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TEACHERS' VOICES IN WORDWALL MEDIA APPLICATION IN TEACHING YOUNG LEARNERS CONTEXT: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract: Abstract: This study examines English Young Learner (EYL) teachers' perceptions of the Wordwall application, an online game-based learning tool, for vocabulary teaching. Amidst the digital transformation in education, there is a notable gap in literature regarding EYL teachers' attitudes towards such digital learning tools. Employing narrative inquiry, this research delves into the experiences of teachers at an elementary school in Malang, gathering data through semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that teachers perceive Wordwall as an engaging, effective means for both instruction and assessment of vocabulary, highlighting its user-friendly interface and positive impact on student learning outcomes. Teachers appreciated Wordwall for its diverse and interactive content, which not only facilitates vocabulary learning but also enhances students' motivation and engagement. The study underscores the significance of integrating teacher insights in the adoption and implementation of educational technologies, positioning Wordwall as a beneficial addition to language learning strategies for young learners. This investigation contributes to the broader understanding of the integration of digital tools in language education, advocating for the inclusion of teacher feedback in the selection process of educational technologies.
Keywords: *digital learning tools; EYL teacher; vocabulary teaching; narrative inquiry; Wordwall.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in educational settings has significantly increased. Understanding the unique attributes of modern students compared to earlier generations is crucial for teachers aiming to capture and maintain their attention effectively. The widespread availability of ICT has led to a shift towards digital preferences among students. To foster sustained interest and active participation in the classroom, integrating ICT into teaching methods, especially in language learning, is a viable strategy (Supardi et al., 2021).

Although using technology in English language teaching is not new, teachers need adequate technological skills to utilize ICT tools and platforms effectively to engage young learners and spark their curiosity (Musthafa, 2013). Researchers highlight the critical role of student engagement in learning activities (Hidayaty et al., 2022).

It is recognized that a strong interest in learning correlates with improved educational outcomes, underpinned by the understanding that individuals are motivated by their interests and passions. Furthermore, the significance of enjoyable and impactful learning experiences is emphasized, as these are likely to be remembered. Incorporating multimedia that creates and supports an enjoyable learning environment is key to making the educational experience rewarding (Isti et al., 2022).

The integration of instructional strategies and educational media constitutes an interdependent relationship that greatly influences the overall

learning journey. Educational media serves not only as a catalyst for fostering motivation and engagement in learning activities, but also generates new needs and curiosities, thereby exerting a noticeable impact on the psychological wellness of students (Puspitarini & Hanif, 2019). The utilization of educational games as pedagogical tools or media has demonstrated a noteworthy enhancement in various facets of students' development, encompassing cognitive, motivational, emotional, and social dimensions.

This underscores the multifaceted benefits of integrating interactive and engaging educational games into instructional methodologies. The escalating popularity of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the realm of education, the contemporary trend has been pointed out by Szymkowiak et al. (2021). The impact of the internet and the changing landscape of ICT is greatly transforming how children participate in learning, form relationships with their peers and teachers, and navigate the difficulties of life. This change in perspective emphasizes the transformative effect of technological advancements on educational models, which calls for a detailed comprehension of its consequences for pedagogical methods.

Komara (2023) describes Wordwall Media as a digital gamification platform designed specifically for the educational sector, aiming to enrich the learning experience with its extensive array of games and quizzes. This platform stands out for its ability to function as an interactive tool for student assessment, offering multimedia resources and instructional support across various devices, including laptops and mobiles. Abdulrahaman et al. (2020) highlight its multimedia integration, featuring images, audio, animations, and interactive activities, thereby underscoring its versatility in accommodating both face-to-face and virtual learning environments. This adaptability is key to engaging students and incorporating competitive elements into learning, as noted by Khairunisa et al. (2022). They further elaborate on Wordwall Media as a network-based program that enhances the educational experience by enabling effective material assessment and fostering an engaging learning atmosphere for students.

In the context of narrative inquiry, a qualitative approach emphasized by Xue (2021), the focus is on English teachers' experiences with Wordwall, particularly those teaching young learners. This methodology delves into the personal stories of educators to uncover the complexities of their interactions with Wordwall, shedding light on the challenges and triumphs of using this tool in vocabulary teaching. It offers a holistic view of teachers' experiences, revealing the practical, emotional, and pedagogical facets of integrating digital tools into language teaching. This approach enriches our understanding of ICT's role in language education, guiding the development of more effective teaching practices.

Empirical studies have explored various perspectives on Wordwall's use in education. Paksi et al. (2023) found teachers' positive feedback on Wordwall.net for enhancing English vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, Jannah and Syafryadin (2022) reported favorable student responses to using Wordwall.net as a vocabulary learning tool, citing its engaging and motivational qualities. Research by Arsini et al. (2022) on hospitality students indicated that Wordwall's vocabulary games significantly boosted learning enthusiasm, despite some limitations in providing detailed explanations. Susanto and Yosephine (2019) discussed teachers' perceptions of incorporating word games into writing instruction, noting the need for creativity and emphasis on learning objectives over game mechanics. Anisah (2022) investigated the impact of Wordwall as a collaborative learning tool in classroom settings, with findings suggesting a high inclination among students to use Wordwall for assessments, attributing its appeal to the interface design and question variety. Lastly, Komara et al. (2022) highlighted the positive effects of Wordwall.net on EFL students' attitudes, engagement, and emotions, supporting its value in language learning environments.

Despite the wealth of research on the utilization of web-based tools for vocabulary learning and teachers' perceptions of Wordwall, there remains a notable gap in understanding how English teachers for Young Learners (EYL) perceive and utilize Wordwall.net for vocabulary acquisition. This gap is especially pronounced in the context of teaching vocabulary to young learners, a group often not included in existing studies. Consequently, this study aims to explore EYL teachers' views on using Wordwall.net to enhance vocabulary learning among young students. The research questions are twofold: (1) How do EYL teachers perceive the use of Wordwall in their classrooms? (2) What challenges do teachers face when integrating Wordwall into EYL teaching, and how are these challenges addressed?

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METHOD

The study employs a qualitative research methodology, specifically narrative inquiry, to delve into EYL teachers' experiences with Wordwall. Following Clandinin's (2006) guidelines, narrative inquiry provides a framework for an in-depth examination of teachers' perspectives and the obstacles they encounter while using Wordwall. This approach emphasizes a close and collaborative relationship between researchers and participants, enabling a detailed exploration of how Wordwall is integrated into classroom practices (Sudarwati et al., 2022). Choosing narrative inquiry as the methodological framework facilitates a detailed understanding of the nuanced interactions between teachers and Wordwall, shedding light on both the benefits and the difficulties of using this digital tool in EYL settings. This method's depth simplifies the data analysis process, allowing for a rich interpretation of teachers' narratives.

For data gathering, the study employed semi-structured interviews, utilizing a set of predetermined questions to guide the conversation (Dingwall et al., 1998). This approach ensured that the interviews remained focused on the topic of interest – the use of Wordwall in English language teaching – while still allowing for flexibility in responses. The structured part of the interview aimed to gather specific insights that could be directly compared with findings from other interviews, enhancing the study's coherence and comparability (Dawson, 2016). The entire data collection and analysis process, which included transcription, coding, and narrative construction of participants' experiences, spanned four months across three elementary schools in Malang (Creswell, 2006).

Prior to the interviews, researchers conducted observations in various elementary schools to identify potential participants. Through purposive sampling, a selection of teachers was made to participate in the interviews. These teachers were chosen based on their experiences and diverse backgrounds, ensuring a rich and varied collection of insights into the use of Wordwall in the classroom.

Table 2. *Participants' profile*

Codes	Gender	Teaching Experience	Wordwall Experience
P1	Female	2 years	Yes
P2	Female	3 years	Yes
P3	Female	5 years	Yes

As part of the data analysis process, this research employed thematic analysis process (Braun et al., 2017) which participant narratives were created, codes were applied, and transcriptions were made. In this analysis, the researcher had some stages to analyze the data that is Transcription, codes, theme, and interpretation. Transcribing the data after each interview allowed us to evaluate the transcripts for input on developing themes and kept the transcripts organized. The various narratives were constructed utilizing emerging themes in the coding process, which involved coding each individual transcript. Written transcripts were used to find differentiate experience sections of text where the participants gave information on a special experience, which helped to create the participants' narrative. The way the narrative was put together offered a flow of events that reflected the teachers' perception and experiences, and the themes that came out of them.

Table 2. *Question guideline*

No.	Questions List
1.	1. Do you have an interest in utilizing the Wordwall application? 2. Have you encountered any difficulties while implementing the Wordwall application as a teaching tool? 3. Do you find the Wordwall application user-friendly?
2.	1. Does the Wordwall application have an appealing interface? 2. Is it possible to use the Wordwall application as a tool for assessment?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' usage perception

To obtain the results of the research, the researcher used the appropriate instruments, namely structured interviews, which gathered additional information and notes from teachers. This is a result of the data the researcher obtained during interviews, which went beyond the formal and structured setting. Through these interview sessions:

> "As a teacher, I am interested in using Wordwall. It is an online tool that allows me to create interactive activities for my students. These activities can be used to review content, practice skills, or assess student learning. They

> are also a great way to engage students and make learning fun." (P1)

As a teacher, the participant 1 finds herself constantly seeking captivating and effective ways to engage her students and ignite their passion for learning. Enter Wordwall – an online treasure trove of interactive activities that has transformed my pedagogical toolkit. This innovative platform empowers the teacher to craft dynamic experiences that not only solidify understanding but also spark curiosity and enthusiasm in young minds. No longer confined to textbook drills and dry lectures, the teacher's students can now delve into immersive exercises like captivating quizzes, engaging word games, and collaborative puzzles, all seamlessly woven with the curriculum's core concepts. Whether it's reinforcing complex grammatical structures through interactive challenges or assessing comprehension through dynamic puzzles, Wordwall provides a flexible platform to cater to diverse learning styles and cater to individual needs. The gamified approach injects a dose of fun into the learning process, transforming dry memorization into an exciting quest for knowledge. It has been

transformative in her classroom to see this transition from passive absorption to active exploration. Having the spark of happiness go out in my student's eyes as they take on a difficult Wordwall game or burst into applause after completing a group puzzle is the best kind of satisfaction. By embracing interactive learning platforms like Wordwall, the teacher strives to create a classroom where learning is not merely a duty but a thrilling adventure, one filled with discovery, collaboration, and, most importantly, the joy of knowledge. As stated, the teacher is interested using Wordwall for fun learning activities, also assessing the students learning. The teacher feels that using the application makes her easier to teach.

> "After three years of teaching, I've discovered that the secret to motivating EYL learners is variation ... With Wordwall's wide collection of pre-made games and the option to design my own, I can adapt my lessons to suit a variety of students' interests and learning styles." (P2)

After working as an EYL teacher for three years, the teacher has developed a deep awareness of how important variation is to keeping young language learners motivated. Their varied learning styles and interests are frequently ignored by traditional, static teaching methods which causes disengagement and impedes language acquisition. This is where Wordwall shines as a game-changing tool, providing teachers with an endless array of customizing options and a colorful tapestry of pre-made gateachers to let them to customize language learning to each child's specific requirements and tastes.

The extensive library of Wordwall transcends the limitations of a single strategy. It offers a wide variety of interactive *gateacher* formats, such as dynamic quizzes, compelling tales, and matching *gateachers* based on teacher memory. This makes it possible for teachers to easily incorporate enjoyable activities into the curriculum, guaranteeing that every class is an exciting journey. The days of monotonous drills and rote memorizing are over. Additionally, by teacher who has five years in teaching EYL, the teacher is determined that successful language acquisition must encourage intrinsic motivation and accommodating a variety of learning styles.

The teacher highlights the inherent limits of traditional methods while acknowledging her teaching usefulness. Her static quality frequently fails to inspire the intense curiosity and continuous engagement that essential to learn for developing brains. The statement above shows that Wordwall is beneficial for students as a learning resource, media, and entertaining assessment tool. This is in accordance with Safitri et al., (2022). The study's findings showed that Wordwall had a beneficial effect on students' motivation to learn.

The teacher who took part in the interview said that Wordwall appeals to her since it provides her children with a variety of interesting assignments. Additionally, the application can be employed as an assessment tool. Wordwall is more than just a game, however. Due to its user-friendly interface, teachers can create original games or modify already-made ones to meet the unique needs of their students and meet specific learning objectives. The argument aligns with Paksi et al., (2023) findings that teachers found Wordwall to be an effective tool for teaching vocabulary in English.

For any challenges, the teacher first encountered difficulties, but they can be avoided by completing smaller activities and practicing the application frequently. The teacher's first experience with Wordwall wasn't without difficulties. It was like trying to figure out a foreign language when navigating its interface and creating dynamic activities.

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> "At first, I feel difficult but I learn more about using the application then it is easy. Although there are challenges involved, I have found Wordwall to be a valuable tool for teaching media-related subjects. To overcome these challenges, I begin with smaller activities and gradually explore more advanced features of the platform." (P3)

Even though so many features were tempting, at first the teacher felt overwhelmed. But she persisted because she believed she could change her students' educational experience. The teacher read through tutorials, used internet resources, and talked to other teachers. The secrets of the platform started to emerge gradually. Acknowledging the teacher's inner beginner, the teacher made an easy beginning. Fill-in-the-blank exercises and basic word matches served as her training platform. Observing her students' spirit, an idea assimilated—inspired her to continue exploring.

The teacher advanced to cooperative games, interactive puzzles, and even started creating interesting quizzes. Every obstacle surmounted and every trait perfected eroded the initial fear and replaced it with a rising self-assurance. Wordwall is fun games. The teacher skillfully uses its interactive exercises into my multimedia-rich curriculum, creating tasks that stimulate interest, encourage participation, and reinforce comprehension. With Wordwall, the teachers analyze the students' ability through cooperative puzzles and analyze cinema tactics through dynamic matching games. This indispensable tool has opened doors to deeper study and made the teacher's work not just easier but also much more rewarding.

The statement above shows that the teacher's initial struggles with Wordwall serve to highlight the usual problems associated with integrating technology into the classroom. It can be intimidating at first to fully utilize a new platform and navigate it. It is resonates with Anisah (2022) findings that the reason behind this is that certain informants find it challenging to utilize the program since it is based on a quiz game. Some perceptions claim that using this wordwall application is not at all difficult.

The respondents indicated that this program was user-friendly on average because of its design, which made it simpler for them to use. The teachers' do, however, demonstrate the transformational potential of persistence and focused effort. She was able to transform a perceived obstacle into a useful instrument for teaching and assessment by taking a purposeful strategy that included segmenting activities into manageable parts and emphasizing constant exploration.

This highlights how important it is to use efficient learner tactics when implementing new technologies in the classroom, such as splitting and spaced repetition. Through demonstrating the inherent obstacles as well as the ultimately rewarding process of learning new technologies, the teacher's experience provides an useful example that motivates teachers and students to approach new platforms with commitment and a growth attitude.

The using of wordwall application is easy to use because the application has a clean and interesting layout, so it can make the teaching learning be interactive.

> "Yes, the Wordwall application interface is designed to be visually appealing and user-friendly. It offers a clean and intuitive layout, making it easy for teachers to navigate and create interactive activities. Imagine unlocking a treasure chest of fun learning games! That's what Wordwall feels like.it is time to transform learning into an incredible experience!" (P1)

Instead of confusing menus and tricky paths, Wordwall presents a pedagogical playground, meticulously curated for learner engagement and teacher empowerment. This user-friendly design invites educators to unleash their inner instructional genius by providing a blank canvas free of unnecessary features. Everything is easy to find and use, like dragging and dropping colorful blocks to build exciting quizzes, puzzles, and games.

Wordwall offers a variety of alternatives to stimulate children's curiosity and fit every learning style. It is like having a magic toolkit that makes learning feel like an adventure, not a chore. And as the the students' play, the teacher can see how well they are doing, giving the teacher a chance to help them wherever they need it. Therefore, the teacher can put away the old textbooks and step into Wordwall. Each element feels intentionally placed, guiding the user or teachers through the creation process with gentle nudges. The statement is resonate with Anisah (2022) claimed that the informants were curious about the interface's movements and the explanation behind the appearance that irritated their eyes.

Moreover, the informant responded favorably to the animated graphic that was shown. The animations on show are excellent fits for their educational level and age. Wordwall boasts a vibrant library of visuals, catering to diverse learning styles and igniting student imaginations. With straightforward labels and intuitive icons to guide you, navigation becomes a simple activity. Regardless of teachers' level of experience with technology, Wordwall allows to create captivating activities without becoming lost in the digital obstacles. This purposeful decision of ease of use makes it possible for even the busiest teachers to effortlessly incorporate interactive learning into their courses; it's not only an aesthetic goal. Moreover, while other platforms may intimidate with their complexity, Wordwall attracts with its intellectual attractiveness. It is a digital haven where even the most tech-averse teacher can develop into an engaging learning experience designer, demonstrating that excellent tools don't have to sacrifice usability.

Additionally, although Wordwall has increased student participation in P2's and P3's classroom, there are several drawbacks to using it. Comprehensive growth is ensured by balancing its tech-driven, engaging activities with more conventional approaches like play-based learning and physical exercise, while screen time management is still an issue. It can take some time to adapt the platform's pre-made games to different learners and skill levels, and its controlled formats make it difficult to promote unstructured exploration. An additional layer of complication is introduced by technical problems and connectivity breakdowns, necessitating backup plans and flexibility to keep the learning process moving.

The statement above is line with the findings of Rahmawati and Wijayanti (2022) conclusion that one benefit of adopting Wordwall is that it makes it simpler for the teacher to conduct class activities. Owing to its user-friendliness, educators may now create personalized exercises that cater to the requirements of every individual student and accomplish specific learning goals. Wordwall is an adaptable toolkit that helps users learn languages faster than just playing games.

Accessible inside the platform's extensive library, visual aids improve vocabulary recall and help close the gap between tangible experiences and abstract notions. The statement also stated in Paksi et al., (2023) determined that Wordwall's numerous features have aided the teacher. The instructor who took part in the study also mentioned that the display is appealing, the menus are organized neatly, and it contains basic design elements that make it easy for the teacher to use and entertaining for the students.

Teachers' perception on Wordwall display

In the display of the Wordwall is eye-catching, the menus are well-organized and has simple design elements, so the teacher can easily use.

> "Yes, the Wordwall program is made to be both aesthetically pleasing and intuitive. It has a simple, straightforward style that makes it simple for me as a teacher to use and set up interactive activities. The platform uses contemporary design elements like simple icons, menus that are well-organized, and eye-catching color palettes. These aesthetic components help create an appealing interface that improves the user experience and makes using the Wordwall program fun." (P1)

The Wordwall design is easy to use and comfortable, similar to a blank canvas. Wordwall embraces user-friendliness, empowering educators and students alike to become digital artists. The statement also in line in Paksi et al. (2023). The most popular method is drag-and-drop, which makes it possible to create complex mosaics out of text, eye-catching images, and interactive games.

Wordwall bursts with a kaleidoscope of varied visuals that appeal to a wide range of learning preferences and encourage creative thought. These images serve as a bridge, assisting even the most tech-averse people in crossing the threshold into the world of digital production. They are complemented by unambiguous labels and simple iconography. This accessibility is not mere feel-good fluff; it's a strategic tool seamlessly integrating interactive learning into any classroom environment. This empowered engagement directly translates into heightened motivation and knowledge retention. Wordwall proves that powerful tools need not be shrouded in complexity; accessibility and effectiveness can coexist, hand in hand. The application can be an assessment tool:

> "… it is an interactive quiz and game making tool that helps me assess students' knowledge. It has different question types and makes learning fun for my students. I can track students' progress and identify areas where they need more help." (P2)

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Wordwall comes onto the scene as a cutting-edge quiz and game creator, turning knowledge assessment into an exciting journey for educators and learners alike. Its variety of question styles, which include captivating riddles, interactive games, and traditional multiple choice questions, are like a treasure trove of opportunities.

With Wordwall, education is no longer limited to drab textbooks; instead, it can become a vibrant playground where students can put their knowledge to the test, indulge their competitive nature, and have a great time. However, Wordwall offers more than just entertainment. It is also an effective tool for teachers to explore the depths of their students' comprehension. The assessment potential aligns with Kusuma's (2021) findings, which highlight Wordwall's beneficial influence on students' enthusiasm in learning.

The "Team Games Tournament" model employed in the study exemplifies how Wordwall transforms learning into a collaborative competition, igniting intrinsic motivation and promoting active participation. The inherent variety of game formats offered by the platform further bolsters this notion, as constantly encountering new challenges and engaging activities keeps students' curiosity piqued and fosters a love for learning. With the help of extensive tracking systems, the teachers can keep an eye on both individual and group development, identify any areas in which students may be having difficulty, and adjust their training accordingly.

It is similar to having a live map of the students' educational path that shows the teachers where they need support the most. Wordwall quietly speaks insightful information into their comprehension as they go through these captivating challenges. The teacher collects additional information with each click and response, providing a more comprehensive view of the students' strengths and shortcomings.

With the use of this invaluable knowledge, the teacher will be able to praise individual accomplishments, offer targeted support, and differentiate lessons. This is in line with Anisah's (2022) that for assessments like daily quizzes or examinations, the majority of informants indicated that they agreed. Although the prior study focused on students' perceptions, it also relates to teachers' perceptions regarding the use of Wordwall as an assessment tool.

According to Rahmawati & Wijayanti (2022) added that it is beneficial in a variety of contexts, such as assessing students' development and activities. As a result of the record feature that this application offers, the teacher can view it with ease.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study used structured interviews to learn more about the ways in which teachers felt about incorporating Wordwall into Early Years Language (EYL) classrooms. Teachers' reactions were overwhelmingly positive, emphasizing Wordwall's adaptability in developing engaging, interactive activities that accommodate a range of learning styles. Teachers skillfully conquered early difficulties, like figuring out the platform's UI, by tenacity and methodical investigation, highlighting the significance of cooperation and training. The successful adoption of Wordwall can be attributed in large part to its visually appealing design and user-friendly interface. Although acknowledged as challenges, such as managing screen time and technical issues, they were judged manageable with careful planning. It is suggested that future research look into student perspectives, teacher training programs, comparative analyses with other educational tools, and longitudinal studies to evaluate long-term impacts. In addition to providing a basis for future research and improvement of Wordwall's integration into various educational settings, the study offers a thorough overview of the transformative potential of Wordwall in EYL classrooms.

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