

The Difficulties of the Students of IAI As'adiyah Sengkang in Mastering English

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ABSTRACT

This research objective is to describe the difficulties of the students in mastering English Preliminary observations in IAI As'adiyah Sengkang indicate that the English ability of the students is varied. The researcher limited this research in the second semester students of English Education Program of IAI As'adiyah Sengkang as participants of the research. The researcher focused in the difficulties of the students in mastering English. There are Two Difficulties discussed. They are the difficulties of the students in speaking and the difficulties of students in grammar. The researcher used descriptive qualitative research in this research. The technique of collecting the data in this research is in the form of interviews. The interviews provided questions that on the difficulties of students in mastering English. Interview is the technique in getting evidence deeply to students. The result of the research proves that most of the students in the second semester of English education program of IAI As'adiyah Sengkang liked learning English. They have many reasons why they like learning English. Besides that, they consider that English speaking is difficult to be learnt. They have two main problems. Those are pronunciation and vocabulary. Most of students also have problems in learning grammar. They are difficult to understand the formula of the structure. They also have problems in understanding the tenses.

Key Words: Difficulties; Mastering, English.

INTRODUCTION

English as international language is the need of all people in this world. They need English not only in education but also in all aspects of their lives. They use English to communicate with the people from another country or to write letters, articles, and assignments in schools and universities. It indicates that English is something that needs to be developed actively in oral and written at this time.

Speaking English is one of the most important skills in learning language, especially in developing countries, where English is needed, one of which is to obtain employment. Many people experience problems in work not because there is no ability or opportunity, but only because their English skills are lacking. Speaking can be defined as the process of communicating ideas and ideas through oral language in society. Speaking is the process of producing oral utterances that are carried out orally. (Bailey, 2003:48).

In order to help the younger generation becomes more technologically and scientifically advanced, Indonesia, as a member of the ASEAN Economic Community, has provided support. This support comes from the country's extensive language proficiency. An illustration of this is the requirement of English as a subject in the government's educational policies for students in elementary through high school. Even at the university level, all majors must offer English courses for one or two semesters, even if the chosen discipline has nothing to do with English. This demonstrates the significance of learning foreign languages, especially English, as a foundation for academic success and to support careers in the workplace.

Today there are many educational problems that occur at school. The problem faced is very close relationship with students and learning. Students are given learning at the school level. Most students at school are more emphasized in grammar, but students are rarely given direction on how and what functions of the elements of the Language they are studying.

Even though Indonesian schools and universities provide English lesson to their students, students still struggle with various difficulties in mastering English. Learning difficulties in English are still widely practiced by students, especially in universities.

The Institute of Islamic Religion (IAI) As'adiyah previously named the Islamic College (STAI) As'adiyah Sengkang is one of the institutions of private education that is fairly old in South Sulawesi. It is located in Jl. Veteran. Given the accessibility of public transportation and how simple it is to find, the location is very well chosen. It has six departments; Philosophy of Aqeedah (Ushuluddin), Islamic Religious Education (Tarbiyah), English Education (Tarbiyah), Ahwalus Syahsiyah (Sharia), Sharia Economic Law (Sharia), and Islamic Religious Education (Magister).

Preliminary observations in IAI As'adiyah Sengkang indicate that the English ability of the students is varied. The researcher assumes that the students have different ability because they have different difficulties in learning English. A common problem for English language learners, according to Hasan (2000), is a lack of understanding of pronunciation in English uttered at standard speed through materials of listening. Second language learners will need a lot of time to develop their ideas before they can start writing, according to White and Arndt (1991:14).

English in school is too technical. In fact, sometimes students are very familiar with English terms, but they cannot mention the objects they usually use in English every day, and also they are embarrassed to use English for fear of being laughed at. School teachers who play a role in helping students who experience difficulties in various things, especially problems with learning difficulties, must

always receive serious attention so that the learning difficulties can be resolved immediately. From here the role of the teacher begins to be needed and not only to overcome student learning difficulties but also to help the teacher get to know his students more deeply so that the Teacher is more systematic and quality.

Harmer (2010) states that all people in the world who learn English have different goals. Some students learn English because they just follow the curriculum of their schools or universities and another reason is the need for a specific purpose. In learning English, a student will experience difficulties because English is not just to memorize a lot of words, but how to use English according to their needs and goals. In their study on speaking ability, Megawati and Mandarani (2016) discovered that a lack of English vocabulary is frequently the cause of students' struggles when speaking English. According to Emmaryana (2010), almost all students at all educational levels must learn writing skills, which are the most challenging and complex language skills. Based on the previously mentioned information, the author will conduct research into the difficulties faced by IAI As'adiyah Sengkang students in mastering English..

The study's research subjects were restricted to second-semester students enrolled in the English Education Study Program at IAI As'adiyah Sengkang. One thing was the researcher's primary focus. That is the challenge students face when learning English. Two challenges are covered by the researcher in this section. Speaking and grammatical difficulties are two examples of these problems for students. The aim of this study is to describe the difficulties of the students in mastering English, factors that influence students' difficulties in mastering English, and the strategies of students to overcome speaking and grammar difficulties in relation to how the problem above has been formulated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Studies

Some researchers have done researches that focus on the students' difficulties in mastering English. Their findings are as contribution to improve English teaching, mainly English course. There are some research findings that support this research.

According to Megawati's (2016) research, speaking, listening, reading, and writing are the four skills that are the most challenging to learn in order of difficulty. The degree to which each student has mastered the language has a significant impact on the factors contributing to English learning difficulties. Writing is frequently selected as the hardest subject by motivated students. But speaking is frequently chosen as the hardest skill to practice by passive students.

A research was conducted by Lubis (2017). The qualitative method was applied in this research. Data obtained from the results of questionnaires, observations and interview results. Data collection techniques are carried out through open questionnaires, interviews and observations. Data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis. The results show that the factors that influence student difficulties in completing the Daily English conversation task are related to word selection, discipline, and motivation.

Hasibuan, et. al. (2013) conducted a research on *An Analysis On The Factors Causing English Learning Difficulties*. They found that reluctance of students to actively speak, never consult with teachers and parents are the cause of low self-confidence in students. While the low percentage of learning facilities is caused more by the lack of facilities and infrastructures that support English learning such as books, laboratories, and other media.

At Ahmad Dahlan University in Yogyakarta, 50 students and a teacher served as the subjects of Hermayanti (2010) study. According to her research, there are several reasons why some students have trouble learning: (1) Due to their dislike of learning English, they have no interest in learning (2) Lacking foundational knowledge but eager to learn English; (3) good ability and motivation, but an unhelpful environment; (4) Although he is motivated, he tends to "forget" the fundamental ideas he has acquired; and (5) Although learning chances are few, learning motivation is great. According to the findings, it was recommended that teachers and institutions support and highly motivate their students' English study.

The study "Grammatical Difficulties Encountered by Second Language Learners of English" was done in 2016 by Widianingsih and Gulo. This study sought to discover and examine such grammatical issues in order to contribute to the study of linguistics and aid teachers in spotting grammatical mistakes that English language second-language learners frequently commit. The findings of this study demonstrate that plural markers, articles, verb tenses, and plural markers are the main areas where students make errors. Hopefully, individuals who research and instruct English to foreign language learners will find these data useful.

The Analysis of The Factors Affecting Undergraduate Students' Difficulties in Writing Thesis in The English Department of Mahasaraswati University is another study in this area. Dwihandini, et al. (2013) did the research for this study. The study's conclusions revealed three key elements that influenced undergraduate students' thesis writing. The lack of confidence in choosing a thesis title, having prior knowledge because of the thesis subject, and producing a strong thesis were the first psychological elements. The capacity to link and organize each phrase into a coherent thesis writing, knowledge of appropriate lexical terms and linguistic units, and knowledge of the university's culture department with regard to the structure of the thesis writing were covered by the second socio-cultural component. The third aspect is linguistic, which includes difficulty in minimizing

grammar errors and in identifying and/or choosing the grammatical elements that should be added, substituted, supplied, and rearranged.

Based on previous and related research discussed above, we can assume that there are a lot of causes of students' difficulties in learning English. Some researchers conducted studies related to all aspects or skills in English. Some of them only focused on one skill, such as speaking, writing, or grammar. In this research, I will focus on two skills that students need in the first or second semester. They are the speaking skill and the grammar knowledge.

Speaking

For many English learners, the main concern of them is the mastery of speaking skill. They often evaluate their development in language learning especially in speaking ability. Accordingly, the main objective of teaching English in schools or universities is to improve the students' ability to speak English so that they can compete in the work market and they can continue their study to the higher education.

One of the abilities that students who are studying English must acquire is speaking. Students should first be familiar with the term. Speaking is defined differently by many specialists. The following is how Revell describes communication: "Communication, of ideas, of opinions, of feeling." Therefore, for information, ideas, thoughts, attitudes, or sentiments to be exchanged, there must be at least two persons involved: the transmitter and the receiver. The speaker's words to the listener convey not just what is on her mind but also what the listener needs, such as knowledge or a service. The majority of people probably spend some time each day talking to others.

According to Brown and Yule (1989), "Speaking is expressing the needs-request, facts, service, etc." Speaking is the process of communicating verbally for a variety of goals. Speaking is "the process of constructing and sharing meaning through the use of symbols that are verbal and nonverbal, in a number of contexts," according to Chaney (1998). Speaking therefore serves as a primary means of communication between speakers and listeners.

Speaking is spoken communication, according to Mackey (2007: 3), which requires the employment of the proper rhythmic and intonation patterns as well as the proper sequencing to convey the intended message. Speaking is a functional ability since one uses his speech organ well, according to Cooper (2010:88), but listening requires that another person listen to what has been said in order to successfully react to what has been heard previously.

Humans require communication in order to convey their ideas in order to do anything. Additionally, students and learners must communicate with their

teachers during the whole learning process in order to share their ideas. For non-native speakers, speaking a language is particularly challenging since good oral communication needs appropriate language use in social situations.

Teachers and students must engage in a formal setting in order to communicate. Our regular contact is still primarily interactive. Because interaction is the foundation of language learning and because communication arises primarily from interaction, language teachers should give students chances to engage in meaningful communicative behavior about pertinent topics.

One of the four English talents is speaking. Everybody uses it to communicate in day-to-day life. Oral expression of ideas, feelings, and thoughts was possible. Speaking is literary, according to Brown (2001: 257), since it employs the voice to say things and to convey thoughts aloud. Speaking is a second or foreign language in teaching and learning, according to Bailey and Savage (1994:27), with the aim of enhancing communication effectiveness. Many students of second or foreign languages place a high focus on developing their English speaking abilities.

The most difficult of the four language skills to master is speaking in a second or foreign language. According to Mackey (2007: 3), speaking is oral expression that requires the employment of the proper rhythmic and intonation patterns as well as the proper sequencing to convey the intended message. According to Cooper (2010:88), speaking is a productive ability since it involves correctly employing one's speech organ, whereas listening requires that another person listen to what someone has said in order to successfully react to what has been heard previously.

Speaking is a useful skill as a second or foreign language that is used to directly convey speakers' thoughts, facts, and feelings to others, it may be inferred from the three theories. People must be able to use the right words with the right pronunciation, create sentences with the right syntax, and pick their vocabulary while communicating.

The four English languages relate to each other and practicing them every day will greatly increase the learning process. Many people practice the opposite and not enough for others. Fascinatingly enough, speaking is the skill that most people want. However, that is also the least they practice. The ability to unify words in a meaningful way to reproduce views, opinions, and feelings presents the speaker with many important advantages.

Language is one of the means of communication. We speak with one another to share our thoughts and understand those of others. Where there is speaking, communication occurs. Without language, we are unable to communicate with one another. Speaking skills are therefore essential for all language learners. In the absence of voice, a language only exists as a written script. Language use occurs often inside the confines of our community. Language is used in a wide variety of

circumstances. In order to properly engage with one another, people are required to speak politely and effectively in their workplaces, such as researchers working in a medical laboratory or a language laboratory. Any communication breakdown causes misunderstandings and problems.

The importance of speaking skills is therefore very large for any language learner. Without speaking, language is reduced to simple drafts. The use of language is an activity that occurs within the boundaries of our society. Bygate (1987:4) emphasizes “Knowledge itself is not enough: knowledge has to be used in action”. We communicate in various conditions. People use language at their workplace, researchers who work in medical laboratories or in language laboratories, should speak well and acceptably in order to communicate well with each other. Every gap in communication produces misinterpretation and troubles.

Many students of second or foreign languages place a high focus on developing their English speaking abilities. As a result, students frequently assess their success in learning a language as well as the success of their English course based on how much they believe that their speaking ability has increased. Although there has been considerable methodological discussion on the optimal way to teach oral skills, it is clear that speaking abilities have not been ignored in EFL/ESL programs (as seen by the abundance of talk and other speaking instruction materials on the market). There are many different approaches used by teachers and courses of study, from direct methods that concentrate on particular aspects of oral interaction (such as turn-taking, topic management, questioning strategies) to indirect strategies that foster oral communication through collaboration, task work, and other techniques (Richards, 1990).

Grammar

Grammar is one of the most important things in learning English. A person's ability to compile the correct sentence will be the capital to master all skills in English. Even though many students don't like learning grammar, they still have to learn it. Mastering language is not the same as understanding about language. In fact, learning English at the university level requires knowledge of English.

There are many definitions of Grammar according to experts. According to Fromkin et al. (1990:12), the grammatical structure of a language consists of the sounds and sound patterns, the fundamental units of meaning, such as words, and the rules that govern how to combine these elements to create new sentences. Native speakers absorb and unconsciously learn these norms. According to Garner (1989), descriptive grammar is a methodical technique to learning about linguistic facts, whereas prescriptive grammar is a strategy to preserve linguistic quality. The act of modifying a word's shape and connecting it to another word to produce a sentence is known as grammar.

Grammar is not only used in one skill of English. Students need grammar when they learn writing, reading, speaking and listening. The students' knowledge of grammar helps them to correct the mistakes in writing and to improve the fluency of speaking. Without grammar, students cannot speak successfully in many situations. Hannan (1989) asserts that grammar is a crucial component of the research of language, ideas, and writing. Additionally, he notes that grammar shows the strength and structure of the human intellect and aids in understanding human civilization's diversity.

For "thousands of years" (Giunchi, 1990), the function of grammar in learning a second or foreign language has been the subject of a heated discussion that has accompanied the evolution of the many ideas of language acquisition. Krashen (1982) emphasizes that only a small collection of rules may be learned and used as a monitor, and that the best application of the monitor only takes place when the learner employs conscious rules without obstructing dialogue, hence increasing the accuracy of second language.

English is one of the more challenging languages to learn for students. The difficulties of students in learning English will depend on their prior knowledge of English. If the students have knowledge of a language that has the same basic of English, they will be easier to learn it. Different learners may have various challenges and issues when trying to master English. Different errors in English language, grammar, and pronunciation are possible.

Encourage a teacher or language instructor to focus more on the state of their pupils before assessing their readiness to put what they have learned into practice. Activities designed to promote learning won't function well without proper planning. The Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), content, medium, and evaluation all show preparedness for the preparation. An educator can do self-reflection to assess the effectiveness of the classroom learning process and to raise the caliber of pupils by having a thorough awareness of the issues that students experience.

METHODS

Research design

Descriptive qualitative research was the approach employed in this study. Qualitative research emphasizes phenomena or events that appear to be natural. According to Cohen et al. (2005:57), qualitative research must be conducted in the field rather than in a laboratory or any other setting where quantitative research is often conducted. The goal of qualitative research is to comprehend the universe of meaning represented by people's conduct from the viewpoint of the community as a whole. One approach to obtaining the truth is qualitative research, which is categorized as scientific research founded on hypotheses that emerge from study and is regulated on an empirical basis.

This study is a descriptive qualitative study, to sum up. Given that the data in this study are in the form of words, it is qualitative. This is why the researcher wants to talk about how hard it is for learners to learn English.

Research site and participants

The study was conducted at the Institute of Islamic Religion (IAI) As'adiyah previously named the Islamic College (STAI) As'adiyah Sengkang is one of the institutions of private education that is fairly old in South Sulawesi. It is located in Jl. Veteran. The location is strategies, because the public transportation is very available, so it is very easy to find. It has six departments; Philosophy of Aqeedah (Ushuluddin), Islamic Religious Education (Tarbiyah), English Education (Tarbiyah), Ahwalus Syahsiyah (Sharia), Sharia Economic Law (Sharia), and Islamic Religious Education (Magister).

The participants of the research were the second semester students of the English Education Study Program of Tarbiyah Faculty. There was only one class of the second semester of the English Education Study Program that consisted of 16 students.

Data collection and analysis

The method a researcher uses to gather the data required for a research project is sometimes referred to as a data collection methodology. Gathering information through observation and interview is necessary for data collection. Data collection is crucial to the research process. It's because gathering information is necessary for good study. To offer more reliable statistics, the researcher snaps pictures in the classroom.

Interviews were used as the method of data collection for this study. The interviews asked questions on the challenges kids have learning English. Interviews are a good technique to provide pupils deeper knowledge. A key method for researchers to verify the veracity of the impressions they have formed from observation is through interview.

At the finish of the process of learning and instruction, the students were interviewed for this study. The interview serves as a means of gathering data on the students' struggles with learning English and their coping mechanisms.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The students' of English study program of IAI As'adiyah Sengkang reported three responses related their experience in learning English and their difficulties in Speaking. They are the enjoyment in learning English, the pronunciation problem, and the lacking of vocabulary.

Speaking is a skill that is in high demand by students who study English. English speaking skill provides many benefits for students. They can use speaking skills in discussions, both in the classroom and out of the classroom. Basically, the students' of English Study Program of IAI As'adiyah Sengkang are very happy to learn English. They have many reasons why they enjoy learning English. Student 1 said that "I love learning English because I have planned to take an English Education study program and have become my choice". She already had the desire to deepen his English skills before she continued his studies in the English Study Program. This statement is supported by the student 2 who talked that "I love English, I like English because I like watching movie and listening to the music. This statement indicates that the students' hobby is one of many reasons why they like learning English.

The student 4 has different opinion why she likes learning English. She talked that "Actually I love learning English and I feel challenged because English is very important and it is an international language". This statement is supported by the student 5. She said that "I like learning English because it is an international language. If we are fluent in speaking English and we have mastered the knowledge in English we will be easy to get a job and we can communicate with foreigner. English skill will make us easy to get scholarship because one of the requirements of the scholarship is being able to speak English fluently". This student explained to us that the easiness in getting a job and scholarship is the reason why she likes learning English.

Even though they like learning English, they still think that learning English is difficult. The student 2 reported that "I think learning English is difficult because the writing is different from the pronunciation. For example, the word 'name' is pronounced 'neim', not name. It is so difficult to learn English, but if we study hard to learn English to know the speaking skill, it will be easy". This student considered that the pronunciation is the main problem of the difficulties in learning English. The student 4 supported the statement of the student 2. She explained that "Learning English is very difficult because English is not my language, not our nation language, not my mother tongue. Sometimes there are some words that are not in accordance with Indonesian tongue. It is all about pronunciation".

Another statement comes from student 5. She said that "It depends on the students; to what extent they can overcome the difficulties". It indicates that the difficulties in learning English are not from the language but from the ability of the students to face the problem. The student 1 justified this opinion. She reported that "Learning English is difficult enough because some materials in English are

difficult and some of them are easy. I mean that I can understand them". Those students' opinion explained us that some of the students consider that English is difficult and some of them consider that English is easy. It depends on the students and the materials of the English.

There are some difficulties of students in speaking. The student 3 explained that "I have three difficulties in learning Speaking. Those are lack of vocabulary, pronunciation problem, and word order". The student 5 has the same opinion with this statement. She talked that "The difficulty that I face in speaking is lack of vocabulary because if we have lack of vocabulary, it will influence our fluency in speaking. Next, I have problem with grammar especially tenses".

In this part, the researcher discusses the difficulties that students face in learning grammar. Most of student reported that they have some difficulties when they were learning English. The student 1 explained that "In learning structure, I am difficult to understand the formula of the structure". It indicates that the formula of the structure makes the students confused to understand it, so the students didn't know how to arrange the sentences.

The student 2 supports the statement of the student 1. She talked that "I am difficult to learn pronunciation and grammar because it is hard to understand. I am difficult to understand tenses because tenses are varied and I am still difficult to understand them". It proves that the same problem was faced by the student 2. She was difficult to understand the tenses of the English grammar. She was confused because she didn't know when she should use verb 1, verb 2, and verb 3.

The student 4 also agreed with statement of the student 1 and 2. She said that "In learning English, I am difficult to know the grammar and pronunciation. In Grammar, I am difficult to understand the tenses". This statement justifies the opinion of the student 2. The tenses were the main problem of their difficulties in mastering English grammar.

The different problem was faced by the student 3. She reported that "In learning English, I face some difficulties. First, I have lack of vocabulary. Second, I have lack of basic grammar because I took Science Program in my senior high school and I didn't deepen my understanding in English. So, if I make a sentence, I have a problem". Her difficulties were caused by the lack of vocabulary and the lack of basic grammar. She didn't have basic knowledge of English from senior high school because she didn't take language class. So, she didn't have motivation to learn more about English when she was in senior high school.

The student 5 also has different difficulties in mastering English grammar. She talked that "The difficulty that I face in learning English are the lack of place to practice, the lack of facility in the campus, and the lack of English books in the library. This statement proved that the difficulties of the students' in mastering

English is not only from their self but also from the environment such as a place to practice, the lack of facility and the lack of books that support their English learning.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of students in the second semester of English education program of IAI As'adiyah like learning English. They have many reasons why they like learning English. Some of them like learning English because English is international language. They also enjoy learning English because they like listening to the music and watching movie. Besides that, they consider that English speaking is difficult to be learnt. They have two main problems. Those are pronunciation and vocabulary.

Most of students have difficulties in learning grammar. They are difficult to understand the formula of the structure. They also have problems in understanding the tenses. They are difficult to arrange the sentence because they are confused to order the word in the right order. Besides that, some of students criticize the lack of facility in the campus and the lack of references related to the English subject.

This part deals with suggestions in relation to the difficulties of the students in mastering English. These suggestions are addressed to all elements of the English learning process. The students should motivate their selves to study hard. They need the strategies to overcome their difficulties in mastering English. They must be supported by their environment in learning English. The English lecturers also have responsibility to help students in overcoming the students' problem. They have to apply many strategies in the teaching learning process to stimulate the students in developing their skill.

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