INTERACTIVE WORDWALL: TEACHING WRITING TO EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the use of Wordwall as a digital learning media for teaching EFL to seventh grade students at a public junior high school in Central Java during the 2024/2025 academic year. This study used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design and conducted in two cycles, each consist of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The sample of this research were 29 seventh grade students. The topic focused on describing public places and implemented interactive Wordwall activities, especially unjumbled sentences. The data were collected through writing tests (pre-test, post-test 1, post-test 2), observation, and documentation. The data were analyzed used quantitative methods by comparing the average scores obtained at each stage. The findings of the study suggested the application of Wordwall significantly improved students' writing skill on descriptive text. The average score increased from 56 in the pre-test with 27.65% of students nearly achieved the minimum completion criteria, to 73 in post-test 1 with 69%, and improved further to 80 in post-test 2 with 82.8%, surpassing the minimum completion criteria of 75. This study concludes that Wordwall can effectively improved students' writing ability through interactive teaching and learning methods based on digital learning media.

Keywords: Digital Media, EFL, Junior High School, Wordwall, Writing Ability.

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Introduction

In the digital era, the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have undergone significant transformation through the integration of technology, enhancing accessibility, interactivity, and efficiency. Digital tools such as learning applications, online classes, and interactive platforms have shifted traditional methods into more engaging and flexible approaches, enabling learners to access resources, practice skills, and connect globally (Kriswinahyu, 2024). This transformation has also promoted autonomous learning tailored to learners' needs, which plays a crucial role in sustaining engagement and motivation. Nevertheless, issues such as unequal access to technology and limited digital literacy in certain regions remain challenges that require attention (Chairunisa, 2024).

In Indonesia, EFL has an important element in preparing students for participation in a globalized world. The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes flexible, student-centered learning that adapts instruction to individual needs, interests, and abilities (Hidayat, 2021). This curriculum promotes communicative competence through real-world applications, project-based learning, and digital integration, fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity (Adıgüzel, 2023). Among the four language skills, writing is particularly significant as it is increasingly essential in academic, professional, and social contexts. Writing also functions as a primary medium of communication across digital platforms such as email, blogs, and social media, where clarity, coherence, and persuasiveness are essential for effective interaction (Abbasova & Mammadova, 2019).

Despite its recognized importance, many Indonesian students continue to face persistent challenges in writing, including limited vocabulary, weak sentence construction, poor content development, and frequent mechanical errors (Asnas & Hidayanti, 2024; Alzain, 2022). Preliminary observations and questionnaires conducted at a public junior high school in Central Java revealed that 62.1% of seventh-grade students identified sentence construction as their main difficulty, largely due to insufficient vocabulary and weak organizational skills. These challenges hinder their ability to produce coherent and well-structured paragraphs, thereby limiting their overall writing proficiency.

To address these issues, the integration of interactive digital media into EFL writing instruction offers a promising solution. One such tool is Wordwall, an online platform that enables teachers to create customizable and interactive activities such as quizzes, matching tasks, and sentence-building games. Previous studies have shown that Wordwall can support vocabulary acquisition, grammar mastery, and idea organization while maintaining learner motivation (Abbasova & Mammadova, 2019; Alzain, 2022). Its user-friendly interface, adaptability to diverse learning needs, and

instant feedback features make it a suitable medium for enhancing students' writing ability in a more engaging environment.

Although research on digital tools in language learning is well established, studies focusing specifically on Wordwall to improve junior high school students' writing ability remain limited. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by investigating the use of Wordwall as a digital learning media to enhance the writing skills of seventh-grade EFL students. Specifically, the study examines the effectiveness of Wordwall in addressing students' writing challenges and explores their perceptions of its application in the learning process.

Research Methods
Design
This research used a quantitative descriptive design, with questionnaires as the main data collection tool. Trochim and Donnelly (2006) argue that descriptive study generally aims to explain what is happening or already exists. The data results were analyzed using descriptive research and are explained according to the purpose of this study. In this research, the researchers use a quantitative method. This research aims to determine students' perceptions of using TED Talk videos in learning vocabulary. The purpose of quantitative descriptive analysis is that researchers want to describe or tell in-depth research about current events or phenomena to students.
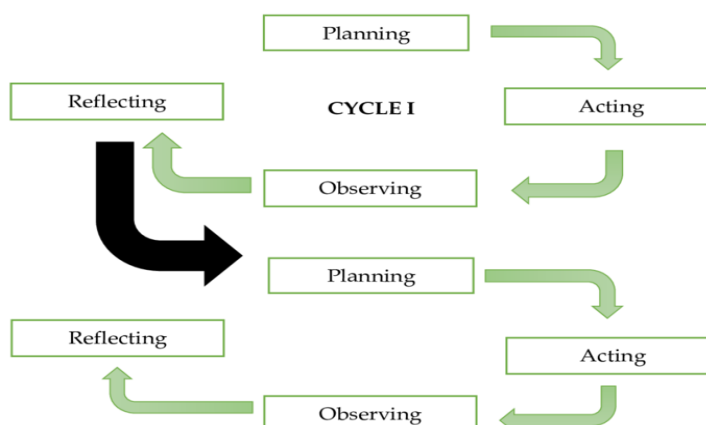

Figure 1. CAR Model (Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 1998)

Participants
The participants of this research were 29 seventh grade students (15 male and 14 female) from SMP Negeri 18 Surakarta, a public junior high school in Central Java. This class was selected because preliminary observations revealed that many students experienced difficulties in constructing sentences, organizing ideas, and developing content in writing. In addition, the school applied the Kurikulum Merdeka, which emphasizes the integration of digital learning media, making this class a suitable context for implementing Wordwall based instruction.

Success Indicators

Research success was determined using two criteria : (1) at least 80% of students achieve scores equal to or above the Minimum Completion Criteria (MCC) of 75; and (2) the class average score reaches a minimum of 80. These indicators are aligned with the curriculum standards, where the MCC serves as the required passing grade for English language learning outcomes.

Instrument

The instruments used in this research were writing tests administered in three stages: pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. The pre-test was conducted before the implementation of Wordwall to assess the students' initial writing ability, for post-test 1 and post-test 2 were given at the end of each cycle 1 and cycle 2 to evaluate the progress made after the treatment. The writing test required students to compose a descriptive text based on a given topic, following the appropriate generic structure and language features. The assessment of students' writing performance was based on specific criteria covering five aspects: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Each aspect was used scoring rubric adapted from H. Douglas Brown (2007), with a range score 1 to 4 . The rubric provided detailed scoring ranges for each component, allowing for consistent and objective evaluation of students' writing ability throughout the research.

Table 1. Writing Assessment (Douglas Brown, 2007)

Components of Writing	Score	Level	Indicators	Weighting
Content (C)	4	Excellent	Relevant, well-chosen details	
	3	Good	Adequate details	3
	2	Fair	Limited details	
	1	Poor	Unclear/insufficient information	
Organization (O)	4	Excellent	Logical, clear, well-structured	
	3	Good	Mostly organized, minor lapses	2
	2	Fair	Somewhat unclear, weak structure	
	1	Poor	No clear organization	
Vocabulary (V)	4	Excellent	Precise, varied vocabulary	
	3	Good	Minor lexical errors	
	2	Fair	Frequent errors, partial clarity	2
	1	Poor	Serious errors, obscure meaning	
Grammar (G)	4	Excellent	Accurate, consistent grammar	
	3	Good	Few errors	
	2	Fair	Regular errors, some interference	1.5
	1	Poor	Many errors, hard to comprehend	
Mechanics (M)	4	Excellent	Correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization	
	3	Good	Minor mechanical errors with	
	2	Fair	Some errors affect clarity	1.5
	1	Poor	Frequent errors, unclear	

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Final Score : $\dfrac{3C+2O+2V+1.5G+1.5M}{40}$ χ 100

Research Procedure

The research procedure in this study followed the Classroom Action Research (CAR) model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which consists of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. These stages were applied systematically to ensure the intervention was effectively designed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated. The procedure was implemented in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two meetings. The detailed steps of each stage are described as follows :

a) In the planning stage, the researcher identified the students' writing problems based on preliminary observations and prepared the necessary materials, lesson plans, and Wordwall activities designed to improve vocabulary, sentence construction, and idea organization. Pre-test instruments were also prepared to measure students' initial writing ability.

b) In the action stage, the researcher implemented the planned teaching activities using Wordwall as the primary learning media. The activities included interactive games unjumbled sentences and writing tasks that engaged students in constructing sentences, expanding vocabulary, and organizing ideas in descriptive text which the topic was describing public places .

c) In the observation stage, the researcher, acting as the classroom teacher, monitored students' participation, engagement, and performance throughout the learning process. Student work was collected, and their progress was recorded through the administration of post-test 1 and post-test 2.

d) In the reflection stage, the researcher analyzed the results of each cycle by comparing students' average scores with the Minimum Completion Criteria (MCC) and identifying aspects that required improvement. Based on the reflection of cycle I, adjustments were made to the learning strategies in cycle II to optimize the effectiveness of the intervention.

Data Collection

The data was obtained through observation, written tests, and documentation. Observation was conducted to monitor students' behavior, participation, and engagement based on the teaching and learning process using Wordwall. Written tests were administered in three stages: pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. The pre-test was conducted before the implementation of Wordwall to assess students' initial writing ability, while post-test 1 and post-test 2 were carried out in the end of each cycle to measure their progress after the treatment. Each test required students to compose a descriptive text according to the appropriate generic structure and language features. Documentation in the form of activity photos and field notes served as supporting data and complement the results of the research.

Data analysis

Quantitative analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics.
The average score was calculated using the following formula:

X̄ = <u>Total Student Scores</u>
   Number of Students

Classical completeness was calculated using the formula:

CCC = <u>Number of Students Achieving ≥ 75</u> × 100%
         Total Number of Students)

The Minimum Completion Criteria (MCC) applied in this research was 75. A class was considered to have achieved classical completeness if at least 85% of the students obtained scores equal to or above the MCC. The results from pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2 were compared to determine the improvement in students' writing ability after the implementation of wordwall as a learning media.

Results and Discussion
Results

Pre-Test

Preliminary test was conducted to identify students' initial ability in writing descriptive text. In this stage, the teaching process applied a conventional method using lectures and limited practice activities without interactive media. The teacher explained the concept of descriptive text, including its definition, purpose, generic structure, and language features, and gave examples from the textbook. Students were then instructed to write a short descriptive paragraph based on a given topic without additional scaffolding activities.

Table 2. Pre-Test Result

Category	Number of Students	Percentage
≥ MCC (≥75)	8 Students	27.65%
< MCC (<75)	21 Students	27.4%
Total	29 Students	100%
Grade Average		56

The pre-test results showed that only 8 of 29 students (27.6%) achieved the Minimum Completion Criteria (MCC) of 75, with an average score of 56. This indicated limited ability in constructing descriptive texts with correct structure, vocabulary, and grammar.

Cycle I

The implementation of Cycle I involved Wordwall activities focusing on vocabulary mastery, sentence construction, and paragraph organization. At the end of the cycle, a post-test was administered.

Table 3. Post-Test Cycle I Result

Category	Number of Students	Percentage
≥ MCC (≥75)	20 Students	69%
< MCC (<75)	9 Students	31%
Total	29 Students	100%
Grade Average		73

The average score increased to 73, with 20 students (69%) achieving scores above the MCC. Although the target of 82% completeness had not yet been reached, there was a significant improvement from the pre-cycle results.

Figure 2. Wordwall activity in post-test 1

After the implementation of Wordwall using unjumbled sentences about *School Library* and *Classroom*, the students' writing performance improved significantly. The average score reached 73, and (69%) of the students achieved the minimum mastery criterion. The activity helped students recognize the basic structure of descriptive text and construct simple yet accurate sentences.

Cycle II

Based on Cycle I reflection, additional wordwall activities were designed to address grammar errors and paragraph organization issues. The lesson plan included more complex writing tasks and peer-review sessions to encourage collaborative learning.

Table 4. Post-Test Cycle II Result

Category	Number of Students	Percentage
≥ MCC (≥75)	24 Students	82.8%
< MCC (<75)	5 Students	17.2%
Total	29 Students	100%
Grade Average		80

The results of post-test 2 showed an increase in the average score to 80, with 24 students (82.8%) successfully surpassing or exceeding the MCC. This met the predetermined success indicators of the research, which required at least 80% of students to achieve a score of 75 of higher and an overall class average of at least 80.
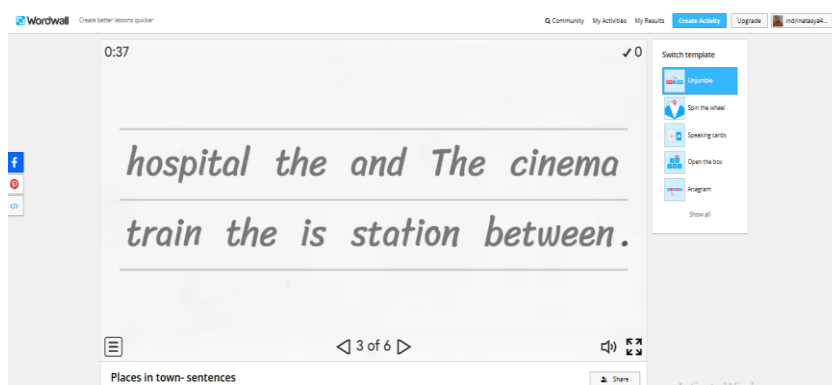

Figure 3. Wordwall Activity in post-test 2

In this cycle, Wordwall tasks were developed with more complex unjumbled sentences describing *Airport* and *Traditional Market*. The students showed further improvement, with an average score of 80 and 86.20% of the students achieving the mastery criterion. The increase was influenced by the students' better understanding of vocabulary, sentence organization, and text coherence. This indicated that the step-by-step unjumbled sentence activity provided through Wordwall not only improved accuracy but also fostered students' confidence in writing descriptive text.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the integration of Wordwall significantly enhanced students' writing proficiency in descriptive text. The average score increased from 56 in the pre-test to 73 in Cycle I, and further to 80 in Cycle II, with classical completeness rising from 27.6% to 69% and finally achieving 82.8%. These results indicate that the application of Wordwall successfully addressed the research objective of improving students' writing proficiency, surpassing the minimum completeness criteria set for the study.

In Cycle I the novelty of Wordwall, which fostered students' motivation and active participation. This is consistent with the findings of Alzain (2022) and Abbasova & Mammadova (2019), who highlight that interactive digital learning tools increase learner engagement and support vocabulary and grammar development. However, despite the positive gains in Cycle I, some students continued to struggle with sentence construction and organization, indicating the need for targeted instructional adjustments.

In Cycle II, the integration of grammar-focused activities and peer-review opportunities further supported improvement. Students not only demonstrated greater accuracy in sentence construction but also improved coherence and organization at the paragraph level. Peer-review fostered collaboration and critical awareness, aligning with the principles of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which emphasize autonomy, creativity, and collaborative learning (Hidayat, 2021).

The results also highlight the role of Wordwall in supporting digital literacy. Its interactive and adaptive features provided immediate feedback, encouraging students to self-correct and monitor their own progress. This aligns with Brown's (2007) framework for writing assessment, which includes content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics as integral components. By addressing these elements in a gamified and student-centered manner, Wordwall facilitated both accuracy and confidence in writing.

Overall, the findings suggest that technology-enhanced learning media such as Wordwall not only improve language outcomes but also foster learner autonomy, motivation, and digital competence. This has important implications for EFL instruction, particularly in the Indonesian context where integrating interactive media into writing instruction can support national curriculum goals and better prepare students for participation in a digital and globalized world.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of Wordwall as a digital learning media effectively enhanced students' writing ability in descriptive text. The use of interactive activities such as sentence arrangement, vocabulary quizzes, and guided writing tasks created a more engaging learning environment and supported improvements in both accuracy and organization. Wordwall not only contributed to higher achievement levels but also fostered student motivation, participation, and confidence in writing.

The findings further highlight the importance of teacher adaptability in managing digital tools. Adjustments made between Cycle I and Cycle II, particularly through grammar-focused tasks and structured feedback, proved effective in addressing students' difficulties and creating a more collaborative and supportive classroom atmosphere.

However, this research has several limitations. The study was conducted in a single school with a relatively small sample of seventh-grade students and within a short time frame. These factors may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Future studies are recommended to examine the application of Wordwall across different grade levels, schools, and learning contexts, or to compare its effectiveness with other digital platforms. Longitudinal studies could also provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of Wordwall on students' writing development.

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