
The Effectiveness of Using Let's Read Application As a Media to Improve Student English Vocabulary In Junior High School

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Abstract

This research was aimed at examining empirically the effectiveness of using the Let's Read application to improve student vocabulary skills at Nurul Haq Islamic Junior High School, mainly for students in the seventh grade. The purpose of this application is to capitalize on teachers' ability to use engaging media to help students learn English. The study used two paired sample tests with samples divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. Quota sampling was used to collect data from two seventh-grade classes. The statistical method used a non-parametric statistic with the Wilcoxon test and Mann-Whitney U test. The findings of this study revealed that using the Let's Read application had a positive impact on student English vocabulary improvement. The material story used in this application was tailored to the basic English vocabulary competence of seventh-grade students with low English levels.

Keywords: *Teaching Media, English Vocabulary, Let's Read application.*

INTRODUCTION

Numerous applications and instruments demonstrate the fast development of technology (Brake, 2021). These programs were designed to enhance personal interests and abilities. Brake further suggested that new technologies enable an

institution's human resources to function more effectively and may give students better educational access and new learning channels. There are a variety of beneficial programs available for everyone, such as an application to learn English.

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are four key parts of the English language (Amal & Hijazi, 2018), and vocabulary plays a role in all four abilities (Richards, 2015). English will always be required in education for pupils to develop their abilities. Similarly, a person cannot practice the other abilities of English without a large vocabulary. The government recently adopted legislation prohibiting the teaching of English in primary schools, which went into effect for the 2013-2014 school year. It will be implemented progressively until 2016/17 (Maili, 2018), at which time certain local schools, particularly in the Praya region, will begin to implement this legislation. Therefore, English is a required subject starting in junior high school and continuing through college. Students in this era, which consists of seven grades of junior high school, were seldom exposed to English for a prolonged length of time in elementary school; as a consequence, they study English for the first time in junior high school.

In this research, it was shown that participants began studying English in junior high school. During the course of the study, the researcher also discovered that the instructor seldom used additional instructional resources to aid in the learning process. The

instructor continues to employ the "teacher center" technique, which entails educating only by providing an explanation and putting context on the board. According to Kasihani and Suyanto, there are six benefits to using media learning tools, including helping to simplify and then complete the language learning process; reducing the use of the mother tongue; arousing both student motivation and attraction; explaining a new concept to students until they accept it, then avoiding misinterpretation; adjusting perception; having multiple meanings; and creating both an interesting and interactive learning experience. Media is a vital tool for avoiding monotonous learning conditions. The good news is that students in the research program were aware of and conversant with technology; one of the basic devices they used was a cell phone.

A cell phone is hardly a novelty for students. Lier thinks that technology may be useful to education and that it should be utilized as a tool to aid instructors in producing interesting lessons (Lier, 2003). (Lier, 2003). It may also be used for remote or in-class negotiations. Ironically, the cell phone as technology is infrequently employed by instructors to support their study activities. Balke stated that new technologies may help

increase student access to education. Technology may be the instrument that helps enhance student interest in the English language. The instructor starts to use familiar technology as a teaching tool, such as by using an application on a mobile phone with an internet connection. The instructor should choose an engaging learning technology to engage pupils in the learning process. As a consequence, pupils may acquire the content simpler, which will also aid a student increase interest (Unsworth & Mills, 2020). (Unsworth & Mills, 2020), by mixing technology into conventional learning methods, students will find it simpler and more entertaining to learn their target language. On the mobile phone via the internet, the teacher may discover numerous programs that meet their teaching plans, such as an application that consists of graphics and a basic application, which is the Let's Read application.

Let's Read was developed by the Asia Books Foundation and gained notoriety during the COVID-19 outbreak as an application designed to improve children's reading. This application's primary objective is to stimulate children's interest in reading by providing them with diverse illustrations of picture books, a variety of colors, and basic phrases below the pages. This program also

delivered the narrative in a number of languages, including English and Javanese, Tagalog, Filipino, Malay, Indonesian, Balinese, and Sundanese, among others. The user may choose the topic they want to read about, including superheroes, critical thinking, science, adventure, animals, problem-solving, non-fiction, nature, mighty girls, health, comedy, folktales, community, family, and friendship, music, and art. In addition, they may read this book in print or online. Even though some tales may not have a single phrase on each page, these stories often provide the background for children to develop both creative and critical thinking.

The method of learning English with this program includes reading a story. This application advises that students use technology to enhance their English proficiency. Students who are used to seeing English in a variety of contexts will develop a deeper understanding of the language and a bigger vocabulary. Richards (2015) believes that any kind of reading is a good source of incidental vocabulary acquisition since it may include acquiring terms from context and that graded readers are an effective method for delivering spaced repetition of core vocabulary. Consequently, the researcher presents this scenario to determine "How

successful is the Let's Read application in enhancing pupils' vocabulary skills?" With the idea that the use of technological tools as a medium may have a good effect on young learners, students might seek out more apps to assist them in learning English.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

The evaluation of technology was followed by the creation of many application features with the main aim of increasing people's interest, aptitude, and skills, mainly for students. Conventionally, the teacher must choose other tools or devices to assist their teaching activities and help students learn their target language. One of the rules is to find something that students frequently use and are familiar with, such as a mobile phone.

The use of students' interests helps students avoid boring situations. Nevertheless, teachers must align the teaching procedures with an interesting learning process and combine them with other strategies. It was effective for students with a basic understanding of the English language. The use of interesting applications had an impact on their competence, such as vocabulary improvement. Let's Read is also available, with a pictorial story and a simple sentence in English beneath each page. It

aided them in making learning more enjoyable and accessible.

Teaching Vocabulary

The term "vocabulary" may apply to all words in a language as well as phrases or terms used in specialized contexts, such as accents, registers, and terminology (Lelawati et al., 2018). Most linguistic studies refer to vocabulary as a collection of features or characteristics; each word is a mix of its meaning, register, association, collocation, structural behavior, written text (spelling), spoken form (pronunciation), and frequency (Raskova Octaberlina et al., 2020). Because of this, vocabulary became an essential element of English language study for students. However, when the lesson is presented traditionally, the student often becomes bored, so the researcher advises using an application to teach English vocabulary.

Method of Teaching Vocabulary

Vocabulary Games

Playing a game is one approach for enhancing students' desire to learn. Utilizing a mix of deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, keywords, elaboration, transfer, and inference, this study prioritized a cognitive method. The implementation of the teaching approach in this study was centered on the experimental

group, in which the games used were a combination of hot seat and miming games, and students were split into five groups of three members each. The researcher prepares 10 total numbers using basic terminology for the hot seat games. These lines were taken from the application's narrative under the heading "My body and occupation."

Guessing Method

This research focused on using the pictorial story based on this application as the material center. The material was selected at one to two levels. The researcher matches this level with the backgrounds of the students who will be participating in this research. Students have beginners' level dominance (a lower basic level) in English, and they seldom practice their language skills. The theme of this study was family and science. This application applied the guessing word strategy, where students were trying to guess the meaning of those words through the picture shown. To make the treatment more effective, the researcher suggests students use the applications to learn at home after the treatment.

Let's Read Application

This application was used offline and online. The first step is for the participant to create an account on their own using the

number phone or email provided by the researcher, and then the participant double-checks their profile. After the participants had an account, they began to set up the levels, which the researcher guided them to select at the first level with themes from sciences, adventures, and family and friends. Despite the fact that this application read the day's target tools, the researcher knew how students spent their time when they opened this application. Students also used the "Listen and Learn" feature to correct participant pronunciation. The accent used in this feature is standard English dominance, and this feature aims to give an education about other languages, both international and national, as well as many local languages, therefore the researcher was focused on using the English language.

The researcher used the "Listen and Learn" feature from J. Richard's learning procedures:

- While listening or reading, the learner notices a word that was read.
- The student highlights a word while writing it in their book.
- The students negotiate the meaning of a word with each other or with the teacher.

- The teacher explains a word for the learners by giving a definition, by writing the new vocabulary on the board, and by having the students mention and explain the word that they found and discuss it.

Using Dictionary

Both the experimental and control groups of students used dictionaries to aid their learning activities in class. Students had to look up the definitions of the words and then discuss them. Therefore, in the experimental group, the pronunciation of the word was recorded on the application, and in the control group, the researcher guided students to pronounce any words. Each group has one dictionary. The application also has a listening tool that consists of some stories. The "Listen and Learn" features are the name of the tool. This feature was only used in the experimental group when students used the tool to listen to the correct pronunciation after learning the meaning of the word. The "listen" feature was shown like a storyteller.

Group Work

The materials used in this research were taken from the Let's Read application; they are "my body and occupation." Harmer argued that personal relationships are usually less problematic, and there is also a greater

chance of different opinions and varied contributions. They can also help others; it is much easier for students to share emotions such as happiness or amusement. The story was chosen from the "Listening and Learning" feature on the application by using their phones. The group work was divided into five groups, each with three members, making the class more intense and controlled.

Progress and Development

In the first phase, the researcher determined the level vocabulary of students, which is divided into three levels: low, middle, and high. The researcher also asks the teacher to know more about the students' level, and as a result, the teacher argues that students in the seven grades have lower English levels than those on the list of vocabulary questions. The researcher was preparing 30 lists of vocabulary questions that consisted of basic English language subjects. They translated the meaning of the word into the Indonesian and English languages. Students with a low level were determined when they got under 10 answers; the middle level determined when a student could reach 20 questions; and the high level was when the student could answer 30 questions.

Moreover, the target vocabulary improvement is so that the students can move

on to the next level; students with low levels become middle levels. It means they can answer a maximum of 20 lists of vocabulary questions. Students with the middle level changed into high levels if they could answer more than 30 questions; it was the same as a high-level answer, which is more than 30 lists of questions. The result of the students' answer will be shown in the fourth chapter.

Every question has four score values. Students with incorrect spelling, but the researcher reminded them not to guess and not to answer the question when they were unsure. Several of these questions consist of 15 words, which the student tries to translate using the rubric below.

The Rubric of Teaching Vocabulary (McCormick et al., 2021)

		word into English	
2	Writing	Students write the wrong spelling in English but have the right meaning	3
		Students missing one to three compliments of a word such as to be and auxiliary, but has the right meaning	4

Score Descriptions:

$10 \leq 35$	=	Low Levels
$35 \leq 70$	=	Middle Levels
> 70	=	High Levels

Hypothesis

This research aims to prove the effectiveness of using the Let's Read application as a medium to improve vocabulary skills in the seventh grade at Nurul Haq Islamic Junior High School. This research focused on enriching student vocabulary using this application. The hypothesis for this study was to determine the

No.	Vocabulary Aspect Evaluation	Indicator	Score
1	Translation	Students cannot translate the sentence or word into English	1
		Students can translate the sentence or	2

impact of this application on student vocabulary improvement.

$$H_0 = \mu_1 = \mu_2$$

$$H_a = \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$$

Null Hypothesis (H₀)

This hypothesis appears when the result of the data shows there was no difference in results between the control group, who accepted the conventional teaching method, and the experimental group, who applied vocabulary teaching using the Let's Read application in the seventh grade at Nurul Haq Islamic Junior High School.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_a)

This hypothesis appears when the result of the data shows there was a different result between the control group, who will accept the conventional teaching method, and the experimental group, who will apply vocabulary teaching by using the Let's Read application to seventh grade at an Islamic junior high school. The result of the hypothesis will be shown in the fourth chapter.

The researcher seeks to find some studies' explanations that have the same topic as this research. Some studies compare the collaboration of technology as a learning tool, particularly practicing the pictorial story, and the Let's Read Application of vocabulary skills

as the foundation for improving other English skills.

(Bashori et al., 2021) argued that there was a correlation between vocabulary capabilities and student confidence to speak the English language. The use of technology will help students learn the English language, mainly to determine their vocabulary knowledge. By the same token, their research focuses on Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR)-based websites to determine if the student can enjoy their language learning. Students' effectiveness and cognitive skills improve as a result of their use of these websites. The participants in this study were students from nine vocational high school classes, for a total of 309 participants. The researcher accepts the result of the impact of using technology as a medium to help student learning activities; the habit of students using a mobile phone does not complicate receiving this research experiment; the result shows students can practice speaking the target language with ease, and students can enjoy their learning activities.

The use of technology in education has a positive impact (Klimova, 2021). Klimova has shown in his research the different impacts of using mobile applications to enrich student vocabulary at the university level. The

application of technology was successful in enriching English vocabulary with unique characteristics such as portability, multimodality, interactivity, and ability. Klimova also argues that there is a differentiation between the usage of technology and traditional teaching that focuses on input-interaction-feedback, while the technology used to assist in using the technology also has its own needs.

When technology collaborates with an appealing application, the attraction is the same (Raskova Octaberlina et al., 2020). Raskova Octabelarina and friends viewed his study on how to use picture cards as a medium to improve English vocabulary for elementary school-age children in Thailand. The material was sourced from the school textbook, which consists of a pictorial story. The participants in this study were in the third grade in elementary school, In Thailand, English is used more as a foreign language than as a second language. However, English in that school was required as an elective school subject. This study focused on the concept of demonstrating the importance of vocabulary in the context of textbooks. The researcher divided the students into three groups. All groups are divided into three levels: low, middle, and high. The method

used in this study is qualitative. The research was focused on the quality of the theory development. The results of this research were presented in the form of a narrative statement rather than a numerical one. Then for the data analysis, the researcher used compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding.

Maruti and her other friends talked about teaching other local languages in Indonesia using the Let's Read application based on their research under the title "Belajar Bahasa Jawa" as their native language using the Let's Read application for elementary school children. The descriptive-inductive method was applied in this research, then they used three study approaches in order. This research aims to prove that the Let's Read application was useful to improve the "Bahasa Jawa" language ability (Maruti et al., 2021).

All the researchers utilized technology as a tool for learning languages, especially for improving students' vocabulary skills. The result of this research proves that technology is an effective way to help students with learning activities. The usage of technology with ease, as well as the attractive designs, items, and availability of around 200 applications, The improvement of vocabulary helps students improve their four skills in

English, namely writing, speaking, and listening (Klimova, 2021). All researchers above mentioned their research to determine the four aspects of language, such as reading and writing. Then this research focused on how to improve student vocabulary skills using the Let's Read application in their studies. This application consisted of a colorful design and unique features.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study was quantitative in nature. The type of experimental design used in this research is a quasi-experimental design. This method is not a true experiment, in which an external factor might affect the dependent variable (Sugiyono, 2019). The type of experimental design used in this research is the quasi-experimental design with the equivalent control group design, in which the experiment and control group do not have a randomly generated background. The experimental group received treatment, while the control group did not, and the treatment results will be compared between the two groups (Sugiyono, 2019).

The population of this research consists of all the seventh-grade students at Nurul Haq Junior High School in Central Lombok, Praya Regency. This research focused on the seventh grade, especially both

VII A and VII B classes, which were divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. The total number of seventh grade students in this research is 71. The sample used in this research is 15 students for each group, both the experimental group and the control group. This research used the quota sampling technique. The experimental group consists of students who accept the suitable criteria for this research using a technology such as a mobile phone. The control group for the comparison is made up of students who were chosen at random. The form was used to decide the total number of samples for this research using the "Yamane method."

The IBM SPSS 16 version was used for data validity and reliability. In collecting the data, this research used observation and interviews. This research used descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (statistical probability) between parametric and non-parametric statistics to analyze the data results, using IBM SPSS 16 as the system to account for the data. The researcher used nonparametric tests, and the non-parametric analysis used the Wilcoxon and Mann-Whitney U tests. The significance levels were set at 5% with a 0.05 distribution. The distribution was the same with the parametric

tests, such as the paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test. The method compared both the larger and smaller variants according to these rules; the test also uses IBM SPSS 16 versions. Joko Widiyanto argued that if the significance values (sig.) are greater than 0,05, the variance from two or more groups in the population is not normal. But if the significance values (sig.) are less than 0,05, then the variances are normal. The entire set of data has been examined. Then this research used interactive analysis from Miles and Huberman, which helped us to understand what had happened and to take some further analysis or action on that understanding (Ramdhani, Yuliasri, et al., 2019).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Effectiveness of Let's Read Application

The researcher described the result of the data analysis, then showed the difference between the scores of these samples before and after the treatment (especially for the experimental group). The researcher has shown the universal background of the participant in this research. Based on the method of collecting data, the researcher interviewed the English teacher in the seventh

grade at Nurul Haq Islamic Junior High School.

The teacher explained some arguments, including that, firstly, almost all the students have private mobile phones, but they cannot bring them into their classes for formal studying (classroom activities) because it is not compatible with the rules of the school. They usually played or brought theirs outside of formal class, such as during organization or course times in the afternoon, after formal school hours; second, almost all students have the same background, which is that they never took an English course for a long time, even in elementary school. Thirdly, they have a lower basic English vocabulary. Fourth, not all students are interested in taking English classes, so they were unable to practice their language.

In the pre-test, which was the observation test, the researcher used the basic vocabulary as the material applied in the test. The material was sourced from the Let's Read application. The researcher applied two times for the question, and then the last researcher had 17 valid questions consisting of the basic vocabulary. Students at this school have a lower level of proficiency in Basic English. The students in both the control and the experiment classes received the same list of

questions in the pre-test to determine their natural competence.

Discussion

The result of the student score in the pretest for both the experimental group and control group is 53,200 and 56,400. The experimental group's score increased to 76,466.67 after receiving the treatment (using the Let's Read application as a media to improve their English vocabulary skill), whereas the control group's score increased to 67,4000 after receiving the conventional teaching (without using the Let's Read application).

Hypothesis

$$H_a = \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$$

H⁰	:	The null hypothesis was rejected because there were different results between the experimental group that received treatment and the control group that did not receive treatment.
H^a	:	There was a different result between the control group, who accepted the conventional teaching method, and the experimental group, who will

be applying vocabulary teaching using Let's Read Application in their pre-test and post-test in seventh grade at an Islamic junior high school.

Based on the data before, in the Mann-Whitney U test, both the control group and the experimental group had a lower result score (Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)) than the rank of alpha-standardized (α), and the result was distributed between (0,0130,05) and (0,0000,05). The difference between the pre-test and post-test results indicated that the standardized experimental group received English vocabulary material via the Let's Read application. Students in the experimental group accepted new vocabulary by learning to use the Let's Read app, which contains many English-language stories. In the Wilcoxon test, the student who applied to Let's Read Application received an average score of 8,000 and a total rank of 120,00. Based on the result, it was proven that students can use the application to help them improve their vocabulary, and that this is an effective way to help students improve their vocabulary by learning many new vocabulary words via reading a picture book using the English

language with no boredom and accessibility to apply this application whenever.

Based on the data validation with 15 participants, students in both groups—the experimental group and the control group—received 17 questions. The test results show that there is a difference in score between the experimental group and the control group, who did not use the Let's Read application, with an average score ranging from 56 to 67.

There was a significant difference between the results of the experimental and control groups in the test. In the experimental group, the graphic showed that 12 students got the high score, 80 to 85, and two others got 50 and 75 in the post-test. In the pre-test, 8 students scored 50 to 60, 4 scored 60 to 65, 3 scored 40 to 45, and one scored 30. This result indicates that students learned many new vocabulary terms between the pre-test and post-test, and the 00 negative rank indicates that there was no decrease in score from the pre-test to the post-test. The data in the Wilcoxon test also show the positive rank in the experimental group was 8,00; the score shows the enhancement from pre-test to post-test.

In the control group, 1 student got 80 to 85, 7 students got 75 to 80, 3 students got 60 to 65, and 2 students got 45 to 50 scores in

the post-test. Whereas in the pretest, 1 student got 80 to 85, 6 students got 60 to 65, 4 students got 50 to 55, 3 students got 40 to 45, and 1 student got 30 to 35. In the Wilcoxon test, the negative ranks in the control group were 15, which means that they are lowering their score from the pre-test to the post-test, and the positive rank in the control group is 8,75, which shows a change from the pre-test to the post-test.

Learning Outcomes

Student Activities

There were different rules between the experimental group and the control group. Students are more active and enjoy the classroom activities in the experimental classroom. Material in the application is delivered by used games, too. In the game activities, students use their gestures or mimicry to try to guess the meaning of the word that the speaker mentions or interprets. Students must also listen to the audio version of the story and attempt to pronounce the words they hear.

Despite using the traditional method, students in the control group received the same material and discussed it, such as writing down the vocabulary, translating the vocabulary, and attempting to make their own sentences. Each meeting consumed 90

minutes, and then the material was shown once in each group. The first meeting was explained by stating that the control group used the traditional method and the experimental group used the Let's Read application as a study medium.

Students Outcomes

Experimental group

This group accepted the treatment and used the Let's Read application. According to the data, there were differences in scores between the pre-test and the post-test. In the pre-test, 32 students achieved the minimum score, with the average score being 53. Otherwise, the minimum score at the post-test was 50,00, with the average score of 79,000. Thus, that showed the different score between the two tests; they had changed better, but the difference was not significant. The result of the final score is affected by the points answered by students. The researcher interviewed four students after the post-test. The students who were interviewed had a minimum lower score and a higher score after the posttest. The researcher asked about how often they used the application to improve their vocabulary at home. The following is the answer to the question (translated from the researcher's interview; the original interviews were conducted in the native language):

NA	:	<i>"After I learned about this application, I usually try to read other books when I have data connected. Even I have downloaded some books to read them offline because I do not always have an internet connection. Usually, I always re-read the story I tried to learn in school (the treatment) and try to make the same sentence."</i>
FA	:	<i>"I opened this application in my spare time in the afternoon, and before I go to sleep, I try to read other books except the story that I learned at school (the treatment), and I also try to use the Learn and Listen feature, then try to pronounce it if I can. Then I try to write it down and find the meaning using the dictionary or by asking her father (her father is a teacher of English)."</i>
HR	:	<i>"I don't like studying English anymore. But after I knew about this application and opened it sometimes, I try to read it even though I do not know the meaning. I read one to two pages of every story that makes me interested. I love those stories; sometimes I change the language setting to Indonesian and then read the story."</i>
NH	:	<i>"I usually open this application only to read without knowing the meaning; I only write the sentence that makes me wonder about"</i>

the meaning. But, when I opened this application, I only read the story that I learned before (at the treatment). It is so much fun when I try to listen to the audio too; the language is seldom what I hear."

Control group

The control group accepted the conventional method with the same material as the experimental group; the material shown in writing and explaining this material reveals many variances in this group. Based on the observation of the classroom activities, the researcher used the teacher-centered method. The student had done other activities such as talking with others, and they were sleepy (unmotivated). Based on the data, two students got lower scores. The result of the control pretest and the experimental group has a score range. The control group got a higher score than the experimental group.

Based on the accumulated descriptive statistics tables, the control group received a minimum score of 30,00 in the pre-test; otherwise, they received a minimum score of 43,000 in the post-test, with an average of 56,400 to 67,400.

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