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Challenges in Teaching English Faced by English Teachers at MTsN Taliwang, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging task, particularly when it is done in places where English serves a very limited purpose. This study attempted to investigate English teaching challenges as well as the solutions taken by the English teachers at MTsN Taliwang. The study captured the English teachers' point of view in facing English teaching challenges in the classroom and the solutions they implemented to solve them through interview. A number of challenges emerged, partly coming from students, partly from teachers, and partly from the school's facility. Students are challenged by their lack of vocabulary mastery, low concentration, lack of discipline, boredom, and speaking problem. Meanwhile, teachers' challenges are shortage of teachers' training, language proficiency issue, limited mastery of teaching methods, unfamiliarity to IT, and lack of professional development. In addition, facilities issues including inadequate resources and facilities, and time constraint. The solutions to overcome these challenges were also suggested in this study. The efforts taken are divided into two; efforts done by the school and by the English teachers. Reforming attitude and improving resources and facilities are the solutions taken by MTsN Taliwang. On the other hand, applying various teaching methods and techniques, matching students' proficiency level and learning situation, making use of available resources and facilities, providing motivational feedback, looking for appropriate methods or materials, and teachers' self-reflection are the English teachers' efforts in tackling English teaching challenges.

Keywords: teaching, English language, challenges, solutions

INTRODUCTION

Teaching a language has many different features. A teacher does not only teach

and pay attention to students' language skills, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking, but also helps, facilitates, and encourages students to have enthusiasm, good attitude, and motivation towards English. Furthermore, teachers have to understand what students learn, how and why such learning influences them, how lessons could be beneficial for them in the future (Derakhshan, 2015). Hence, language teaching requires teachers to teach students to develop both academic and personal abilities.

However, teaching English becomes a crucial issue when it is taught as a foreign language. Teaching English as a foreign language is a demanding task when it comes to the places where English serves limited exposure (Khan, 2011). It was shown by the researcher's teaching experience in several schools in Yogyakarta. She encountered various challenges in teaching English, including lack of English exposure, classroom size, and shortage of English teachers. Challenges regarding shortage of English teachers should not have happened since there is a great number of English graduates in Indonesia, particularly in Yogyakarta. According to statistics which were taken from official online database of some universities in Yogyakarta, the researcher has found about 240 English education students graduate from five universities in a year.

Furthermore, the kind of challenges faced by the researcher in her teaching practice exists in Yogyakarta, one of the developed areas in Indonesia, which likely has enough English graduates, competent teachers, and English exposures, such as books and other language learning facilities. If such challenges are still encountered in several schools in a developed area, let alone in schools in a rural area. Mishra (2015) asserted that "the rural areas

lack good schools having proper ambiance and affordability which cater to the changing needs and expectations of the crass" (p. 38). For that reason, the researcher is interested in finding a wider range of challenges in teaching English especially in a rural area that is Taliwang city of West Sumbawa.

Teaching English in Indonesian Context

English is taught and used as a foreign language in Indonesia. The fact that English is one of the most essential international languages for communication has been acknowledged by the Indonesian government since its independence; therefore, the government has recommended that English become a compulsory subject in secondary schools (Nurkamto, 2003). Furthermore, Lie (2007) also argues that "the maintenance of English as a foreign language has been steady as it is officially taught throughout the secondary schools" (p. 2). Lie (2007) also stated that there has been a tendency in several big cities in Indonesia to teach English starting from the lower grades of primary schools and even from kindergarten.

The aim of teaching English in schools is based on the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 060/U/1993 dated 25 February 1993 and the 1989 Constitution on the System of National Education that the final goal of the English subject at the schools is to enable the students to be proficient in English in the globalization era (Rachmajanti, 2008). Meanwhile, Nurkamto (2003) asserts that "the aim of the teaching of English in the schools has been to develop the students' communicative competence that would help the students in their university education" (p. 287).

However, these aims have never been satisfactorily achieved. Although English is officially taught throughout secondary schools, competence and

proficiency in this foreign language among high schools are generally low (Lie, 2007; Nurkamto, 2003). Learners find English particularly difficult when they are instructed to state their opinion in English (Nurkamto, 2003). There are only few students who are able to learn English to the next level, especially those who come from the middle and upper socio-economic classes. Such students have “the easy access and opportunity to enhance their English proficiency through private courses, computer-aided language instruction, and exposure through Western influences, TV channels, and foreign movies” (Lie, 2007, p. 3). In addition, Lie (2007) added that outside the academic and professional worlds, English has never been widely used as the lingua franca of the majority of the population. This is because the geographic position of Indonesia is far away from English-speaking countries as well as several particular cultural values that to some extent, cannot motivate students to study English (Nurkamto, 2003).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generally, teaching English might seem similar to any other teaching, yet it has its own unique challenges. These challenges exist in various forms. A number of studies have discussed these challenges along with their solutions. Below are the challenges encountered in English teaching.

Severe shortage of training. In some countries, problems regarding a severe shortage of trained English teachers are reported (Nunan, 2003; Salahuddin, Khan, & Rahman, 2013; Nurkamto, 2003). Thus, teachers might “find themselves teaching English either without sufficient English training generally or in teaching English to learners particularly and such thing frequently occurs in

poor or rural area” (Garton, Copland, & Burns, 2011, p. 740). Since teachers may get only basic preparation in the supportive theory and practical applications, they may then struggle for embodying teaching methods effectively (Bulter, 2005; Littlewood, 2007). Emery (2012) outlines some issues that occur because of insufficient preparation for teaching: teachers’ inability to deal with challenges that take place in teaching context because of the lack of training, teachers’ poor language ability, and teachers whose English is not their subject area are hired to teach it. Such challenges take place in a rural area because rural areas lack proper and good teaching and learning tools (Mishra, 2015). Furthermore, English teaching process tends to be challenging when it comes to the teachers’ qualification, language proficiency level, and training since these points can cause teachers’ confidence (Emery, 2012). Teachers whose teaching training is not enough might strive to embody teaching methods effectively (Littlewood, 2007). Applying appropriate teaching methods and techniques is tough because the teachers do not merely think of how to transfer four language skills, but also how to remain students’ motivation and enthusiasm in learning and practicing English (Ansari, 2012).

Crowded class. According to Emery (2012), one of the most often mentioned problems encountered by English teachers is that “overcrowded classes and the effect of such condition can have on teaching and learning” (p. 4). Nurkamto (2003) also lists one of the challenges in teaching English that is the size of the classroom. Likewise, Baker and Westrup (2000) state several problems of teaching large classes, such as “desks and chairs are fixed or difficult to move; students sit close together in

rows; little space for the teacher and students to move in the classroom; walls between classrooms are thin, and noise will disturb other classes" (p. 2). Consequently, it is necessary that teaching and learning process requires comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere, otherwise, teachers might be in failure to fulfill students' need and achieve learning goals.

Lack of vocabulary. Hasan (2016) states that one of the most challenging tasks students encountered is mastering vocabulary. Maruyama (1996) as cited in Hoa and Mai (2016) point the reason why students lack vocabulary, i.e. "students believed that they did not need to know words because they were not common, even rarely used in their daily lives, therefore, they have no motivation to learn the words" (p. 155). Consequently, students in English as a foreign language context are limited by their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary of the target language and have to struggle to comprehend the content (Chung, 2016).

Lack of English exposure. Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging duty in the places where English has inadequate exposure. Lack of English exposure also serves less opportunity for students to use English. Khan (2011) argues that the lack of English purposes demotivate students to practice and understand English due to students' insufficient background knowledge of English. Moreover, it gets more difficult for teachers to encourage students to be enthusiastic in using English due to the lack of English exposure (Khan, 2011).

Limited resource accessibility. Another challenge in English language teaching is the issue of resources. Garton et al (2014) states that "in some countries, such as South Korea and Malaysia, text-

books are set; in Singapore and China, teachers can select from government-approved books, yet, it is a matter that in many countries appropriate books are either not available or not used in the classroom" (p. 740). Furthermore, Ajibola (2010) argues that "the inadequacy of resources also constitutes a trial to the English teaching and the larger number of students is the large number of sources is needed" (p. 97). In addition, lack of facilities and equipment hinder teachers to embody an effective teaching process (Fatiloro, 2015; Nurkamto, 2003). Pande (2013) puts forward that "language could only be understood by practicing all the four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing" (p. 417). Hence, the availability of teaching aids holds vital role and needs to be provided as soon as possible, otherwise teachers will not be able to teach effectively. In other words, to get students familiar with English and to provide them sufficient with exposure of target language, the amount of learning resources are in dire need.

Linguistic problems. Mukattash (1983) categorized English teaching challenges that are encountered into two: first, most inaccuracies done regarding the pronunciation, morphology, syntax, and spelling; second, most of students have problems in expressing themselves when using English. The first issue is also strengthened by Khan (2011) that "specific problem connected to pronunciation, stress, and intonation become problem for students" (p. 72). As a consequence, these linguistic problems are found in all language skills, which make students demotivated in practicing a target language. Another issue regarding linguistic problem is first language or mother tongue interference. Both teachers and students frequently talk using their mother-tongue language which uncon-

sciously affects their English performance (Fatiloro, 2015). Additionally, Pande (2013) describes when teacher and students speak in their mother-tongue, they sometimes use English words in the midst of the sentences and disremember that every language varies in stress, intonation, and pronunciation.

Psychological problems. Pande (2013) asserts that "it is a common misinterpretation among students that English is the most difficult of all subjects" (p. 416). Similarly, Fatiloro (2015) states that the challenging difficulty in teaching English as a foreign language is meeting students' awful attitude in practicing English. For instance, students can be fearful to speak in front of their classmates, particularly when it comes to the presence of a competitive student in the classroom. Another example is related to students who enroll in English courses outside schools. According to Khajloo (2013), these students have higher academic level than others and when they "listen to repetitive low-level content for them, they find it unattractive and boring" (p. 57). Such psychological issues can affect students' motivation and learning attitude toward English language.

Solutions to Solve English Teaching Challenges

The discussions below are only the solutions for some English teaching problems, and the rest are not yet found. Nevertheless, to some extent, these solutions can be used and referred to a certain problem.

Attitude reform. The English language teaching and learning "should be examined in order to deal with the challenges, it can be done through reforming attitude" (Fatiloro, 2015, p. 29). Fatiloro (2015) also adds that an absolute commitment to comprehend English should be made among teachers and students. In addition, Pande (2013) proposes

one way to reform attitude is that "the place of English in education system and policy should be well-defined" (p. 418). Another way is asserted by August and Shanahan (2006) who say that in order to embody an effective teaching, teachers have to ask students to understand native language and similarity of native language and mother tongue. In summary, reforming attitude involves not only teachers and students, but also government in order to come up with precise education system.

Different teaching methods and techniques application. There are numerous methods of language teaching that can be implemented. Fatiloro (2015) argues that "in handling English teaching problems, teachers must use a variety of methods for teaching English language" (p. 29). In addition, Pande (2013) also believes that through applying various methods, particularly in matching the method and teaching topic, it will help teachers to establish an effective teaching process. Additionally, applying various techniques in language teaching should be taken into account because it will enable teachers to create suitable condition for students in learning English as well as help students to deal with their learning challenges (Holensinská, 2006). Therefore, students can be helped in their language learning when teachers understand what best teaching methods or technique meet the need of students.

Teaching facilities improvement. English teaching will not achieve its objectives if the teaching tools are not backed up. Hence, "special effort should be made to ensure that teachers get proper teaching facilities, including space, books, and teaching aids" (Pande, 2013, p. 419). It is necessary to "confront facilitation of teaching tools as to empower teaching and learning English" (Fatiloro,

2015, p. 29). Thus, teaching a language needs equipment, particularly for those who teach in the milieu where English exposure is limited.

Students' level match. Since students' educational background in learning English, personality, goals, age, and learning style are different, it is imperative to come up with helpful ideas to dealing with such multilevel class. There are several ways to handle such issue, "it can be begun from the lesson planning should contain leveled tasks using a variety of groupings and throughout the practice of the lesson, students' assignments are leveled based on their language skills" (Roberts, 2007, pp. 2-3). Roberts (2007) also adds that teacher's own version of textbook can be used to develop leveled task since it is considered effective when it covers various tasks for students whose level is different. It is also suggested by Pande (2013) that teachers should be patient in teaching different ability of students and striving for matching level with students. As a result, since English level of students in classroom might be uneven, teachers have to provide appropriate tasks for meeting and improving students' language level.

Classroom management. Based on the Virginia Department of Education (2006), understanding English and creating English language's exposure for students can be done through managing classroom. For instance, "designing a classroom which expresses cultural diversity, considering seating positions for cooperative learning activity, building a classroom library containing age-appropriate books with various reading levels" (p. 19). Those are the ways to manage classroom in order to get students familiar with and get used to use target language.

Teacher's reflection. Christodoulou (2010) put

forward that one of the most important aspects of teaching is self-reflection. Teachers should be all aware of their acting, such as knowing consequence of everything they do as well as finding solutions or suggestion in a teaching and learning situation. Additionally, self-reflection are included in the essential teaching skill. Self-reflection consists of knowing how to act "in interaction with pupils, their parents, and colleagues at school" (Christodoulou, 2010, p. 19).

Methodology

This present research was conducted at MTsN Taliwang, located at Poto Village, Taliwang, West Sumbawa, West Nusa Tenggara Province. MTsN Taliwang is the only school which is located in the outskirts of Taliwang city compared to the other schools. The location receives attention from learners who come from other rural areas of West Sumbawa. According to the researcher's observation, among four secondary schools in Taliwang city, MTsN Taliwang was the only school whose teachers and students were from remote areas of West Sumbawa Regency. It means that the students and teachers were those who lived in Taliwang city and the other parts of West Sumbawa, while the other schools' students and teachers were mostly the residents of Taliwang city. Taliwang city is the capital city of West Sumbawa. This may indicate that the people are more developed than the people from other cities.

The participants of the research were the English teachers of MTsN Taliwang. Initially, the participants consisted of five teachers. However, at the end, there were only four participants because one participant was doing pilgrimage. The participants consisted of three females and one male. Purposive sampling was applied in selecting the research

participants. According to Teddlie and Yu (2007), "purposive sampling is undertaken for several kinds of research including: to achieve representativeness, to enable comparisons to be made, to focus on specific, unique issues or cases" (p. 80). A group of English teachers at MTsN Taliwang were chosen because of some criteria. First, they have joined and participated in teaching training in and outside the school. Second, they have contributed and taught English for more than five years.

In order to obtain better understanding of the phenomenon, in-depth interview was applied using mixed language of both Indonesian language and Sumbawa language (local language). Member checking was also done in this study. The researcher used initial for all participants, there were the first participant (P1), second participant (P2), third participant (P3), and fourth participant (P4).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The challenges in teaching English faced by the teachers at MTsN Taliwang

The challenges found are varied in which they are related to the students, the teachers, and the facilities.

Students' side. The findings revealed that challenges in teaching English comes from students as well. These challenges are students' lack of vocabulary mastery, students' low concentration, lack of parents' support, lack of discipline, boredom, and speaking problem.

Students' lack of vocabulary mastery. P1 and P4 stated that one of the challenges in teaching English in classroom is students' lack of vocabulary mastery. It hindered the students' understanding of the subject. "...some students might have lack of vocabulary mastery which makes them not ac-

tively participate in class" argued P1. In addition, P4 asserted that the main challenge in achieving teaching and learning goal was students' lack of vocabulary mastery. With regard to this issue, Hasan (2016) states that one of the most challenging tasks that students encountered is mastering vocabulary. Maruyama (1996) as cited by Hoa and Mai (2016) also points out one of three reasons why students have lack of vocabulary mastery is because English is not used by students in their daily life which make them feel not need to learn the words.

Students' lack of parents' support. P1 and P4 concluded that lack of students' motivation can be caused by the absence of their parents' support. P1 elaborated her experience in which she once caught a student who did not bring any books to school due to forgetfulness, while the other students intentionally left their books in the desk of the classroom. This participant believed that such things would not have happened if students' parents supervised and controlled their children's learning at home. Meanwhile, P4 made a comparison between the motivation of students' parents who lived in Taliwang city and the students' parents who lived in the rural areas of Taliwang. He elaborated that the motivation of the parents who live in the city is high. They let their children master English by having a private course in their home or sending them to English courses. On the other hand, the parents who lived in rural areas only expect the school to be the place where their children get knowledge. Copland, Garton, and Burns (2014) state that students do not have any ideas on the purpose of learning English, "an attitude which may be exacerbated by their parents" (p. 747).

Students' low concentration. Students' low concentration in classroom causes challenges in compre-

hending knowledge transferred by the teacher. P1 argued that teaching goal could not be achieved one hundred percent because some of students do not concentrate in classroom. As described by the participant that when she was explaining a certain topic, the teaching process was interrupted by students who were busy in talking and doing other things. Therefore, she needed to stop and give the students advices. Khajloo (2013) says that students do not concentrate in learning English, otherwise, they will do their best and get good scores.

Students' lack of discipline. Discipline issue was linked to the classification of the students' class. As P1 described that such issue is not encountered in class E, in which it is the class of smart students, yet it is faced the other classes (Class A, B, C, and D). Copland, Garton, and Burns (2014) found that discipline problems were related to "the age and sex of students, differentiation, parental attitudes, inexperience, not sharing the learners' first language, and keeping the students motivated" (p. 746).

Students' boredom. P2 argued that some of her students get bored in studying English when she teaches a certain topic of the subject. It is because some of her students have already studied that in their primary schools and private courses. Ajibola (2010) and Khajloo (2013) indicated that these students have higher academic level than others and when they listen to repetitive low-level content for them, they find it unattractive and boring.

Speaking problem. The comments about getting students to speak were stated by two participants. P3 and P4 similarly stated that making students speak is quite difficult. Each of them mentioned students' problems in speaking performance.

Pronunciation problem. P3 put forward, "most of

students commit errors in pronouncing words." This corresponds to Mukattash (1983) who found that most inaccuracies done regarding the pronunciation, morphology, syntax, and spelling. This is also strengthened by Khan (2011) that "specific problem connected to pronunciation, stress, and intonation become problem for students" (p. 72).

Confidence issue. Students are timid in performing their speaking skill. P3 argued, "...when I ask my students to retell what they have written in their diary and speak in front of their classmates, they get timid." This was also reinforced by P4 that "students' speaking skill is not improved since most of students are timid." Copland, Garton, and Burns (2014) that many children are timid in front of their classmates, particularly in speaking a foreign language since it can be face-threatening. Another thing is that most of students are afraid of making mistakes, especially in pronouncing or spelling incorrect words. P4 stated, "...there is no improvement in students' speaking skill because they are mostly afraid of making mistakes." This finding goes hand in hand with the statement of P2 in which there are some students who have studied English outside the school which can make other students are afraid. Fatiloro (2015) said that the presence of a competitive student in the classroom make other students have awful attitude.

Teachers' side. Challenges in teaching English are also faced because of teachers' limited teaching knowledge and development. English teaching challenges from teachers' perspectives including shortage of training, limited mastery of teaching methods, unfamiliarity to IT, and lack of professional development.

Shortage of teachers' training. The most common comments were about the shortage of trainings

experienced by all participants. They all were in agreement that English teaching training is in dire need. P1 said, "...if I may conclude, my English teaching training experience is insufficient." It was also argued by P3 that "although I have joined a number of training, it is still not enough." Most of teachers in poor or rural area find themselves teaching English without sufficient English training (Copland, Garton, & Burns, 2014).

Meanwhile, P2 showed dissatisfaction with herself in which she asserted, "...perhaps I am the one who does not develop myself through joining training and updating English teaching innovation in education." It was also stated by P1, "I sometimes feel unconfident in what and how I teach." These are corresponding with the study done by Emery (2012) that English teaching process tends to be challenging when it comes to the teachers' teaching qualification, language proficiency level, and training since these points can cause teachers' confidence.

Limited mastery of teaching methods. Applying various teaching methods is tough for P1 and P2. One of them argued that her teaching method is monotonous. "...my teaching method is monotonous. I enter the class, I teach, I close the class by giving them suggestion to join study club. That is all." Implementing various teaching methods and techniques is difficult because the teachers do not merely think of how to transfer four language skills, but also how to remain students' motivation and enthusiasm in learning and practicing English (Ansari, 2012).

Unfamiliarity to IT. One participant admitted that she did not involve electronic devices when she was teaching in the classroom. P2 stated, "...to be honest, I have no idea how to use electronic devices,

such as LCD projector, laptop, online stuff, and so on." Conley (2010) says that "teachers often struggle with an inadequate knowledge of specific technology, technology-supported pedagogy, and technology-related-classroom management."

Teacher's lack of professional development. Developing English teaching ability really depends on the teacher's motivation. It was only P2 who reflected her teaching ability during interview. She admitted, "...perhaps, I do not try to develop and enrich myself with training and innovation in English language teaching." In addition, she described the difficulty she faced in teaching songs to students. In K13 (Curriculum of 2013) there is a topic about songs in which she sometimes does not teach it because she cannot sing. Another thing is that regarding teacher's unfamiliarity to IT, P2 found it reluctant to practice or take TOEFL test.

Facilities issue. In facilities issue, it covers not only about the things concern with facilities provided and time devoted, but also the support facilitated by students' parents to learn English.

Inadequate resources and facilities. P3 described that the availability of K13-based books were barely provided, especially books for the seventh grade students. Additionally, all participants agreed that the available facilities in the school did not support English teaching and learning process. P1 and P4 mentioned that devices such as LCD projector and sound system were very limited in which there was only one device that could be used by all teachers. Such inadequacy "constitutes a challenge to the teaching of English in which large numbers of students require a large number of resources" (Ajibola, 2010, p. 97). Ajibola (2010) also added that ensuring the availability of sufficient textbooks, computers, listening devices, hands-on tools, and other

teaching instruments is a challenging assignment.

Time constraint. Three participants considered that the time provided was not enough to apply teaching ideas in the classroom as well as to improve their own professional development. Time provided to teach English was only two hours for each meeting, to be exact, 40 minutes in every meeting, whereas, these participants expect that the ideal time to teach English is 90 minutes for each meeting.

"...teaching English within two hours seems not possible because it requires extra effort to explain the lesson under the lack of books" said P1. Khajloo (2013) in which "some experts complain about the amount of time devoted to the course and believe that in many cases teachers cannot teach all subjects in this limited time" (p. 56).

Likewise, P4 often planned to play games in his class but due to the time constraint, only few of them were implemented. Moreover, related to professional development, P2 is the one who was unfamiliar to high-tech cannot learn IT well since she only has 30 minutes for recess and such amount of time might be used to either correcting students' assignments or doing personal stuffs. On the other hand, P4 was the only teacher who had many responsibilities since he was the students' supervisor in which he had to teach and be involved in students' extracurricular activities. P4 stated, "as soon as I wanted to take an online TOEFL test, I had to postpone it because I have students' parents to meet, students' problems to solve, and students' activities to attend."

THE SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

Reforming attitude. Reforming attitude can be done through the efforts of students, teachers, and

school in improving English teaching and learning. Fatiloro (2015) argues that an absolute commitment to comprehend English language should be made among teachers and students. P4 explained the effort done by the school in facilitating students to learn English through holding study club as well as facilitating teachers through workshop or training in which the school invited speakers from Mataram, including IAIN Mataram (State Islamic University of Mataram) and *Lembaga Penjamin Mutu Pendidikan* (Education Quality Assurance Agency) to give a lecture and training about teaching materials, media, and teaching methods. Ajibola (2010) states one way to overcome shortage of teachers' training is holding professional development activity for teachers by having partnership with universities and experts.

Applying various teaching methods and techniques. Three participants varied their teaching methods and techniques in the classroom. Fatiloro (2015) asserts that "in handling English teaching problems, teachers must use a variety of methods for teaching English language" (p. 29). P1 used pictures and role-plays in teaching since "students often feel more attracted towards images and photographs" (Mishra, 2015, p. 42) and teachers are advised to use role play activity in order to motivate students and to help the less motivated learners take part in the lesson (Alexenoamen, 2010). P3 and P4 implemented monthly diary writing and applied various games to improve their students' vocabulary mastery. In addition, based on the Virginia Department of Education (2006), understanding English for students can be done through managing classroom. P1 described that if she finds students do not concentrate, she would point them out and tell them to stop their activity. Brewster,

Ellis, and Girad (2002), when a teacher wants to gain students' attention, it can be done through "firmly name the children who still talking and say *stop talking please* and maintain eye contact" (p. 221). Another thing P1 would do for disciplined and misbehaved students were control and give them punishment. Additionally, P2 would not hesitate to involve smart students; those who have learned English outside the school to help her in teaching certain topic of the subject. Furthermore, in dealing with students' lack of vocabulary mastery, two participants ask students to bring dictionary when they have English class or study club activity in the school. In fact, P3 would provide the list of vocabulary behind the copies of the materials she is about to teach. Fatiloro (2015) says that dictionaries, grammar guides, and the web should always be as the tool for consultation when teaching and learning English. Another way is, as the three participants argued that they always look for suitable teaching materials and methods in order to solve students' challenges in learning English. P4 uses dialogues in order to teach pronunciation and structures that ha have searched. Meanwhile, in teaching listening, P3 let students listen to the songs she has downloaded. P2 would search for songs on the internet although she does not know how to sing them.

Improving resources and facilities. Regarding the shortage of books, P2 whose job was also as the financial manager of *Bantuan Operasional Sekolah* (School Operational Assistance) stated that every year, the school always made efforts to complete and provided books in the library and free WiFi. Special efforts should be made for ensuring that teachers receive proper teaching facilities, including space, books, and teaching aids (Pande, 2013).

Matching students' proficiency level and learning

situation. The way to match students' level and learning circumstance can be done by lesson planning (Roberts, 2007). All participants admitted that they did some revision in lesson plan. P3 focused on simplifying learning objectives which was more easily to be understood by students. P1 tended to consider availability of real examples around them that could be used in English teaching. Meanwhile, P1 and P2 would select simple words and diction to be used in teaching English when they explain the material. On the other hand, P3 and P4 consented to consider students' social and financial circumstances in which they would not give homework that would spend money.

Making use of available resources and facilities. P1 and P2 were in agreement that they made use of available books in order to solve the shortage of K13 (Curriculum of 2013) books. They also argued that they still use KTSP (School-Based Curriculum) books if the topic discussed was similar. Furthermore, P2 preferred to use anything provided in the classroom i.e. chairs, whiteboard, window, and so on to be learning tools. On the other hand, since there was very limited device of sound system, P3 teaches listening only through her own voice. Mishra (2015) that "rural areas lack in the required ambience, teachers can make much use of the easily available resources" (p. 42).

Providing motivational feedback. The way to improve students' motivation in learning English was by giving them motivational feedback. Three participants frequently did that. P2 said, "...regarding students' interest towards English, I keep giving them advices to keep studying" (P2.21). P3 also added, "...for passive students, I often give them motivational feedback" (P3.40). Likewise, P4 stated, "...the first thing I do for students whose motiva-

tion is low is motivating them orally" (P4.10).

Teachers' self-reflection. Christodoulou (2010) puts forward that one of the most important aspects of teaching are self-reflection and self-evaluation since they are included in essential teaching skill. P2 reflected that students' interests toward English depended on her teaching methods. "I think students' interests really depend on teaching methods and techniques that I use, yet the fact is I have limited teaching methods mastery" she said. In addition, since she realized that her technology ability was low, she would try to learn it independently. P1 and P3 concern more on their language proficiency in which they sometime spent time to listen to songs to improve their vocabulary mastery and took online TOEFL.

CONCLUSION

This research has highlighted a wide range of issues faced in teaching English at MTsN Taliwang, Indonesia. This study shows that the teachers were challenged by their lack of training, limited mastery of teaching methods, unfamiliarity to IT, lack of professional development, inadequate facilities and resources, and time constraint. On the other hand, the other challenges coming from students' side including lack of vocabulary mastery, low concentration, lack of discipline, students' boredom, and speaking problem.

In order to face these issues, this study also found the strategies implemented by the participants of the research. Each of them had his/her own strategies in overcoming their teaching challenges in classroom, such as reforming attitude that is done by the school and the teachers at MTsN Taliwang, Indonesia including holding study club and teachers' training as well as improving facilities and re-

sources. The other strategies implemented by the participants when teaching in the classroom were applying various teaching methods and techniques, matching students' proficiency level and learning situation, managing classroom, making use of available resources, giving motivational feedback, and doing self-reflection.

Nevertheless, the readers should evaluate the results of this study. The findings of the present study cannot be generalized because the findings suggest localized challenges in teaching English, which is at MTsN Taliwang, Indonesia. Even in the school's context, each English teacher encounters different challenges. Therefore, for teachers, the findings can be whether applicable in teaching process or not based on the readers' real environment. In addition, the absence of one participant in the current study might affect the findings in which the researcher was unable to investigate broad perspectives of the teacher.

Furthermore, future investigation into challenges in teaching English might usefully focus on students' attitude diversity in classrooms and training that participants have joined in. Despite the fact that not all students have discipline issue in learning English, in this case, it is only encountered in class A, B, C, and D, as well as not all training support and empower teachers' teaching ability in the classroom, i.e. some of the participants mentioned the teaching training of *Musyawah Guru Mata Pelajaran* (MGMP) that, to some extent, does not support teachers in teaching English. This indicates that there are tendencies to be studied in more detail.

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