

TRANSFORMING ENGLISH INSTRUCTION THROUGH ICT INTEGRATION AT MADRASAH TSANAWIYAH (MTs)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into English instruction at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) has affected teaching and learning through qualitative research. Through a series of in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and focus group discussions with teachers and students, the research examines how ICT tools are being utilized to enhance the teaching and learning process. The findings reveal that the incorporation of ICT in English lessons has significantly improved student engagement, motivation, and overall language proficiency. Additionally, the study highlights the challenges faced by teachers in adopting ICT, including technical issues and the need for adequate training. This research implies that strategically integrating ICT can enhance English language education at MTs, creating a supportive environment for teachers and students in the digital era.

Keywords: English instruction; Information and communication technology (ICT); Madrasah tsanawiyah (MTs)

INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) refers to the technologies used to manage and communicate information. It encompasses a wide range of hardware, software, and networking components that enable the processing, storage, and communication of data. ICT includes computers, servers, networks, telecommunications equipment, software applications, and other digital tools and resources (Adulkareem Alkamel et al., 2018; Arif & Handayani, 2021; Jayanthi & Kumar, 2016; Nur Hafifah & Harry Sulisty, 2020). ICT is essential in today's society, allowing businesses, governments, organizations, and individuals to access, process, and share information efficiently.

ICT in English Language Teaching (ELT) refers to the integration of Information and Communication Technologies into the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language. This integration can take various forms, including the use of computers, tablets, interactive whiteboards, educational software, online resources, and digital communication tools.

ICT in ELT can enhance the learning experience by providing interactive and engaging materials, offering opportunities for self-paced learning, facilitating communication and collaboration among students and teachers, and providing access to a wide range of authentic language resources. It can also help teachers to create more

dynamic and personalized learning environments, cater to different learning styles and abilities, and track student progress more effectively (Bhattarai, 2021).

In the context of MTs (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) students, ICT in English Language Teaching (ELT) serves several key functions that can significantly enhance the learning experience. First, ICT offers access to a wide range of authentic English language materials, including online articles, videos, and interactive exercises. These resources can make learning more engaging and relevant, helping students to develop their language skills in a more practical and meaningful way.

Secondly, ICT can facilitate communication and collaboration among students and teachers. Platforms such as online forums, chat applications, and video conferencing tools enable students to interact with their peers and teachers, regardless of physical distance. This not only helps to improve their language proficiency but also fosters a sense of community and shared learning experience.

Furthermore, ICT can support differentiated instruction, allowing teachers to tailor their teaching to meet the individual needs and abilities of each student. Educational software and apps can provide personalized learning paths, adaptive exercises, and immediate feedback, helping students to progress at their own pace and level.

Additionally, ICT can enhance students' digital literacy and 21st-century skills, which are essential for success in today's digital world. By using ICT tools in their English language learning, MTs students can develop important skills such as information literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills, which are valuable beyond the classroom.

In ELT for MTs students, ICT offers benefits such as access to authentic materials, improved communication, personalized learning support, and the development of digital skills. Integrating ICT into English language teaching can help to make learning more engaging, effective, and relevant for MTs students, preparing them for success in the digital age (Sahrullah et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to explore the impact of integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into English instruction at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs). This research was conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Rambatan, Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and focus group discussions. Interviews were conducted with samples of English teachers to gain insights into their experiences, perceptions, and challenges regarding the use of ICT in their teaching practices. Classroom observations were carried out in various English classes to document how ICT tools were implemented during lessons, capturing interactions, student engagement, and the overall teaching process. Focus group discussions were held with groups of students to understand their perspectives on the use of ICT in their English learning, providing a platform for them to share their experiences, preferences, and any difficulties they encountered. Data were analyzed

thematically to identify common patterns and themes related to the use of ICT in English instruction, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how ICT integration influences teaching effectiveness and student outcomes in the context of MTs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into English instruction at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Rambatan, Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia, offers several potential impacts. This exploration is based on data collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and focus group discussions.

1. Positive Impacts

Integrating ICT into English instruction at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Rambatan significantly enhanced student engagement and motivation. Students expressed increased interest and enthusiasm for learning English due to the interactive nature of ICT tools, such as multimedia content, educational games, and digital storytelling, which made lessons more engaging.

Teachers observed higher levels of student participation and attentiveness when using ICT resources compared to traditional methods. Activities like interactive quizzes and video-based lessons kept students more engaged. Teachers have utilized Microsoft PowerPoint, educational games such as Baamboozle, and videos in English instruction.

The internet connection is stable at MTs due to the use of Wi-Fi, making it easy to access the web. This reliable internet connection facilitates the seamless integration of ICT tools into the classroom, further enhancing the learning experience for students.

2. Challenges

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Rambatan in Tanah Datar Regency faces several challenges. Firstly, there is a lack of sufficient training for teachers on how to effectively integrate ICT into their English language teaching practices. This limited training hinders teachers' ability to use ICT tools and resources to create engaging and interactive English lessons, potentially leading to less effective learning outcomes for students.

Secondly, there is a lack of variety in the ICT tools and resources used by teachers in ELT. Teachers may rely on a limited number of ICT tools, such as basic educational software or online resources, which can result in monotonous and less engaging lessons. This lack of variety may fail to cater to the diverse learning styles and preferences of students, impacting their motivation and interest in learning English.

Furthermore, the inadequate number of computers available for students at MTs Rambatan poses a significant challenge. Limited access to computers can hinder students' ability to actively engage with ICT for English language learning

purposes. This lack of access may also restrict students' opportunities to practice and develop their digital literacy skills, which are essential in today's digital age.

3. Recommendations

To address the challenges faced in the use of ICT in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Rambatan, several solutions can be implemented:

3.1. Enhanced Teacher Training

Provide regular and comprehensive training programs for teachers on how to effectively integrate ICT into their English language teaching practices. These training programs should focus on both basic ICT skills and advanced strategies for using ICT to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes (Bhattarai, 2021; Hashemi & Si Na, 2021; Nur Hafifah & Harry Sulistyo, 2020; Sher Ryn & SC, 2020).

The teacher training mentioned here can be conducted at the school level, the English Teacher Association (*Musyawah Guru Mata Pelajaran* or MGMP) for MTs, as well as at the district level in Tanah Datar Regency by inviting speakers who are knowledgeable about ICT developments. It is hoped that with these events, English teachers can be trained in their understanding of using ICT in teaching.

Enhancing teacher training for Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) teachers can significantly improve their skills in integrating ICT into English language teaching. To achieve this, it is essential to conduct a needs assessment to identify specific training needs. This assessment will help tailor training programs to address the challenges and requirements of the teachers effectively.

Developing comprehensive training programs is crucial. These programs should cover basic ICT skills as well as advanced strategies for using ICT in English language teaching. The training should be practical and interactive, providing teachers with hands-on experience that they can apply in their classrooms.

Pedagogical training is also essential. Teachers need to learn how to use ICT tools effectively to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Providing training on different pedagogical approaches for integrating ICT into English language teaching can be highly beneficial.

Encouraging peer learning and collaboration among teachers can further enhance teacher training. Workshops, seminars, and online forums can be used to facilitate knowledge sharing and the exchange of best practices in ICT integration.

Continuous professional development is key. Teachers should have access to opportunities for ongoing learning and skill development in ICT integration. This can include attending conferences, webinars, and online courses related to ICT in education.

Providing teachers with ongoing support and access to resources is also crucial. This can include technical support, access to ICT tools and software, and instructional materials that can help them integrate ICT effectively into their teaching.

Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teacher training programs is essential. This will help ensure that the programs are meeting the needs of the teachers and improving their skills in ICT integration. Adjustments can be made to the training programs based on feedback and evaluation results to make them more effective.

3.2. Diversification of ICT Tools

Encourage teachers to explore and utilize a variety of ICT tools and resources in their ELT, such as educational software, online platforms, interactive whiteboards, and mobile applications. This diversification can help create more engaging and interactive English lessons that cater to different learning styles and preferences (Adulkareem Alkamel et al., 2018; Çakici, 2016; Merino Munive et al., 2021; Olszak, 2015).

There are many ICT applications that teachers can use to help explain English language materials to students. Teachers are not only limited to using Microsoft PowerPoint; there are many varieties of ICT that can be developed in teaching English. For example, with the current development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), teachers will be assisted in creating ICT in teaching.

AI stands for Artificial Intelligence. It refers to the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems. These processes include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and language understanding. AI is used in various applications, including speech recognition, natural language processing, image recognition, and machine learning.

AI for teaching English refers to the use of Artificial Intelligence technology to enhance the teaching and learning of the English language. This can involve various applications and tools designed to assist both teachers and students in different aspects of language learning.

One key application of AI in teaching English is through language learning apps. These apps, such as Duolingo and Babbel, use algorithms to personalize language learning experiences for users. They offer exercises and feedback based on individual progress, making the learning process more engaging and effective.

Another use of AI is in language assessment. AI can assess students' language skills, including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, through automated tests and quizzes. This provides teachers with valuable insights into students' progress and areas for improvement.

AI-powered translation tools, like Google Translate, can also aid in language learning by translating English text into students' native languages.

This can help students understand English text more easily and facilitate learning.

Additionally, AI chatbots and virtual tutors can provide students with conversational practice in English. These tools can engage students in dialogue, helping them improve their speaking and listening skills in a controlled and supportive environment.

Furthermore, AI can assist teachers in creating educational materials. It can help generate lesson plans, quizzes, and worksheets based on curriculum requirements and student needs, saving teachers time and ensuring that materials are relevant and effective.

Overall, AI has the potential to revolutionize the way English is taught and learned. It can make language learning more accessible, engaging, and effective, benefiting both students and teachers alike.

3.3. Increased Access to Computers

Ensure that an adequate number of computers are available for students at MTs Rambatan. This may involve increasing the number of computers in computer labs, implementing a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policy where students can use their own devices for learning (Jayanthi & Kumar, 2016).

Increasing access to computers for MTs students can be achieved through various strategies. One approach is to expand existing computer labs or establish new ones to accommodate more students. This ensures that there are enough computers available for educational use. Another strategy is to implement a Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD) policy, allowing students to use their own devices, such as laptops or tablets, for learning purposes. This reduces the burden on the school to provide computers for every student.

Community partnerships can also help increase access to computers. Schools can partner with local businesses or organizations to provide funding or donations for computers, supplementing the school's budget and providing more resources for students. Additionally, advocating for government support is crucial. Schools can advocate for government funding to ensure that all students, including those in MTs, have access to computers for their educational needs.

Seeking grant opportunities that provide funding for educational technology, including computers, can also help increase access. Engaging parents in fundraising efforts or advocacy campaigns can also be beneficial. Parents can play a crucial role in supporting the school's efforts to provide technology resources for students.

By implementing these strategies, MTs Rambatan can increase access to computers for MTs students, enabling them to benefit from ICT integration in their learning process.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Integrating ICT into English instruction at MTs Rambatan has the potential to significantly enhance learning experiences and outcomes. However, addressing the associated challenges is crucial to maximizing its benefits and ensuring equitable access for all students. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Rambatan faces challenges such as limited teacher training in ICT integration, resulting in less engaging lessons. Additionally, there is a lack of variety in ICT tools used, which may not cater to diverse learning styles. Moreover, the inadequate number of computers restricts students' access, hindering their digital literacy development.

To address these challenges, several solutions can be implemented. First, enhanced teacher training programs focusing on ICT integration can improve teaching practices. Secondly, encouraging the use of a variety of ICT tools can create more engaging lessons. Lastly, ensuring increased access to computers can enhance students' learning experiences in ELT.

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