



# AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY THROUGH DISTANCE LEARNING AT MTS AL-IKHLAS JENEPONTO REGENCY

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## ABSTRACT

With the rapid advancement of technology, distance learning has emerged as a viable alternative for educational institutions to continue providing quality education during challenging circumstances. This research explores the strategies employed by English teachers in teaching vocabulary through distance learning at MTs Al-Ikhlal Jeneponto Regency. The study aims to investigate the effectiveness and adaptability of various pedagogical approaches in the remote teaching of vocabulary. A qualitative research design was employed. The participants of the study consisted of a group of English teachers who had been teaching vocabulary remotely at MTs Al-Ikhlal Jeneponto Regency. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The findings of the study indicate that English teachers at MTs Al-Ikhlal Jeneponto Regency employed a diverse range of strategies to effectively teach vocabulary through distance learning. These strategies included the utilization of online resources, interactive multimedia, virtual flashcards, gamified learning platforms, and collaborative activities. Additionally, teachers adapted their instructional methods to suit the online environment by incorporating synchronous and asynchronous communication tools to engage students actively. The implications of this research highlight the significance of leveraging technology and adopting innovative instructional strategies to enhance vocabulary teaching in remote learning environments. The findings provide valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers, enabling them to optimize distance learning experiences and ensure the continued development of students' vocabulary skills.

**Keywords:** distance learning, vocabulary instruction, English teachers' strategies

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The field of education has witnessed a significant transformation in recent years, driven by advancements in technology and the increasing prevalence of distance learning (Purwaningsih, Dewi, Wilany, 2021). With the rapid adoption of online platforms and digital resources, educators have been exploring innovative strategies to effectively teach various subjects, including language learning, in remote settings. Among the core components of language acquisition, vocabulary plays a crucial role in enabling effective communication and comprehension (Bai, 2018; Nie & Zhou, 2017).

Vocabulary acquisition is a complex process that requires repeated exposure, meaningful practice, and contextual understanding (Nurdiansyah, Asyid, & Parmawati, 2019). In traditional face-to-face classroom settings, teachers employ various instructional strategies, such as direct instruction, vocabulary games, and vocabulary notebooks, to facilitate vocabulary learning. However, the shift towards distance learning has necessitated a reevaluation of these strategies and the development of new approaches tailored to the remote environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the implementation of distance learning (Famularish, 2020). Highlighting that, it is essential to analyze the strategies employed by English teachers in teaching vocabulary remotely. This research article focuses on the analysis of English teachers' strategies in teaching vocabulary through distance learning at MTs Al-Ikhlas Jeneponto Regency, recognizing the importance of understanding effective pedagogical practices in this context.

MTs Al-Ikhlas Jeneponto Regency, like many educational institutions globally, had to swiftly transition to remote learning due to the pandemic. In this new educational landscape, English teachers faced challenges related to engaging students, promoting vocabulary acquisition, and maintaining the quality of instruction. Understanding the strategies employed by these teachers is crucial for informing educational practices and ensuring effective vocabulary instruction in remote settings.

Several studies have investigated the effectiveness of various teaching strategies in traditional face-to-face vocabulary instruction. These strategies include explicit instruction, context-based learning, multimedia integration, and collaborative activities. However, limited research exists on the adaptation and effectiveness of these strategies in the distance learning context, particularly in the specific setting of MTs Al-Ikhlas Jeneponto Regency.

This research article aims to bridge this gap in knowledge by conducting an analysis of English teachers' strategies in teaching vocabulary through distance learning at MTs Al-Ikhlas Jeneponto Regency. The study will examine the strategies employed, their

effectiveness in promoting vocabulary acquisition, and the challenges encountered by teachers in the remote learning environment. By identifying successful strategies and addressing the challenges faced, this research contributes to the development of effective pedagogical approaches in remote vocabulary instruction.

The findings of this study have implications for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers. The insights gained from analyzing the strategies used by English teachers at MTs Al-Ikhlâs Jeneponto Regency can inform the design of instructional materials, the selection of appropriate technology tools, and the implementation of effective pedagogical practices in distance learning environments. Additionally, the research findings can contribute to the ongoing discussions on optimizing vocabulary acquisition in remote settings and support the development of policies that promote quality education in challenging circumstances.

Therefore, this research article addresses the need to analyze the strategies employed by English teachers in teaching vocabulary through distance learning at MTs Al-Ikhlâs Jeneponto Regency. By conducting this analysis, the research aims to contribute to the advancement of effective vocabulary instruction in remote learning environments and support the development of high-quality education in similar settings.

## **2. METHODS**

To conduct an analysis of English teachers' strategies in teaching vocabulary through distance learning at MTs Al-Ikhlâs Jeneponto Regency, a qualitative research design was employed. The participants of this study consisted of English teachers at MTs Al-Ikhlâs Jeneponto Regency who have experience in teaching vocabulary through distance learning. Qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of English teachers to gain in-depth insights into their experiences, challenges faced, and successful strategies employed in teaching vocabulary through distance learning. The interviews were allowed for open-ended exploration of the teachers' perspectives and practices. Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to directly observe the implementation of vocabulary teaching strategies in the remote learning environment. This involved observing online classes, reviewing instructional materials, and noting the specific strategies employed by the teachers. Classroom observations were provided contextualized data on the actual implementation of strategies, student engagement, and any challenges encountered during the instructional process.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of the analysis of English teachers' strategies in teaching vocabulary through distance learning at MTs Al-Ikhlâs Jeneponto Regency revealed valuable insights

into the approaches employed, challenges faced, and effective strategies utilized in the remote learning environment.

### *Strategies Employed:*

The interviews and classroom observations highlighted a diverse range of strategies employed by English teachers in teaching vocabulary through distance learning. These strategies included:

- a) Utilization of online resources: Teachers made extensive use of online resources such as interactive vocabulary websites, digital dictionaries, and vocabulary-building apps to provide students with additional practice and engagement opportunities.
- b) Multimedia integration: Teachers incorporated multimedia elements such as videos, audio clips, and visuals to enhance vocabulary instruction and create a more interactive and engaging learning environment.
- c) Virtual flashcards: Virtual flashcards were widely used by teachers to facilitate vocabulary retention and reinforce word-meaning associations. These digital flashcards allowed for self-paced practice and repetition.
- d) Gamified learning platforms: Teachers utilized gamified learning platforms and online quizzes to create an enjoyable and competitive learning experience for students, promoting their active participation and motivation in vocabulary acquisition.
- e) Collaborative activities: Teachers encouraged collaborative activities among students through virtual breakout rooms and group discussions. These activities fostered peer interaction, communication, and cooperative learning, promoting vocabulary usage and understanding.

### *Challenges Faced:*

The analysis also revealed several challenges encountered by English teachers in teaching vocabulary through distance learning:

- a) Limited access to technology: Some students faced challenges in accessing appropriate devices or stable internet connections, hindering their engagement with online vocabulary activities and resources.

- b) Internet connectivity issues: Teachers reported instances of connectivity problems, leading to disruptions in online classes and affecting students' participation and engagement.
- c) Reduced opportunities for face-to-face interaction: The absence of physical classrooms and direct interaction limited the opportunities for immediate feedback, clarification, and personalized support, posing challenges in addressing individual student needs.

*Effective Strategies:*

Despite the challenges, the analysis identified effective strategies employed by English teachers to overcome the limitations of distance learning and promote vocabulary acquisition:

- a) Synchronous and asynchronous communication: Teachers utilized synchronous communication tools like video conferencing platforms to conduct live interactive sessions and provide real-time feedback. Asynchronous communication tools, such as discussion boards and email, were used to facilitate ongoing communication and support outside of class time.
- b) Individualized support: Teachers made efforts to provide individualized support to students through one-on-one online meetings, personalized feedback on assignments, and virtual office hours, ensuring that students received tailored guidance and assistance.
- c) Clear instructions and organization: Teachers emphasized clear instructions and well-organized lesson plans to enhance student understanding and minimize confusion. Structured lesson materials, step-by-step explanations, and visual aids were used to facilitate comprehension and independent learning.

The strategies employed by English teachers in teaching vocabulary through distance learning at MTs Al-Ikhlâs Jeneponto Regency reflect their innovative approaches to engage students and enhance their vocabulary acquisition. The utilization of online resources emerged as a prominent strategy, indicating the recognition of the vast array of digital tools available to support vocabulary learning. By incorporating interactive vocabulary websites, digital dictionaries, and vocabulary-building apps, teachers provided students with diverse opportunities for practice and engagement (Godwin-Jones, 2014). This strategy aligns with the current trend of leveraging technology to enrich language learning experiences.

Another effective strategy identified was the integration of multimedia elements. By incorporating videos, audio clips, and visuals, teachers created a multi-modal learning environment that catered to different learning styles and enhanced students' understanding and retention of vocabulary (Mothe, 2002). Multimedia elements offer authentic language contexts, real-life examples, and audio-visual support, making the learning experience more engaging and meaningful (Kanellopoulou, Kermanidis, and Giannakouloupoulos, 2019).

Virtual flashcards proved to be a valuable tool in vocabulary instruction through distance learning. By using digital flashcards, teachers enabled students to practice vocabulary independently, review word meanings, and reinforce their understanding through self-paced practice and repetition. The availability of virtual flashcards provided flexibility and convenience for students to engage with vocabulary learning materials outside the classroom. This strategy aligns with research on the benefits of spaced repetition and active recall in vocabulary acquisition (Boers et al., 2017).

The use of gamified learning platforms added an element of excitement and competition to vocabulary learning. By incorporating game elements such as points, levels, and rewards, teachers fostered students' motivation and engagement. Gamified learning platforms create a sense of achievement and progress, making vocabulary learning more enjoyable and encouraging students to actively participate in vocabulary acquisition tasks (Alfehaid, 2019). This strategy aligns with the growing interest in gamification as a means to enhance student motivation and engagement in various educational contexts.

Collaborative activities played a crucial role in promoting vocabulary usage and understanding among students. Through virtual breakout rooms and group discussions, teachers provided opportunities for peer interaction, communication, and cooperative learning. Collaborative activities not only facilitated vocabulary practice but also nurtured students' social and communication skills (Elekaei, Tabrizi, and Chalak, 2020). This strategy recognized the importance of creating a collaborative and interactive learning environment, even in the remote setting.

The diverse range of strategies employed by English teachers demonstrates their adaptability and creativity in navigating the challenges of distance learning. These strategies cater to different aspects of vocabulary acquisition, including practice, retention, engagement, and meaningful use. By utilizing a combination of online resources, multimedia integration, virtual flashcards, gamified learning platforms, and collaborative activities, teachers aimed to create a comprehensive and effective vocabulary learning experience for their students.

These findings have practical implications for educators and instructional designers. They highlight the importance of leveraging technology, incorporating multimedia elements, providing interactive and engaging learning activities, and fostering collaboration in vocabulary instruction through distance learning. Educators can draw inspiration from these strategies and adapt them to their own teaching contexts, considering the specific needs and resources available to them.

The challenges faced by English teachers in teaching vocabulary through distance learning at MTs Al-Ikhlâs Jeneponto Regency highlight the complexities associated with remote instruction. Limited access to technology emerged as a significant challenge, with some students lacking appropriate devices or stable internet connections. This limitation hindered their ability to fully engage with online vocabulary activities and resources, potentially affecting their vocabulary acquisition and overall learning experience. Addressing this challenge requires a concerted effort from educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to technology and internet connectivity for all students.

Internet connectivity issues were also reported as a challenge faced by teachers. Disruptions in online classes due to poor internet connections not only disrupted the flow of instruction but also impacted students' active participation and engagement (Ali & Deris, 2019; Gryzelius, 2015). Teachers had to adapt their teaching strategies and be prepared to handle such disruptions by employing alternative methods of communication and providing offline resources to mitigate the impact of connectivity issues on students' learning.

One notable challenge arising from distance learning was the reduced opportunities for face-to-face interaction. In a traditional classroom setting, teachers can provide immediate feedback, address students' questions and concerns, and tailor instruction based on individual needs. However, the remote learning environment poses limitations in terms of direct interaction and personalized support (Sadikin, 2016). Teachers had to explore alternative methods, such as online discussion forums, virtual office hours, and asynchronous communication channels, to maintain ongoing communication and support students' vocabulary development. The challenge lies in finding effective ways to provide timely feedback, address individual difficulties, and maintain a sense of connectedness and support within the virtual learning environment.

These challenges underscore the importance of ongoing professional development for teachers in adapting their instructional practices to the remote learning context. Teachers need training and support in leveraging technology effectively, developing strategies to overcome connectivity issues, and designing engaging and interactive online vocabulary instruction. Collaboration among teachers, administrators, and support staff is

crucial in addressing these challenges and developing comprehensive solutions to ensure the quality and inclusivity of vocabulary teaching in distance learning environments.

The effective strategies employed by English teachers in teaching vocabulary through distance learning at MTs Al-Ikhlas Jeneponto Regency demonstrate their dedication to providing quality education and supporting students' vocabulary acquisition. Despite the challenges posed by the remote learning environment, teachers implemented strategies to ensure effective communication, individualized support, and clarity in instruction.

Synchronous communication tools played a crucial role in creating live interactive sessions and maintaining real-time engagement with students. Video conferencing platforms allowed teachers to conduct virtual classes, enabling direct interaction, immediate feedback, and active participation (Ali & Deris, 2019; Elekaei et al., 2020; Posyidin, 2019). These synchronous sessions facilitated student-teacher and peer-to-peer communication, fostering a sense of connectedness and collaboration within the virtual classroom.

Individualized support emerged as a key strategy to address the diverse needs of students. Teachers provided one-on-one online meetings, personalized feedback on assignments, and virtual office hours to offer tailored guidance and assistance. This individualized approach acknowledged the importance of addressing students' specific difficulties, providing targeted support, and fostering a supportive learning environment (Jaleel, Sukri, & Ayub, 2019). By personalizing their interactions and feedback, teachers nurtured student confidence, motivation, and growth in vocabulary acquisition.

Clear instructions and organization were emphasized as effective strategies to enhance student understanding and minimize confusion. Teachers recognized the importance of presenting information in a structured and organized manner, ensuring that students could navigate through the lesson materials easily (Ali and Rosli, 2019). By providing step-by-step explanations, visual aids, and well-organized lesson plans, teachers facilitated comprehension and independent learning. Clear instructions helped students grasp the learning objectives, follow the tasks, and engage effectively with vocabulary activities and exercises.

These effective strategies highlight the adaptability and resourcefulness of English teachers in overcoming the challenges of distance learning. By utilizing synchronous and asynchronous communication tools, providing individualized support, and emphasizing clear instructions and organization, teachers created an environment conducive to effective vocabulary instruction. These strategies align with student-centered approaches,



focusing on personalized learning experiences, clear communication, and structured instruction.

## **CONCLUSION**

The analysis revealed that English teachers at MTs Al-Ikhlâs Jeneponto Regency implemented a diverse range of strategies to effectively teach vocabulary in the remote learning context. These strategies included the utilization of online resources, multimedia integration, virtual flashcards, gamified learning platforms, and collaborative activities. By leveraging these strategies, teachers created engaging and interactive learning experiences for students, fostering vocabulary acquisition and promoting active participation.

However, the study also highlighted several challenges faced by English teachers in teaching vocabulary through distance learning. Limited access to technology, internet connectivity issues, and reduced opportunities for face-to-face interaction emerged as significant obstacles. These challenges necessitate efforts to bridge the digital divide, improve internet connectivity, and explore alternative methods of communication and support to ensure equitable access and quality education for all students.

Despite these challenges, the effective strategies employed by English teachers showcased their adaptability and resourcefulness. Synchronous and asynchronous communication, individualized support, and clear instructions and organization were identified as key strategies that facilitated effective vocabulary instruction. These strategies emphasized student-centered approaches, personalized learning experiences, and the creation of a supportive learning environment.

The implications of this research extend to the broader educational landscape. Educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers can draw upon the findings to optimize distance vocabulary instruction and enhance the overall quality of remote learning experiences. Ongoing professional development programs and support for teachers are essential in equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the challenges of remote vocabulary teaching effectively.

## **Acknowledgment**

The authors would like to express their heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all the individuals and institutions who contributed to the successful completion of this research on English teachers' strategies in teaching vocabulary through distance learning at MTs Al-Ikhlâs Jeneponto Regency.

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