Jurnal Ilmiah Telaah
http://journal.ummat.ac.id/index.php/telaah
p-ISSN 2477-2429 | e-ISSN 2620-6226
Vol. 11, No. 02, July 2026, Hal. 571—575

A Case Study of Unpopular Use of Wordwall for English Teaching in SMA Negeri 1 Tanjunganom Nganjuk

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INFO ARTIKEL

Riwayat Artikel:
Diterima: 06-07-2026
Disetujui: 09-07-2026

Kata Kunci:
Wordwall
Tidak Populer
TPACK
Integrasi Teknologi

Keywords:
Wordwall
Unpopular
TPACK
Technology Integratio

ABSTRAK

Abstrak: Integrasi teknologi dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) diwajibkan dalam Kurikulum Merdeka. Namun, penerapan platform pembelajaran digital masih belum merata. Meskipun Wordwall dikenal dapat meningkatkan pengajaran kosakata dan tata bahasa, serta telah menunjukkan manfaat yang signifikan dalam penelitian sebelumnya, penggunaannya tetap terbatas bahkan di sekolah yang memiliki infrastruktur TIK yang memadai. Oleh karena itu, studi kasus kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi alasan spesifik di balik tidak digunakannya Wordwall oleh guru Bahasa Inggris di SMAN 1 Tanjunganom. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan lembar observasi kelas. Temuan penelitian mengungkap tiga hambatan utama, yaitu kesadaran yang terbatas terhadap fitur-fitur platform, konektivitas internet yang tidak stabil, serta keterbatasan waktu dalam mempersiapkan bahan ajar baru. Hambatan-hambatan ini menunjukkan bahwa pengetahuan teknologi yang terbatas memengaruhi pengetahuan pedagogis teknologi, sehingga menghalangi guru untuk mengenali manfaat Wordwall. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa infrastruktur fisik yang memadai saja tidak menjamin adopsi alat digital. Pada akhirnya, pelatihan teknologi yang berkelanjutan serta akses internet yang andal diperlukan untuk keberhasilan integrasi teknologi di kelas EFL.

Abstract: *Technology integration for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction was required under the Merdeka curriculum. However, the application of digital learning platforms remained inconsistent. Although Wordwall was known for enhancing vocabulary and grammar instruction, it has demonstrated notable benefits in prior research. However, the adoption remained limited even at schools with adequate ICT infrastructure. Therefore, this qualitative case study aimed to explore specific reasons behind the non-use of Wordwall among English teachers at SMAN 1 Tanjunganom. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and a classroom observation sheet. The findings revealed three main barriers: limited awareness of platform features, unstable internet connectivity, and time limitations in preparing new instructional materials. These obstacles indicated that limited technological knowledge affected technological pedagogical knowledge, preventing teachers from recognizing Wordwall. The research concludes that adequate physical infrastructure alone does not guarantee adoption of digital tools. Ultimately, sustained technology training and reliable internet access were necessary for successful technology integration in EFL classrooms.*

https://doi.org/10.31764/telaah.vXiY.ZZZ

A. INTRODUCTION

A focus on more meaningful integration technology highlighted within Merdeka Curriculum to improve students' learning experience (Kementerian Pendidikan, 2022). This educational approach required the use of technology to create more engaging and effective classroom environments. The need for this change was closely to the human side of learning, specifically the requirement to increase student motivation during. English lessons (Aulia,2023). Furthermore, active students and a positive connection to the lessons were recognized as key foundations for language learning, and the use of digital tools to bring back an exciting and joyful

classroom atmosphere became a primary focus (Rahmani et al., 2019).

Moreover, as a response to motivational challenges, gamification has been increasingly adopted as an educational approach that incorporates game design elements into learning environments to enhance student engagement and motivation (Ling, 2018). One of the applications is Wordwall, which became popular for offering twelve free templates to use, and it can be adjusted as teachers need. Previous research has connected the platform to increased students' vocabulary and grammar skills, as well as more active classrooms (Fakhruddin et al., 2021; Chandra et al., 2022; Aulia, 2023). Despite these known advantages, the usage in the classroom was still low, especially in suburban schools. This situation showed that simply having digital tools did not mean the tools were used in the classroom.

In addition, the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework explained this problem by outlining the specific skills needed to use technology in teaching (Mishra, 2006). A preliminary study conducted with twelve English teachers across four high schools in Tanjunganom sub-district confirmed a steady low use of Wordwall. Subsequently, a preliminary study focused specifically on SMAN 1 Tanjunganom to delve deeply into the root of this problem by applying the typical case sampling strategy. The selection of a location based on typical case sampling characteristics was described as a reliable way to study events occurring within a specific environment (Cresswell & Poth, 2018).

Additionally, past research on teachers' perceptions of Wordwall has focused only on junior high schools and early childhood education (Urnila et al., 2024; Prasetyaningrum et al., 2025). Similar studies at the senior high school level were rare. Therefore, to address this missing piece, a study was carried out to find the actual reasons why Wordwall was not used during English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjunganom. The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework was applied to guide this study. Therefore, the objectives were to explore the reasons and perceptive of the English teachers regarding the use of Wordwall as a learning media tool, specifically focusing on familiarity with the platform.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

Design

A case study design was selected for this research. This design involves an empirical investigation that uses multiple data collection methods to examine a current phenomenon within a real-life context, without active participation from the investigator in the case (Wohlin,2021). Furthermore, within a qualitative approach, this study observed and explored in depth the initial perceptions of five English teachers regarding Wordwall in a real-time context. A qualitative case study focused specifically on a particular individual, location, program, or event.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of five English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjunganom, Nganjuk. A purposive selection method was applied, informed by a preliminary investigation. Additionally, the participants selected represent a wide range of educational backgrounds and teaching experiences, providing a solid baseline for comparing individual responses.

Research Instrument

This study's instrument utilized semi-structured interviews and classroom observation sheets. The integration of these two instruments was chosen to establish strong methodological triangulation. This involved gathering verbal information through direct conversations and comparing it with actual teaching practices during teaching sessions. This dual instrument ensured the credibility, depth, and validity of the qualitative data. Furthermore, both instruments were constructed by operationalizing core theoretical frameworks related to technology integration.

Data Collection

The primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted individually with

each participant. The main objective of these sessions to identify the actual reasons behind the low usage and general unpopularity of Wodwall in daily instructional practices. Open-ended questions were utilized to allow for deeper exploration of participants' answers and to probe their responses regarding pedagogical decisions and experiences with educational technology. To strengthen the validity of the collected data, classroom observations were conducted. These observation sessions took place in five different classrooms, each corresponding directly to a participant. The main purpose of this second step was to verify and cross-examine the information previously gathered from the interviews. A strictly passive and non-interventional role was maintained throughout the observation process. By sitting at the back of the room during the teaching session, the natural flow of teaching was not interrupted. This approach provided direct, real-time evidence regarding the actual implementation or absence of digital tools in the learning environment.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to examine and understand the main ideas from the data collected during the semi-structured interviews. The analysis process began with a word-for-word transcription of the recorded audio files. During this step, both the spoken words and important physical expressions were carefully documented. This detailed documentation was necessary to maintain the true meaning and natural context of the given responses. Following the transcription phase, an open coding method was utilized to review the written text line by line. Important ideas, specific teaching concepts, and critical statements found in the interview responses were identified and assigned labels.After the initial labelling was completed, the generated codes were systematically reviewed and compared. Codes that shared similar meanings or logical connections were grouped together into broader conceptual categories. Ultimately, these compiled categories formed the study's final themes. These final themes emerged directly from shared classroom experiences, specific school-related challenges, and general awareness regarding educational technology. Furthermore, the themes highlighted the perceived benefits of specific applications and included direct comparisons made between Wordwall and other alternative digital platforms used for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Through this structured analytical process, a clear and objective understanding of the barriers to technology adoption was successfully established.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teachers limited technological mastery

Based on the interview session with five participants, revealed a general lack of familiarity with Wordwall as a teaching media. Specifically, four of the five participants reported unfamiliarity with the application and did not implement it in the classroom. This limited awareness appeared to be a primary factor contributing to the tool's low adoption at this school.

In addition, participant I reported encountering Wordwall through teachers' training forums but did not use it in the teaching session. This reluctance came from lack of clarity regarding the application's features. Despite familiarity with the application, the confidence levels remained insufficient to further ,explore and integrate it into teaching session.

Furthermore, other participants expressed resistance rooted in adopting a new application. Conventional teaching methods remained and were widely perceived as reliable. Learning an unfamiliar platform was considered too much effort. As a result, teachers preferred to keep the existing methods.

Limitations in technical infrastructure

In addition to participants' personal barriers, technical infrastructure also posed a major challenge, especially the internet connection. The reports indicated that the school's Wi-Fi network did not provide coverage throughout the school. It affected the ability to rely on the platform during lessons.

Moreover, this limited connectivity required an alternative solution to maintain internet access. All participants reported relying on students' personal mobile data or tethering from personal teachers' devices while need the internet access. It was estimated that the school's Wi-Fi covered only approximately 60% of classrooms, leaving many teaching spaces without adequate connectivity. Consequently, classrooms near the front building generally maintained a stable connection to the school's Wi-Fi, whereas classrooms toward the rear experienced internet disruptions. This inconsistency

made it more difficult for teachers assigned to use Wordwall.

Administrative and preparation burden

Additionally, instructional adjustments presented another significant barrier. Teachers were required to revise both the assessment rubric and teaching modules to implement Wordwall. Consequently, extra preparation time was necessary to master the application's features before implementing in teaching sessions.

Discussions

These findings align with the TPACK framework, which describes interconnected domains of knowledge required for effective technology integration in teaching (Mishara et al., 2006). The limited technology proficiency observed among participants reflected clear gaps in Technology Knowledge (TK), as teachers remained unfamiliar with Wordwall. This finding was in line with Dincer (2024), who found that insufficient infrastructure, inadequate training, and limited specific materials continue to prevent teachers from moving beyond basic technology use toward advanced integration.

Moreover, this gap in TK was closely connected to Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK). It unable to envision how Wordwall could enhance their instructional strategies without adequate understanding and support. Infrastructure limitations further weakened this integration, as unstable internet connections prevented teachers from implementing Wordwall. This result supports Akram et al. (2022), who identified technological incompetence and inadequate infrastructure as the most frequently reported barriers to effective ICT integration among teachers.

Furthermore, administrative burden emerged as an additional barrier. The absence of systematic institutional support for modifying assessment rubrics led teachers to continue relying on their existing methods rather than adapting materials independently. This was in line with Akram et al. (2022), who also reported that limited time for lesson planning and preparation prevented teachers from making full use of ICT tools in their instructional practices.

D. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study showed that low used of Wordwall among English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tanjunganom was caused by three connected problems. There was lack of awareness of Wordwall, unstable internet connection, administrative and time preparation for integrated it. These results indicated that having good technology facilities did not ensure regular classroom integration. Based on the TPACK framework, a lack of Technological Knowledge (TK) limited educators' ability to see how Wordwall could assist the teaching process, while infrastructure limitations and school-level gaps further hindered regular use. These findings highlighted a clear need for continuous technology training and reliable internet access. Since this study was limited to a single school, future research was recommended to examine similar barriers in larger educational settings to confirm these results.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, several recommendations were proposed to address the identified barriers to technology integration. It was recommended that the school administration prioritize enhancing classroom internet infrastructure to ensure stable connectivity, as reliable access was identified as a critical requirement for the successful implementation of digital tools. Furthermore, professional development programs were suggested for redesign to prioritize practical, hands-on sessions over purely theoretical demonstrations.

Regarding future research, conducting longitudinal studies was recommended to track the progression of technology integration over an extended period. Additionally, comparative studies across diverse school contexts were suggested to yield a broader understanding of various adoption barriers. Finally, further investigation into student perceptions of technology-enhanced instruction compared to conventional methods was warranted to provide a more holistic view of the learning experience.

E. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Teachers and students of SMA Negeri 1 Tanjunganom, Nganjuk, for their cooperation and assistance during data collection.

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