

## ABSTRACT

### **Hafidz, Marisa Syta (2024): Exploring EFL Teachers' Challenges in Fostering Students' Reading Skills at a Rural School: A Case Study at a Junior High School in Bandung Barat**

EFL teachers often face struggles in teaching reading skills, especially in a rural area setting such as a lack of learning resources, students' reading comprehension issues, and challenges in implementing teaching methods. Therefore, the research aims to explore EFL teachers' challenges in fostering students' reading skills at a 9th-grade rural junior high school Muslimin Cipongkor, Bandung Barat. To add, addressing the strategies of EFL teachers in teaching reading could improve students' skills in reading in a rural area setting and contribute to language learning development.

The research employed a qualitative approach with case study methods. The research instruments used were observations and interviews. Participants in this research were 2 EFL teachers who teach in class 9<sup>th</sup> grade junior high school Muslimin Cipongkor, Bandung Barat. Data were utilized using the theories from Creswell (2012).

The findings of the research showed that EFL teachers faced several challenges in teaching to foster students' reading skills, such as students' limited vocabulary mastery, insufficient reading pronunciation, difficulties in decoding words, comprehending texts, lack of varied learning methods, and unclear teaching instructions, inadequate reading techniques, concentration issues, and inadequate learning resources. The research also found that teachers employed several strategies including reciprocal teaching, question-and-answer relationships, and read-aloud as well as collaborative strategies can help students engage in the learning process and enhance students reading skills.

The research concludes that EFL teachers encountered multifaceted challenges in a rural junior high school setting, despite these obstacles, the research identifies several effective strategies to address these challenges offering implications for teaching practices of English language teaching and educational policy. Therefore, EFL teachers should develop activities that integrate reading into meaningful learning to develop student's reading skills and engagement in reading. Students should actively use available resources to improve their vocabulary and engage in collaborative learning activities. Further, schools should creatively utilize existing resources and provide professional development for teachers. Future studies should explore the effectiveness of various teaching strategies in overcoming specific challenges, especially in rural area settings.

**Keywords:** *EFL teachers, Challenges, Strategies, Reading skills, Rural schools*