



Navigating Challenges: Strategies for Enhancing English Teaching in Central Lombok's Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT: This study investigates the challenges faced by English teachers in primary schools in Central Lombok and identifies strategies to address these issues. Key barriers include limited teaching resources, socio-economic disparities, and large class sizes, all of which hinder effective English instruction. Teachers face diverse student proficiency levels, cultural influences prioritizing traditional rote-learning methods, and professional isolation that limits collaborative opportunities. The study employs qualitative methods, combining semi-structured interviews with 10 English teachers and structured classroom observations. Interviews explored topics such as resource limitations, training disparities, and student engagement strategies, while classroom observations provided empirical insights into teacher-student interactions, instructional methods, and resource availability. Data were analyzed thematically to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the contextual challenges. Findings highlight the need for professional development programs focused on culturally responsive pedagogies and strategies for addressing linguistic diversity. Collaborative networks and community involvement are recommended to bridge the gap between global English standards and local cultural contexts. By integrating these approaches, this research advocates for targeted interventions to enhance English teaching and learning outcomes in Central Lombok's primary schools.



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A. BACKGROUND

The educational panorama in Central Lombok has a complex interaction of various factors that moderate the experiences of English teachers in primary schools. A central theme in understanding these dynamics is the cultural and social context that underlies both the involvement of students and the effectiveness of teachers. English education in this region is influenced by local traditions, socio-economic conditions and educational policies, reflecting a rich tapestry of cultural diversity that must be recognized in pedagogical approaches.

English, as a foreign language in Indonesia, is often located as an academic concern mainly in urban centers. In rural areas such as Central Lombok, it can be considered with ambivalence. Local wisdom,

which includes the traditional beliefs and practices of Sasak ethnic group predominant in this region, greatly affects the educational context. This cultural background often promotes the use of the Sasak language on English, leading to a double challenge for teachers who must navigate in the linguistic preferences of their students, instilling the importance of the knowledge of English in a globalized world (Mazhabi, 2025).

Additionally, socio-economic barriers contribute to the challenges faced by English teachers in Central Lombok. Many families give priority to economic survival on educational investments, leading to an inconsistent school attendance among students. The teachers are faced with classrooms which are often heterogeneous in terms of exposure preceding

English, which requires differentiated didactic strategies that can host different levels of linguistic competence. Limited access to resources, such as textbooks, multimedia materials and professional development opportunities, further aggravates these difficulties. The lack of adequate training and support for English teachers, many of whom have a minimum exposure to contemporary teaching methodologies, rely on an addiction to traditional learning (Jaya et al., 2024).

In addition, the multicultural fabric of Central Lombok places another layer of complexity. The presence of various ethnic and cultural groups requires an educational approach that is not only linguistic but also culturally reactive. Teachers must integrate elements of local culture in their teaching to generate significant learning experiences, requesting an understanding of how to harmonize global English language standards with relevant local content. This cultural supplementary approach can potentially improve the motivation and involvement of students by connecting new knowledge to the experiences and cultural narratives of the students.

The intersection of these challenges requires the implementation of weighted strategies adapted to the specific needs of the local context. The teachers are encouraged to use culturally relevant pedagogies that recognize and celebrate local identities simultaneously underlining the global meaning of the knowledge of English. Collaborative efforts between teachers, community members and local government entities can encourage a support environment for professional growth and sharing resources. Ultimately, facing these challenges with culturally reactive strategies not only advances the acquisition of language, but also supports the integrity of local wisdom, thus enriched for both teachers and students.

The challenges faced by English teachers in the primary schools of Central Lombok have been the subject of an increasing number of scholarships, reflecting an increasing concern relating to the effectiveness of teaching the language in non-native environments. An important research field focuses on the functional learning difficulties encountered by students, who directly affect their ability to engage and succeed in an English language program. Lestariningsh et al. (2024) argue that these difficulties often arise from a combination of socio-economic factors, from an exhibition limited to the English language outside the school and at different levels of motivation and confidence. Their results highlight that teachers are often faced with various levels of competence in a single class, requiring

tailor-made educational approaches which can adapt to this heterogeneity.

Furthermore, additional studies highlight the need for educational strategies that are sensitive to the local cultural context. Dewi (2024) underlines the importance of integrating local cultural elements into teaching English language to make learning more relevant to students. It postulates that when teachers use culturally contextualized materials, it improves not only the commitment of students, but also strengthens the relevance of English as a precious competence in local and global contexts. Tanashur et al. (2024) reinforce this perspective, which suggests that insufficient cultural responsiveness can lead to a decrease in the interest of students, contributing to the broader challenge of educational efficiency in the region. They plead for professional development programs aimed at equipping teachers with strategies that fill local cultural knowledge and the content of the English language.

Another important challenge identified in the literature is professional isolation often experienced by English teachers in Central Lombok. As described in the works of Dussault et al. (1999), teachers frequently find themselves without adequate support systems in the form of mentorship or collaborative professional networks. This isolation hinders their ability to share best practices or to ask for help to overcome educational challenges. Consequently, the lack of community among teachers can have a negative impact on their educational efficiency and their professional growth, resulting in professional exhaustion and a decrease in work satisfaction.

In addition, the issue of inadequate resources and infrastructure has another layer of difficulty for English teachers. Studies by Wati et al. (2024) show that many primary schools in Central Lombok lack essential aid and educational materials which are crucial for effective linguistic teaching. Without access to updated manuals, audiovisual aid or technological resources, teachers often use obsolete methods that do not effectively engage students. This limitation not only stifles creativity in the planning of lessons, but also limits the development of a dynamic class environment conducive to language acquisition.

Finally, research shows that educational policies and curricula can also impose challenges on teaching English language in this region. As articulated by Hamied (2023), the rigid structures of the national program may not be aligned with local educational needs or the skills of students, which leads to frustrations for teachers and students. The one-sized approach does not take into account local

educational contexts, suggesting the need for more flexible political frameworks which allow contextualized teaching in English.

In light of these challenges, literature calls for a multifaceted approach to improve teaching and learning English in primary schools in Central Lombok. This implies not only to improve the professional development of teachers and community support, but also to defend the allocation of resources and programs reforms that recognize and deal with the regions unique educational landscape.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed qualitative methods to investigate the challenges and strategies of English teachers in primary schools in Central Lombok. The research aimed to understand the contextual factors influencing English teaching and the subjective experiences of teachers. Two methods were used: semi-structured interviews and classroom observations.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 English teachers from various schools, offering flexibility to explore issues like resource limitations, training disparities, and student motivation. This format also encouraged teachers to share strategies such as collaborative teaching and technology integration. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique to ensure diverse perspectives. Interviews were recorded with consent, transcribed, and subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring challenges and strategies.

Classroom observations complemented the interviews, providing empirical insights into teacher-student interactions, instructional methods, and resource availability. Observations followed a structured checklist based on established literature (Suryani & Muslim, 2024; Harahap et al., 2022) to ensure systematic data collection. This dual approach enabled data triangulation, enhancing the validity of findings.

Ethical considerations included informed consent, confidentiality, and participants' right to withdraw without consequences. While qualitative methods yielded rich, context-specific insights into English education in Central Lombok, they also limited the generalizability of results, emphasizing the need for localized understanding in educational research.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Lack of Adequate Resources

The study reveals significant challenges faced by English teachers in the primary schools of Central Lombok. Chief among these challenges is the lack of adequate resources, including textbooks and visual aids, which are essential for fostering

student engagement and facilitating effective language acquisition. Teachers often resort to creative improvisations, yet the scarcity of fundamental resources has limited the development of a robust English subject. In contexts where teaching is strongly based on memorization by heart, there is a decrease in the capacity to stimulate critical thinking and conversational skills in students (Adityas, 2022). Such limits hamper the ability of teachers to make lessons interactive and relevant, leading to a decrease in students' commitment and, in the end, to poor language acquisition results.

2. Large Class Size

Another pressing issue is the large class sizes, which frequently exceed the ideal student-to-teacher ratio. This dynamic hamper teachers' ability to provide personalized attention and maintain discipline, further compounded by teachers' varying capacities to manage large groups. The lack of individualized attention reduces the effectiveness of education and complicates the assessment of students' progress and individual needs.

3. Student Proficiency Disparity

A significant obstacle highlighted is the disparity in English proficiency levels among students. Some students enter the classroom with minimal exposure to English, while others possess more advanced skills, creating challenges for teachers in delivering lessons suited to diverse needs. As a result, teachers are often compelled to develop differentiated lesson plans, which demand additional time and effort. However, such efforts are often undermined by the limitations of available teaching resources and support.

4. Cultural Factors

Cultural factors further shape the challenges and strategies in teaching English in Central Lombok. Traditional teaching methods, often emphasized in local educational culture, tend to prioritize rote learning over interactive and communicative techniques. This paradigm makes English appear abstract and disconnected, discouraging student engagement (Shibuya et al., 2023). Teachers also struggle with limited professional development opportunities, which restrict their exposure to innovative teaching methodologies. Many teachers report feeling isolated, lacking access to workshops or collaborative networks (Adityas, 2022), which reinforces outdated practices and hinders their ability to address evolving educational needs.

5. Socio-Economic Status

The socio-economic status of students is another factor impacting language acquisition. Limited

access to resources or extracurricular opportunities for practice exacerbates the gap in English proficiency within classrooms, resulting in fragmented learning environments Solikhah and Budiharso (2020). Teachers have underscored the necessity of equitable resource distribution and targeted support for students who are most disadvantaged.

6. Teacher's Professional Development

Addressing these issues requires systemic changes, including professional development for teachers. Training programs need to equip teachers with culturally responsive methodologies and strategies tailored to the linguistic diversity of their classrooms. Tiraeni et al. (2024) emphasize that teachers who receive training in these areas are better positioned to promote the development of language that take advantage of the existing linguistic skills of students. Incorporating ongoing community engagement into teaching practices also has the potential to strengthen the connection between formal education and students' cultural realities, enhancing the relevance of English language learning (Waham et al., 2023).

7. Teacher's Adaptability

Overall, the adaptability of teachers in Central Lombok reflects a resilient response to their unique challenges. Their efforts underscore the importance of a comprehensive approach to improving English education, which includes resource allocation, professional training, and culturally sensitive pedagogy. These findings provide critical insights for policymakers and educational stakeholders to design interventions that address the multifaceted challenges of English language instruction in the region.

D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The research underscores the multifaceted challenges faced by English teachers in primary schools of Central Lombok, ranging from resource scarcity to large class sizes and socio-economic disparities among students. These issues, compounded by cultural and systemic factors, impede the effective delivery of English instruction and hinder student engagement and learning outcomes.

To address these challenges, several recommendations emerge. Policymakers must prioritize investments in teaching resources, including textbooks, technology, and multimedia aids, to enhance the learning environment. Structured professional development programs that integrate culturally responsive teaching strategies are essential for equipping teachers to

address linguistic diversity and foster inclusive learning environments.

Community involvement should be a cornerstone of educational reform. Schools can engage parents, local leaders, and organizations to bridge the gap between formal education and students' cultural contexts. Collaborative networks among teachers can also serve as valuable platforms for sharing best practices and innovative approaches to teaching.

Continuous evaluation and research are necessary to refine teaching methodologies and adapt to the evolving needs of both students and teachers. By addressing these challenges through targeted strategies, Central Lombok can establish a sustainable and effective ecosystem for English education, ultimately empowering students and teachers alike in their language acquisition journey.

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