
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Mastering English Vocabulary through Toontastics Application

Syamsiarna Nappu¹ ✉ Nur Qalby² and Maemuna Muhayyang³

^{1,2}English Education Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Makassar Indonesia

³English Education Department, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Syamsiarna Nappu, **E-mail:** syamsiarna.nappu@unismuh.ac.id

| ABSTRACT

Teaching English in this sophisticated era requires teachers' effort and creativity to attract students' attention and motivation to learn. This pre-experimental study aims to determine the impact of the Toontastics Application on students' English vocabulary mastery and to know student attitudes toward the use of the Toontastics. Pre-post tests are employed to get data about the effect of the application on students' English vocabulary mastery. At the same time, a questionnaire is distributed to get data about student's attitudes toward using the application. Twenty-eight students were purposively chosen as the sample and then treated to learn English vocabulary using Toontastics. According to the study, The Toontastics Application impacts student's mastery of English vocabulary. The fact that their pre-test score of 51.2 changed to 62.9 on their post-test serves as evidence. This finding is strengthened by the survey results, which show that the students' responses fell into the "strongly interested." Their intense interest may influence students' increased English vocabulary proficiency in the Toontastics Application. In other words, the Toontastics Application affects students' attitudes and ability to grasp English vocabulary.

| KEYWORDS

English vocabulary mastery, students' attitude, Toontastic application

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Technology use in teaching and learning, as well as all other aspects of modern life, is now required and cannot be avoided. Using technology in teaching and learning has grown ingrained (Ullah & Farzana, 2018). In addition to facilitating the learning process, the use of technology by teachers in the classroom inspires and supports student achievement (Phung, 2021; Mohan & Ismail, 2021; and Rojabi et al., 2022). Therefore, a teacher's role as a facilitator of students' learning and teaching should involve creativity and the use of all available technology. The new "*Merdeka Belajar*" policy of The Indonesia Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, Technology, and Higher Education also makes using technology in this scenario relevant.

There is no denying that as the digital era develops, teachers must figure out how to respond to students' learning needs by adjusting to technology. In addition to promoting student growth and academic success, using a new technology in the classroom encourages teachers to take on a more facilitative rather than a central role in the learning process and gives them the chance to give each student more individual attention. According to Rahman et al. (2020), technology allegedly gives teachers the chance to create various contexts and learning environments in the teaching and learning process to match the competency level of their students. Hence, it will tangentially make it simpler for teachers to instruct students in the classroom and to meet their demands. The study by Nappu et al. (2022), which discovered that employing technology in learning English had an impact on students' skills, particularly in writing descriptive paragraphs, serves as evidence for this claim. To effectively support teaching and learning, it is crucial to discover a way to incorporate technologies into a curriculum. Teachers must be able to condition all instructional components because they are leading the implementation of digital learning (Montrieux et al., 2015).

It is essential thing to look into how technology can be used in the classroom to help students acquire and grow their vocabulary, especially while teaching English (Tiara et al., 2021). The previous studies revealed that one of the reasons for the students' poor command of English vocabulary was the teacher's ineffective teaching method, which did not change throughout the teaching and learning process, particularly when it came to vocabulary learning (Sanosi, 2018; Hasram et al., 2021; Ginting & Fithriani; 2021; and Alghameeti; 2022). Since it is well recognized how the learning content is presented to students plays a significant role in how effectively a teacher teaches (Rahmawati et al., 2020; Alakrash et al., 2020; and Tahounehchi, 2021). Therefore, the use of technology, such as the Toontastic application in this instance, is one strategy that teachers can use to inspire students to learn and increase their vocabulary of the English language. Teachers must become adept at utilizing ICT for their instructional requirements when instructing students respectively (He, 2023; Bing, 2022; Hermagustiana & Rusmawaty, 2018).

Furthermore, Makoe & Shandu (2018), Alakrash et al. (2020), Ginting et al. (2021); Banaeian & Gilanlioglu (2021), Nasichah et al. (2022); and Rojabi et al. (2022). are a few prior works that discuss the use of technology in vocabulary instruction. However, none of those studies looked into how Toontastics Application might be used to acquire vocabulary. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate and determine how using Toontastics affected students' English vocabulary mastery as well as student's attitudes towards the use of the application.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Vocabulary Mastery and its Advantages

The foundation of language learning is vocabulary. To communicate our thoughts and ideas, we need language. Words are also necessary to point at things and describe them. For those who learn English as a second or foreign language, vocabulary lackness is a significant barrier. When forced to communicate an idea verbally or in writing, students struggle to find the right words. The development of the students' vocabulary and assistance with understanding word and sentence meaning is a key goal of language instruction (Sari et al., 2019). As a result, teaching vocabulary is one of the most talked-about aspects of teaching English as a foreign language. Teachers would encounter issues during the teaching and learning process. Therefore, they struggle to find a suitable way to instruct students that produces satisfying outcomes (Alqahtani, 2015).

Hence, mastering English vocabulary is crucial since it is a component that enhances English language proficiency. It would be challenging to communicate thoughts to others and to comprehend what others are saying without any sufficient vocabulary. Students should be involved in their own learning by providing ideas and encouraging their peers; thus, mastering vocabulary is a vital and continuing duty for teachers. This is in line with what Nation (2015) stated about how teachers should support students by (1) educating them about different vocabulary, (2) training them in different learning strategies so they are familiar with a variety of learning options, (3) giving students an opportunity to choose what they want to learn and how they want to learn it, and (4) inspiring and giving them opportunities to reflect on and evaluate their learning outcomes.

Nation (2015) further suggested that there are four ways to learn vocabulary: (1) by listening and reading; (2) by focusing on learning what is being taught through sound, vocabulary, grammar, and conversation; (3) by producing language through speaking and writing; and (4) by speeding up in speaking.

Mastering vocabulary involves six skills, according to Ur (2009: 60). It is possible to utilize those six vocabulary items as indicators of vocabulary mastery, namely form (pronunciation and spelling), grammar, collocation, aspects of meaning (denotation, connotation, appropriateness), characteristics of the relationship, and word creation. Those are all markers of vocabulary competence.

There are some advantages of vocabulary mastery; one of them is it will ease the language user to convey and run communication in spoken and written form (Alqahtani, 2015). Therefore, vocabulary mastery plays a crucial role in language teaching and learning.

2.2 Toontastic Application and its Advantages

Toontastic application is an application released in 2017 and made by Google to create an animation video. Users of this application can effortlessly create videos. The application lets the users make and create their imagination. Since it has some futuristic facilities then, it guides the users to complete their story easily by following some steps, namely, starting by choosing a suitable background, choosing the animated characters, then having the voice acting, and at last, giving desired sound effects.

Using the Toontastics application has some advantages. First, it helps students learn. Second, it works with Android, iOS, and tablets, and third, Toontastics may be used as a standalone, enabling offline use. The benefit of employing Toontastics, according to Sam & Hashim (2022), is that students could be designers and directors and have the chance to express their creativity through

this easy medium. Using Toontastic as one of the technological means will facilitate students to learn. Nappu (2014) discovered that technology, particularly computer-assisted language learning (CALL), helped students learn English vocabulary.

The use of this application as a technology used in the teaching and learning process in a classroom will attract and motivate students to learn. Ullah & Farzana (2018) found that in technology-affiliated classes, most students felt comfortable, but they needed time to take a class with the help of technology. Therefore, it needs further investigation, particularly in the effort to gain some English vocabulary.

3. Methodology

This study uses a pre-experimental design to examine how using Toontastic affects students' English vocabulary. With 28 samples, the study was carried out in grade nine of a junior high school in Makassar. Purposive sampling is used to choose the sample, which comprised a diverse group of students in terms of aptitude or competency. Ninety-five percent of the students had never taken an English course.

The independent variable and dependent variable are the two variables used in the study. The Toontastic Application-based teaching strategy is the independent variable. An instructional technique that encourages students to learn English vocabulary is the use of the Toontastic application. In this case, the students used the application to watch movies as learning materials in learning English. Meanwhile, the dependent variables of this study are the students' English vocabulary and student's attitude toward the use of the Toontastic Application in learning English.

A vocabulary test and a questionnaire are employed as instruments to collect data. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is used to analyze data to determine the impact of the Toontastic Application and to determine student attitudes toward the use of the Toontastic Application. Data collection tools utilized in this study are the ones listed below: (1) testing, which included vocabulary tests both before and after the treatment. To learn more about the students' prior knowledge, a pre-test was given before the treatment, and a post-test was administered after the treatment to know about how using the Toontastic application has impacted the students' mastery of English vocabulary. For this test, the students have 45 minutes to complete it. (2) treatment. Following the administration of the pretest, the students underwent six meetings using the Toontastic Application. The Toontastic Application was used to distribute resources to the students throughout each meeting that were focused on the curriculum. These resources include the following: *Expressing certainty*, *Expressing repetition*, *Procedure text*, *Labeling*, and *Expression of Admiration*. By using the Toontastic application, the students watch videos on such topics to learn English. Sometimes, the students completed the assignment in groups; other times, they had to work alone; and still other times, they completed it in pairs and (3) Students were given a questionnaire to see how interested they were in utilizing the Toontastic Application to learn English. The survey made use of the Likert scale. Strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree are the options for statements. The percentage technique is then applied to assess it. The responders were given the questionnaire following the treatment.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Impact of Toontastic Application on Student's English Vocabulary Mastery

In order to reveal the impact of the Toontastic Application on students' English vocabulary mastery, students were then given tests: a pre-test before they got the treatment and a post-test after they were treated with Toontastic application. The results of both tests can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean Score of Students in the Pre-test and Post-test

Tests	Mean Score
Pre-test	51.2
Post-test	62.9

Table 1 shows that the mean score of students on the pre-test as their prior knowledge or before they get the treatment is 51.2, while the mean score of the students on the post-test after having the treatment is 62.9.

To see the students' vocabulary mastery, Figure 1 represents it.

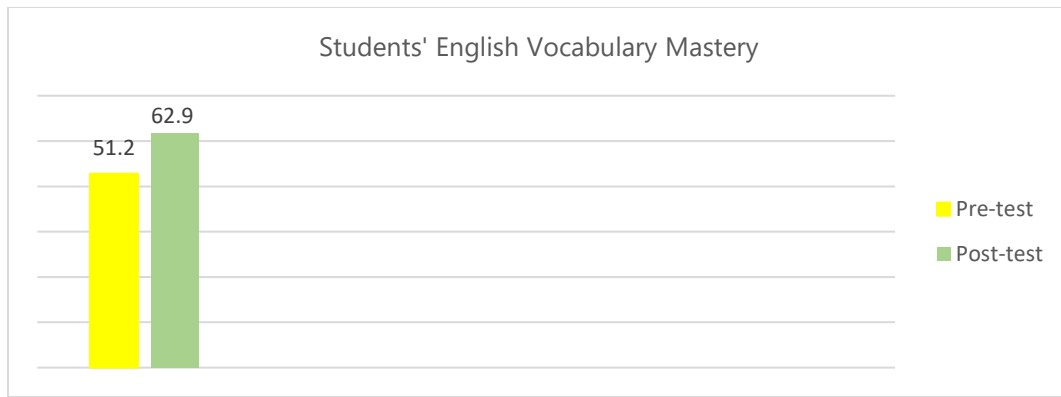


Figure 1. Student’s Vocabulary Mastery

Figure 1 indicates that there is an improvement in the student’s vocabulary mastery. Before having the treatment, their score was only 51.2, while after they had been treated by the Toontastic application for several meetings, their vocabulary mastery became 62.9. It means that there is an improvement.

To see the category and the score classification got by students in their pre-test and post-test it can be clarified in Table 2.

Table 2. Classification of Student’s Pre and Post tests

No.	Classification	Score Range	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
			F	%	F	%
1	Excellent	96-100	0	0	4	14.3
2	Very good	86-95	3	10.7	3	10.7
3	Good	76-85	4	14.3	5	17.8
4	Fairly good	66-75	4	14.3	2	7.2
5	Fair	56-65	4	14.3	1	3.6
6	Poor	36-55	5	17.8	9	32.1
7	Very poor	0-35	8	28.6	4	14.3
Total			28	100	28	100

Table 2 shows a different classification and category of student’s scores in Pre-test and Post-test. In the Pre-test, there are 8 students in a *very poor* category, while in Post-test, it becomes 4; in Pre-test, there are 5 students in a *poor* category, while in Post-test, it becomes 9. There are 4 students in the *fair*, *fairly good* and *good* categories in the Pre-test, and it decreases to 1 in the *fair*, 2 in *fairly good*, and 5 in *good* categories in the Post-test. 3 students get *very good* categories in the Pre-test and Post-test. At last, there is no student in the *excellent* category in the Pre-test, but 4 students in the Post-test get the *excellent* category.

The student’s English vocabulary before having the treatment seems very low. It is seen from their pre-test, which is only 51.2. Students’ test results improved after they learned English for six meetings using the Toontastic application. It is proved that when students learned English using the application, they were enthusiastic about studying and did the assignment since they could learn English by watching the video designed based on their passion. This indicates that the Toontastic application can motivate and interest students to learn (Sam & Hashim, 2022). Further, technology will improve students’ motivation to learn (Erben et al., 2008). It is because the materials presented in the video were prepared and designed carefully based on topics in the syllabus and based on student’s characteristics. Thus, this application allows students to learn by watching videos based on their liking. Additionally, Toontastics application is a user-friendly application that makes it simple for students to access (Sam & Hashim, 2022). Using technology in the teaching and learning process, like the Toontastic application, is excellent and essential, as stated by Lampong (2021). Therefore, the use of technology, in this case using Toontastic application, is good to be used in English teaching and learning process to engage students in learning particularly in learning vocabulary and to attract their attention and interest to learn, as well.

4.2 Students’ Attitude Toward the Use of The Toontastic Application

Students’ attitudes toward the use of Toontastic applications in learning English can be seen in Table 3 as the result of the Likert Scale questionnaire.

Table 3. Students' Attitude toward the Use of Toontastic Application

No	Category	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly uninterested	0 -3.2	0	0
2	Uninterested	3.3–6.5	2	7.2
3	Moderate	6.6–9.8	0	0
4	Interested	9.9 – 13.1	10	35.7
5	Strongly Interested	13.2–16.00	16	57.1
Jumlah			28	100

In Table 3, it can be seen that 7.2 % of the students are in the *uninterested* category, 35.7 % of them are in the *Interested* category, while 57.1% of them are in the *strongly interested* category. This indicates that most of them fall into the strongly interested category in the use of the Toontastic Application in learning English.

After distributing a questionnaire, it was revealed that students were interested in learning by watching videos using the Toontastic Application. Besides, it is also seen in the learning process students focused their attention on the lesson presented in the video. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Sam & Hashim (2022), who found that the majority of students viewed the employment of Toontastic 3D positively, particularly as a tool to improve speaking abilities. Moreover, the use of videos with Toontastic application in learning English really attracts students to learn enthusiastically of the interesting and unique characters presented in the videos. Therefore, their responses to the questionnaire are mostly in the *strongly interested* category. In other words, learning English using the Toontastics application positively impacts students' English, which is proved by their good achievement on an English vocabulary test.

Meanwhile, the hypothesis was tested using t-test statistical analysis where $t(27) = 12.79$, $p < .05$ while the t value is 2.021. It means that the t-test is higher than the t-table. This indicates that the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted while the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. In other words, the Toontastic application impacts the students' English vocabulary mastery.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion drawn after having the findings, first, the Toontastic Application positively impacts students' English vocabulary mastery. It is seen from the different results of the students' Pre and Post-tests, and second, students have a positive attitude toward using the Toontastic Application. Their positive attitude tends to make them enthusiastically learn English.

The study's limitation is the tiny number of junior high school students it covered. A larger sample size will thus be used in future studies or by other researchers using the same application to learn English vocabulary. Additionally, it is advised to use various learning applications for advanced coursework and learn other English language abilities. Such studies will increase our understanding of how to provide content to students utilizing various technologies.

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ORCID iD : 0000-0001-7115-7011

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