

## Students' Difficulties in Learning English

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### Abstract

*In English learners, especially high school students, generally find it difficult in translation and vocabulary. This study aims to find out what difficulties students face in learning English. To achieve the research objectives, a qualitative research method was used with a case study design. The instrument of this research is observation where we observe students' participation in learning English. Then we also use other instruments such as interviews. The object of this research is students of class VII-4 SMP Negeri 1 Delitua. The number of students in this study were 15 students. Researchers found that many students find learning English difficult. From the results of interviews the highest difficulty faced by many students was in translating sentences, the second was lack of vocabulary, and the third was motivation. The researcher also found other factors that cause students' difficulties in learning English, namely there are students who like English and there are also those who do not like English.*

**Keywords:** *Difficulties; Learning English; Students.*

### Abstrak

Dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris terutama siswa sekolah menengah, pada umumnya merasa kesulitan dalam menerjemah dan kosakata. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kesulitan apa yang dihadapi siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Untuk mencapai tujuan penelitian digunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Instrumen penelitian ini adalah observasi dimana kami mengamati partisipasi siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Kemudian kami juga menggunakan instrumen lain seperti wawancara. Objek penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VII-4 SMP Negeri 1 Delitua. Jumlah siswa dalam penelitian ini adalah 15 siswa. Peneliti menemukan bahwa banyak siswa menganggap belajar bahasa Inggris sulit. Dari hasil wawancara kesulitan tertinggi yang dihadapi banyak siswa adalah dalam menerjemahkan kalimat, yang kedua adalah kurangnya kosa kata, dan yang ketiga adalah kurangnya motivasi. Peneliti juga menemukan faktor lain yang menyebabkan kesulitan siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris, yaitu ada siswa yang menyukai bahasa Inggris dan ada juga yang tidak menyukai bahasa Inggris.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kesulitan, Belajar Bahasa Inggris, Murid*

### 1. Introduction

As a foreign language studied at school, English may be considered a difficult language for Indonesian students to learn. Even though students study English for a long time, they still feel that English is difficult to learn. Speaking is not just speaking with words, especially for students. To speak, confidence

is also important for students to have so they can speak the right language. Maulana, Daud and Heriansyah (2016), the problems that students faced in speaking English is their less of confidence to speak and they are afraid of making errors or inaccuracy while speaking besides other problems like their lack of vocabulary and poor pronunciation.

According to Ur (1996:117), there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking they are as follows: inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation and mother language. In addition, Raba'ah (2005:15) pointed out that there are many factors are related to the learners themselves. the teaching strategies, the curriculum, and the environment. For example, when students lack the vocabulary to speak and don't have friends or people they can discuss with, this can result in difficulties for these students in learning.

Rahayu (2020) states that the students feel difficulties when they speak English, they are fear of mistake, shyness, lack of pronunciation, lack of motivation, lack of vocabulary, nothing to say, and mother tongue use. Several problems can also cause low students' speaking ability, such as student motivation, student personality, and speaking material. In general, the first problem faced by high school students is the lack of pronunciation and vocabulary caused by a lack of practice.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Difficulties in Learning English

In this study learning English means that there are students learning together, and there are a teacher who teaches and guides students in formal classes at school. Where when the learning takes place the teacher explains and the students listen until the teacher gives instructions and directions about the task and the students do the task.

In learning English is not easy. Students may experience difficulties when learning English, for example, such as difficulties in *translating sentences, lack of vocabulary and lack of motivation*. The difficulties faced by students in learning English can be understood from the explanation in the following paragraphs.

#### 1) Translation

Translation cannot be separated from theory because theory is the basis of translation. Catford (1978:20) defined translation as the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. Sumarni (2020) states that translation is an everyday phenomenon and when communication takes place, the process of translation also takes place. In learning English at school, students may think that translating sentences is difficult because some of the words they are looking for are not in the dictionary they use. Especially with students who don't like learning English, it makes these students lazy to translate sentences. For a translator, they don't only understand the word, but they also have to understand the sentence whether the sentence uses present or past sentences. However, in high school students, many of them tend not to know that.

#### 2) Lack of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is very important for language use. According to Naeem Afzal (2019), the country's proficiency in English depends on vocabulary knowledge possessed by second and foreign language learners and even native speakers. even native speakers can make mistakes in vocabulary. According to Nathaya Bonkongsan (2013), argues that vocabulary is a process of learning vocabulary to help them become more independent in learning vocabulary. Where the learning process can greatly influence good learning outcomes.

According to Moghadam, SH, Zainal, Z., & Ghaderpour, M. (2012). Stating that vocabulary learning is dominant in language acquisition, it is very important for the learner's language acquisition as a whole. One of the basic reasons explained is that many foreign words that students encounter while reading can cause difficulties in processing the text. According to Folse, KS (2004). found that there are eight myths about vocabulary, namely: (1) Vocabulary is not as important as grammar or other fields in learning a foreign language. (2) It is not good to use word lists when learning vocabulary. (3) Vocabulary must be presented in semantic order. (4) Using translation is a bad way to learn new vocabulary. (5) Guessing words from context is just as productive for foreign language learners as for first language learners. (6) Vocabulary learners should only use one or two specific vocabulary learning strategies that are effective. (7) Foreign

language learners must use a single language dictionary. (8) Vocabulary is adequately covered in our curriculum and courses.

### 3) *Lack of Motivation*

The students who learn English as foreign language, they must find some difficulties and obstacle and it will be a challenge to the teacher how to increase student's interest in learning English. This is why the teacher needs to motivate the students to help them to increase their English skill, Motivation is the wrench of success in learning process. There are certain definitions of motivation from some experts. As mentioned by Hayikaleng, Nair & Krishnasamy (2016), otivation is regarded as an important component to make students success in their English learning. Motivation can also be defined as one's direction to behavior or what causes a person to want to repeat a behavior and vice versa (Alizadeh, 2016).

From a whole explanation above can be illustrated that motivation is the combination of attempt plus desire which gives the reasons for people's actions, desires, and needs to obtain the objective of learning towards an objective. According to Lai (2011), motivation refers to reasons that underlie behaviour that is characterized by willingness and volition. Motivation involves a constellation of closely related beliefs, perceptions, values, interests, and actions. However, by getting motivation students will be spirited in learning, so they will be motivated to study English well. Teachers should be aware of significance of motivation in learners' language learning and through some changes they can help learners increase their motivation (Alizadeh, 2016).

## 3. Method of The Research

### 3.1 *Design of Research*

The design of this study used observation qualitative method. This method is considered suitable for uncovering the difficulties students face in learning English. Grade VII-4 students of SMP Negeri 1 Delitua in Delitua were selected as participants. Interviews are used as instruments in this study.

The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale, 1996).

### 3.2 *Data Collection*

In this research the writer uses descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research is the research study that investigates the relationship, the activity, the situation or the material (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990:502). For collecting data the writer will analyze and observe the difficulties students face in learning English. Therefore, this study used classified as documentary analysis by record of the interview from students.

In this study, researchers used a type of qualitative research method, namely an intensive, detailed and in-depth study of certain institutions or phenomena. According to David, and friends. (2017: 10) this type of qualitative approach is directed at individual backgrounds holistically (whole).

To obtain data in the field in order to describe and answer the problems being studied using the following data collection methods:

1. **Observation Method**, observation in the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia means careful observation or review. According to Alwasilah as quoted by Djam'an Satori (2011: 104) is a systematic and planned observation that is intended to obtain data that is controlled for its validity and reliability. Meanwhile, according to Cresswell (2000) states, that qualitative observation is an observation in which researchers go directly to the field to observe the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site. With this method researchers can find out firsthand the events or activities at the research location.

2. **In-depth Interview Method**, Beni Ahmad Saebani (2008: 190) states, interview is a meeting of two people to exchange information and ideas through answers, so that meaning can be constructed in certain data. In (Ibid., pg. 191) in conducting interviews, apart from having to bring instruments as a guide for interviews, data collection can also use tools such as tape recorders, pictures, brochures and other materials that can help conduct interviews smoothly.
  
3. **Documentation Method**, Nyoman Kutha Ratna (2010: 235) states, documents are generally used as secondary sources. But in certain studies, in which the document is the only manuscript, so it is considered as the main data source, the documentation occupies the position as the primary source. According to Cresswell (2012: 267-270) states, data collection techniques with documentation are data collection obtained through documents with the hope that when carrying out the documentation method some important matters related to research can provide accurate information. This document can be in the form of public documents (papers, office reports) or private documents (diaries, letters, e-mails).

### 3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Moleong (2002:52) stated that analyzing is called as a process of organizing and arranging the data into pattern, category and a set of basic classification. Therefore, in this research the researcher uses the table classified which used to analyze types of the factor of students difficulties students face in learning English.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Factors of students' difficulties in speaking English

Based on the researcher's the difficulties of class VII-4 students in speaking English can be seen from the following table below:

No.	Participants	Translation	Vocabulary	Motivation
1.	P1	✓	✓	
2.	P2	✓	✓	✓
3.	P3	✓	✓	✓
4.	P4	✓	✓	
5.	P5	✓	✓	
6.	P6	✓	✓	✓
7.	P7	✓	✓	✓
8.	P8	✓	✓	
9.	P9	✓	✓	✓
10.	P10	✓	✓	
11.	P11	✓	✓	
12.	P12	✓	✓	✓
13.	P13	✓	✓	
14.	P14	✓	✓	
15.	P15	✓	✓	✓

The findings on these indicators, all students who were sampled in the first interview the researcher found that students found it difficult when translating English into Indonesian. Students find it difficult because when they want to translate a sentence word for word, there are words that are not in the dictionary, causing them to lack vocabulary. Limited use of mobile phones during learning hours makes students have

to use a dictionary to translate sentences. However, some words to be translated are not in the dictionary, so this makes students less motivated to translate into English or on the contrary

Second, the researcher found that students' difficulties in speaking were due to a lack of vocabulary. When students want to speak, they are afraid to express sentences because there are no words that can be said because of the lack of vocabulary in students.

Third, the researcher found that there was a lack of motivation from the students. Some students feel that learning English is boring because students don't like learning English. Even though they are still learning, if they don't like English themselves, they will still feel that learning English is difficult. However, some of them who like English said that whatever difficulties they face in learning English, they still want to try to learn because there is also support and motivation from their families to keep directing students to learn English. From the statements of the points above, these findings support the findings of Rahayu (2020) states that the students feel difficulties when they speak English, they are fear of mistake, shyness, lack of pronunciation, lack of motivation, lack of vocabulary, nothing to say, and mother tongue use.

In conclusion, the difficulties students face in learning English are students having difficulty translating sentences, lack of vocabulary, and self-motivation. Students who like learning English try to learn English, but students who don't like it will feel that English is a difficult lesson to learn.



## Discussion

Learning English can be challenging, but with the right approach and strategies, you can overcome difficulties and improve your language skills. Starting learning English by mastering the basics of English grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Take your time to understand the fundamental rules and structures of the language. The students, despite having varying levels of English proficiency, had the same belief that authentic learning English can be overcome through authentic media in order to learn English in a more creative way (Nanda, 2020; Perkasa, 2022). While English can be challenging to learn, with dedication, practice, and effective learning strategies, these difficulties can be overcome. Patience, perseverance, and a positive attitude towards learning will go a long way in achieving proficiency in English.

### 5. Conclusions

After conducting research entitled "Students' Difficulties in Learning English" in class VII-4 SMP Negeri 1 Delitua, based on observation and analysis of data collection it can be concluded that there are three difficulties students face in learning English. The first is difficulty in translating, vocabulary, and motivation (support).

The highest difficulty faced by students is translating. The results of the interviews showed that many of the students found it difficult to translate sentences. Because when students translate sentences word for word, the dictionary they use does not cover the word they are looking for, especially for students who do not bring a dictionary when learning English and limited use of mobile phones during learning makes it more difficult for students to translate. Motivation from themselves is also a factor of difficulty in learning English because some students like it and some don't like English.

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