

Exploring Students' Difficulties in Learning English

Nuri Fitri Astuti¹, Yanuarti Apsari²

IKIP Siliwangi, Indonesia

¹ nurifitri27@gmail.com, ² yanuar.apsari1@gmail.com

Abstract

An international language is a language that is used in any international communication that involves individuals from two or more different nations. The most extensively used language in a variety of global situations is English. English is thus a global language as well as an international language. Therefore, speaking English is not limited to interactions with native English speakers. This study aims to find out the difficulties experienced by high school students in learning English which are based on internal and external factors. The method used in this research is qualitative data. There were thirty students who were selected as respondents of this study. The instruments used were open ended questionnaires and interviews. In this study, it was found that interest and motivation are the keys to the internal problems faced by students in learning english, which then the teacher is an external factor which also the main influences the learning process.

Keywords: Learning Difficulties; Internal Factors; External Factors

INTRODUCTION

English is more than just an international language; it is a world language. An international language is a language that is used in any international communication that involves individuals from two or more different nations. Therefore, speaking English is not limited to interactions with native English speakers. People who speak diverse first languages use English. It is utilized when individuals from different countries get together as well as when people communicate to English speakers. The most extensively used language in a variety of global situations is English. English is thus a global language as well as an international language. People all across the world use English as their native tongue, secondary language, and foreign language. However, just because individuals in those nations use English does not grant it a special position as a world language. English becomes a global language because, despite not being their first language, people in other nations accord it great respect. Although English is not an official language, it is the language that both adults and children are most likely to study for a variety of reasons. Crystal (1997), stated more than a hundred nations now teach English as a foreign language, with China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt, Brazil, and Indonesia Even while English speakers in different parts of the world are not always fluent, they at least understand the language. Learning the principles, customs, and way of life of another culture is one of the experiences that will help us develop as people the most. But in any educational setting, there are always challenges to learning and teaching. The academic success of the pupils pursuing the education will also be impacted by these learning challenges.

Irham and Wiyani (2013) stated that difficulties in terms of learning are a condition when students experience obstacles in following the teaching and learning process so as to achieve non-optimal learning outcomes. According to Blassic & Jones (in Irham and Wiyani 2013), the difficulties that students experience in learning indicate a gap between the expected academic achievement and that achieved by the student in actual. Hamalik (1983) also states that student

difficulty in learning is a disorder that can hinder student learning progress and can also result in student achievement failure. According to Abdurrahman (2003), learning difficulties can be divided into two large groups, namely: 1. Developmental learning disabilities, these difficulties are: a) development-related learning difficulties include motor and perceptual disorders, b) language and communication learning difficulties, and c) learning difficulties in the adjustment of social behavior. 2. Academic learning disabilities, namely learning difficulties that include failures in achieving academic achievement in accordance with the expected capacity. Ahmadi and Supriyono (2004), explained that the factors causing learning difficulties can be classified into two groups, namely internal factors and external factors:

1. Internal factors

The factors from within the human being himself, which include:

- a) Physiological factors, physiological factors that can cause the appearance of learning difficulties in students such as the condition of students who are sick, unwell, the presence of weakness or disability of the body and so on. Students' Healty Condition, influenced factors such as the students' comprehension and memory during the process of giving materials in the class. Lower academic self-efficacy and poor study progress have been linked to mental anguish, but the underlying mechanisms are complicated and not fully understood. A longitudinal American study indicated that mental health issues were associated with delayed academic progress (GPA), indicating a possible direction of influence (Eisenberg et al., 2009).
- b) Psychological factors, psychological factors of students which can cause learning difficulties include a generally low level of intelligence, low aptitude to subjects, lack of interest in learning, low motivation, and poor mental health conditions. Students' Interest & Motivation, influenced factors such as liking/wanting to be able to speak English or embarrassed to be able to speak English. Academic success is recognized to be strongly influenced by achievement motivation, which energises and guides behavior toward achievement (e.g., Robbins et al., 2004; Hattie, 2009; Plante et al., 2013; Wigfield et al., 2016). Goals, task values, motivational beliefs, and achievement motives are only a few of the many diverse structures that make up achievement motivation, which is not a single construct in and of itself (see Murphy and Alexander, 2000; Wigfield and Cambria, 2010; Wigfield et al., 2016). Students' Learning Habit, influenced factors such as being active/paying attention to the teacher or doing assignments and rereading materials at home. The development of good learning habits is crucial to the learning process. This is in line with Rana and Kausar's (2011) assertion that effective study habits are the primary factor in students' performance in the classroom. High learning achievement is a result of good study habits. "Students who use superior study habits and tactics typically achieve more academically" (Aluja et al., 2004).

2. External factors

The factors from outside the human being, which include:

a) Non-social factors

Non-social factors that can cause learning difficulties in students can be in the form of learning equipment or learning media that is not good or even incomplete, the conditions of the study room or building that are not feasible, the curriculum that is very difficult for teachers to describe and mastered by students, the time of implementation of the learning process that is less disciplined, and so on. Teaching Methods, factors that influence such as the

character of the teacher and how the learning process occurs. The success of machines as a methodology in language instruction, according to Anthony (2014), "is not because a lot of sophistication of the electronic equipment is used, but rather what kind of approach and method the equipment uses." It suggests that in order to achieve efficacy in language instruction, instructors should use approaches that are in line with theories and are appropriate for the subject matter. Learning Media & Technology, factors that influence such as books/projector or gadget with apps. Teachers are always looking for technology tools that can improve their students' learning. Students' lives today are significantly impacted by technology. It has, nevertheless, been regarded as a fantastic resource in classrooms that has enhanced learning. The use of technology has improved student engagement and willingness, and it has improved learning. New information technology has made schooling more flexible in terms of time and location. To achieve lifelong learning, every student still has to be connected to a support system. Students require mentors who are both teachers and coaches, including their parents, friends, and bosses. The school-to-work movement's main goal is to mobilize awareness and support so that kids can develop the skills, routines, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for productivity. (Hakim et al. 2000, p. 263).

b) Social factors

Social factors that can also cause problems in students such as family factors, school factors, playmates, and the wider community environment. Another social factor that can cause learning difficulties in students is the teacher factor. Classroom Situation, factors that influence such as the location of seats and friends in the class. The circumstances under which learning occurs are referred to as the learning context or learning environment. Every classroom has different teaching and learning environments. Arend (2007) asserts that while appearing similar from a distance, classes differ in their practices and methods. There are two main elements in a classroom setting: the physical element and the human element. While the human component consists of people, such as teachers and pupils in the classroom, the physical component includes all the tangible items present in the classroom, such as the blackboard, furniture, lighting, projector, books, computers, etc. Usually, it deals with how students and teachers connect with one another as well. This interactional pattern creates a specific setting that can be referred to as a learning condition, circumstance, or environment.

Based on what has been explained above, the purpose of this study is to find out the difficulties of high school students in learning English based on internal and external factors which are further divided into several parts as shown before.

METHOD

The method used in this research is qualitative data, according to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social human problem. The instrument itself by giving a few short questions about the students' learning difficulties in English in the form of a close-ended questionnaire consisting of six statements with five ranges of answers such as strongly agree to strongly disagree which were given to thirty participants and then three of them will be randomly selected to providing statements in the interview process and for the instrument itself was translated into Indonesian to ensure the participants' comprehension of the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the data that have been collected from thirty participants who filled out the questionnaire in the Google Form are displayed in the two tables below:

Table 1. Results of The Internal Factors

Numbers	Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Netral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Students' Healty Condition	30%	33,3%	20%	16,7%	0%
2.	Students' Interest & Motivation	40%	30%	16,7%	10%	3,3%
3.	Students' Learning Habit	33,3%	23,3%	16,7%	20%	6,7%

Table 2. Results of The External Factors

Numbers	Categories	Strongly Agree	Agree	Netral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Teaching Methods	56%	16,7%	13,3%	6,7%	6,7%
2.	Learning Media & Technology	40%	23,3%	33,3%	3,3%	0%
3.	Classroom Situation	37,9%	31%	6,9%	20,7%	3,4%

Discussion

Based on the data above, that these factors can affect students' english learning activities, where on mostly of the participants agree with each of the categories that previously given. Then, in this session the data that will be discussed is only data on the "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" scales, therefore the data on the two scales will be combined to make it easier to see comparisons between one category and another. Based on the Internal Factors, the "Students' Interest & Motivation" category was in first place with 70% of the votes that said they were agreed. As said by participant (1) that motivation can actually be classified into internal motivation from ourselves and external motivation from other people. So, logically motivation from the outside will be useless if ourselves have no motivation. This statement is supported by (Harun, 2006) that motivation is a mental impulse that influences attitudes and individual learners' actions. Where it all comes back to ourselves in taking control of what we want to do.

The Participant (2) also said that, if we study but without being accompanied by motivation it will only bring laziness, so material that should be easy to learn will become difficult to understand. Similar to the previous one, Participant (3) also argued that, if we are not interested in learning then we will also not be interested in digging further about the material, either because it is difficult or we just don't like it from the start. The idea of interest in the context of education captures how people's experiences of influence and value throughout learning have an impact on their attitudes toward that object. However Hgheim and Reber (2019); Habig et al. (2018), stated that interactions between various context, activity, or task-related levels and course components are still related to interest and have an impact on students' sentiments of enthusiasm and self-efficacy.

Based on the External Factors, the "Teaching Methods" category was also in first place with 73,4% of the votes which also said they agreed. As said by Participant (2) who argued that the character of a teacher in teaching also influences, such as when they get a mean teachers. This of course will only make their mentally down instantly, so that the material presented will not be conveyed properly. Then, Participants (3) also argued about the same thing, where their focus was not on understanding the material that had been presented and instead they cheating on their test to get a big score because afraid of being scolded by the teacher.

The next one was Participant (1) that chose the "Classroom Situation" category which said that friends around us can also influence us in the learning process in class, whether it's an impact that brings positive or negative effects. According to Hartup (1983) & Schwartz (2009) when teenagers have friends, those relationships help them develop pro-social skills, identify who they are and what they are worth, which boosts their self-confidence and improves their academic achievement So, the people that teenagers socialize with can have an impact on their academic performance.

CONCLUSION

From the data that has been collected, it can be concluded that the difficulties in learning English for high school students are most likely influenced by the teacher, both in terms of the way the material is delivered or in terms of the teacher's character as an external factor and for the internal factors themselves, the partisipants agreed with the number of votes that were collected that the interests and motivation of the students themselves had a major influence on the learning process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The preparation of this research, as well as guidance and assistance from various parties, have all influenced how obstacles were overcome so that this research article could be completed properly. As a result, I would like to thank my parents for their support during this research and Miss Yanuarti Apsari, M. Pd. as a lecturer.

REFERENCES

- Ahmadi dan Supriyono. 2004. *Psikologi Belajar*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Carstens, K. J., Mallon, J. M., Bataineh, M., & Al-Bataineh, A. (2021). Effects of Technology on Student Learning. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology-TOJET*, 20(1), 105-113.
- Dechant, A. (2011). Influence of Friendship On Motivation And Academic Achievement.

- Firmansyah, M. A. (2017). Analisis hambatan belajar mahasiswa pada mata kuliah statistika. *JPPM (Jurnal Penelitian dan Pembelajaran Matematika)*, 10(2).
- Grøtan, K., Sund, E. R., & Bjerkeset, O. (2019). Mental health, academic self-efficacy and study progress among college students–The SHoT study, Norway. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 45.
- Hamalik, U. (1983). *Metodologi Belajar dan kesulitan-kesulitan Belajar*. Jakarta: Tarsito.
- Malik, R. H., & Rizvi, A. A. (2018). Effect of Classroom Learning Environment on Students' Academic Achievement in Mathematics at Secondary Level. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 40(2), 207-218.
- Rohmah, Z. (2005). English as a global language: Its historical past and its future. *Jurnal Bahasa & Seni*, 33(1), 106-117.
- Samad, I. S. (2016). A Study on English Teachers' Teaching Approaches, Methods, and Techniques at a State Senior High School in Enrekang, Indonesia. *IAIN Tulungagung Research Collections*, 8(2), 129-146.
- Steinmayr, R., Weidinger, A. F., Schwinger, M., & Spinath, B. (2019). The importance of students' motivation for their academic achievement–replicating and extending previous findings. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 1730.
- Sukmawati, S., & Sabillah, B. M. (2021). The Effect of Learning Habits and Self-Efficacy towards Students' English Learning Outcomes. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 4(4), 437-444
- Sullivan, J. R. (2012). Skype: An appropriate method of data collection for qualitative interviews?. *The Hilltop Review*, 6(1), 10.
- Sumyadi, Y., Umasih, U., & Syukur, A. (2020). The Effect of Teacher Teaching Skills and Student Interest on History Learning Outcomes. *Journal of Education Research and Evaluation*, 4(3), 319-324.
- Syaiful, S., Kamid, K., Kurniawan, D. A., & Rivani, P. A. (2021). Madrasah Ibtidaiyah: A Study of interest and Process Skills in Mathematics. *Journal of Education Research and Evaluation*, 5(4).
- Triarisanti, R., & Purnawarman, P. (2019). The Influence of Interest and Motivation on College Students' language and Art Appreciation Learning Outcomes. *International Journal of Education*, 11(2), 130-135.
- Wulandari, C., Surtikanti, M. W., & Agung, A. S. S. N. (2020). A Case Study of Internal and External Factors on the Difficulties in Learning English. *JOEEL: Journal of English Education and Literature*, 1(2), 43-48.