

THE PROBLEMATIC NATURE OF ENGLISH TEACHERS' WEAKNESS TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract:

This study aimed to identify the problems faced by English teachers in improving student' achievement at MTS Raudlatul Falah. This research employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore teachers' readiness and the challenges encountered in the teaching ang learning process. The study was conducted at MTS Raudlatul Falah involving two English teachers and several eighth-grade students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and documentation, and were analyzed using the interactive model of miles, Huberman, and Saldana, including data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings showed that English teachers had generally prepared learning materials based on the curriculum, syllabus, lesson plans, and textbooks; however, the development of contextual and authentic materials remained limited. In terms of teaching methods, teachers employed lectures, question and answer sessions, assignment, discussions, and simple conversation practices, yet teacher centered instruction was still dominant. The use of learning media was also limited, with teachers relying mostly on textbooks and basic classroom facilities. These conditions effected students' motivation, participation, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation practice, and in summary English learning achievement.

Keywords:

Teacher Readiness,
English Teacher,
Student
Achievement,
Learning Media,
Teaching Methods.



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INTRODUCTION

English has become an international language that plays an essential role in communication, education, science, and technology. In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject at the secondary school level because it equips students with the language skills needed to access global knowledge and participate in international communication(Chong & Azman, 2025; Waluyo & Panmei, 2021). Therefore, improving students' English achievement has become one of the primary objectives of English language education. Students' achievement reflects not only their academic performance but also the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process in developing language competence.

Among the factors influencing students' achievement, teacher readiness has been recognized as one of the most significant. Teacher readiness encompasses mastery of

subject content, pedagogical competence, classroom management, instructional planning, and the ability to utilize appropriate learning media. It also includes teachers' emotional readiness to deal with diverse classroom situations and students' learning needs (Chaaban et al., 2021; Development et al., 2023; Lahodzinskyi & Shevchuk, 2023). Teachers who possess adequate readiness are more capable of creating meaningful learning experiences, motivating students, and facilitating effective language acquisition.

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that teacher readiness contributes positively to students' English learning outcomes. Teachers with strong pedagogical competence are able to design engaging learning activities, provide appropriate feedback, and implement teaching strategies that enhance students' vocabulary mastery and speaking skills. Effective pedagogical competence enables teachers to create meaningful and student-centered learning environments by selecting appropriate instructional methods and learning media that meet students' needs and characteristics (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). Likewise, the use of innovative learning media has been reported to increase students' motivation, engagement, and language acquisition compared with conventional teaching approaches (Xodabande, 2022). For example, studies on flashcard-assisted instruction indicate that visual and digital flashcards significantly improve vocabulary retention and pronunciation accuracy through repeated exposure and active recall, which subsequently enhance students' speaking performance (Aufa et al., 2023).

Vocabulary mastery is another essential component closely related to students' English achievement. Vocabulary forms the foundation of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Agnes & Srinivasan, 2024; Muhammad, 2025; Yaşar & Koçoğlu, 2025). Students with limited vocabulary often experience difficulties in understanding texts, expressing ideas, and participating in classroom communication. Research on contextual teaching and learning (CTL) also suggests that connecting vocabulary instruction with students' real-life experiences facilitates long-term retention and improves overall language achievement.

Despite these findings, teacher readiness remains a challenge in many educational contexts. Preliminary observations conducted at MTs Raudlatul Falah revealed several problems in the English teaching and learning process, particularly in Grade VIII. First, teachers still rely heavily on conventional instructional methods, using textbooks, lectures, and whiteboard explanations with limited integration of interactive learning media. This condition reduces students' engagement and learning motivation.

Second, observations indicated that teachers encountered difficulties in explaining language concepts comprehensively and providing contextual examples. In several classroom situations, teachers were hesitant in answering students' questions or clarifying grammatical concepts, which potentially led to students' misconceptions. Similar challenges have been reported in previous studies, which emphasize that inadequate pedagogical content knowledge limits teachers' ability to address students' diverse learning characteristics and implement differentiated instruction effectively (Fakhrunisa, 2021; Gura et al., 2022; M. Azam et al., 2023).

Another problem concerns the limited emphasis on pronunciation practice during classroom instruction. Students rarely receive opportunities to imitate correct pronunciation or practice speaking in communicative activities (Alghmadi, 2024; Fitriana

& Agustian, 2025; Hua, 2025). Instead, classroom instruction focuses primarily on reading texts and completing written exercises. According to previous studies, insufficient pronunciation practice contributes to low speaking confidence and foreign language anxiety, preventing students from developing productive language skills.

These instructional limitations eventually influence students' vocabulary mastery and learning achievement. Classroom observations showed that many Grade VIII students had difficulty understanding basic English vocabulary used in daily instruction. Their limited vocabulary affected reading comprehension, speaking performance, and writing ability, resulting in relatively low English achievement. This finding supports previous research highlighting vocabulary mastery as a prerequisite for successful language learning and academic achievement.

Although numerous studies have examined teacher readiness and students' achievement, relatively few have investigated the practical problems faced by English teachers in improving students' achievement within the context of Islamic junior secondary schools, particularly at MTs Raudlatul Falah. Therefore, this study aims to identify the problems experienced by English teachers in improving students' achievement and to provide recommendations for strengthening teacher readiness and improving the quality of English language instruction

Several previous studies have investigated English teacher readiness in various teaching contexts. Generally, these studies focus on teachers' readiness in implementing learning strategies, utilizing instructional media, applying curricula, and improving students' learning outcomes. These findings provide an important foundation for understanding the factors that influence the effectiveness of English language teaching.

Syafryadin and Santiana found that English teachers were generally well prepared to conduct online speaking instruction through lesson planning, learning media, evaluation, and classroom management (Bengkulu & Siliwangi, 2023). However, they also reported several challenges, including limited technological facilities, unstable internet access, low student participation, and difficulties in assessing speaking performance. Similarly, Latif, Jameel, and Shah emphasized that effective teaching practices, such as group discussions, multimedia presentations, handouts, and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, contributed to better student engagement despite challenges related to limited facilities and students' low motivation.

Other studies also highlight the challenges faced by English teachers in different educational settings. (Kusumah, 2023) reported that English teachers encountered problems related to teacher qualifications, students' limited vocabulary, low learning motivation, insufficient instructional time, and inadequate school facilities. Likewise, (Kusumah, 2023) explained that teachers often struggle to support students' academic language development because of limited instructional strategies and inadequate academic support, which eventually affect students' academic progression.

In addition, (Azizah, 2024) reported that English teachers' readiness includes cognitive, psychological, professional, and pedagogical aspects, particularly in designing lesson plans based on the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The findings indicated that teachers generally possessed sufficient readiness; however, they continued to face challenges in managing instructional time, developing effective lesson plans, and adjusting learning activities to meet the diverse characteristics and learning needs of students.

Although these studies consistently demonstrate that teacher readiness plays a crucial role in students' learning achievement, most of them focus on specific aspects such as online learning, teaching strategies, curriculum implementation, or lesson planning. Few studies specifically investigate the problems of English teacher readiness related to material mastery, the use of instructional media, pronunciation practice, and vocabulary development in improving students' achievement at the junior secondary level. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the problems of English teacher readiness at MTs Raudlatul Falah, with the expectation of providing practical recommendations for improving English teaching quality and students' achievement.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is appropriate because the purpose of this study is to explore and understand the problematic nature of English teachers' weaknesses in improving student achievement. Rather than examining numerical relationships between variables, qualitative research focuses on obtaining in-depth information regarding participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of particular phenomena.

According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems. The researcher collects detailed data from participants, analyzes the information inductively, and interprets the meaning of the findings.

This study specifically adopted a qualitative descriptive design. Qualitative descriptive research aims to describe a phenomenon systematically and accurately based on participants' perspectives. In this research, the phenomenon under investigation is the weaknesses experienced by English teachers and how these weaknesses influence students' academic achievement in English learning.

Research Setting

This study was conducted at MTs Raudlatul Falah. The school was selected because it provided a relevant context for investigating issues related to English teachers' readiness to improve student achievement. The research was carried out on February 2026 academic period. During the study, the researcher visited the research site to conduct interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Research Participant

The participants of this study were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling refers to a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are intentionally chosen because they possess particular characteristics and experiences relevant to the objectives of the study. Unlike random sampling, purposive sampling prioritizes the selection of information-rich cases that can provide in-depth insights into the phenomenon under investigation.

According to (Patton, 2015), purposive sampling allows researchers to obtain rich and detailed information from individuals who have direct experience with the issue being studied. Through this technique, researchers are able to identify participants who are

knowledgeable and capable of providing meaningful explanations regarding the research topic. Since this study aims to explore the problematic nature of English teachers' weaknesses and their influence on student achievement, participants who have direct involvement in the English teaching and learning process were considered the most appropriate sources of data.

The participants in this study consisted of 2 English teachers and 15 students from the selected school. The teachers were selected because they were actively teaching English during the period of data collection, while the students were chosen because they had direct learning experiences with those teachers. These two groups of participants were expected to provide different but complementary perspectives regarding the phenomenon being investigated.

Research Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), qualitative researchers collect data directly from participants through observation, interviews, and document review. To support the data collection process, the researcher employed several instruments, including:

Interview Guide

The interview guidelines are semi-structured and contain questions about teacher readiness, learning constraints, and their impact on student achievement. These guidelines help researchers maintain the focus of their research while providing space for the development of questions according to field conditions.

Observation Checklist

The observation sheet is used as an observation guide for English learning activities, teacher-student interaction, media use, and classroom situations during learning.

Field Notes

Field notes are crucial instruments in the form of special notebooks that researchers use to write down everything they see, hear, feel, and think about while at the research site, which are not accommodated in a formal observation sheet. Field notes contain two main aspects: descriptive (an objective description of events in the field) and reflective (personal views, initial analysis, or feelings of the researcher towards the phenomenon witnessed).

Physical Documentation Tools

Field records are used to record various information found during the research, both in the form of descriptions of events and reflections of researchers on the situation that occurred. Data collection in this study involved three techniques:

a. Interview

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format. This technique enabled participants to express their opinions and experiences freely while allowing the researcher to probe deeper into emerging issues. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

b. Observation

Classroom observations were conducted to understand actual teaching practices and students' responses during instruction. The researcher assumed the role of a non-participant observer and recorded observational notes systematically.

c. Documentation

Documentation was used to complement information gathered through interviews and observations. Documents served as evidence to strengthen the credibility of the findings.

d. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis techniques are a systematic process of searching and compiling interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that have been collected so that researchers can improve their own understanding and present them to others. The qualitative data analysis in this study was carried out interactively and lasted continuously until it was completed, by adopting an interactive qualitative data analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña.

Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña emphasize that activities in qualitative data analysis do not run linearly once completed, but rather an interactive cycle in which the components of the analysis move together and influence each other both during the data collection process and after the data has been fully collected (Issue, 2021). The operational steps of data analysis in this study are described into four main stages as follows:

Data Collection

This stage is carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation to obtain data on the problems of English teacher readiness and student achievement.

Data Condensation

At this stage, the researcher selects, focuses, and simplifies data relevant to the focus of the research. Data that are not related to the research are set aside, while important data is coded and grouped by specific theme.

Data Display

The condensed data is presented in the form of descriptive narratives, matrices, or tables to make it easier for researchers to understand the patterns of relationships between data.

Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The last stage is carried out by interpreting the data that has been presented and verifying the findings through a triangulation process. The final conclusion was determined after the data was considered consistent and supported the research focus on the problem of English teacher readiness in improving student achievement at MTs Raudlatul Falah.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Teachers' Readiness in Compiling and Developing Learning Materials

The findings indicated that English teachers demonstrated readiness in preparing learning materials before classroom instruction. Both teachers prepared materials by referring to the curriculum, syllabus, lesson plans, and textbooks. Teacher 1 stated, "*Saya menyiapkan materi berdasarkan buku teks dan bahan ajar yang ada*" In English "*I prepare the material based on the textbooks and teaching materials available.*" (T1), while Teacher 2 explained that additional references from the internet were also used to support learning (T2).

Classroom observations confirmed that textbooks remained the primary source of instruction. Teachers generally asked students to read texts from the textbook, explained the material, and discussed difficult vocabulary. However, authentic materials such as articles, videos, or real-life communication resources were rarely integrated into the lessons. As a result, learning materials tended to be less varied and contextual, potentially limiting students' exposure to authentic English use.

Teachers' Readiness in Implementing Learning Methods

The interview results showed that teachers applied several instructional methods, including lectures, question-and-answer sessions, assignments, group discussions, and simple conversation practice. Teacher 2 stated, "*Saya menggunakan diskusi kelompok, sesi tanya-jawab, dan latihan percakapan sederhana*" In English "*I use group discussions, Q&A sessions, and simple conversation exercises*" (T2).

Nevertheless, classroom observations revealed that teacher-centered instruction remained dominant. Most learning activities focused on teacher explanations, vocabulary translation, and textbook exercises. Communicative activities such as role plays or presentations were rarely implemented. This finding was supported by Student 2, who stated, "*Jarang sekali ada kegiatan di mana para siswa berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris di depan kelas*" In English "*There are rarely any activities where students speak English in front of the class*" (S2). Consequently, students had limited opportunities to practice speaking and participate actively during lessons.

Teachers' Readiness in Utilizing Learning Media

Both teachers recognized the importance of instructional media and reported using textbooks, whiteboards, worksheets, projectors, and occasionally learning videos. Teacher 1 explained, "*Media yang saya gunakan adalah buku pelajaran, papan tulis putih, lembar kerja siswa, dan proyektor*" In English "*The media I use are textbooks, a whiteboard, student worksheets, and a projector*" (T1).

However, observations indicated that textbooks and whiteboards were the media most frequently used, while projectors and digital media were seldom utilized despite being available. Student responses also reflected this condition. Student 2 mentioned, "*Kalau ada video tutorial, saya jadi lebih tertarik karena materi tersebut lebih mudah dipahami*" In English "*If there are instructional videos, I'm more interested because it's easier to understand the material*" (S2). These findings suggest that technology-based media had not been optimally integrated into classroom instruction.

Teachers' Readiness in Motivating Students

The findings revealed that teachers attempted to motivate students by providing encouragement and positive reinforcement. Teacher 2 stated, "*Saya memuji para siswa ketika mereka berani menjawab pertanyaan atau mencoba berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris*" In English "*I praise students when they have the courage to answer questions or try to speak English*" (T2). Classroom observations also showed that teachers praised students who actively participated.

Despite these efforts, many students remained passive and lacked confidence in using English. Student 1 admitted, "*Saya sering merasa malu ketika harus berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris di depan teman-teman saya*" In English "*I often feel embarrassed when I have to speak English in front of my friends*" (S1). Similarly, Student 3 stated that English was difficult and reduced self-confidence. These findings indicate that although

motivational strategies were applied, they had not fully addressed students' anxiety toward learning English.

The Impact of Teachers' Readiness on Students' Achievement

The findings suggest that teachers' readiness influenced students' English achievement. Observations showed that many students experienced difficulties in understanding vocabulary and reading texts. Student 2 stated, "*Ketika diminta berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris, saya masih kesulitan memilih kata-kata yang tepat*" In English "*When I'm asked to speak English, I still have trouble choosing the right words*" (S2), while Student 3 expressed fear of making pronunciation mistakes.

Limited use of communicative teaching methods and interactive media reduced students' opportunities to practice English actively. Consequently, students' vocabulary mastery, speaking confidence, and classroom participation remained relatively low. These findings demonstrate that teachers' readiness in preparing materials, selecting teaching methods, utilizing media, and motivating students plays an important role in improving students' English achievement.

Discussion

English Teachers' Readiness to Improve Student Learning Achievement

Teachers' Readiness in Compiling and Developing Learning Materials

The findings indicate that English teachers at MTs Raudlatul Falah are generally prepared to compile learning materials based on the curriculum, syllabus, and prescribed textbooks. However, material development remains limited because teachers still depend mainly on textbooks rather than utilizing more contextual learning resources. This finding supports the concept of teacher readiness proposed by (Pitriani & Wedhanti, 2021), which emphasizes teachers' ability to plan and prepare effective learning. It is also consistent with (Azizah, 2024) study, which found that teachers' readiness in developing learning materials contributes to improving the quality of instruction and student achievement.

Teachers' Readiness in Implementing Learning Methods

The study found that teaching practices are still dominated by lectures, question-and-answer sessions, and assignments, while communicative activities are used only occasionally. This indicates that teachers are able to select learning methods but still rely on teacher-centered instruction. These findings align with the theory emphasizing active learning and are supported by (Azizah, 2024), who concluded that varied and communicative methods improve student engagement and learning outcomes.

Teachers' Readiness in Using Learning Media

Teachers have utilized basic learning media such as textbooks, whiteboards, and worksheets; however, technology-based media are rarely used due to limited facilities and insufficient technological competence. This finding supports the theory that instructional media enhance learning effectiveness and highlights the need to improve teachers' digital competencies and school facilities.

Teachers' Readiness to Increase Students' Learning Motivation

Teachers attempt to motivate students by providing encouragement, praise, rewards, and explanations about the importance of English. Nevertheless, students' motivation remains

relatively low because they perceive English as difficult and rarely use it in daily life. This finding is consistent with (Ye et al., 2022) theory, which states that teachers play a significant role in fostering students' learning motivation through supportive learning environments.

English Learning Facilities

The study revealed that English learning facilities at MTs Raudlatul Falah are still inadequate, particularly the absence of language laboratories and sufficient instructional media. This limitation restricts teachers from implementing more innovative teaching strategies. The findings support previous studies showing that adequate facilities are essential for effective English language learning.

Teachers' Ability to Conduct Learning

The findings indicate that teachers frequently use Indonesian rather than English during classroom instruction, limiting students' exposure to the target language. Although teachers demonstrate adequate classroom management, greater use of English is needed to improve students' communicative competence. This result supports Shulman's theory of teacher competence and Stronge's characteristics of effective teachers.

Teachers' Strategies to Improve Student Learning Achievement

Learning Strategies Used by Teachers

Teachers employ various strategies, including vocabulary memorization, practice exercises, assignments, speaking activities, repetition, and feedback. These strategies help students understand the material but remain focused on knowledge acquisition rather than communicative competence. The findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that varied learning strategies enhance student engagement.

Implementation of Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are implemented through reading, vocabulary translation, exercises, and group discussions. However, opportunities for students to use English in authentic communication remain limited. This finding supports the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, which emphasizes meaningful interaction to develop language proficiency.

Challenges in Strategy Implementation

The main challenges include students' low motivation, limited English proficiency, inadequate learning facilities, and lack of confidence in using English. These findings support Slavin's theory that learning outcomes are influenced by both internal and external factors, as well as previous studies identifying similar barriers in English language learning.

Teachers' Solutions

To address these challenges, teachers simplify explanations, provide additional practice, repeat difficult materials, continuously motivate students, and offer individual assistance. These efforts demonstrate teachers' readiness to adapt instruction to students' needs, although further support through improved facilities and innovative teaching approaches is still required.

The Influence of Learning Strategies on Student Achievement

The study found that teachers' learning strategies positively contribute to students' understanding, particularly in vocabulary mastery and comprehension. However, improvements in overall learning achievement remain limited due to low motivation,

insufficient facilities, and the limited use of communicative teaching methods. Therefore, improving student achievement requires not only appropriate instructional strategies but also supportive learning environments and adequate educational resources.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, this study concludes that the English teachers at MTs Raudlatul Falah have demonstrated a basic level of readiness in conducting English instruction. Nevertheless, several limitations persist, reducing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and consequently influencing students' English achievement.

First, regarding instructional materials, the teachers prepared learning resources by referring to the curriculum, syllabus, lesson plans, and prescribed textbooks. Nevertheless, the development of instructional materials remained limited, as the teachers relied predominantly on textbooks and only occasionally incorporated authentic or contextual learning resources. Consequently, students had limited exposure to meaningful English use in real-life contexts.

Second, with respect to teaching methods, the teachers employed various instructional approaches, including lectures, question-and-answer sessions, assignments, discussions, and simple conversation practices. Despite this variety, classroom instruction remained largely teacher-centered, providing students with insufficient opportunities to engage in communicative language use through activities such as role plays, presentations, debates, collaborative learning, and project-based tasks. This instructional practice restricted students' active participation and communicative competence.

Third, in terms of instructional media, the teachers acknowledged the importance of utilizing learning media and occasionally integrated projectors and educational videos into classroom instruction. However, conventional media, particularly textbooks and whiteboards, continued to dominate classroom practice. The limited integration of interactive and technology-enhanced learning media reduced the variety of instructional activities and diminished students' engagement during the learning process.

Fourth, concerning student motivation, the teachers attempted to enhance students' motivation through praise, encouragement, and positive reinforcement. Nevertheless, many students continued to experience low self-confidence and anxiety, particularly when participating in English-speaking activities. These findings suggest that the motivational strategies employed had not yet fully addressed students' psychological and learning needs in developing their communicative competence.

Finally, the findings indicate that these limitations in teachers' instructional readiness contributed to students' relatively low English achievement. Many students encountered difficulties in vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, pronunciation, and speaking performance. Furthermore, limited vocabulary mastery, insufficient opportunities for meaningful language practice, and low confidence in using English negatively affected students' classroom participation and overall learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the problems faced by English teachers in improving students' English achievement at MTs Raudlatul Falah are associated with limited development of

instructional materials, the predominance of teacher-centered instructional practices, inadequate utilization of interactive learning media, challenges in fostering students' learning motivation, and insufficient opportunities for communicative language practice. Collectively, these factors hinder the effectiveness of English instruction and contribute to students' suboptimal learning achievement.

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