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TEACHING ENGLISH IN RURAL AREAS: EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FROM A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the challenges encountered by English language teachers in rural areas, with a focus on junior high schools in Pandeglang, Banten, Indonesia. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research investigates the difficulties of teaching English and the strategies employed by teachers in this context. Four experienced English teachers with over five years of teaching experience participated in the study. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews conducted via WhatsApp. Thematic analysis revealed key challenges, including a lack of student interest, insufficient parental support, limited learning resources, a lack of exposure to English, and issues with vocabulary retention. Despite these challenges, teachers developed innovative strategies using interactive instructional materials such as video content and gamified learning tools, project-based and cooperative learning, and utilizing limited technology such as smartphones and educational apps. Teachers also integrate local culture and daily life into lessons to enhance contextual learning. This study highlights the resilience and creativity of educators in rural areas in overcoming obstacles to improve the quality of English language teaching.

Keywords: challenges; education; English teaching; rural areas; strategies

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi tantangan yang dihadapi oleh guru bahasa Inggris di daerah pedesaan, dengan fokus pada tingkat Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP) di Pandeglang, Banten, Indonesia. Menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini menyelidiki kesulitan dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris dan strategi yang diterapkan oleh guru di daerah tersebut. Empat guru bahasa Inggris berpengalaman, masing-masing dengan pengalaman mengajar lebih dari lima tahun, berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terbuka dan wawancara semi-terstruktur yang dilakukan melalui WhatsApp. Analisis tematik mengungkapkan tantangan utama, termasuk kurangnya minat siswa, dukungan orang tua yang terbatas, sumber daya pembelajaran yang terbatas, kurangnya paparan terhadap bahasa Inggris, dan masalah penguasaan kosakata. Meskipun menghadapi tantangan ini, para guru mengembangkan strategi inovatif, seperti menggunakan materi interaktif (video dan permainan), pembelajaran berbasis proyek dan kooperatif, serta memanfaatkan teknologi terbatas seperti ponsel pintar dan aplikasi pendidikan. Para guru juga mengintegrasikan budaya lokal dan kehidupan sehari-hari dalam pelajaran untuk meningkatkan pembelajaran kontekstual. Penelitian ini menyoroti ketahanan dan kreativitas para pendidik di daerah pedesaan dalam mengatasi hambatan untuk meningkatkan kualitas pengajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: *tantangan; pendidikan; pengajaran bahasa Inggris; daerah pedesaan; strategi*

INTRODUCTION

English, as an international language, plays a crucial role in academic development by providing access to global knowledge and educational opportunities. As Ute (2010) highlights, it serves not only as a tool for international communication but also as a gateway to information, educational advancement, and improved career prospects. In Indonesia, English is recognized as an essential foreign language, integrated into the national curriculum from elementary to high school levels (Depdiknas, 2003). Though not mandatory at the elementary level, its inclusion aims to equip students with the skills needed to succeed in a globally competitive world, fostering progress in science, technology, and the economy. Ultimately, this emphasis on English seeks to produce a generation of students capable of mastering the language to access broader knowledge, thereby contributing to both personal growth and national development (Isadaud, 2021).

However, rural areas in Indonesia face unique challenges in delivering effective English language education. Education, as a fundamental pillar of national development, experiences significant disparities between urban and rural areas due to Indonesia's diverse population and geography (Yorman et al., 2023). While urban areas typically offer better access to educational resources, rural areas struggle with limited infrastructure and fewer opportunities for both students and teachers. In the context of English language learning, these challenges are particularly pronounced. Jackson et al. (2005) note that rural areas often suffer from lower population densities, distinct socio-cultural environments, and geographic isolation, all of which contribute to difficulties in teaching English.

Moreover, Indonesia's geographical diversity adds complexity to English language teaching, as many rural areas are populated by individuals with low educational levels and limited exposure to the outside world. Mayaputri et al. (2021) examine the challenges of foreign language education on Pemana Island, East Nusa Tenggara, a remote region facing significant obstacles in English language teaching. These difficulties are not only rooted in geography but are also shaped by local beliefs and perspectives on education. These local views often influence how communities perceive the value of learning English and the importance of foreign language skills.

Rural education systems face several distinctive challenges compared to their urban counterparts. As Songbatumis (2017) notes, rural schools often have limited access to essential resources such as textbooks, technology, and qualified teachers. Infrastructure issues, such as inadequate school facilities and poor transportation, further exacerbate the situation. Mudra (2024) highlights that English teachers in rural areas also face specific obstacles, including classroom management challenges, a lack of teaching materials, and insufficient teaching aids or media. Compounding these issues are slow internet connectivity, low student motivation, limited parental support, and difficulties in assessing student progress, all of which hinder the educational experience in rural schools.

For teachers, the situation is equally challenging. While English has become a critical skill in today's globalized world, many rural areas struggle to provide the necessary resources for both students and teachers to develop their language skills. According to Listyani (2021), teachers face significant challenges such as being unqualified or lacking formal training in English language education, a shortage of quality textbooks, inadequate school facilities, and poor internet connectivity. Furthermore, students in rural areas often lack motivation, fear speaking English, and face social pressures that de-prioritize education. These factors severely limit the effectiveness of teaching and learning. In response, many teachers in rural areas employ creative and adaptive solutions, such as using locally relevant materials or developing teaching strategies better suited to the unique needs of rural students.

Another critical factor impacting English education in rural areas is socio-economic disparity. Families in rural areas, particularly those with low incomes, often cannot afford additional educational resources, such as English courses or technological tools that support learning. This socio-economic gap is particularly noticeable in rural areas like Baureno, East Java, where access to quality education is hindered by financial constraints (Buyun Khulel, 2021). Students in such

regions often struggle to engage with the curriculum or benefit from educational advancements, further exacerbating educational inequalities.

Moreover, the disparity between rural and urban education is marked by significant differences in facilities and opportunities for professional development. Urban schools typically have better access to modern resources, including well-equipped classrooms and professional development opportunities for teachers. In contrast, rural teachers often lack the training and access to seminars or workshops that could enhance their skills. This limits their ability to adopt innovative teaching practices or keep up with developments in English language education.

Banten, located at the westernmost tip of Java Island, exemplifies a region with urban growth and rural underdevelopment. While cities like Serang and Cilegon have benefited from industrialization and modern infrastructure, the rural areas of Pandeglang and Lebak continue to face significant socio-economic challenges. Despite their rich natural resources and potential in sectors like fisheries, agriculture, and tourism (Muhlis, 2023), these regions struggle with limited access to modern educational tools and infrastructure. Basuki (2021) notes that these challenges contribute to the region's educational disparities, especially in subjects like English, which require modern teaching aids.

Banten is a deeply religious province where Islam forms the core of its cultural identity, with the people known for their strong faith and commitment to religious practices. As Fauziah et al. (2023) note, *Kiyai* or Islamic religious leaders hold a central and revered position in both religious and social life, leading the boarding schools they manage and maintaining a significant presence in the broader community. This influence extends beyond religious rituals, such as fasting during *Ramadan* and paying almsgiving *(zakat)*, to the political and social spheres of Bantenese society, which, though open-minded in some respects, still operates within a patriarchal framework. The Banten people, historically known for their devotion to religious obligations, blend Islamic practices with local traditions, particularly influenced by Sufism. Karomah et al. (2020) further highlight that this Sufistic influence has led to the incorporation of mystical practices such as *debus* (ritual combat), *pencak silat* (martial arts), and *ilmu hikmat* (spiritual wisdom), which have roots in both the Sufi *tariqa* (Islamic mysticism) and local practices like *jangjawokan* (spiritual power). This fusion of Islamic mysticism and local culture defines Banten as a region where religion, tradition, and local beliefs intertwine to form a unique cultural and spiritual landscape. In addition to its religious devotion, Banten's culture, as explored by Vedia and Marasabesy (2020), is rich in local myths and customs. These myths, along with the province's unique foods and landscapes, are integral to Banten's cultural fabric, often reflected in its folklore and short stories, which help attract tourism by showcasing its distinctive identity. Therefore, this represents a significant opportunity for both domestic and international tourists, and it is essential to enhance English language proficiency despite the challenges. Consequently, the need to improve English skills should not be overlooked.

Given these challenges, it is essential to explore how teachers in rural areas address these issues and develop effective strategies to improve the quality of English language education. This study aims to examine the challenges faced by English language teachers in rural areas and identify the innovative strategies they employ to overcome these obstacles. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers and educational institutions, helping to design more effective programs and policies that support English language teaching in rural areas.

The research questions guiding this study are: what are the challenges faced by English teachers in rural areas? and what strategies do English teachers in rural areas use to address these challenges? These questions serve as the foundation for exploring not only the obstacles faced by teachers but also the creative approaches they employ to improve English language learning in rural contexts.

METHODOLOGY

Research Method and Design

This study aims to investigate the teaching challenges faced by English teachers in rural areas. To achieve this, a qualitative research design was employed, which is effective for exploring and understanding the experiences and perspectives of individuals or groups (Creswell, 2014). The research utilized a case study approach, which, according to Creswell (2014), involves a detailed and in-depth examination of a specific problem through the collection of comprehensive data using multiple methods. This approach was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by English teachers in rural areas. The case study focused specifically on Junior High School located in the rural regions of Banten. Banten was chosen due to the clear differences between industrial development in urban areas such as Serang and Cilegon, and the educational challenges faced in rural areas, which still struggle with limited access to quality education

Participants

The participants in this study were five English language teachers selected through purposive sampling. The selection criteria included teachers working in rural areas, particularly in the rural regions of Banten, with more than five years of teaching experience, and who are permanent staff members at the junior high school level. These criteria were designed to ensure that the participants possessed the necessary experience to provide valuable insights into the challenges of teaching English in rural areas, especially in the context of Banten, which has unique socio-cultural and educational characteristics that can influence language teaching. Teachers with over five years of experience were chosen because their extended practice allows them to have encountered a variety of challenges and developed strategies to address these issues, thus providing a deeper understanding of the realities of teaching English in rural settings.

However, it is important to note that while five teachers were initially selected for this study, one participant was unable to respond to the interview request. Consequently, the study is based on data gathered from four teachers. The following table provides an overview of the participants who contributed to the study:

Table 1. Participants Information

No	Name	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience	Position
1	Teacher 1	Female	42	15 years	English Teacher
2	Teacher 2	Female	34	8 years	English Teacher
3	Teacher 3	Female	34	13 years	English Teacher and curriculum department
4	Teacher 4	Female	38	19 years	English Teacher
5	Teacher 5	Female	37	7 years	English Teacher

Research Instruments

Two main data collection instruments were used in this study: a questionnaire with open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. An open-ended questionnaire allows respondents to provide answers freely, without being limited by pre-provided answer choices. This type of questionnaire enables respondents to express their opinions, experiences, or ideas in greater depth and spontaneously, offering richer insights into the topic being studied (Reja et al. 2003). An open-ended questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms to gather initial data on the challenges teachers face and the strategies they employ in their teaching. The open-ended questions were designed to allow teachers to provide detailed, qualitative responses, offering deeper insights into their personal experiences, challenges, and perspectives on teaching English in rural areas. Semi-

structured interviews were conducted using WhatsApp, allowing teachers to provide detailed responses in an open-ended format. While the interviews followed a predesigned set of questions, they also allowed flexibility for participants to elaborate on their experiences and views related to teaching English in rural areas.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection is conducted through two main techniques. First, teachers complete questionnaires online via Google Forms, which facilitates efficient collection and organization of responses and provides an overview of challenges and strategies across all participants. Second, semi-structured interviews are conducted via WhatsApp. The interviews are conducted in the participants' first language, Indonesian, to enable them to express their thoughts more freely and provide richer, more authentic data and to allow more flexible communication, especially considering teachers' limited access to other technologies and difficulties in meeting face-to-face. This approach enables teachers to share their experiences in a more in-depth and spontaneous manner. The researcher uses an interview guide but maintains flexibility to encourage detailed responses. All interviews are recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method for identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. Thematic analysis was chosen because it offers a flexible, in-depth approach to exploring the experiences of participants, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges English teachers face in rural contexts. As noted by Feel (2020), thematic analysis facilitates the interpretation of meaningful patterns within the data. The analysis process comprises several key stages. First, the interview recordings are transcribed to transform spoken responses into written text, enabling systematic analysis. The transcribed data are then examined, and significant points are identified and categorized into codes that represent the primary challenges and strategies shared by the participants. These codes are subsequently organized into broader themes that structure the findings and offer deeper insight into the participants' experiences. Finally, the themes are reviewed and refined to ensure that they accurately reflect the data and effectively capture the core issues faced by English teachers in rural areas.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the systemic challenges of English language teaching in rural contexts and the adaptive strategies employed by teachers. These results highlight the need for context-sensitive teacher support, infrastructure development, and curriculum adjustments that reflect the realities of rural education. Moreover, the study contributes to the existing literature by emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy and teacher agency in overcoming structural limitations. The practical strategies identified in this study may inform future policy and professional development programs aimed at improving rural language education. The findings reveal both the challenges encountered by English teachers in rural Banten and the strategies they employed to address these issues.

Challenge in Teaching English in Rural Area of Banten

After analyzing the interview data, several challenges were identified in relation to teaching English in rural areas. The qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interviews were coded and then grouped into broader themes to structure the findings more clearly. The following are the themes and code analyses derived from the interviews:

Table 2. Challenges in Teaching English in Rural Banten

No	Challenge	Explanation	Teachers Mentioned
1	**Lack of Student Interest**	Many students perceive English as difficult and boring, leading to low engagement and motivation.	Teacher 1, Teacher 3
2	**Lack of Parental Support**	Parents in rural areas often cannot support their children's learning, and students do not see the relevance of English to their daily lives.	Teacher 1, Teacher 3
3	**Insufficient Learning Facilities**	Schools lack necessary resources such as language labs, libraries, and modern technology (computers, projectors, internet), which limits effective learning.	Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 4
4	**Limited Exposure to English**	Students rarely encounter English use outside the classroom, reducing their opportunity to engage with and improve their language skills.	Teacher 1
5	**Perceived Difficulty of English**	Many students find English challenging, especially because it is viewed as an abstract or foreign subject.	Teacher 1, Teacher 3
6	**Difficulty in Memorizing Vocabulary**	Students struggle to retain vocabulary, hindering their ability to use and apply English effectively.	Teacher 4

The research findings highlight several interconnected challenges that teachers face when teaching English in rural areas of Banten. These challenges not only impede the learning process but also impact students' motivation and self-confidence in acquiring the language: lack of student interest, lack of parental support, insufficient learning facilities, limited exposure to English, and difficulty in memorizing vocabulary. In this discussion, we will explore these challenges in more detail based on the findings obtained from teacher interviews.

One of the main challenges faced is *the lack of student interest in English*. Many students perceive English as a difficult and boring subject, which leads to low engagement and motivation. Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 highlight this issue, noting that negative perceptions of English hinder active participation in the classroom. As both teachers explain, students' lack of interest in learning is primarily due to their perception of English as a challenging subject. This finding aligns with research conducted in Salatiga, Central Java, where Rahayu (2024) highlights the issue of English being treated as a local content subject, which reduces its importance in the curriculum and negatively affects students' motivation to learn. Similarly, Herizal et al. (2023) identify significant obstacles in rural areas of South Sumatra, including inadequate infrastructure, insufficient learning materials, and low student motivation, all of which hinder effective teaching.

Lack of Parental Support and Relevance to Daily Life: One of the main challenges hindering students' motivation to learn English in rural areas is the lack of parental support and students' inability to see the relevance of English in their daily lives. Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 note that parents are often not involved in their children's education, especially in English, leading students to not consider it an important subject. Additionally, students struggle to understand how English is useful in their daily lives, further diminishing their motivation to learn. Research by Angela et al. (2024) shows that parents in rural areas often fail to recognize the importance of English, perceiving it as irrelevant to their everyday needs. The lack of parental involvement and students' limited understanding of English's benefits further exacerbate low motivation and apathy toward learning the language.

One of the biggest challenges faced by teachers is *insufficient learning facilities*. Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 4 note that many schools in rural areas lack essential facilities, such as language labs, libraries with collections of English books, adequate whiteboards, and modern learning media like computers, projectors, and internet access. As stated, "There is also a lack of facilities in schools, which makes it difficult for students to access resources that would help them learn more easily." Without proper facilities, teachers find it difficult to make lessons more interactive and engaging for students. According to research conducted by Nathania et al. (2024), the challenges faced by English teachers in rural schools, particularly in public schools in Central Kalimantan, are similar. Most schools in the region lack basic facilities, especially projectors and speakers. These schools do not have an LCD projector due to high costs and electricity issues. As a result, teachers are often limited to using only chalkboards or whiteboards for teaching.

The lack of exposure to English in students' daily environments is indeed a significant barrier, especially in rural areas where the language is rarely used outside of the classroom. As Teacher 1 points out, "Students are rarely exposed to environments where English is actively used," which highlights the disconnect between what students learn in class and how they can apply English in real-life situations. This limited exposure affects more than just motivation; it also hinders vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and the internalization of complex grammatical structures. As Krashen's Input Hypothesis suggests, consistent exposure to comprehensible input, language that is slightly above the learner's current level, is essential for effective second language acquisition (Krashen, 1985). Without this exposure, students struggle to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, leading to challenges in fully mastering the language.

This perception of inadequacy creates resistance and a lack of enthusiasm to engage with the language. One significant challenge contributing to this resistance is *the perceived difficulty of English*. As noted by Teacher 1 and Teacher 3, many students view English as a difficult and boring subject. English is often seen as a foreign or abstract language, which leads to further reluctance to learn. Additionally, many students speak local dialects or regional languages at home, which affects their ability to learn and master standard English. Both Wahyudin et al. (2024) and Angela et al. (2024) highlight that students' low proficiency in foundational components such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation significantly impedes their ability to communicate effectively in English. As Herizal et al. (2023) suggest, this lack of proficiency leads to lower engagement in lessons, as students feel inadequate when using the language.

The difficulty in memorizing vocabulary is a significant challenge that students face, particularly when learning a second language. Teacher 4 highlights that students often struggle to retain vocabulary, which hinders their ability to use and apply English effectively. This issue arises from a lack of practice in using new vocabulary in real-life contexts. Without enough practice, students find it difficult to remember words, ultimately slowing their progress in mastering the language. This aligns with the research from Yuliyana (2024), which suggests that students often face challenges in both retaining new words and finding effective strategies to expand their vocabulary.

Strategies for Teaching English

Teaching English in rural areas such as Pandeglang, Banten, presents unique challenges. However, educators in the region employ various creative strategies to overcome these barriers and create effective, engaging learning environments for their students.

Table 3. Teaching Strategies to Overcome Challenges in Rural Banten

No	Teaching Strategy	Description	Teachers Using It
1	**Use of Interactive Materials**	Using images, videos, games, and songs to make learning more engaging and enjoyable.	Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 4
2	**Project-Based and Cooperative Learning**	Using real-life projects (e.g., making posters or greeting cards) and group work to connect lessons to students' everyday lives.	Teacher 1, Teacher 2 Teacher 4
3	**Utilizing Limited Technology**	Using digital resources like Duolingo, YouTube, and digital dictionaries on smartphones to support learning, despite limited facilities.	Teacher 1, Teacher 2 Teacher 3 Teacher 4
4	**Contextual and Cooperative Learning**	Linking English lessons to local culture and environment, and promoting group work to enhance student participation.	Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 4
5	**Problem-Based and Discovery Learning**	Engaging students in solving real-life problems or finding solutions that relate English to their daily experiences.	Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 3
6	**Use of Offline Learning Materials**	Relying on books, printed materials, and posters as primary learning tools when technology is unavailable.	Teacher 1, Teacher 4

1. *Use of Interactive Materials*

Teachers such as Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 4 use interactive materials like images, videos, games, songs, and role-playing to make learning more engaging and enjoyable. This strategy is very effective in capturing students' attention and getting them more involved in the lesson. For example, using English videos or songs provides a more lively and entertaining experience, which is much more enjoyable compared to traditional methods that can be monotonous. By utilizing interactive learning materials, students are not only more interested in learning, but also find it easier to understand the material being taught. This is crucial in addressing the challenge of low student interest. As found in research by Nathania (2024), the use of games and songs can increase student motivation, even in areas with limited resources.

2. *Project-Based and Cooperative Learning*

Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 implement project-based learning (PBL) and cooperative learning, where students work in groups to create real projects, such as posters or greeting cards, linking the lesson material to their everyday lives. This approach allows students to see the relevance of English in real-world contexts. This aligns with findings from Bahri (2024), which emphasize that connecting real-world projects to students' daily lives can enhance student motivation and help them see the practical application of English, making it more engaging and useful. Additionally, through cooperative learning, students collaborate, discuss, and support each other, strengthening their understanding of the material and helping to overcome challenges, such as difficulties in using technology. Through project-based learning, students can directly see how English is used in their daily lives. For example, when creating a poster or greeting card, they can use English to communicate in a relevant context, making the lesson feel more useful and practical. This directly addresses the challenge of the perceived lack of relevance of English to their lives.

3. *Utilizing Limited Technology*

Teachers like Teacher 1, Teacher 3, and Teacher 4 address the limitations of facilities by creatively using available technology, such as smartphones, YouTube, Duolingo, and digital dictionaries. While access to high-speed internet and devices is limited in rural areas, these teachers make the most of free educational apps and videos that can be accessed offline or on low-bandwidth connections. For instance, Teacher 1 downloads YouTube videos in advance to show in class without needing internet access. The use of smartphones and English language learning apps like Duolingo enables students to continue learning outside the classroom, overcoming the challenge of limited facilities. As found in the study by Supriadi (2023), despite infrastructure limitations, technology can still be leveraged to support effective learning. Additionally, YouTube provides access to educational videos that enrich the teaching materials.

4. *Contextual and Cooperative Learning*

Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 4 implement contextual learning by linking lesson material to local culture and students' everyday lives. Additionally, they apply cooperative learning, enabling students to collaborate in groups to better understand and apply the material. By connecting English lessons to local culture, teachers make the content more relevant and accessible, while cooperative learning fosters collaboration, enhancing students' understanding through discussion and interaction. This approach addresses the challenge of limited exposure to English outside the classroom and promotes social support among students, encouraging active engagement in learning. This strategy aligns with the findings of Putera (2023), which emphasize the value of incorporating local cultures to improve students' oracy skills, build their confidence, and make learning English more enjoyable and engaging.

5. Problem-Based and Discovery Learning

Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3 use problem-based learning and discovery learning, which challenge students to solve real-life problems or find solutions related to their own lives. This approach gives students the opportunity to discover answers on their own and strengthen their understanding. By applying problem-based learning (PBL), students are engaged in real-world situations that require the use of English to solve problems. For example, they may be asked to solve a group problem that involves communication in English. This strategy helps address the challenge of vocabulary memory difficulties, as students learn English in a practical context that can be directly applied. This aligns with the findings of Zahra (2024), where the teacher presents students with problems or issues that are more relevant to their daily lives. While pushing students more in the classroom, the learning remains student-centred, allowing them to develop their critical thinking skills through PBL.

6. Use of Offline Learning Materials

Teacher 1 and Teacher 4 rely on offline learning materials, such as textbooks, worksheets, handouts, and posters, to support the teaching and learning process in rural areas. These materials are particularly important in regions where internet access is limited, allowing students to continue learning even when technology is unavailable. In the face of the challenge of limited access to technology, the use of offline learning materials like books and posters becomes crucial. This allows students to continue learning even when there is no access to digital technology, a common issue in rural areas where limited internet connectivity hinders online education. As suggested by Musthafa (2019), the combination of digital resources and printed materials is essential to support learning in areas with limited access to technology.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Teaching English in rural areas in Pandeglang, Banten, presents significant challenges, as highlighted by the findings of this study. Key obstacles include a lack of student interest, limited parental support, insufficient learning facilities, and reduced exposure to English outside the classroom. These challenges affect students' motivation and engagement and impede their ability to learn the language effectively. Many students view English as a difficult, abstract subject, which, combined with the lack of resources and real-world applications, further hinders their progress. Despite these difficulties, teachers in rural Banten employ a range of innovative strategies to overcome the limitations they face. By using interactive materials such as videos, games, and songs, teachers make lessons more engaging and relevant to students' lives. Additionally, project-based learning, cooperative learning, and contextual learning help bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and real-world applications. Teachers also utilize available technology, including smartphones and educational apps, to supplement their teaching, allowing students to engage with the language outside the classroom. These strategies demonstrate the teachers' commitment to fostering an environment where students can develop their English skills despite the challenges. This study suggests that improving English teaching in rural areas requires targeted teacher training, enhanced educational resources, and incorporation of local cultural context into the curriculum. Policymakers should focus on addressing infrastructural gaps and providing equitable support to rural schools to improve language learning outcomes.

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