

# External Factors Affect English Learning in Rural Elementary Schools: A Qualitative Study

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July, 2023



# Introduction

English teaching and learning activities for young learners in Indonesia, especially in rural school areas, still have low learning quality. Even though English itself also has an important role in the world of education to be taught to students at the elementary school level. There are still many areas in Indonesia where education tends to lag. These are recognized as 3T areas, which means *Tertinggal, Terluar, dan Terdepan* (Disadvantaged, Outermost and Frontier Areas). This causes a gap between learning English in urban schools and in rural schools.

Previous research about teaching and learning English in rural schools, found that various factors affect this situation, one of which is the presence of external factors. These external factors contributed to the difficulty of learning English in rural schools to implement.

# Research Question

What are the external factors that influence English learning in rural elementary schools ?

# Method

## Research Design

Qualitative research with the type a case study.



## Research Setting

Al Fatch elementary school, Jember, East Java.



## Data Analysis

- Observing the school environment and its culture using field notes.
- Conduct interviews with participant.
- Classifying data from observations and interviews using Kuchah's framework.
- Crossed-checking observation data with informant interview data.
- Wrote a report and reached conclusion.



## Participant

An English teacher of Al Fatch elementary school.



## Data Collection Technique

observation and interview.



## Data and Source of Data

- Data: verbal and non-verbal.
- Source of data: teaching and learning English process in rural school environment.



# Results

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers by using Kuchah's (2018) framework, it was found that teachers and students at SD Al Fatch faced the following external factors when learning English: 1) the school's location is far from urban areas, making it difficult for the community to reach it; 2) inadequate school infrastructure; 3) inadequate school facilities cannot support the continuity of the English teaching and learning process; 4) a lack of learning resources for students and teachers; 5) the language barrier, which is influenced by the community surrounding the school, which speaks the local language more frequently, makes it difficult for students to understand Indonesian as a medium of instruction in the teaching process.



Fig 1. The School's Environment



Fig 2. Learning English Activity

# Discussion

Indonesia faces challenges in teaching and learning English to young students (Jon et al., 2021), particularly in rural areas with limited socioeconomic facilities.

- The school environment, including the location, environment, and infrastructure, can significantly impact the daily experience of teaching and learning English. These external factors, such as lack of education, healthcare, transportation, marketing, and electricity, contribute to difficulties in teaching and learning English (Dube, 2020; Kusuma, 2022). Addressing these challenges requires more attention and consideration of both micro-level and meso-level constraints in the school environment (Kuchah, 2018).
- Inadequate school infrastructure is a significant factor in the learning process, as it enhances education quality and development. In rural Indonesian schools, inadequate infrastructure is often due to limited facilities, lack of parental fees, and inadequate administrative systems (Febriana et al., 2018).

# Discussion

- Insufficient learning facilities hinder the effective teaching and learning process of English in developing countries. Kuchah (2018) said the need for adequate facilities to support the learning process, while Musiman et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of all parties supporting the learning process. Schools must provide adequate facilities to meet the educational needs of students, ensuring a successful English learning experience.
- English teaching in rural schools faces challenges due to a lack of learning resources, such as handbooks and textbooks. Kuchah (2018) stated the importance of these resources, as they help learners acquire English knowledge. However, teachers in rural areas often lack access to information and support, leading to misperceptions about their needs in English class practice.
- The difficulty of teaching English in rural schools is influenced by language barriers, particularly in Indonesia where most people speak Indonesian as their mother tongue and English is considered a foreign language. The local language, Madurese, is more frequently used, making communication in English challenging for students and teachers. Kuchah (2018) highlights the need for high-quality and equitable education for children from low-income families in multilingual contexts, where language barriers hinder parental involvement.

# Important Research Findings

The implementation of English teaching and learning activities for young learners in Indonesian rural elementary schools, still requires evaluation and support from all parties, especially the government, in order to be carried out properly and equitably.



# Benefits of Research

- To provide knowledge that awakens readers to understand the condition of education in Indonesia, especially in 3T areas which means *Tertinggal, Terluar, dan Terdepan* (Disadvantaged, Outermost and Frontier Areas).
- Making motivation for readers to participate in the welfare of education in Indonesia.

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