TEACHERS' CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN RURAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN LAMANDAU

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Pendidikan

DESI WULANDARI

112015050

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND ARTS
UNIVERSITAS KRISTEN SATYA WACANA
SALATIGA
2019
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Desi Wulandari
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TEACHERS' CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN RURAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN LAMANDAU

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ABSTRACT

This research was done to investigate the challenges faced by English teachers in teaching English in rural junior high schools in Lamandau and the strategies they used to deal with the challenges. To find out the answers, semi-structured interview and classroom observation methods were employed in this study. The participants of the study were five English teachers in five rural junior high schools in Lamandau. The study captured the English teachers’ point of views. The results showed that there were seven challenges faced by the English teachers in teaching English in rural high schools. Those seven challenges in teaching English were the 2013 curriculum, students’ competence, students’ motivation, teaching media, teacher development, inadequate number of teachers, and parents’ supports. Therefore, to cope with these challenges, there were four strategies used by the English teachers. Those four teaching strategies were applying various teaching methods and techniques, matching students’ level and learning situations, collaboration between school and parents, and promoting students’ motivation. Finally, through this research, it is expected the results from this finding can help the English teachers to discover the teaching strategies suitable for the challenges they have.

Keywords: English teachers’ challenges, 2013 curriculum, Rural Junior high schools.

INTRODUCTION

With the increasing cooperation and international exchanges, the popularization of English education has long been a trend. In Indonesia, English is taught and used as a foreign language. At the secondary level, the government has mandated that English is a compulsory subject where students must learn English
(Yulia, 2013). Furthermore, Lie (2007) also argues that "the maintenance of English as a foreign language has been steady as it is officially taught throughout the secondary schools" (p. 2). In some areas in Indonesia, English language learning starts from the lower elementary school and even from kindergarten. In urban areas, English teaching and learning has captured new attention at home. Parents make efforts to create English learning environment for the children, so they are exposed to English language environment from an early age.

However, due to various reasons, English teaching in rural areas in Indonesia is facing considerable challenges related to access and quality. As Moulton (2001) explains, a schooling model developed in the urban context is not continually relevant to a rural setting. There are many factors that influence the quality of English teaching in rural areas. Luschei & Zubaidah (2012) states that "the greatest educational challenge facing Indonesia is the country's vast geography and many remote areas" (p. 337). In addition, Mumary (2017) stated that rural schools have limited access and resources to support their teaching. Meanwhile, urban schools have a good quality of teachers and adequate facilities for teaching and learning. According to Febriana et al. (2018), most English teachers in rural schools do not have qualifications in teaching English. For example, English classes are taught by a Physics teacher. The challenges in teaching English are not only from teachers and facilities but also from students and the social environment. Febriana et al. (2018) found that students still have difficulties in speaking Indonesian language. It can be concluded that teachers who cannot speak the local language of students may need extra efforts in
teaching English. Sulistiyo (2016) also states that rural communities regard formal education as being unimportant. Parents do not encourage much motivation to their children to study hard. So, factors such as geography, quality of teachers, resources, facilities, and social issues may result in the differences in English teaching quality received by students in urban and rural areas.

Some researchers have addressed questions about the challenges in teaching English in rural areas especially at the elementary level. However, little research is available on the challenges and strategies in teaching English in rural junior high schools in Indonesia. Therefore, the aim of this study is to describe the challenges faced by English teachers in rural high schools and ways the teachers deal with those. Research on English teachers’ challenges and strategies has never been done before in this areas.

This investigation intends to provide insight into what challenges are faced by English teachers in teaching English in rural areas and how they overcome these challenges to improve English teaching quality especially in junior high schools in rural areas. The research questions that lead this study are:

1. What are the teachers' challenges in teaching English in rural high schools in Lamandau?
2. What are the teachers' strategies to overcome the challenges of teaching English in rural areas?
LITERATURE REVIEW

This study focuses on the challenges faced by English teachers in teaching English in rural junior high schools and strategies that they used to cope with these difficulties based on teachers’ point of views. This review presents five major themes: teaching as a profession in Indonesia, English language teaching in EFL context, English teaching policy in Indonesia, the practice of English in high schools, and education in rural areas.

Teaching as a Profession in Indonesia

With the development of English as a global language, it is necessary to enhance the quality of English teachers. In Indonesia, English teachers have a dilemma in teaching. On one side, they have to teach students to improve students’ competence to communicate. But at the same time, they should prepare the students to succeed in the National Exam. It is almost impossible to achieve both goals at the same time because there are many factors that influence the success or failure of teaching English. Teachers play a crucial role in the teaching and learning process to enhance student outcomes although many factors contribute to their success (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2000; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). According to Derakshan (2015), teaching a language is “a multidimensional process, and teachers should pay enough attention to all skills of students such as: reading, writing, listening, and speaking” (p. 103). Students’ achievement in learning English depends on the readiness of teachers to do teaching and learning activities which are supported by teacher’s knowledge and
skills, attitude and practice. Teachers should have good competence and professionalism in teaching practice in the classroom. In fact, English teachers in Indonesia still lack competence in teaching. Hidayah & Marhaeni (2016), who conducted research in Ende District, East Nusa Tenggara Province, reported that some school subjects in the area were taught by those who did not have relevant qualifications due to lack of teachers. For instance, a Science teacher handles an English class. It means the teacher does not have sufficient knowledge about the method and strategy in teaching English. Furthermore, teacher qualifications, language proficiency, and training can be the challenges in the English teaching process because these aspects can cause teacher confidence (Emery, 2012). Yulia (2013), conducting a study in Yogyakarta Province, revealed that most teachers believe that teachers are more confident speaking in Bahasa Indonesia than in English. Meanwhile, Sullivan (2011) states that teachers' oral proficiency in the target language is a significant factor in both teaching effectiveness and student learning. In other words, in EFL contexts teachers' instructions and explanations are the only language exposures students get. According to Hamied (as cited in Alwasiwah, 2013), only 35% of teachers of English who qualify academically to teach English in Indonesia. In sum, it is necessary to develop teachers’ quality and competence in teaching English.

**English Language Teaching in EFL Context**

As explained earlier, English is a foreign language in Indonesia. Oxford and Shearin (1994), a foreign language is a language learned only during formal
education. In other words, the students may have limited opportunities to get language input outside the classroom because the community does not use the language as a communication tool in their daily lives.

However, the practice of English education in Indonesia tends to reflect native-speakers norms. Most teachers believe it will be more effective if the students are exposed to the target culture in language teaching. So, they are ambitious to teach English using the teaching material from the target language. According to Derakhshan (2015), a teacher must understand what, how and why such learning affects students. ELT practices in Indonesia specifically and other expanding countries generally need to be revisited because English education practice tends to have unrealistic expectations about what students can achieve (Jayanti & Norahmi, 2014). They emphasize three contextual factors for the recent revision of ELT practices in EFL countries, especially in Indonesia. First, there are three different roles of English, English as a native language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL), and English as a foreign language (EFL). The role of English in ENL / ESL is generally used as an international communication tool while English in the EFL contexts generally follow the norms used by ENL speakers. However, information on cultural values in teaching contents can also be included in teaching materials that discuss local contents because EFL teaching in Indonesia cannot ignore student multiculturalism where there are 742 local languages.
According to Cortazzi & Jin (as cited in McKay, 2002), the selection of textbooks in non-native countries must include 3 cultural information, namely source culture, target culture, and international target culture. Finally, to avoid authority and the existence of dominant culture in language, different cultural values must be incorporated into the English language used. Therefore, the expectations of being native-like must be excluded from ELT practice in non-native countries due to students’ multiculture. Furthermore, teaching English is not only about transferring four language skills, but also how to apply appropriate teaching methods and techniques to motivate and make students enthusiastic about learning and practicing English. Yulia (2013) revealed that although English is an international language, the motivation of students to study English in Indonesia is instrumental because English education in Indonesia is one of the requirements of the national exam. The students do not regard English as an important part in their lives for various reasons such as being up-to-date, education, learning a new skill, having a better job and increased life chances.

English Teaching Policy in Indonesia

Starting from the academic year of 2013/2014, the Indonesian Government has mandated Indonesian schools to start implementing the 2013 Curriculum (Education and Culture Ministerial Regulations No. 81 A, 2013). There are some changes in the standard content made by the Department of Education in the 2013 Curriculum. One of the changes in the 2013 curriculum is the elimination of English as a subject in primary schools, reduction of teaching hours in high
schools, and limited topics. In the 2013 curriculum, the number of hours of learning English in the classroom is less than that of the previous curriculum. This brings about a big challenge for both teachers and students to work harder in achieving the learning goal in a limited time. The limited hours per week surely reduce the students’ chance to learn English and teachers cannot cover all materials in the syllabus (Rahayu, 2016). The government through the Ministry of Education and Culture provides English textbooks for teachers and students. Romero (2007) suggests the use of place-based education that teachers can develop the existing local resources to help students to apply knowledge in real and meaningful contexts. The government has launched e-book for secondary schools, and it requires technology to use it in teaching and learning process. But, most teachers still have difficulty in using instructional technology which is considered the weakest area to improve, and it should be included in the EFL pre-service and in-service training (Alwasiwah, 2013). In addition, the government of Indonesia often changes the curriculum from time to time. It affects the resources used in teaching and learning English, for example old schools still use old printed books that are not relevant to curriculum standards (Febriana et al., 2018).

The Practice of English in High Schools

English is formally an optional school subject in primary schools and a compulsory subject starting from junior secondary schools. Making English study effective from primary to tertiary levels needs a lot of inputs and resources like trained teachers, communicative teaching materials, financial, infrastructure and
management facilities (Biswas, 2018). In some areas, there is no English subject in primary schools because the status of English is an optional subject. Febriana et al., (2018), found that due to the absence of English subjects in rural elementary schools in Indonesia, learning English in junior high schools was new to them. It becomes challenging for teachers and students because they should start from the basic knowledge of English. Meanwhile, English is a compulsory subject in Junior High Schools, and the government has established the standard of the National Exam. It is impossible for teachers and students to reach the desired competence in a limited time. Meanwhile, many students in urban areas already have English language foundation. They start to learn English from primary level even from kindergarten.

Education in Rural Areas

In general, the context of teaching and learning in rural areas is different. Most schools in rural areas are new schools so that the teaching and learning process in rural schools in Indonesia mostly occurs with inadequate facilities because the schools have limited facilities. (Febriana et al., 2018). The teaching and learning process in rural schools also leads to learning that only focuses on the teacher because of the lack of inadequate books as learning resources. Parents of students in rural schools also consider formal education is not important for their children. Parents’ lack of concern toward formal education results in a lack of motivation and support for their children to be able to study well. As a result, the
sense of competition is not seen in rural areas (Rahayu, 2016). Meanwhile, the Education in urban areas is fully supported by facilities and resources.

To sum up, the previous studies mentioned above focused on the challenges faced by English teachers in teaching English in rural areas in general. However, research on strategies to overcome the challenges of teaching English in rural areas has never been done in Indonesia, especially at the secondary school level. Therefore, this research addressed to answer the research question: “What are the challenges that English teachers faced in teaching English in rural high schools in Lamandau and the strategies to overcome the challenges?.

THE STUDY

Context of the Study

Since the research question of this study is to describe the challenges English teachers of High Schools in teaching English in rural areas, this research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive method in Lamandau, Central Borneo, Indonesia. Lamandau has an area of ± 6.414 km² and 8 sub-districts namely: Batang Kawa, Belantikan Raya, Bulik, Bulik Timur, Delang, Lamandau, Menthobi Raya, and Semat Jaya. There are 42 junior high schools. The scope of this study was limited to investigate teachers' challenges and strategies in teaching English at some rural high schools in Lamandau.
Participants of the Study

In this study, five schools were chosen with five English teachers as participants. The schools were: SMPN 2 Batang Kawa, SMPN SATAP 4 Batang Kawa, SMPN 1 Delang, SMPN SATAP 4 Delang, and SMPN 2 Lamandau. Each school has one English teacher. Purposive sampling was used and junior high schools located in rural areas in Lamandau could participate in this study. The schools were selected as samples depending on the location located in the farthest area. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of participants.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Length of Teaching</th>
<th>Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>English Education</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>SMPN SATAP 4 Batang Kawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>English Education</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>SMPN 1 Delang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>SMPN 2 Lamandau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teacher D</td>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>SMPN 2 Batang Kawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Teacher E</td>
<td>English Education</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>SMPN SATAP 4 Delang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection Instruments

To collect the data, a semi-structured interview and classroom observation were used in this research. The semi-structured interview was selected to get richer data from the interviewees that focus on the challenges during teaching English in rural high schools. According to Burns (2000, cited in Hawanti, 2014 p. 5), a semi-structured interview “permits greater flexibility and permits a more valid response from the informant’s perception of reality”. Field notes were used
to record the English teachers’ answers in the interview. The interview questions were adapted based on the interview questions from Rahayu (2016) and the interview questions were added according to the contexts of this study. Then, observation protocol was used to observe the activity in classroom. Observation sheet helped the observation more organized and structured. This tool was used to answer the research question about the challenges and strategies used by the teachers in teaching English in rural areas. Audio recording during the interview and observation sessions were also used to supplement the accuracy of the data gathered.

The interview questions and observation sheet can be seen in appendix A and B.

Data Collection Procedures

The piloting of the study started on September 2019. The purpose of piloting was to find out if the questions were suitable to get information about teachers' perception of English teaching challenges in rural high schools. The real data collection method was through semi-structured interviews consist of 10 questions. This method was chosen because it allows for spontaneous questions to be asked that come out of the interviewees' responses to get detailed information about the interviewees’ perceptions of English teaching challenges in rural areas. For this study, the piloting was conducted by interviewing two English teachers outside the participants. Firstly, interview questions were given to the participants in 10 minutes to give them time to think about the detailed answers for the
questions. After conducting the piloting, two participants were interviewed with revised interview questions. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian and recorded for transcription. Then, the other three participants were observed two times considering the time that given by the school. The purpose of this observation is to examine the challenges and strategies that were used by the teachers in the classroom. Field notes and video recording were used to note something important that will be useful for enriching research findings.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

After obtaining all the data from interviews, the data was transcribed using the clean transcription to show the whole picture of the findings. Then the next step was to identify themes that emerged from the transcript. The next step was to classify similar data of the same theme. The data were then analyzed, interpreted and reported descriptively based on the participants' responses.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the research findings and discussion of the study. It consists of two main sections based on the research objectives. The first section is about the English teachers’ challenges in teaching English in rural junior high schools in Lamandau. The second part presents teachers’ strategies to overcome these challenges.
The Challenges Faced by English Teachers

1. The 2013 Curriculum

The first challenge faced by the English teachers is the 2013 curriculum. When the students start entering Junior High School, English is a new subject for them. English subject is not included as a subject for Elementary School students in the 2013 curriculum that effect English subject in Junior High school. It becomes a challenge for English teachers because they should teach the students from the basic level of English. Below are two English teachers’ responses regarding their views of the challenges in teaching English as a new subject to students.

Excerpt 1
“Mereka baru pertama kali belajar bahasa Inggris di SMP. Kami terus terang harus mulai dari awal untuk pengenalan bahasa Inggrisnya; dari mulai pengenalan angka, abjad; itu mereka mulai pengenalan dari awal di SMP.”
“Students learn English for the first time in Junior High Schools, so we start from the basic level in introducing English, from introducing numbers and alphabets. They start learning from the basic level in Junior High School.” (Teacher A, free translation)

Excerpt 2
“Bagi sekolah-sekolah yang berada di pedalaman dengan tidak adanya bahasa Inggris di SD itu menjadi kendala yang sangat besar. Karena kami kembali mengajar si anak dari 0 bahasa Inggris ini, apalagi daerah pedalaman tidak ada bimel bimbel (bimbingan belajar). Jadi ini sangat menjadi kendala yang besar bagi SMP tidak adanya pelajaran bahasa Inggris di kurikulum 2013 ini.”
“The absence of English subject in rural Elementary school become a challenge because we have to teach English to the students from basic level. Moreover, there is no English tutor in rural area.” (Teacher C, free translation)
From the interviews above, it was clear that the teachers had difficulties in teaching English as a new subject in Junior High Schools. The students had no basic knowledge to follow the lessons. The absence of basic knowledge of English made the teachers teach from the beginning and developed or changed the materials in the 2013 curriculum.

The other teachers also argued that the high demand of English skills in the 2013 curriculum was one of the challenges in teaching English in rural schools.

**Excerpt 3**

“Sementara tuntutan kurikulum untuk pelajaran bahasa Inggris ini tinggi karena dasar anak-anak tidak ada untuk bahasa Inggris.”

“In fact, the demand in the curriculum is very high for Junior High school level because students have no English basic.” *(Teacher B, free translation)*

**Excerpt 4**

“Dampaknya sangat besar sekali, contohnya kan kita kalau SMP baru kita mulai dengan ABC kan itu sudah diajarkan di SD paling tidak. Nah kalau sudah di SMP ini kan seharusnya mulai memahami tentang bagaimana memperkenalkan diri, bagaimana bisa apa namanya percakapan, sedangkan dasarnya juga ndak pernah diajarin. Jadi menurut saya dampaknya itu sangat besar sekali.”

“In Junior High school, they are expected to understand how to introduce and know the basic English conversation skills. In fact, students have no basic in English, so they learn from the beginning such as learning the alphabets.” *(Teacher D, free translation)*

The interviewees above showed the struggle of the English teachers who tried to adjust the children’s ability to the demands of the curriculum. As seen in excerpt 2, students at this level should know the basics of conversation. It was difficult for the students because they had no basics of English. Teacher A admitted that she often used other sources from the internet to match the students’ level. The ways to adjust student levels and learning conditions can be done by
improving lesson planning (Robert, 2007). Moreover, the other teacher stated that it was difficult for them to develop the material because of the insufficient facilities. So, they only used the available facilities and resources.

2. Students’ competence

As explained above, English in Junior High Schools is a new subject. Students have no English foundation from elementary school, so the students’ competence is very low in Junior High School especially in vocabulary. The comments about the lack of student vocabulary knowledge were stated by two English teachers.

Excerpt 5

“Tingkat penguasaan bahasa Inggris mereka itu karena masih rendah ya, mereka baru mengenal bahasa Inggris di SMP juga, kita memulai bahasa Inggris dari awal dari 0.”

“The level of students’ mastery of English is still low because they know English in Junior High School. So, we start from the beginning.” (Teacher A, free translation)

Excerpt 6


“Students have different abilities because they come from three different villages. So, they bring their own cultures but the similarity they have is the lack of vocabulary mastery.” (Teacher B, free translation)

Based on the excerpts, it could be concluded that English teachers faced problem related to the lack of students’ English vocabularies. It hindered the students’ understanding of the subject because vocabulary plays important role in mastering all language skills. River in Nunan (1991) argues that vocabulary is one of the knowledge areas in language, is essential for successful second language learning because without vocabulary people cannot use the structure and function
in the language. As a result, the lack of students’ vocabulary mastery cannot make them actively participate in classes.

3. **Students’ motivation**

The third challenge faced by English teachers is related to students’ motivation. A lack of students’ interest in learning English becomes an obstacle for English teachers to teach English lessons. There are many factors that influence the students’ motivation in learning English. Below are the English teachers’ responses regarding students’ motivation:

**Excerpt 7**


“In my 6 years of teaching experience, students had no interest in English. First, because children live in rural areas, so they did not know the development of the world. So, they were less interested in English because English is a foreign language. Then, I have no English background so I cannot teach English effectively.” *(Teacher C, free translation)*

The other teachers described other factors that affect student motivation:

**Excerpt 8**

“Yang kedua dari segi minatnya mereka memang apa ya ya fisiknya atau latar belakang keluarganya yang memang menurut mereka bahasa Inggris itu memang bener-bener asing untuk mereka, itu juga menjadi tantangan bagi kami untuk mengajarkan bahasa Inggris.”

“Because of their family background, they see English as a foreign language and it becomes challenges for us to teach English. *(Teacher A, free translation)*
Excerpt 9
“Kebanyakan dari mereka kurang tertarik karena itu tadi menurut mereka bahasa Inggris itu tidak berkenaan langsung dengan kehidupan mereka atau mereka belum membutuhkan bahasa Inggris. Jadi, menurut mereka ya pelajaran lain lebih penting lah.”
“Students are less interested in English because there is no chance for them to use it outside the school environment and they think other subjects are more important.” (Teacher E, free translation)

The interviewees above showed that most of junior high school students in rural areas did not consider English language as an important subject because of their poor family background and world knowledge. The other factor was stated by English teacher E that students were not interested in English because they did not use English in their daily life which makes them feel reluctant to learn English. Ho (2003) as cited by Rahayu (2016) also shows that students who are not interested in English may occur in rural areas where students have little contact with foreigners and consequently do not need to learn and communicate in English.

4. Teaching media
According to the result of interviews, all teachers agreed that it was important for students to be involved or to take part in the global world to learn English. Pointing to the global spread of the language, rural schools should not be excluded from providing a quality English language education. Furthermore, they highlighted that English is important for the rural students in order to be successful in their lives and follow the technological development. However, they complained that in implementing the 2013 curriculum, the facilities available at
their school were inadequate to meet the standards in the curriculum. Two English teachers described the situation as follows,

Excerpt 10
“Kalau kita sekarang ikuti kurikulum 2013, bisa kita ikuti sesuai dengan RPP itu kan kita harus punya fasilitas fasilitas pendukung alat peraga semua kan ini kan kita nggak punya. Nah untuk membijaki itu saya seringkali mengambil untuk hal-hal yang mudah untuk kita dapat di bahan-bahan alam untuk kita pakai untuk kita sebagai bahan mengajar kita bisa.”
“If we follow the lesson plan in the 2013 curriculum, we need supporting facilities for teaching aids. But, our schools do not have the facilities. I often use things that are easy for us to find, we use natural materials for us to use as teaching material.” (Teacher D, free translation)

Excerpt 11
“Kadang-kadang kita sebagai pengajar pun apalagi di daerah pedalaman yang banyak kekurangannya. Kita akan susah mengembangkan kelasnya. Kadang juga materinya membosankan, itu juga menjadi tantangan untuk membangun suasana kelas.”
“Sometimes, we as teachers in rural areas because of many shortcomings, we have difficulty developing classes. Sometimes the material is boring. It is also a challenge to build a classroom atmosphere.” (Teacher E, free translation)

Based on the excerpts above, it turns out that facility for English education in the rural areas is still an obstacle for English teachers to meet the demands of the 2013 curriculum. The concept of K13 curriculum is so difficult to implement in the class. This is because the conditions of learners and facilities were not sufficient to support the implementation. All English teachers agreed that facilities in their school were not sufficient to support their needs. Their teaching and learning process mostly occurred with inadequate facilities. One of the schools observed in this study, had only one book for teachers. When the teachers gave the students assignments, they must rewrite the assignments in their own books. It becomes an obstacle in the teaching and learning process. In addition, from the
interview, teacher E argued that the material in the book given by the government was not appropriate for schools in the rural areas. He also added that it was very difficult for him to develop the material because it was difficult to find other references because of the sufficient resources. Teacher E expands on the situation saying,

**Excerpt 12**

“Fasilitas iya. Kemudian dari segi materi kita minta untuk mengembangkan materi. Tapi kan, pemerintah harusnya tahu bahwa infrastruktur kita di Indonesia ini belum mencukupi belum setara lah. Sementara materi yang ada di buku yang disediakan oleh pemerintah tidak kontekstual.”

“Facilities are also an obstacle. Then in terms of material, we are asked to develop the material, but the government should know that our infrastructure in Indonesia is not sufficient yet while the material in the book provided by the government is not contextual.” (Teacher E, free translation)

This challenge is basically in line with the general challenge in rural education as reported in the current studies which noted that lack of supplementary teaching materials and facilities is one critical problem in rural education including the realm of ELT (Taneri & Engin-Demir, 2011).

5. **Inadequate Number of Teachers**

The inadequacy of teachers in rural areas is also a challenge for English teachers. From the results of interviews and observations, all teachers taught more than one subject. This is a challenge for them to make effective English lessons. Two teachers admitted that they had no English education background. However, they taught English subject because there were no English teachers in their school. Below are two excerpts from the interview with English teachers.
Excerpt 13
“Kemudian mungkin karena guru bahasa inggrisnya bukan berlatar belakang guru bahasa inggris, yang pasti itu menjadi kendala.”
“Then, because of the English teachers do not have English education background, this is definitely an obstacle.” (Teacher C, free translation)

Excerpt 14
“Saya sendiri yang pertama saya ini tidak memiliki bukan basic-nya bahasa Inggris. Kemudian tantangan yang kedua sekolah ini kan semenjak dia berdiri ini kan tidak pernah ada guru bahasa Inggris yang notabenenya pendidikan berbahasa Inggris dan ada ya kita cuma sekedar yang bisa sih bisa bisanya gitu saja”.
“The first is the obstacle from within me, the first is that I do not have the basic in English. The second challenge is this school. Since it was established, there has never been an English teacher whose English education.” (Teacher D, free translation)

Teacher C also stated that he has a dual role as the principal and teacher in the school. It became an obstacle in focusing on English subjects. Teacher D also stated that he did not apply to be an English teacher at that time. However, the school asked him to be an English teacher. Such cases had an impact on the lessons due to the mismatch of subjects and teachers’ qualification. This result is basically in line with Hidayah & Marhaeni (2016) research in Ende District, East Nusa Tenggara Province. They reported that some school subjects in the area were taught by those who did not have relevant qualifications due to lack of teachers.

6. Teacher Development

The sixth challenge is about the shortage of trainings. Two teachers had no English background and they mentioned that teacher training was a dire need. Teacher C admitted that he had never taken any English training. While teacher D dissatisfied with himself in which he asserted,
Excerpt 15
“Ndak cukup sebab kalau kalau kita belajar bahasa Inggris itu kan harus kreatif tidak cuman pintar harus kreatif untuk memahami situasi tadi Oleh karena itu pelatihan masak dalam dalam 5 tahun 3 tahun cuma dua kali ndak cukup inovasi terus.”
“It is not enough because if we learn English, we must be creative, not only smart, we must be creative to understand the situation. Therefore, two trainings in 5 or 3 years are not enough, teachers must be innovative.” (Teacher D, free translation)

Based on the excerpt above, it was clear that the development of teaching skills were in dire need of appropriate training to become innovative and creative teachers. English teachers may find themselves teaching English without adequate English language training in teaching English to students in particular and such things often occur in poor or rural areas (Garton, Copland, & Burns, 2014). Because teachers may only get basic preparation in support of theory and practical application, they can then struggle to realize teaching methods effectively.

7. Parents’ supports

The last challenge is lack of parents’ supports. Parents in rural schools did not consider English language subjects important to their children. The absence of parents' concern for English results in a lack of motivation and support that they provide to their children. Teacher A stated that financial factors influenced parents' supports in providing learning facilities for their children, such as dictionaries. Socio-economic condition in rural areas was still low. Teacher A described on the situation,

Excerpt 16
“Kepedulian terhadap pendidikan orang tua di sini masih kurang ya, misalnya masalah kamus saja saya meminta satu anak harus memiliki kamus terutama untuk pelajaran bahasa Inggris yang harus mereka bawa setiap mata pelajaran saya tetapi mereka seolah-olah kurang penting.
Entah karena menurut mereka penting masih kebutuhan pokok saja tidak terpenuhi. Akhirnya sampai sekarang pun tidak terbeli kamus itu Jadi agak susah juga.”
“Lack of awareness of parents towards education, for example, I ask students to have a dictionary, but they consider it less important. So, they do not buy a dictionary because their primary needs are not fulfilled.” (Teacher A, free translation)

Another problem was the lack of cooperation between teachers and parents in controlling student learning. Teacher D described his experience in which he had given assignments to students to do at home but students worked at school before handing over homework to the teacher. Teacher D believed that such things would not happen if the parents of the students supervised and controlled the learning of their children at home. The above findings are in line with previous Copland, Garton, and Burns (2014) research that students have no idea about the purpose of learning English, "an attitude that can be aggravated by their parents" (p. 747). It was clear that parental support affected student motivation in learning English. Teacher D further explained about the lack of parental control because most of the parents in this study lived in rural areas and worked as farmers. They spent most of their time in the fields and sometimes spent the night in the forest and left their children with their relatives. They thought it was the teacher's job to educate their children, not their responsibility.

This challenge is consistent with Tariq et al (2013)’s study which reported one of basic problems faced by rural students is unsupportive attitude of parents about the learning activities in students’ home environment. They only provided education for children to school and did not care about the development of children in their education. All teachers in this study agreed that they could not
work alone in educating students. They still needed cooperation from parents in helping their children at home.

The Strategies Used by English Teacher

The discussion below are the strategies used by the English teacher in this study for some English teaching problems, and the rest are not yet found.

1. Applying various teaching methods and techniques

Four English teachers stated that to make students interested in learning English they varied their teaching methods and techniques in the classroom. Fatiloro (2015) asserts that “in handling English teaching problems, teachers must use a variety of methods for teaching the English language” (p. 29). Teacher A argued that to build the interest of students, she tried to teach English lessons to be enjoyable with limited facilities. It means they are comfortable with English lessons and they don't feel pressured or find it difficult in learning. In teaching listening, she downloaded a song and let students listen to it. In addition, teacher E used a role-play and music video in teaching since students are more interested to pictures.

Excerpt 17

“I usually use roleplay. In Nyalang, their English level is basic for grade 7. I often use short music videos to introduce English, for example learning about the name of the days.” (Teacher E, free translation)
According to Alexenoamen (as cited in Mumary, 2017), teachers are advised to use role-playing activities to motivate students and help students who are less motivated to take part in lessons. Teacher D also stated that he use some games to improve students' vocabulary.

2. Matching students’ level and learning situation

Two teachers admitted that they made several revisions in the lesson plan. Teacher A stated that the material in the book is very difficult for students to understand. So, it is necessary to simplify learning goals that are more easily understood by the students. The way to match students’ level and learning circumstances can be done by lesson planning (Roberts, 2007). She stated that she usually looked for other sources related to the curriculum and it was easier for her to convey the material to students.

Excerpt 18

“I use sources from the internet. I download it, there are reading texts and questions. Students answer questions based on reading texts. I think it's easier for them to learn than use this book, sometimes the language level is higher for them.” (Teacher A, free translation)

Furthermore, teacher E preferred to relate the basics of English with topics in textbooks in the classroom. So, they could use and follow curriculum standards.

Excerpt 19

“Jadi Seperti yang saya jelaskan tadi kalau kita mengulang dari awal atau dasar bahasa inggris berarti standar kurikulumnya tidak tercapai tuh
karena waktunya yang tidak cukup. Jadi, caranya kalau pertemuan pertama kita mengulang belajar nama-nama hari nanti dikaitkan dengan topik pembelajaran dibuka. itu bisa tentang perkenalan.”

"So, As I explained earlier, if we repeat from the beginning or the basis of English, it means that the standard curriculum is not reached because of insufficient time. So, the way is, for example, the first meeting we learn the names of the day, we can relate it to the learning topics in the book. it can be about introductions." (Teacher E, free translation)

3. **Cooperation between school and parents**

All teachers agreed that the important role of parents at home in the development of student learning was important. The cooperation between schools and parents was needed to control and provide facilities for student learning, such as dictionaries. Teacher D stated that he used his role in the community as a priest. He often appealed to parents to collaborate in controlling students at home.

Excerpt 20

“Kebetulan saya ini kan paling banyak di masyarakat jadi kan saya sering cuma sekedar mengimbau pada saat acara-acara rohani, ingatkan pada orang tua untuk mengontrol jam belajar siswa dirumah”.

"I often meet with the community, so I often appealed during spiritual events, remind parents to control the students’ study hours at home". (Teacher D, free translation)

4. **Giving motivation**

One way to improve students' interest in learning English is by giving them motivation. Teacher B frequently did that.

Excerpt 21

“Yang pertama kan kita buka wawasannya wawasannya mereka kita ceritakan hal-hal positif ditambah lagi keadaan geografis sekolah sini ditetapkan sebagai daerah wisata saya buka wawasan mereka kedepan bahasa inggris ini kan berperan. Contohnya, karena sekarang sudah menjadi kecamatan wisata ada banyak wisatawan asing yang datang. Nah siapa yang bisa memandu mereka ini kalau bukan orang lokal.”
"First we open their insights, we tell positive things like the geographical location of the school here is determined as a tourist area. In the future, English plays a role. For example, because this district is now a tourist area, there are many foreign tourists who come. Local people can guide them if they can speak English." (Teacher B, free translation)

He stated that one way to motivate students was to open their insight into English. He told them what benefits students get if they learn English. For example, the school area was a tourist area, so many tourists come. Students could communicate with foreigners in English. In addition, Teacher B stated that regarding students’ interest in English, he kept giving them advice to keep studying.

**CONCLUSION**

Since English is a foreign language in Indonesia, English teachers find it a complex task in their teaching. This study has highlighted a wide range of issues faced in teaching English in rural junior high schools in Lamandau, Indonesia. It has been shown that the teachers are challenged by the 2013 curriculum, students’ competence, students’ motivation, teaching media, inadequacy number of teachers, lack of professional development, and lack of parental support. To deal with these challenges, this study also has discovered the strategies used by the participants of the study. However, only some of the challenges had the strategies in this study and each teacher has different strategies for overcoming the challenges in teaching, for example varying techniques and methods of teaching in the classroom, such as using games, songs, videos, or role-play. The other strategies implemented by the participants when teaching in the classroom are
matching students’ level and learning situation, giving motivational support, and cooperation between schools and parents.

However, this study cannot claim whether the strategies used by the participants in this study were successful and had an impact on their teaching. Therefore, further studies on the strategies used by English teachers to overcome the challenges in teaching in rural schools and the impacts of using the strategies in teaching English should be conducted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I want to thank God for always blessing me from the beginning of my study in this faculty until the end of my thesis submission. Next, I would like to give my biggest gratitude for my thesis supervisor, Prof. Dr. Gusti Astika, M.A, who has given me guidance, supervision, and support until I could finish my thesis. I also thank my examiner, Drs. Anton Wahyana, M.A, who gives evaluations, suggestions, and inputs for improving my thesis. Also, I thank my participants in this thesis (the five English teachers from rural junior high schools in Lamandau) for being so cooperative to share their opinion and struggles in running English program.

Second, I would like to thanks my mother, father, sisters, and my other family members who always support, give advice, and pray for me to finish this undergraduate thesis. My friends from the faculty, college, and boarding house also have given me support, motivation, and convinced me to graduate soon. A special thank also goes to Merkarius Fristian Dies for the support, love, and motivation. Then, the Faculty of Language and Arts especially for English Language Education Program that allowed me to study English, and gave a lot of lessons and experience during my college. Last but not least, thank everyone who has supported my study in Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Interview questions to know High School English Teachers’ challenges in teaching English in rural junior high schools

1. How many subjects do you teach every day in your classes?
2. What do you think about the high school English curriculum?
3. What do you think about teaching English in high schools?
4. What do you think about teaching English in rural schools?
5. How important do you think English lessons are for students here?
6. How do they respond to English lessons? Are your students interested in learning English?
7. What do you think about the important role of parents in student education?
8. What are the common challenges you find while teaching in this school?
9. What kind of teaching strategies do you use?
10. What kind of resources available in the school as for supporting your teaching?
# APPENDIX B

## Class Observation Sheet

Name of observed School: 
Name of observed class: 
Date: 
Number of students: Present---------------- Absent-----------------------

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<tr>
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<th>Teacher’s activities</th>
<th>Students’ activities</th>
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<td>Classroom management of teachers</td>
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<td>Learners’ extent of participation in classroom activities</td>
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<td>Teachers’ display of knowledge of subject matter</td>
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