



## Using Wordsift as a Tool to Teach Vocabulary in EFL Classrooms

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Suggested citation: Çakır Kayışoğlu, N. (2022). Using Wordsift as a Tool to Teach Vocabulary in EFL Classrooms. *Language, Education, & Technology (LET Journal)*, 2(2), 174-189.

### Article Info

Date submitted: 28.11.2022

Date accepted: 07.02.2023

Date published: 08.02.2023

### Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of one of the special web services, WordSift, which was used as a digital educational tool to teach vocabulary to 25 prep class students studying at a state university in Turkey. The treatment of the study took two weeks, which include one week of teacher-directed vocabulary teaching method without using a technological tool, and one week of technology enhanced vocabulary teaching methodology in which the WordSift was utilized. Two vocabulary quizzes administered in the following week after each method was implemented. After obtaining the grades of the students from the quizzes the results were analyzed qualitatively by comparing the two different approaches in vocabulary teaching and semi- structured interviews were conducted both with the teacher and the students to find out about their thoughts following the two-week period of different vocabulary teaching activities. The data obtained from the comments of the students and the teacher were also analyzed qualitatively. Hopefully, this research will provide English teachers with an understanding of the effects of using different techniques to teach vocabulary and integrating a technological tool to teach vocabulary.

### Research Article

**Keywords:** Technology, vocabulary teaching, WordSift, English, word cloud.

## 1. Introduction

Thanks to the help of mobile devices used in recent years to teach English as a foreign language (EFL), it has been accepted that Web-based tools and some applications are beneficial in educational contexts. In the modern world almost, everything is affected by technological changes. In the field of education, it is impossible to ignore those chances when teaching or learning, especially because the new generation is grown in this era. So, it becomes a must for teachers to rethink about their past implementations and consider the new tendencies of students' learning styles.

The attention in this paper is on teaching and learning vocabulary which is one of the most important building blocks of language. Though, the widespread assumption was that if you take care of grammar, vocabulary will take care of itself and as a result learners were largely left on their own to enhance their vocabulary knowledge which is a big burden on their shoulders (Schmitt, 2020). It can be said that the attention vocabulary deserves has not been given to throughout the years. So, in their minds, having the

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question of “What can we do to help learners learn the vocabulary effectively?”, some researchers in the language learning and teaching field have continuously been thinking about implementing different approaches and tools to enhance their students’ vocabulary by taking the needs of 21st century’s generation into consideration.

Now, we can all accept that according to the realities of modern digital era, we must enable learners to cope with the challenges of communication in the contemporary contexts by putting emphasis on language awareness, student-centred learning and interaction. And here the technology comes to our rescue. It is a fact that we can benefit from the new possibilities by making use of several web tools in terms of language learning. They can also serve a purpose in supporting traditional learning methods which has limited suggestions to help students improve their vocabulary. Previous studies show that technology-enhanced learning gives students opportunity to improve their language learning skills by enabling them to listen to pronunciation, access rich sources of related reading texts and reinforce vocabulary learning through interactive activities (Situmorang, Nugroho, Pramusita, 2020). It can be said that teachers living in this era are lucky enough to have several tools which they can benefit to teach vocabulary to make their students practice words. One of these web-based tools is ‘Wordsift’ which serves as a word cloud generator to support vocabulary learning, review, playing with language and to help learners identify certain vocabulary from the point of its importance in a text. This web tool is a learner and teacher friendly, easy to use and free interactive vocabulary learning website. It also combines several features which can be very beneficial to learn vocabulary in that it gives the learners the opportunity to be able to see related vocabulary and its explanations and highlighted parts in the text, example sentences, related Google images, audios and videos all together prepared by its software. WordSift is a word cloud generator which users make use of it wishing to emphasize the key words of a text. Hakuta & Wiles (2018) state that Wordsift web tool can help learners to learn new vocabulary by providing examples through displaying visual word net and thesaurus dictionary. Bromley (2013) defines how to use word cloud generators to teach vocabulary and help learner gain a general understanding of texts. These kinds of attempts to integrate technological tools into teaching and learning environments are related to making students more aware and interested in their vocabulary development. When it comes to teaching words, teachers often feel that they should try out different vocabulary teaching techniques because some activities can be useful to teach some amount of vocabulary and some may have better learning potential than others (Nation, 2001). Thus, due to technological changes in every part of life and of course in education teachers feel an urge to reconsider what kind of approaches or methods they have benefited so far from the point of vocabulary teaching and learning. In search of effective vocabulary teaching and learning ways to offer students and teachers this paper intends to share the experimental results of making use of Wordsift-a web-based tool, a word cloud generating website pointing out the effects of integrating technology in EFL classes from the point of vocabulary teaching. On the other hand, WordSift is just one of the interactive web pages which provides both teachers and students with effective ways of teaching and learning vocabulary combining different aspects of presenting and learning new vocabulary. There are not many studies on what purpose word clouds can be used or on the web-based tool such as Wordsift to teach vocabulary in Turkish EFL contexts. Considering this gap, the researcher hopes that- thanks to the examples of good practices in this research- educators may also be encouraged to find other effective web tools or applications which they think those would also be beneficial for their students or they may continue using Wordsift in their classrooms because they are aware of the benefits of integrating technological tools in their vocabulary teaching classrooms. The intention is to obtain the vocabulary from the texts more effectively, so learners will not easily forget the words by proposing a way that teachers can help their students build up their English vocabulary volume. There will be a secondary benefit if the results of the research contribute to the literature on integrating technological

tools into teaching vocabulary and hopefully it will help teacher develop new strategies which will be beneficial for their students to learn vocabulary effectively.

## 2. Literature Review

Vocabulary is the core unit of the language learning process. Knowing a word means having a good command of its form, meaning and use. Oxford (1990) stated that vocabulary may be accepted as “by far the most sizeable and unmanageable component in the learning of any language, whether a foreign or one’s mother tongue, because of tens of thousands of different meanings”. It is likely for language teachers to encounter such questions asked by their students as: How can I memorize words? Are there any ways to learn new vocabulary easily? The students may seek for answers to this kind of questions because, in their learning foreign language processes, they are able to feel that learning a second language means to have adequate knowledge of vocabulary to communicate meaningfully. Students may need their teacher’s help in several ways to improve their vocabulary knowledge which might be a learning burden especially in the early stages of their language learning processes. Now almost all of the foreign or second language instructors point out that vocabulary teaching and learning should be taught systematically and included in the syllabus in which there should be strategies and plans to teach it. Speaking of teaching strategy, teachers generally point out similarities between vocabulary in the first and second languages and try to pre-teach the meaning of words in a definition-based style by hoping to make the new vocabulary easier to learn (Nation, 2006). Now we all know that vocabulary makes the essence of a language It is not logical not to consider vocabulary when we try to define the frames of language skill development. Even if students have a good level of grammatical knowledge of the language, they still face the problem of not to be able to express themselves because of the lack of adequate vocabulary knowledge.

There are increasing number of studies emphasizing vocabulary teaching and learning by pointing out deliberate and intuitive vocabulary learning. Nation & Webb (2011), state that deliberate learning of vocabulary has a positive effect on accelerating students’ effective vocabulary learning progress. Both deliberate and incidental learning have equal importance in efficient vocabulary learning even though the former is faster the latter has some important contextual aspects that cannot be ignored (Weissheimer, Souza, Antunes & Filho, 2019). However, both forms have some certain aspects which exceeds the other. For example, retention rates are higher when the words are taught deliberately. and only some amount (Nation, 2001). On the other hand, Cameron (2001), pointed out that traditional way of teaching vocabulary in which a lecturer may explain some words and thinks that hopefully students will learn them all in a certain time period is not a preferable approach for students to learn effectively. In countries where English is a foreign language, English teachers need to see more of the effective techniques and their implication effects of vocabulary teaching. As Thornbury (2006) stated that if someone spends a lot of time to study grammar, his/her English is not likely to improve very much but if that person spends a considerable time to learn more words and expressions then he/she will see the improvement because little can be said with grammar but almost anything with words. Nebiloğlugil (2015) states that building vocabulary is crucial to communicate effectively and he adds that to master a word one should see and use it in various and interesting contexts. In another research Başibek (2010) emphasized that, learning a language may be dependent on improving its vocabulary. Several studies have pointed out that words should be manipulated to focus students’ attention on key elements to create effective and systematic vocabulary teaching atmosphere in classroom. If a teacher today is in need for finding a beneficial way to teach vocabulary, the first thing that he/she does would be searching the net to find sources, a way, tool, applications or websites to be able to use as a teaching tool as a complement or support. Digital educational tools have so many advantages especially from the point of vocabulary teaching and learning such as helping teachers prepare activities or tasks by the help of which they teach their students new words by playing, practicing pronunciation through authentic and interactive texts which also encourage collaboration among them (Perevalora, Resenchuk & Tunyova, 2020). Today we can access numerous

web-services which can be integrated in foreign language vocabulary teaching by improving students' 4 language skills. These web tools enable us to present the vocabulary as visual images which help students improve their vocabulary competence. Creating word clouds can be a useful in this sense. Cui (2010) stated that word clouds help us see the keywords in the text by highlighting certain words in different colours, typefaces and shapes to emphasize their frequency of appearance in the text. This type of visual representation of words of a reading passage provides learners an easier and quicker view of key concepts (Gottron, 2009; Tafazoli et al., 2014). Baralt (2011) pointed out that a word cloud can be used both as an activity which may activate students' schemata and as a useful tool to raise their motivation towards the topic. Jumpakate (2020) conducted research to explore the perceptions of learners' and instructors' perceptions about the use of word clouds for as a pre-reading activity tool and reported that the results of the research include positive remarks of the two groups. Both the teachers and the students have parallel thoughts in that word clouds could be motivating in the classroom since they enable interaction.

When we want to find out about the use of word cloud generators for educational purposes, we can see several studies pointing out the benefits. Dumchoo (2018) conducted a study with Thai students to understand the effects of using WordSift in English vocabulary retention. WordSift is a free and interactive vocabulary learning website. It can easily fit into any lesson plans featuring explicit vocabulary instruction by enabling students meaningfully interact with the vocabulary that they encounter in texts. It combines several features for vocabulary learners, such as a tag cloud, word sorting, a visual thesaurus, links to Google images and videos, and example sentences. This versatile tool has attracted the attention of several researchers. Hakuta & Wiles (2018) reported that WordSift is a facilitating tool after implementing it to identify parts of speech. Mahmoodi & Talang (2013) also examined students' long term vocabulary retention rates by making use of Word and they reached positive results. Carpenter & Olson (2012) states that the retention is better when vocabulary presented using multimedia tools.

Berne & Blachowicz (2008) state that there may be some problems when teaching vocabulary because of the teachers' not being sure about which technique is best in vocabulary teaching and because they do not know the starting point to form an instructional emphasis on learning vocabulary. Teachers may have some problems time to time when they are trying to find a useful technique in order to reach a reasonable result. In search of effective vocabulary teaching and learning ways to offer students and teachers the present study aims to share the experimental results of making use of Wordsift a web-based tool.

The present study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Are there any significant different results in vocabulary retention after and before the integration of technological tool in vocabulary learning?
- 2) What are the student and teacher perceptions of the use of WordSift and non-WordSift vocabulary learning and teaching?

### **3. Methodology**

This study associates English vocabulary teaching and learning through the use of the WordSift, which was used as an English vocabulary teaching and learning tool in one of the Prep classes of a state university in Turkey in the second semester of 2022-2023 education year. The study can be described as action research as characterized by Nunan (1992) and considered to be quali-quantitative, since the collected data are both interpretative including students' and teachers' impressions and numerical with the results obtained from the comparison of quiz grades of the students.



### 3.1. Participants/Sampling

The participants were 25 male and female students studying English in the prep class at a university in Turkey in the second semester of academic year 2022-2023. Their age ranged from 18 to 22.

### 3.2. Instruments/Materials

As the first part of the data collection instrument, the study drew on two reading tasks chosen from the course book to study vocabulary. In the first reading task, with the reading passage entitled “The legends”, the new vocabulary was highlighted and explained by the lecturer for the students. At the end of the reading passage, comprehension questions were answered by the students. In the second task, the reading passage entitled “The life styles and celebrations” was generated into word clouds by using Wordsift online program which provides a connection of words, identifies and highlights the frequencies of words found in the texts giving students the opportunity to see the visuals and watch related videos. The lecturer was asked to make use of the word cloud, the sample sentences with highlighted related vocabulary, the pictures and videos provided by the Wordsift program to teach the vocabulary.

The difficulty levels of the two reading texts were controlled. They had the same levels and each contained 10 to 15 new vocabulary. The students were scheduled to take two separate tests at the end of each teaching period of the reading and vocabulary tasks. In total, 30 words, which the lecturer ensured that she did not teach her the students before, were investigated in the study.

For the second reading passage the student, in groups or as whole class together with their teacher’s guidance, selected one of the highlighted words from the word cloud which was created by WordSift and made sentences; clicked on the words to learn their meanings and saw the related vocabulary; read the example sentences and examined the visuals and videos shown related to the vocabulary.



Figure 1. Word cloud generated by WordSift web tool for the reading text “The life styles and celebrations”

Students click on the words they like to see their meanings and the vocabulary tree created with related words.



Figure 2. Vocabulary tree and visuals and videos related to the words in the tree.



Figure 3. The sentences from the text with highlighted words which are under the examination.

As the second part of the data collection instrument semi-structured interviews with the instructor and the participant students were conducted to find out their thoughts and experiences about using a technological tool to learn vocabulary by asking the following questions.

*Semi-structured interview questions for the students:*

- 1-Do you like to learn vocabulary through WordSift? Why?
- 2-Does technology integration have any impact on your study compared to learning through the teacher-directed method?

### *Semi-structured interview question for the teacher:*

-What do you think about technology integration into language teaching in general and the WordSift implementation to teach vocabulary?

The students were told that the aim of the interview was to collect data from their thoughts and feelings about the task of making use of WordSift, a web-based tool, in teaching and learning vocabulary.

### *3.3. Data Collection Procedure*

The whole procedure of the study grounded on two stages. In the first stage, participants learned new vocabulary through the classical teacher directed method. They were given the target words by the lecturer who followed her traditional vocabulary teaching methods without using any technological tool or application. The first vocabulary quiz was then administered to the participants. A week later, after they studied the second reading passage, the second quiz was given to the participants. After grading the two quizzes, the researcher assessed them by making comparisons to see if any vocabulary learning had occurred in the target words as a result of the technological intervention in vocabulary learning while studying English. This time, the lecturer made use of Wordsift web tool to teach the target vocabulary. The teacher inserted the second reading text into WordSift where she can click on “Sift” and then the program generated a word cloud showing the 50 most frequently occurring words in the text. When a target word was clicked, the image window was enlarged showing a related pictorial presentation and the context window showing a list of related sentences were seen. The instructor also allowed the students play with the generated WordSift page for the second reading text in groups discussing the items. See Appendix for the lesson plan of teaching English vocabulary using WordSift (Jumpakate, 2020).

Before the data collection, the English instructor was trained in how word cloud generators and WordSift could be applied to English language teaching. According to the lesson plan, the teacher firstly introduced word clouds of reading texts and engaged in a pre-reading activity. This was the first time they were introduced to making use of a web-based tool to learn vocabulary as part of the course. After two weeks of period in which two reading passages were included into the reading lessons to teach vocabulary by making use of two different vocabulary teaching technique and two vocabulary quizzes were given and a semi-structured interview was administered to reach an in dept understanding of the thoughts and experiences of the participants and the lecturer towards using a web-based tool in vocabulary learning after the completion of the above stated activities.

### *3.4. Data Analysis*

The scores of the students in the quizzes were analysed to reflect their performance in the WordSift-a web-based tool to create word cloud task-based activities. The students’ scores from the vocabulary quizzes were converted into percentages to analyse the difference of vocabulary retention between the two different vocabulary teaching and learning implementation. Content analysis was carried out to investigate the students’ and the instructor’s perception toward learning vocabulary.

## **4. Results**

Word clouds, due to their attractive visual appeal continue to be a popular tool for online discussion, for analysis tasks like summarizing, gisting, and understanding the topics of underlying documents or summarizing textual information. Teachers sometimes use them to capture their students’ attention

towards the subject matter. It can be said that word cloud designs may be better suited for more complex analytic tasks such as summarizing, understanding topics and teaching and learning vocabulary.

The results of the study were divided into two parts: The first part of the data collection procedures was one week implementation of classical and one week technology integrated vocabulary teaching. The second part of the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews done with both the class teacher and the participant students.

The scores of the students in the activities were analysed by comparing two different teaching approach to reflect their performance by benefiting from technology integrated vocabulary teaching-learning method and the traditional teaching-learning methods as part of the course.

#### 4.1. The results from the first part of the data collection procedures

##### 4.1.1. The First week

Throughout the first week of the research study implementation, the teacher conducted reading and vocabulary studies without making use of any technological tools. The unknown words were glossed and explained by the lecturer for the students. Several follow-up comprehension questions about the task at the end of the reading passage were answered without reference to the target words.

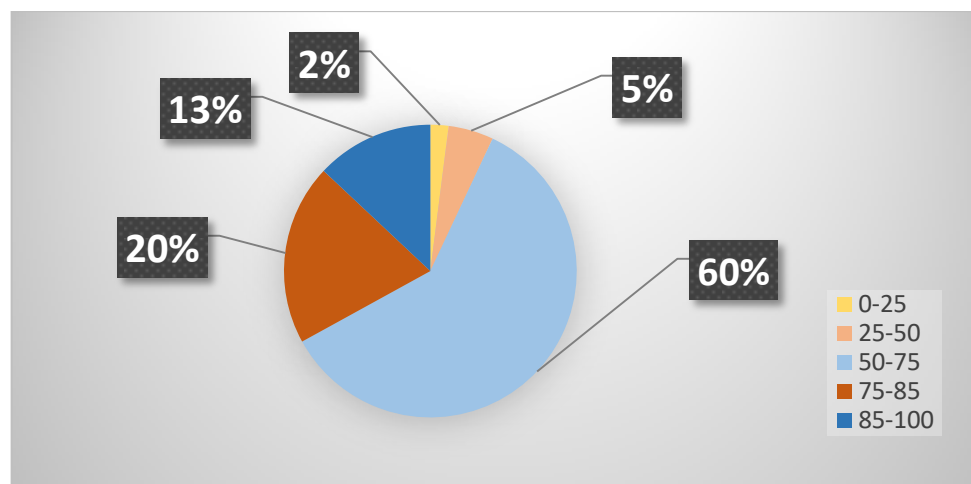


Figure 4. The results of the first Vocabulary quiz before the WordSift implementation.

Figure 4 reflects that the majority of the students scored between the 50-75 points which shows that they have retained or learned the new vocabulary at fifty and slightly above the rate per cent after one week period of studying the first reading passage with the help of the teacher who implemented her traditional teaching method that she did not benefit from neither WordSift nor any other technological tools. The students who have the lowest scores, which means that they could only answer only one or two questions have covered the 2 % of the total class population and the other low achievers who could answer approximately 5 questions consist of the 5 % of the total students in the class. The points other two group got having the 33% rate in total show that less than half of the class has managed to answer more than half of the questions in the quiz. Only 13% of the students scored B+ and A in the first vocabulary quiz.



#### 4.1.2. The second week.

Throughout the second week of the research study implementation, in the second task, the reading passage entitled “Life Styles and Celebrations” was generated into word clouds by using Wordsift online program which provides a connection of words, identifies and highlights the frequencies of them found in the texts giving students the opportunity to see the visuals and watch related videos. The lecturer was asked to make use of the word cloud, the sample sentences with highlighted related vocabulary, the pictures and videos provided by the Wordsift program to teach the vocabulary.

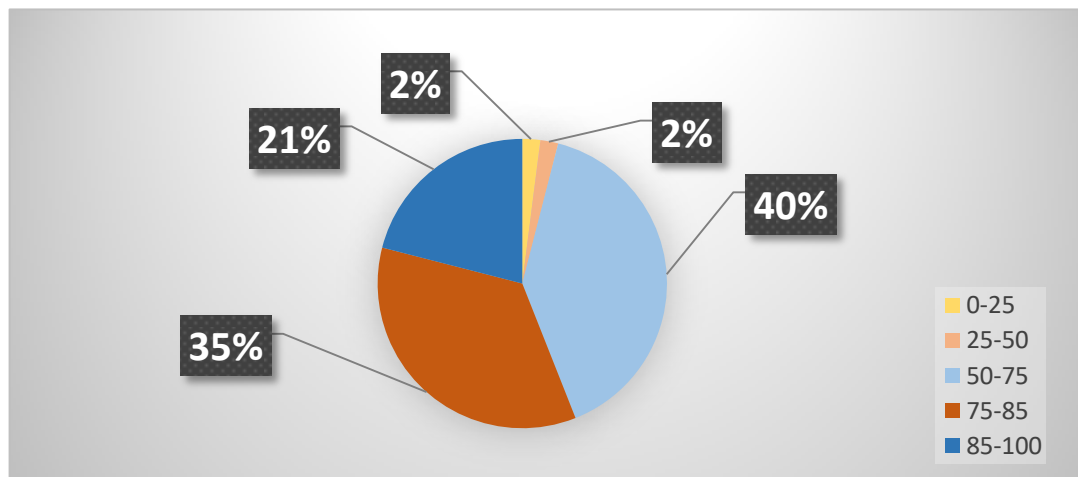


Figure 5. The results of the second Vocabulary quiz after the WordSift implementation

Figure 5 reflects that the majority of the students ( 56%) scored between the 75-100 points which proves that they have retained or learned the new vocabulary better than the traditional teaching models compared to the technology integrated teaching model by making use of WordSift web-based tool to study the second reading passage with the help of the teacher. The 2% rate of the students who have the lowest scores remain the same which shows that they might need some other support to be more successful rather than altering the teaching methodology. The number of second low achiever group having 5% rate who had grades between 25-50 in the quiz decreased approximately 3% which means that some of them answered more questions than they did in the first quiz. The number of the students in the middle group with the grades between 50-75 also decreased approximately 20% which means that those students rated in the upper grades in the second quiz. In this second diagram we can see more students between the grades 75-100 which shows 23% more students could answer more questions in the second quiz given after the WordSift web-based tool activities to study new vocabulary. In the second quiz, 21% percent of the students had the grades of B and A.

#### 4.2 The semi-structured interviews

The second part of the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews done after two weeks of period in which the two different vocabulary teaching methodologies were implemented to gain an in dept understanding of the thoughts and experiences of the participants and the lecturer towards using a web-based tool in vocabulary learning.

#### 4.2.1 The students' views

The interview questions for the participant students:

- 1- Do you like to learn vocabulary through WordSift? Why?
- 2- Does technology integration have any impact on your study compared to learning through the teacher-directed method?

The participants' answers for the semi-structured interview about using WordSift as an educational technology tool to learn vocabulary were overall very positive. The comments are summarized below. Some of the students wanted to answer the questions in Turkish, feeling that they might not express what they think appropriately because of their level of English. So, the Turkish answers given by the students were translated into English by the researcher.

##### 4.2.1.1. The answers of the students for the first question

*"It was a fun to see new vocabulary in word clouds rather than in lists. I could literally see the word and other words related to this word which was very educating. I could see the sentences, pictures and videos about the word when I click on it which was really perfect. Now I can remember all the words."*

*"First I didn't like it. It seemed very confusing to see all the words all together and mixed up. But when our teacher explained how to use WordSift I liked it. I want to use it from now on. I believe that it will help me learn new vocabulary easily."*

*"I can say that I will definitely use this web tool at home when I try to memorize vocabulary. It is a great way for self-study. I also think that it is very effective to study vocabulary in the class together with the teacher and my classmates using WordSift."*

*"I was familiar with word clouds earlier but I didn't know that they can be used to teach and learn vocabulary. I think it helped me learn new words. Because this web-tool enabled us to see different aspects of the vocabulary."*

*"I liked to see the words, the sentences and the visuals of the words. It was a nice experience. I will ask the teacher to use WordSift more often."*

*"I think it is better we use it at home. Teacher can give us the meaning of the unknown words and then we can study those using WordSift at home. But we had fun watching videos about the words."*

##### 4.2.1.2. The answers of the students for the second question

*"I like my teacher. She is great and teaches great but when she brings gives the lessons using technological tool I like her more. Because I can learn more."*

*"It certainly has a lot of effects. The lessons get more enjoyable and we can see a lot of different things which we cannot see just by studying text books."*

*“I think technological tools are part of everything in today’s world. But if we cannot have teachers or if the teacher teaches only through these tools it can be very mechanical. We must have teachers and they must teach us without technology sometimes and with technology sometimes. But I can say that WordSift helped me learn the words quicker.”*

*“Yes, I got a higher mark from the second quiz. I got 30 points more which is fantastic for me. Because I cannot do well in vocabulary quizzes. I think I can learn better when I see the new vocabulary in different places such as in WordSift. This tool helps us play with the words in visuals, videos and highlights them in sentences and in this process we learn better.”*

*“It definitely has a positive effect on my grades. I got a better mark from the second quiz. I felt that I could easily remember the vocabulary when I start to study for the second exam.”*

*“Most of my friends liked the WordSift web tool to study vocabulary. I like it too. But I can also learn vocabulary by listening my teacher and by reading the text by myself. We studied the vocabulary by using the smart board in the classroom. We clicked on the words in the word cloud and in the word tree and then we looked at the visuals which were shown. These activities are certainly helpful.”*

#### 4.2.2 The lecturer’s views

The interview question for the class teacher:

- 1- What do you think about technology integration into language teaching in general and the WordSift implementation to teach vocabulary?

For the teacher’s attitudes towards using WordSift web-based tool as a vocabulary teaching activity in EFL classroom, the results from the teacher’s remark indicate that technology enhanced tools could help engaging students to the lessons, remember the new vocabulary from reading texts easily, and creating interactive classroom. It was observed that instructor was strongly interested in integrating technological applications and tools for teaching English in her classes. The comments of the teacher summarized below.

*“I like the WordSift web tool and I believe that there are many advantages of using such a tool especially when you try to teach vocabulary. From the first moment I switched on the smart board to start to study the vocabulary making use of WordSift, I could notice their interest. They were all silent and waiting for me to copy the reading passage and paste it into the WordSift page. This silence was not there when I tried to write the vocabulary on the blackboard to teach pronunciation and the meaning of them. It definitely helped getting students attention to the reading passage and the new vocabulary. The colourful word cloud generated by highlighting important keywords related to reading texts by the WordSift was useful for the students to get the main idea and the use of the new vocabulary of the reading passage easier. It also made my work easier in that it provides the explanations, different usages and the related words together with visuals and videos. Moreover, I can say that the students communicated in English more with each other when trying different functions of WordSift and they eagerly participated in pair work. talked to me more during reading activity which they never did before. So, it can be said that it encourages them to use technology in English language learning and support learning atmosphere in the*

*classroom as well as on their own. I must admit that there were some students who seemed confused and not to like the implication at first but after a few minutes they participated the activities.*

*I always try to update everything about my profession and I know that technology is one of the best things from the point of language learning and teaching since it can provide us almost everything we need with just a click. I make benefit of several technological tools to teach English but this was the first time for me to use WordSift to teach English vocabulary. Thanks to this study I will keep using it to teach vocabulary and perhaps in some other ways to improve language skills of my students."*

## 5. Discussion

In Turkey, we, as English teachers, probably have heard several times the utterance of the students such as; "I can understand but I cannot speak because I do not know enough vocabulary." It is not a secret that learners may forget the meanings or functions of the words which they have studied a short while ago. Unfortunately, in vocabulary learning, learners cannot find rules to apply to improve their knowledge. Vocabulary does not have rules the learners may follow. It is obvious that there need to be more researchers in this field. Even if an English teacher devotes much time to vocabulary teaching, the results may be disappointing. Hence, there is a need for research into the vocabulary teaching methods to guide us toward the effective ones. In their minds, having the question of "What can we do to help learners learn the vocabulary effectively?", some researchers in the language learning and teaching field are exploring ways of promoting it more effectively by taking the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century's generation into consideration. And here the technology comes to our rescue. It is a fact that we can benefit from the new possibilities by making use of several web tools in terms of language learning. They can also serve a purpose in supporting traditional learning methods which has limited suggestions to help students improve their vocabulary. The results of this study may enable the researcher to show language teachers the effective ways to teach vocabulary to help the learners achieve adequate word store by making use of a web-based tool.

The study aimed at exploring the use of web-based tool WordSift a sort of multifaceted word cloud facilitator as an educational tool in a prep class consisting of A2 level students. The first research question which is "Are there any significant different results in vocabulary retention after and before the integration of technological tool in vocabulary learning?" explored students' and the lecturer's perceptions. After two weeks of period, both the participant students and the lecturer stated that they found it quite easy to use, and enjoyable instructional practice and a beneficial learning experience.

The second research question which is "What are the student and teacher perceptions of the use of WordSift and non-WordSift vocabulary learning and teaching? examined the perceptions and experiences of the participants and the lecturer towards using a web-based tool in vocabulary learning. The students were positive about the impact they had on improving their vocabulary. They were also quite positive about the impact of visual effects on vocabulary learning activities. The lecturer was also quite positive about the impact it had on her vocabulary teaching strategies. Overall, the results reflected that a web-based tool such as WordSift can be utilized as a vocabulary teaching and learning tool practicing them with sequential activities throughout the vocabulary teaching classes. Filatova (2016) states that word clouds were useful for using vocabulary, identifying synonyms and identify the main points of a text. Miley & Read, (2011) points out that word cloud generators can be seen as a potential effective learning tool because they have a positive effect on students' motivation and gaining useful learning strategies.

According to the first and the second part of the data collection results, most students have positive attitudes towards the use of WordSift as both a vocabulary and second or foreign language learning tool in prep classes of universities. It can be said that they strongly agreed that making use of a technological

tool such as WordSift was enjoyable and educating and could motivate them to learn English both inside and outside the class, helped them learn new vocabulary.

## 6. Conclusion

The results revealed that WordSift can be used as an effective educational technology tool that can be used for improving vocabulary knowledge when learning a second or foreign language. In a technology integrated language learning environment, this and this kind of web-based tools can be of great assistance in using a constructive approach to make learning student-centred through enhancing peer-learning and in personal learning environments. It is obvious that integrating technological tools such as WordSift into the second or foreign language learning and teaching process is less stressful by providing enjoyable multimodality.

The study recommends the use of WordSift web-tool after providing explicit guidelines and using them for class activities to teach second language vocabulary. This research is expected to make some contribution to the language teachers to make decisions about teaching new vocabulary to their students to provide for the most benefits in mastering new words.

Yet, by conducting this study, the researcher tries to provide a guideline for the language teachers by showing the certain effective ways of learning and teaching vocabulary by describing effects of integrating the technological web-based tool WordSift defining the implementation procedures and the results to help students promote their foreign or second language vocabulary knowledge and teachers understand the benefits and practicality of using such technological tools in their teaching practices.

The results, while preliminary, suggest that using technology such as word cloud generators could help students to learn English in various aspects, especially learning new vocabulary, getting an overview of reading texts, understanding main idea of what they are going to read, and creating an interactive classroom atmosphere. Almost all students stated the motivating and enjoyable nature of the technology enhanced learning format. They pointed out that by the help of this learning activities they learn better. The teacher also reported about the benefits of integrating technological tools such as WordSift into language teaching environments. To sum up, this study therefore shows that word clouds can be used as a part of pre-reading activity for teaching EFL students.

## 7. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The study aimed at exploring the use of web-based tool WordSift a sort of multifaceted word cloud facilitator as an educational tool in a prep class consisting of A2 level students. The results showed that both the teachers and the students agreed that making use of a technological tool such as WordSift was enjoyable and educating both inside and outside the class. Therefore, this research is expected to make some contribution to the language teachers to make decisions about teaching new vocabulary in that using technology such as word cloud generators could help students to learn English in various aspects, especially learning new vocabulary, getting an overview of reading texts, understanding main idea of what they are going to read, and creating an interactive classroom atmosphere.

However, more studies may be required to explore the impact of using web-based tools to teach foreign language vocabulary with an asynchronous mode of instruction. The results may be somewhat limited by the small size of participants and limited timeline of implementation. Thus, it may be suggested investigating the use of technological applications to teach second and foreign language including students in different grades by conducting longitudinal study and by showing good applications that can serve as guidelines for language teachers.



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## Appendix

### A Lesson Plan of Teaching English Lesson Using Word Clouds

Time:15 mins	Level of Students: first year students(undergraduate)	Language Focus: Reading	Topic: Unit 8 Lifestyles	
<b>Objective: students will be able to...</b>				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. predict the content of reading passage</li> <li>2. know the meaning of new vocabulary regarding lifestyles</li> <li>3. be interested in the lesson they are going to study</li> </ol>				
<b>Materials</b>				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reading passage</li> <li>2. Image from Wordsift</li> <li>3. PowerPoint presentation</li> </ol>				
Time	Activity	Purposes	Interaction	Stages
Pre-teaching	1min Opening class	Initiate thinking and set up context	T-SS	A) Greeting
	3min Warm-up activity	Get students attention and link to the lesson: unit 8 lifestyles	SS-T	B) T lets SS describe what they've seen in photo. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>What does the photo show about the fisherman's lifestyle?</i></li> <li>- <i>What have you seen?</i></li> <li>- <i>What's your lifestyle like?</i></li> </ul>
	3min Word Clouds picture	Set up context and get students attention	T-SS, SS-T	C) T shows SS wordsift file about 'the Secrets of Long Life' and asks relevant questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>What have you seen?</i></li> <li>- <i>Can you guess what the main idea is?</i></li> <li>- <i>What is a reading passage mainly about?</i></li> </ul>
	3 Word Clouds picture	Relate to the topic and pre-teach new vocabulary and link to the reading passage	T	D) T elicits vocabulary in plenary class; explain new vocabulary by showing the definition from the Wordsift program. T asks SS questions randomly about the meaning of each word. Then write their answers on the board.
	3 Reading passage	Practice reading about people' lifestyles	SS	E) T asks SS to read the reading passage and like to Wordsift picture again in order to summarize the main idea of the passage.
Time	Activity	Purposes	Interaction	Stages
Pre-teaching	2 Transition	them in realizing the point for studying about people lifestyles and guide them which grammar focus they will learn	SS-T, T-SS	F) T guides that the reading passage is about Japanese lifestyle. After that, T asks students a question 'How about Thai people, what's our lifestyles like?'

\*T= teacher, SS= students, S = a student