

FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This final project was conducted to investigate the problems faced by student in learning English language. This study was conducted to the tenth graders of SMA Islam Sultan Agung 1 Semarang, which is located in Jl. Mataram No.657 Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. The objectives study were to find the factors hindering the students in learning English language. Design of this project belong to descriptive study. The data were collected through the observations and interviews. Result in the study showed there are several factors to hinder students in term of developing their language skills; Motivation, prior knowledge and skills of the target language, facilities, and class environment. The study revealed that the factors have potentially decreased the quality of learning and so progress of learning was considered slow. In order to improve the recent process of learning, the study encourages the involment of both teachers and school officials in fixing the problems. Improvement can start from, yet not limited to revisiting the course design and supervising the process of learning as well as updating pedagogical and professional competences of English teacher.

Keywords: *Factors Affecting Students in Learning English, Senior High School Students, Descriptive Study*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool to communicate (Pitoy, 2012). As a means of communication, language is used among human in society for different purposes. In the frame of language as a science, it is noticeable that language when it is classified into its function is divided into two, productive and receptive skills. According to Golkova and Hubackova (2014), productive skill is the transmission of either information that a language user produces in spoken or written form, through which speaking and writing belong to this classification. Bashrin (2013) argues that receptive skill is the ability to extract information from spoken or written discourse, where listening and reading are the group of it. Epistemologically, humans initially acquire language through listening before they are able to speak, to read and to write. Those skills are undeniably needed by human, because they are employed and helped by these skill the ability to employ those skills, not to mention, in the sense of broadening knowledge through education.

Education is a way to make humans civilized and to make them live better. Marg (2014) states that education is a way to nourish the quality of humans and also practice the humans to be the best individual. Humans can develop their quality through experience, learning process and practice, etc. Education talks about many aspects in life from simple to complex issues. No education, without language, through language humans can learn knowledge by answering what, when, where, why, which and how. In the context of classroom teaching, Malekela (2003) argues that teacher uses language at least and his students in order to build interaction to make meaning of the lesson, without language knowledge transfer will never happen.

Language where it refers to its function is categorized into two different kinds; (1) language that people use as a means of communication within their community and (2) language that they use broadly to build interaction with people from different areas where their original language will not count. In clearer sense, I name it as local and international language. Böhmann & Trudell (2008) points out that local language or native language is language spoken at home and marketplace within a community, as distinguished from a regional, national or international language. Within the context of where I live local languages, refer to Javanese and Indonesian language, while international language refers to languages able to be used to bridge communication among people from different countries. Roux (2014) states that international language is language that ‘neutral’, pointing out its universal international utility. Jhonson and Anne (Winter, 2009) note that it is to prepare the people to face globalization era, and to share the global and scientific information. Those who are able to well demonstrate International language; they seem to be ready to face globally challenges. One of the widely spoken international languages is English.

English is an international language that is considers very important language because many fields such as education, business, economic, science, technology, and other fields of life use it. Al-saadi (2015) revealed that English language is a source that encompasses daily practice and almost all other aspect of human life. Fang (2017) also points out that especially since 21st century; English has spread throughout the world as a lingua franca. It has been used in communication among people from different nations, languages, regions, and cultures. In the frame of education, particularly in Indonesia, this language has been taught to students across levels of education; kindergarten, primary school, junior high school, senior high school, even in the level of university. It has been

taught as a foreign language, English takes quite a long process in Indonesia. Arung (2015) states that English as a compulsory subject at school is administered as foreign language not a second language. The students in this case only learn it at school, after their several times they use their mother tongue to communicate with other people in society. Arung (2015) also points out that there are still some important problems should be investigated related to the way teachers and lectures teaching English in English as a foreign language (EFL) circle. Although all students learn English as a foreign language throughout their academic years, they still have problems in learning it. Students cannot optimize themselves to improve their skills in English mastery.

This raises a question related to why the students cannot be optimal in learning English as a foreign language. Keeping the view of the discussion, this study is conducted to investigating the EFL students' difficulties factors to learn English language within the context of learning at SMA Islam Sultan Agung 1 Semarang in the academic year 2018/2019.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is using qualitative research method. It is a method which analyzes the data using words rather than numbers. It takes from sources of words, sentences, utterance, and dialogues. According to Atieno (2009), the qualitative research is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data is media through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machine.

In processing the data, I will use two steps, those are: 1) Transcribing, and 2) Analyzing. The first step is transcribing. The data taken from recording transcribe appropriately with the fact without changes the sense of the participants carried out and said. Data that has been taken will be checked again to get the accuracy and precision in carrying out its functions. I would like to reclose some important data.

The second step of processing the data is analyzing. The content of this study analysis will be conducted in the reality field. I will try to find and analyze the students' behavior and comment about learning English language. I analyze the data into some different aspects such as English proficiency, motivation, environments and the other factors.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is presented to discuss about what I found. From the data collected through by the observations and interviews, there are problems to hinder students' in learning English. In order to discuss comprehensively, I divide the section into several parts. In the initial part, I would like to discuss the problems in English listening. From the data which were presented in chapter IV, I found some students had low English proficiency due to a lack of motivation. Some students admitted that they could not understand the lesson and not interested on this subject. This issue was strengthened by Vandergrift (2005). He stated that students who were motivated, were proficient in learning. Based on this problem, it seems that teacher should have motivate more the students in order to support the students' succeed in learning. The problem from unsporting facilities revealed from students' responds about the classroom devices that could not work properly. According to Hannah (2013) the classroom facilities played an important role in keeping the students to succeed in the learning process. Witnessing the

condition, immediate repairs needs to be well, particularly to classroom devices that could not work properly. In this case, I recommend the schools to repair some classroom devices that could not work properly. Adding to the issue of facilities, the students claimed that the class was too noisy. It disturbed their concentration while learning. Servilha (2014), suggest that the noisy class hinder the students' concentration during the process of learning. In order to manage the issue, teacher needs to find ways to create conducive class, which suggest the learning.

The second part, I would like to discuss the problems in English speaking. The data collected in the previous chapter appeared their anxiety has influenced on their capabilities in English speaking. They stated that they were afraid to speak in front of class. As the result, they could not optimally develop their skill in this subject. A study by Anandari (2015), Suleienova (2013), and Mohtasham (2017) found that the students' anxiety lead some consequence such as difficulty in speaking in public, participating in conversations minimally, and inhibited speakers etc. The students need to practice in English speaking and make it as a pleasure. The other problems revealed that some students uninterested in this subject and they never had learning seriously. Al - Mahrooqi (2012) adds this low English proficiency caused by the students, which were uninterested in the subject. Therefore, creativity is needed to minimize students anxiety and to grow student interest in this subject. Vocabulary mastery was another problem that I found in the study. Vocabulary is one of the key point in order to perform the skill. The students had very low mastery it. Hasan (2015), suggested that having bit of vocabulary, a language learner will find it hard to perform the language. One of which is to great learning activities which encourage students to read.

The third part discussed several problems in English reading. The data aimed the students who had low English reading ability and low motivation affected negatively with their vocabulary knowledge. Firstly, they could not understand some reading contents given by the teacher. In actually, they felt uninterested toward reading activity. In the study of Lai Mei mentioned that one of the factors of limited English proficiency is the students who are not interested to read. Meanwhile, they also bored quickly while learning this subject. As a result, they had limited vocabulary knowledge and words in English. It was supported by Roberts et al (2008) and Chou (2011). They states that lack of motivation and low English reading mastery correlated to affect on students' ability to improve their vocabulary and to develop strong reading strategies. In this case, I suggest the students to keep reading habits and found some interesting activities in this subject such as reading an article, read some contents related to the pleasure etc.

The last part discussed several problems in English writing. Based on the data collected in chapter IV, the students with low English writing proficiency showed that they uninterested in this subject, faced the difficulties to write a long sentences and lack of vocabulary knowledge. Some students admitted that they uninterested in this subject, as a result some of them could not write well while learning. It further reinforced by the study by Lin (2009), which found that the students who had a low ability in writing due to uninterested in this subject. The other problems appeared the students who could not unsporing organize the idea to write a long sentences due to lack of vocabulary knowledge. They only create a short sentence and difficult to expand it due to confuse to use the words or vocabularies. This finding was strengthened by Alfaki (2015) and Abderraouf (2015). They found the students' who was lack of idea caused by lack of vocabulary knowledge and grammar. Therefore, they could anticipate it by practice in writing using English conversation in some devices message applications with their peers

and the teacher etc. The role of the teacher must be patient during guiding the students' process, because every students' have different capabilities to pass the process of learning, especially in writing. Students also did not expect to underestimate this subject due to English was important skills that they should be mastered to face the future.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the data of analysis result in the previous chapter, I obtained several factors affecting EFL students to learn English language of SMA Islam Sultan Agung 1 Semarang in the academic year 2018 – 2019. Through by the observations and interviews, the data showed that some students were suffered while learning English in the school. The several factors to hinder students in term of developing their language skills; Motivation, prior knowledge and skills of the target language, facilities, and class environment. The study revealed that the factors have potentially decreased the quality of learning and so progress of learning was considered slow. In order to improve the recent process of learning.

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