



CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING TEACHING MATERIALS FACED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS AT SMPN 1 WARU

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Abstract:

This study investigates the challenges faced by English teachers at SMPN 1 Waru in developing teaching materials. Interviews with two participants revealed that teachers prioritize selecting materials that cater to student's needs and learning styles and that materials should be engaging and easy to understand. However, student motivation, students' lack of knowledge, and teacher struggles with technology pose significant challenges. The findings align with previous research on difficulties encountered in teaching English in junior high schools. This study highlights specific challenges, such as students' lack of English skills and reading reluctance, alongside teacher difficulties integrating technology. The study suggests a multifaceted approach to address these challenges. This includes ensuring materials align with students' learning styles and proficiency levels while also being engaging and easy to understand. Motivation is identified as a crucial factor in student success, particularly in reading. Future research areas could explore the impact of professional development programs designed to enhance teacher technological skills and develop frameworks for selecting teaching materials that cater to diverse student needs. Longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of these strategies and further investigation into student motivation are also recommended. This research contributes to developing more effective English language teaching practices in junior high schools, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes.

Keywords: *Challenges, English Teachers, Teaching Materials*

1. INTRODUCTION

Challenges in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), such as in the Indonesian EFL context, have been extensively studied. The students have focused on academic language, literacy, and vocabulary. Amid English's urgent need for global communication and job opportunities, Indonesian schools have now begun to incorporate the English language from primary education to the higher level of education. With continuous clipping plane all along the course, there are only a few hitches that remain in the teaching and learning of the English language in the classroom; these challenges have been identified to be the struggle of the teachers and students related to retarded reading development. Due to the fact that Indonesia does not speak Indonesian, they are the result of the lack of opportunities to practice English besides learning about it in school. Thus, students abnormally perceive English as an academic subject instead of a language for basic communication; thus, the motivation for learning drops. The situation is even more complicated by problems like teacher scarcity, inadequate professional development, and non-availability of culturally related teaching materials.

Other studies explored the problems in teaching English as a Foreign Language in the Indonesian context. First, Irma (2020) reported that teachers encounter several obstacles, including a teacher shortage, poor expertise in instructional methods, and a lack of professional development opportunities. Besides that, there are also several challenges for the students, such as their lack of concentration, vocabulary mastery, lack of discipline, speaking problems, and boredom. Secondly, Bagus (2021) has reported



the difficulty of teaching English. Teachers encounter obstacles such as having too many classes to manage over the week, which makes it tough to focus on each kid. Another obstacle is managing kids in the classroom, particularly when the majority of them misbehave. Lastly, Kamila (2020) reported some challenges in the classrooms. Her study found that the obstacles experienced by student teachers in generating material include a lack of knowledge of the language, lack of classroom management, and lack of contact with the tutor teacher.

Nevertheless, teaching English as a foreign language presents a great challenge. Teaching English as a foreign language proves to be a daunting task, especially in areas where English faces limited use (Khan, 2011). This was reflected in the experiences of other researchers in several Indonesian schools. They faced many obstacles in learning English, such as inadequate English exposure, overcrowded classrooms, lack of English teachers, etc. Considering the large number of English graduates in Indonesia, the issue of shortage of English teachers should not have arisen (Songbatumis, 2017). Developing learning materials is an important part of curriculum design, as good materials can help teachers deliver lessons effectively and engage students. When teaching English, teachers must ensure that the materials are appropriate for students' skills, relevant to the learning environment, and able to help students understand and use English in a variety of contexts. Well-designed materials also diversify the teaching methods so that students are less bored and more motivated to learn.

In the context of English teaching, instructional materials play a pivotal role in shaping the classroom learning experience. These materials serve to facilitate the teaching and learning process, ideally catering to the needs of the students. They should enable students to preview and prepare for their lessons while also allowing for flexibility and adaptation. Often, teaching materials take center stage in instruction and greatly influence classroom dynamics. Therefore, the creation and utilization of teaching materials and aids are paramount for the effectiveness of educational endeavors.

However, an important aspect of material development revolves around catering to the students' needs (Brown, 1995). Hence, educators must employ creativity in crafting instructional materials that resonate with the vocational interests of their students. Choosing suitable materials for classroom instruction poses a significant challenge for language instructors, as these materials serve as a gateway for students to acquire English language skills. Dudley-Evans (1998) echoes this sentiment, emphasizing the pivotal role of materials in immersing learners in the language.

Choosing materials to use in the classroom is a formidable challenge for language teachers, because these materials are the ways in which students acquire English. Dudley-Evans (1998) emphasizes this point, emphasizing the important role that objects play in students' language competence. As a result, providing developmentally appropriate, relevant, and engaging content is a key responsibility shared by content producers and educators.

Several studies have highlighted the challenges faced by student-teachers in the teaching profession. Risky's (2013) study examined various learning challenges that



student-teachers of English face in their courses. The study on 14 English-language student teachers revealed a variety of issues faced by these individuals, which will be categorized into three main categories: student-related challenges, supervising teachers, and student teachers themselves.

In a study of classroom learning outcomes, Jusoh (2011) found that teachers frequently adapted their teaching strategies based on their students' individual abilities and circumstances, often using strategies that were not explicitly defined in their lesson plans. Furthermore, fears were expressed about the limitations of instructional time with perceived negative effects on students' writing skills. As a result, teachers developed strategies for students to complete the writing assignment in the next class. In addition, Camilla (2020) conducted a study focusing on student teachers' challenges in teaching practice in Thailand. The result of their research is that one way to create learning materials for students is that we need to prepare learning materials.

In the end, this research aims to investigate the challenges that English Teachers face when developing their teaching materials. Challenges in teaching materials were chosen as the concept to be discussed in this research because discussions about Teaching Materials are increasingly widespread and are now not only limited to the scope of developing and adapting but have entered into other aspects, one of which is challenges when teachers develop their teaching materials.

2. METHOD

The current study used a qualitative research approach to investigate the difficulties teachers have when creating lesson plans, particularly in the context of teaching English as a second language at SMPN 1 Waru. Since qualitative research enables a thorough knowledge of participants' experiences, viewpoints, and motives, it is ideally suited for investigating complicated, context-specific issues. Two English instructors participated in semi-structured interviews for this study, which allowed the researchers to get a detailed look at the difficulties the teachers faced in their line of work and the solutions they came up with.

The data for this study was collected using semi-structured interviews, a well-liked qualitative research method that offers both structure and flexibility. Semi-structured interviews consist of a set of pre-planned questions, but based on the participants' responses, there is also an opportunity for discussion and follow-up questions. This approach was particularly well-suited to the research goals since it enabled the researcher to explore particular themes of interest and go deeper into topics that naturally arose during the conversation.

The interview guidelines for this study consisted of five essential questions that the researcher developed. The questions focused on the challenges teachers faced while developing educational materials, the strategies they used to overcome these challenges, and the considerations they made when selecting resources that would be appropriate for their students. However, the researcher did not adhere to the pre-planned questions exactly. Instead, the semi-structured approach allowed for flexibility, allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions to extract more detailed information about the participants' experiences. The teachers were given the opportunity to describe their experiences in their own terms and contribute information that the researcher



might not have anticipated, ensuring that the interviews proceeded beyond the first questions.

The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder, which is standard practice in qualitative research, to ensure the accuracy and dependability of the information acquired. Instead of only taking notes during interviews, researchers can use audio recordings to capture participants' exact phrases, tone of voice, and other subtleties. By recording the interviews, the researcher was also able to focus fully on the conversation, free from the distraction of having to document every word that was said at the moment.

After the interviews, a thorough transcribing procedure was performed on the audio recordings. One of the most important steps in the qualitative research process is turning spoken data into a written format that can be carefully reviewed. In addition to accurately recording the participants' actual words, the researcher also ensured that the transcriptions included any noteworthy pauses, hesitations, or emphasis that would have given the responses more context. Maintaining the integrity of the data and ensuring that the participants' perspectives were appropriately represented required this painstaking attention to detail.

After the interviews were transcribed, the researcher conducted a comprehensive and systematic data analysis process. To completely comprehend the content and begin to identify recurring themes, patterns, and groups, it was necessary to read the transcriptions multiple times. The categories and themes were not planned; instead, they emerged organically from the data since the researcher used an inductive coding process. The researcher developed many key categories during this process that encapsulated the primary subjects discussed by the participants. These categories comprised (1) factors to take into account when choosing instructional materials, (2) difficulties encountered while creating instructional materials, and (3) methods for resolving those difficulties. The researcher was able to arrange the data using these wide categories in a way that promoted a better comprehension of the experiences of the participants and the variables affecting their decision-making processes.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

According to the discussions, the teachers of SMPN 1 Waru are more often confined to course books, videos on YouTube, PDFs, and some other websites. These materials are the basic building blocks that teachers utilize in their lectures, and they also introduce further materials to stimulate student engagement. The teachers who depend on the textbooks of the government generate a classroom environment which is characterized by the curriculum's strictness and that of digital resources, which is considered a recent development of multimedia learning in the EFL context.

3.1 Teachers' consideration in selecting teaching materials

Before exploring how teachers develop their teaching materials, it's crucial to understand how teachers choose the resources. According to the interview, student teachers primarily use textbooks and video YouTube for their teaching materials. The source of teaching materials that English teachers most widely use in SMPN 1 Waru is a textbook that has been provided by the school and government.

Participant 1



“I look for supporting materials; sometimes I use YouTube videos, which I provide links to students, and the main material using the package book provided by the school”

Participant 2

“I use a lot of resources, often looking for materials on the internet such as the web, PDF, and worksheets from the internet as my teaching materials in class”

The materials used by the teachers included PDFs, student worksheets, YouTube videos, and textbooks. As Participant 1 explained, videos are particularly effective in EFL teaching because they provide authentic language input in a format that is engaging for students. contents were designed to be easily understood by students. Participant 2 noted, “I often look for worksheets from the internet as my teaching materials in class.” This highlights the flexibility that digital resources offer compared to textbooks, which may not always provide enough differentiated practice for students with varying abilities. Researchers also asked, “What are good teaching materials for teachers?” Good teaching material for teachers should align with the learning styles, be fun, and be easy to understand.

Participant 1

“Good teaching material is material that suits the learning style of each student because we can't only use teaching materials with one learning style. It causes students who feel their learning style is not appropriate to have difficulties and do not want to learn”

Participant 2

“Good teaching material that is fun because making students feel enjoy in the classrooms is difficult. Also, they must suit the learning style of students, at least taking the most 50% that suits the students in the classroom to make it easier for the teacher”

One of the key considerations in selecting teaching materials is ensuring they align with the different learning styles present in the classroom. Participant 1 explained “Good teaching material is material that suits the learning styles.” This acknowledgment of diverse learning styles is crucial in EFL contexts, where students may have different preferences in how they absorb new information. For example, visual learners may benefit from diagrams, videos, or charts, while auditory learners may prefer listening to audio recordings or participating in discussions.

Both teachers agreed that teaching materials must be engaging and enjoyable for students. "Good teaching material is fun because it makes students feel comfortable in the classroom," said Participant 2, emphasizing this point. It is crucial to create a good and pleasurable classroom environment in EFL



environments, as students may suffer anxiety owing to the difficulties of learning a new language. Fun and interesting resources promote a sense of satisfaction in the learning process and lessen anxiety related to language acquisition.

Including games, role-plays, or interactive exercises that let students practice language skills in a light-hearted way is one method to make instructional materials enjoyable. Additionally, students' attention can be captured, and learning can be made more pleasurable by utilizing multimedia resources like music, films, and digital storytelling. Students are more likely to actively participate in lessons and remember the language they are learning when they are involved and enjoying themselves. This strategy is in keeping with Dudley-Evans's (2009) framework, which lists eight requirements analysis components categorized into five main areas: means analysis, target situation analysis, language analysis, subjective needs analysis, and current situation analysis. Moreover, the teachers stated there are several factors in selecting teaching materials.

Participant 1

“The factors that help can be from the creativity of the teacher, from the materials, and also from the learning environment.”

Participant 2

“The influencing factor in developing the material is the proficiency of students and the readiness of students in each class”

These considerations are: (1) materials must align with the student's learning style; (2) materials must match the student's achievement level; (3) content should be easily understood by students; (4) materials must align with learning objectives; and (5) materials should engage and motivate students. According to Howard and Major (2005), six key factors need to be considered when designing teaching materials: the learners, the curriculum, resources, facilities, personal confidence and competence, and time.

3.2 The Challenges in Developing Teaching Materials

Creating instruction content for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners that work is a well-structured project that needs the careful attention of various factors. One of the main problems facing teachers at SMPN 1 Waru and also at other schools in Indonesia is how to deal with the different needs of the students. These problems come in the form of a student's lack of knowledge and understanding, low student motivation and laziness, as well as the failure of the teacher to use new methods, particularly technologies. By identifying such limitations, we can see more clearly the challenges posed to content design in EFL settings and the need for change in teaching methods.

3.2.1 The Lack of Student Knowledge and Understanding



In developing the material, it is very important to get to know each student because some students lack English lessons, so sometimes teachers have to explain slowly and even repeatedly so that all students understand the teaching material provided. Ariani (2012) reported that the reason that students lacked English lessons was that the environment was less motivating for learning, which was the reason some communication science students had difficulties.

Participant 1

“The challenge is from the students themselves; sometimes we have to repeat the materials because students' ability in English lessons is different, so the teacher must repeat the materials several times so that the students are clearer in understanding the material.”

One of the main factors taken into consideration in the development of teaching materials is the difference in abilities that students have. Teachers need to make sure that the materials are designed to meet the needs of those having to deal with high-functioning students and those who are not proficient in the language and require much more support. According to Participant 1, "The challenge is from the students themselves; sometimes we have to repeat the materials because students' ability in English lessons is different so the teacher must repeat the materials several times." This is a common struggle for many teachers, and one of the reasons why the tempo of the lessons and the materials may need to be altered is to allow all students to comprehend the material.

Moreover, the person who lacks knowledge is, in a way, not the fault of the person who is the teacher. Ariani (2012) said that a lack of motivation to engage in English originates largely in the environment. For instance, those students who do not practice English outside the limited school resources may not get the experiences that are necessary for language acquisition. This is compounded by the dearth of English exposure in most parts of Indonesia, where locals use their languages and Bahasa Indonesia as their main means of communication. As a result of a lack of immersion in the target language and neglect in integrating it into the student's life, they may find it hard to master, store, and apply what they learn in school.

3.2.2 The Students' Laziness in Reading Teaching Materials

There is a lot of material about the text that requires students to read often, to be able to understand and also understand the contents of the text. However, participants experienced difficulties when their students did not want to read because they were lazy, and they argued that reading and understanding the text was difficult.

Participant 2



“A severe challenge for me is when the material is read, because the students were lazy to read can be said to be still minimal literacy”

The issue of student laziness in reading teaching materials is not a single instance, but the problem is prevalent all over the world, particularly in situations where students are receiving instructions in a foreign language rather than occasionally outside the school. One of the interviewed teachers almost cried when she talked about the difficulty of teaching this way: "A severe challenge for me is when the material is read because the students were too lazy to read. They can be said to be still minimal in terms of literacy." This statement highlights two key issues: the students' laziness and their minimal literacy levels, which exacerbate the problem.

Reading is a skill that takes time and effort, and when students don't have this kind of desire, it is very certain that they will not make any effort to become better. This is a situation where each student is locked in a competitive spiral with reading and, as such, does not read because it is difficult, and for that reason, their proficiency has to be improved by not reading enough. For the teachers, it is a test because the comprehension of English texts is the most important point of language learning.

At the same time, a lot of students struggle with English reading because it is their first giant hurdle in English that demands their interaction with sentences and structures that are new and unfamiliar and grammar that is totally strange to them. The absence of their language in the content or the scarcity of topics they can link it to in real-life activities can be a reason for this. Thus, the students feel that every element of reading material, which is their dislike and laziness, is expanded. Because of this, the teachers often need to make significant efforts to incite the students to read and provide materials that they can identify with.

Motivation is one of the most significant things when it comes to whether students are successful at reading or not. Gardner (1985) proposed that a goal-directed person commits both effort and striving to achieve a certain end, for which she or he derives satisfaction from the activities pursued in the process. Gardner categorizes motivation as made up of three key components: the goals — the goal that is strived for, the effort to attain them, and job satisfaction. It is the motivation that decides whether students engage in reading and continue when reading becomes difficult.

In the context of language learning, reading is often viewed as a tool for achieving specific goals—like building vocabulary, enhancing grammar skills, and improving overall language proficiency. However, many students may find this objective to be far-off and abstract, especially if they don't recognize the immediate advantages of reading in their everyday lives. This disconnect can result in a lack of motivation, which often appears as laziness or a reluctance to engage with reading materials.



For educators, a significant challenge lies in discovering effective ways to inspire students to read. This involves understanding the factors that drive student motivation and how to cultivate it within the classroom. One effective approach is to make reading materials more relevant and appealing to students. When students can relate what they are reading to their own experiences, they are more likely to invest the effort needed to comprehend the text. For instance, teachers might include subjects that resonate with students, such as pop culture, sports, or technology, in their reading selections.

3.2.3 The Struggle of Teachers' Innovation in Using Technology

Integrating technology into English learning should serve as a tool for teachers to enhance the learning process rather than complicate it due to a lack of technological proficiency. In English learning activities, incorporating technological media can introduce diverse teaching methods, preventing monotony for both teachers and students (Yumnam, 2021: 148). In this digital age, where technology is embedded in daily life, teachers can adopt learning strategies that utilize technological media, such as Android mobile phones, to support student learning.

Participant 2

"I was lacking in utilization in using technology unlike today's children who are sophisticated. If I use technology in teaching materials or if students have to use cellphones when teaching, it makes the class not conducive. Not conducive because the child's focus is distracted by opening other platforms on their mobile phone that are not important during the lesson"

The teacher explained that using technology in teaching materials presents several challenges, among others, students whose focus is disturbed if they use mobile media and inadequate school facilities when teachers want to use class projectors because their operation takes a lot of time. So that teachers more often develop teaching materials that are integrated into flashcard-shaped games for students to participate actively in learning.

3.3 Ways to Overcome the Problem

Based on the interview, there are several ways to overcome the challenges in developing teaching materials. Those are: (1) Learn and understand the student's needs and learning styles in the classroom; (2) Select relevant media based on the student's level of understanding and readiness (which might be different in every class); (3) Provide regular motivation every time so that students are not lazy in learning the material that the teacher has given.

The findings of this study reveal several challenges faced by teachers at SMPN 1 Waru in developing teaching materials. The results of this study show the answer to the research question, namely, the teachers encounter some challenges in terms



of selecting the material to be used, the lack of students' understanding in English, the laziness of students in reading the material that the teacher has given, and the lack of facilities provided to teachers to use technology-based materials. These results align with previous research by Riesky (2013), Brown (1995), and Mumary (2017), which also explored the difficulties teachers encounter in teaching English in junior high schools.

The study draws on research on the challenges student teacher in developing material mentioned in Risky (2013) as a reference in this study where the focus is on the challenges faced by teachers when developing teaching materials and also mentioned by Brown (1995) that one material must be adapted to the needs and readiness of students.

4. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the different difficulties SMPN 1 Waru English teachers encounter when creating useful teaching resources. The main problems are inadequate monitoring, a lack of awareness of students' interests, and challenges in choosing the right teaching materials. According to earlier studies by Riesky (2013), Brown (1995), and Mumary (2017), these results are consistent with others that found comparable challenges in junior high school English instruction. Students' lack of abilities and knowledge, their unwillingness to read required materials, and teachers' difficulties integrating technology into their classes are some of the specific issues raised. A diversified strategy is needed to address these issues. In order to make the information interesting and straightforward to understand, teachers must make sure that the teaching resources match the learning preferences and skill levels of their students. Another vital element affecting pupils' performance in language learning, particularly in reading, is motivation. Although there are advantages to incorporating technology into the classroom, there are drawbacks as well because teachers and students have differing degrees of technological skill.

Future studies should focus more on approaches that can successfully deal with the issues this study found. Investigating the effects of focused professional development programs intended to improve teachers' technical proficiency could yield important information about how to incorporate technology into the classroom better. A thorough framework for choosing and implementing instructional resources that accommodate students' various learning preferences and skill levels could also be the subject of future research. In particular, longitudinal research that looks at how these tactics affect student results over time would be helpful. Additionally, it is critical to investigate the effect of student motivation in greater detail. In order to improve reading comprehension and general language competency, it is essential to comprehend how various motivational techniques can be incorporated into instructional methods. Better educational outcomes for students could result from this area of research since it could greatly aid in the creation of more adaptable and efficient English language teaching methods in junior high schools.



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