

**THE EFFECT OF WORDWALL ON STUDENTS' INTEREST
IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT SMK NEGERI 1
PANYABUNGAN**



THESIS

Submitted to the Department of English Education in a
Partial fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Strata I
(Bachelor of Education) in English Language Education

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STATE COLLEGE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES
MANDAILING NATAL
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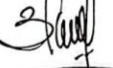
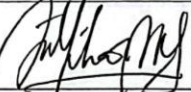
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ABSTRACT

Eka Abelia Putri(NIM 22130020). The Effect of Wordwall on Students' Interest in Learning English at SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan. Thesis, English Language Education Study Program, State College of Islamic Studies Mandailing Natal.

This study aimed to examine the effect of Wordwall on students' interest in learning English at Grade XI AKL, SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan, and to describe how the treatment affected the four indicators of interest, namely attention, enthusiasm and participation, curiosity, and enjoyment. This study used a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design, involving 27 students of Grade XI AKL selected through total sampling. Data were collected using a Likert-scale interest questionnaire administered before and after the treatment, consisting of 20 items, all of which were declared valid through the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique, with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.903. The treatment was implemented across six instructional meetings using Wordwall activities, namely Match Up, Quiz, and Spin the Wheel. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test conducted on the difference scores (post-pre) showed that the data were normally distributed, so the hypothesis was tested using the Paired Sample t-Test. The results showed a statistically significant increase in students' interest in learning English following the implementation of Wordwall ($t(26) = 2.404$, $p = 0.024$), with a small-to-moderate effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.463$). The mean interest score increased from 56.93 in the pre-questionnaire to 60.26 in the post-questionnaire, both within the Moderate category. Descriptively, the largest increase among the four indicators was found in Attention, followed by Enjoyment, Enthusiasm and Participation, and Curiosity. A separate Paired Sample t-Test conducted for each indicator showed that Attention was the only indicator with a statistically significant increase ($t(26) = 4.380$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.843$, a large effect), while the increases in Enjoyment, Enthusiasm and Participation, and Curiosity did not reach statistical significance. Because this study used a one-group pretest-posttest design without a control group, these findings indicate that the implementation of Wordwall was associated with a statistically significant and practically meaningful increase in students' interest in learning English, rather than definitive proof that Wordwall alone caused this increase, and Wordwall can be considered as an alternative game-based learning medium for English teachers in vocational high schools.

Keywords: *Wordwall, students' interest, game-based learning, English learning, vocational high school*

ABSTRAK

Eka Abelia Putri(NIM 22130020). The Effect of Wordwall on Students' Interest in Learning English at SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan. Skripsi, Program Studi Tadris Bahasa Inggris, Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Mandailing Natal.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh Wordwall terhadap minat belajar Bahasa Inggris siswa Kelas XI AKL SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan, serta mendeskripsikan pengaruh perlakuan tersebut terhadap empat indikator minat, yaitu perhatian (attention), semangat dan partisipasi (enthusiasm and participation), rasa ingin tahu (curiosity), dan kesenangan (enjoyment). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain pre-eksperimen one-group pretest-posttest, melibatkan 27 siswa Kelas XI AKL yang dipilih melalui teknik total sampling. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan angket minat berskala Likert yang diberikan sebelum dan sesudah perlakuan, terdiri atas 20 item yang seluruhnya dinyatakan valid melalui teknik korelasi Pearson Product Moment, dengan koefisien reliabilitas Cronbach's Alpha sebesar 0,903. Perlakuan dilaksanakan selama enam pertemuan pembelajaran menggunakan aktivitas Wordwall, yaitu Match Up, Quiz, dan Spin the Wheel. Hasil uji normalitas Shapiro-Wilk yang dilakukan terhadap skor selisih (post-pre) menunjukkan bahwa data berdistribusi normal, sehingga pengujian hipotesis dilakukan menggunakan Paired Sample t-Test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan secara statistik pada minat belajar Bahasa Inggris siswa setelah penerapan Wordwall ($t(26) = 2,404$, $p = 0,024$), dengan effect size kategori kecil menuju sedang (Cohen's $d = 0,463$). Rata-rata skor minat meningkat dari 56,93 pada pre-questionnaire menjadi 60,26 pada post-questionnaire, yang keduanya berada pada kategori Moderate. Secara deskriptif, peningkatan terbesar di antara keempat indikator ditemukan pada indikator Attention, diikuti oleh Enjoyment, Enthusiasm and Participation, dan Curiosity. Uji Paired Sample t-Test yang dilakukan secara terpisah untuk setiap indikator menunjukkan bahwa Attention merupakan satu-satunya indikator dengan peningkatan yang signifikan secara statistik ($t(26) = 4,380$, $p < 0,001$, Cohen's $d = 0,843$, kategori besar), sedangkan peningkatan pada Enjoyment, Enthusiasm and Participation, dan Curiosity tidak signifikan secara statistik. Karena penelitian ini menggunakan desain one-group pretest-posttest tanpa kelompok kontrol, temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penerapan Wordwall berasosiasi dengan peningkatan yang signifikan secara statistik dan bermakna secara praktis terhadap minat belajar Bahasa Inggris siswa, bukan merupakan bukti pasti bahwa Wordwall satu-satunya penyebab peningkatan tersebut, dan Wordwall dapat dipertimbangkan sebagai media pembelajaran berbasis permainan alternatif bagi guru Bahasa Inggris di sekolah menengah kejuruan.

Kata Kunci: *Wordwall, minat belajar, pembelajaran berbasis permainan, pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, sekolah menengah kejuruan*

DEDICATION

This thesis is sincerely dedicated to:

1. First and foremost, I express my praise and gratitude to Allah SWT for all the blessings in the form of health, strength, and abundant inspiration throughout the process of completing this thesis. May peace and blessings always be upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW. This thesis is dedicated as a testament to my determination, effort, love, and affection for the people who are most precious in my life.
2. Emilya, my beloved mother, thank you for your endless love, prayers, patience, and sacrifices that have always been my greatest strength. Every prayer, tear, and struggle you have given for me has brought me to this achievement. This bachelor's degree is one of the ways I express my gratitude for everything you have done. I hope that this achievement makes you proud and becomes a small way for me to repay your unconditional love and sacrifices.
3. Mulyadi Suprayitno, my beloved father, thank you for your endless hard work, prayers, love, and support throughout my journey. Although you did not have the opportunity to pursue higher education, you never allowed that limitation to prevent your children from achieving the highest education possible. This bachelor's degree is not only my achievement, but also a reflection of your sacrifices and hopes for me. I hope this achievement brings you happiness and makes you proud.
4. Desi Mulya Efriyanti and Diva Mulya Lestari, my younger sisters, thank you for all the attention and support you have given me through your words, attitudes, and actions. You have always been there whenever I needed you and have always brought comfort whenever I felt tired. Thank you for bringing your own special colors to this journey. You are an important part of my journey, perhaps unseen, but always felt. My dear sisters, live a better life than your older

sister. Keep fighting, keep pursuing your dreams, and become individuals who always make our family proud. I love you both so much.

5. Mrs. Ayu Meita Puteri Siregar, M.Pd., as my First Supervisor, and Mr. Zulfikar, MA., TESOL, as my Second Supervisor, who patiently guided, directed, and supported me throughout the process of writing this thesis. I sincerely appreciate their valuable time, insightful advice, constructive feedback, and encouragement, which helped me improve my research and overcome the challenges I encountered during the completion of this thesis. Their knowledge, guidance, and dedication have been invaluable to me throughout this academic journey.
6. Mrs. Resdila Pratiwi, M.Hum., as my First Examiner, and Mrs. Lia Agustina Damanik, M.Hum., as my Second Examiner, who generously devoted their time to examining my thesis and providing valuable suggestions, constructive feedback, and guidance for its improvement. I sincerely appreciate their attention, valuable input, and knowledge throughout the thesis examination process. Their feedback has been an important part of helping me revise and improve this thesis.
7. All lecturers of the English Education Study Program at STAIN Mandailing Natal, who have provided me with valuable knowledge and education.
8. Winda Amalia Tanjung, my best friend, thank you for being part of my journey, from our high school years until we finally completed our university journey and earned the same degree. Thank you for every support, prayer, encouragement, and story we have shared along the way. Whenever we felt tired while working on our theses, we encouraged and supported each other, reminding one another to keep going until we finally reached this moment. I am grateful that we were able to grow, struggle, and achieve this milestone together. May we continue to support each other as we pursue our dreams. Thank you for being such a meaningful part of my journey.
9. My friends and fellow students from the TBI 2022 cohort, Winda Amalia, Nur Hayati, Nur Aisyah, Uswatun Hasanah, Romaito, Laila Saqila Putri, Royhan Ansori, Husin As'ari, and all the others whose names I cannot mention one by

one. Thank you for sharing both happiness and difficulties, encouraging one another, and accompanying me throughout my university journey until the completion of this thesis.

10. Mrs. Ira Shanty Dalimunthe, my boss, who has always understood and supported me throughout my journey in completing this thesis. Thank you for always giving me permission and time off from work whenever I had academic responsibilities and matters related to my university. I am also deeply grateful for your kindness and generosity in giving me additional salary when you knew that I was in need. Your understanding, trust, and support have meant so much to me and have helped me continue my studies and complete this thesis. I will always remember and appreciate your kindness. May Allah SWT reward you with abundant blessings and goodness for everything you have done for me.
11. Finally, to myself, Eka Abelia Putri. Thank you for fighting this far and for working so hard to reach this point. Thank you for going through so many processes, challenges, tears, exhaustion, and doubts that not everyone knows about. Thank you for continuing to move forward even when you felt like giving up, for staying strong when everything felt difficult, and for believing that every struggle would eventually come to an end. You are strong, you are brave, and you are extraordinary. Be proud of yourself for making it through everything and reaching this point. Never forget to appreciate every step you have taken, because today is proof that all your hard work, patience, sacrifices, and tears were never in vain. Thank you for working so hard, thank you for holding on, thank you for fighting, and most importantly, thank you for never giving up on yourself. You have done your best, and you deserve to be proud of yourself. This is your achievement, and you deserve to be proud of it.

This thesis is a reflection of the love, support, guidance, and prayers of all of you.

Eka Abelia Putri

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher would like to express her deepest gratitude to Allah SWT for His endless blessings, love, guidance, health, and mercy, which have enabled her to complete this thesis entitled “The Effect of Wordwall on Students’ Interest in Learning English at SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan.” This thesis is submitted to the English Education Department of the State College of Islamic Studies Mandailing Natal as a partial requirement for obtaining a Bachelor’s Degree in Education (Strata 1/S1). May peace and blessings always be upon the noble Prophet Muhammad SAW, who brought enlightenment to humanity and served as a guiding light, especially for Muslims around the world. Throughout the process of writing this thesis, the researcher has received invaluable support, encouragement, guidance, prayers, suggestions, and constructive feedback from many people. On this special occasion, the researcher would like to sincerely express her heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the following people:

1. **Dr. Mara Samin Lubis, M.Ed** as the head of STAIN Mandailing.
2. **Mr. Dr. Amrizal, M.Pd** and **Mrs. Rica Umrina Lubis, M.Hum** the head, and secretary of the English Department, allowed and guided the researcher to carry out the research
3. **Mrs. Ayu Meita Puteri Siregar, M.Pd.**, and **Mr. Zulfikar, MA., TESOL**, as the researcher’s thesis advisors, for their help, instruction, guidance, time, and support in correcting and helping the researcher to finish her thesis.
4. **Mrs. Resdilla Pratiwi, M.Hum** and **Mrs. Lia Agustina Damanik, M.Hum** the examiners of the thesis, for their support, correction, and suggestions.
5. **All the lecturers and all STAIN Mandailing Natal’s secretariat officers** for their endless support.
6. **Mr. Maralin Panjaitan, S.Pd.**, as the Principal of SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan, along with the English teachers, who have granted

permission and provided assistance to the researcher in conducting the research at the school.

7. **The students of Class XI AKL at SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan**, who willingly participated as research participants and actively took part throughout the research process.
8. **Emilya**, my beloved mother, thank you for your endless love, prayers, patience, and sacrifices that have always been my greatest strength. Every prayer, tear, and struggle you have given for me has brought me to this achievement. This bachelor's degree is one of the ways I express my gratitude for everything you have done. I hope that this achievement makes you proud and becomes a small way for me to repay your unconditional love and sacrifices.
9. **Mulyadi Suprayitno**, my beloved father, thank you for your endless hard work, prayers, love, and support throughout my journey. Although you did not have the opportunity to pursue higher education, you never allowed that limitation to prevent your children from achieving the highest education possible. This bachelor's degree is not only my achievement, but also a reflection of your sacrifices and hopes for me. I hope this achievement brings you happiness and makes you proud.
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13. **Everyone who contributed to the completion of this thesis**, whether through academic assistance, useful information, encouragement, companionship, prayers, or simple acts of kindness, I sincerely thank you. Every contribution, regardless of its size, has been meaningful in helping me reach the completion of this academic journey.
14. Finally, may Allah SWT always devote joy to all of us; hopefully, this thesis can be useful for the reader.

Panyabungan, 28 September 2026

The Researcher,

Eka Abelia Putri

NIM: 22130020

MOTTO

“Allah tidak membebani seseorang melainkan sesuai dengan kesanggupannya”

(QS. Al-Baqarah: 286)

“Bukan kesulitan yang membuat kita takut, tapi ketakutan yang membuat kita sulit.”

Ali bin Abi Thalib

“Tugas manusia hanya berjuang, bukan memaksakan hasil. Kita punya kendala tapi Allah punya kendali. Yakinlah jika Allah sudah ikut andil, maka tidak ada kata mustahil.”

Ustadz Hanan Attaki

“Keberhasilan bukanlah milik orang pintar. Melainkan milik mereka yang senantiasa berusaha.”

B.J. Habibie

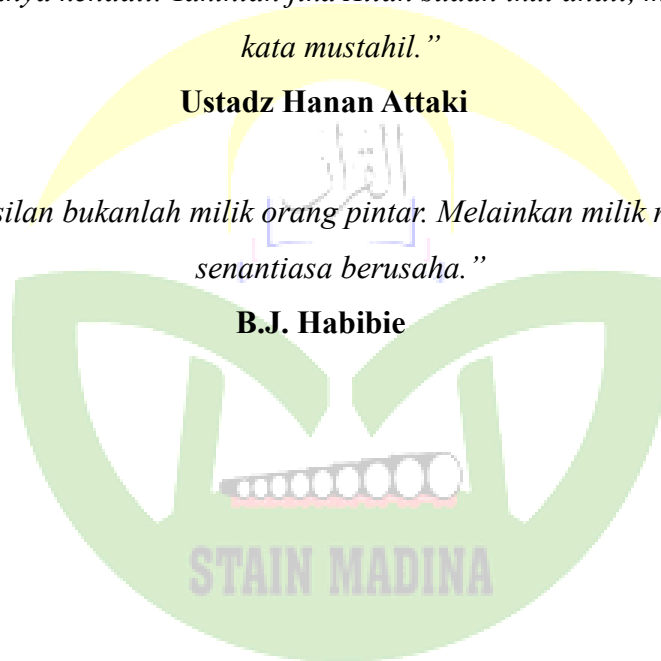


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English is widely recognized as an international language used in communication, education, science, technology, and global business. In the context of Southeast Asia, the importance of English has increased significantly following the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which requires individuals to communicate effectively across member countries (Muslim et al., 2020). As a result, English proficiency has become an essential skill for students to compete in both academic and professional environments. However, despite the importance of English in the global era, the level of English proficiency in Indonesia remains relatively low. According to the EF English Proficiency Index (EF Education First, 2023), Indonesia ranked 79th out of 113 countries and was categorized as having a low level of English proficiency with a score of 473. Furthermore, the Sumatra region obtained a score of 459, which was below the national average. These findings indicate that many Indonesian students still face difficulties in mastering English and suggest the need for more effective and engaging instructional approaches to support English language learning.

This national pattern of low English proficiency is closely connected to issues of learner motivation and interest. In a study involving Indonesian senior high school students, Muslim et al. (2020) found that although students generally recognized the importance of English for both integrative and instrumental purposes, their actual investment in learning the language remained low, largely because classroom instruction offered little variation or personal relevance. This finding suggests that the problem of low English proficiency in Indonesia cannot be solved through curriculum content alone, but requires instructional approaches that are specifically designed to engage students' interest and sustain their motivation over time.

For students enrolled in vocational high schools (SMK), English proficiency carries added importance because the SMK curriculum is designed to prepare graduates for direct entry into the workforce. Research on the readiness of SMK graduates for employment indicates that employers generally consider English an important cross-industry skill, particularly for career development, even though many vocational schools still struggle to provide instruction that matches these workplace expectations (Budi et al., 2023). This gap between workplace demands and classroom practice is especially relevant for students majoring in Accounting and Financial Institutions (AKL), such as those at SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan, since entry-level positions in accounting and finance increasingly call for basic English skills, for instance in reading financial documentation or communicating with clients. Strengthening students' interest in English from an early stage is therefore not only an academic concern but also a practical step toward improving their long-term employability.

This condition was observed by the researcher during the Teaching Practicum Program (PPL) conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan from January to February 2026. Based on classroom observations in Grade X AKL, English learning activities were predominantly teacher-centered, with limited variation in instructional methods. Most students appeared passive during classroom activities and rarely participated voluntarily in discussions or exercises. Several students also stated informally that English lessons were monotonous and difficult to understand, especially vocabulary, because learning activities mainly consisted of explanation and worksheet completion. Furthermore, students showed limited enthusiasm when English lessons began, indicating a low level of interest in learning the subject. These findings suggest that more interactive learning strategies are needed to create a learning environment that can attract students' attention and encourage active participation.

The pattern of disengagement observed during the PPL period is theoretically significant because interest itself is a critical predictor of long-

term learning success. According to Hidi and Renninger (2006), interest develops through four sequential phases, beginning with triggered situational interest, which arises when a learner's attention is captured by a specific stimulus in the learning environment. Without this initial trigger, interest cannot progress toward the more stable and self-sustaining forms that support long-term engagement. The absence of enthusiasm and voluntary participation observed among students at SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan therefore suggests that the current instructional environment has not yet succeeded in triggering this foundational phase of interest, pointing to the need for an instructional approach capable of introducing the kind of engaging stimulus that conventional teacher-centered methods have so far failed to provide.

One instructional approach that has the potential to address this issue is game-based learning (GBL). According to Plass et al. (2020), game-based learning is an instructional approach in which game design mechanics and structural features are intentionally applied to help students acquire new knowledge, practice existing skills, and develop higher-order thinking abilities. Through game elements such as challenges, competition, and immediate feedback, students are encouraged to participate actively in the learning process (Adipat et al., 2021). One digital platform that supports the implementation of game-based learning is Wordwall. Wordwall is a web-based educational game platform that allows teachers to design and implement various interactive learning activities tailored to specific language materials and learning objectives (Maulida et al., 2024). Wordwall provides various interactive activities, including Match Up, Quiz, and Spin the Wheel, which can be customized to match specific vocabulary learning objectives (Maulida et al., 2024). These activities allow students to practice target words in a more engaging and enjoyable way compared to conventional classroom instruction, supporting the development of students' interest in learning English (Sakkir et al., 2023). Despite this potential, empirical evidence on Wordwall's effect specifically on students'

interest, as distinct from vocabulary achievement, remains limited within the context of Indonesian vocational high schools, a gap that the present study seeks to address.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the study described above, the following problems are identified as the foundation of this research:

1. During the Teaching Practicum Program (PPL) at SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan, 27 students of Grade X AKL showed low interest in learning English. Most students rarely participated in classroom activities, and several students found English lessons boring and difficult to follow.
2. English teachers at this school mostly rely on lecturing, text translation, and worksheet exercises. This teacher-centered approach offers little variation, making it difficult to maintain students' interest in learning English (Muslim et al., 2020).
3. Previous studies have examined the effect of Wordwall on vocabulary mastery (Sakkir et al., 2023) and student engagement (Maulida et al., 2024). However, its effect on students' interest in learning English in vocational high schools (SMK) has not been examined. This study aims to address this research gap.

C. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses specifically on examining the effect of Wordwall on students' interest in learning English. In terms of scope, the study is conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan involving 27 students of Grade XI AKL (Accounting and Financial Institutions) during the odd semester of the 2026/2027 academic year. The instructional materials used in this study were based on the Grade XI Erlangga SPLASH English textbook used by the English teacher at SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan. Wordwall was used as the instructional media through the Match Up, Quiz, and Spin the Wheel

activities to support the English learning process based on the materials presented in the textbook. In terms of limitation, this study does not examine students' vocabulary mastery scores, grammar competence, or overall English proficiency as outcomes. The study also does not compare Wordwall with other digital platforms or teaching methods.

The research participants consist of the same 27 students who were initially identified as Grade X AKL during the preliminary observation and proposal stage. At the time of data collection, these students had naturally progressed to Grade XI AKL due to the commencement of the new academic year. This grade transition does not affect the identity of the research sample.

The dependent variable in this study is limited to students' interest in learning English, measured through four indicators: attention, enthusiasm and participation, curiosity, and enjoyment. The findings of this study are applicable specifically to the research context at SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan and cannot be generalized to other schools or student populations without further replication research.

This study uses a one-group pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire design, which may contain limitations related to internal validity, such as history, maturation, and testing effects. These limitations are acknowledged and discussed further in Chapter III.

D. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problems above, the research question of this study is formulated as follows:

1. Is there a significant effect of Wordwall on students' interest in learning English at Grade XI AKL, SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan?
2. To what extent does Wordwall affect each indicator of students' interest (attention, enthusiasm and participation, curiosity, and enjoyment)?
3. How large is the practical effect (effect size) of Wordwall on students' interest in learning English?

E. Objectives and Significances of the Study

1. Objective of the Study

- a. To determine whether there is a significant effect of Wordwall on students' interest in learning English at Grade XI AKL, SMK Negeri 1 Panyabungan.
- b. To identify the extent to which Wordwall affects each indicator of students' interest, namely attention, enthusiasm and participation, curiosity, and enjoyment.
- c. To determine the practical effect size of Wordwall on students' interest in learning English.

2. Significances of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to provide benefits for several parties, as follows:

a. Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly by addressing the research gap concerning the effect of Wordwall on vocational high school students' interest in learning English, especially through vocabulary material.

b. Practical Significance

1. For English Teachers

The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for English teachers, particularly in vocational high schools, in implementing Wordwall as an alternative game-based instructional medium, rather than as a stand-alone teaching method or pedagogical approach, to enhance students' interest in learning English.

2. For Future Researchers

This study is expected to serve as a reference and source of information for future researchers who are interested in conducting studies related to game-based learning,

Wordwall, and students' interest in learning English in similar educational contexts.

F. Definition of Operational Variables

1. Wordwall (Variable X / Independent Variable)

In this study, Wordwall is operationally defined as an instructional treatment that utilizes Wordwall as an interactive medium in English learning activities on the topic of vocabulary within the context of reading comprehension. Based on the theoretical framework proposed by Plass et al. (2020), this approach employs game elements intentionally to help students acquire knowledge, practice skills, and increase students' engagement in the learning process.

In its implementation, Wordwall-based learning is carried out through various interactive game activities such as Match Up, Quiz, and Spin the Wheel, which are integrated into English learning activities. The treatment is implemented through six instructional meetings as part of the overall research schedule consisting of eight meetings, including one meeting for the administration of the pre-questionnaire, six instructional meetings using Wordwall, and one meeting for the administration of the post-questionnaire. The learning sessions are held twice a week, every Monday and Wednesday, with each meeting consisting of two English lesson periods. Through these interactive and engaging game activities, students are expected to participate more actively and develop greater interest in learning English.

2. Students' Interest in Learning English (Variable Y / Dependent Variable)

In this study, students' interest in learning English is operationally defined as the score obtained through a Likert-scale questionnaire administered before and after the implementation of Wordwall. The score reflects the extent to which students demonstrate positive affective and behavioral responses toward English learning

activities, particularly on the topic of vocabulary within the context of reading comprehension. This operational definition is based on the theory of Renninger and Hidi (2016), who explain that interest is a psychological state involving focused attention, positive emotions, and personal engagement toward a particular subject.

In this study, students' interest in learning English is measured through the following four indicators:

Table 1.1 Indicators of Students' Interest in Learning English

(Adapted from Renninger and Hidi, 2016)

No	Indicator	Operational Description	Observable Behavior
1	Attention	Students' focus and concentration during learning activities using Wordwall	Actively participating in Wordwall games
2	Enthusiasm and Participation	Students' enthusiasm and involvement in learning activities	Voluntarily answering questions
3	Curiosity	Students' curiosity toward the learning material	Asking questions related to the material
4	Enjoyment	Students' positive feelings during the learning activities	Showing enjoyment during the learning process

These four indicators form the dimensions of the questionnaire instrument used in this study. The instrument consists of 20 questionnaire items measured using a four-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate higher levels of students' interest in learning English.

Through interactive and engaging Wordwall activities, students are expected to demonstrate increased attention, participation, curiosity, and enjoyment in learning English.

In this study, students' interest in learning English is measured twice: a few days before the implementation of the treatment through a pre-questionnaire and a few days after the completion of the treatment through a post-questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 20 items measured using a four-point Likert scale, resulting in a minimum possible score of 20 and a maximum possible score of 80. Higher scores indicate higher levels of students' interest in learning English.

