

**EXPLORING TEACHERS CHALLENGES IN TEACHING
ENGLISH VOCABULARY IN A RURAL ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL IN BOJONEGORO**

SKRIPSI



Presented to
IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Sarjana in English Education

By :
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NIM 22120032

**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS EDUCATION
IKIP PGRI BOJONEGORO**

2026

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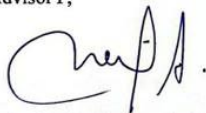
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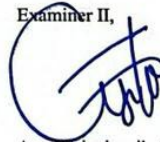
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MOTTO

"Allah tidak mengatakan hidup ini mudah. Tetapi Allah berjanji, bahwa sesungguhnya bersama kesulitan ada kemudahan"

(Q.S Al-Insyirah: 5-6)

"Hatiku tenang karena mengetahui bahwa apa yang melewatkan ku tidak akan pernah menjadi takdirku, dan apa yang ditakdirkan untukku tidak akan pernah melewatkan ku"

(Umar Bin Khattab)

"Apapun yang sudah terjadi dalam hidupmu, jangan katakan "seandainya", tapi katakan "Qadarullah" karna semua yang terjadi adalah takdir dan takdir Allah itu selalu baik, karna Allah itu maha baik"

(Ustadz Hanan Attaki)

“ Life must go on, be serious about today and do your best, so that tomorrow there will be no more regrets.”

(K.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. First and foremost, all praise and gratitude be to Allah SWT, the Almighty, for His endless mercy, blessings, guidance, and strength throughout my life. Without His grace, I would not have been able to complete this thesis. May peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad SAW, whose exemplary character and teachings continue to inspire me.

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the support, guidance, and prayers of many wonderful people. Therefore, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

1. My beloved parents.

My deepest gratitude goes to my beloved parents for their unconditional love, endless prayers, sacrifices, patience, and unwavering support. Although they did not have the opportunity to pursue higher education, they always believed in me and encouraged me to achieve my dreams. Every accomplishment I have achieved is a reflection of their love and dedication.

2. My esteemed supervisors, Meiga Ratih Tirtanawati, M.Pd. and Dr. Refi Ranto Rozak, M.Pd.

I sincerely thank them for their invaluable guidance, constructive feedback, patience, and continuous encouragement throughout this research. Their knowledge, support, and dedication have greatly contributed to the completion of this thesis and inspired me to grow as a researcher and future educator.

3. To SDN NGABLAK 1 and MI AL ISLAM

The researcher also expresses sincere gratitude to the principal and English teachers of SDN Ngablak 1 and MI Al-Islam, Bojonegoro, for their willingness to participate in this research and for providing valuable information and support during the data collection process.

4. To my dearest friends, "Madesukses" (Khafita, Hafizah, Sabrina, Anik, and Dian).

Thank you for filling my college journey with unforgettable memories, laughter, and meaningful experiences. I deeply appreciate your patience in answering my endless questions, your support during difficult times, and your willingness to listen whenever I felt overwhelmed. Your friendship has made every challenge easier to overcome and every success more meaningful. I sincerely hope that one day we will all achieve our dreams.

5. To myself, Putri Khafita Ulul'Azmi.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge myself for remaining strong throughout this long academic journey. Thank you for choosing to keep going despite challenges, self-doubt, exhaustion, and times when giving up seemed easier. Thank you for believing that every struggle ultimately results in growth. Continue to be disciplined, resilient, and hardworking in pursuing your dreams. I am proud of your achievements, and this thesis is proof that perseverance, determination, and faith can overcome any obstacle.

Finally, I realize that this thesis is far from perfect. Therefore, I sincerely welcome constructive criticism and suggestions for future improvement. I hope this thesis will provide valuable insights and contribute to the development of English language education, particularly in teaching English vocabulary in rural elementary schools, and serve as a useful reference for future researchers.

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I, the undersigned below:

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In order to uphold academic integrity, sincerely and without coercion from any parties, I hereby declare that the thesis entitled:

**"EXPLORING TEACHERS CHALLENGES IN TEACHING ENGLISH
VOCABULARY IN A RURAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN
BOJONEGORO"**

Is the result of my own original work, and all sources of information used have been clearly cited in the reference list according to the scientific and academic code of ethics. I am aware that if any violations of scholarly ethics regarding to the authenticity of this work are found, I personally accept the consequences in accordance with the applicable regulations and am prepared to bear legal sanctions.

Bojonegoro, 14 July 2026


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ABSTRACT

Ululazmi, Putri Khafita. (2026). "Exploring Teachers Challenges In Teaching English Vocabulary In A Rural Elementary School In Bojonegoro." Skripsi. English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Advisors: (I) Meiga Ratih Tirtanawati, M.Pd. (II) Dr. Refi Ranto Rozak, M.Pd.

Keywords: *teacher challenges, English vocabulary, rural elementary school*

Vocabulary is one of the most essential components of English language learning, as it underlies the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. However, teaching English vocabulary in rural elementary schools remains challenging due to limited educational facilities, teachers whose educational background is not in English Language Education, and students' low motivation to learn English. This study aimed to explore the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching English vocabulary in rural elementary schools in Bojonegoro Regency and to describe the factors contributing to these challenges. This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design. Data were collected from two English teachers through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation, and were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The research was conducted at SDN Ngablak 1 and MI Al-Islam, two rural elementary schools in Ngablak Village, Dander District, Bojonegoro Regency. The findings revealed that teachers encountered four major categories of challenges, namely pedagogical, professional, institutional and contextual, and student-related challenges, which were influenced by student-related, teacher-related, school-facility, and environmental factors. The study concludes that improving English vocabulary instruction in rural elementary schools requires more interactive and contextual teaching strategies, continuous professional development for teachers, and improved educational facilities to support effective English language learning.

ABSTRAK

Ululazmi, Putri Khafita. (2026). "Exploring Teachers Challenges In Teaching English Vocabulary In A Rural Elementary School In Bojonegoro." Skripsi, Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Pembimbing I Meiga Ratih Tirtanawati, S.Pd., M.Pd, Pembimbing II Dr. Refi Ranto Rozak, S.Pd., M.Pd

Keywords: *tantangan guru, kosakata bahasa Inggris, sekolah dasar pedesaan*

Kosakata merupakan salah satu komponen terpenting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris karena menjadi dasar bagi pengembangan keterampilan menyimak, berbicara, membaca, dan menulis. Namun demikian, pengajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris di sekolah dasar pedesaan masih menghadapi berbagai kendala, antara lain keterbatasan fasilitas pendidikan, latar belakang pendidikan guru yang tidak berasal dari bidang Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, serta rendahnya motivasi siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi tantangan yang dialami guru dalam mengajar kosakata bahasa Inggris di sekolah dasar pedesaan di Kabupaten Bojonegoro serta mendeskripsikan faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan tantangan tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan dari dua orang guru bahasa Inggris melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi non-partisipan, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña (2014) yang meliputi kondensasi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan simpulan dan verifikasi. Penelitian dilakukan di SDN Ngablak 1 dan MI Al-Islam, dua sekolah dasar pedesaan yang terletak di Desa Ngablak, Kecamatan Dander, Kabupaten Bojonegoro. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru menghadapi empat kategori tantangan utama, yaitu tantangan pedagogis, profesional, institusional dan kontekstual, serta tantangan yang berkaitan dengan siswa, yang dipengaruhi oleh faktor siswa, faktor guru, faktor fasilitas sekolah, dan faktor lingkungan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa peningkatan pengajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris di sekolah dasar pedesaan memerlukan strategi pengajaran yang lebih interaktif dan kontekstual, pengembangan profesional berkelanjutan bagi guru, serta perbaikan fasilitas pendidikan untuk mendukung pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang efektif.

PREFACE

Praise and gratitude to God Almighty, for by His grace and blessings, the author has been able to successfully complete this skripsi. This skripsi was written as one of the requirements for a bachelor's degree in education.

This skripsi is entitled "**Exploring Teacher Challenges in Teaching English Vocabulary in a Rural Elementary School in Bojonegoro.**" This skripsi was motivated by the phenomenon of English language learning, particularly vocabulary teaching, which still faces various challenges in rural elementary schools. Limited learning facilities, student background and abilities, and teacher strategies and competencies are factors that influence learning effectiveness. Therefore, this research is expected to provide a clearer picture of the challenges faced by teachers and the efforts that can be made to overcome them.

In the process of preparing this skripsi, the author recognized various obstacles, such as determining the research subject, aligning the research design with a phenomenological approach, and modifying academic writing to conform to institutional norms. This project was successfully completed by addressing these issues through ongoing consultation, careful editing, and advice from academic advisors.

The author would like to take this opportunity to express his deepest gratitude to Meiga Ratih Tirtanawati, M.Pd., as First Advisor, and Dr. Refi Ranto Rozak, M.Pd., as Second Advisor, who patiently provided guidance, direction, input, and motivation throughout the process of preparing this thesis. He also expresses his gratitude to all parties who have assisted, directly or indirectly, in ensuring the successful completion of this thesis proposal.

The author acknowledges that this skripsi has limitations and is far from perfect. Therefore, he welcomes constructive criticism and suggestions for the improvement of this research in the future. He hopes that this thesis proposal will benefit the development of science, particularly in the field of English language education.

Bojonegoro, 10 July 2026

Researcher

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In the current era of globalization and rapid technological advancement, mastering English has become an essential need, rather than merely a valuable asset. English functions as a global lingua franca in fields such as business, science, technology, and academia, enabling wider access to international communication, education, and professional opportunities (Thompson, 2024). Research also shows that strong English skills support participation in global labour markets and enhance competitiveness in a digital economy where English is the predominant language of information exchange (Rahmi Safitri et al., 2025). Recognizing this strategic importance, the Indonesian government has promoted the development of English literacy from an early age to strengthen national human resource competitiveness.

In Indonesia, English language education is increasingly being introduced to young children. The introduction of a second language during the elementary school years is based on strong pedagogical reasons. The opportunity to acquire advanced language skills is higher for students who begin language learning in elementary school compared to those who begin when entering secondary school (Ball et al., 2014). This is in line with Lightbown and Spada, (2021), who argue that younger learners benefit from early exposure to a foreign language due to cognitive flexibility and heightened sensitivity to linguistic input during the early years of development.

In learning English, there are four skills that students must master: speak-

ing, listening, reading, and writing. To achieve proficiency in these skills, students must also possess a solid understanding of language components, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Vocabulary is a fundamental element in mastering English. It is often seen as the foundation of language, without enough words, children cannot express complex ideas or understand what they read and hear effectively. Particularly is A student's capacity to understand oral and written messages is hampered by a lack of vocabulary in reading and listening comprehension. Having a large vocabulary makes it possible to communicate ideas and concepts more confidently, fluently, and precisely in speaking and writing production. In addition to boosting students' confidence to actively engage in both study and life, effective vocabulary instruction can enhance language proficiency in general.

However, teaching English vocabulary still presents a number of challenges for teachers globally, such as poor student motivation, the use of traditional methods that prioritize memorization, and a dearth of media that accommodates children's learning preferences. Rural areas are viewed not only from a geographic perspective but also from an educational perspective. In addition to their distance from urban centers, rural areas are described in numerous educational studies as having restricted access to infrastructure, learning materials, professional development opportunities, and institutional support for teachers (Kulkarni, 2015; Azano et al., 2017). The quality of English language education in rural schools is strongly impacted by these traits, which frequently lead to teachers having limited professional interaction and little exposure to innovative teaching methods.

Numerous studies have been carried out in Indonesia to address these particular difficulties in rural areas, highlighting the systemic character of the problem. A study conducted by Sekar Pramesty et al., (2022) showed several examples of major inefficiencies. The study came to the conclusion that the difficulties include the subject's status as local material, which frequently downplays its significance, insufficient facilities, inconsistent curriculum implementation, and most importantly the teachers' own lack of understanding of the English language. Additionally, the use of traditional teaching methods frequently leads to students only retaining the language without being able to use it in conversation. This problem is made worse by the lack of learning support that is accessible because of the low socioeconomic status of the parents.

This is supported by Kristanto et al., (2025) investigation of challenges faced in a rural high school setting, which revealed that student variables including low motivation, low self-esteem, and significant first language interference make it very difficult for students to learn English. These internal challenges are made worse by external elements that are specific to rural environments, such as a culture that discourages the use of English, a lack of learning materials, and little exposure to the language. Together, these challenges make learning and mastering English inefficient in all aspects of the language, including speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

In regards to this, the rural Bojonegoro Regency in East Java has a lot of promise for human resources in its primary education system, but it faces major challenges such uneven access to digital technology and a lack of formal teacher

coaching programs. These problems make it challenging for schools to modify conventional teaching strategies to meet the demands of the twenty-first century, as rural schools often struggle with limited technological infrastructure, poor connectivity, and insufficient opportunities for teacher professional development (Azis et al., 2025).

Therefore, rural elementary schools were deliberately selected as the research setting because contextual challenges in rural areas significantly affect the teaching and learning of English vocabulary. Previous studies indicate that English instruction in rural schools often faces constraints such as limited resources, inadequate technological infrastructure, and insufficient teacher training, which hinder effective vocabulary instruction. Consequently, rural elementary schools provide a critical context for investigating teacher challenges in teaching vocabulary to young learners (Mariyam, Pratiwi, & Meraj, 2025).

More specifically, initial observations at MI Al-Islam and SDN Ngablak 1 revealed that learning English vocabulary remains challenging for students. Low student motivation and heavy reliance on memorization were observed, mainly due to teachers' limited teaching media and less engaging instructional methods. This condition indicates a noticeable gap between curriculum expectations and actual classroom practices, particularly in vocabulary instruction.

Several factors contribute to this situation, including a shortage of teaching materials, limited pedagogical training focused on vocabulary instruction, teachers' multiple teaching responsibilities across subjects, and restricted time and resources. These challenges significantly affect the quality of the learning process and result in students' inadequate mastery of English vocabulary.

Previous studies have widely discussed the challenges of teaching English in rural schools. However, the majority of these subjects are either secondary school-level or concentrate on general English training. English vocabulary instruction at the elementary school level has received little attention, especially in the special context of Bojonegoro's rural villages. This study aims to close this gap by exploring the challenges teachers have when teaching English vocabulary in rural elementary schools, specifically SDN Ngablak 1 and MI Al-Islam, given that vocabulary is a fundamental component of language learning for young learners.

B. Formulation of the Problems

1. What are the challenges faced by teachers in teaching vocabulary in elementary schools in rural Bojonegoro?
2. What factors do contribute to these challenges?

C. Objective of the Research

1. To identify what challenges teachers in Bojonegoro's rural elementary schools encounter when teaching vocabulary.
2. To describe the causes of these challenges.

D. Significances of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretical research on vocabulary instruction in primary schools, particularly in rural Indonesia, is anticipated to be enhanced by this study, which will also serve as a reference for future studies on the creation of English language learning methodologies.

2. Practical Significance

- 1) For Teachers: Offers information about the real challenges in teaching vocabulary as well as several approaches to raise learning standards.
- 2) For Schools: Provides a foundation for creating teacher preparation programs and supplying instructional materials for English language acquisition.
- 3) For Other Researchers: Serves as a guide for doing comparable studies in various settings or areas of interest.

E. Definition of Key Terminologies

The following key ideas are specified in order to improve the study's academic clarity:

1. Teacher Challenges

Teacher challenges are obstacles in implementing effective learning. Richards, (2015) states that language teaching challenges involve pedagogical competence, classroom management, resources, and learning context. Oktavia et al., (2022) add that teaching young learners requires managing the classroom and motivating students. In vocabulary instruction, teachers often struggle to help students understand and remember new words when teaching relies on memorization (Alqahtani, 2015). Therefore, this study views teacher challenges as technical and pedagogical issues, including limited resources, classroom manage-

ment, and effective vocabulary teaching strategies.

2. English Vocabulary

English vocabulary refers to the knowledge of words, including their meanings, forms, and usage, which enables learners to understand and communicate effectively in English. According to Mustafa Faisal, (2019), vocabulary is the most essential component of language and should be taught before other abilities. Nation, (2015) emphasizes that vocabulary knowledge strongly influences learners' ability to understand spoken and written texts, making it essential in early stages of language learning. Therefore, a strong foundation in English vocabulary is essential because it supports the development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Without sufficient vocabulary, learners may struggle to understand texts and express ideas, which can hinder overall language proficiency and academic performance.

3. Rural Elementary School

A rural elementary school refers to an educational institution located in a remote area, often characterized by limited infrastructure, resources, and professional development opportunities. Azano et al., (2017) note that teachers in rural settings must adapt their teaching practices because the schools are far from urban centers and have limited institutional support. Zulaeha & Riyanti, (2024) further highlight challenges affecting both teachers and students, including inadequate infrastructure and training for

teachers, as well as low motivation, limited vocabulary mastery, and poor discipline among students. These conditions make rural elementary schools a significant context for studying English vocabulary instruction.

Therefore, the challenges in rural elementary schools emphasize the need for context-appropriate English vocabulary instruction that addresses limited resources and students' needs. Adaptive teaching strategies are essential to improve vocabulary mastery, increase motivation, and enhance overall English learning outcomes in rural contexts.