

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English language skills are an important skill that every individual must have in the current era. In the world of education, English has been implemented as a subject taught from elementary school to university, both in urban and rural educational institutions. However, in reality, the use of English is certainly not easy for students, given the position of English in Indonesia as a foreign language. The status of English as the first foreign language in Indonesia differs from that of the second or third foreign languages used by language communities in Indonesia. The status of English as a foreign language in Indonesia makes the teaching of English challenging (Umiyati & Widayanti, 2022).

Teaching English has become more difficult for students, especially when English learning is linked to the context of rural schools, because rural schools do not have as many opportunities to learn English as urban schools (Harlina & Yusuf, 2020). This causes students in rural areas to often feel less confident in using English, mainly because opportunities to learn English are much more limited than in urban schools. This gap has the potential to create significant differences between the English language abilities of students in urban and rural areas (Suputra et al., 2021). Therefore, teaching English in rural areas poses a challenge for teachers.

A challenge is an obstacle or hindrance that must be faced and resolved properly and effectively. These challenges include the conditions of teachers in rural areas which are closely related to limited educational infrastructure such as lack of school facilities, difficulty of access, and technological and social changes (Insan et al., 2023). This can also be linked to rural areas in Batutas Island schools, where students are often less interested in learning English because they consider it difficult and uninteresting. Even though they study, the learning process is often not as effective as in urban schools, due to limited facilities and infrastructure and a lack of innovative teaching staff. Additionally, students use local languages and Indonesian more frequently in their daily lives, which further weakens their English language skills. This can result in low levels of English proficiency among rural students, which in turn may hinder their ability to compete in today's era.

To overcome these problems, efforts are needed from teachers to design and implement English learning strategies that are appropriate to the context and needs of students in rural areas. Learning strategies are ways that will be used by teachers to select learning activities that will be used during the learning process (Millah, 2019). By realizing high-quality learning, it is equally important to formulate learning strategies that best suit students' conditions, learning styles, and comfort in learning (Maghfiroh et al., 2024). This means that the strategies used by teachers help students to more easily understand the material so that the objectives of the teaching

and learning process are achieved. English teaching strategies are important for English teachers to recognize important ways of adjusting their lessons and assessments to meet the needs of individual students (Oktavia et al., 2023). Thus, strategies are indispensable regarding learning activities, because learning activities involve the search, formation and transfer of knowledge, which is often called teaching and learning activities.

Based on initial research, the researcher observed challenges at the Batuatas Island junior high school related to inadequate access to internet resources, lack of equipment for learning facilities and infrastructure available at schools and researchers also observed that English language learning was only learned when studying in junior high school, whereas in general in urban schools English language subjects had been taken during elementary school education. This also refers to previous research conducted by Burhamzah et al., (2024), Zulhijjah, (2022) the findings of their study indicate that the obstacles encountered stem from insufficient resources, inadequate teacher training, a non-supportive environment, and a lack of motivation and assistance from both parents and the community. Additionally, the habits of students, particularly their frequent use of their local language, contributed to these challenges. However, another study conducted by Halik & Nusrath, (2020) the findings showed that the challenges in teaching English to students in rural schools because many students showed their dislike in learning English. Meanwhile, research conducted by Pramesty et al., (2022) showed that some teachers are not

from English education, the status of English as local content and the socio-economic status of parents that affect students learning English.

From the above problems, so this makes researchers interested in examining the challenges and strategies of teachers teaching English in rural areas precisely on the island of Batutas southeast Sulawesi. Therefore, this study aims to identify the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English at the junior high school of Batutas Island and analyze the strategies that can be applied by teachers to overcome these challenges.

With the above research, it can be concluded that this research is important to do because it is to find the causal factors or other challenges faced by teachers, so that it can provide solutions in the form of new strategies that will be used in teaching English in the current era, especially in rural areas. By understanding the challenges and effective strategies, it is hoped that the quality of English learning in rural areas can be improved and the gap with urban areas can be minimized.

B. Statement of the Study

After describing the background of the problem in the study, as for the main focus that can be described in this study, namely:

1. What challenges do teachers face in teaching English at Batuatas Island Junior High School?
2. What strategies can teachers implement to overcome the challenges of teaching English?

C. Purpose of the Study

From the formulation of the problems mentioned earlier, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the challenges teachers face in teaching English at Batuatas Island Junior High School.
2. To analyze the strategies that can be implemented by teachers to overcome these challenges.

D. Contributions of the Study

At least two benefits are expected from this research:

1. Theoretical contribution

The results of this study are expected to provide useful knowledge in the field of education, especially about the use of appropriate strategies in facing the challenges of teaching English in rural areas.

2. Practical contribution

Practically, this research contributes to:

- a. The researcher

To increase the knowledge and experience gained as a provision in conducting research and improvements in the future and can

increase the knowledge of researchers about the problems faced in the real world of education.

b. The students

The results of this study are expected to provide motivation and enthusiasm for learning English to students. Researchers also hope that students in the area will be more interested in learning English even though they have limited infrastructure and others and are not only forced to learn because of subjects that must be taken in the field of education, but of their own accord students to learn English.

c. The teachers

This research is expected to provide real benefits for teachers in improving the quality of teaching English in rural areas so that in the implementation of the teaching and learning process at school using new strategies can provide solutions to the challenges faced in the current era.

d. The educational field

This research is expected to be a source of information that helps other researchers on the same issue. In addition, this study is expected to make a useful contribution to other researchers who are interested in studying issues related to English language teaching in rural areas.

E. Scope and Limitation

The main focus of this research is teachers' challenges and strategies in teaching English at junior high school level on Batuatas Island, Southeast Sulawesi.

F. Definition of the Key Terms

By knowing the key term, it makes avoid understanding. There are many key terms that are related to this research such as:

English teacher challenge : Challenges are efforts that aim to arouse the ability of a nation or country. In general, English teachers' challenges include lack of creativity when teaching and inadequate facilities (Nurhaliza et al., 2024).

Strategy : is a general pattern of a series of activities to be carried out to achieve certain goals (Tim Developer of Education Science Faculty of Education UPI (2007) in Koerniantono, 2020). Thus, strategy is part of an important component in achieving goals, both for organizations and individuals, through planning, resource allocation, and integrated and structured actions.

English language teaching : Teaching is a learning process carried out by an educator (Harahap et al., 2023). English

language teaching is a complex process that involves the interaction between language comprehension and use.

Rural area : Human settlements that are located outside the city and whose inhabitants make a living by farming or farming (Suryaman et al., 2022). In general, rural areas are characterized by different geographical, economic, socio-cultural, and infrastructure conditions from urban areas. These characteristics bring their own challenges in the development and improvement of rural areas, especially in the field of education.

