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## The Challenges of English Native Speaker in Teaching English in A Junior High School Manokwari West Papua

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**Abstract:** Teaching English requires effective strategies for students to improve their language skills. English Native Speakers play an important role in the learning process as they provide a more authentic language experience. However, English Native Speakers also face various challenges, especially when teaching in one of the junior high schools in Manokwari, West Papua. This study aims to identify the challenges English Native Speakers face in teaching English in that school. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews and classroom observations. The results showed that English Native Speakers experience challenges in dealing with differences in students' ability levels, cultural gaps, and adaptation to the local education system. In addition, large class sizes and limited opportunities for students to practice English outside the classroom are also barriers to learning. By understanding these challenges, it is hoped that teaching strategies can be improved and recommendations made for more effective English language teaching in Manokwari.

**Keyword:** Challenges, English Native Speaker, Teaching English, Education, Manokwari West Papua.

### INTRODUCTION

Education in West Papua has been a concern since the Soeharto era as poor infrastructure and a shortage of educators led to low quality human resources (Mollet, 2007). The special autonomy laws enacted since 2001 in Papua and 2008 in West Papua provide substantial funding for education development (Ariyanda & Arifyani, 2020). However, challenges such as weak management, teacher absenteeism and difficult access to education services in remote areas still hamper education progress (Nugraha & Bajari, 2022). Although the education budget has increased, its use remains ineffective, and the implementation of the special autonomy policy has worsened educational achievement (Ariyanda & Arifyani, 2020). Factors such as weak policy implementation, lack of achievement standards and geographical constraints contribute to education disparities in the region (Uswanas et al., 2019).

West Papua's Human Development Index (HDI) is the second lowest in Indonesia (Khairina & Wijaya, 2023), signaling the need for further attention in improving education access and quality. In addition, the national education system is perceived to distance Papuan

students from their own culture, which impacts on identity and attachment to the country (Kusumaryati, 2019). Education in West Papua is the hope for local communities to overcome social stigma and inequality (Munro, 2018).

In the context of globalization, teaching English in West Papua is important to improve students' competitiveness. However, the main obstacles in learning English in this area include the lack of qualified teachers and the lack of adequate educational facilities (Harlina & Yusuf, 2020). Therefore, effective teaching strategies are needed to improve students' competence in English.

Teaching English by native speakers in schools, including in one of the junior high schools in Manokwari, is considered as one of the solutions to improve students' language skills. Native speakers have the advantage of more authentic language acquisition and are able to provide a more natural learning experience (Harmer, 2015). However, the presence of native speakers also faces challenges, such as difficulties in adjusting to the classroom environment, classroom management, and differences in students' diverse abilities (Dang, 2024 ; Neupane, 2015).

Globally, English teaching methods continue to evolve with technology-based and student-centered learning approaches. However, challenges in teaching English in regions such as West Papua remain significant, especially in terms of resource availability, accessibility, and community acceptance of foreign language learning. Therefore, improving the quality of teaching staff, providing supporting facilities, and adapting learning strategies to suit local socio-cultural conditions are key factors in improving the effectiveness of English Language Education in West Papua.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method to identify and understand the challenges faced by English native speakers in teaching English in one of the junior high schools in Manokwari, West Papua. This education was chosen because it allowed the researcher to describe the teaching experience in more detail and naturally. Qualitative descriptive research is used to understand and describe social life based on individual perspectives in their original environment, through this research the way a person understands and explains the world around them can be known (Sudaryono, 2016).

The subject in this study was an English Native Speaker who taught at the school for 3 months. In addition, local teachers and students were also involved to provide additional perspectives. Informants were selected using purposive sampling technique, which is based on certain criteria in accordance with the research objectives. These criteria included their teaching experience, interactions with students, and the challenges they faced in the learning process. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and direct observation to obtain detailed and complete information (Wiraguna et al., 2024).

This is expected to provide a clearer picture of the challenges faced by English Native Speakers and how social, cultural and academic factors influence their teaching process in Manokwari. In addition, the results of this study are also expected to provide recommendations for improving teaching strategies to better suit the needs of students in the area.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter describes the results of research and discussion about the challenges faced by English Native Speakers when teaching in one of the junior high schools in Manokwari, West Papua. Teaching English in this area experiences various challenges, ranging from differences in students' ability levels, large class sizes, to limited opportunities for students to practice English outside the classroom. In addition, cultural differences and variations in student learning styles are also factors that affect teaching effectiveness.

The results of this study were obtained through interviews with English Native Speakers as well as classroom observations which aim to provide a clear picture of the difficulties faced by English Native Speakers. By understanding these challenges, it is expected to provide recommendations for improving teaching strategies to be more effective and in line with the needs of students in Manokwari. The following are the challenges that English Native Speakers face, among others:

### **1. Differences in Students' Language Proficiency Levels**

In English classes, students' ability levels often vary greatly. Some students already have a basic knowledge of English, while others may not even know the basics of English. This is a big challenge for English Native Speakers, especially when it comes to adjusting the material to suit the needs of each student.

The English Native Speaker said that "Often students in the same class have different levels of ability. Some students are more advanced and can quickly understand the material, while other students do not know the material yet. It can be a challenge to know which level of instruction to teach to more advanced or more basic students".

Teachers often struggle to structure lessons or materials to suit all levels of students simultaneously. If the focus is on more advanced students, lower ability students feel left behind. Likewise, if the focus is only on low-ability students, more advanced students will feel bored.

The diversity in students' abilities demands a varied teaching approach, which can be challenging for teachers, especially if they do not have specialized training to handle such differences (Akteer Shanta, 2014). This difficulty can hinder the smooth running of the teaching and learning process as teachers may have difficulty in engaging all students equally (Akteer Shanta, 2014). To overcome this challenge, the use of visual aids and customized lesson plans can be an effective solution (Albaiz, 2017). Therefore, it is important for teachers to understand the right strategies to keep learning inclusive and efficient. In addition, training and professional development for teachers can help them better deal with diversity in the classroom. Support from the school and collaboration between teachers can also be an important factor in creating a more conducive learning environment. With the right approach, every student has the same opportunity to develop according to their potential.

### **2. Class sizes that are too large**

Large class sizes are a major challenge for English native speakers in one of Manokwari's junior high schools. Research shows that the larger the class, the more difficult it is for the teaching and learning process to take place effectively. This causes several problems, such as lack of individual attention for each student, difficulty in maintaining discipline, and increased burden in grading students' assignments, which ultimately decreases the quality of teaching.

In addition, in large classes, the interaction between teachers and students becomes more limited, so students have less opportunity to practice speaking in English. Teachers also have difficulty in providing in-depth feedback to each student due to time and energy constraints. As a result, the effectiveness of teaching methods used by native speaker teachers can be reduced compared to smaller classes.

As the English native speaker said that "for optimal learning, students should have the opportunity to interact directly with the English native speaker, either starting one-on-one sessions or in small groups. But in a large class, practice time with native speakers is limited, so students get less opportunity to improve their speaking skills. If they can practice with friends who have better proficiency, this will greatly help their development".

Large classes often lead to low student engagement. Due to the large number of students, not all can actively participate in learning activities, resulting in limited classroom interaction (Abdul Samad Roshan et al., 2022). In addition, discipline issues are also a challenge for teachers, as it is difficult to effectively manage student behaviour in a crowded environment (Erlina et al., 2022). As a result, the teaching and learning process can be disrupted and students miss the opportunity to gain a better learning experience.

For teachers, large classes also present difficulties in providing feedback and evaluation to students. The large number of students makes it difficult for teachers to provide timely assessments, which can have an impact on their learning outcomes (Sabir, 2024). In addition, resource limitations, such as lack of teaching materials and inadequate classroom conditions, further complicate the teaching task (Erlina et al., 2022). This suggests that without adequate support, teachers face many obstacles in ensuring effective learning.

To overcome this challenge, some schools have adopted collaborative approaches, such as bringing in Language Teacher Assistants to help teach large classes (Hasanah & Utami, 2020). In addition, teachers also use various engagement techniques, such as group work and interactive activities, to increase student participation (Erlina et al., 2022). While it is argued that large classes can encourage a sense of community and cooperation among students, most research suggests that the challenges outweigh the possible benefits, especially in language learning.

### **3. Students' Motivation and Attitude towards English**

Students' enthusiasm and outlook towards learning English has a big influence on the challenges English native speakers face in teaching. Students' attitudes towards learning English generally tend to be positive. Research shows that students in Malaysia score an average of more than 4.00 in terms of positive attitude towards English, indicating a strong interest in learning it (Zaini, 2019). In addition, another study found that 52% of students had a positive attitude towards English, which shows the importance of creating a supportive learning environment to keep them motivated (Matatula & Tupalepsy, 2024).

Motivation also plays a big role in the success of learning English. In general, motivation is divided into two types, namely intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation comes from within students, such as pleasure and satisfaction in learning, which was reported by 67,5% of students. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation, such as the desire to get a good job, is also a factor that encourages students to learn English (Matatula & Tupalepsy, 2024). These two types of motivation show that teachers need to use the right approach to support all students in their learning process.

An English native speaker said that “one of the biggest obstacles to learning English in Manokwari is the lack of opportunities to practice. Although students may learn to speak English in class, they rarely have the opportunity to use it outside because there are very few native speakers in Manokwari. As a result, they struggle to retain the material they have learned and develop new skills. The lack of opportunities to practice outside the classroom can also demotivate students in learning English. Without an environment that supports language practice, they may feel less confident and less motivated to continue improving their skills. Sometimes students feel nervous to try because they don't want to say something wrong. In this case, I encourage students that the best way to learn is to try and make mistakes in a safe atmosphere or a classroom that supports learning from those mistakes is a good way to learn.”

In addition, an interactive and fun learning environment can strengthen students' motivation. Teachers can implement various interesting learning methods, such as language games, group discussions, and the use of technology, to get students more involved in the lesson. In this way, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be enhanced, so that students are more enthusiastic in learning English.

In addition, support from family and peers also affects students' attitudes and motivation in learning English. When students get encouragement from people around them, they tend to feel more confident and committed to improving their language skills. Therefore, cooperation between teachers, families and peers is essential in creating a positive and effective learning environment.

Students' motivation and attitude have a direct effect on teaching strategies, so teachers need to adjust to improve learning outcomes. Interactive activities can make students more motivated and engaged as they tend to enjoy fun learning methods (Zhao, 2015). However, although many students have positive attitudes and high motivation, some still experience difficulties in learning English due to external factors such as economic conditions or limited resources. Therefore, it is important for educators to overcome these barriers to make English learning more effective.

#### **4. Differences in Students' Learning Styles**

Differences in students' learning styles can affect the effectiveness of English language teaching by native speakers. If the method applied by the teacher does not match the students' way of learning, this can reduce their engagement and they experience difficulty understanding the material. English native speakers face challenges in teaching because students have different ways of learning and cultural backgrounds. Understanding these differences is essential for effective teaching, because if the teaching style does not match the way students learn, they can struggle to engage and achieve good results.

Models such as VARK and Kolb show that each student has a different way of learning, such as seeing (visual), hearing (auditory), or moving (kinesthetic) (Kannan et al., 2020). However, English native speakers often use teaching methods that may not be suitable for all these learning styles. As a result, some students can have difficulties in understanding the material and become less motivated in learning (Felder & Henriques, 1995). Therefore, it is important for teachers to adapt their approach to accommodate diverse learning needs.

An English native speaker pointed out that “One of the challenges is also that students learn in different ways. For example, some students learn best when moving or kinesthetic. Others learn best by hearing or seeing. Some students can be overwhelmed in a setting full of noise and learn better in a quieter environment. Thus, in large groups of students, incorporating teaching that helps support the learning needs of all types of students requires extra attention and planning.”

Cultural understanding plays an important role in the teaching and learning process. English native speakers may lack understanding of their students' cultural backgrounds, which can be a barrier to effective communication and learning (Albaiz, 2017). Meanwhile, English non-natives face additional challenges in explaining concepts, as cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings in the delivery of material (Albaiz, 2017). Therefore, cultural awareness is needed to make learning more effective and inclusive.

In addition, effective teaching strategies also play an important role in overcoming challenges in language learning. Learner-centered approaches, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), encourage students' active participation and help meet diverse learning needs (Cao, 2023). In addition, adaptation of culturally appropriate materials can increase student engagement and understanding (Rahman et al., 2024). Despite the challenges, this presents an opportunity for educators to innovate and develop more effective teaching methods. By embracing diversity in the classroom, teachers and students can gain richer learning experiences and create a more dynamic learning environment.



## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, English native speakers who teach in one of the junior high schools in Manokwari, West Papua, face various challenges in teaching English. The main challenges include differences in students' ability levels, class size, students' motivation and attitudes towards English, different ways of learning, and cultural gaps between teachers and students. English native speakers have to adjust their teaching strategies to suit the needs of diverse students, such as slowing down the speaking speed, choosing simpler vocabulary, and implementing more interactive and inclusive learning methods. In addition, the lack of opportunities for students to practice English outside the classroom is also a factor that hinders their progress in language.

Therefore, support from schools, training for teachers, and a more flexible and needs-based teaching approach are needed. Thus, the effectiveness of English language teaching by English native speakers in Manokwari can be improved, so that students have greater opportunities to develop their language skills optimally.

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