

PROBLEM FACE BY VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT SMK NEGERI KEBONAGUNG

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Abstract

Learning English is very important especially for education and future, this is because English is one of the international languages used. This case study aims to analyze the difficulties of learning English in grade 10 students at the vocational high school level. This research is mainly to find the students' difficulties in mastering English. This research was conducted at SMK Negeri Kebonagung involving 70 students as subjects. Researchers used a classical and individual approach in collecting data. The data was obtained using a google form which was distributed to 70 students of class x in various majors. The findings show that students' English learning difficulties are: (1) a sense of coercion; (2) mastery of basic concepts/low intake; (3) lack of self-confidence; (4) forgetting factor; (5) have little opportunity to practice. Referring to these findings, it is suggested to teachers and institutions to facilitate and provide high motivation for the students' English learning process.

Keyword: Learning, English, Vocational High School

INTRODUCTION

The main means of communication throughout the world is language. Language is a symbol system in the form of sound, arbitrary, used by the community to speak, work together, communicate, and to identify themselves (Keraf & Chaer, 2006; 1). The difficulties in learning English still often faced by students, especially in vocational school. Initial observations show that their English intakes are very low. In fact, the quality of the input will certainly affect both the process and learning outcomes. In addition, the frequency of learning in vocational school is also less supportive in improving the quality of English learning. Education is a conscious and planned effort to realize learning, learning atmosphere and learning process so that students are active develop their own potential (Muhibbin Syah, 2006).

The time for learning English is relatively less proportional to the needs of students, moreover English is one of the keys to overcome various problems of graduates in the future, where the competition is getting tougher. Modern language learning systems are ideally based on needs analysis. Needs analysis is a procedure for gathering information about learning needs at a certain level of learners, namely to formulate learning objectives and content (Richards, 2001b: 51-90; Gall, 2003: 557). At the vocational level, needs analysis focuses on mastering

language skills according to the learner's field of study. The various aspects mentioned above involve the roles of lecturers and students. Teachers have the same role regarding assumptions about language and language learning at the level of their approach (Cunningsworth, 1995: 113; Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 27-29).

Language learning can be in the form of the language system and language using. Modern language learning involves institutions, teachers, learners, and teaching (Richards, 2001b: 198) and prioritizes learning experiences. The mastery of English is also been a means to improve the quality of Indonesia's human resources, which according to the Human Development Index is the lowest category in Asia. The Human Development Index (HDI) is used to classify whether a country is a developed country, a developing country or an underdeveloped country and also to measure the influence of economic policies and policies on the quality of life (Davies & Quinlivan, 2006).

Global competition in all fields demands an increase in the quality of human resources, including teachers, as the spearhead. According to Suparlan (2008), teachers are one of the instrumental input elements that greatly determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of education and training. To be able to carry out their duties and functions properly, teachers must have adequate qualifications, competencies, and welfare standards. One of the efforts to realize the above is to improve the quality of learning English. Mastery of the language will open their horizons to the development of science and technology, including education which is currently easily accessible from various sources.

Learning English is very complex because English consists of four skills, namely reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Language is a system of arbitrary conventionalized vocal, written, or gestural symbol that enable members of a given community to communicate intelligibly with one another (Brown, D. H 49-58:2000). To achieve optimal English language skills, professional language instructors are needed to produce quality students. In addition, mastery of the material and practice must be given in a balanced portion (Megawati, 2016).

The difficulties faced or felt by the students in speaking can be divided into two kinds of problems namely linguistic problems and non-linguistic problems. There were three difficulties related to linguistic problems. They were 'lack of vocabulary', 'lack of grammar knowledge', and 'poor pronunciation.' While, the 9 difficulties dealt with non-linguistic problems were, 'not being brave to speak', 'not being confident to speak', 'being afraid of speaking', 'being afraid of making errors', 'being afraid of being mocked by friends', 'being nervous to speak', 'not used to talking in class', 'difficult to express words or sentences', and 'confused how to use appropriate words' (Heriansyah, 2012:40)

Listening is the cognitive process whereby we attach meanings to aural signals. It is the active intellectual of decoding, understanding, interpreting and evaluating messages. It is a particular way to communicate just as important as the

others like speaking, reading, and writing. (Wah, 2019:883)

According to Robert Todd Carroll (1990), the most important invention in human history is writing. It provides a relatively permanent record of information, opinions, beliefs, feelings, arguments, explanations, theories etc. Although writing is an essential skill, many students at high school are not interested in it according to Robert Todd Carroll (1990), many students were never required to learn proper spelling or grammar. These poor students come to think that “English and “Writing” are nothing but spelling and grammar. To them, writing means inevitable failure.

Reading is a form of interaction with language, and therefore reading is a language activity (Yuliana, 2013, Hariyati and Syakur, 2018). The number of problems and difficulties which reduce the comprehension efficiency process from what are stated in the educational literature (Shubaylat 0.2010; Manasrah 0.2007; 2008; Nasr 0.2003; Asr 1999; Kamahi & Catts, 1991). The most important problems are:

1. Limited previous knowledge of the reader with inability to integrate new knowledge to the previous one.
2. A limited vocabulary.
3. Lack of oral language.
4. Excessive concentration of teachers in the early grades on teaching the skill of decoding symbol.
5. Focus on accurate reading performance at the expense of meaning.
6. Lack of listening comprehension skills.
7. Parents’ carelessness to communicate with their children for follow up them at school.
8. Lack of exposing children in the early grades for printed materials.
9. Create negative attitudes among students towards reading and materials.
10. Lack of dedicated time for independent reading.
11. The weakness of the students’ self-confidence in their abilities to read.

Improving the quality of learning English can be achieved if the background of learning difficulties is known. Information about learning difficulties can be used as a basis for determining goals, methods, strategies, and learning materials that are relevant to the needs of graduates. For this reason, it is necessary to study the factors that cause difficulties in learning English.

This research involved 10th grade students of SMK Negeri Kebonagung. Based on intensive observations made by researchers at the beginning of the semester, there are indications that the quality of students’ English mastery is very low. Most of the teacher’s expressions and instructions using the most basic English are difficult for most students to understand, including difficulties in developing competence in reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills at a basic

level. Based on this phenomenon, the researcher analyzed the students' learning difficulties in English, which could then be used as the basis for improving the quality of learning.

In understanding Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading, tenth students have not been able to understand and apply the four English skills. Their lack of understanding in the four language skills can be found in the data we have obtained at the time of distributing a questionnaire containing their reasons for not understanding English lessons too well, the answers that were found from the researchers as follows: "difficult", "because I find it difficult to understand English vocabulary", "because it is difficult to read vocabulary" and "because it is difficult to reach and difficult to read and to memorize".

Based on these data, the researcher conducted research on the tenth grade students of SMKN Kebonagung, with the title "Problem Face by Vocational High School Student in Learning English at SMKN Kebonagung". The focus of this research is on mastering four language skills, namely: Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading. The reason the researcher raised the title is because there has never been a similar study at SMKN Kebonagung.

To find out the relevance of this research, the researcher refers to previous research. The research is described as follows: Hendra Heriansyah's research (2012), entitled "Speaking Problems Faced by The English Department Students' of Syiah Kuala University" at the Students in English Department of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Syiah Kuala University. Based on the research findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the 10 students of English Department at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Syiah Kuala University faced some problems in speaking. The problems that most students faced in speaking were 'having a lack of vocabulary', 'not being confident to speak', 'not being used to talking in class', and 'difficulty expressing words or sentences.' The cause of problems most students faced was 'being afraid of making errors.' There were two kinds of problems faced by the students in speaking that the researcher found in this study, namely, linguistic problems and non-linguistic problems. The difference between this study and the previous research by Hendra Heriansyah (2012), entitled "Speaking Problems Faced by The English Department Students' of Syiah Kuala University" is that this study discusses the difficulties in learning English of students in the Speaking aspect. While this study discusses the difficulties in learning English for vocational students in four aspects, namely Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing.

METHOD

This study was designed using a descriptive qualitative research method approach, with the aim of conducting a descriptive study of learning English problems that arise in Vocational High School students at Tenth Grade in SMK Negeri Kebonagung for the academic year 2022/2023. The study used a questionnaire where in collecting data using a questionnaire through the *Google*

Form platform to ±70 Students in SMK Negeri Kebonagung. Link about which part they find difficult. The second questionnaire focuses on two aspects of the question:

1. What are your difficulties in learning English?
2. Why are you feeling difficult with that?

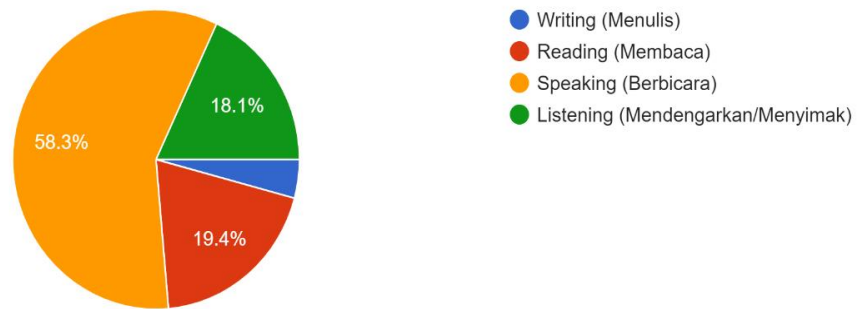
After the data was collected, the researcher conducted an analysis with the following stages: presenting research data, explaining research methods, presenting research results and discussions, write conclusions and providing suggestions.

FINDING

Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Learning English

Kesulitan dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris

72 responses



Picture 1.1 Students' Difficulties in Learning English

From the results of the google form questionnaire, it is known that 58.3% of students have difficulty in learning English, especially in the speaking aspect. Most students think that the most difficult thing to learn from English is speaking. Due to the lack of vocabularies they have, they feel insecure, cannot pronounce well and the students' lack of motivation to speak English. Whereas motivation to students is very important for the development and willingness of students to learn. Learning a second language is not easy for some people. Because we are used to using Indonesian as a daily language, this will be difficult. However, for someone who is motivated to understand the new language they are learning, they tend to try to study harder in order to immediately understand the new language. In contrast to people who do not have motivation, they will tend to be passive and unmotivated. Usually, they learn this language only because they are told and not on their own. In fact, they will still tend to be passive even though they do not understand the material being taught (not trying to ask the teacher).

In the diagram it is also known that 19.4% of students feel that the most difficult thing in English is reading. Students who find it difficult to read think that they find it difficult to memorize how to read English vocabulary because of the different writing and reading methods. There are also students who say that what makes reading English difficult is that there are different writings with different meanings but the way they are read is the same. Some students also have difficulty understanding English texts due to not having proper reading strategies, lack of understanding of grammar, and not forming a good reading habit.

Another students 18.1% find it difficult when learning about listening, students find it difficult because they cannot analyze well what the speaker says so they are unable to know what the speaker means. Students also said that when listening there were some of them who did not understand what the speaker meant at all because they thought the speaker spoke very quickly and they lacked mastery of pronunciation. This problem must be addressed immediately because listening is important since students may receive much of their information of their school through listening to instructors and to another. Listening has been regarded as the most frequently used language skills in the classroom. Besides, listening skill is important in the workplace, the family and the community.

Some other students find it difficult in the writing aspect, because students have difficulty memorizing English vocabulary writing. Therefore, even though students have good ideas or ideas, they have not succeeded well in expressing these ideas in English written works. Some students also said that they had to repeatedly look at the dictionary when writing an English sentence to make sure that their writing was correct. Students tend to be passive, bored and sleepy in teaching and learning activities. Moreover, they do not have sufficient mastery of vocabulary and grammar skills. This situation is very influential on student learning outcomes. For that we need to find a solution why it happened. This is motivated by various factors, including a lack of interest in learning English which may be caused by a lack of mastery of vocabulary, supporting books and grammar. In addition, it is possible that the teacher does not use the right method and in delivering the subject matter is less interesting.

DISCUSSION

The main factor that affects students' difficulties in learning English is speaking. Because they find it difficult to pronounce English vocabulary due to different writing and pronunciation. In addition, students also have limitations in mastering English vocabulary, making it difficult for them to express what they want to convey. Some students feel insecure to speak in public because they are not fluent in speaking English. The lack of students' learning motivation also affects their difficulty in learning to speak English. Students' difficulties in speaking must be overcome because basically learning the language is to be able to communicate, if this is not immediately addressed, students will continue to feel that communicating in English is difficult and even impossible. According to Diknas (2003) "The

competence of English subjects is students able to communicate both orally and in writing using a variety of languages appropriate, fluent and accurate”.

The second factor is reading, students have difficulty in reading English texts during the learning process. There are several obstacles that make students find it difficult in this regard, including students having difficulty determining the main idea, identifying specific information, identifying references, and identifying the meaning of words. The main causes of students' reading comprehension difficulties were unknown/unfamiliar vocabulary items, while long passages, limited time, and lack of practice in reading and learning English were considered as other causes. According to Wideasworo in (Rosnaningsih et al., 2019) the problems that barrier of students in learning English in class, namely not responding lessons, passive and lack of confidence.

The next factor is listening, namely the ability of students to listen to other people speak English. Students have difficulty in this because they do not understand what the speaker is saying, especially if the speaker is a native speaker. Students also cannot control the speaking speed of the person conveying the information, and they feel that the information conveyed is lost before they can understand the meaning of the information. When students can understand one piece of information, at the same time other information is lost. Students do not have the opportunity to ask the speaker to repeat or clarify the information conveyed by the speaker, so students must be able to understand what it is. Errors in interpreting the information received, so that the content of the message conveyed is received or interpreted differently by students.

The last factor that makes it difficult for students to learn English is in the writing aspect. According to (Kurniawati, 2019) writing means pouring a thought into written form or telling something to others through writing, so writing is a person's activity in expressing ideas, thoughts, telling something to the idea that he wants to convey through words that are assembled into Complete and clear sentences, in other words, writing is also interpreted as indirect communication. The results showed that students experienced difficulties in every aspect of writing, namely difficulties in content, organization, language use, and vocabulary. Students have difficulty memorizing written vocabulary in English, so when writing they have to repeatedly look at a dictionary or book to ensure that their writing is correct. This makes it difficult for students to express their ideas through written work.

CONCLUSION

Learning English is very important for students because English is an international language which is definitely important to be used in various places. However, in learning this language, there are several obstacles experienced by students at SMK Negeri Kebonagung. According to this study, the biggest obstacle experienced by the students was the speaking aspect. Because they lack mastery of vocabulary they have, they feel insecure, cannot pronounce well and the students' lack of motivation to speak English.

Second, they find it difficult to read. Because they are confused in studying different writings by pronouncing them. Sometimes the words and the way they are pronounced are very different. The third is that they find it difficult in the listening aspect because they cannot analyze well what the speaker says so they are unable to know what the speaker means. And the last, they find it difficult to write because students have difficulty memorizing English vocabulary on writing.

DEDICATION

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