INTERACTION: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Vol. 13, No. 3; September 2026
P-ISSN: 2406-9558; E-ISSN: 2406-9566

The Effect of Wordwall on Descriptive Writing Skills at SMP Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari

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ABSTRACT

Writing is one of the essential language skills that enables students to communicate ideas effectively in written form. However, many junior high school students experience difficulties in writing descriptive texts because of limited vocabulary, lack of motivation, and low engagement during the learning process. This study aimed to examine the effect of Wordwall as game-based media on students' writing skills in descriptive texts. This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a post-test only control group design. The participants consisted of 64 seventh-grade students of SMP Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari, divided into an experimental class and a control class through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a writing test and analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, Levene's Test of Homogeneity, and an independent samples *t*-test with IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The findings revealed that the experimental class achieved a higher mean score (77.03) than the control class (66.41). The independent samples t-test showed a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.88$), indicating that Wordwall had a significant positive effect on students' writing skills in descriptive texts. These findings suggest that Wordwall can serve as an effective game-based learning medium to enhance students' writing achievement and support the implementation of interactive English language instruction.

Keywords: Descriptive Writing; Game-Based Learning: Wordwall; Writing Skills

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four essential language skills that plays a significant role in English language learning. As a productive skill, writing enables students to communicate ideas, experiences, and information in a well-organized written form. However, writing is often considered the most challenging language skill because it requires students to generate ideas, organize them logically, and apply appropriate grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation simultaneously (Harmer, 2004; Hyland, 2003; Nunan, 2003). In Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, students are expected to master various text types, including descriptive

text, which aims to describe people, places, animals, or objects in a clear and systematic manner (Anderson & Anderson, 1997). Despite its importance, many junior high school students still experience difficulties in producing descriptive texts effectively.

Several previous studies have identified various problems encountered by students in writing descriptive texts. Ismayanti and Kholiq (2020) found that students frequently made errors in organizing ideas, using grammar, and applying appropriate vocabulary in their writing. Similar findings were reported by Kristiana et al. (2021), Nurfidoh and Kareviati (2021), Daulay et al. (2023), and Hafizah et al. (2024), who revealed that limited vocabulary, grammatical inaccuracies, and difficulties in developing ideas were among the major factors affecting students' writing performance. These challenges indicate that conventional teaching practices are often insufficient to actively engage students and support the development of their writing skills. Therefore, English teachers need to employ innovative instructional media that encourage students to participate actively while facilitating the writing process.

One of the instructional approaches that has attracted increasing attention is Game-Based Learning (GBL), which integrates educational games into learning activities to improve students' engagement and learning outcomes. According to Kapp (2012), game-based learning enhances learners' motivation, participation, and learning experiences by combining instructional objectives with game elements. Wordwall is one of the interactive digital learning platforms that supports this approach by providing various educational games that can stimulate students' interest and participation during classroom activities. Previous studies have demonstrated that Wordwall effectively improves students' motivation, vocabulary mastery, classroom engagement, and language learning achievement (Russhaimah et al., 2024; Rubykania et al., 2025; Zakaria & Zakaria, 2025). Furthermore, Nadila and Munir (2025) and Fatimatuzzahro and Putri (2026) reported that the use of Wordwall created positive learning experiences and contributed to students' writing performance.

In descriptive writing, students often experience difficulties during the pre-writing stage because they struggle to generate ideas and recall appropriate vocabulary. Wordwall supports this cognitive process by providing interactive game activities that activate students' prior knowledge, enrich vocabulary, and stimulate idea generation before they begin writing. Through activities such as quizzes, matching exercises, and word association tasks, students are encouraged to organize relevant information that later serves as the foundation for constructing descriptive sentences and coherent paragraphs. Therefore, Wordwall functions not only as a motivational tool but also as a cognitive scaffold that facilitates the transition from idea generation to structured descriptive writing.

Although previous studies have reported the positive impact of Wordwall on English language learning, most of them focused on vocabulary mastery, students'

motivation, learning perceptions, or writing activities at the senior high school level. Empirical studies investigating the influence of Wordwall as game-based media on junior high school students' writing skills in descriptive text through a quasi-experimental design remain limited. This gap highlights the need for further investigation to provide stronger empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of Wordwall in improving students' descriptive writing skills in junior high school contexts.

In addition, this study contributes to the limited body of research conducted in Islamic junior high schools, where the implementation of technology-supported game-based learning in English writing instruction has received relatively little empirical attention. Examining the effectiveness of Wordwall in this educational context provides evidence that may support English language teaching practices in Islamic secondary schools with similar learning characteristics.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of Wordwall as game-based media on students' writing skills in descriptive text at the seventh grade of SMP Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari. The findings of this study are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of Wordwall in improving students' writing skills and to contribute to the implementation of game-based learning in English language teaching. In addition, this study is expected to serve as a practical reference for English teachers in selecting interactive learning media to enhance students' writing achievement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Study

Several previous studies have investigated the use of Wordwall and other game-based learning media in English language teaching. Russhaimah et al. (2024) found that the use of Wordwall improved students' learning outcomes and learning motivation. Similarly, Rubykania et al. (2025) reported that integrating Wordwall into English instruction enhanced students' vocabulary mastery and learning motivation. Furthermore, Zakaria and Zakaria (2025) concluded in their systematic literature review that digital game-based learning positively influences students' motivation, engagement, and language learning performance.

Research focusing on writing skills also demonstrates the potential of Wordwall in English language learning. Nadila and Munir (2025) employed a qualitative approach to explore senior high school students' experiences and perceptions of using Wordwall in writing descriptive texts. Their findings showed that students perceived Wordwall as an enjoyable learning medium that helped them generate ideas and increased their confidence during the writing process. Likewise, Fatimatuzzahro and Putri (2026) conducted a quasi-experimental study and found that Wordwall significantly improved junior high school students' writing skills compared with conventional teaching methods.

Studies investigating students' writing difficulties provide additional justification for implementing interactive learning media. Ismayanti and Kholiq (2020), Kristiana et al. (2021), Nurfidoh and Kareviati (2021), Daulay et al. (2023), and Hafizah et al. (2024) consistently reported that students encountered difficulties in developing ideas, organizing content, applying grammatical rules, and selecting appropriate vocabulary when writing descriptive texts. These findings indicate that writing instruction requires learning strategies and instructional media that actively engage students and facilitate the writing process.

Although previous studies have confirmed the positive contribution of Wordwall to language learning, most research has focused on vocabulary mastery, students' motivation, perceptions, or writing activities at different educational levels. Limited studies have specifically examined the effectiveness of Wordwall as game-based media in improving descriptive writing skills among seventh-grade junior high school students through a quasi-experimental design. Therefore, the present study seeks to provide empirical evidence addressing this gap while extending previous findings in the context of English writing instruction.

The Theory of the Variable

Writing is one of the productive language skills that enables learners to communicate ideas, experiences, and information through written language. According to Harmer (2004), writing requires students to organize ideas systematically while applying appropriate grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation. Similarly, Hyland (2003) explains that writing is a complex cognitive process involving planning, drafting, revising, editing, and producing a final written product. In English language teaching, writing not only functions as a means of communication but also develops students' critical thinking and language proficiency.

Descriptive text is one of the text genres taught in junior high schools based on the English curriculum. Anderson and Anderson (1997) define descriptive text as a type of text intended to describe a particular person, place, animal, or object by presenting its characteristics in a clear and organized manner. Effective descriptive writing requires students to generate relevant ideas, organize information coherently, and apply appropriate language features to produce meaningful descriptions.

Game-Based Learning (GBL) refers to an instructional approach that integrates educational games into learning activities to achieve specific learning objectives. Kapp (2012) states that game-based learning combines instructional content with game elements to increase learners' motivation, engagement, and participation throughout the learning process. By creating enjoyable learning experiences, game-based learning encourages students to become more active and confident in achieving instructional goals.

Wordwall is an interactive digital learning platform that supports the implementation of Game-Based Learning (GBL) in classroom instruction. It provides various educational game templates, such as Quiz, Match-Up, and Anagram, that enable teachers to design interactive learning activities aligned with instructional objectives. Previous studies have demonstrated that Wordwall enhances students' learning motivation, engagement, vocabulary mastery, and overall learning performance (Russhaimah et al., 2024; Rubykania et al., 2025; Zakaria & Zakaria, 2025). In the present study, Wordwall was implemented during the pre-writing stage to facilitate brainstorming and vocabulary activation before students began drafting their descriptive texts. These interactive activities helped students generate relevant ideas, recall appropriate vocabulary, and organize information systematically. Consequently, Wordwall supported the development of students' writing performance across Brown's (2004) four analytical writing aspects, namely content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics, by providing structured learning experiences before the writing process.

Based on the theories and previous studies discussed above, this study assumes that integrating Wordwall as game-based media into writing instruction can facilitate students' idea generation, increase classroom engagement, and improve their writing skills in descriptive text. Therefore, this study investigates the influence of Wordwall as game-based media on students' writing skills at the seventh grade of SMP Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari.

METHOD

Design and Samples

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design with a post-test only control group design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research was conducted at SMP Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari during the 2025/2026 academic year. The population consisted of all seventh-grade students. The sample was selected using purposive sampling based on the teacher's recommendation and the similarity of students' academic characteristics. Class VII F, consisting of 32 students, was assigned as the experimental group and received instruction using Wordwall as game-based media, while Class VII D, consisting of 32 students, served as the control group and received conventional instruction. Thus, the total number of participants involved in this study was 64 students. This study employed a post-test only control group design; therefore, no pre-test was administered. Instead, the researcher examined students' previous English achievement records through document review to determine the baseline equivalence of both classes before the treatment. Based on the document review and the English teacher's recommendation, Classes VII D and VII F showed relatively similar academic characteristics and initial English proficiency.

Instrument and Procedure

The instrument used in this study was a writing test administered to measure students' writing skills in descriptive text after the treatment. The test required students to write a descriptive text based on a given topic. Students' writing was assessed using an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Brown (2004), covering four aspects: content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics. The instrument was validated through expert judgment before being administered to the participants. Prior to the main study, the writing test was tried out on 32 students outside the research sample to examine its reliability. The reliability was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha in IBM SPSS Statistics version 26, and the result indicated that the instrument met the reliability requirement for use in this study.

The research procedure consisted of three stages. During the preparation stage, the researcher obtained permission from the school, selected the research sample, prepared the instructional materials, and validated the research instrument. The treatment was conducted in four meetings. The experimental group learned descriptive writing using Wordwall as game-based media during the pre-writing stage. Wordwall was used to introduce relevant vocabulary, stimulate idea generation, and prepare students before drafting descriptive texts. Meanwhile, the control group received conventional instruction through teacher explanation, classroom discussion, and guided writing activities without using Wordwall. After the treatment, both groups completed the post-test, and the collected data were analyzed statistically.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Prior to hypothesis testing, the data were examined through prerequisite analyses, including the normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk test and the homogeneity test using Levene's Test. The research hypothesis was tested using an independent samples *t*-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. Furthermore, Cohen's *d* effect size was calculated to determine the magnitude of the influence of Wordwall as game-based media on students' writing skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that students taught using Wordwall as game-based media achieved higher writing scores than those taught using the conventional teaching method. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Group Statistics

Score	Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Control Class (VIID)	32	66.41	12.131	2.144

	Experimental Class (VIIF)	32	77.03	11.904	2.104

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the post-test scores for both groups. The experimental class obtained a higher mean score (M = 77.03, SD = 11.904) than the control class (M = 66.41, SD = 12.131). This result indicates that students who were taught using Wordwall as game-based media demonstrated better writing performance than those who learned through the conventional teaching method. The difference in the mean scores suggests that the use of Wordwall contributed positively to students' descriptive writing skills.

Table 2. Test of Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk		
Class	**Statistic**	**df**	**Sig.**
Control Class (VII D)	.965	32	.369
Experimental Class (VII F)	.942	32	.086

Table 2 presents the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test. The significance values for the control class (0.369) and the experimental class (0.086) were higher than 0.05. Therefore, the post-test scores of both groups were normally distributed. Since the normality assumption was fulfilled, the data were considered appropriate for further analysis using a parametric statistical test.

Table 3. Test of Homogeneity

		Levene Statistic	**df1**	**df2**	**Sig.**
Result	Based on Mean	3.666	1	62	.060
	Based on Median	3.715	1	62	.059
	Based on Median and with Adjusted df	3.715	1	53.310	.059
	Based on Trimmed Mean	3.805	1	62	.056

Table 3 shows the result of Levene's Test of Homogeneity. The significance value was 0.060, which exceeded the significance level of 0.05. This finding indicates that the variances of the experimental and control groups were homogeneous. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity was satisfied, allowing the independent samples *t*-test to be conducted.

Table 4. Independent Samples t-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean Difference**	**Std. Error Difference**	**Lower**	**Upper**
Score	Equal Variances Assumed	.016	.901	-3.536	62	< .001	-10.625	3.004	-16.631	-4.619
	Equal Variances Not Assumed			-3.536	61.978	< .001	-10.625	3.004	-16.631	-4.619

Table 4 presents the result of the independent samples t-test. The analysis revealed a significance value of $p < 0.001$, which was lower than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. These findings indicate that the use of Wordwall as game-based media had a statistically significant effect on students' writing skills in descriptive text. Furthermore, the effect size analysis yielded a Cohen's d value of approximately 0.88, indicating a large treatment effect. This finding suggests that the use of Wordwall not only produced a statistically significant difference but also had a substantial practical impact on students' descriptive writing skills.

Table 5. Mean Scores of Each Writing Aspect

Writing Aspect	Experimental Class	Control Class
Organization	4.16	3.38
Content	3.84	3.34
Vocabulary	3.84	3.34
Mechanics	3.56	3.25

Table 5 presents the mean scores for each writing aspect assessed using Brown's (2004) analytic scoring rubric. The experimental class obtained higher mean scores than the control class across all four aspects: organization, content, vocabulary, and

mechanics. The largest difference was found in the organization aspect, indicating that the use of Wordwall during the pre-writing stage helped students organize their ideas more effectively before developing descriptive texts. Improvements in content, vocabulary, and mechanics also suggest that Wordwall supported students in generating relevant ideas, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and producing more accurate written texts.

Examples of Students' Writing

To complement the quantitative findings, excerpts from the students' post-test writing are presented below. The excerpts are reproduced exactly as written by the students without any corrections.

Excerpt 1. Experimental Class (Score = 95)

> My favorite teacher is my PAI teacher. Her name is mrs. Fitrih. She is beautiful and friendly to all students. She always explains the lesson clearly in the classroom. She is kind patient and helpful to students. I like her because she helps students understand the lesson easily. Sometimes she gives advice to students to study hard she also reminds students to be polite.

Excerpt 2. Control Class (Score = 90)

> My favorite teacher is my English teacher. Her name is Mrs. Dwi. she is kind and friendly to students. She explains the lesson clearly in the classroom. I like her because she helps students understand English lessons she also gives motivation to students. She makes the class fun and comfortable.

The excerpts illustrate the differences in students' descriptive writing performance between the experimental and control classes. The excerpt from the experimental class presents more detailed supporting ideas and better-developed descriptions than the excerpt from the control class. Although both excerpts still contain several grammatical and mechanical errors, **the excerpt from the experimental class** demonstrates better overall writing quality. These observations support the quantitative results, which showed that students taught using Wordwall achieved significantly higher writing scores than those taught using the conventional teaching method.

The findings of this study revealed that the use of Wordwall as game-based media significantly improved students' writing skills in descriptive text. Students in the experimental class achieved a higher mean score than those in the control class, and the independent samples *t*-test confirmed a statistically significant difference between the two groups. These findings indicate that integrating Wordwall into the writing classroom can positively influence students' writing achievement by providing interactive and engaging learning activities.

The results support the theory of Game-Based Learning proposed by Kapp (2012), which states that educational games increase students' motivation, engagement, and active participation during the learning process. Through interactive quizzes and game-based activities, Wordwall encouraged students to participate more actively in learning and helped them organize ideas before writing descriptive texts. This learning environment made students more confident in expressing their ideas and completing writing tasks effectively. The findings are also consistent with Harmer (2004), who argues that writing is a process that requires continuous practice and meaningful learning experiences. In this study, Wordwall provided students with opportunities to strengthen their vocabulary and understanding of descriptive text characteristics before completing the writing task. As a result, students were able to produce better-organized descriptive texts with more appropriate vocabulary and fewer writing errors.

Furthermore, the present study supports previous findings reported by Nadila and Munir (2025), who found that students had positive experiences and perceptions when using Wordwall in descriptive writing activities. Similarly, Fatimatuzzahro and Putri (2026) reported that Wordwall effectively improved students' writing skills. These findings are also consistent with Rubykania et al. (2025), who reported that Wordwall enhanced students' vocabulary mastery and learning motivation, and Russhaimah et al. (2024), who found that Wordwall improved students' learning outcomes and motivation. These consistent findings strengthen the evidence that Wordwall is an effective digital game-based learning medium for English language instruction.

The improvement in students' writing performance may also be explained by the interactive features provided by Wordwall. During the treatment, the Quiz template was implemented during the pre-writing stage to review descriptive vocabulary, activate students' background knowledge, and stimulate idea generation before drafting. Through these activities, students practiced identifying appropriate nouns and adjectives related to the writing topic, which helped them organize ideas and construct descriptive sentences more effectively. The interactive nature of the Quiz template also encouraged active participation and created a more enjoyable learning environment, contributing to better writing performance.

Despite its advantages, several practical challenges were encountered during the implementation of Wordwall. Because the activities were conducted using a classroom projector, students had to participate collectively rather than individually. In addition, some students initially focused more on completing the game than on the learning objectives. Therefore, the teacher provided clear instructions and classroom guidance to ensure that the game activities remained focused on vocabulary learning and preparation for writing. Although this study demonstrated the effectiveness of Wordwall as game-based media, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study involved only seventh-grade students from one junior high school and focused exclusively on descriptive writing

skills. In addition, students' writing performance was assessed only until the editing stage of the writing process, while the publishing stage was not implemented because of limited instructional time. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples, investigate other English language skills, and implement the complete writing process, including the publishing stage, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of Wordwall in English language learning.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the use of Wordwall as game-based media has a significant positive effect on students' writing skills in descriptive text. Students who were taught using Wordwall achieved higher post-test scores than those who received conventional instruction, indicating that integrating game-based learning into English writing lessons effectively improves students' writing achievement. The findings also demonstrate that Wordwall can support students in generating ideas, strengthening vocabulary, and organizing descriptive texts during the pre-writing stage. The findings of this study provide practical implications for English teachers, particularly those teaching descriptive writing at the junior high school level. Teachers are encouraged to design Wordwall activities that focus on descriptive text features, such as identifying descriptive vocabulary, matching nouns with appropriate adjectives, arranging descriptive sentences, and reviewing text organization before students begin writing. Integrating these activities into the pre-writing stage can help students develop ideas and prepare for writing tasks more effectively. Despite these positive findings, this study was limited to seventh-grade students at one junior high school and focused only on descriptive writing. Furthermore, the writing instruction was implemented only up to the editing stage because of limited instructional time. Therefore, future studies are recommended to involve larger and more diverse participants, investigate other English language skills, and implement the complete writing process, including the publishing stage, to obtain more comprehensive findings.

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