

Teachers' Challenges in Teaching English to Young Learner in Rural Primary Schools

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Abstrak

It is believed that rural education has a legacy unique challenge compared with urban and suburban counterparts. The challenges are also found in the place and the implementation of English program in primary level. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the challenges encountered by English teachers in teaching English for young learners in rural public primary schools in Salatiga, Central Java. To answer the question, semi-structured interview is used with eight participants from eight primary schools in four sub-districts (Argomulyo, Tingkir, Sidorejo, and Sidomukti) in Salatiga. It launches by briefly discussing the place of English in national curriculum for primary school in one hand and the execution of English program in rural schools on the other hand. Throughout the research, the researcher obtained three challenges and those were: (i) the status of English as a local content subject creates conditions which is less supportive for the teachers to teach English, (ii) most of the teachers are coming from non-English educational background which influence their competencies in teaching English, (iii) socio-economic status from parents plays big role in students' motivation and achievement in learning English.

Key words: teaching English for young learner, rural schools, teachers' challenges, curriculum, teachers' competencies, parents' socio-economic status.

Tantangan yang Dihadapi Guru dalam Mengajar Bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Dasar

Abstrak

Pendidikan di daerah pinggiran memiliki tantangan yang unik dibandingkan dengan daerah perkotaan. Tantangan juga ditemukan di Sekolah Dasar di mana pengajaran Bahasa Inggris diterapkan. Tujuan penelitian untuk mengetahui tantangan yang dihadapi guru bahasa Inggris dalam mengajar bahasa Inggris di beberapa Sekolah Dasar di daerah pinggiran Salatiga, Jawa Tengah. Untuk menjawab pertanyaan itu, wawancara semi-terstruktur digunakan dengan delapan peserta dari delapan sekolah dasar di empat kecamatan (Argomulyo, Tingkir, Sidorejo, dan Sidomukti) di Salatiga. Penelitian diawali pembahasan singkat pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dalam Kurikulum Nasional Sekolah Dasar dan pelaksanaannya di sekolah. Adapun hasil penelitian: (i) status bahasa Inggris sebagai muatan lokal menciptakan kondisi yang kurang mendukung bagi guru untuk mengajar bahasa Inggris, (ii) sebagian besar guru bukan berasal dari latar belakang pendidikan bahasa Inggris yang mempengaruhi kompetensi mereka dalam mengajar bahasa Inggris, (iii) status sosial-ekonomi dari orang tua berpengaruh terhadap motivasi dan prestasi siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris.

Kata-kata kunci: pengajaran bahasa Inggris untuk anak-anak, sekolah pinggiran, tantangan guru, kurikulum, kompetensi guru, status sosial ekonomi orang tua.

Introduction

In Indonesia, teaching English to young learners (TEYL) has been implemented in some schools since 1994 (Supriyanti, 2012). However, the implementation of TEYL is not obligatory. English at primary school is not a compulsory subject, but a local content subject. English at primary school as the local content subject is promoted by the policy of Ministry of Education and Culture Number 0487/4/1992, chapter VIII, which states that schools can add the basic subjects in the curriculum, providing the lesson as long as it is not contrary to the national education goals. Then, the policy is followed with the Decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 060/U/1993 dated February 25, 1993 about the opportunity of the English program as a local content in primary school that can be started in the fourth grade.

Decentralization of education in Indonesia has pushed local governments to create their own decisions in terms to what extent of curricular space in the form of the use of some learning hours for what has become known as a local content (Musthafa, 2010). As a result, many districts and city governments are interested in TEYL due to the decentralization policy. This is evidenced by the increasing number of primary schools which offer English classes at the primary school level. Now, primary schools in Indonesia offer English subject as a local content beginning at the fourth grade (aged nine to ten); in spite of that many other primary schools even teach English at earlier grades (starting from aged six to seven) (Sikki, Rahman, Hamra & Noni, 2013). It becomes a new trend in which schools offer English instruction before grade four.

However, due to many factors like geographical, social, economic, political, or cultural which cause diversity in educational access, some children in urban areas enjoy the luxury of high quality education in which they almost have everything the best education could offer, qualified teachers, up to date and excellent educational facilities, supporting local government's policy and also parents. For these children English has a very important role to keep up with the progress of knowledge and science.

However, other less privileged children in some areas are happy enough to have access even to the basic education seeing that factors in supporting good education are not available to them, for instance less qualified teachers, parents' support, and limited educational facilities. Besides, the status of English as the local content subject also influences so that for these children English has no role to play. Inequality of access to English at primary level, especially the division between urban and rural areas and amongst urban schools, has been underlined by several researchers (e.g, Butler, 2009; Gimenez, 2009; Ho, 2003; Y. Hu, 2007; Nikolov, 2009). There has been a huge increase in the private sector in many countries, which increases the gap between rich and poor, since wealthier parents are able to send their children to private schools or for private English lessons (Enever & Moon, 2009; Hoque, 2009; Lee, 2009). Based on the factors influencing the educational diversity in Indonesia, including geographical, social, economic, and parents' contribution towards English young learners, it is essential to explore more about the challenges faced by English teachers while teaching in those schools. The challenges might be very different than schools located in the main city, where parents and students are aware of the role of English. The challenges risen as the consequences of the policy might influence the quality of teaching and student success in learning English.

This research is a qualitative study of some public primary schools in rural areas in Salatiga. Many studies have been conducted to investigate teachers' challenges in teaching to young learners. However, few research has been undertaken to investigate how teachers' perspectives in TEYL as the implementation of language policy, especially in Salatiga. This study aims at investigating school teachers' challenges in teaching English when English is a local content subject in the curriculum. This paper seeks to contribute to this area of research and offer a better understanding of teachers' problems and challenges. It will provide some positive suggestions for teachers, policy makers, parents and professional educators as to improve English language teaching quality especially in primary schools in rural area, not only in Salatiga

context but in other areas that face similar dilemmas. Hence, the problem and question in this study is: What are teachers' challenges in teaching English for young learners in public primary schools in rural areas in Salatiga?

Literature Review

Previous studies have described the significance and outcomes of the introduction of English into primary schools, specifically in terms of the gap between policy and implementation. Some of the issues seem to be common across countries while others are more local. This review will focus on the policy issues (macro-level) and its consequences to the English teaching most closely linked to the aims of the study (micro-level).

Macro-level Factor: The Policy

The first point to note is that there is a variation in government policy from one province to another and even within the same province Indonesia. The current curriculum in English language education program in Indonesia only focuses on the teaching at junior and high school levels since English is not a core subject at primary level (Yuwono, 2005). As English becoming a local content, the Ministry of Education and Culture has not published a national curriculum for English in primary schools and the responsibility to develop the curriculum lies with the regional or provincial government or local school (Lestari, 2003). For this reason, the local content curriculum in one part of Indonesia might be different from the local content curriculum in other parts, either in terms of the objectives or the content (Kasihani, 2010). Even though there is no national curriculum for English program, the national government has provided competency standards for the English language education and learning for primary schools which are aimed to inform teaching and learning goals. Such lack of clarity in the policy can cause considerable confusion, particularly at regional or school level. As the result, English teachers in primary schools are struggling in developing and choosing appropriate materials and methods to be used in teaching.

Another factor is the number of hours per week dedicated to English. As a local content

subject, English is allotted two 35-minute lessons per week in grades four, five, and six of primary schools (Supriyanti, 2012), yet several schools start teaching English from the first grade. With a low number of hours per week surely limits the students' chance to learn English and teacher cannot cover all materials in the syllabus. Government policy on primary level certainly creates gap, especially the divide between urban and rural areas.

Micro-level Factors: Education in Rural Areas

The first factor in micro-levels is rural area itself. As an area, which is far from the main city, the population of this area is also different with others. According to McCormack and Thomas (2003), rural environments can be geographically, culturally, socially, personally, and professionally isolating. In spite of mobility and socio geographic shifts, rural schools still tend to facilitate large minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations (Lichter, 2003). In this area, education only stops until primary level. It is not an obligatory to continue to secondary level or even college for children. As a result, rural schools are found weaker in instruction compared to their urban counterparts, seen in the eyes of general public (Taneri & Engin-Demir, 2011). Chruch, Elliot, & Gable (2001) concluded that children living in poor families have lower academic achievement scores, lower college enrollment rates, and lower college graduation rates than children living in families that are asset sufficient. As long as the children graduate from the primary level, no matter the scores they get it is enough. Sense of competition is not seen in rural area. It is different with urban schools where the schools and environment in there fully support the education for the children. Children in urban areas are required to compete with their peers to be the best. Yet, the environment in rural area still cannot support the children to get the best quality education.

Teaching Profession and Its Challenges

Factor on the challenges faced by teacher is not only based on the policy or the environment. Teaching profession can be one of the factors that lead the teacher to the challenges. There are two

main problems related to the quality of English teachers in primary schools proposed by Yuwono & Harbon (2010), first, most of English teachers in primary school do not have qualifications in English education; second, those English teachers who do have an English education background were not trained as primary school English teachers. Currently, teacher education programs in Indonesia only prepare training for English teachers in teaching in junior high and high schools levels, and not in primary schools, since the national curriculum for English language education in Indonesia only focuses on junior high and high school students. It means that teachers have not been well prepared for the enactment of the new policy. As a result, many schools may offer English without having the required teachers or facilities (Rachmajanti, 2008). Since there is no exact curriculum to lead their teaching, they can keep teaching as long as there is a textbook. The teachers believed that the textbook can be considered as a substitute for a curriculum. Teachers' belief that the textbook could provide resources to fill the gaps in their knowledge and competencies as has been argued by Krammer (1985) and Ball & Feiman-Nemser (1988). Also, in most cases, English teachers in Indonesia depend only on textbooks and curriculum guidelines but often without having full understanding of the idea behind those materials or methods. In other words, many of them still have the so-called 'new-textbook old-method' attitude (Dardjowidjojo, 2000). Therefore, teaching profession particularly in primary school contributes problems that must be solved.

The Practice of English Program in Primary School

Another factor that is encountered by the schools in running an English program is the availability of resources. According to Lestari (2003) primary schools in Indonesia that include English in their curriculum commonly do not have appropriate and sufficient teaching and learning facilities to support teaching and learning process. Dardjowidjojo (2000) pointed out that the big class size is the obvious factor that contribute to

the ongoing problems in English language teaching in Indonesia. Other reasons for the problems are students do not have enough time to practice speaking English in class because their teacher is more concerned to teach the grammar and syntax rather than speaking and the absence of authentic and good learning materials as it stated by Musthafa (2001). Many schools lack instructional resources. Visual or audio-visual aids are not available and as a result, the majority of teachers use a 'chalk and talk' method when teaching the students as it stated by Faridi (2011). To manage with the problem of lack of teaching resources, most teachers use a textbook known as *Lembar Kerja Siswa* (LKS) as the only resource for their teaching (Lestari, 2003). Even though, many of the English textbooks available on the market are low quality, as it is evidenced by the many spelling and grammar errors and pictures that are ambiguous for the students (Sukamerta, 2011).

Many primary schools have started English teaching for their students not because they think that the students need it and they are interested in learning English (Jamilah, 2008) but due to parental pressure and a desire to increase the school's prestige (Suherdi & Kurniawan, 2005). From the description above of the practices of English language teaching in primary schools, it is clear that many primary schools do not have the qualified teachers and resources needed to run an English program. School principals may assign English teaching to classroom teachers who do not have English teaching qualifications, in order to be seen that they run an English program in their school.

Methodology

Context of the Study

Salatiga is a small city in Central Java, Indonesia. As a city which is entirely bordered with Semarang district, Salatiga has an area of $\pm 56,78$ km² and four sub districts namely: Argomulyo, Tingkir, Sidorejo, and Sidomukti. There are 66 public primary schools and 22 private primary schools in this town. The schools are spread throughout the area in Salatiga starting from in the urban areas until rural areas.

Participants

Two schools were chosen from each district with eight English teachers as the participants. Each school has one English teacher. Table 1. shows the demographic profile teachers in the sample. Age range was 23 – 40 years old, six were female and two are male.

Data Collection Procedure

The data for this study was collected through interviews. The interview data was the main data used in this study and a semi-structured interview was used to give more opportunities to develop participants' accounts of their teaching. The interviews ranged from 20 to 30 minutes and were undertaken in Indonesian as

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Sample

No	School	Gender	Age	Length of teaching	Educational Background
1	SD Tingkir Lor 2	Female	26	3 years	English Language Education
2	SD Randuacir 1	Male	24	1,5 years	Primary School Teacher Education
3	SD Kutowinangun 9	Female	25	1 years	Primary School Teacher Education
4	SD Dukuh 2	Female	36	14 years	Islamic Teacher Education
5	SD Salatiga 8	Female	34	11 years	English Language Education
6	SD Bugel 1	Female	24	9 months	English Language Education
7	SD Dukuh 1	Male	24	3 months	Primary School Teacher Education
8	SD Tegalrejo 5	Female	36	13 years	Economic Education

Instruments

The main goal of this study is investigating the perceptions of English teachers on the challenges in teaching English to young learner at public rural primary school in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia. In order to achieve this goal, a qualitative study was conducted to provide culturally specific and contextually rich data. In this regard, as Moll et al. (1992) stated, "Qualitative research offers a range of methodological alternatives that can fathom the array of cultural and intellectual resources available to students and teachers within households" (p. 132). Purposive sampling was used as only some public primary schools located in rural areas in Salatiga could participate in this study. The choice of the schools depended on the location. Schools that are located in farthest area of each sub district were selected to be the sample.

the researcher is a native-speaker of Indonesian. A teacher from SD Tegalrejo 05 was chosen as a participant for piloting process as the school is located in rural area. The interview was done in 33 minutes with some follow up questions to explore teacher's perspectives. The following questions provide a sample of the questions included on the interview and used for data analysis:

1. What do you think about status of English as local content subject in primary school?
2. What do you think about English curriculum for primary school?
3. Is there any bad experience in teaching English?
4. What do you think about the use of English workbook in primary school?
5. What do you think about teacher's education related to English teaching in primary school?
6. What do you feel after teaching English?

7. What are the common challenges you find while teaching in this school?
8. How far is the implication of students' social economic background to the ability to learning English?

The researcher continued to collect the data after transcribing the piloting result. The researcher was using the same interview question addressed in piloting process with some notes on each question so that the researcher could lead the interview session to the same answer between each participant. As soon as all data were collected, the researcher began to transcribe the result of interview. Any personal information given were changed into pseudonymous to keep the participants secret. The interview sessions were various from 23 minutes until 35 minutes for each participant.

Data Analysis Procedure

The process of data analysis is identified as a complex and challenging part of qualitative research. As Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor (2003) pointed, "It requires a mix of creativity and systematic searching, a blend of inspiration and diligent detection" (p.199). The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim for accurate analysis and interpretation with the help of Express Scribe. Then they were all read. Interesting passages were marked with brackets and labeled. Important patterns were determined in the light of the research questions and descriptive codes were used. To illustrate, CoC (Challenges on Curriculum) was used as a code for ideas and experiences of the English language teacher regarding on the curriculum challenges in rural settings. The data were then translated and presented in English.

Findings and Discussion

Teachers' Challenges Regarding to the Status of English in National Curriculum

The status of English as a local content has consequences on how teachers understand the place of English in the curriculum. The English teachers in this study believed that positioning English as a local content subject created

conditions for teaching English, which were less supportive for them than would have been the case for a main subject. According to Jamilah (2008), the status of English as a local content subject was confirmed in the 2004 curriculum. Later, the status of English changes from local content subject to be an extra subject in 2013 curriculum. The following quote demonstrates the practice of 2006 curriculum in rural primary schools.

This school use 2006 curriculum. It means that I have only seventy minutes a week to teach. This is different with other teachers who have more than seventy minutes a week to teach. They have enough time and the materials could be explained well to the students. (Participant 1/SD A)

According to Participant 1 it is revealed that 2006 curriculum used in primary school does not support English education for young learners. It can be seen by the time allocation in a week, which is only seventy minutes, and teachers only meet once in a week. Other teachers also deal with the same problem about time allocation. They think that it is not enough to teach 2 x 35 minutes in a week, because students will forget what they have learnt in the last meeting. As a result, teachers have to review the previous materials in the following week and it takes much time. Participant 1 also elaborates the practice in her school.

It is hard to meet only once a week. I have to do some administration stuff in the beginning of the class, then I have to review previous lesson because my students always forget about it. The reviewing session cannot be fast since it is rural school. Then I have to explain today's material slowly and waiting them to take note. Taking note is the most time-consuming part. After that, my students will practice through exercises. However, mostly, I could not finish the teaching cycle because of the lack of time. Whereas, I have to finish all materials in the syllabus by the end of semester. (Participant 1/SD A)

The problem is worsened with other class teachers who likely to use other teachers' time, especially English teachers' time to teach English. Most of the teachers in this study experience the moment when it is his/her time to teach, but the previous teacher has not finished teaching yet.

As a result, the time for teaching is reduced. Harwanti (2014) also found similar thing. She explained that most of classroom teachers think that their subjects are more important rather than English. As a result, they are likely to use the time to put more emphasize in teaching other subjects which is included in national examination. Almost all primary schools in rural areas experience the same thing with Participant 1. Most of them believe that government should add more time for English lesson, in order to create an effective English lesson.

In order to improve the quality of 2006 Curriculum, the government then created 2013 Curriculum, which is implemented in some schools in Indonesia. It is hoped that the newest curriculum will increase the quality of English program in primary school. One of the participants agrees with the government's policy.

I think 2013 curriculum is better than 2006 curriculum. English might be not the additional subject anymore, but English becomes an extra subject. It means that teachers have more opportunities and time to teach English. They can teach English every day with no limitation. They will not be bothered with time allocation in a week. They can teach 3 hours, 4 hours, and it depends on them. They can teach anything that does not appear in the workbook. It is fun, isn't it? (Participant 5/SD E)

Although her school did not implement 2013 curriculum, she has positive attitude towards the newest curriculum. She believes that the newest curriculum provides more opportunities for teachers in improving the quality of English teaching. Teachers have a right use more time to teach English and the materials' coverage is wider than before. However, her idea is contradictory with Participant 4's statement about the implementation of the newest curriculum in her school.

I use 2013 curriculum for teaching, since the government pointed my school to be one of the piloting subjects. However, I feel that English is not seen as an important subject anymore. Although we as an English teacher is given a right to conduct English lesson outside regular meeting, but there is no students who want to learn English. They have already tired studying from 7 to 2, and now they have to study English? No one who want to do that. (Participant 4/SD D)

Participant 4 explains that in the reality, students do not want to take extra class after school ended. The students are already tired with the lesson that they have taken before. As a result, they prefer to come back home, rather than taking an extra class. The situation is worse by the socio-economic background from the students. Although the policy encourages teachers to use time outside the regular meeting to improve English program, but it is not working in the field. Other teachers also addressed the same idea about the impact of the curriculum. They believed that the policy does not support the improvement of quality English teaching for young learners, especially in primary schools.

Other problem, which is raised regarding to the implementation of either 2006 or 2013 curriculum, is the school attitude on English. Most of the teachers points out that as the result of the policy, the school does not give much attention toward English, just like what the schools do on the core subjects. The school prefers to spend money to support teachers who teach core subjects rather than to support English teachers.

I think the school does not give much attention toward English. They think that English is only additional subject in the school so that there is no need to give attention on this. The school does not provide us with suitable books and material to develop the quality of English teaching. (Participant 1/SD A)

I once asked the principal to buy other English books to support my teaching references but the principal just ignored me and said that English is not the core subject, so workbook is enough for me. (Participant 6/SD F)

The school did not facilitate me with other references, so I just lean on the workbook. (Participant 2/SD B)

Based on the interview result above, it can be concluded that the materials given to the students are not arranged based on students' proficiency. Both of the participants believe that some materials are given in higher grade, instead of giving it in lower class. They think that the materials such as number and alphabet should be given in lower class, considering that students will use that knowledge later, in the next meeting.

The inconsistency of the ordering of materials is also found in several grades. The elaborate more that the materials given should be re-arranged from the basic one, to the more complicated. Therefore, students and also teachers are confused with the materials.

Other teachers also share same ideas on the practice of the workbook. They realized, in spite of the content (materials given), the workbook is also weak on the instructions (instructions of the exercises). They found that there are many grammatical and spelling errors in the workbook. One of the teachers describes what she found on the book.

I often find grammatical errors and spelling errors on the book. Sometimes, I have to correct it during class session so that students know the correct one. I also found that many exercises given do not provide the picture or even all choices in the multiple-choice questions are wrong. (Participant 3/SD C)

According to Participant 3, it is known that the workbook is not good enough to be the main source for teachers, as well as students. With the high number of grammatical and spelling errors which are found in the workbook, the teachers are likely to correct the errors during the class lesson, so that there will not be misunderstanding between students and teachers later on. Of course, it will take much time in class and reduce the effectiveness of the lesson. The reality is similar with Sukamerta (2011) finding about the quality of workbook, which is available, and being used by schools. He stated that the textbook which is used by teachers and students are low quality. Many spelling and grammar mistakes and pictures are ambiguous for students are evidenced. Similar results also delivered by other teachers. Since all students have the workbook and the book is the only source for them to learn English, it is important to pay attention more on the quality of the book. Students will not realize whether the grammar or spelling is wrong. Students will not also recognize whether the choices in multiple-choice question are wrong or not.

To conclude, there is a gap between the governments' policy on the English curriculum and the practice of English program in primary schools. The result of the interview shows that the implementation of either 2006 curriculum or

2013 curriculum has not solved their challenges in teaching English. The situation is getting worse by the schools' attitude toward English, which is not seen as important as the other subjects. The status of English as an additional subject creates polemic for English teacher.

Teachers' Challenges Regarding to Their Competencies as English Teachers

According to the results of the interviews, many English teachers in rural primary schools, do not have a formal training in English education. Rather, many of the English education teachers are graduates from other disciplines such as primary school teacher education, religion, and economic. Generally, many school principals do not hire English teachers at all. As an alternative, they ask the class teacher to teach the English classes. Research about English teaching in primary schools revealed that most of the teachers in primary schools in Indonesia are not qualified and that the majority of them have insufficient command of English to be able to teach effectively (Kasihani & Chodijah, 2002; Mursalim, 1997; Suherdi & Kurniawan, 2005). Most teachers who are assigned teach English are not prepared for the teaching they need to do. Their pedagogical knowledge might not sufficient for teaching English as they do not have an English background relevant for teaching English. Some of the teachers confess that at first they are assigned to be class teachers and teach all subjects except English. However, after the past English teachers are delegated by the government to be class teachers, they are chosen to replace the past English teachers' position. Although they do not have qualifications as English teachers, the schools' principals still chose them to handle English program.

I first taught in third grade as a class teacher. Then I am assigned by the principal to replace Miss Yudha's position, the previous English teacher since the government asked her to be a class teacher. (Participant 3/SD C)

I replace Miss Lupi's position, the previous English teacher, because she teaches grade four in order to follow government's decision. (Participant 7/SD G)

This finding shows that many teachers in this study did not start their teaching careers as

teachers of English to young learners and is consistent with previous research in some countries such as Vietnam and Japan (instruction of English is made; for example, in countries such as Vietnam and Japan (Lee & Azman, 2004; Hoa & Tuan, 2007; Butler, 2007). Other teachers state that they did not apply to be an English teacher at that time. However, the school asked them to be an English teacher.

Since English is just a local content subject in primary school, the government does not really care about the quality of English teacher in the school. So, teachers who are not graduated from English Language Education, are also given chance to teach English, just like me. Whereas, it is important for students to learn English from teachers who came from English Language Education program. As a teacher, I just follow the government policy. (Participant 2/SD B)

Other teachers pointed out that as the result of the policy, schools in common was also less care in providing English teacher. The schools thought that any teacher could teach English, as long as they were graduated from good university, no matter what major they took.

I do not know how the policy works but I applied for teaching subjects outside English, but the school gives me responsibility to teach English. I have no ability to teach English, since I graduated from FKIP (Faculty of Teacher Training and Education), as primary school teacher, not English teacher. (Participant 3/SD C)

I graduated from FKIP (Faculty of Teacher Training and Education) as primary school teacher. My mother once taught English and other subjects in here. Then my mother told me to apply in here as English teacher. I told her that I cannot teach English, but she said that teaching English in elementary school is very easy. So, I applied and I was accepted. Now, I am still wondering why this school accepted me, whereas I have no qualification in teaching English. (Participant 2/SD B)

As the result of the practices, most of the teachers in this study feel anxious in managing English program. They think that they are not

worth enough to teach English because of their competences. They are afraid in giving the materials to the students. The following quote describes what they feel while teaching English.

I am afraid for teaching English since I do not take English education. I am afraid that what I have explained to them is all wrong, in terms of pronunciation and grammar. (Participant 2/SD B)

She also commented that as a local content subject, the responsibility for developing the materials lays with the teacher and the school, but that she did not believe he was able to do this because of his lack of English teaching qualifications and she had not received any guidance about how to develop the material. Such a condition could lead to English teachers' skepticism, confusion, ignorance, reluctance, unwillingness, or even resistance rather than growing as professionals (Yuwono, 2005). As a result, she teaches English in a relatively unstructured way: 'as it comes' using workbook provided. As Nur (2003:168) pointed out, where there is a lack of qualified teachers, 'textbooks appear to have a strong positive impact'. Other teacher made similar comments:

Well, since I do not know how English, I am also new teacher in here and the school only provides me with workbook and this is the main source of the lesson, so I just rely on the workbook. I teach students as it comes. (Participant 3/SD C).

He also commented that as a local content subject, the responsibility for developing the materials lays with the teacher and the school, but that he did not believe he was able to do this because of his lack of English teaching qualifications and he had not received any guidance about how to develop the material. As a result, he teaches English in a relatively unstructured way: 'as it comes' using workbook provided. As Nur (2003:168) pointed out, where there is a lack of qualified teachers, 'textbooks appear to have a strong positive impact'.

Teacher's Challenges Related with Students' Social Economic Status

The challenges that teachers faced while teaching in rural primary schools do not only come from the government policy on English

program and teachers' competence. Students' parents also give much contribution toward the successfulness of English program in primary schools. Socio-economic disparities have been observed among researchers in recent years. Previous studies generally found that English as Foreign Language students' social-economic status, normally measured by parental income, educational background, and/or occupations, are associated with the students' academic English development and achievement at school (Carhill, Suárez-Orozco, and Páez 2008; Entwistle and Anstone 1994; Fernandez and Nielsen 1986; Hakuta, Butler, and Witt 2000; Hampton, Ekboir, and Rochin 1995; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorva 2008). Based on the interview of eight participants, all of them agree that social-economic status from student's parents influence students' motivation and success in learning English.

I think social-economic status of students has a great impact on students' ability in learning English. Students who come from poor family tend to have less motivation in learning English. (Participant 3/SD C)

We all know that students' social-economic background plays big role in the success of students in learning English. When students come from low class social economic status, they will likely to have lower achievement in English. (Participant 5/SD E)

Other participants also address the same idea with Participant 3 on the parental issue. They argue that if social-economic status of students plays important roles in students' achievement in learning English, especially for young learners. Seeing that all participants teach in rural primary schools, this factor also influences their teaching and of course become one of their challenges while teaching English. Most of the participants believe that students in rural areas usually have parents who come from low educational background. Participant 3 explains:

Since this is rural school, of course students who study here come from the neighborhood. Most of the students in here have parents who graduated from junior or senior high school. They even graduated from elementary schools. Only few of them graduated from university. (Participant 3/SD C)

Participant 3 believes that parents' educational background really influences their socio-economic status and occupation. As a result, the parents tend to spend most of their time for working. This participant further explains:

Most of them work as a labor in factory; some of them are working as a seller in traditional market; some are not working. Only few of them work as a civil servant. Therefore, they only focus on getting much money to fulfill family needs. They do not have time to care about children's education. (Participant 3/SD 3)

Other participants also share the same idea with Participant 3:

Mostly, students in this school live with their relatives. Most of them are living with their grandparents. Their parents work as labor and most of them are working as TKI in several countries. Of course, their grandparents could not help them in learning the material from the school. As long as their grandchildren go to school, it is enough for them. (Participant 8/SD H)

Parents spend their time to work as labors. If they have time to help their children with their homework, they could not do that, since most of them graduated from junior high school or even elementary school. How can they help their children with English lesson if they do not even know about English? (Participant 2/SD B)

Based on the excerpts above, it turns out that parents' occupation determines their socio-economic status. The higher education they got the better job they would get. It will effect on their understanding of guiding their children at home, as well as providing good environment for children to learn. Most of parents in this study are living in rural areas and working as labor. They spend most of their time in working place and leave their children with their relatives. They think that it is teacher's duty to educate their children, not their job. Therefore, they just hand in children education to school and do not care of children development in their education. According to Lee, (1998) another issue frequently stated is the lack of motivation and interest in English on the part of students, who might not

see any need to learn English or simply do not see mastery of it as reasonable. This may be particularly acute in rural areas where students have few contact with foreigners and as a result little perceived need to learn and communicate in English (Ho, 2003).

I think most parents just relying children education to school and teachers. They think that sending their children to school is enough. However, without the guidance of parents, children cannot develop maximally, especially in mastering English. As a teacher, I could not work alone. I still need parents' contribution by assisting children development at home. (Participant 2/SD B)

Other teachers also have similar concerns with Participant 2:

I do not think that leaving children at home with their grandparents is good. Children still need their parents to help them learning materials that they have learnt in school. Their grandparent could not help with the homework that I gave since they do not speak English. (Participant 8/SD H)

Environment plays important role for children achievement in learning English. If children come from wealthy family, of course their parents will assist them with any substantial things, which can support the development of the children, especially for English. For example: parents will provide them with TV programs which use English as the language of instruction, or maybe they send their children to English courses to increase their ability. It will be different with parents who live in rural areas. Their main concern is getting money. Education for children is the duty of school. (Participant 3/SD C)

The rest of the participants also give similar opinion on how parents who come from low socio-economic status tend to put much effort to work rather than giving attention to children development in education. It is found that parental educational levels were significantly correlated with young learners' comprehension in the target foreign language, particularly English. This finding is similar with the study conducted by Enever (2011). It was found that

both the parental indirect behaviors (the home literacy and language environment and indirect modeling) and parental direct behaviors (direct assistance with children's studying and learning of English at home) were already significantly positively correlated with socio-economic status at the fourth grade level, European countries. Zou and Zhang (2011), a study conducted among secondary school students in Shanghai, also found that students' English performance showed differences that varied by their parents' educational levels.

Teachers in this study agree that they could not work alone. They still need parents' contribution in assisting their children in home. Seventy minutes a week is not enough for them to make students understand English. In addition, the amount of exposure to the target language outside of school and the parental use of the target language at home are also found to be influential.

I only have 70 minutes a week to teach English. I usually give students homework so that they could learn from what they have learnt before. But, since their parents do not understand English, they cannot help them with the homework. As a result, students do the homework carelessly. The problem becomes worsen because students cannot practice English outside the class. The environment doesnot support them to practice. Therefore, they easily forget what they learnt. (Participant 6/SD F)

In short, English teachers in rural primary schools are not only struggling with curriculum and their competences in English. There is also a factor from parents who are not have enough time to assist their children at home. Therefore, it will lead into a bigger problem such as the lack of motivation and interest in English from the children. It brings negative effect on the students that think that English is not important. As a result, the achievement from the children at school will remain low.

Conclusion

From the result of the study, there are three board implications that can be concluded. First, the

position of English language education for primary school in the national curriculum creates a gap between the policy itself and the practice of English programs in rural primary schools in Salatiga. Second, this policy has also created problems because the schools have not been preparing the teachers. The non-English background teachers lack subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge relating to English and hence need professional development to address their problem with competencies. Lastly, socio-economic status from the students also raises a problem where parents who are living in rural area, mostly are not aware of the importance of English for their children.

However, this study is limited since it is only seeking for teachers' challenges in teaching English in public rural primary schools in Salatiga. The result might be different if it is conducted in urban schools or in different places in Indonesia. Therefore, further study related to the implementation of English program in primary schools in Indonesia is possible to hold.

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