DIFFICULTIES IN COMPREHENDING ENGLISH LESSONS FOR STUDENTS IN POLITEKNIK UNGGUL LP3M

Hermansyah[1], Selfirida A Yani[2]
[1]Akuntansi, Politeknik Unggul LP3M
[2]Manajemen Pemasaran, Politeknik Unggul LP3M

ABSTRACT

At Politeknik LP3M, English is a foreign language to be studied as a general skill subject. In practice, both lecturers and students still face many problems during the learning process. Various responses can be found in the classroom related to these problems, especially the attitude of students during the learning process, student learning outcomes, and participation in carrying out group activities. This study aims to describe the difficulties faced by students in learning English and the factors that cause them. This study uses a qualitative approach with questionnaires, observations, and video recording instruments. Analysis of research data was carried out in three ways, namely data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing and verification. The results showed that the research subjects experienced various difficulties in learning English. This is due to the different levels of mastery of English.

Keywords: learning difficulties, Competence, English Lesson

INTRODUCTION
Background of the Study
Mastering English as one of international languages is something that needs to be developed at this time. English is an important international language that can connect people with the world in various aspects, including aspects of education. It has been shown by government regulations that make English subject is a compulsory subject for students to study from elementary school to higher education level. Even at Politeknik Unggul LP3M, all study programs must provide English courses for 4 to 5 semesters even though the disciplines taken are not related to English. This shows how important it is to master a foreign language, especially English as an introduction to one's academic success as well as to support a career in the world of work.

Communication can be realized if a person masters four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This also applies to the process of learning English which is called listening and reading as receptive skills, while reading and speaking as productive skills. Often people say that only by mastering speaking, that person can be said to be proficient in the language. This is not entirely true. Written language is also important to master. For example, when we open the internet and want to respond to e-mails, of course we need careful reading skills along with the ability to write with the correct language structure so that we can give appropriate answers. In addition, there are three language elements that play an important role in supporting these four skills, namely pronunciation (pronunciation), vocabulary (vocabulary), and grammar (language structure).

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. However, to realize the ideal language class is not an easy thing. In addition

to having sufficient mastery of the material, an English Lecturer should know the level of language mastery of each student. If all conditions are generalized, it will be difficult to achieve the expected learning objectives. Because basically every student has different characteristics, including learning techniques and the portion of absorption of subject matter such as the concept of multiple intelligence (Stanford, 2003).

In the process of learning English, a student must have experienced an obstacle in learning. These obstacles can lead to less than optimal student learning outcomes. This can happen to anyone, including students who take English and non-English study programs. Hasan (2000) states that the difficulty faced by many learners of English as a foreign language is the incomprehension of English pronunciation which is expressed at a normal speed through listening material.

On reading skills, Rahmawati (2011) argues that the problem faced for understanding reading texts lies in the lack of knowledge about reading materials and not knowing how to connect ideas between sentences with one another. Writing skill is a difficult thing because the activity requires a complex and systematic thought process, however it needs to be mastered by English learners. According to Rukmini (2011), in communication, writing skills are also important to master. The benefits will be felt when the written language is published and read by many people. So the quality of writing must always be improved.

For speaking ability, Megawati & Mandarani (2016) in their research found that the difficulties that students often face when speaking English lies in the lack of English vocabulary. From the problems faced, it certainly encourages a teacher or language instructor to pay more attention to the condition of his students followed by readiness in the implementation of learning. Without proper preparation, learning activities will not run effectively. These preparations can be seen from the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), materials, media, and assessments. By understanding the problems faced by students, an educator can do self-reflection to find out how effective the implementation of the learning process in the classroom is and to improve the quality of students.

Problems in learning English are not only found at the primary, secondary, and upper education levels, but will continue to the tertiary level. Several studies have proven this in each English skill. This also applies to students who are not from the English department. Every student has an interest in a different field of science. So not everyone likes English and chooses English majors. This cannot be separated from the problems that will arise when the learning process takes place. To fulfill their obligations as students at a university, they are required to take English courses and even have to pass the TOEFL/ TOEIC test with a fairly high score. For students who do not have a strong background of language knowledge obtained from elementary to high school, they will feel very burdened by this. So that as English language learners who are not deep in knowledge in their field (ESP learners) have the potential to produce various responses in the learning process (Zuomin, 1995).

Based on the concepts presented in the introduction, it can be concluded that there are many difficulties faced by students when learning English, especially as a foreign language because the language is used in certain conditions and people not in daily activities. Therefore, in this article, researchers are interested in digging deeper into the obstacles experienced by students in the four language skills, especially in learning English that is not from an English major or commonly called ESP learners. It is deemed necessary to do this as information material that

can later be used to improve the concept of effective English learning for students who are not from English majors (ESP learners).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Learning

Cronbach in his book Educational Psychology states that "learning is shown by a change in behavior as a result of experience". According to Cronbach the best way to learn is to experience, and in experiencing that students use their five senses (Sumardi Suryabrta, 2008:231). According to Jams O. Whittaker (in Wasty Soemanto, 2006) suggests learning is a the process by which individuals achieve a change in behavior that new as a whole as a result of the individual's own experience in interaction
with the environment.

From a number of views and definitions of learning, it can be concluded some general characteristics of learning activities are as follows: first, learning shows an activity in a person who is conscious or intentional. Second, study is the interaction of the individual with his environment. Third, learning outcomes are marked with changes in behavior. From some of the similarities above, it can be concluded that learning is a conscious effort made by individuals to change good behavior through training and experience concerning the aspects of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor to obtain certain goals. The learning theory compiled by Gagne (in Anurrahman, 2009) is a balanced guide between behaviorism and cognitivism which stems from information processing theory. According to Gagne, a person's thinking depends on:
1. What skills does he have?
2. What skills and hierarchy are needed to learn a task?.

Thus, according to Gagne, in the learning process there are two phenomenon, namely the increase in intellectual skills in line with the increase in age and training acquired by the individual, and learning will be faster if the strategy Cognitive skills can be used to solve problems more efficiently. Gagne concludes that there are five kinds of learning outcomes:
1. Intellectual skills, or procedural knowledge that includes learning concepts, principles and problem solving obtained through the presentation school materials;
2. Cognitive strategies, namely the ability to solve new problems by regulating the internal processes of each individual in paying attention, learning, remembering and thinking;
3. Verbal information, namely the ability to describe something with words by organizing relevant information;
4. Motor skills, namely the ability to carry out and coordinate movements associated with muscles;
5. Attitude, which is an internal ability that affects behavior someone who is based on emotions, beliefs and factors intellectual.

It has been a long time mastering English has become a necessary knowledge studied by Indonesians. From the 60's to now, lessons English is a subject that is no less prestigious than other subjects such as mathematics and science. In the past, Indonesian children only learned English in high school level, now they start at the elementary level, and if necessary the kindergarten level.

Students or individuals must know several languages, at least they can using two languages, the National language and the International language. Language national language is for communication for fellow nations and international language for communication to people from other countries. regional language is important for communicate with people from the same area, but nowadays we rarely use the local language. There are three 3 factors that make sense behind the need learn English for Indonesians.

First, the geographical factor. Indonesia is surrounded by countries that most of the population uses English as their first language or second. These countries are Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand. If one day Indonesian citizens want to travel to the above countries, knowledge of English is absolutely necessary.

The second and most common factor is that English is the language of international. To be able to communicate with people from different backgrounds Due to cultural and state background, English is often the main choice used in communication. Easy-to-see examples exist in the world tourist. If you want to travel to another country, English is the language the most standard that we must master. Another example can be seen in the world of aviation and shipping.

Here, English is the official language used by all aircraft and ships that fly and sail to other countries/countries. There's no way one the pilot or captain must memorize all the languages in the world / in the country to be addressed, then English is used as a neutral language. The third factor is that the information in this world is mostly published in English. For writers, in order to gain a broad market, they publish books in English. Likewise, magazines, newspapers, television broadcasts, and the internet, mostly in English. Even if there is writings or books that use non-English languages, will definitely be direct translated into English. Research results from well-known universities in the world is also published in English, so Indonesians will be able to English speakers will easily be able to broaden their horizons.

Learning Difficulties

Learning difficulties can be interpreted as a condition in the learning process which is characterized by the presence of certain obstacles to achieve learning outcomes. These barriers can be psychological, sociological, or physiological in nature sluggish learning process (Siti Mardiadiyati, 1994:45).

A student can be suspected of having learning difficulties if the student the student concerned shows certain learning failures in achieving learning goals. The failure is if within a certain time limit students cannot achieve the minimum level of mastery in learning as determined by the lecturer.

Broadly speaking, learning difficulties can be classified into two groups:
1. Developmental learning difficulties (learning disabilities) are generally difficult to know for both parents and children educators, because there are no systematic measurements, such as in the academic field. This learning difficulty appears as a difficulty learning caused by not mastering the prerequisite material (prerequisite) skills), namely skills that must be mastered first in order to master the next form of skill.

2. Academic learning disabilities. These failures include mastery of skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. academic learning difficulties can be identified by educators or parents when the child fails to display one or some academic abilities (Mulyono Abdurrahman, 2008:11-12).

The learning difficulties studied in this study are learning difficulties academic only, which is about academic achievement or academic ability, among others mastery of students/students on speaking, listening, and writing in English. English courses whose learning outcomes can be known by lecturers and people parents of students / students.

Basically, every learning difficulty is always based on the components that affect the learning process itself. According to Burton (in Abin Syamsuddin Makmun, 2007) mentions the factors that cause learning difficulties there are two categories, namely:

1. The factors contained in the students, among others;
a. Physical weakness, such as the five senses (eyes, ears, speech and organs) so on) develop less than perfect or sick so that it makes it difficult interactive interaction process;
b. Mental weakness, namely the intelligence factor, the level of intelligence is indeed lacking so that in following the lessons the participants students seem to lack interest, lack of enthusiasm, lack of effort, and habits fundamental in other learning;
c. Emotional weaknesses, including incorrect adjustments to people, situations, task demands and the environment. So that fear, hatred and antipathy arise in learning;
d. Weaknesses caused by wrong habits and learning attitudes, including lack of interest in schoolwork, many activities that are contradictory and not support school work, refuse or are lazy to study, lack courage and failing to try to focus, etc.;
e. Lack of basic skills and knowledge, such as inability to read and count.

2. Factors that come from outside of the students include;
a. Curriculum that is too dense, above the ability of students and not according to the talents, interests and concerns of students in learning
b. Too large a population of students in the classroom;
c. Too many activities outside of school hours or too many engage in extracurricular activities;
d. The relationship between teachers/lecturers with students is not good;
e. The teaching methods of teachers/lecturers are not good, for example, teachers are not good enough preparation and lack of mastery of the subject matter so that the teacher present it is not clear.
f. Weaknesses contained in household conditions (education, social status) socio-economic, family needs, peace and social security psychological) and so on (Abin Syamsuddin Makmun, 2007: 325-328).

Some of these symptoms include;
1. Students show low learning outcomes;
2. The learning outcomes achieved by students are not balanced with the effort have been done. Hard efforts have been made by students who concerned, but the learning outcomes achieved are too low;
3. Slow in doing learning tasks compared to friends in class, the students concerned are always left behind in complete the task;
4. Students show inappropriate attitudes such as indifferent, stupid with the learning process, and don't regret getting grades the unfavorable;

5. Showing deviant behavior, such as playing truant, coming late and don't do homework, disturb classmates, don't want to record lessons, isolate themselves and so on;
6. Showing unnatural emotional symptoms such as gloomy, easy offended, angry and so on (Wakitri, 1990:85-86).

RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the purpose of this study, namely to find out students' difficulties in learning English, this type of research is a qualitative research that produces observable written or spoken words. The research was carried out on even semester 2021-2022 students in May 2022. The research subjects were students of Politeknik Unggul LP3M study program Accounting semesters II who took General English II course. Where previously they had received English I which discussed the basic concepts of General English. The number of research subjects was 45 students.

Data collection is done by distributing questionnaires, recording, and observation methods. Questionnaires were distributed to research subjects to determine student responses about the experience of learning English for two semesters including the difficulties experienced in the learning process. In addition, researchers also collected data through recordings at the end of semester activities where students were asked to describe their idols in the form of video recordings for approximately 7 minutes. The results of the recording were then observed, especially in the aspect of student appearance and language delivery. Observations took place during one semester of learning activities to observe students who were classified as active, less active, and passive.

Students can be categorized as active when in the learning process they show their participation to answer questions, ask questions, and often express opinions during group activities. For those who are less active, it can be seen from the intensity of the interaction that rarely exists between the student and the lecturer. They are only active when asked or appointed by the lecturer to express their opinion. The last category is passive where students almost never contribute orally with lecturers, and have low quiz scores or mid-semester exams (under 50).

Triangulation technique was used to check the validity of the research data. As stated by Sugiyono (2006: 241) that when a researcher uses triangulation, the researcher collects data as well as checks whether the data obtained is credible or not with various data collection techniques and reference sources.

In this study, the data analysis used consisted of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

1. Data Reduction

The researcher summarized the data collection process during the learning activities by looking for important points that became the focus of the research data. In this case, it is to classify answers related to the difficulties faced when learning according to the level of student activity.

2. Data Presentation

Researchers present the results of research data that have been summarized by describing in detail and clearly things related to student barriers in the process of learning English.

3. Drawing Conclusions

The conclusions presented first are provisional. This can change when there is a lack of supporting references to strengthen the results of data collection. When there are valid and consistent supporting references, this researcher can draw credible conclusions.

Data collection is done by distributing questionnaires, recordings, and observations. Questionnaires were distributed to research subjects to gain data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the results obtained through the questionnaire, all students had various opinions about the most difficult skills to master. Not a single skill was missed. However, when compared from one language skill to another, the results show that Speaking is at the highest level. Some of the factors that are the reasons why they choose Speaking are as follows: lack of vocabulary in English, difficulty memorizing, difficult pronunciation because it is very different from Indonesian, fear of making mistakes, fear of being laughed at by friends, and lack of knowledge of Grammar. Some of the factors that cause student difficulties lie in students' affective factors. This is reinforced by the results of obsevation which state that the factors that cause difficulties in learning to speak English are the frequency of practice speaking English and psychological factors (in this case, it can be said to be affective factors).

The second position lies in Listening skills. When listening to videos or shows in English, students feel they cannot keep up with the normal speed of a native English speaker's voice. Then the lack of mastery of vocabulary and understanding of English accents makes them not understand the content being discussed in the conversation even though the speed has been adjusted to Indonesian or the speakers are not native.

Writing is the most complex activity to master. For ESP learners in this context. However, few students make writing a difficult skill to learn. This is because in the learning process, they approach the writing process where there are several steps that must be passed before they publish their English writing results. The writing process consists of outlining (compiling a paragraph outline), drafting (making an initial draft of a paragraph), editing (checking the accuracy of writing), revising (checking the accuracy of the relevance of content), and publishing (publishing the results of writing for friends to read). The importance of process approval in writing activities is highly recommended because to express an idea requires an activity process that can develop ideas and improve the elements in it. In addition, appropriate learning media are needed so that the difficulties encountered can be minimized with these media. One of the media that can be used is comic strips if the idea to be developed is related to narrative text (Megawati & Anugerahwati, 2012).

The lowest difficulty in learning English lies in Reading. Most students think that reading skills is the easiest thing to do. The factor that is used as the basis for answers by students is

because of their interest in reading activities. So even though the language of instruction given is English, they still enjoy the activity. The second reason is that when reading students have text that can be directly used as reference material to answer questions related to understanding the text.

However, the opinion that states reading as a difficult skill cannot be ignored even though the number is very small. From the information obtained, students find it difficult to understand the contents of readings in English due to low mastery of vocabulary so that the messages contained in what they read are very difficult to interpret. This can be used as input for all language teachers to pay attention to the level of difficulty in choosing English reading with student competence.

As a supporting material for research data, the analysis was carried out on the recordings of students' final assignments. Before recording, students are asked to read the reference to the idol that will be described (English sources are recommended). Then, draft a description of the idol in a maximum of two paragraphs and consult with the lecturer. After receiving input from the lecturer, students revise and prepare themselves by watching and listening to You Tube videos before making recordings. In order to facilitate the analysis of recorded data, the researcher classified the student recordings into three categories, namely active, less active, and passive students.

The results of the analysis show that students who actively participate in English class are able to carry out projects confidently and fluently with almost correct pronunciation. This can be seen from their facial expressions that do not show their tension and fluency when telling their idol profiles. They confidently show pictures of their idols while describing the reasons they chose that character as inspiration. Some students even improvise very well in order to provide detailed information to the listeners.

For students who are less active in the learning process, their performance is quite good, especially in pronouncing English vocabulary although it still sounds stammered because they have not memorized or read the text in hand notes. The notes that have been prepared help provide ideas that will be conveyed in the recording. For facial expressions, they look relaxed and not tense when giving a profile picture of each other's idols.

The results of speaking recordings of students who passively participate in class during the one semester English learning process show that they are not confident in describing their idols in English even though they have prepared notes to be read. During the description of the idol, the voice produced is very low and the facial expression shows an embarrassed or nervous expression. In addition, the structure of the language used is not very good. This can be seen when they try to pronounce English vocabulary brokenly and repeatedly because they are not sure what is being said. This is due to limitations in translating Indonesian into English without double-checking or proofreading. Although in the consultation the contents of the description have received input, the results of the improvements made are not quite satisfactory.

From all research results, it can be concluded that the difficulty of learning English in achieving complete language competence is influenced by the level of language mastery of each student. This can be seen from the statement of research subjects who are classified as

active in the opinion that speaking is the easiest skill. This is in contrast to students who are classified as passive who state that speaking is the most difficult thing to master.

CONCLUSION

The process of learning English cannot be separated from the emergence of various difficulties that occur, especially for students. These difficulties can be seen from each language skill or as a whole. In class conditions that have different language competencies, the difficulties faced also have various results. In this study, the research subjects showed difficulties in learning English in four skills in order from the most difficult to the easiest as follows: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing. The factors that cause difficulties in learning English are strongly influenced by the level of mastery of the language of each student. Active students tend to choose writing. However, passive students tend to choose speaking as a difficult thing to practice. The results of the video recording show that active and less active students can carry out the final project well in terms of confidence and grammar. But for passive students, the results show that students lack confidence and cannot describe fluently.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Afisa, P., & Yolanda, S. (2015). The Students' Difficulties In Speaking At The Tenth Grade Of SMA Negeri 1 Sine In 2014/2015 Academic Year (Doctoral dissertation, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta).

Hasan, A. S. (2000). Learners' perceptions of listening comprehension problems. Language Culture and Curriculum, 13(2), 137-153.

Johnson, G. R. (1930). An objective method of determining reading difficulty. The Journal of Educational Research, 21(4), 283-287.

Kharma, N. (1981). Analysis of the errors committed by Arab university students in theuse of the English definite/indefinite articles. IRAL-International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 19(1-4), 333-345. Lituanas, P. M.,

Jacobs, G. M., & Renandya, W. A. (1999). A study of extensive reading with remedial reading students. Language instructional issues in Asian classrooms, 89-104.

Megawati, F., & Anugerahwati, M. (2012). Comic Strips: AStudy on the Teaching of Writing Narrative Texts to Indonesian Efl Students. Teflin, 23(2).

Megawati, F., Mandarani, V. (2016). Speaking Problems in English Communication. Artikeldipresentasikanpada the First ELTiC Conference. Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo, Jawa Tengah. 30 Agustus 2016.

Paakki, H. (2013). Difficulties in Speaking English and Perceptions of Accents: A Comparative Study of Finnish and Japanese Adult Learners of English. Unpublished Master‟s Thesis, University of Eastern Finland.

Rahmawati, I. F. (2011). Improving Eighth Graders' Reading Comprehension through Autonomous Strategy. SKRIPSI Jurusan Sastra InggrisFakultasSastra UM.

Rukmini, A. S. (2011). The Implementation of Teacher Corrective Feedback in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text to The Second Year Students of SMPN 1 Tunjungan in 2010/2011 Academic Year (Doctoral dissertation, Univerversitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta). Sugiyono, M. P. P. P. K. (2006). Kualitatif, dan R dan D. Bandung: Alfabeta.

Sinaga, F. (2010). Peranan Bahasa Inggris Dalam Era Globalisasi. Tersedia: htpp://kursusinggris.wordpress.com, diakses tanggal 20 Juli 2016 Stanford, P. (2003). Multiple intelligence for every classroom. Intervention in school and clinic, 39(2), 80-85. Peranan Bahasa Inggris.

Zuomin, N. (2005). Approaches to the bottlenecks of interdisciplinary education of English majors—Starting from the problems of ESP in the education of English majors [J]. Foreign Language World, 5, 006.