

**EXPLORING TEACHERS' CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES
IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT SCHOOLS IN A RURAL AREA
IN SOUTH ACEH**

THESIS

Submitted by
NANDA ZULIANTI
NIM. 210203123

Student of English Language Education

Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Ar-Raniry State Islamic University
Banda Aceh



FACULTY OF TARBIYAH AND TEACHER TRAINING
AR-RANIRY STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
BANDA ACEH
2025 M / 1447 H

**EXPLORING TEACHERS' CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN
TEACHING ENGLISH AT SCHOOLS IN A RURAL AREA IN SOUTH
ACEH**

THESIS

Has been Approved and Submitted to the Thesis Munaqasyah Defense
As One of the Requirements to Obtain a Bachelor's Degree
in the Field of Education in English Language Teaching

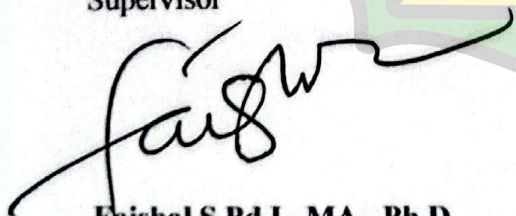
By

Nanda Zulianti
210203123

Student of English Language Teaching Study Program
Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Ar-Raniry State Islamic University
Banda Aceh

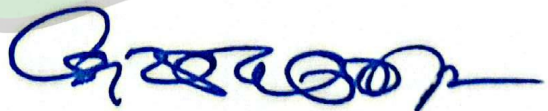
Approved by:

Supervisor



Faishal, S.Pd.I., MA., Ph.D.
NIP. 198010242011011002

Head of Department



Syarifah Dahliana, M.Ag., M.Ed., Ph.D.
NIP. 197504162000032001

EXPLORING ENGLISH TEACHERS CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS IN SOUTH ACEH

THESIS

It has been defended in *Sidang Munaqasyah*
in front of the board of the Examination for the working paper
and has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching

On:

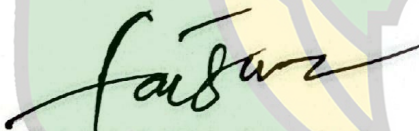
Friday,

August 22th 2025 M

Safar, 28th 1447 H

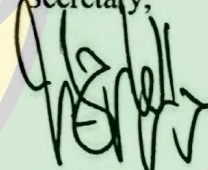
Board of Examiners,

Chairperson,



Faishal, S.Pd.I., MA., Ph.D
NIP. 198010242011011002

Secretary,



Cut Dara Ilfa Rahila, M.Pd.B.I.
NIP. 198801272014032004

Member,



Prof. Jarjani Usman, S.Ag., SS. M.Sc., M.S., Ph.D
NIP. 197208122000031002

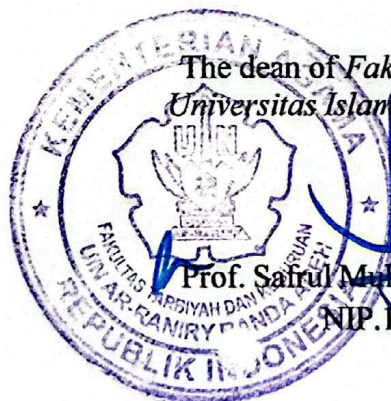
Member,



Chamisah, M. Ed
NIP. 197002051999032004

Certified by:

The dean of *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*
Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh




Prof. Saiful Malik, S.Ag., M.A., M.Ed., Ph.D
NIP. 1973010219970310

SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN

(Declaration Of Originality)

Saya yang bertandatangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Nanda Zulianti

Nim : 210203123

Tempat/tanggal lahir : Aceh Singkil/14 Desember 2003

Alamat : Seuneubok Alur Buloh, Kec. Kota Bahagia, Kab. Aceh Selatan

Menyatakan dengan sesungguhnya bahwa skripsi yang berjudul:

EXPLORING TEACHERS' CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT SCHOOLS IN A RURAL AREA IN SOUTH ACEH

Adalah benar-benar karya saya, **kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya**. apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan di dalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikian surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya

Banda Aceh, 12 Agustus 2025

Saya yang membuat pernyataan,



Nanda zulianti

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praises be to Allah SWT, I am deeply thankful to Allah SWT, the Most Gracious and Merciful, for granting me health, strength, patience, and opportunity to complete this thesis. Every step of this journey was made possible by Allah's will. May peace and blessings always be upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW, his family, and his companions, who brought light and wisdom to all humankind.

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my honorable supervisor and academic advisor, Faishal, S.Pd.I., M.A., Ph.D. for his sincere guidance, endless patience, and unwavering belief in my potential. His insightful feedback, continuous encouragement, and dedication have significantly contributed to the depth, clarity, and overall quality of this research. May Allah SWT reward him abundant blessings and continued success in all his endeavors.

To my beloved parents, Azulbaimi and Laila wati would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for them, who have always given me their unwavering support and love, who consistently do their best to provide the best for me, and who are always there whenever I need them. May Allah SWT grant them a long and blessed life.

To all my friends who truly witnessed my daily struggles throughout the thesis writing process, thank you for understanding, for staying close through the highs and lows, and for reminding me that I was not alone in this journey. To that one friend who always supported me, who always told me that I could do things I thought I could not whenever I was hesitant. Thank you for always giving me the little push when I needed it the most. Your kindness and support meant the world to me, and I am deeply grateful for your presence throughout this journey.

Last but not least, I realize that constructive feedback and suggestions are important for the improvement of this thesis. I would also like to thank myself, Nanda Zulianti, for not giving up when things got tough, for choosing to keep going despite the doubts, and for having the courage to finish what I started.

Alhamdulillah, I was able to get through the tears, exhaustion, and setbacks. You made it, Nanda zulianti. May Allah bless us all with His mercy.



ABSTRACT

Name :NandaZulianti

Reg.No :210203123

Faculty :Tarbiyah dan Keguruan

Major :Department of English Language Education

Thesis's Title :ExploringTheachers' Challenges and Strategies in Teaching English at Schools in Rural Areas in Aceh

Supervisor :Faishal, S.Pd., M.A., Ph.D.

Keywords :EFL teaching, rural education, teaching strategies, teacher challenges.

This study investigates the challenges and strategies of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in rural and under-resourced schools in Aceh, Indonesia. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through observations, interviews with four EFL teachers, four students, and two principals, as well as documentation. The findings revealed that teachers faced four major challenges: limited facilities and infrastructure, students' low English proficiency, language and environmental barriers, and fluctuating learning motivation. To address these issues, teachers employed contextual and basic approaches, utilized media and limited technology, applied bilingual instruction with repetition, incorporated fun and motivating learning activities, and adapted their methods flexibly to class conditions. These strategies not only facilitated comprehension but also enhanced student engagement despite resource constraints. The study concluded that effective EFL teaching in rural areas depend on teachers' adaptability, creativity, and contextualized approaches. It recommends increased provision of learning facilities, early English introduction at the primary level, targeted teacher training, and stronger collaboration between schools, parents, and communities to improve English education in rural setting.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
ABSTRACT	V
CHAPTER IINTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of Study	1
B. Research Questions.....	4
C. Research purposes	4
D. Research Benefits	4
CHAPTER IILITERATUR REVIEW	6
A. Conditions and Quality of EFL Teaching in Rural Schools.....	6
B. Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers in Rural Schools.....	12
C. Teaching Strategies of EFL Teachers in Rural Schools.....	1
CHAPTER IIIRESEARCH METHODOLOGY	18
A. Types of Research	18
B. Research location.....	19
C. Date Collection Technique	19
D. Data Analysis Techniques	21
CHAPTER IVFINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	23
A. Findings	23
B. Discussion	51
CHAPTER VCONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	54
A. Conclusions	54
B. Implications	56
REFERENCES	58
APPENDICES	62
AUTOBIOGRAPHY	72

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Appointment Of Letter Of Supervisor

Appendix 2: Recommendation Letter from the Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan to conduct field research

Appendix 3: Research Completion Letter from SMP Negeri 2 Bakongan

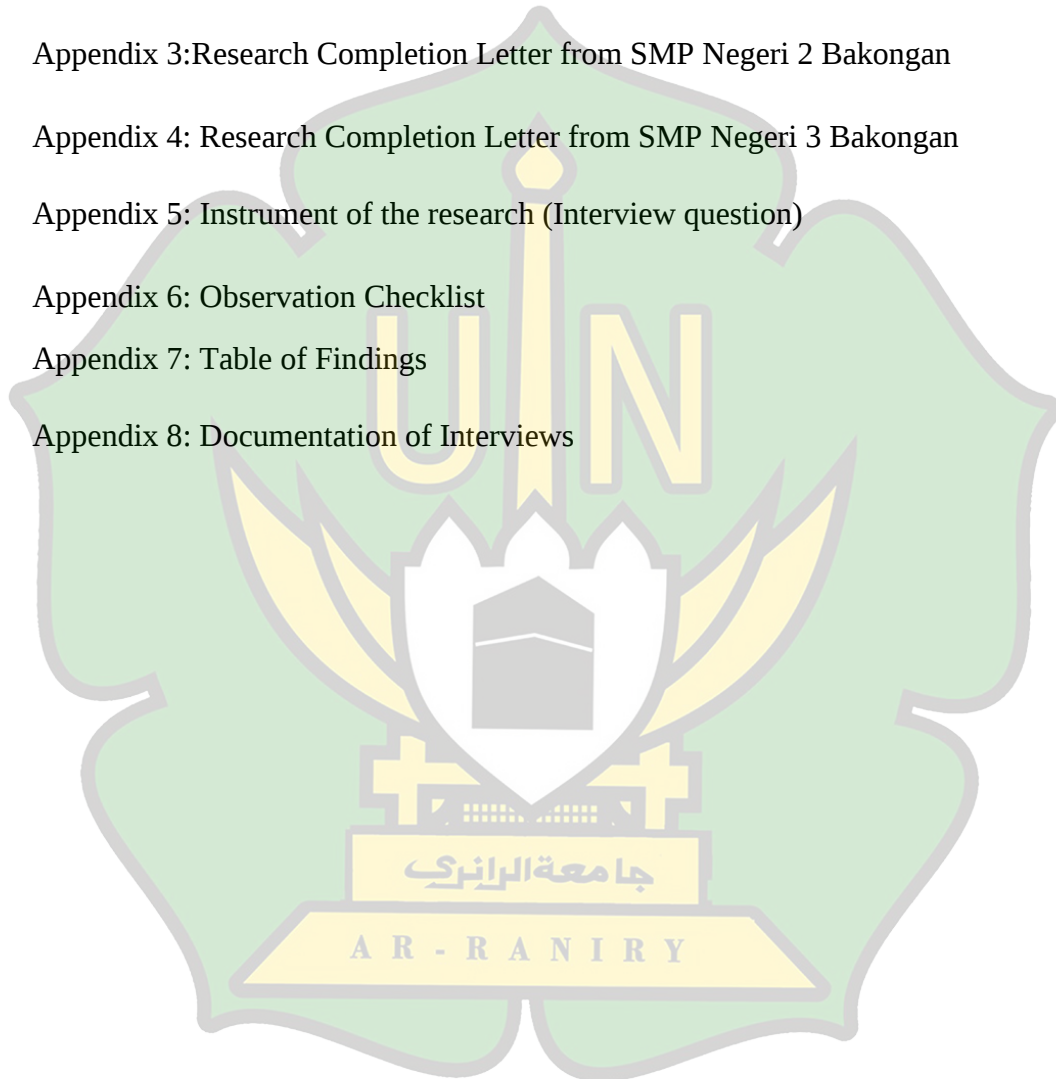
Appendix 4: Research Completion Letter from SMP Negeri 3 Bakongan

Appendix 5: Instrument of the research (Interview question)

Appendix 6: Observation Checklist

Appendix 7: Table of Findings

Appendix 8: Documentation of Interviews



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

English had long become a compulsory subject at all levels of education in Indonesia. It was introduced in elementary schools up to college Supriadi et al., (2023), The goal was for students to achieve mastery of English in the current era of globalization Rahmajanti(2008), where proficiency in English is required.

Nonetheless, teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in many rural areas in Indonesia faced numerous contextual and structural challenges. The lack of adequate infrastructure, such as poorly equipped classrooms, limited access to resources, and a scarcity of textbooks, became teachers' daily struggles as they strived to deliver excellent instruction to the students. Additionally, the low literacy level in English among students, combined with social and economic factors that impacted student motivation and school attendance, further compounded the difficulties faced by EFL teachers in these regions.

To overcome these challenges, EFL teachers in rural Aceh often needed to devise creative and innovative teaching strategies to deliver effective instruction, despite the constraints they faced. They had to maximize available resources and adapt their teaching methods to local conditions. Therefore, conducting an in-depth investigation into the challenges EFL teachers faced in rural Aceh and the strategies they employed to address them was crucial.

This study focused on two schools located in rural areas of Aceh Selatan. Both schools lacked sufficient media and learning resources to support English language teaching. Moreover, students at these schools showed limited or even no attention and interest in learning English. Specifically, the schools were situated in some of the most remote villages in Aceh Selatan. Teaching English at these schools was particularly challenging, as previous observations had highlighted several issues faced by English teachers. These included a lack of learning facilities, such as textbooks, reading materials or educational videos. Furthermore, most students at

these schools primarily communicated in their local language, even during classroom learning activities. This posed a significant challenge for English teachers working in such contexts.

Another challenge was the need for teachers to find effective ways to motivate students to actively participate in classroom activities, particularly in English lessons. Students often lacked interest in learning English and failed to engage with the material taught due to their unawareness of the importance of learning the language Harmer,(2007). Additionally, the family and community environment often did not provide sufficient support for students' English education (Mustafa,2010).

This study aims to explore the challenges that EFL teachers face in under-resourced rural schools in Aceh and examine their strategies to overcome these challenges. A deeper understanding of these conditions is expected to provide insights into potential solutions to improve the quality of English language teaching in rural areas of Aceh, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes in these regions.

Existing research has examined similar topics. For instance, Hu (2016) explored how limited resources such as textbooks, technology, and qualified teachers affected EFL students' learning outcomes in rural Indonesian schools. Unlike Hu's study, which emphasized the impact of resource shortages on students, this research focuses on the challenges and strategies of teachers.

Wang and Ortega (2017) investigated the role of teacher training and professional development in addressing challenges in resource-limited rural areas. Their study centered on how professional growth supports teachers, whereas this research highlights teachers' practical strategies and daily classroom struggles. Moreover, their study covered several Southeast Asian countries, while this thesis focuses specifically on Aceh.

Mukherjee (2020) examined the effectiveness of community-based approaches, such as parental support and community involvement, in improving English teaching in rural schools. This contrasts with the present research, which emphasizes teachers' efforts and challenges rather than the broader role of

community actors. Mukherjee's work considered students, teachers, and communities, while this study looks exclusively at teachers' perspectives.

In summary, this thesis aims to analyze and describe the challenges faced by English teachers in rural Indonesian schools, the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges, and how the findings can fill gaps in existing research. Ultimately, it seeks to provide pedagogical insights relevant not only for Indonesia but also for rural EFL contexts more broadly.

B. Research Questions

1. What challenges do English teachers encounter in teaching English in rural and under-resourced schools in SMPN 2 Bakongan and SMPN 3 Bakongan
2. How do these teachers address these challenges?

C. Research purposes

1. To investigate the kinds of challenges English teachers face when teaching English in rural and under-resourced schools in Aceh
2. To explore the strategies employed by teachers to overcome challenges in English language teaching in the rural and under-resourced schools.

D. Research Benefits

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits:

1. Theoretical Benefits

This study can enriched the literature on English language teaching in rural areas, especially in Indonesia, by providing a deeper understanding of EFL teachers' challenges and teaching strategies. It also serves as a foundation for further research on education in resource-limited areas.

2. Pedagogical Benefits

This research provided recommendations for EFL teachers in rural areas to enhance the quality of their teaching through more effective strategies that align with existing conditions. Moreover, policymakers can use this study's findings to design more targeted training programs for teachers in rural areas.

E. Terminology of Rural Area :

According to the OECD (2020), a rural area is an area with low population density, limited access to public facilities, and an economy that is generally dependent on agriculture and natural resources. This definition is used in this study to explain the context of rural schools in South Aceh, the research location.

A rural area refers to a geographical region located outside urban centers, generally characterized by low population density, limited infrastructure, and a dominance of primary economic activities such as agriculture, livestock, and fisheries. According to the United Nations (2018), rural areas are typically defined as territories where the level of infrastructure, economic activity, and demographic concentration is significantly lower than in urban settings. These areas are often marked by restricted access to essential services, including healthcare, education, transportation, and technology, which in turn contributes to development disparities between rural and urban regions.

From a sociological perspective, rural areas are seen as communities with more homogeneous social structures, stronger reliance on tradition, and higher levels of communal solidarity compared to urban populations (Tacoli, 2004). Social relations in rural areas tend to be closer and more cohesive, often supported by practices such as mutual cooperation and community-based living. However, such advantages are accompanied by challenges, including limited access to information, fewer economic opportunities, and lower exposure to modernization.

In the field of education, rural areas are frequently associated with challenges in teaching and learning quality. Schools in rural regions often lack adequate facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, and modern teaching media (Nugraha, 2020). The shortage of professionally trained teachers and the limited opportunities for continuous professional development further exacerbate the gap in educational outcomes between urban and rural students.

Despite these challenges, rural areas hold significant potential for sustainable development. Abundant natural resources, strong cultural heritage, and environmentally friendly lifestyles are considered key assets that can contribute to inclusive and locally driven growth (Ellis & Biggs, 2001). Thus, the term rural

area should not merely be perceived as a disadvantaged space, but rather as a region with unique characteristics and opportunities that, if properly managed, can play an essential role in achieving balanced and sustainable development.

