



## Teachers' Challenges in Teaching English in Rural School: Case Study at MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah Kubu Raya West Kalimantan

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**Abstract:** English, as an international language, plays a significant role in education, especially in preparing students to face global challenges. However, the teaching of English in rural schools still faces several obstacles that affect the effectiveness of learning. This study aims to identify and analyze the challenges faced by English teachers at MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah, a school in a rural area. The study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, where data is collected through classroom observation and in-depth interviews with English teachers. Data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show several main challenges in teaching English, including low student interest in the subject, lack of support from parents and the surrounding community, teachers' perceived low quality, and high administrative and curriculum burdens. Students in rural areas often fail to see the relevance of English learning to their everyday lives, which reduces their motivation to learn. Additionally, the lack of support from parents worsens the challenges that teachers face in teaching English in these schools. To address these challenges, the study provides several recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of English teaching in rural schools. First, increasing student interest by developing fun and relevant teaching methods that connect English to daily activities, local culture, and regional potential. Second, involving parents in supporting their children's English language learning. Third, improving teacher competence through intensive training programs. Lastly, encouraging collaboration between the central government and local authorities to adapt the curriculum flexibly to the local context, making English teaching more relevant and accessible to rural students.

**Keywords:** Challenges of Teaching English, English Education, Rural School, Student Motivation, Teacher Competence

**Abstrak.** Bahasa Inggris, sebagai bahasa internasional, memiliki peran penting dalam dunia pendidikan, terutama dalam mempersiapkan siswa untuk menghadapi tantangan global. Namun, pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di sekolah-sekolah pedesaan masih menghadapi berbagai hambatan yang mempengaruhi efektivitas pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis tantangan yang dihadapi oleh guru Bahasa Inggris di MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah, sebuah sekolah di daerah pedesaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus, di mana data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas dan wawancara mendalam dengan guru Bahasa Inggris. Teknik analisis data mengikuti model Miles dan Huberman, yang mencakup reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan beberapa tantangan utama dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, yaitu rendahnya minat siswa terhadap pelajaran, kurangnya dukungan dari orang tua dan masyarakat sekitar, kualitas guru yang dianggap masih rendah, serta beban administratif dan kurikulum yang tinggi. Siswa di daerah pedesaan sering kali tidak melihat relevansi pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris dengan kehidupan sehari-hari mereka, sehingga menurunkan motivasi mereka untuk belajar. Selain itu, kurangnya dukungan dari orang tua juga menjadi faktor penghambat yang memperburuk kesulitan yang dihadapi guru dalam mengajarkan Bahasa Inggris di sekolah. Untuk mengatasi tantangan tersebut, penelitian ini memberikan beberapa saran yang diharapkan dapat meningkatkan efektivitas pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di sekolah-sekolah pedesaan. Pertama, meningkatkan minat siswa dengan mengembangkan metode pembelajaran yang menyenangkan dan relevan, yang dapat menghubungkan Bahasa Inggris dengan aktivitas sehari-hari, budaya lokal, dan potensi daerah. Kedua, melibatkan orang tua dalam mendukung pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris anak-anak mereka. Ketiga, meningkatkan kompetensi guru melalui program pelatihan intensif. Terakhir, mendorong kerja sama antara pemerintah pusat dan daerah untuk menyesuaikan kurikulum dengan konteks lokal, sehingga pengajaran Bahasa Inggris menjadi lebih relevan dan mudah diakses oleh siswa di pedesaan.

**Kata kunci :** Tantangan Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Sekolah Pedesaan, Motivasi Siswa, Kompetensi Guru

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization, English language education plays a very important role. English is a key bridge to access global knowledge, expand professional networks, and build cross-cultural connections. Mastery of this language is a vital aspect in readiness to face the world of work and international education, especially in Indonesia which continues to develop economically and diplomatically. As an international language, everyone must be able to master English to achieve global education, employment, and communication opportunities (Kirkpatrick 2012). Education policy in Indonesia has emphasized the importance of teaching English as the primary goal, from primary to secondary school. However, the implementation of these policies is often ineffective contextually, especially in rural areas that experience a lack of educational resources and facilities (Laila, Prastiwi, and Fauziati 2023). The gap between policy formulation and implementation is particularly striking in remote areas. They show that limited infrastructure, lack of trained educators, and limited access to learning media are major obstacles to the implementation of effective English language learning in rural areas.

The limited means of learning not only have an impact on students, but also create additional pressure for teachers. In many cases, teachers have to improvise in conditions that are far from ideal, so the effectiveness of teaching decreases. This reflects structural challenges that need to be addressed urgently to improve the quality of language education in rural areas. According to Effendi and Hendriwanto, in rural areas, one of the biggest obstacles to learning English is the lack of supporting infrastructure such as language labs, textbooks, and stable internet connections (Poudel 2022). In addition, lack of learning conditions such as lack of exposure to the target language outside the classroom is also considered a factor that hinders learning. These challenges not only impact students who use devices, but also burden teachers who have to temporarily change their teaching methods due to these constraints. The availability of English teachers with adequate pedagogical and linguistic competence is very limited in remote areas. He emphasized that teacher training is often general and uncontextual to local challenges, so it is not effective in addressing the educational needs of the area. In schools in rural areas of Indonesia, English teaching also has other problems, including a lack of qualified teachers and training for these teachers (Zein 2017). The lack of innovation in teaching approaches in rural schools is closely related to the lack of access to the latest training and technology-based teaching materials. As a result, the methods used are not able to stimulate students' interest or actively encourage communication skills in English. In a 2023 study by Fazliddinova and Erkulova, it was found that in many schools in rural areas, English teachers deliver their lessons using traditional methods due to fewer teaching and learning resources, this not only leads to low student learning outcomes.

In addition to structural factors, social and cultural factors also affect the effectiveness of English teaching practices in rural areas. In many communities, perceptions of the importance of English are influenced by cultural values and local needs. Regional languages and religious education are often prioritized, making English less of the attention it deserves in the learning environment. English may not be a priority in some communities compared to other subjects or even regional languages and religions (Juffs 2005). This results in a decrease in students' interest in learning a foreign language and increases the challenge for teachers in creating a suitable learning environment. Schools in urban areas have the advantage of access to educational resources, quality teachers, and an environment that supports the active use of English. In contrast, rural schools face layered limitations that affect the quality of student learning outcomes. Aspects of teaching English in rural schools in Indonesia have been discussed in previous research. According to Alkaff, there is a gap in the quality of English teaching between schools in urban areas and schools in rural areas (Ali 2013). Training focused on teacher professional development, if done in an ongoing and contextual manner, can improve teaching competence. However, they also noted that empirical evidence on the challenges faced by teachers in madrassas and religious-based schools is still very minimal, so more direct field studies are needed from education actors. While Raoofi et al. argue that several obstacles can overcome with professional teacher training. However, there is still limited research documenting direct reports from teachers on these challenges, especially in faith-based institutions such as madrasas.

Although there have been a number of studies that have discussed English learning in schools, most studies have focused more on learning strategies, student learning outcomes, or the development of learning media in urban or urban schools. Research on the challenges faced by English teachers in rural schools is still very limited, especially those that raise the real conditions of teachers in schools with minimal facilities, limited resources, and rural socio-cultural contexts. Several previous studies, such as those conducted by Rachmawati (2020) and Putri & Mahmud (2019), have indeed touched on teachers' constraints in the learning process, but the scope of their research area is still limited in semi-urban areas. In addition, research that explores in depth the administrative burden of teachers, the limitations of professional training, and the gap between the national curriculum and the field reality in rural schools, is still rarely done specifically and contextually.

Thus, this research fills this gap by raising the real experience of English teachers in MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah as the main object of study. The focus of this research is not only looking at the technical aspects of teaching, but also includes structural and cultural factors that affect the effectiveness of English teaching in areas with limited access.

This research aimed to investigate the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching English at MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah Kubu Raya. Therefore, this study is expected to provide valuable insights into the development of inclusive education policies and to enhance the quality of English language teaching in rural schools.

## **2. METHOD**

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative approach with the type of case study research. According to Denzin and Lincoln, qualitative research is research that uses a natural setting, with the intention of interpreting the phenomena that occur and is carried out by involving various existing methods (Satori, Komariah 2009). Qualitative research is a research approach that focuses on exploring and understanding social phenomena based on the perspective of participants. This approach aims to explore the meaning, experience, and interpretation of individuals or groups in a particular context (Raofi et al., 2017). Case study is a research method used to investigate phenomena in depth in the context of real life. This method is often used in the social sciences and life sciences to analyze individuals, groups, organizations, or certain communities with the aim of understanding the dynamics that exist in them (Heale & Twycross, 2018).

Data collection in this research is conducted through classroom observation and in-depth interviews. The purpose of using these two techniques is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English in an inland school environment, specifically at MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah.

### **a Classroom Observation**

The first step in the data collection process is classroom observation, which aims to obtain direct data about the teachers' teaching practices in the classroom. This observation is conducted in a participatory-passive manner, meaning the researcher is present in the classroom as an observer without participating in the learning activities. The focus of the observation is directed towards several aspects, namely:

- Strategies or methods used by the teacher in delivering the material.
- Students' responsibility for learning English.
- Obstacles that arise during the teaching-learning process.
- Interaction between teachers and students.

The observation duration was conducted during 3 meetings, each lasting approximately 40–45 minutes (one standard lesson at MTs), within a one-week period. During the observation, the researcher used an open observation sheet and field notes (field notes) to record important events and behaviors relevant to the research focus.

#### **b In-depth Interview**

After the observation process is completed, the next step is to conduct an in-depth interview to uncover information that cannot be obtained solely through observation. This interview is semi-structured, using a interview guide but allowing the researcher the freedom to explore issues that arise spontaneously during the conversation.

The main respondent in this interview is Muna'im, SP, d. an English language teacher at MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah. Below is a brief profile of the respondent:

- Name: Muna'im, SP, d
- Gender: Male
- Last Education: S1 English Education
- Teaching Experience: ± 4 years
- Employment Status: Permanent Teacher at Foundation

The interview was conducted in two sessions, each lasting approximately 45–60 minutes, held in the teacher's room after the teaching and learning activities had concluded. The interview was recorded (with the respondent's permission) and then transcribed for analysis. The questions in the interview included:

- Experience teaching English in a rural school.
- Perception of students' abilities and interests.
- Strategies used in learning.
- Barriers faced both from the students' side and the workload of teachers.
- Support from the school and the surrounding environment.

#### **Technical Analysis and Data Validity**

Data collected through observation and interviews is analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which includes three stages:

a. Data Reduction

This process involves selecting and simplifying raw data from interview transcripts and observation notes. Only information relevant to the research focus is retained. Data reduction is carried out by grouping findings into two broad categories: challenges from the student's side and from the teacher's side.

b. Data Presentation

After the data is reduced, the information is presented in the form of descriptive narration and tables to facilitate understanding. This presentation includes direct quotes from interviews, summaries of classroom observations, and the grouping of findings based on themes.

c. Drawing Conclusions and Verification

Conclusions are drawn based on patterns or tendencies from the interview and observation results. The verification process is repeated to ensure that the conclusions truly represent the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In this study, the researcher used a triangulation method, namely:

a) Method Triangulation

The researchers combined two main data collection techniques:

- Classroom observation: Provides a hands-on empirical picture of behaviors, teaching strategies, and interactions in the classroom.
- In-depth interviews: Provide deeper insights into teachers' motivations, perceptions, and reflections on observed teaching practices.

By comparing the results of direct observation with the teacher's statement in the interview, the researcher was able to:

- Confirm whether the teacher's strategy is in accordance with what he says.
- Verify whether the obstacles expressed by the teacher do arise in classroom practice.
- Identify the difference between the teacher's perception and the observed reality.

b) Data Source Triangulation

Although the main interview was conducted with only one respondent, the researcher also obtained additional contextual data through student observation and the learning environment. It helps:

- Juxtapose teachers' perceptions with students' actual behavior.
- Understand environmental support through observational records.

### 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This research focuses on the identification and classification of challenges faced by English teachers at MTs Rubath naqsyabandiyah. Based on the findings obtained from interviews and observations, these challenges can be categorized into two broad groups, namely: (1) challenges that come from students, and (2) challenges that come from teachers themselves. By dividing problems based on their sources, it is hoped that it can provide a more structured picture in efforts to improve the quality of English learning in rural schools.

**Table 1. Factors**

<b>Teacher challenges</b>	
<b>internal factors</b>	<b>External factors</b>
English Teachers' Competence	Students' Interest in English
Curriculum and Administrative Burden	Environmental Influence

#### **External factors**

##### a. Students' Interest in English

In the context of English language teaching, the theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) emphasizes the importance of motivation as one of the affective factors that greatly affect the language learning process. Gardner and Lambert (1972) in the Socio-educational Model stated that instrumental motivation (learning for practical purposes such as work) and integrative motivation (the desire to interact with native speakers' culture) greatly determine the success of language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). However, in rural contexts, both types of motivation tend to be weak due to the lack of exposure to the use of English in everyday life and the limited immediate prospects that students can perceive.

The findings of this study are in line with the results of a study by Suryati & Wijayanti (2018), which stated that students in rural schools often see English as a difficult subject and irrelevant to their lives. Therefore, students' low interest in learning English is not only a matter of teaching methods, but also closely related to the social and cultural context in which students live. English is now widely recognized by students in urban schools, but this is not the case in rural schools (Ponmozhi & Thenmozhi, 2017). English in the rural environment is not widely recognized both within the school and outside the school (du Plessis, 2014). Rural students do not know the importance of learning English other than as one of the subjects on the final exam. Lack of knowledge about the language has a huge impact on students' interest in learning. In addition, the assumption that English is a difficult subject makes them not put much interest in learning English.

Many of them do not learn English optimally. In fact, many of the students only aim to answer the final exam. In addition, many students ignore English lessons and make it the umpteenth choice of other lessons.

Low interest in learning can be seen from students' behavior during the learning process in the classroom, such as students not showing enthusiasm during the English learning process. In this study, it was found that most students did not pay attention to the teacher's explanation well. They even do other things such as reading novels, drawing, joking with other friends.

Then when the teacher sought attention by asking about the material presented, most students were silent, some responded by saying 'yes/no' although the question was much different from the 'yes/no' answer. Some students even laughed at their own answers, which showed that they were not really serious in learning. This reflects that students do not understand the explanation or questions asked by the teacher. In addition, students often left the class during the lesson and returned to the class when the lesson was over. This is in accordance with the results of interviews conducted with teacher at school.

Teacher; "Male students like to leave the class and do not return until the lesson is over. I can't possibly look for them while the learning time is only two hours. So I leave cases like this to the counseling teacher. I report those who act up and don't want to be told. In almost every class I have, there is always a case. And this case is often repeated, they are not deterred."

Another obstacle in rural schools related to students is that students do not want to do the tasks given by the teacher. They give a variety of reasons for not wanting the teacher to give them the assignment, including that they don't understand the assignment so they won't be able to do it. This often happens and overwhelms English teachers.

Teacher: "When given the assignment, they mostly complain, complain because could not answer. Later, I had to turn the schoolwork into homework because they never finished the assignments on time. They have so many excuses. So inevitably I make it into homework. The next day, they don't necessarily do it. They forget to bring it and make excuses."

Another case occurred where students never attended additional course activities held at school. The courses organized by the school are scheduled twice a week, which aims to provide additional lessons and provide additional time to complete the material in the class that has not been completed. However, only a handful of students attended the course. There were even a few times when no students attended at all. Most students argued that they had many extra-curricular activities after school, so they could not attend the extra lessons in the afternoon. In addition, students were not honest in doing their homework.

When given homework to create a text, most students usually look for texts that are already available in books or other sources, rather than creating their own according to their abilities. They admit this to their teachers without any guilt.

Teacher; “If they really want to learn, of course they will choose English over other activities. Second a ret But the evidence is that only a handful of students come during the course. I also told them to come at least once a week, but no one wanted to. These children make a lot of excuses when told to study.”

Teacher: “How many times have I told you to make assignments according to your ability, but that's how they are. When I compare the original assignment with the cheated one, it's obvious which one they did. When they are asked, they confess. They will say, -the important thing is to be a teacher-. Only a few students are aware and want to make their own assignments.”

#### b. Environmental Influence

Language education cannot be separated from the social context and community support. Vygotsky (1978) in the Sociocultural Theory states that learning takes place effectively in social interactions. However, in rural settings, English learning often does not receive support from parents or communities who prefer local or national languages. Parents of students generally have limitations in their understanding of English, so they cannot provide assistance in their children's learning.

This finding is reinforced by a study by Coleman (2011) which examined English teaching in various regions in Indonesia and stated that the social environment plays a major role in supporting or inhibiting the mastery of foreign languages (Coleman, 2011). In rural areas, where English is rarely used in everyday life, students do not have enough opportunities to use or hear English authentically, so the language acquisition process becomes hampered. The environment is considered to be very influential on a person. The environment has an influence on shaping a person's mindset and motivation to do something, including for rural school students in learning English.

In general, motivation is defined as a way to influence someone or many people to do something in which there is a certain goal. The rural school environment that is not familiar with English makes students also not take a great interest in learning English. In addition, the family environment or parents and place of residence are also very instrumental in helping to improve the quality of student learning. However, the role of parents in the rural environment in helping students learn English is considered very low.

Parents do not help students learn and also do not control students optimally. Parents in rural areas do not provide special motivation for students in developing their learning abilities, especially those related to English learning. Parents emphasize their children to work rather than go to school. This is related to the economic conditions in rural environments which usually come from the lower middle class economy. So, even though their children go to school, they do not control the extent of their children's development in the learning process at school. This statement is supported by data obtained from interviews with English teachers from the school, most of the students of MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah live in dormitories within the school environment, the teacher considers the students' interest in learning English is quite large. The However, this great interest is not in line with the effort that students make in the learning process.

Teacher: "Because they live in the dormitory, I think the environment is supportive. If asked if they are interested in English lessons, yes they will answer that they are interested. But if you ask them to do practice questions alone, they complain all the time. They will say English is difficult. So interest is just interest, not supported by their efforts. I think so. Interest must be accompanied by effort, right?"

Teacher convey the polemics faced by students related to the economic conditions of the family and the surrounding environment that do not support students in carrying out their roles as students.

Teacher: "The children here go to school while working. When they are scheduled to work, they will not go to school. In a week, it can be counted as one or two days they can go to school, three days they don't go, the reason is because they are working. If we tell them not to work, they'll say they don't have money for shopping. So what can we do?"

Teacher: "Besides, in their neighborhood, many of their peers don't go to school. So they sometimes follow suit by not going to school. And to my surprise, the parents don't forbid it. They just let them go."

## **Internal Factors**

### **a. English Teachers' Competence**

The quality of teachers is a key factor in the success of English teaching. However, teachers in rural areas often do not receive ongoing training or adequate professional development opportunities. According to Richards and Farrell (2005), Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is very important in improving the pedagogical and linguistic competence of English teachers. Unfortunately, teachers in remote areas often experience limited access to these training programs (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

These findings are in line with a study from Yuwono & Harbon (2010), which showed that English teachers in rural Indonesian schools feel professionally isolated and do not have enough opportunities to develop their competencies (Yuwono & Harbon, 2010). This condition causes low teacher confidence and has an impact on the quality of teaching they provide. Teachers' competence is assessed by their ability to design and implement learning in the classroom well and maximally so that learning objectives can be achieved maximally as well. English teachers in this school have different ways of implementing learning in the classroom.

Teacher delivery the material according to what is in the package book. The material is explained in simple language to make students understand quickly. The teacher delivered the material in detail, such as explaining the meaning of text, text structure, text linguistic characteristics, purpose and showing examples which were then discussed together. After finishing discussing the text examples, the teacher asks the students to create a text like the one that has been discussed together as an assignment. Previously, the teacher asked students to ask questions related to the material that they did not understand. The questions that arose from students were not about their lack of understanding of the content of the material, but students mostly asked about the meaning of vocabulary that they did not understand from the example text. This is because students do not have a complete dictionary as one of the learning resources. The school only provides a few dictionaries that are shared with other classes that also have English schedules on the same day. This is one proof that school facilities really help the implementation of the learning process in the classroom. If learning facilities are not adequate, then the learning process can be hampered.

In this case, the teaching methods that teachers use need to be considered so that students are not confused when doing the assignments. As Harmer (2007) says, different teaching methods may result in different student understanding and different learning achievements (Harmer & Cates, 2007).

This whole set is covered in the teaching module. A good teacher should have learning tools that are used as guidelines in learning. But in reality, the use of teaching modules never goes as it should. What is written in the teaching module is never in line with the reality of learning in the village school. English teacher in this school admit that they never use the teaching module when teaching.

Teacher: "It can't be done. The use of teaching modules cannot work here. The condition of the students here is different. Especially with these children. They are hard to tell. Just to pay attention to the explanation, I have to shout until they are hoarse, then they will pay a little attention. So I never rely on the teaching module."

b. Curriculum and Administrative Burden

Teachers in rural schools also face pressure from the implementation of the national curriculum which is often non-contextual. A uniform curriculum throughout Indonesia does not take into account geographical, social, and economic differences in rural areas. This leads to a mismatch between the material taught and the real conditions that students face. The Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) theory developed by Berns and Erickson (2001) emphasizes the importance of relating learning materials to students' real lives so that learning becomes meaningful. However, teachers who are burdened by a lot of administration tend not to have enough time or energy to innovate contextual learning (Berns & Erickson, 2001).

The study from Nilan (2003) also confirms that in many Indonesian educational contexts, teachers are more preoccupied with administrative demands rather than focusing on the quality of teaching, especially in the suburbs (Nilan, 2003). The high administrative burden distracts teachers from their primary task, which is to educate and guide students directly. English language education as a foreign language in Indonesia has become an important component of the national education system. However, the implementation of English language teaching still faces various challenges, especially in rural areas. One significant challenge faced by English teachers in rural schools is the application of a uniform curriculum that is not contextualized to local conditions. The national curriculum used throughout Indonesia tends to focus on achieving the same competencies, without considering the geographical, social, and cultural diversity of rural areas. This leads to disparities in the learning process, as students in rural areas often lack the prerequisite readiness required by the curriculum standards. According to Hamied (2012), the English curriculum in Indonesia still does not pay enough attention to local needs and student abilities, especially in remote and rural areas (Hamied, 2012). In addition, high administrative burdens are also a major obstacle to the development of innovative learning. Teachers in rural schools are generally required to complete various reports, learning documents, and digital reporting, which often consume time and energy that could otherwise be used to design more creative teaching strategies. Research conducted by Kurniasih & Sani (2017) shows that more than 60% of teachers' working time is spent fulfilling school and ministry administrative requirements, rather than on activities to improve the quality of learning (Kurniasih & Sani, 2017). This issue poses a challenge for teachers in teaching English in rural schools.

Rural schools, such as MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah in Kubu Raya District, West Kalimantan, are a clear example of the complexity of these challenges. In this context, English teachers are not only required to deliver learning materials in accordance with the national curriculum, but also have to deal with limited resources, low student motivation, and a heavy

administrative workload. The national curriculum is designed with uniform competency standards across Indonesia, including for English language subjects. While this approach aims to standardize educational quality, in practice, its implementation creates disparities, particularly in areas lacking adequate infrastructure and human resources.

An interview with one of the English teachers at MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah revealed that the curriculum used is not entirely suitable for the conditions of students in rural areas. The teacher said that students at the school have very limited exposure to English. Most students have no experience interacting with the language outside the classroom, making it difficult for them to understand the context of the material being taught.

Teacher: “The English curriculum we use is the same as in the city. But the conditions of the students here are very different. Many of them are not accustomed to hearing or using English in their daily lives. I have to explain materials such as descriptive texts or procedural texts at greater length because they have never seen examples of them directly.”

This statement shows that the implementation of the curriculum does not take into account the contextual and cultural gaps between urban and rural areas. The English curriculum in Indonesia is still top-down and insensitive to local needs, especially in terms of material selection and learning approaches. As a result, teachers must adjust their teaching strategies with additional efforts to bridge the gap in student understanding, which ultimately increases their workload.

In addition to curriculum issues, teachers in rural schools also face high administrative demands. Administrative tasks that must be completed include preparing teaching materials, filling out daily journals, weekly reports, and digital reporting through the education information system. This burden not only reduces the time teachers have to prepare teaching materials, but also reduces the opportunity to design more creative and enjoyable teaching methods.

The teachers interviewed revealed that most of their time is spent completing reports and administrative documents required by the school and the education office.

Teacher: “Sometimes I want to create teaching materials or look for educational videos, but my time is taken up with administrative tasks. There are teaching journals, daily reports, weekly reports, and other documents that must be collected. Often, I focus more on administrative tasks than on developing teaching materials.”

This situation highlights the imbalance between teachers' roles as educators and the bureaucratic demands that burden them. Kurniasih and Sani (2017) state that excessive administrative burdens can reduce teachers' motivation and effectiveness in managing learning. In the context of rural schools, the impact is even greater because teachers often take on additional tasks outside their teaching responsibilities.

In addition to the curriculum and administrative workload, limited access to training and technical guidance poses a separate challenge. English teachers at MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah noted that they rarely receive curriculum training or workshops to enhance their competencies. This makes it difficult for them to understand the latest curriculum changes and implement them effectively.

Teacher: "We rarely receive training or technical guidance, especially for English teachers. So when there are changes to the curriculum, we learn on our own, or at most ask our fellow teachers in the WhatsApp group".

The lack of training exacerbates the challenges in implementing the curriculum, especially if the training materials do not reach rural schools. Teachers become less confident in developing Lesson Plans (RPP) that align with the latest curriculum approach. This situation risks creating disparities between educational practices in rural and urban areas. A national curriculum that is not contextually relevant and high administrative burdens are two major challenges hindering the effectiveness of English language instruction in rural schools such as MTs Rubath Naqsyabandiyah. A curriculum that does not consider the social and cultural backgrounds of students requires teachers to make additional adjustments, while administrative burdens reduce teachers' opportunities to innovate in learning. The lack of professional training support exacerbates this situation, leaving teachers often working without adequate guidance. To address this issue, collaborative efforts between the central and local governments are needed to flexibly adapt the curriculum to local contexts. Additionally, reducing administrative burdens and enhancing training for teachers in remote areas are crucial steps toward improving the quality of English education across Indonesia.

#### A. Implications and Recommendations

The above discussion shows that the challenges of teaching English in rural areas are not merely a matter of individual teachers, but are more structural and contextual in nature. To overcome these challenges, the following are needed:

##### a. Contextual Approach in the Curriculum

The government needs to design a more flexible and locally-based curriculum that is more suited to rural conditions.

b. Strengthening Social Support and the Learning Environment

Involving the community, including parents and local leaders, in supporting informal English language learning.

c. Enhancing Teacher Competence and Professional Support

Training and mentoring program need to be provided on an ongoing basis, particularly for teachers in remote areas, through online training or regular visits from professional mentors.

d. School Administrative Reform

Reducing the administrative burden on teachers is important so that they can focus more on teaching and mentoring students.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

English as an international language has an important role in the world of education, especially in preparing students to face global challenges. However, in rural schools, English teaching still faces various obstacles that affect the effectiveness of learning (Hargreaves, 2009). Access to learning resources, inadequate school facilities, and low salaries make it difficult for rural schools to recruit competent teachers, so the learning process in the classroom only focuses on the teacher.

The results of the study show several main obstacles faced by teachers in teaching English, including low student interest in English lessons, lack of support from parents and the surrounding environment, teacher quality which is still considered low, and high curriculum and administrative burden. From these challenges, researchers provide suggestions with the aim of making English teaching in rural schools more effective. Enhancing student interest, by developing fun and relevant teaching methods tailored to students' lives in rural areas, linking English language learning to daily activities, local culture, and regional potential, and involving parents in supporting their children's English language learning, improving teacher competence through intensive training programs for English teachers, and requiring collaborative efforts between the central government and regions to flexibly adapt the curriculum to the local context.

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