

TEACHING ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS IN RUSTIC AREA: TEACHERS' CHALLENGES

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Abstract: English is regarded as a foreign language in Indonesia. As a result, English is rarely employed in everyday speech. The location of English in the educational curriculum is also influenced by its prestige. The regulation ensures that elementary schools both in urban and rustic area can include basic subjects in their curriculum, as long as the lesson does not conflict with national educational goals. Rustic education, in comparison to its urban and suburban counterparts, is seen to face a distinct challenge. The location and the implementation an English curriculum in primary school are significant problems. As a result, the purpose of this study is to look into some difficulties that English teachers face when teaching English to elementary students in rustic primary schools in Baureno, East Java. To find the answer for this purposed study, the writer used qualitative approach. A semi-structured interview involved six participants from six elementary schools in five villages (Gajah, Gunungsari, Tulungagung, Selorejo, and Blongsong) is utilized to address the question. It was started by shortly reviewing the role of English in the national primary school curriculum on the one side, and the implementation of English programs in rustic schools on the other side. The writer encountered three difficulties: (i) Students' socio-economics condition, (ii) the status of English in the school, and (iii) Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the writer suggested that more research be done to highlight English teachers' challenges on the implementation of primary school learning. The findings of the study can be used by English teachers, stakeholders, policymakers, and institutions to develop practical strategies for teaching English in primary school, particularly in rustic area.

Keywords: TEYL, Challenge, Rural Area

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is considered as foreign language. Thus, English is not generally used in daily communication. The status of English also affects the position of English in school curriculum. The implementation of TEYL in Indonesia is not required although teaching English for young learners (TEYL) in Indonesia has been started in some schools from 1994. At primary school, English is not considered as a required subject. Some elementary schools just considered English as a local content subject. The use of English at elementary school as the local content subject is proposed by the policy of Ministry of Education and Culture. The policy guarantees that elementary schools can add the basic subjects in the school curriculum, providing the lesson as long as it is not contrary to the national education goals.

Local governments in Indonesia are given freedom in elaborating the curricular scope. Decentralization of education in Indonesia has prompted local governments to make their own decisions about how much curricular space to devote to what has become known as "local content" (Musthafa, 2010). As a result of the decentralization program, several districts and city administrations are interested in TEYL. In Indonesia, primary schools now provide English as a local content starting in the first grade (ages six to seven) (Supriyanti, 2012). It has become a new trend for schools to provide English teaching before the fourth grade. However, this trend is not followed by the seriousness and readiness of schools to organize English subjects. So, through this research the writer is intended to find out what are the challenges faced by English teachers who teach in elementary schools in rural areas?

Nonetheless, due to a variety of factors such as geographical, social, economic, political, or cultural differences in educational access, some children in urban areas have the luxury of receiving a high-quality education that includes certified teachers, newest and great educational facilities, and parents who support local government policies. English plays a critical part in these children's ability to attach with the advancement of expertise and science.

Other children who are lesser fortunate in some locations, on the other hand, are content to have access to even the most basic education since they shortfall access to variables that assist effective education, such as fewer skilled teachers, parental backing, and scarce educational resources. Furthermore, the situation of English as a local content study has an impact, as English plays no function for these youngsters. Inequality of access to English at primary level, especially the division between urban and rural areas and amongst urban schools, has been underlined by several researchers (e.g, Cabrera, Solano, & Castillo, 2019; Erk & Cengic, 2020; Sah, 2018; Y. Hu, 2007; Nikolov, 2009). In many nations, the private sector has grown dramatically, widening the gap between rich and poor by allowing wealthier parents to send their children to private schools or pay for private English lessons (Rusiana & Nuraeningsih, 2012; Hoque, 2009; Lee, 2009).

Based on the elements that influence educational diversification in Indonesia, such as geography, social, and economic considerations, as well as parents' contributions to English elementary students, it is critical to learn more about the obstacles that English teachers encounter when teaching in those institutions. The difficulties may be considerably different from those faced by schools in major cities, where parents and kids are realize of the importance of English. The difficulties have arisen because the policy's effects may have an impact on the condition of instruction and student progress in learning English.

This study is a qualitative research of various public elementary schools in Baureno's rustic districts. Some previous research have been undertaken to look into the challenges that teachers face when teaching young students. However, very little study has been done to look into how teachers' attitudes in TEYL affect language policy implementation, particularly in Baureno. The objective of this research is to look into the difficulties that English teachers have when teaching English as a local content subject in the classroom. This research will contribute to this field of study by offering a greater understanding of the issues and obstacles that teachers confront. This study will make some solid recommendations for teachers, politicians, parents, and professional educators on how to improve English language teaching quality in rural primary schools, not just in Baureno but in other places suffering similar issues. As a result, the study's problem and question is: What are teachers' obstacles in teaching English in some elementary schools in Baureno's rustic areas?

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Earlier research has looked into the value and outcomes of integrating English into elementary schools, particularly in terms of the policy-implementation gap. Some of the challenges appear to be universal, while others appear to be more regional. This evaluation will concentrate on policy concerns (at the external factor) and their implications for English education that are most closely related to the study's objectives (internal factor).

The first issue to note is that government policies differ in each province to the next. The policy is even different within the same province in Indonesia. The present of English language education curriculum in Indonesia only focuses on teaching at the junior and senior high school levels because English is not a fundamental subject in primary school. (Susanto, 2013). The Ministry of Education and Culture has not established a national curriculum for English in primary schools since English has become a local content, and it is the responsibility of the regional or provincial government or local school to develop the curriculum. (Lestari, 2003). As a result, In terms of aims or substance, the local content curriculum in one part of Indonesia may differ from the local content curriculum in another. (Kasihani, 2010). Despite the lack of a national English curriculum, the national government has established competency

requirements for English language teaching and learning in primary schools, with the intention of informing teaching and learning objectives. The policy's lack of clarity can lead to a lot of uncertainty, especially at the regional or school level. As a result, English teachers in elementary schools are having difficulty generating and selecting relevant resources and teaching approaches.

Another aspect is the number of hours spent studying English each week. English is assigned two 35-minute lessons per week as a local content subject started from grades two to six of elementary schools (Supriyanti, 2012), but other institutions begin teaching English in the first grade. Students' opportunities to study English are severely limited due to the low amount of hours per week, and teachers are unable to cover all of the information on the syllabus. Government policy at the basic level undoubtedly creates a separation, particularly between urban and rural communities.

In micro-levels, the initial aspect is the rustic area itself. The population of this area differs from that of other areas because it is located outside of the major metropolis. Rural locations can be isolating geographically, culturally, socially, psychologically, and professionally. Rural schools, despite movement and socioeconomic upheavals, continue to serve substantial minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. Education in this field is limited to the primary level. For children, continuing to higher school or even university is not required.

As a consequence, in the views of the general public, rural schools are found to be worse in instruction than their urban counterparts (Shikalepo, 2020). Academic accomplishment scores, university enrollment averages, and university graduation averages were all lower for children from low-income families than for children from high-income families, according to Chruch, Elliot, and Gable (2001). It is sufficient if the students graduate from primary school, regardless of their grades. In rustic areas, there is little sense of competitiveness. It is not the case in metropolitan schools, in which the schools and surrounding condition completely support the children's education. In metropolitan places, children are expected to challenge with their schoolmates to be the best. Despite this, the condition in rustic areas continues to make it difficult for students to receive the greatest possible education.

The issues that teachers confront are not just due to policy or the environment. One of the factors that can make teachers' job challenging is their profession. According to Susanto (2013), there are two major issues referring the quality of English teachers in elementary schools: first, majority of English teachers in elementary schools lack English language teaching qualifications; second, those English teachers who graduated from English language teaching background were initially not trained as elementary school English teachers.

Because the official curriculum for English language teaching in Indonesia solely focuses on junior high and high school level, teacher

education programs in Indonesia currently only prepare English teachers for teaching in junior high and high schools, rather than elementary schools. It can be said that teachers were not appropriately prepared for the implementation of the new policy. Consequently, many schools may be able to provide English programs without the required teachers or resources. They can continue teaching as long as there is a textbook because there is no specific curriculum to guide them. The teachers admit that the available course book can be used as a curriculum replacement. Teachers' admission that the textbook can give resources to cover their limited expertise has been agreed by Krammer (1985) and Ball & Feiman-Nemser (1988). In addition, most English teachers in Indonesia rely solely on course books and curricular requirements, frequently without fully comprehending the concepts or processes behind those materials or procedures. To put it another way, most of them could be considered as "old-textbook new method" mentality. As a result, teaching, specifically in elementary school, is considered as issues that should be addressed.

The availability of resources is another issue that schools face when establishing an English program. Some elementary schools in Indonesia that integrate English in their curriculum, according to Lestari (2003), frequently lack proper and ample teaching and learning resources to bolster the teaching and learning process. According to Marcellino (2008), class size and time allocation, with a class of more than forty students and a forty-five minute time allotment for an English lesson, is the most obvious element contributing to Indonesia's persistent English language teaching challenges. Students face difficulties to find adequate time in class to try their speaking English since their teacher take more attention on teaching grammar and syntax than speaking, and there is a lack of authentic and good learning materials, according to Musthafa (2001). Many schools are short on educational materials. As a result of the lack of visual or audio–visual aids, the majority of teachers teach their students using the 'chalk and speak' method, as described by Faridi (2011). Many teachers take course book known as Lembar Kerja Siswa (LKS) as their only reference to deal with the problem of a shortage of teaching resources (Lestari, 2003). Even if many English course books on the market have poor quality, as indicated by numerous spelling and punctuation errors, as well as ambiguous graphics for students (Kaltsum and Habiby, 2019).

Most of elementary schools have provided teaching English to their students not because they believe the students require it or want to learn it (Kusmaryati, 2020), but because of parental emphasis and a pretension to raise the school's level (Suherdi & Kurniawan, 2005). It is obvious from the foregoing overview of English language teaching procedures in elementary schools that many elementary schools lack the trained personnel and resources required to run an English program. To demonstrate that they provide an English program in their school, school principals may entrust English instruction to classroom teachers who do not graduated from English language teaching.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach to gather information about English teachers' obstacles in teaching English to young learners in a few elementary schools in Baureno, East Java. To back up this claim, Creswell (2014) defines qualitative research as "the exploration and understanding of the meaning of individuals or groups who are deemed to be social or human problems." As a result, the writer used the qualitative technique in this study to delve deeper into the issues faced by English teachers in teaching English to young learners in several elementary schools in Baureno, East Java.

This research was conducted at Baureno, a small district in East Java, Indonesia. The schools are spread throughout the rural area in Baureno district. Not all of elementary schools in Baureno district offer English in their curriculum. Thus, in this study there were six elementary schools that would be used: SDN Gajah II, SDN Tulungagung I, SDN Blongsong I, MI Tanwirul Hija Selorejo, MI Islamiyah, and MI Mansyaul Huda Gunungsari.

The subjects of this research were English teacher from each elementary schools stated above. There are six English teachers from six different elementary schools.

Table 1. Profile of the Sample

No	Name of School	Age	Gender	Teaching Experience	Educational Background
1.	SDN Gajah II	30	Female	4 years	Diploma I
2.	MI Mansyaul Huda	31	Male	3 years	Informatics
3.	MI Tanwirul Hija	32	Male	10 years	Islamic Teacher Education
4.	SDN Blongsong I	34	Female	5 years	Primary School Teacher Education
5.	SDN Tulungagung I	34	Female	8 years	Sociology
6.	MI Islamiyah	29	Female	2 years	Mathematics Education

The primary purpose of this study is to understand more about English teachers' perspectives on the obstacles of teaching English to young learners in Baureno, East Java, Indonesia. A qualitative study was done to attain this goal, providing culturally distinctive and contextually rich data. Qualitative research provides a variety of methodological options for understanding the cultural and intellectual resources available to children and instructors in their homes (Fraenkel, et.al. 2012). Because only a few public primary schools in Baureno's rural areas were able to take part in this study, purposive sampling was used. The schools that were available were determined by the availability of English in their curriculum.

Interviews were used to gather information for this investigation. The interview data was the primary source of information in this study, and a semi-structured interview was employed to provide more opportunity for participants to elaborate on their teaching experiences. The interviews lasted 10 to 20 minutes and were conducted in Indonesian because the researcher is an Indonesian native speaker. Because the school is in a remote area and has English in its curriculum, a teacher from SDN Gajah II was chosen to participate in the piloting process. The interview took 13 minutes to complete, with some follow-up questions to learn more about the teachers' viewpoints. The following are some of the questions that were asked during the interview and were used to analyze the data:

1. How do you feel about English being taught in primary schools?
2. How do you feel about English being taught at a rural school?
3. How do you feel once you've finished teaching English?
4. As an English teacher in a rural school, what is your greatest fear?
5. What are some of the most typical obstacles you face as a teacher at this school?
6. What kind of rural issues do you have now that you've taught at this school?
7. To what extent does a student's socioeconomic background influence their ability to learn English?
8. What are your thoughts on the importance of English in primary school?
9. What are your thoughts on the primary school English curriculum?
10. What are your thoughts on the use of a workbook?
11. What type of teaching methods do you employ?
12. What resources are accessible at the school to assist you in your teaching?
13. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, what are your thoughts on teaching English to young learners (TEYL) in your community?

After transcribing the piloting results, the researcher continued to gather data. The researcher used the same interview questions as in the piloting procedure, along with some notes on each question, in order to guide the interview session to the similar answer for each participant. The researcher began transcribing the interview results as soon as all of the data was collected. To keep the participants' identities hidden, all personal information was changed to pseudonyms. For each participant, the interview sessions lasted between 10 and 20 minutes.

Data processing is seen as a difficult and time-consuming aspect of qualitative research. It involves a blend of inspiration and thorough detection, as well as a balance of originality and systematic investigation (Spencer, Ritchie, and O'Connor, 2003). With the help of scribe, the audiorecorded interviews were transcribed verbatim for proper analysis and interpretation. After that, they were all read out. Bracketed and labeled portions were marked as interesting. In light of the research topics, significant patterns were identified, and descriptive codes were applied.

Representing example, IoSe (Issues on Socioeconomic) was utilized as a code for the English language teacher's opinions and experiences with socioeconomic challenges in rustic settings. After that, the information was translated and presented in English.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study explores English teachers' challenges in teaching English for young learners in rural area. The data in this study were collected from interview. The findings of the data allow them to be categorized as findings of English teachers' challenges in teaching English for young learners in rural area. This research interested in knowing English teachers' challenges in teaching English for young learners in rural area

There are three in the findings to be analyzed in this research includes students' socio-economics condition, the status of English in the school, and Covid-19 pandemic. Based on the data in findings will be discussion are:

1. Teachers' Obstacles in Relation to Students' Socioeconomic Status

Teachers in remote primary schools encounter a variety of obstacles, including those related to the government's English program and teacher competency. Parents of students play an important role in the success of the English curriculum in primary schools. In recent years, academics have noticed socio-economic differences. Previous research has found that students' social-economic status, as measured by parental income, educational background, and/or occupations, is linked to their academic English development and achievement at school (Harmanto, 2018; Muhammad, 2013; Ariani and Ghafournia, 2016). Based on an interview with six participants, they all believe that a student's parents' socioeconomic level has an impact on their motivation and success in learning English.

Seems they feel that way. They feel English is not needed in the future. Because they think English is not important for a child who comes from a rural area. (Participant 1/School A)

Such family conditions make their motivation to learn English decrease. Because they find it difficult. (Participant 4/School D)

Other participants discuss the parental similarly. They suggest that students' socioeconomic position has a significant impact on their ability to learn English, particularly for young learners. Because all of the participants teach in rural primary schools, this element has an impact on their teaching and, of course, is one of the obstacles they face when teaching English. Most of participants believe that their socioeconomic level and career are heavily influenced by their parents' educational backgrounds. As a result, working parents spend the majority of their time at work.

One of the causes of low motivation to learn English is because of the family's economic condition. Here the

economic condition of the people is mostly middle level. Most of his parents work in factories, so there is no time to accompany students to study at home. (Participant 5/School E)

According to the extracts above, their socioeconomic standing is determined by their parents' work. They would have a better job if they had a greater education. It will have an impact on their understanding of how to guide their children at home, as well as establishing a conducive learning environment for youngsters. The majority of the parents in this study live in rustic areas and work as laborers. They allocate most of their days at work, handing their children with family. They believe that it is the teacher's responsibility, not their job, to educate their students. As a result, They simply relinquish control of their children's education to the school and are unconcerned about their educational growth.

2. Teachers' Concerns about the Place of English in the National Curriculum

The status of English as a local content has ramifications for how teachers view English's role in the educational program. The English teachers in this study came to the conclusion that teaching English as a local content subject created fewer conducive conditions for teaching English than teaching it as a primary subject would. According to Participant 1, the primary school curriculum of 2006 does not encourage English subject for elementary students. It may be observed in the weekly allotment of time. In elementary school, English is only given seventy minutes long, and the teachers only meet the students once a week. Other teachers face the similar issue with regard to time management. They believe that teaching 2 x 35 minutes a week is insufficient since elementary students will fail to remember materials they learned in the past session. As a consequence, teachers must spend the next week reviewing past materials, which takes a long time. Participant 1 also goes into detail about the practice at her school.

The English subject which changed its status to become a local content lesson and is no longer the main subject that must be included in the learning of students at the elementary level for me is a setback, considering that English is very important for children's future to be able to access deeper knowledge and explore wider world. Of course, learning English must be obtained by students from an early age, since they are in elementary level education. (Participant 3/School C)

The number of meetings provided for English lessons is very less. So I hope there will be additional hours for English. (Participant 4/School D)

Honestly, it's actually not enough because they are only given about sixty minutes each week. (Participant 6/School F)

Almost all rural primary schools have the same problem with Participant 3, 4 and 6. Most of them say that in order to establish a successful English lesson, the government should allocate more time to it.

Another issue that has been mentioned in relation to the application of either the 2006 or 2013 educational program is the approach of schools toward English. Majority of teachers agree that, as a consequence of the policy, the school does not devote nearly as a lot of focus to English as it does to the major disciplines. Rather than supporting English teachers, the school would rather invest fund on teachers who assigned basic courses. Based on the results of the interview, it can be determined that the materials provided to students are not organized according to their level of competency.

The change in the status of the English language subject to the local content subject has often resulted in the source books and worksheets provided by publishers having a composition of subject matter that changes every academic year, this indicates that English material is not yet standardized for students at the elementary level. (Participant 3/School C)

The students worksheets have been provided by the school, so the teaching process in the classroom is just adjusting to the existing worksheet, not the worksheet that adapt to students' abilities. (Participant 5/School E)

To summarize, there is a disconnect between the government's English educational program policy and the implementation of English programs in elementary schools. The results of the interview demonstrate that implementing either the 2006 or 2013 curricula has not cleared up their problems with teaching English. The problem is exacerbated by schools' attitudes toward English, which is not valued as highly as other subjects. For English teachers, the position of English as a second subject causes controversy.

3. Teachers' Challenge in Covid-19 Pandemic

Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic adds to the challenges that English teachers in elementary schools must face. There are some previous research about the challenges in teaching English during Covid-19 pandemics (Hartatik and Yuni, 2020; Lukas and Yunus, 2021; Efriana, 2021, Safira, Hadi, and Zaitun, 2021; Nartiningrum and Nugroho, 2021; and Prabawati, 2021).

The first challenge faced by English teachers during the pandemic is in terms of making subject matter and teaching it. In fact, the process of

teaching English often requires more attention because of the difference between the writing and the pronunciation of the words.

Teaching English during the Covid-19 pandemic has become even more difficult. The thing is, if you meet face-to-face, there is usually teaching how to read it, so writing for children is very difficult. If you don't know how to read it, it's just like that. (Participant 1/School A)

During online learning, we found it very difficult. Because if it is not implemented face-to-face, children will find it difficult to understand the lesson. This is because they are confused between pronunciation and writing. (Participant 6/School F)

Another factor that makes teaching English more difficult in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic has to do with the digital skills of English teachers. They find it difficult to create interesting online course materials. So often they only send assignments to students via the Whatsapp application.

During online learning, I usually submit assignments via WA groups to work on this page's student workbook. And in my opinion it is less effective because English between pronunciation and writing is usually different, causing confusion for students. (Participant 5/School E)

During online learning, I usually give assignments to students through WA groups. (Participant 3/School C)

The challenge is when there is material that is impossible to convey online, but we have to convey it through Google Meet or via Google Form. And I feel it's not optimal. Still cannot replace face-to-face learning. (Participant 2/School B)

In sum, English instructors in rustic elementary schools are battling not only with their English skills and curriculum, but also another factor. A factor resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic is that teachers must engage in online learning. As a result, a larger problem will emerge, as an example the children's inadequacy of drive and enthusiasm in English. It has a poor impact on students who believe English is unimportant. As a result, children's academic success will continue to be low. To overcome that challenge, English teachers in this era should adapt with the development of technology. Some teaching media generated from technology are proven effectively improve students motivation to study English during this on line teaching learning (Laksmi, et. al., 2021; Chotimah & Astiyandha, 2020).

CONCLUSION

There are four main implications that can be drawn from this study's findings. First, students' socioeconomic background positively correlated with their motivation to study English. Thus, English teachers must put more effort to keep the students' ability in English. Second, the inclusion of English language education in the national curriculum for primary school students causes a disconnect between policy and reality in Baureno's rural

primary schools. Third, to limit the challenges faced by the teachers, strict policy should be implemented regarding to who is responsible to teach English in elementary school. Fourth, it is a must that English teachers in this era should be equipped with the ability to adapt with the development of technology. Teachers in this era should not only be equipped with pedagogical knowledge, but also be equipped with some skills regarding the use of advance technology. Some previous studies have been discussed about the positive effect of technology based media on maintain the students motivation during learning English. Through those skills, English teachers could possibly find better solution for each of their challenge.

However, because it focuses primarily on teachers' challenges in teaching English in Baureno's rustic elementary schools, the scope of this study is limited. The results may vary depending on whether the study is conducted in urban schools or in different locations of Indonesia. As a result, it will be possible to conduct more research into the practice of an English in Indonesian elementary schools.

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