

# Students' Attitudes Toward The Use Of Wordsift To Learn English Vocabulary

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## **Abstract**

*This study investigated students' attitudes toward learning English vocabulary using the WordSift platform. WordSift is a web-based tool that offers word clouds, mind maps, visual illustrations, and contextual examples to support vocabulary learning. The research involved 60 non-English major university students, divided into an experimental group using WordSift and a control group using traditional learning methods. After 8 weeks of study, data were collected through surveys to determine students' attitudes. The findings revealed that students responded positively to using WordSift in their vocabulary learning process. They reported an increase in all investigated aspects. These results suggest that students generally hold favorable attitudes toward integrating digital tools like WordSift in vocabulary learning and highlight the role of technology in creating more engaging and learner-friendly language environments.*

**Key Word:** Attitudes; English vocabulary learning; WordSift; non-English majors.

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## **I. Introduction**

English has become a global language, essential in business, technology, and academia. In Vietnam, English proficiency is increasingly considered a gateway to better job opportunities and higher income. However, one of the significant challenges for non-English major students is vocabulary acquisition, which is essential for reading comprehension, writing, and effective communication (Armstrong, 2001). Traditional vocabulary learning methods, often relying on rote memorization, have proven ineffective and disengaging. With the rise of educational technologies, new platforms have emerged to enhance vocabulary learning. Among them, WordSift is a web-based tool that integrates visualization, word mapping, and keyword features to support learners in expanding their vocabulary both in size and depth (Smith, 2018).

Although studies investigated the effect of using WordSift on students' learning outcomes, limited studies examined their attitudes toward this platform. This study aimed to fill this gap by exploring students' attitudes toward using the WordSift platform for vocabulary learning.

Research question: What are the ELF students' attitudes towards using WordSift for English vocabulary learning?

## **II. Literature Review**

Attitude is one of the primary keys to success in language learning. Researchers in the field consider several definitions of attitude, which mention different meanings from different contexts and perspectives. Attitude consists of 3 components, which are affective, cognitive, and behavioral. Jain (2014) defines the three dimensions as follows: cognitive attitude is an evaluation of the entity that constitutes an individual's opinion (belief/disbelief) about the object, and it refers to the thoughts, facts, and knowledge about an object; the affective attitude is the emotional response and feeling (liking/disliking) favoring and disfavoring, positive or negative evaluation towards the object; behavioral attitude is more or less consistent (favorable/unfavorable) and the tendency to behave, act and respond observably to the object depending on cognitive and affective components. Beckler (1984) identified three components of a person's attitude: the ABC Model. Each letter refers to a different component. A refers to Affect, B refers to Behaviour, and C refers to Cognition. These three dimensions are classified into two: positive or negative feelings about a particular issue, person, object, situation, or event. This aimed to evaluate students' attitudes toward vocabulary learning and their vocabulary knowledge in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. Researchers can understand how students implement, judge their learning, and practice language learning.

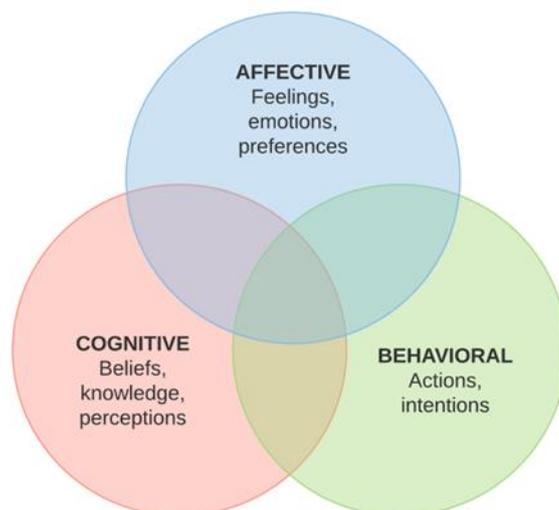


Figure 1. ABC model (Ostrom's, 1969)

Studies show that students hold positive attitudes towards the use of Wordsift in English learning and teaching. Specifically, Supatida and Zainee (2018) conducted a study with 37 Thai secondary school students to see how WordSift may be used to teach and memorize vocabulary. The findings demonstrated a significant improvement in kids' vocabulary memorization. WordSift students had a positive attitude toward the tool, believing that the imagery and example sentences make studying more enjoyable. In 2018, Smith conducted a study to analyze WordSift's influence on vocabulary retention among secondary school students. The study included providing a pretest and posttest to assess vocabulary knowledge and assessing students as they learned new terms via WordSift. The findings demonstrated a 30% boost in vocabulary retention among students who used WordSift versus those who didn't. Furthermore, the questionnaires showed increased involvement and enthusiasm in acquiring vocabulary.

### III. Methods

The study was conducted at a university in the North of Vietnam. It used a quasi-experimental research design, involving two intact classes: an experimental group using the WordSift platform and a control group learning via traditional methods. The intervention lasted 8 weeks.

Sixty first-year non-English major students participated, divided equally into experimental (n=30) and control (n=30) groups. All participants were classified as A1 level based on the Oxford Placement Test and had similar backgrounds in English learning. The experimental group received vocabulary instruction through the WordSift platform, which includes tools such as word clouds, mind maps, synonym/antonym maps, and visual aids. Lessons integrated explicit instruction (e.g., direct word meanings) and implicit activities (e.g., context-based guessing, reading). The control group was taught vocabulary using conventional methods, such as textbook-based definitions and matching exercises.

The researchers based the questionnaire on Ostrom's (1969) ABC Attitude Model, which focuses on three parts of attitude: the emotional (items 1–6), the behavioral (items 7–12), and the cognitive (items 13–20).

The researchers had a five-step process for translating the questionnaire to ensure everything was clear and correct. First, the researchers translate the original English version into Vietnamese using Google Translate. Then, a group of students from the University went through the translation to fine-tune it and ensure it made sense. After that, the researchers sent the translated version to an English teacher for feedback. Once the suggested changes were made, the pilot study with five non-major students to check if they understood the questions. The final adjustments based on their feedback to improve clarity and accessibility were made. The questionnaire was evaluated on a Likert scale of 1-5, respectively, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was administered to students of the experimental group at the end of the study.

### IV. Result

Table 1. Participants attitudes towards the use of WordSift platform to enhance their English vocabulary

Question	Question type	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I enjoy using WordSift to learn vocabulary.	Affective	6.7%	0%	20.0%	36.7%	36.7%
I find WordSift makes learning vocabulary more fun.	Affective	6.7%	0%	10.0%	43.3%	40.0%

I feel more confident learning vocabulary with WordSift.	Affective	6.7%	0%	10.0%	43.3%	40.0%
I find learning vocabulary easier with WordSift.	Affective	6.7%	0%	13.3%	36.7%	43.3%
I like the look and feel of WordSift.	Affective	6.7%	3.3%	26.7%	33.3%	30.0%
I feel that WordSift reduces the frustration of learning vocabulary.	Affective	6.7%	0%	10.0%	50.0%	33.3%
I regularly use WordSift to learn vocabulary.	Behaviour	6.7%	3.3%	33.3%	23.3%	33.3%
I intend to continue using WordSift in the future.	Behaviour	6.7%	0%	16.7%	36.7%	40.0%
I have recommended WordSift to my classmates.	Behaviour	10.0%	10.0%	6.7%	46.7%	26.7%
I spend more time learning vocabulary when I use WordSift.	Behaviour	6.7%	0%	20.0%	36.7%	36.7%
I use WordSift to look up vocabulary when reading English documents.	Behaviour	6.7%	6.7%	20.0%	36.7%	30.0%
I tried different features of WordSift to optimize my learning.	Behaviour	6.7%	0%	16.7%	46.7%	30.0%
I believe that WordSift helps me understand the meaning of vocabulary better.	Cognitive	0%	0%	10.0%	43.3%	46.7%
I noticed my vocabulary improved after using WordSift.	Cognitive	0%	0%	13.3%	50.0%	36.7%
I understand how to use WordSift features.	Cognitive	6.7%	6.7%	20.0%	33.3%	33.3%
I believe that WordSift is a useful tool for learning vocabulary.	Cognitive	6.7%	0%	10.0%	36.7%	46.7%
I find that WordSift helps me remember vocabulary longer.	Cognitive	6.7%	0%	10.0%	60.0%	23.3%
I believe that WordSift helps me use vocabulary more accurately.	Cognitive	6.7%	3.3%	10.0%	40.0%	40.0%
I appreciate that WordSift provides context for vocabulary usage.	Cognitive	6.7%	0%	10.0%	40.0%	43.3%
I believe that WordSift helps me learn vocabulary more effectively than traditional methods.	Cognitive	10.0%	3.3%	13.3%	36.7%	36.7%

Firstly, the platform significantly affects learners' affective aspect, as questions 1 to 6 indicate positive emotional evaluations from learners when using WordSift. With percentages ranging from 67% to 83.3% for both Agree and Strongly Agree responses, it shows that WordSift generates excitement and comfort in vocabulary learning. Jain (2014) stated that affective attitude is the emotional response and feeling (liking/disliking) favoring and disfavoring, positive or negative evaluation towards the object. The questions in the questionnaire related to affective aspects, such as "I enjoy using WordSift to learn vocabulary," "I find WordSift makes learning vocabulary more fun," and "I find learning vocabulary easier with WordSift," clearly highlight the positive feelings of learners. Question 1 directly assesses the enjoyment of using the platform, while in question 2, we see the positive evaluation and the ease of learning. These responses are related to the creative design of WordSift. Perhaps, unlike traditional vocabulary learning methods, WordSift generates excitement for learners due to its fresh and engaging elements. The use of visual images, visual tools, and word clouds not only helps learners reduce feelings of fear and boredom but is also associated with vocabulary learning. These features can increase motivation, reduce anxiety, and promote positive emotional connections with vocabulary learning. To sum up, the data analyzed above is consistent with several previous studies. These studies show a significant positive impact of applying technology to vocabulary learning. For example, Azizan and colleagues (2023) found that WordSift enhanced students' confidence. Supatida and Zainee (2018) reported that students believed WordSift made learning more enjoyable. Instead of learning vocabulary through traditional methods of simple note-taking, learners are exposed to innovative features and an engaging interface, such as word clouds and illustrative images, creating tremendous motivation for learners to study vocabulary.

Next, WordSift encourages and motivates positive learning behaviors through its supportive learning features. When students recognize the superior characteristics of WordSift that help them learn vocabulary faster and retain it longer, they are more likely to use it more frequently. Questions 7 to 12 show that WordSift helps measure usage frequency and reflects the intention to continue using it, recommend it to others, and the level of interaction with the platform. Most users recommend WordSift to others and continue using it in the future, with 73.4% agreement. This has a positive impact on the future learning behaviors of the learners. The survey results related to learners' behavior when using WordSift, specifically from question 7 to question 12, show that learners show positive learning behavior when using WordSift. Specifically, 73.4% of students agree

or strongly agree that they will continue to use WordSift in the future and recommend this platform to their classmates. In addition, more than 50% of students regularly access and use WordSift, and 63.4% of learners spend more time learning vocabulary when using WordSift. Furthermore, over 80% of students have tried different features to optimize vocabulary learning. These behaviors show learners' positive responses when applying online technology platforms to learning. In addition to frequent use and long-term intention and sharing learning resources, they also actively explore WordSift's features. This shows that they see WordSift as having the ability to maintain interest and choice to support learners' long-term learning strategies. Ostrom (2005) stated that the behaviors displayed in an action situation reflect the learners' ability to self-organize and maintain long-term engagement. The reason that WordSift attracts users to return to use is the combination of its functionality and design. Unlike the traditional note-taking learning method, WordSift provides a learning experience through a vocabulary cloud that integrates illustrations and mind maps, making learning less boring and mechanically memorizing vocabulary. In short, learning through the support of the WordSift platform gives learners an enjoyable experience, which is highly appreciated by learners who are willing to use it long-term.

Finally, in terms of cognitive, using the WordSift platform instills confidence in the effectiveness of vocabulary learning. Jain (2014) stated that cognitive attitude evaluates the entity that constitutes an individual's opinion (belief/disbelief) about the object and refers to the thoughts, facts, and knowledge about an object. Questions from 13 to the end showed that students believe WordSift helps them understand vocabulary meanings better, improves their vocabulary, and is more effective than traditional methods. The analysis illustrates that about 83.3% Agree, with over 70% Strongly Agree. The questions in the questionnaire related to cognitive aspects, such as "I believe that WordSift helps me understand the meaning of vocabulary better." (Question 13); "I believe that WordSift is a useful tool for learning vocabulary." (Question 16); "I believe that WordSift helps me learn vocabulary more effectively than traditional methods." (Question 20). These questions create a clear connection between the data and the analysis. Question 13 indicated that learners thought WordSift contributed more positively to their vocabulary understanding. This showed a positive cognitive attitude related to beliefs and evaluations, focusing on the belief that understanding is improved through WordSift. Learners believe that WordSift provides tools or information that facilitate a deeper grasp of word meanings. Question 16 shows students' overall evaluative perspective that they believe WordSift is a valuable tool after they have been taught on this platform. Similarly, in question 20, learners compare WordSift with other traditional methods. They believe that WordSift helps them learn vocabulary better than other traditional methods due to its engaging features that support learners. These positive responses are based on the effective learning support characteristics that WordSift offers. For example, the appearance of clouds in WordSift visually represents the frequency of word occurrences, helping learners quickly identify key terms or prominent words and their importance. Thus, it can be seen that WordSift supports the process of searching for keywords and necessary information more quickly. Next, the mind maps provide additional images of related words, promoting a deeper understanding of new words and helping learners expand their vocabulary. The visual tools help learners clarify abstract concepts, making them more accessible to students. The platform's features, such as images, visual tools, word clouds, and mind maps, help learners easily analyze and think, thereby providing them with a system of information about vocabulary that makes it easier to memorize and retain words. To conclude, the data analyzed above is consistent with several previous studies. For example, Dubois and Vial (2000) and Mayer (2009) highlighted the benefits of visuals for vocabulary memorization and learning effectiveness. Finally, the cognitive effectiveness of WordSift is consistent with studies that advocate for explicit and blended vocabulary instruction (Tahir et al., 2020; Fainman & Tokar, 2019). In conclusion, this confirms that most students have a positive affective, behavioral, and cognitive of vocabulary learning through the valuable features of the WordSift platform. Students notice positive changes and their progress in vocabulary learning through the platform's features. All the above factors based on Ostrom's (1969) evaluation framework indicate that students have a positive attitude towards WordSift in all three components of the ABC model. This reinforces the remarkable value of WordSift as an effective vocabulary learning tool that learners widely accept and share.

The questionnaire illustrates an overview of students' attitudes toward using the WordSift platform for vocabulary learning through ten survey items. Overall, the results of the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses exceed 80% for the majority of statements, while the "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" opinions account for a smaller percentage, clearly indicating that favorable evaluations are predominant. This clearly shows that the majority of evaluations are favorable. According to the first statistic, 36.7% of students agreed, and 36.7% strongly agreed that they enjoyed using the WordSift platform to study vocabulary, while just 6.7% of students disagreed. A similar trend is observed among learners who believe that WordSift makes their vocabulary learning more enjoyable, with 83.3% expressing interest and enjoyment. Only 6.7% strongly disagreed, while the remainder expressed neutral opinions (10%). This highlights the appeal of WordSift in the eyes of most survey participants. The WordSift platform makes them "more confident" in learning vocabulary (62% combined "Agree" and "Strongly agree"), which demonstrates its effectiveness in using this platform for

vocabulary learning. Regarding the interface and design, 67% of students provided positive feedback with the statement "I like the interface," while about 33% remained neutral. This indicates that most learners are satisfied with the platform's interface; however, many did not express a clear opinion, implying that the interface design may need further improvement to enhance the user experience. Learners rated the perspective of "feeling less stressed" quite positively, with this criterion having a relatively lower rate of positive feedback: 50% agreed, 33.3% strongly agreed, 10% remained neutral, and 6.7% disagreed. Perhaps the interesting features that the WordSift platform offers, such as word clouds and mind maps, have helped learners feel more at ease while discovering new words. Next, learners provided positive opinions and feedback about this platform from a social perspective. Students expressed their willingness to recommend WordSift to their friends; specifically, the percentage of students who agreed to "Recommend WordSift to others" is 73.4%, with 46.7% agreeing and 26.7% strongly agreeing. Learners immensely enjoy learning vocabulary through the WordSift platform. Furthermore, the student's feedback on "Appreciating the contextual support feature" received 83.3% positive responses (40% chose "Agree" and 43.3% chose "Strongly Agree"). This indicates that WordSift's outstanding features and functions have encouraged learners' enthusiasm for using it in vocabulary learning. Thus, this emphasizes the importance of learning words in context for memory retention and understanding meaning. "More effective than traditional methods" is one of the opinions that many students agree with. This viewpoint received approximately 70% positive feedback, indicating that learners highly value the learning experience with the new method compared to conventional teaching methods. It is undeniable that students are enthusiastic about the new learning approach and its practical features, such as the appearance of word clouds, keywords, and mind maps. Finally, 69.7% represents the percentage of learners who agree they will "continue using WordSift" in the future. Thus, this reflects the positivity, appreciation, and trust of students in the long-term learning value that the platform provides.

## **V. Discussion**

The findings from the current study highlight the significant positive impact of the WordSift platform on learners' attitudes toward vocabulary acquisition, especially among non-English major students. The data demonstrated that students not only engaged actively with the tool but also formed a favorable evaluation of its effectiveness and usability. Over 80% of respondents expressed positive emotional responses, recognized practical cognitive benefits, and reported behavioral intentions to continue using the platform.

This response pattern aligns well with Ostrom's (1969) ABC attitude model, encompassing affective, behavioral, and cognitive components. Students reported enjoyment and reduced stress when using WordSift (affective), frequent usage and intention to recommend (behavioral), and belief in its superiority over traditional methods (cognitive). These three dimensions formed a comprehensive, positive attitude towards the platform.

The formation of these positive attitudes can be explained through well-established theoretical frameworks. According to Montano and Kasprzyk (2008), attitudes are shaped by beliefs about behavior and its expected outcomes. In this study, students believed that using WordSift led to better vocabulary retention and learning efficiency, which, in turn, reinforced their positive attitudes. Ajzen (1988) similarly defined attitude as an individual's disposition toward a particular object or behavior influenced by their evaluation of outcomes. These theoretical models support the current findings, where learners' belief in the utility of WordSift directly correlates with their willingness to engage with and continue using it. The design and functionality of WordSift are key contributors to its effectiveness. The platform's integration of visual tools—such as word clouds, mind maps, and contextual examples—offers a multisensory approach to vocabulary learning. This supports deeper cognitive processing and facilitates long-term memory retention. Students specifically appreciated the keyword highlighting and visual organization, which reduced cognitive overload and increased efficiency. Ashaari et al. (2011) further support this emotional engagement, emphasizing that student interest plays a vital role in maintaining attention and motivation. WordSift's visual and interactive nature fosters an enjoyable and immersive learning experience, reducing the monotony of traditional rote memorization. The study's findings resonate with the notion that interest leads to emotional involvement, enhancing behavioral commitment to the learning task. Several recent studies reinforce these outcomes. Supatida and Zainee (2018) highlighted that WordSift's visual support and sentence examples made learning more enjoyable. Smith (2018) observed increased student motivation due to WordSift's interactive design. Additionally, Çakır Kayışoğlu (2022) found that WordSift could shift learner attitudes from neutral to positive, particularly regarding vocabulary learning outcomes. These studies confirm the present study's conclusion that WordLift promotes a more favorable attitude toward vocabulary learning through technology-enhanced experiences. In essence, the students' positive affective reactions, active behavioral intentions, and strong cognitive beliefs converge to support WordSift's effectiveness as not merely a vocabulary tool but a holistic learning environment. Its innovative features and user-centered design empower students by boosting motivation, confidence, and learning satisfaction. These dimensions are crucial for sustaining long-term learning success and fostering self-directed vocabulary acquisition.

## VI. Conclusion

To sum up, this study aimed to improve the vocabulary learning outcomes of non-English major students by applying the WordSift platform. The results demonstrated that WordSift is an effective vocabulary learning tool and significantly more engaging and enjoyable than traditional methods. Learners reported high satisfaction, motivation, and comfort levels while using the platform. Most students expressed excitement and enthusiasm during their learning process, highlighting WordSift's ability to boost confidence and support independent learning. The majority also indicated a willingness to recommend the platform to others, underscoring its perceived usefulness and credibility. In light of these findings, it can be concluded that WordSift is a practical and learner-friendly technological tool that positively influences students' vocabulary acquisition and attitudes toward language learning. Its integration into classroom activities and self-study routines has the potential to make vocabulary learning more dynamic, interactive, and effective in contemporary educational contexts.

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