

## Applied Research on Community Empowerment of Teaching Derivational and Inflectional Morphemes to Pondok An Nahdloh, Selangor, Malaysia

Savira Zaniar\*, Djuwari, Mujad Didien Afandi, Jauharotur Rihlah, Fajar Annas  
Susanto

Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: savira@unusa.ac.id\*

KEYWORDS		ABSTRACT
Teaching	Morphology,	The acquisition of derivational and inflectional morphemes presents a significant challenge for multilingual students in under-resourced educational settings. This community service initiative was conducted at Pondok An Nahdloh, an Islamic boarding school in Selangor, Malaysia, which serves children of Indonesian migrant workers. Students face difficulties in mastering English morphology due to linguistic interference, inconsistent teaching methods, and limited access to learning resources. To address these issues, the project implemented a multilingual and contextualized teaching approach incorporating contrastive analysis, translanguaging strategies, and culturally relevant materials. Interactive resources, including games, digital flashcards, quizzes, and augmented reality experiences, were developed for different age groups. Additionally, capacity-building workshops were conducted for teachers and community members to ensure sustainability. The results showed improved student proficiency in morpheme application, increased motivation for language learning, and enhanced teaching effectiveness. This initiative fostered a sustainable language learning environment, strengthened community engagement, and contributed to the overall empowerment of the pesantren community.
Inflectional	Morphemes,	
Derivational Morphemes,	English	
Language Acquisition.		

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## INTRODUCTION

Language significantly influences communication, learning, and identity, particularly in multilingual communities. In Islamic boarding schools, or pesantren, language acquisition serves as both an academic goal and a means for religious education and cultural preservation (Nugraha & Sukarno, 2025; Romadhon, 2024; Siregar, 2025). The core aspect of language development is morphology, specifically derivational and inflectional morphemes, which support vocabulary expansion and grammatical accuracy (Yadav & Yadav, 2021; Zaniar, Authar, Aquariza, Rihlah, & Sucita, 2024). Proficiency in these elements is crucial for effective oral and written communication; however, they are often disregarded in classroom practices, particularly in under-resourced educational environments (Mythiri & Karthika, 2023; Sarwari, 2018; Shahi, 2025; Singh, 2024).

Research on morphological awareness consistently underscores its critical role in literacy development across languages. Studies by Kuo and Anderson (2006) and Carlisle (2010) demonstrate that explicit instruction in word formation rules significantly enhances reading

comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. In multilingual contexts, the challenge intensifies. Scholars like Marinova-Todd, Siegel, and Mazabel (2013) and Ramirez, Chen, Geva, and Luo (2011) highlight that learners navigating multiple linguistic systems often experience interference, where the morphological rules of one language impede the acquisition of another. This is particularly relevant in educational settings serving migrant populations, where the pedagogical focus must extend beyond mere translation to foster deep metalinguistic awareness across languages (García et al., 2017; Sanesi, 2024; Sperti, 2019). While existing literature provides robust evidence for morphological instruction and acknowledges multilingual challenges, there is a distinct gap in *Applied Research on Community Empowerment of Teaching Derivational and Inflectional Morphemes to Pondok An Nahdloh, Selangor, Malaysia* that designs, implements, and evaluates tailored pedagogical interventions within specific, complex socio-educational ecosystems like transnational Islamic boarding schools.

According to (Rianti et al., 2024), Pondok An Nahdloh, located in Selangor, Malaysia, represents a distinctive educational institution providing religious and general education to children of Indonesian migrant workers. Students must engage with four languages—Indonesian, Arabic, English, and Malay—each presenting distinct morphological systems and complexities. Multilingual exposure provides valuable linguistic experiences; however, it also presents notable challenges, including language interference, confusion in morphological structures, and obstacles to achieving proficiency (Hamdalo et al., 2023; Kormos, 2017). These challenges emphasize the necessity of focused and methodical teaching in derivational and inflectional morphemes. Several factors inhibit morphology teaching in this context (Berthiaume et al., 2018; Zaniar, Authar, Aquariza, Rihlah, & Pramudita, 2024). Teachers are drawn from varied educational backgrounds, resulting in inconsistent lesson delivery methods. The school has restricted access to contemporary teaching resources and technology, limiting the use of interactive and engaging materials. Additionally, parental involvement in children's education is limited by communication barriers and socio-economic constraints. These issues decrease the effectiveness of language instruction and negatively affect students' long-term learning outcomes (Butler & Le, 2017; Piskorz-Ryń, 2024).

These challenges require applied research that connects theoretical frameworks with practical applications, effectively addressing the community's actual needs. *Applied Research on Community Empowerment of Teaching Derivational and Inflectional Morphemes to Pondok An Nahdloh, Selangor, Malaysia* aims to produce practical, context-sensitive, and sustainable solutions. For Pondok An Nahdloh, this involves developing strategies and materials suitable for the students' multilingual context, practical given the school's limited resources, and effective in empowering both learners and educators. This research is particularly relevant to community service programs where the objective extends beyond academic contribution and incorporates social transformation.

The project concentrates on empowering communities via education. The program emphasizes derivational and inflectional morphemes to enhance students' linguistic awareness and provide them with tools for more effective language analysis and production. Simultaneously, teacher training and the establishment of sustainable teaching frameworks aim to enhance institutional capacity, thereby ensuring that the program's benefits continue beyond

its immediate duration. Community involvement is emphasized to promote ownership and ensure long-term impact.

This program uses a bilingual and contextualized approach to education, taking into account the language barriers students experience. Translanguaging and contrastive analysis are two strategies that assist in connecting languages and making learning more meaningful. Integration of cultural and religious settings makes learning even more relevant and interesting. The project develops a balanced learning environment that works for people of all ages and learning styles by mixing conventional methods with new resources, including interactive games, digital flashcards, quizzes, and augmented reality activities.

This study assesses the efficacy of instructional interventions while contemplating wider ramifications for migrant populations. The results are expected to help create a long-lasting language learning environment at Pondok An Nahdloh, where students will be better at speaking the language, more motivated, and teachers will be more effective in their jobs. More importantly, the project shows how working together as a community can help fix problems with education and encourage long-term growth in under-resourced areas.

The novelty of this research lies in its targeted, applied approach to addressing specific multilingual challenges at Pondok An Nahdloh. Unlike broader studies on multilingualism or morphological awareness, this study develops and tests a context-sensitive intervention model that integrates contrastive analysis and translanguaging strategies directly within the school's unique religious and cultural framework. It moves beyond identifying challenges to empirically evaluate a practical solution that leverages students' existing linguistic repertoires as assets for learning English morphology.

Therefore, the primary objectives of this study are to design and implement a contextualized teaching program for derivational and inflectional morphemes that utilizes familiar cultural and religious content, integrate interactive and digital resources to enhance engagement and motivation, and build sustainable teaching capacity through educator workshops and community involvement. The implications of this research aim for meaningful educational transformation on multiple levels. For learners, it empowers them with robust morphological awareness, improving lexical competence and confidence across languages. For educators, it seeks to transform pedagogical practices from inconsistent, traditional methods to structured, interactive, and multilingual-friendly approaches. Institutionally, it contributes to building a sustainable, resource-efficient learning ecosystem. Ultimately, by demonstrating a successful model of community-engaged, applied linguistic research, this study provides a replicable framework for educational empowerment in similar under-resourced, multilingual settings serving migrant communities globally.

## **METHOD**

This research applied a qualitative case study methodology to examine how junior high school students' lexical choices indicate their linguistic progression and communicative proficiency in academic writing. The case study approach was selected for its capacity to provide comprehensive, contextual analysis of particular writing samples within authentic classroom environments. The emphasis was placed on identifying patterns, preferences, and implications of lexical choice as demonstrated in students' academic writing practices.

The participants of this study were 30 eighth-grade students drawn from Pondok An Nahdloh to capture variation in lexical use. 30 students at junior high school level from Pondok An Nahdloh, an Islamic boarding school that integrates English instruction alongside religious education. The sample was deliberately chosen through purposive sampling, as the study required learners who were actively engaged in academic writing tasks and who had sufficient exposure to English instruction to demonstrate meaningful lexical choices. All participants had previously undertaken foundational English writing training and produced multiple written assignments before the study, ensuring that the samples analyzed reflected a baseline familiarity with academic writing conventions.

To enrich the analysis of students' texts, three phases of supplementary data collection were conducted by semi-structured student interviews in terms of five selected students were interviewed to explore their awareness of vocabulary use, strategies for lexical selection, and perceived challenges in academic writing. The semi-structured format provided flexibility to capture personal experiences while maintaining comparability across interviews (Creswell, 2012). Then, the teacher interviews for English teachers from Pondok An Nahdloh to gain insights into instructional practices and assessment approaches concerning vocabulary. These interviews focused on teachers' perceptions of lexical development, the role of vocabulary in writing instruction, and the extent to which lexical considerations informed assessment criteria. The last one, classroom observations for writing and speaking lessons were observed to contextualize students' writing and speaking practices and document how lexical choices were corrected. Field notes were maintained to capture teacher–student interactions, peer feedback, and classroom discussions to increase lexical awareness in practice.

The data from students' writing and speaking were analyzed using thematic coding based on Creswell's (2012) framework. NVivo software helped to organize and code the data. The analysis followed three main steps: open coding, categorizing, and comparing results.

For writing data, students' essays and practice were taken carefully to find common patterns in their vocabulary use. The focus was on three aspects such as lexical diversity for searching the variety of vocabulary used, lexical appropriateness whether the chosen words were suitable for the context and lexical density for the balance of content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) compared to total words.

For speaking data, interview transcripts and classroom discussions were also coded. The same three aspects were used to analyze oral language. Special attention was given to the use of fillers, repetition, and code-switching, which often appeared in spoken responses. After coding, the results from writing and speaking were compared. This comparison showed similarities and differences between how students used vocabulary in written texts and in oral communication. For example, some students used richer vocabulary in writing but relied on simpler words when speaking. Others were more confident in speaking but made more lexical errors in writing.

To make the findings more reliable, data from essays, interviews, and classroom observations were compared (triangulation). Students also confirmed some of the interpretations through member checking. These steps helped ensure that the analysis reflected the real situations of students' writing and speaking practices.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *Effectiveness of Teaching Strategies and Contextualized Materials*

The findings revealed that contextualized teaching strategies, which combined morphology instruction with familiar cultural and religious contexts, were effective in enhancing students' engagement and understanding. Lessons that linked derivational and inflectional morphemes to Islamic studies vocabulary (for example in terms from Qur'anic recitation or daily prayers) encouraged students to recognize patterns across languages. Interactive exercises such as word family mapping, matching activities, and storytelling helped students notice how words could change form while maintaining meaning.

Teachers also reported that using contrastive analysis between English, Indonesian, and Arabic facilitated comprehension. Students were able to identify similarities and differences across morphological systems, reducing confusion and reinforcing retention. Classroom observations indicated that when teachers used examples from students' everyday environment, such as school or pesantren life, participation levels increased significantly.



**Figure 1. Classroom Implementation of Interactive Morphology Activities**

Source: Author's field documentation (2024)

### *Influence of Interactive and Digital Resources on Motivation and Outcomes*

The integration of digital tools such as flashcards, quizzes, and augmented reality (AR) applications had a notable impact on student motivation. Learners reported that AR-based activities were more engaging than traditional drills, as they allowed them to visualize vocabulary in 3D contexts (for example pointing a phone at a card to see a digital object with its English label). Similarly, digital quizzes created through platforms like Kahoot motivated students by adding a competitive and playful element to learning.

Students exposed to these tools demonstrated more improvement in lexical diversity and accuracy than those who relied solely on paper-based exercises. Essays written after digital activities contained more varied word forms, while speaking tasks reflected increased confidence and willingness to experiment with vocabulary. Teachers confirmed that learners appeared more enthusiastic, often asking to repeat game-like activities.

### *Building a Sustainable Learning Ecosystem*

The outcomes of the project indicated potential for establishing a sustainable language learning ecosystem at Pondok An Nahdloh. By combining teacher training with student-centered strategies, the program created a model that could be maintained beyond the research



phase. Teachers who initially relied on grammar-translation methods reported adopting more interactive techniques, including peer feedback, group vocabulary projects, and digital integration.

Community involvement also strengthened sustainability. Parents and pesantren leaders supported the initiative by providing additional practice opportunities at home and during religious activities. Students began to create their own vocabulary notebooks and shared word lists with peers, reflecting growing learner autonomy. These practices suggest that the model could be adapted for other educational contexts serving migrant populations, where resource limitations and multilingual challenges are similar.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of contextualized teaching strategies in helping students at Pondok An Nahdloh develop greater awareness of morphological structures, particularly derivational and inflectional morphemes. When learning was connected to students' cultural and religious environment, engagement improved significantly. By linking English morphology with Arabic and Indonesian terms that students already knew, teachers were able to reduce confusion and build cross-linguistic understanding. This finding reinforces previous research by Kuo and Anderson (2006), who argue that explicit connections across languages enable multilingual learners to make sense of new vocabulary more effectively. In practice, students showed more willingness to participate in activities when they recognized that English words could be analyzed in ways similar to the languages they already used daily.

Another important insight is the role of contrastive analysis and translanguaging in improving comprehension. Students frequently struggled with distinguishing English morphological rules from those of Arabic and Malay, but direct comparison allowed them to identify differences and similarities clearly. Classroom observations confirmed that these strategies increased classroom participation, as students often contributed examples from their own linguistic background. This aligns with Oz (2014), who emphasized that translanguaging should not be seen as an obstacle but rather as a resource for deepening language learning. By validating students' multilingual repertoires, teachers empowered learners to see themselves as competent users of multiple languages, which fostered confidence and motivation.

The integration of interactive and digital resources was also found to be a strong factor in enhancing motivation and learning outcomes. Flashcards, quizzes, and augmented reality (AR) activities encouraged active engagement and helped learners practice morphological forms in ways that were both playful and memorable. Students reported that AR made vocabulary "come alive" because it linked words with visual and interactive experiences. This aligns with Priskinanda, Nahak, Wea, and Bram (2021), who found that digital resources make morphology instruction more dynamic and effective. Moreover, the incorporation of quizzes and games reduced learning anxiety, transforming practice into an enjoyable activity rather than a burden. Such results are consistent with Memiş (2019), who noted that technology-enhanced instruction strengthens both motivation and literacy outcomes.

Nevertheless, the introduction of digital tools also revealed challenges that must be addressed for sustainability. Some students lacked regular access to personal devices, and some teachers initially felt unprepared to integrate technology into their lessons. This shows that technology alone is not sufficient; it must be supported by professional development and institutional capacity building. The teacher workshops provided in this project were crucial in

equipping educators with the skills to adapt materials and use tools confidently. As Carlisle (2010) pointed out, instructional improvement in morphology requires teachers who are well trained in both linguistic theory and classroom application. The success of this initiative therefore depended not only on the strategies but also on building teacher competence and confidence.

The results also shed light on the relationship between writing and speaking performance. While many students demonstrated low lexical diversity and density in their writing, several showed more fluency and appropriateness in speaking tasks, particularly when supported by teachers or peers. Conversely, some learners who attempted more complex vocabulary in writing struggled to retrieve similar words in real-time oral communication. This asymmetry between modalities confirms the observations of Marinova-Todd, Siegel, and Mazabel (2013), who reported that lexical competence often varies between oral and written production. For Pondok An Nahdloh students, writing provided more time for reflection, but speaking benefited from scaffolding and interaction. This indicates that both modalities should be developed in parallel, with teachers encouraging transfer of lexical knowledge across contexts.

Beyond classroom outcomes, the findings demonstrate that this initiative contributed to building a more sustainable learning ecosystem at Pondok An Nahdloh. Students began to keep personal vocabulary notebooks, share word lists with peers, and apply English terms in religious and cultural settings. Teachers, after training, adopted more interactive and collaborative approaches, moving away from grammar-translation as their primary method. Community stakeholders, including parents and pesantren leaders, supported the program by encouraging learners to continue practicing outside the classroom. These developments are consistent with Ramirez, Chen, Geva, and Luo (2011), who emphasize that literacy development is most successful when supported not only by formal instruction but also by community and family engagement.

Finally, the overall discussion suggests that morphological instruction, when combined with contextualization, interactivity, and sustainability strategies, does more than improve linguistic outcomes, that it also empowers learners and communities. At Pondok An Nahdloh, students gained not only new vocabulary but also a sense of ownership of their learning, while teachers expanded their pedagogical repertoire. The program thus demonstrates how applied research in education can directly contribute to community empowerment, especially in under-resourced contexts serving children of migrant workers. By linking theory with practice, the intervention not only addressed immediate classroom needs but also established a foundation for long-term educational transformation.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that teaching derivational and inflectional morphemes through contextualized, culturally relevant, and interactive methods significantly improves vocabulary use and overall language development at Pondok An Nahdloh. Linking morphological instruction to familiar cultural and religious contexts enhanced student engagement and understanding of word formation in both writing and speaking. The use of digital tools like flashcards, quizzes, and augmented reality increased motivation and active practice, leading to greater lexical diversity and more accurate language use. Findings suggest a balanced focus on oral and written communication is essential, as students showed greater oral confidence but continued challenges in writing. The program fostered a sustainable learning environment by empowering teachers with new strategies, promoting student autonomy, and involving the community. This approach not only strengthens linguistic skills but also supports broader educational empowerment in multilingual settings. Future research could explore long-term impacts of such programs on language proficiency and examine how similar models might be adapted for diverse multilingual communities in different socio-cultural contexts.

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