Challenges In Teaching English At Rural And Urban Schools And Their Solutions

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Abstract: Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging task both in rural and urban areas. Teachers have to pay attention to the language skills of the students such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Beside that, the teachers should also help the technology, and encourage the students to have enthusiasm, good attitude, and motivation to learn English. There are some different challenges faced by the teachers both in rural and urban schools. The challenges are related to the students, teachers, and faclities. This study aims to identify the challenges in teaching English at rural and urban schools and then to find their the solutions. The research applied qualitative approach. The data were collected by semi interview and questionnaire from four teachers at rural and urban schools. The findings indicated that there are different challenges in teaching English at rural and urban schools. The challenges are related to the students such as   vocabulary mastery, students' motivation, parents support,   the activeness; the teachers such as familiarity of IT, mastery of teaching method, teaching training ; and the faclities such as lack of representative building, computer and LCD.

Index Terms: rural school; urban schools; challenges; solutions

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1 INTRODUCTION

English is a foreign language, and it is one of the most essential international languages for communication. English is not commonly used in daily Indonesian life [1]. Futhermore, the goverment has decided that English becomes a compulsory lesson in secondary schools and it is one of the subjects to be tested in National Examination [1]. English is very important in getting a better job and in social interaction with people around the world. Besides, it is also the main language in trade, commerce, news,   and information in globalized world. Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging task both in rural and urban areas. Teachers have to pay attention to the language skills of the students such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Beside that, the teachers should help the technology, and encourage the students to have enthusiasm, good attitude, and motivation to learn English. The purpose of teaching English at schools is to increase   the students' competence in communication facing the globalization era. The purpose of English learning is making the students flexible in using the language [2]. There are some different challenges faced by the teachers both in rural and urban schools. The challenges are related to the students, teachers, and faclities. The example of students challenges are vocabulary mastery, students concentration, parents support, discipline, boredom, and speaking ability. Then, the teachers challenges are teacher Training, teaching method, and the mastery of using IT in teaching learning process. The facilities issues are facilities and time limit. The economy in some rural areas develop rapidly, but in some areas it is still in bad condition. It is because of the lack of facilities in rural areas such as the school buliding and IT equipment. The students in this place are not very well informed. The students can not integrate with the society quite well because they are isolated. In contrast, the education in urban schools are good. They are affected by urbanization. There are so many young teachers of middle schools in rural areas. Sometimes, they only have few work experiences. Futhermore, the school in rural area often find some problems related to the teacher quality. In Indonesia, the teachers choosed to move to urban schools which offer them better work condition. Department of Education often gets some difficulties in recruiting rural teachers. The problem that can be easily identified in rural schools is the low of teacher's quality. Actually, schools in rural areas have important role for national education. However, they often get less attention from the goverment. It can be seen from the fact that there are many of education office which lie on urban areas. Due to the focus on urban schools (i.e prior to the twenty first century), policy makers experience difficulties in finding recomendations from trusted research studies which can help rural schools accelerate positive changes [3]. Thus, high quailty education research taking the issue of rural schools and rural education need to be done. This research was conducted at SMP N 3 Gantiwarno and SMP N 1 Prambanan. SMP N 3 Gantiwarno is located in the outskirts of Klaten. This school is in the border of the city. It is about 20 km from the regency. This school is in the slope of the mountain. Sometimes, in dry season this school have a problem in getting clean water, while in the rainy season flood may happen. It happens because there is a river nearby the school. The people said that it was rob flood. This school has 350 students. The background knowledge of the sudents are low enough. This school has problem for the students recruitment. Almost every year, this school lack of the students. In the admision of the new students, usually this school did not meet the target. According to the reseachers' observation, SMP N 3 Gantiwarno is the school which is in the category of rural school. SMP N 1 Prambanan   is located in the center of the city which has some tourism places. Beside, it is also near with some public places. It is very easy to reach this school. This school is near with the main street. So, it makes the students easier to get to this school by public transportation. Futhermore, this school has good buliding construction. It is big enough, and has two floors. Then, this school also has science and language laboratories. Related to the national examination, this school has complete multimedia equipments. The school does not need to borrow PC, LCD, and server from other schools. It is considered as one of the favourite schools in this area. Thus, the students' final score (Nilai Ebtanas Murni) to be accepted in this school is quite high. This school has 792 students. According to the research, this school is one of the urban schools.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching is the process of attending to people needs, experiences and feelings and intervening so that they learn particular things , and go beyond the given. [4]. One of the problems which is faced by English teacher is over crowded classes and the effect of such condition for teaching and learning process [5]. Rural is the place or municipalities outside the commuting zone of urban centres with a population of 10,000 or more people [6]. Rural school otten find some problems, such as lack of supplementary teaching materials, lack of teachers, low quality of teachers, lack of technology for learning, etc [8]. Futhermore, Urban School often represent a diverse population of students from variety of culltural, religious, socio-economic class, and ethnic background [9].The problem of violence and poverty may give challenges for urban education. They also affraid of the neighbourhoods where they work.

2.1 Problem statements

Problem statement of the study can be stated as follows: What are the Challenges in Teaching English at Rural and Urban Schools and Their Solutions?

2.2 The objective of the study

The objective : to identify the challenges in teaching English at rural and urban schools and then to find are the solutions.

3 METHOD

The research applied qualitative approach. The participants of this research were the English teachers in SMPN 3 Gantiwarno and also in SMPN 1 Prambanan. The participants consist of four teachers. Two teachers were from SMPN 3 Gantiwarno and the other were from SMPN 1 Prambanan. The research used purpose sampling in selecting the participants. Purpose sample is a type of non-probability sample. The main goal of purpose sample is producing sample that can be logically assumed to be the representative of the population Mudra [4]. The teachers of SMPN 3 Gantiwarno were choosen because they have been teaching in that school for more than ten years. Futhermore, the teachers of SMPN 1 Prambanan were selected because they have have been teaching in urban school for almost twenty years. According to the research, all of the participants are profesional teachers. In order to get the information from the participants, the research applied questionnaire and semi interview. The interview was conducted in English, Indonesia and sometimes in Javanese (mother language). Besides, the research also used checklist. The researchers gave some checklists to the participants, then to get more information, participants were given interview related to the topic. The researcher named P1 for the first participant from SMPN 3 Gantiwarno and P2 for the second participant from SMPN 3 Gantiwarno, P3 for the first participant from SMPN 1 Prambanan , and P4 for the second participant from SMPN 1 Prambanan.

4. Find and Discussion

Teaching English in rural areas has different challenges with teaching English in urban areas. The challenges are related to the students, teachers, and facilities of the schools.

4.1 The student challenges

There are some challenges related to the students. These challenges are vocabulary mastery, students' motivation, parents support, and students activeness.

4.1.1 Vocabulary mastery

Vocabulary mastery is one of important thing in learning a foreign language. Nothing can be done without it [10] Vocabulary is the basis of communication. The participants from SMPN 3 Gantiwarno (P1 and P2) said that, their students have a problem with vocabulary mastery. Their students only master few vocabulary. This condition makes their students difficult to understand English both in oral and written. In translating the material, most of the students rely on dictionary. Futhermore, teachers investigate the students' favourite teaching and learning method. Its purpose is to increase the vocabulary learning. Teachers give a questionairre and also interviews to their students. This way will help the teachers in getting the informations about the students' language learning behaviour. From this information, teachers increase the teaching and learning vocabulary. Then, the teachers asked their students to work in group rather than individually. In this case, they more active in negotiating and answering the questions in the class. Futhermore, Negotiation doesn't account for most vocabulary learning [11]. Beside that, teachers also using pictures in teaching learning activity. In this case, the students were active. It's indicated that imagery can definitely help students in acquiring new vocabulary and attract their attention [12]. In opposite, the participants from SMP N 1 Prambanan (P3 and P4) said that their students have good vocabulary mastery. They are able to understand the English material easily. So, it is not difficult for them in transfering their knowledge to the students. Mastering vocabulary is one of the most challenging task for the students [13].

4.1.2 Students' motivation

P1 and P2 stated that their students have low motivation. There are only about five students who have high motivation in the class. There are about 30 students in every class. Most of the students just sitting in the class and listening to the teachers. In some occassions, there are some students who do not bring their homework in classroom. If the teachers ask the reason, some of them said that they forget to do the homework. The other students said that they cannot finish the homework because the questions are difficult. However, the teachers have given an example before they give the homework. In fact, many of the students do not study well at home. It was found that some of them are easy to give up in doing the task.The students are motivated when they give attention to the teaching learning process, they do tasks immediatelly, they ask the question and anwers without the teachers instruction, and they look happy and eager. Futhermore, some teachers try to apply some methods which are able to create a teaching learning stucture and some methods   that provides the environment for optimal motivation, engagement, and learning. Besides that the teachers aslo try to create a quality environment to increase the student's motivation. For example, if the teachers can create the safe environment, the students will easy in giving attention on teaching learning process. Teachers are advised to apply role play activity in improving the students' motivation

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[14]. In another side, P3 and P4 stated that almost all of their students have high motivation. P3 said that their studetns follow the English learning well. They answer the teachers question actively, sometimes they also ask the question to the teachers. The students do not concentrate in learning English, otherwise they will do their best and get good scores [15].

4.1.3 Parents support
According to P1 and P2, there is a problem about parents support. Many of the students in their school get lack of parents' support. It is because their parents work outside of the town, or even overseas. Therefore, the comunication is not as good as those whose parents stay at home. Beside that, most of the parents' economic condition in their school are low. So, they have a financial problem. Many of the students in their school only have an English book from the school library.Futhermore some of students only have a small dictionary. So, when the teachers ask them to find the meaning of words, sometimes they cannot find them in their dictionary. Students do not have any ideas on the purpose of learning English, "an attitude which may be exacerbated by their parents" [16]. One of basic problem which find in rural school is unsupportive attitude of parents [17].To overcome this problem, according P1 and P2, the school helds the meeting with the parents to discuss some problems related to their children. Besides that the school also try to give the BSM (Bantuan Siswa Miskin) to the poor students. In other cases, P3 and P4 said that most of the parents in their school support their students. There are many of their students who follow English private course. Besides that, they also facilitate them. For example, they give the other material sources for learning to the students. It means that their parents support the students' need.

4.1.4 The students activeness
Another challenge is less activeness of the students. The activeness of students learning is the ability of students to follow the teaching learning process actively, such as involving the body, mind and the other aspect that related with the learning process. In this case, according to P1 and P2, many of their students just keep silent during the teaching learning process. They do not ask something to the teachers. Even, they just keep silent when the teachers asked them some questions. They do that because they do not understand the right answer. They do not understand the right answer because they do not study well. Many of them just watch TV and play with their friends after school.Besides that, the students also fell worry if they make mistakes in speaking English. In addition, when they do not understand about the material, they also just keep silent. There are many students are timid in front of the their classmates, particularly in speaking a foreign language , since it can be face-threatening [16]. Futhermore, the learning process in not effective if the class isn't live. Moreover, teachers give more discussion and presentation rather than explanation to their students. In this section, teachers have to manage the time well and adopt student centered teaching method. To overcome the students shyness, the teachers approach the students and then make a good relationship in the class. Teachers also try to use some motivating words to their students. Besides that, the teachers also try to give chance to all students in participating the teaching learrning process.

Futhermore, the teachers also advise the students to speak as far as they can speak without a fear of making fault in grammatical. It's purpose is to improve their language skill. In some occasion, teachers also fulfill all necessary requimennts such as LCD, chart or paper for presentation.. Students do not learn much just by sitting in class listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answer. In contrast, P3 and P4 said that most of their students are active in answering teachers' questions. Sometimes, they answer the question without being pointed by the teachers. Even, they raise their own hand because they want to answer the questions.

4.2 The challenges related to the teachers

4.2.1 Familiarity of IT
The challenges included the familiarity of IT, the mastery of teaching method, and teachers training. According to P1 and P2, there are many old teachers in their schools. They are usually unfamiliar with IT. Even, there are some teachers who are still confuse using laptop and LCD. Rural and remote Indonesian scholl "often lack qualified teachers" [18].To overcome this problem, the school held the IT training programme to the teachers especially some old teaches. On the other hand, P3 and P4 stated that there is no problem about using IT for their teachers.

4.2.2 Mastery of teaching method
P1 and P2 said that the teachers in their school also have problem in teaching method. They do the same things in the different occasions. However, the students will get more advantages if the teachers acquire the suitable method for them. Then,to solve this problem, the teachers held MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran) every Tuesday. In this momment, they share all off thing which related to the teaching learning process. Sometimes, they also invite speakers from the outside of the MGMP member. Then, P3 and P4 stated that many of their teachers have good quality in teaching techniques. Even though some of them are selected regency instructors, but in transferring their knowledge apply the various methods that suitable to their students. It is purposed to avoid the boredom of the students because many of the students may have acquired the material from their private course.The teachers have difficulties in implementing various kinds of teaching methods and techniques [19]. It happens because they don't only transfer the language skills, but also remain the motivation of the students in teaching and learning process.

4.2.3 Teachers training
P1 and P2 said that the teachers in their schools have less of teachers training. Sometimes, they have to join teachers training that held in the town. Eventhough they have to join it by theirselves payment. Futhermore, P3 and P4 stated that they have got enough teachers training. Moreover, both of them are English MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran) administrators. So, they have better opportunity in teachers training rather than the members of MGMP. Futhermore,in poor or rural area, most of the teachers teach English without having sufficient English training [16].

4.3.The facilities of the school

According to P1 and P2, their schools have the problem with the school facilities. For example, P1 said that there are 350 students in the school. In fact, there are only 3 LCD. P2 also said that in UNBK (Computer-Based National Exam) the school has to borrow some computers from the teachers and others schools. Besides, some computers are not in good condition, so sometimes the trouble happens during UNBK. This school is also located in the sloup of the mountain. In the dry season, there will be lack of fresh water. In contrast, in dry season, they will get flood or rob. Futhermore, the school is located in the environment with low social economy. So, many of the students also lack of book resources. They just get books from the library. To overcome this problem, the teachers sometimes ask for helping from the surrounding society, especially ex students. Sometimes, they will give some computers and also the other facilities. Besides that, the school also propose the Local Education Department to give some school facilities too.There must be big effort for supporting the teachers in getting good teaching facilities, such as space, books and teachings utensils [20]. Thus, bigger number of students needs big number of sources. In opposite, P3 and P4 explained that there is no problem about facilities. P3 said the school has representative building. It is big and comfortable. He also said that it has three laboratories for UNBK. The UNBK held three times a day. Fortunatelly, this school got many of computers from the goverment. Therefore, this school do not need to borrow multimedia equipment for national examination. Last year, there are 261 students who registered for UNBK and according to P3 & P4, the result of national examination meet their target.

5. CONCLUSION

This research was conducted in SMP A and SMP B. It shows that there are some different challenges in teaching English at rural and urban schools. The challenges are related to the students, teachers, and facilities. In rural schools, this research find some challenges related to the students, such as low motivation, the parents support, and lack of vocabulary mastery. To overcome the problems related to the students , the teachers try to apply some methods in learning process, and make a good communication with the parents. On the other hand, in urban school, the teachers do not find those challenges. However, there is a challenge in urban school that related to the students and teachers. Because the students are always well prepare in their study, the teachers also have to be well prepared before giving the material. Futhermore, in rural schools, there are also some challenges related to the teachers. For example, the unfamiliarity of IT, the lack of methodology, and less teachers training. To overcome the problem the teachers try to join some teachers trainings. In opposite, in urban schools, the teachers do not find this difficulties. The last is about facility. In rural school, the teachers face the lack of facilities, especially related to UNBK. Futhermore, they try to propose the Local Education Depatment to give some school facilities. In another case, urban school has good facilities. The schools do not have a serious problem about facility that related to the teaching learnig process.

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