Challenges Faced by Teacher in Teaching English

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Abstract

This study explores the challenges faced by an English teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng, a rural junior high school in Tana Toraja, Indonesia, and the strategies employed to overcome them. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Findings reveal that teaching English in this context is hindered by students' limited vocabulary, low motivation, diverse learning needs, scarce resources, and limited exposure to English outside the classroom. In response, the teacher applied adaptive strategies such as differentiated instruction based on student interests, the integration of visual and multimedia tools, and game-based learning. Although innovative methods improved student engagement and language acquisition, challenges like time constraints in producing learning media remained. The study highlights the need for systemic support, including professional development and access to educational technology, to enhance teaching effectiveness and bridge rural-urban disparities in English education.

Keywords: The Challenges, English Teacher, Rural Junior High School, Tana Toraja

Introduction

In today's era of globalization, the English language has emerged as the dominant lingua franca, serving as a common medium for communication across nations and cultures. Its widespread use extends beyond casual conversation—it plays a critical role in international diplomacy, academic collaboration, technological development, and global business (Wardhani et al, 2022). This centrality in global affairs has elevated English to a crucial subject within national education systems, including in Indonesia, where it is designated as a compulsory foreign language beginning in junior high school (Low, 2020; Raihani, 2018). As a result, students are expected to develop a working proficiency in English that enables them to engage meaningfully in both local and international contexts.

Mastery of English is more than just a linguistic skill; it is a gateway to broader academic prospects, professional advancement, and intercultural understanding (Taufik, 2023). Access to global literature, research, and digital content often depends on one's English proficiency, thereby making it a vital competency in the knowledge economy (Hariharasudan et al, 2018). Recognizing this, many educators and policymakers advocate for the early introduction of English instruction. According to researcher, initiating English learning at a young age is not only beneficial for linguistic development but also equips students with the cognitive and communicative tools necessary for future academic demands (Trenkic et al, 2019). Despite these advantages, the implementation of English education in practice, particularly in remote and under-resourced areas such as Bonggakaradeng, faces numerous obstacles. These include a lack of qualified English teachers, inadequate teaching materials, insufficient classroom

facilities, and varying levels of student motivation and linguistic exposure (Singh, 2023). Such disparities highlight the urgent need for context-sensitive strategies that support English language learning in rural settings, ensuring equitable access to the opportunities that English proficiency can provide. Learning strategies refer to the deliberate and organized methods employed by educators to facilitate the attainment of specific educational goals. These strategies serve as a roadmap for both teaching and learning processes, guiding how content is delivered and how students engage with the material. As defined by researcher, a learning strategy involves careful selection and application of instructional methods and tools that are intentionally aligned with predefined learning objectives (Alias et al, 2023). This alignment ensures that teaching efforts are purposeful and directed toward measurable outcomes.

Building upon this foundation, emphasizes that learning strategies are not just arbitrary techniques but rather structured plans that sequence instructional activities in a coherent and logical manner (Rata, 2019). These plans must take into account several critical variables, including students' prior knowledge, learning preferences, cultural backgrounds, and the overall learning environment. In this way, learning strategies are dynamic and context-sensitive, requiring educators to adapt and modify their approaches to meet the diverse needs of learners. Effective learning strategies bridge the gap between curriculum content and student comprehension by providing a clear instructional pathway. When designed and implemented thoughtfully, they enhance learner engagement, promote deeper understanding, and increase the likelihood of achieving intended learning outcomes. Therefore, understanding and applying appropriate learning strategies is essential for improving the quality and impact of education in any setting.

English language learning poses a range of challenges for both educators and learners, particularly in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language (Sumali et al, 2021). These challenges are multifaceted, encompassing linguistic, cultural, psychological, and environmental dimensions. underscores that teaching English in such settings requires thoughtful and intentional instructional approaches, as students often have limited opportunities to encounter or use the language beyond the classroom (Cremin, 2022). Without meaningful exposure to authentic English use in daily life, learners may struggle with fluency, comprehension, and motivation. This situation demands that educators adopt targeted strategies that compensate for the lack of immersion and promote consistent language practice. This is, teachers must go beyond traditional teaching methods and implement adaptive, context-aware, and innovative pedagogical strategies. These may include communicative language teaching, task-based learning, multimedia integration, and collaborative activities that simulate real-world language use. Such methods are crucial for sustaining student interest and improving language retention in environments where English is not a dominant medium.

Importantly, challenges in English language education should not be seen merely as barriers, but also as opportunities for pedagogical and professional growth. Argues that challenges can act as motivators, prompting individuals to strive for excellence and unlock their potential (Umesi, 2023). From this perspective, the difficulties faced in teaching and learning English can serve as a catalyst for educators to refine their instructional practices and for students to develop resilience and problem-solving skills. To effectively overcome these challenges, a comprehensive approach is needed—one that involves re-evaluating curriculum content to ensure cultural and contextual relevance, selecting engaging and inclusive teaching methods, and incorporating appropriate technologies to enhance access and interaction. As highlighted by the, the integration of digital tools and innovative practices can significantly enhance the effectiveness of language instruction, particularly when aligned with learner needs

and educational goals (Zou et al, 2023). In sum, addressing the challenges in English language learning requires not only resources and planning but also a mindset oriented toward continuous improvement and adaptation. Highlights the critical importance of systematic planning in the learning process, arguing that well-structured instruction is the foundation of effective teaching (Reed, 2016). Careful lesson design ensures that educational objectives are clearly defined and aligned with learning activities, allowing students to engage in purposeful and meaningful experiences. When lessons are thoughtfully organized, students are better able to make connections between new information and prior knowledge, thereby facilitating deeper understanding and long-term retention. This principle becomes especially relevant in the context of SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng, a school located in a rural area where students face significant challenges in acquiring even basic English language skills. Initial classroom observations suggest that many students struggle with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, while also exhibiting low levels of confidence and motivation. These findings are consistent with broader educational research indicating that rural schools often contend with a lack of teaching resources, limited infrastructure, and insufficient professional development for teachers (Du Plessis et al, 2019). These conditions can significantly hinder both instructional quality and student outcomes.

Overcoming the challenge, English language educators in these settings must employ focused and contextually appropriate strategies. Interactive and contextualized teaching methods—such as using real-life scenarios, local cultural references, and student-centered activities—can enhance relevance and improve student comprehension. The integration of digital tools, even in low-tech formats like mobile-friendly apps or offline media, can provide varied and stimulating input that fosters engagement. Moreover, differentiated instruction is key in such heterogeneous classrooms where students possess diverse learning abilities, backgrounds, and readiness levels. As explains, differentiated instruction allows teachers to tailor their approaches to individual learner profiles, modifying content, process, or product to ensure all students can access the curriculum meaningfully (Mogale, 2015). This approach not only promotes equity but also fosters a supportive learning environment that values student diversity. Additionally, research by supports the use of game-based learning and multimedia resources as powerful tools to increase student motivation, participation, and enthusiasm (Hung, 2018). By turning learning into an enjoyable, interactive experience, such methods can help transform passive learners into active participants, particularly in settings where traditional teaching methods may fall short.

Thus, meeting the English language learning needs of students in rural areas such as SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng demands a comprehensive instructional approach. This approach must be carefully planned to ensure that it is systematic in structure, inclusive of diverse learner needs, engaging in delivery, and sensitive to the unique challenges of the local context. The complexity of teaching in such environments marked by limited resources, varying student competencies, and motivational issues necessitates that educators not only adapt their methods but also innovate continuously to maintain effective learning outcomes. In light of these realities, the researcher undertook an in-depth investigation to better understand the actual conditions experienced by English teachers at the school. The purpose of this inquiry was to examine the specific obstacles teachers face in the classroom and to uncover the strategies they use to address these issues. The novelty of this research lies in exploring both the challenges and responses, where this study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform teaching practices

and policy interventions in the future, especially for educators working in rural environments with similar limitations.

Method

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, employing a case study design to explore how an English teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng navigates the challenges of teaching in a rural educational setting. The selection of a qualitative methodology is grounded in the intention to gain rich, contextualized insights into the lived experiences of the teacher, rather than to produce numerical generalizations. explains, a research design serves as the procedural framework that guides researchers through data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell 2014). In this study, the chosen design allows for a thorough exploration of real-world teaching practices within a specific, bounded system.

The case study approach is particularly well-suited to studies aiming for a deep understanding of phenomena within their real-life context (Yin, 2018). By focusing on a single case the experience of one English teacher this study enables a detailed examination of both the pedagogical strategies used and the contextual factors that influence English instruction in a rural Indonesian school. This design aligns with Stake's (1995) view that case studies aim to uncover the uniqueness and complexity of a particular instance, thereby generating nuanced, contextually rich insights. Rather than seeking broad statistical patterns, the research seeks to understand how a teacher's instructional decisions are shaped by the challenges of teaching English in a remote area with limited access to language resources and professional support.

The participant selected for this research is one English teacher from SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng who was actively teaching during the 2023/2023 academic year. The selection process employed case study sampling (Stake, 1995), which prioritizes individuals who can provide in-depth information relevant to the study's objectives. The school itself is located in Tana Toraja, a rural region in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This geographic context plays a significant role in the study, as rural areas often face infrastructural constraints, limited exposure to English, and insufficient access to professional development opportunities for teachers— factors that compound the challenges of language instruction. To collect the data, the researcher employed two primary qualitative instruments: classroom observation and interviews. These tools are widely recognized in qualitative research for their ability to capture lived experiences and instructional dynamics (Sudaryono, 2013). Observation enabled the researcher to directly witness teaching practices, classroom interactions, and student engagement during English lessons. This method provided immediate, context-rich data that reflected authentic teaching conditions. In parallel, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the teacher's perspectives on their instructional strategies, challenges encountered, and adaptations made to overcome those challenges. Semi-structured interviews are particularly effective because they combine the consistency of prepared questions with the flexibility to explore emerging themes through follow-up questions (Basuki, 2020; Sarosa, 2017).

Following the guidance of Sugiyono (2020), careful design of data collection tools is essential to ensure the reliability and accuracy of qualitative findings. The interview questions were prepared in advance, but the format allowed the teacher to elaborate freely, encouraging the emergence of spontaneous insights. The observation sessions were conducted over multiple classroom meetings to capture a broader range of instructional practices and student responses. The steps in the data collection process included: (1) identifying and securing the participation of the English teacher, (2) designing and piloting the interview questions, (3)

conducting multiple classroom observations, and (4) recording, transcribing, and organizing the collected data into meaningful categories. In particular, the researcher focused on one eighth-grade English class, observing multiple sessions and conducting an in-depth interview with the teacher to obtain detailed, reflective accounts of their instructional practices and professional challenges. Data analysis, the study utilizes the interactive model of analysis developed by Miles and Huberman, which remains one of the most widely used and robust approaches in qualitative research. This model includes four key components: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2021). The first step, data reduction, involved selecting, simplifying, and transforming the raw data into relevant thematic segments. This process allowed the researcher to filter out extraneous information and focus on significant patterns related to teaching strategies and classroom challenges.

Next, the reduced data were organized and displayed in matrices and charts to help identify recurring themes, relationships, and contradictions. Data display facilitates clear visualization of findings and supports more accurate interpretation. Once the themes were established, the researcher moved to the stage of conclusion drawing, which involved synthesizing the findings and interpreting their implications. Verification of conclusions was achieved through triangulation comparing observation notes, interview transcripts, and field memos to ensure consistency and credibility across data sources. In sum, this methodological approach was chosen to enable a rich and comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in teaching English in a rural Indonesian school. The combination of classroom observation and in-depth interviews provided a well-rounded perspective on the teacher's experience, while the case study design ensured the depth of analysis necessary to uncover contextual influences on pedagogy.

Results

The challenges faced by teachers in teaching at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng

This study reveals that English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng face several challenges in the teaching and learning process. The main issues include students' limited vocabulary, diverse learning abilities, low motivation, insufficient learning resources, and limited opportunities to practice English outside the classroom. These factors negatively affect students' language proficiency and overall learning outcomes. To address these challenges, teachers employ various adaptive strategies. These include differentiated instruction based on students' interests and talents, use of multimedia such as videos and audio, game-based learning, and personalized encouragement. Such methods aim to increase student engagement, improve vocabulary acquisition, and develop communication skills. Below are summarized key findings with supporting excerpts from interviews:

Vocabulary Limitations and Its Impact

One of the most significant barriers to English language learning among students at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng is their limited vocabulary. A restricted vocabulary base not only affects students' ability to comprehend written texts but also limits their capacity to express ideas clearly and engage in meaningful communication. Without sufficient word knowledge, students struggle to decode the meaning of sentences, grasp the overall context of reading passages, and participate confidently in spoken or written tasks. This challenge becomes particularly evident during reading comprehension activities and classroom discussions, where students often hesitate or rely heavily on translation.

To address this issue, teachers adopt a variety of creative and student-centered strategies aimed at making vocabulary learning more engaging and effective. One commonly used technique involves matching pictures with corresponding words. This visual approach helps students form mental associations between new vocabulary and concrete images, making abstract language more accessible and memorable. By integrating visual aids into lessons, teachers cater to students' learning preferences and enhance retention.In addition to visual matching activities, teachers also promote vocabulary development through reading exercises and guided discussions. Encouraging students to read short, level-appropriate texts not only exposes them to new words in context but also reinforces grammar and sentence structure. Follow-up discussions allow students to actively use the new vocabulary in speaking, which helps solidify their understanding and builds confidence in language production. These interactive methods foster a more dynamic learning environment, where students feel motivated to expand their vocabulary through participation rather than rote memorization.

"Students' limited vocabulary affects all language skills. I use methods that connect words with pictures to make learning more engaging." Ms. Katrina Vocabulary plays a foundational role in English language acquisition. It is the building block upon which all other language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing—are developed. Without a sufficient vocabulary, students often find themselves unable to decode the meaning of texts, follow classroom instructions, or convey their thoughts effectively in oral and written communication. This limitation affects both receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing), creating a barrier to overall language proficiency. In essence, vocabulary is not an isolated component but a critical element that directly influences comprehension, fluency, and learner confidence.

In the classroom context of SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng, this challenge is particularly evident. Ms. Katrina, the English teacher, has observed that her students frequently encounter difficulties not because of grammatical issues, but because they lack the basic vocabulary needed to understand even simple English texts. Their limited word bank affects their participation in class, their ability to complete assignments, and their overall engagement in learning. Students often hesitate to speak or write because they cannot find the appropriate words to express themselves, which in turn diminishes their confidence and willingness to practice. Tackle this issue, Ms. Katrina has implemented a range of engaging, student-centered strategies designed to make vocabulary learning more accessible and effective. One of the primary techniques she uses is matching words with pictures. This visual association helps students internalize the meanings of new vocabulary by linking them to concrete images, which supports better memory retention. Visual learning is especially helpful for young learners and those in rural areas, as it provides immediate context and reduces the cognitive load involved in abstract translation.

In addition, Ms. Katrina encourages her students to engage in reading short texts followed by guided discussions. Through this method, students are exposed to vocabulary in meaningful contexts, allowing them to see how words function in sentences and how they relate to other words and ideas. The discussion component reinforces active use of vocabulary, giving students a chance to practice speaking while being supported by their peers and the teacher. These strategies are not only educationally sound but also enjoyable, which helps maintain student motivation and reduces anxiety around language learning.

Transforming vocabulary instruction into an interactive and meaningful experience, Ms. Katrina fosters a more positive and productive learning environment. Students begin to

recognize the practical value of the words they learn, applying them in various situations both inside and outside the classroom. Over time, as their vocabulary base expands, students demonstrate noticeable improvements in reading fluency, writing clarity, listening comprehension, and verbal expression. They become more confident and independent learners, better equipped to access and understand English in diverse contexts. Ultimately, addressing vocabulary limitations is about more than just teaching more words—it is about equipping students with the tools they need to unlock the full potential of language. With appropriate strategies and sustained support, vocabulary development becomes a key that opens the door to effective communication and long-term academic success.

Differentiated Learning to Meet Diverse Needs

Differentiated learning is an instructional approach that acknowledges the diversity of learners in the classroom and aims to meet their varying needs, interests, and readiness levels. Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all strategy, teachers adapt content, processes, and products to ensure that each student has access to meaningful and appropriately challenging learning experiences. This approach is particularly valuable in classrooms with mixed-ability students, such as those in rural areas where learning disparities may be more pronounced.

One effective method of differentiation involves grouping students based on their interests, such as sports, music, or local cultural practices. For example, when teaching English vocabulary or reading comprehension, a teacher might group students who are interested in sports and provide them with texts related to football, badminton, or other athletic topics. This strategy not only aligns learning content with students' personal interests but also enhances engagement and motivation. When students see the relevance of learning materials to their own lives, they are more likely to participate actively and retain new information. Tailoring learning materials in this way fosters a sense of ownership and enjoyment in learning. Students become more invested in classroom activities because the content resonates with their preferences and experiences. At the same time, the teacher can use these groupings to scaffold instruction appropriately—providing more support to students who need it, while challenging more advanced learners with tasks that promote critical thinking and deeper analysis.

Ultimately, differentiated learning helps create an inclusive environment where all students can thrive. By designing instruction that is both personalized and purposeful, teachers not only accommodate diverse learning needs but also promote equity and meaningful engagement across the classroom.

"Grouping students by interests allows me to provide materials that align with what they like, which helps improve their vocabulary." Ms. Katrina. In every classroom, students bring a rich diversity of backgrounds, experiences, interests, and learning abilities. These differences profoundly influence how each student engages with educational content, particularly in the area of language learning, where cognitive, cultural, and emotional factors play significant roles. A standardized or one-size-fits-all teaching approach, while convenient, often fails to meet the needs of all learners. Some students may find the pace too fast or too slow, the content irrelevant, or the method of instruction incompatible with their learning style. As a result, some learners may disengage or struggle to keep up, which can hinder their academic progress and confidence.

Differentiated learning addresses this challenge by recognizing and responding to individual student differences. It involves modifying teaching strategies, materials, and assessments to accommodate varied student needs, ensuring that every learner has access to instruction that

is appropriately challenging, engaging, and supportive. One particularly effective differentiation strategy is grouping students based on their interests—such as sports, music, technology, or local culture—and tailoring learning activities and materials accordingly. This interest-based grouping strategy aligns educational content with students' personal passions, making learning feel more relevant and enjoyable. For instance, a student who enjoys football may be given vocabulary or reading comprehension texts related to sports, while another interested in music might explore lyrics, artist interviews, or reviews. When students engage with content that reflects their interests, they are more likely to participate actively in class, internalize new vocabulary, and develop deeper comprehension skills. This strategy not only promotes active learning but also supports intrinsic motivation, which is critical for long-term language development.

Moreover, interest-based differentiation creates a bridge between what students already know and what they need to learn. By connecting new language input to familiar themes or experiences, teachers help students make meaningful associations that aid memory and understanding. This personalized approach transforms language learning from an abstract exercise into a relevant and enjoyable process, which is especially beneficial in multilingual or rural contexts where learners may have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. As a result, differentiated instruction enhances both the effectiveness and inclusivity of language education. By personalizing content and allowing students to engage in ways that reflect their world, teachers not only support vocabulary acquisition but also foster a more positive attitude toward learning English. The result is a classroom environment where all learners—regardless of ability or background—can grow, contribute, and succeed.

Challenges in Creating Learning Media

Despite the well-documented benefits of video-based learning—such as increased student engagement, enhanced understanding through visual and auditory stimuli, and the flexibility to revisit content—many teachers face significant challenges in implementing this approach effectively. One of the most pressing obstacles is the lack of time available to create high-quality video materials. Producing educational videos that are pedagogically sound, visually appealing, and tailored to students' needs requires careful planning, scripting, recording, and editing—all of which demand a considerable investment of time and effort. For teachers who already manage full teaching schedules, administrative duties, and lesson preparation, dedicating additional hours to video production can be overwhelming. This is especially true in under-resourced or rural schools where teachers may not have access to adequate technological tools or training in digital content creation. As a result, while video-based learning holds great promise for improving instructional delivery and supporting diverse learning styles, its implementation is often hindered by practical limitations that educators must navigate within their existing workloads.

"Preparing videos is time-consuming, which is challenging given my other responsibilities." Ms. Katrina, While video-based learning has become a powerful tool for enhancing student engagement and understanding, the process of creating high-quality learning media presents real challenges for teachers. One major obstacle is the significant amount of time required to plan, record, edit, and refine educational videos. Teachers often balance multiple responsibilities, including lesson planning, classroom instruction, grading, and administrative duties. In this context, allocating time to produce effective video content becomes difficult. The technical aspects of video production—such as choosing appropriate visuals, ensuring clear audio, and editing for clarity—further add to the workload. Although video-based learning can greatly

support vocabulary development and language skills, the time and effort required can hinder consistent implementation. As a result, many teachers struggle to integrate multimedia content into their lessons as frequently as they would like, despite understanding its value in supporting student learning. The teaching challenges faced by English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng reflect broader systemic issues in rural education contexts—ranging from students' limited vocabulary and varied learning abilities to resource shortages and time constraints in developing effective media. Despite these obstacles, teachers demonstrate resilience and creativity through adaptive teaching strategies, including differentiated learning, visual-based vocabulary instruction, and the selective use of technology. These efforts help to create a more engaging and responsive learning environment, which supports students' language development. However, to achieve more sustainable improvements in English proficiency, ongoing support in terms of training, teaching resources, and collaborative platforms is essential. Empowering teachers with these tools can help bridge the gap between teaching goals and student outcomes.

Discussion

The challenges faced by teachers in teaching at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng

The findings of this study reveal that English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng encounter a wide range of interrelated challenges in delivering effective English instruction. These challenges stem not only from students' individual characteristics but also from broader contextual limitations, such as geographic isolation, infrastructural inadequacies, and systemic underfunding. Among the most pressing issues are students' limited vocabulary, diverse learning needs, low levels of motivation, insufficient learning resources, and the lack of opportunities for students to practice English outside of the classroom. While these issues are particularly visible in this school, they reflect common struggles in rural and under-resourced educational contexts, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, as noted by (Singh, 2023).

One of the most significant challenges observed is students' limited vocabulary. This limitation severely restricts their ability to understand instructional materials, follow directions, and communicate ideas, both orally and in writing. Vocabulary is widely recognized as the cornerstone of language acquisition; it is essential for all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Cohen et al, 2019). When students have an insufficient vocabulary, their capacity to process and produce language is hindered, often leading to frustration, disengagement, and a lack of confidence. In response, teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng have employed various strategies to make vocabulary learning more effective. Among these are the use of visual aids, such as matching words with pictures, and the integration of contextual reading and guided discussions. These methods are consistent with dual coding theory, which posits that combining visual and verbal information enhances retention and comprehension. By making vocabulary tangible and relatable, teachers help bridge the gap between abstract language and meaningful understanding.

Another notable instructional strategy employed by teachers is differentiated learning. Recognizing that students come from diverse backgrounds and possess varying abilities, the teachers group learners based on their interests—such as sports, music, or local traditions—and design materials that align with these interests. This approach supports greater relevance and motivation, as students are more likely to engage with content that reflects their personal experiences. The strategy is grounded in theory, which emphasizes the role of social context

and interaction in learning (De Felice et al, 2023). According to researcher differentiation is especially important in heterogeneous classrooms, where student diversity must be addressed through personalized and flexible instruction (Goyibova et al, 2023). By contextualizing learning and respecting individual preferences, teachers create an inclusive environment where all students have the opportunity to succeed. However, despite the creative and student-centered efforts of the teachers, several systemic and logistical constraints limit the full realization of innovative pedagogical practices. One recurring issue highlighted in the study is the difficulty of producing digital learning materials, such as instructional videos. Video-based learning has been shown to significantly enhance student motivation, provide multimodal input, and reinforce content through repetition and visualization (Setiawan et al, 2023). Yet, for teachers in rural schools like SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng, the process of creating high-quality educational videos is often unfeasible. The lack of time, limited access to equipment, and insufficient training in video production pose major barriers. Many teachers are already burdened with heavy workloads, including teaching multiple subjects, preparing lesson plans, and handling administrative duties. Without institutional support or collaborative mechanisms to share resources and expertise, the potential benefits of video-based instruction remain largely untapped (Cattaneo et al, 2023).

Beyond technological challenges, there is also the broader issue of limited access to professional development and up-to-date teaching materials. Teachers often lack opportunities to participate in training programs that would enhance their skills in English pedagogy, ICT integration, and classroom management. This lack of ongoing support can lead to stagnation in teaching methods and make it difficult for educators to stay informed about best practices. As a result, even the most dedicated teachers may struggle to innovate effectively within the constraints of their environment. Nevertheless, the commitment and creativity demonstrated by the teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng are noteworthy. Despite working in a resource-limited setting, they strive to adapt their teaching to meet students' needs, using contextualized materials, integrating visual media, and fostering learner interest through differentiated strategies. Their efforts reflect a deep understanding of their students' realities and a genuine desire to improve learning outcomes. These practices, while limited in scope, align closely with research-supported approaches in effective language education. However, for these efforts to have a lasting impact, they must be supported at the institutional level. Schools and education authorities need to recognize the unique challenges faced by rural educators and respond with appropriate interventions. These may include providing professional development opportunities, equipping classrooms with necessary materials and technology, facilitating collaboration among teachers, and reducing administrative burdens. Supporting teachers in these ways not only enhances the quality of instruction but also contributes to a more equitable and responsive education system.

In conclusion, the teaching challenges identified in this study are both complex and context-dependent. They underline the importance of adopting a holistic view of language education—one that considers not just pedagogy, but also infrastructure, professional support, and learner diversity. Improving English language teaching in rural areas like Bonggakaradeng requires a combination of teacher innovation and systemic reform. Only through this dual effort can educators be empowered to provide high-quality language instruction that is equitable, engaging, and effective for all learners.

Conclusion

This study concludes that English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Bonggakaradeng face significant yet common challenges in the EFL teaching context, particularly within rural educational environments. Core issues include students' limited vocabulary, varied learning abilities, low motivation, insufficient resources, and limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Despite these constraints, teachers have shown remarkable adaptability and commitment by employing context-sensitive strategies such as differentiated instruction, the use of visual and multimedia aids, and efforts to personalize learning based on students' interests. These strategies not only enhance student engagement but also contribute to vocabulary development and communication skills, supporting the overall effectiveness of English language teaching. However, their impact is limited by systemic constraints, particularly the lack of time and resources to develop digital learning media. Therefore, it is recommended that further research is conducted to ensure vital progress in providing ongoing teacher training, adequate learning tools, and institutional support. Finally, improving English education in rural areas like Bonggakaradeng requires a dual approach: empowering teachers with the resources and training they need while recognizing and building upon the creative and student-focused practices they are already implementing. This effort will bridge the gap between existing challenges and the goal of achieving meaningful and equitable English education for all students.

Acknowledgment

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