

English Students' Engagement and Perceptions of Wordwall in Prose Learning

Azriel Zakiyyah Rizqon Sutejo¹, Zahra Syaharani Putri², Nora Alya Ghita Amanda³, Yuanita Aprilia Maharani⁴, Dwi Aji Kartiko⁵

¹University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri, Indonesia
azrielzak07@gmail.com

²University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri, Indonesia
zahrasyaharani059@gmail.com

³University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri, Indonesia
noraalya341@gmail.com

⁴University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri, Indonesia
raniyy277@gmail.com

⁵University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri, Indonesia
dwikartiko140@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of Wordwall as a gamification tool to enhance student engagement in prose courses and to explore students' perceptions of its pedagogical value. Using a descriptive qualitative design, the research collected data through classroom observations, questionnaires, and semi structured interviews involving seven undergraduate students in an English Education program. The results indicate that integrating Wordwall into prose learning promotes active participation and fosters a more supportive classroom atmosphere. Students reported feeling more motivated and less anxious when engaging with course materials through interactive tasks. The tool also helped them better visualize plot structures and understand character development, although it was less effective for tasks requiring deeper critical analysis. Overall, participants found Wordwall easy to use and expressed interest in applying similar digital tools in their future teaching practice. The study demonstrates that gamified learning activities can support meaningful technology integration in literature classes, while emphasizing the need to carefully align digital tools with instructional objectives to optimize learning outcomes.

KEYWORDS: gamification, Wordwall, prose learning, student engagement, English Education

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In English Language Education programs, Prose stands as a fundamental course that requires students to engage in comprehensive literary analysis. Unlike language skills courses that focus on discrete linguistic competencies, Prose learning demands sustained interpretation of intrinsic elements including plot development, characterization, thematic exploration, and narrative structures (Richards & Rodgers, 2015). This analytical depth distinguishes Prose from other language courses such as vocabulary acquisition or grammar instruction, positioning it as a critical component in developing future English teachers' literary and pedagogical competencies.

Despite its pedagogical importance, Prose instruction in higher education frequently encounters significant challenges in maintaining student engagement. Traditional teaching approaches predominantly rely on extensive reading assignments and lecture-based discussions, resulting in passive learning experiences that fail to stimulate active participation (Nunan, 2015). English education students often report experiencing monotony and diminished motivation during Prose classes, as conventional methods do not adequately address the interactive and dynamic learning preferences of contemporary students. This disengagement becomes particularly problematic given that these students will eventually become educators themselves, making their learning experiences critical models for future teaching practice.

This study adopts Constructivism as its primary theoretical framework, recognizing that meaningful learning occurs through active participation and collaborative knowledge construction (Amineh & Asl, 2015). To operationalize this constructivist approach, Gamification serves as the pedagogical strategy. Gamification integrates game-design elements such as point systems, leaderboards, and immediate feedback into educational contexts to enhance both intrinsic motivation and external engagement (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2018). For English education students, gamified learning experiences offer dual benefits: improving their own comprehension of literary concepts while simultaneously providing concrete examples of innovative pedagogical approaches they can adapt in their future classrooms.

Wordwall, a web-based interactive platform, enables educators to design gamified activities such as sentence sequencing for plot analysis and character categorization exercises. While existing research has demonstrated Wordwall's effectiveness in enhancing student engagement, these studies have primarily focused on vocabulary instruction in secondary education contexts. For instance, Sari (2023) reported a 20% increase in engagement among vocational high school students learning vocabulary through Wordwall activities. However, limited empirical evidence exists regarding Wordwall's application in literature-based courses, particularly at the tertiary level where English education students require both content mastery and pedagogical modeling. This gap is significant because Prose analysis involves higher-order cognitive processes distinct from vocabulary memorization, necessitating investigation into whether gamification tools effectively support complex literary interpretation.

Therefore, this study addresses this research gap by examining how undergraduate English education students engage with Wordwall during Prose instruction and exploring their perceptions of its pedagogical value. Specifically, the research investigates three dimensions: behavioral engagement patterns during gamified activities, emotional and psychological responses to the learning environment, and cognitive effectiveness in understanding Prose elements. By documenting both the affordances and limitations of Wordwall in this specific educational context, the study aims

to provide empirical insights that can inform the integration of gamification strategies in literature education and contribute to the professional preparation of future English teachers. Therefore this study questions :

1. How do English Education students engage behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively with Wordwall during Prose learning activities?
2. What are English Education students' perceptions regarding the pedagogical effectiveness of Wordwall in supporting their understanding of Prose elements?
3. To what extent do English Education students consider Wordwall applicable for their future teaching practice?

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative design to examine how Wordwall is implemented in the classroom and to understand what students think about using it. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is the right approach when researchers want to explore how people experience something and what they think about it in their actual environment, not in a lab or artificial setting. The participants in this study were seven undergraduate students from the English Language Education Department at Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri. These seven students were chosen through purposeful sampling, which means they were selected on purpose because they had been actively involved in the gamified learning sessions using Wordwall. This way, the researcher could gather meaningful insights from students who had direct experience with the tool.

To make sure the findings are valid and credible, this study used methodological triangulation as suggested by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). Triangulation basically means looking at the same thing from different angles by collecting data from three different sources. When data from multiple sources point to the same conclusion, it strengthens the reliability of the research.

The first method used was direct observation. The researcher sat in the classroom and watched the students as they used Wordwall during the lesson. This allowed the researcher to see things like how engaged the students were, how they interacted with the game features, and how they reacted to different activities. Observing them in real time gave a picture of what was actually happening, not just what students said happened.

The second method was a questionnaire distributed through Google Form. This questionnaire was given to all seven participants to get a general sense of their perceptions about using Wordwall. The questions were designed based on specific indicators that cover three main areas: behavioral

engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive effectiveness. These indicators are listed in detail in Table 1. Using Google Form made it easier to collect and organize the responses quickly.

The third method was direct face-to-face interviews. After collecting the questionnaire responses, the researcher conducted individual interviews with the students. These interviews were really important because they allowed students to explain their answers in more depth. Sometimes a student might give a certain rating on the questionnaire, but the interview revealed the reasons behind that rating. For example, a student might say they felt excited using Wordwall, and in the interview they could explain exactly what made them feel that way..

Table 1. Research Instrument Indicators

Variable	Indicators (Questions)
Behavioral Engagement	1. I actively participate in the Wordwall games. 2. I try to answer all questions correctly. 3. I feel more energetic compared to regular lectures. 4. I pay full attention to the game feedback. 5. I am motivated to improve my score on the leaderboard.
Emotional Engagement	1. I feel happy/excited when using Wordwall. 2. I feel less anxious/stressed answering questions. 3. The class atmosphere feels fun and lively. 4. I do not feel bored during the lesson. 5. I feel confident in my ability to answer.
Cognitive Effectiveness	1. Wordwall helps me understand the plot structure. 2. Visual features help me remember characters. 3. It makes abstract literary concepts clearer. 4. It helps me review materials before exams. 5. It improves my literary vocabulary.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). This model has three main stages that work together: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

In the data reduction stage, the researcher went through all the raw data and filtered out what was not needed. This included organizing the observation notes, sorting the Google Form responses, and identifying key points from the interview transcripts. The goal here was to simplify the data and focus on what was most relevant to the research questions.

Next, in the data display stage, the information was arranged in a way that made it easier to see patterns and connections. For instance, the questionnaire answers were compiled into tables or charts showing how many students agreed or disagreed with each statement. The observation notes were also organized by themes like participation level or emotional reactions.

Finally, in the conclusion drawing stage, all the pieces were put together. The researcher looked at the patterns that emerged from the Google Form answers and then cross-checked them with the observation notes and interview transcripts. For example, if the questionnaire showed that most students felt more energetic during Wordwall activities, the researcher would look for supporting evidence in the observation notes (like students appearing more active) and in the interview quotes (where students explained why they felt that way). This process of cross-verification helped ensure that the conclusions were not based on just one type of data but were supported by multiple sources, making the findings more comprehensive and trustworthy.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

This section presents findings from observations, questionnaires, and interviews with seven undergraduate students from the English Language Education Department at Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri. The analysis revealed three overarching themes: **(1) Engagement and Psychological Atmosphere, (2) Cognitive Effectiveness in Learning Prose Elements, and (3) Usability and Pedagogical Implications.**

3.1.1 Engagement and Psychological Atmosphere

The data demonstrates substantial increases in student engagement through Wordwall implementation. All seven respondents (100%) indicated greater motivation to participate when Wordwall was used, with one student noting: *"jadi lebih termotivasi untuk partisipasi karena format gamenya ngurangin perasaan takut salah"* (became more motivated because the game format reduces fear of making mistakes). This finding aligns with gamification literature suggesting game-based elements can lower affective barriers to participation (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2018).

Gamified features leaderboards and timers were consistently identified as motivational drivers. All participants (100%) affirmed these elements made learning more enjoyable, describing *"healthy competition, meskipun ada timer tapi ga bikin terlalu tertekan"* (healthy competition without excessive pressure) and noting that *"Gamification elements-nya well-balanced tidak too childish tapi*

tetap fun." When appropriately calibrated, competitive elements enhance rather than undermine learning experiences in higher education contexts.

Regarding emotional responses, 85.7% (6/7) reported reduced stress when answering questions through Wordwall compared to traditional quizzes. Representative responses included: *"atmosphere nya lebih casual dan supportive jadi bisa ekspresiin pemahaman tanpa tekanan berlebihan"* and descriptions of the format as *"lighter and less intimidating."* This anxiety reduction is particularly significant for Prose courses, where analytical complexity often generates performance anxiety inhibiting deeper engagement (Nicholson, 2015).

Comparative feedback revealed overwhelming preference for Wordwall over worksheets. Students described how *"worksheet biasa sering bikin ngantuk, tapi wordwall bikin fokus karena ada challenge nya"* and how *"Wordwall mengubah passive reading menjadi active learning experience yang lebih memorable,"* supporting constructivist principles emphasizing active participation for meaningful knowledge construction (Amineh & Asl, 2015).

3.1.2 Cognitive Effectiveness in Learning Prose Elements

Wordwall proved effective for specific literary learning types, though with limitations. When asked about remembering characters, plots, and devices, 85.7% (6/7) confirmed effectiveness. One detailed response highlighted: *"Visualisasi plot melalui Unjumble dan categorization characters melalui Group Sort sangat concrete, memudahkan saya membangun mental framework sebelum deeper analysis."*

For exam preparation, 100% (7/7) rated Wordwall effective or very effective, noting it became *"andalan aku buat quick review"* and emphasizing: *"Immediate feedback loop-nya essential untuk corrective learning. Saya bisa identify misconceptions about literary elements right away."* This aligns with formative assessment principles emphasizing timely correction for retention (Richards & Rodgers, 2015).

All participants (100%) reported vocabulary improvement, explaining: *"repeated exposure to literary terminology dalam fun context membuat retention jauh lebih baik daripada just memorizing dari textbook."* This supports theories that meaningful contextual engagement facilitates deeper processing and long-term retention.

However, students demonstrated sophisticated awareness of platform limitations. Perceptive observations included: *"Ideal untuk scaffolding basic knowledge dan formative assessment. Untuk summative atau high-level critical thinking, perlu complemented dengan other methods"* and *"cocok buat certain aspect,*

excellent buat vocabulary, plot review dan character analysis." While Wordwall effectively supports foundational learning, it functions best as supplementary rather than replacing traditional analytical methods.

3.1.3 Usability and Pedagogical Implications

Technical usability proved generally positive with occasional challenges. All respondents (100%) rated the platform easy to use (7-8/10), noting *"the layout is simple and straightforward."* However, 57.1% (4/7) reported occasional technical issues like slow loading, though characterized as infrequent: *"jarang, mungkin 1 sampai 2 kali aja."* Text clarity received positive feedback, with acknowledgment that *"untuk extended passages mungkin perlu adjustment."*

Recommended usage frequency centered on moderate integration: 1-2 times per month, *"terutama untuk review sessions atau sebagai formative assessment tool,"* suggesting students recognize value in varied pedagogical approaches.

Pedagogical implications for English education students proved particularly noteworthy. Students connected experiences to future practice: *"Ini memberikan concrete pedagogical model tentang technology integration yang akan saya terapkan sebagai guru nanti"* (4.5/5 rating) and appreciated *"how accessible ini untuk students dengan various tech literacy levels."* All students (100%) would recommend Wordwall for self-study, with the caveat: *"bagus untuk self study basic, tapi harus diimbangi baca actual literary text secara utuh juga."*

Overall ratings ranged from "good to very good" to 8.5/10, indicating Wordwall successfully created engaging, accessible learning while providing English education students practical technology integration models for future classrooms.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Enhanced Engagement Through Gamification

The finding that 100% of participants reported increased motivation through Wordwall aligns with previous research on gamification in educational settings. Sari (2023) similarly found a 20% increase in engagement among vocational high school students using Wordwall for vocabulary learning. However, the current study extends these findings to higher education contexts and complex literary analysis tasks, demonstrating that gamification principles are transferable beyond basic language skills instruction.

The reduction in academic anxiety reported by 83.3% of participants corroborates findings from Zichermann and Cunningham (2018), who argued that game-based elements can lower affective barriers to participation. Specifically, the present study's finding that students described the learning atmosphere as "casual and supportive" resonates with Nicholson's (2015) assertion that meaningful gamification should prioritize intrinsic motivation over punitive assessment structures. This is particularly significant in Prose courses, where the interpretive nature of literary analysis often generates performance anxiety that traditional testing methods may exacerbate.

The overwhelming preference for Wordwall over traditional worksheets echoes constructivist principles emphasized by Amineh and Asl (2015), who argued that meaningful learning requires active participation rather than passive reception. The student observation that "Wordwall mengubah passive reading menjadi active learning experience" provides empirical support for constructivist pedagogy in literature education, a domain where constructivist approaches have received less empirical attention compared to language skills courses.

3.2.2 Cognitive Effectiveness and Platform Limitations

The finding that 100% of participants confirmed Wordwall's effectiveness for exam preparation and vocabulary retention supports Richards and Rodgers' (2015) emphasis on immediate feedback in formative assessment. The "immediate feedback loop" identified by students as "essential untuk corrective learning" demonstrates how gamified platforms can operationalize formative assessment principles more dynamically than traditional paper-based methods.

However, students' sophisticated awareness of Wordwall's limitations particularly its unsuitability for "high-level critical thinking" reveals an important boundary condition not adequately addressed in existing gamification literature. While Sari (2023) reported positive outcomes for vocabulary instruction, the current study's participants recognized that literary analysis requires analytical depth that multiple-choice or categorization games cannot fully support. This finding suggests that gamification tools should be positioned as complementary scaffolding mechanisms rather than comprehensive pedagogical solutions, particularly for disciplines requiring sustained critical interpretation.

The effectiveness of visual features (Unjumble, Group Sort) for plot and character analysis extends previous research by demonstrating how specific game mechanics can support particular cognitive tasks. Whereas much gamification research treats platforms holistically, the present findings suggest that different activity types within Wordwall serve distinct pedagogical functions a nuance that warrants further investigation.

3.2.3 Pedagogical Implications for Teacher Education

A distinctive contribution of this study is its focus on English Education students' dual role as learners and future educators. Participants' recognition that Wordwall provided "concrete pedagogical models tentang technology integration" addresses a critical gap in teacher preparation programs. Werbach and Hunter (2015) emphasized the importance of experiential learning in understanding gamification principles, but rarely has research examined how experiencing gamified instruction shapes prospective teachers' pedagogical reasoning.

The students' recommendation for moderate integration (1-2 times monthly) rather than constant use demonstrates pedagogical sophistication that contradicts assumptions about digital natives' preference for continuous technology use. This measured approach aligns with Nunan's (2015) principle of methodological pluralism in language teaching, suggesting that even technologically competent students recognize the value of varied instructional strategies.

The reported accessibility across "various tech literacy levels" addresses equity concerns often raised about digital tool integration. Unlike complex learning management systems requiring extensive training, Wordwall's intuitive interface may lower implementation barriers for teachers in diverse educational contexts a practical consideration with significant implications for scalable technology adoption.

3.2.4 Synthesis and Theoretical Implications

Collectively, these findings support a refined understanding of gamification in higher education literature instruction. Rather than simply confirming that "gamification works," the study reveals specific mechanisms through which game-based elements support learning: anxiety reduction enabling risk-taking in literary interpretation, immediate feedback facilitating corrective learning, and visual-kinesthetic activities concretizing abstract literary concepts. These mechanisms operate within clear boundaries—foundational knowledge and formative assessment while complementary traditional methods remain necessary for developing critical analytical capacities.

From a theoretical perspective, the study demonstrates how constructivist principles can be operationalized through gamification in literature education, a domain where constructivism has been more conceptually advocated than empirically demonstrated. The transformation from "passive reading" to "active learning experience" illustrates how digital tools can restructure classroom dynamics to promote collaborative knowledge construction, though the necessity of "reading actual

literary text secara utuh" reminds us that technology cannot replace sustained engagement with primary sources.

3.2.5 Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study highlights the positive impact of Wordwall on student engagement and foundational learning, several limitations must be acknowledged to contextualize the findings. First, the study involved a small sample size of seven undergraduate students from a single institution. Consequently, the findings regarding engagement and cognitive effectiveness may not be generalizable to larger cohorts or students with different technological backgrounds. The specific context of Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri implies that the results are tied to the specific institutional culture and teaching traditions present there.

Second, the study relied primarily on self-reported data through questionnaires and interviews to measure cognitive effectiveness. While students perceived improvements in their vocabulary and plot retention, the study did not employ objective pre- and post-tests to quantify actual academic gains. Therefore, the reported effectiveness reflects the students' subjective "feeling of learning" rather than verified cognitive advancement. Additionally, the short-term nature of the implementation raises the possibility of a "novelty effect," where increased engagement stems from the newness of the tool rather than its intrinsic pedagogical value. It remains unclear whether the high levels of motivation would be sustained over a full semester of continuous use.

These limitations carry significant implications for future research and practice. Methodologically, future studies should adopt longitudinal experimental designs with control groups to isolate the specific effects of gamification from other instructional variables. Researchers are encouraged to measure investigating whether the "casual and supportive" atmosphere translates into long-term retention of complex literary concepts. Practically, the limitations suggest that while Wordwall is a powerful tool for engagement, it should not be the sole method of instruction. As noted by the participants, it serves best as a scaffolding tool for "basic knowledge" and should be rigorously complemented with traditional text analysis to ensure deep critical thinking is developed alongside engagement.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that integrating Wordwall into Prose instruction significantly enhances student engagement and reduces learning anxiety by fostering a supportive, gamified environment. While the platform is best suited for scaffolding foundational knowledge such as

vocabulary retention and plot recall rather than facilitating deep critical analysis, it offers dual benefits for English Education students: improving their immediate literary comprehension while providing a practical model for technology integration in their future teaching careers. Consequently, educators are encouraged to utilize Wordwall strategically as a complementary tool, particularly for review sessions, to effectively bridge the gap between passive text-based learning and interactive pedagogy.

However, these findings should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size and single-institution context, which limit the generalizability of the results. The reliance on short-term implementation and self-reported perceptions, without control groups or pre-post assessments, suggests that some positive outcomes might partly stem from the novelty effect rather than sustained pedagogical impact. Future research should address these gaps through longitudinal experimental designs to verify actual gains in analytical competence and explore how gamification affects learners with diverse backgrounds and learning styles over time.

REFERENCES

- Amineh, R. J., & Asl, H. D. (2015). Review of constructivism and social constructivism. *Journal of Social Sciences, Literature and Languages*, 1(1), 9-16.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Nicholson, S. (2015). A recipe for meaningful gamification. In T. Reiners & L. C. Wood (Eds.), *Gamification in education and business* (pp. 1-20). Springer.
- Nunan, D. (2015). *Teaching English to speakers of other languages: An introduction*. Routledge.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2015). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Sari, D. (2023). The effectiveness of Wordwall in enhancing student engagement in Mandarin learning at SMKN 2 Semarang. *Journal of Vocational Education*, 12(3), 45-56.
- Werbach, K., & Hunter, D. (2015). *For the win: How game thinking can revolutionize your business*. Wharton Digital Press.

Zichermann, G., & Cunningham, C. (2018). *Gamification by design: Implementing game mechanics in web and mobile apps*. O'Reilly Media.