The Use of Wordwall in Teaching English Vocabulary to Seventh-Grade Students at Islamic Junior High School

Habibatul Husna Ismail

English and Literature Department, Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

Correspondence E-mail: habibatulhusnaismail@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of Wordwall in teaching English vocabulary to seventh-grade students at an Islamic Junior High School and investigates the teacher's perception of this digital tool. It employs a descriptive qualitative design using the TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) framework by Mishra and Koehler (2006) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989). Data were collected through classroom observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation focused on TPACK indicators, while interviews were based on TAM dimensions: Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). Findings reveal that the teacher could independently operate Wordwall and adapt it to student characteristics using contextual and kinesthetic strategies. The teacher perceived Wordwall as easy to use and effective in enhancing student motivation and vocabulary comprehension. Despite minor technical challenges, the teacher managed them with appropriate strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of English learning, crucial for comprehension and communication. In today's digital era, English proficiency becomes increasingly essential, while traditional vocabulary teaching methods often lead to decreased student motivation. Thus, there is a growing need for interactive and technology-integrated teaching strategies.

Wordwall is an interactive digital platform that enables teachers to design engaging vocabulary games. This study employs the TPACK framework to analyze how technology (TK), pedagogy (PK), and content (CK) are integrated in classroom practice, and uses TAM to understand the teacher's perception toward Wordwall's usefulness and ease of use. By focusing on a teacher who implemented Wordwall based on the *English for Nusantara* textbook, this research aims to explore the instructional integration and teacher perception surrounding this tool.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method. The subject was one English teacher at MTs Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Tembung, and the object was the use of Wordwall in vocabulary teaching. Data were collected using an observation checklist based on the TPACK framework and interviews based on TAM dimensions (PU and PEOU). Documentation, including screenshots and lesson materials, supported the findings. Data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) interactive model: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS

The Use of Wordwall in Teaching English Vocabulary to Sevent-Grades Students

◈ **Technological Knowledge (TK)**

1. Teachers could solve technical problems by themselves when using Wordwall in class.

    During the research, no critical technical issues were identified when the teacher used Wordwall in classroom instruction. Although no major technical problems occurred during the observation, the teacher demonstrated strong technical competence and did not require external assistance. The learning process ran smoothly from beginning to end with the effective use of Wordwall.

2. Teachers have sufficient technical skills to operate the Wordwall in learning.

    The teacher demonstrated strong basic technical skills in operating Wordwall. During the observation, the teacher independently managed the use of

Wordwall from the beginning to the end of the lesson. The teacher accessed the Wordwall website, navigated to the *"My Activity"* menu, and selected materials that matched the day's topic, such as *"School Building"*, *"Asking for Directions"*, and *"School Extracurricular"*.

3. Teachers are able to manage the Wordwall platform to create, modify, and customize learning activities.

   The teacher not only selected relevant materials but also demonstrated the ability to manage the Wordwall platform by customizing the types of activities, such as changing the format from *"Match Up"* to *"Anagram"* or *"Spinner"*. These variations were intended to enhance student engagement and prevent boredom during the lesson. Additionally, this customization served as an evaluation tool to assess students' understanding of the vocabulary being taught.

◈ Content Knowledge (CK)

1. The teacher is able to explain vocabulary in a way that is appropriate to the students' level of understanding.

   The use of Wordwall, which incorporated rich visual elements such as images, along with a body movement-based approach, supported students in understanding vocabulary both visually and contextually. Moreover, the teacher followed a teaching module aligned with the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, ensuring that the instruction was appropriate to the students' level of understanding.

2. The teacher has a deep understanding of the English vocabulary taught through Wordwall.

   The teacher demonstrated a deep understanding of the English vocabulary taught through Wordwall. Vocabulary was explained flexibly—not only by referring to textbooks but also by adapting it to the students' context and environment. The teacher enriched the material by incorporating relevant vocabulary found around the school and used Wordwall as a supportive tool to deepen students' comprehension.

3. The teacher is able to organize vocabulary learning in an interesting and systematic way using Wordwall.

The teacher organized vocabulary learning using Wordwall in a structured and systematic manner, based on the students' textbook. Within the theme *"My School* Building*"*, the lesson was divided into three stages: *school building*, *extracurricular activities*, and *school events*. The use of various Wordwall features in each session made the learning process more engaging, interactive, and well-structured.

◈ Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)

1. Teachers can adjust their teaching style according to students' needs and characteristics.

   The teacher was able to adjust their teaching style according to students' needs and characteristics. Recognizing that some students tended to be passive, the teacher involved them as assistants in operating Wordwall. Meanwhile, other students were given an active role in writing vocabulary they understood on the whiteboard. Additionally, the teacher combined the use of Wordwall with physical activities to cater to students' kinesthetic and visual learning styles.

2. The teacher adjusts the use of Wordwall based on students' understanding of vocabulary.

   The teacher adjusted the types of Wordwall activities according to students' vocabulary comprehension levels. For example, in the topic *"Asking for Directions"*, the teacher employed visually-based and hands-on activities to help students grasp the meaning without relying on direct translation. This approach demonstrated an adaptation of materials and instructional methods centered on students' understanding.

3. The teacher uses various teaching approaches (e.g. collaborative learning, direct instruction, problem/project-based).

   The teacher employed various teaching approaches, combining technology-based learning using Wordwall with direct instruction involving physical movement and demonstrations. Additionally, the teacher fostered a collaborative learning environment where students assisted each other and actively participated in learning activities. An example of this was when students answered questions from

Wordwall related to extracurricular vocabulary, with representatives from each row competing to answer with support from their peers in the same row.

4. The teacher can evaluate students' understanding of the vocabulary after using Wordwall.

The teacher evaluated students' understanding directly through Wordwall games that displayed scores as indicators of learning achievement and guided subsequent follow-up actions. Additionally, the teacher assessed comprehension by asking students to write the vocabulary they had learned on the whiteboard after the game session.

5. The teacher can manage the class well when using Wordwall in learning.

The teacher was able to manage the class effectively during the use of Wordwall, despite the relatively large number of students (40). The teacher fostered an active and structured learning environment by organizing turns for gameplay, assigning writing tasks on the whiteboard, and utilizing Wordwall as the focal point of classroom activities.

Teacher's Perception of Using Wordwall in Teaching English Vocabulary

◈ **Perceived Usefulness (PU)**

1. What do you think are the benefits of using Wordwall in teaching English vocabulary?

The teacher expressed that Wordwall provides numerous benefits, especially in creating a more engaging and dynamic classroom environment.

"Firstly, it makes the class more lively. The students become enthusiastic, especially when we talk about Wordwall games."
"It also helps me present the material more interestingly, not monotonously."

From these responses, it was evident that the teacher found Wordwall very helpful in providing variety in teaching methods. It made the classroom atmosphere more lively, interactive, and students became more enthusiastic. In addition, using Wordwall supported the school's recommendation to combine learning with technology. However, its use was also limited, because the learning goal was not just

to memorize vocabulary but also to use it correctly. So, Wordwall was used as an effective supporting tool, not the only method.

2. Does Wordwall help increase student engagement in vocabulary learning? Why?

The teacher observed a significant increase in student engagement after using Wordwall.

"Even students who are usually quiet, passive, or lack confidence become willing to participate. They don't feel like they are in a formal learning situation."

"At the beginning of the lesson, they already ask, 'Are we going to play Wordwall today, Miss?'"

These statements highlighted that Wordwall has proven to be very helpful. When using Wordwall, students became more active—even those who were usually passive started to participate. They felt like they were playing while learning, which made the atmosphere more enjoyable and less rigid. Their engagement increased because Wordwall provided fun and challenging activities

3. How does Wordwall compare to conventional methods in teaching vocabulary?

Although not directly asked, the comparison emerged implicitly in the interview:

"Students prefer something visual and interactive."
"It's no longer just about entering the classroom, giving assignments, and finishing the lesson. We have to be creative."

Compared to traditional methods like lectures or worksheets, Wordwall was more interesting and enjoyable for students compared to conventional methods such as written exercises or memorization. However, I did not completely abandon traditional methods. I combined both to create a more balanced learning experience—with interactive elements from Wordwall and deeper practice from conventional methods.

4. To what extent does Wordwall help improve students' understanding and recall of vocabulary?

The teacher noted clear improvements in students' vocabulary retention:

"Sometimes I ask about vocabulary from the previous week, and

they still remember because we played it in Wordwall."

This indicated that impact of Wordwall was quite significant. Since students interact directly with vocabulary through games or quizzes, they tended to remember the words more quickly. The learning process also felt lighter because it was wrapped in fun and engaging activities.

5. Do you think using Wordwall saves time or takes more time in teaching vocabulary?

According to the teacher, Wordwall actually helps save time:

"It actually saves time because I prepare everything at home,

and in class, I just open it."

"But since students are so enthusiastic, they often ask to continue

playing, which can slightly reduce the time for textbook lessons."

From the responses, it was clear that once teachers were familiar with the platform and the materials were prepared in advance, Wordwall actually saved time. However, in the beginning, it does took some time to adjust and create the content. After that, everything became more practical and the materials could be reused multiple times.

◈ **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)**

1. How was your first experience of using Wordwall in teaching?

The teacher described her initial experience as somewhat confusing but manageable over time:

"I first found it on Instagram… I started trying it out. At first, it

was confusing because there were so many features, but

eventually, I understood."

This showed that while there wass a learning curve, the teacher adapted successfully, assisted by online resources such as YouTube tutorials.

2. Do you find Wordwall easy to use in vocabulary teaching? Why?

While not explicitly stated, the teacher's regular use of Wordwall implies ease of use:

"Now I'm used to it."

"I use Wordwall almost every time I teach vocabulary."

This indicated that the teacher found Wordwall was easy to use. The interface is simple, and creating content was not complicated. You just choose a template, entered the words, and it was ready to use. It could also be adjusted to match the topic and the students' needs.

3. Did you experience any technical difficulties when using Wordwall? If yes, how did you overcome them?

"Yes, sometimes the school's Wi-Fi connection is unstable. But I handle it by asking students to read their books or doing oral Q&A while I reset the Wordwall."

The teacher demonstrated problem-solving strategies and flexibility in responding to technical issues. such as slow internet connection or the display not appearing. Situations like this were usually anticipated by preparing alternative activities, such as worksheets or tasks that did not rely on the internet.

4. How flexible is Wordwall in supporting the different learning methods you use?

"I combine it with storytelling, roleplay, or other methods."

"I've also used it for grammar with multiple-choice questions, and it's still effective."

These statements reflected that Wordwall was very flexible. It could be used for individual activities, group work, student competitions, or material reinforcement sessions. Wordwall could be adapted to different teaching styles, which made it very helpful.

5. Do you think students can easily understand how to use Wordwall in learning?

Although not directly asked, the responses suggest that students quickly grasp how to use Wordwall:

"They feel like they are just playing. But actually, they are learning."

This implied that Wordwall has a student-friendly interface. Students only needed to be introduced to it once or twice, and then they could understand it right away. Since learning with Wordwall was game-based, it became more meaningful for the students.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study revealed that the teacher successfully integrated Wordwall into vocabulary instruction by applying the principles of the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework. The teacher demonstrated not only strong technical ability in operating Wordwall (Technological Knowledge), but also pedagogical flexibility (Pedagogical Knowledge) by combining the platform with group work, contextual learning, and movement-based strategies. Content-wise (Content Knowledge), she carefully selected vocabulary that aligned with curriculum objectives. This comprehensive integration reflects the teacher's readiness and competence in utilizing digital tools meaningfully, as emphasized by Mishra and Koehler (2006).

Moreover, the use of Wordwall supported multiple learning styles, particularly kinesthetic and visual learners, which aligns with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. The teacher also used Wordwall as a tool for formative assessment, combining its automatic scoring with traditional methods like whiteboard tasks. This hybrid approach supported student comprehension and real-time feedback, consistent with research by Ibrahim et al. (2022). While classroom size presented a challenge, the teacher maintained order and engagement, echoing the findings of Ningsih and Wahyuni (2020) on the importance of structured implementation of digital media.

From a perception standpoint, the teacher viewed Wordwall as a practical and easy-to-use tool, in line with Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The platform was seen as helpful in increasing motivation, interaction, and vocabulary retention. These insights mirror those of Alshammari (2022), Paksi et al. (2023), and Brugliera (2024), who found that Wordwall and similar tools promote learner autonomy and participation. However, not all studies report favorable outcomes. For instance, Alfares (2025) found that

students may become overly focused on the gamified aspect, suggesting that pedagogical design remains crucial.

Initially, interviews suggested the teacher's use of Wordwall might be limited, but classroom observations revealed robust integration with pedagogical strategies. This evolution underscores the value of triangulating qualitative data and capturing the complexity of real classroom practices. It also highlights that digital tools like Wordwall are most effective when guided by strong pedagogical understanding, appropriate infrastructure, and deliberate instructional planning.

CONCLUSIONS

This This study examined the use of Wordwall in teaching English vocabulary to seventh-grade students and analyzed the teacher's perception of the tool through the lenses of the TPACK and TAM frameworks. The findings revealed that Wordwall, when implemented thoughtfully, serves as an effective digital tool for vocabulary instruction. The teacher demonstrated strong technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge, enabling her to integrate Wordwall in a way that was both engaging and aligned with curriculum goals.

The use of Wordwall was not limited to digital gamification; it was strategically combined with contextual learning, physical movement, and collaborative activities. These approaches supported various learning styles and increased students' motivation and retention of vocabulary. The teacher also viewed Wordwall as highly useful and easy to use, aligning with Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model. Wordwall not only enriched the classroom experience but also streamlined lesson preparation and allowed for real-time assessment.

These results underscore the importance of teacher competence in integrating technology, and highlight how digital platforms can support active, student-centered learning when used within a pedagogically sound framework. The study also demonstrates that teacher perceptions significantly influence the success of technology adoption in the classroom.

It is recommended that further research explore students' perspectives on using Wordwall and investigate how it impacts their language skills more broadly. In addition,

comparative studies with other educational platforms could provide insights into the relative strengths of different tools in vocabulary instruction. Supporting teacher training in both technological operation and pedagogical integration remains essential for maximizing the benefits of digital tools in EFL classrooms.

REFERENCES

Alfares, N. (2025). Evaluating the effectiveness of Wordwall in vocabulary mastery: A classroom perspective. Journal of Educational Technology Research, 12(1), 34–47.

Alharbi, A. (2020). The impact of teachers' attitudes on the use of technology in education: A case study. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 17*(1), 1-15.

Alshammari, M., Alshammari, A., & Alshahrani, A. (2022). Factors influencing teachers' acceptance of technology in Saudi Arabia: A TAM approach. *Education and Information Technologies, 27*(3), 1-20.

Anggrella, R., Putri, D. A., & Subekti, A. N. (2023). Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di sekolah menengah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, 18*(1), 45–56.

Ariyanti, N., Susanti, R., & Fadillah, M. (2022). Analisis faktor penghambat membaca permulaan pada siswa kelas I di SD Negeri 10 Palembang. *Jurnal Pendidikan Konseling, 4*(4), 1450–1455.

Chai, C. S., Koh, J. H. L., & Tsai, C.-C. (2010). Facilitating preservice teachers' development of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK). *Educational Technology and Society, 13*(4), 63–73.

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly, 13*(3), 319-340.

Fitriani, F., Rahmawati, D., & Hasanah, U. (2023). The use of Wordwall to improve vocabulary mastery in EFL classrooms. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics, 8*(2), 112–123.

Fitriany, F. (2022). *Pembelajaran Kosakata Bahasa Inggris Menggunakan Wordwall.* https://doi.org/10.56799/joongki.v1i2.716

Harmer, J. (2015). *The practice of English language teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson.

Haryadi. (2023). The role of educational technology in developing students' vocabulary mastery. *Journal of English Language Education and Technology, 4*(1), 25–34.

Lanthony, A., Konan, R., & Filogene, F. (2022, September 1). *Factors of acceptance of digital tools: the example of the 3DEXPERIENCE platform in the context of collaborative projects.* https://doi.org/10.5821/conference-9788412322262.1298

Lumei, C. (2022, March 23). The Role Of Theory Multiple Intelligences In Primary Education Process. *European Proceedings of Educational Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.15405/epes.22032.48

Masita, E. (2023a). Digitalisasi pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di sekolah menengah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, 12*(1), 1–10.

Masita, E. (2023b). Integrasi multimedia dalam pembelajaran kosa kata. *Jurnal Inovasi Bahasa, 8*(2), 77–85.

Masita, E., Volya, D., Anggraini, D., Dewi, A. K., Susilawati, D., Abrar, M., Ulfiati, L., Arif, N., Masbirorotni, Effendi, S., Rahmah, and Fajaryani, N. (2024). *Kurikulum Merdeka dan pengajaran bahasa Inggris di era digital.* PT. Literasi Nusantara Abadi Grup.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Mishra, P., and Koehler, M. J. (2006). Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for integrating technology in teacher knowledge. *Teachers College Record, 108*(6), 1017-1054.

Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Paksi, G. R., Sari, R. K., & Somawati, S. (2023). "Teacher Perceptions on the Use of the Wordwall Net Application as an English Vocabulary Learning Media." Edunesia: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan, 4(1), 120-132. https://doi.org/10.51276/edu.v4i1.307

Pambudi, R. (2022). Interactive learning media and its impact on student engagement: A case study on AI-based platforms. *Journal of Digital Education, 5*(1), 33-49.

Santoso, R., and Dewi, L. (2021). Comparing the effectiveness of Wordwall and Kahoot in vocabulary learning. *Language Teaching and Educational Technology Journal, 8*(2), 55-72.

Schmitt, N. (1997). Vocabulary learning strategies. In N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition, and pedagogy* (pp. 199–227). Cambridge University Press.

Schmitt, N. (2010). *Researching vocabulary: A vocabulary research manual.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Schmitt, N. (2020). *Vocabulary in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Setiawan, R., Pratama, A., & Yuliana, S. (2021). Enhancing student engagement through digital games: A study on Wordwall implementation. Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 12(4), 685–692. https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1204.05

Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan RandD.* Alfabeta.

Teo, T., & van Schaik, P. (2009). Understanding technology acceptance in pre-service teachers: A structural-equation modeling approach. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 18*(1), 47-66. https://doi.org/10.3860/taper.v18i1.1377

Wordwall.net. (2022). Wordwall: Interactive learning activities. Retrieved from https://wordwall.net/

Yasri, D., Safitri, M., & Nugraha, R. (2023). The effect of Wordwall application on vocabulary retention among junior high school students. *Journal of Language Learning Research, 6*(2), 44–59.

Yestiani, H., Iskandar, A., & Rahayu, R. (2020). Teacher's perception of technology use in the classroom: A case study in Indonesia. *Journal of Educational Studies, 14*(1), 88–105.

Zahra, R.A., & Anwar, K. (2023). The Effect Using Wordwall Game Applications To Improve Student's Vocabulary In Chumchon Ban Phanokkhao School. *DINAMISIA: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat, 29*(1), 18-28. http://dx.doi.org/10.30587/didaktika.v29i1.5246