

# AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT SMAN 7 PADANG

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## Abstract

Many people all over the world use English for communication either as a second language or foreign language. It shows that Indonesian students have to learn and study about English. The students still faced problems in learning English. The purpose of this research was to describe students' problems in learning English. The researcher used the descriptive method and the population of this research was the first year students of SMAN 7 Padang. The researcher used cluster random sampling to select the sample. The data of the research were students' problems in learning English. The researcher tried out the instrument to find out the reliability of instrument. The researcher used Variant Formula and Alpha Formula. The reliability of the test was 0.90 and it was categorized as very high level. It is indicated the test was reliable. In general, the result of this research showed that 28 out of 34 students (82.35%) had problems in learning English. Specifically, based on each indicator of students' problem in learning English from the data analysis, 31 out of 34 students (91.18%) had problems in motivation, 28 out of 34 students (82.35%) had problems in attitude, 29 out of 34 students (85.29%) had problems in personality and the last, 27 out of 34 students (79.41%) had problems in perseverance. Based on the research result, it is suggested that the students should increase their motivation and should have more spirit, because the students' motivation was low.

**Key Words: Problems, Motivation, Attitude, Personality, Perseverance**

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## Introduction

Language is an instrument of communication used by people as social creatures to interact each other. There are many languages in this world to communicate each other, but one of the important languages is English. It is studied by Indonesian students beginning

from junior high school to university. It means that English is compulsory subject in Indonesian curriculum. It shows that students have to learn and study about English.

There are many problems faced by students in learning English. Nurhanifah

and Widayati (2012:1) state that English is rarely used outside the classroom. Even in the classroom, not many students take the chance to practice it. In the daily life, students have lack of practice. This condition naturally affects the students' mastery of English. Most of students are not interested in learning English. They think that learning English is hard. They like if their English teacher speaks Indonesian because they have trouble in speaking, listening, reading, and writing English. Their negative attitude toward English also influences their success in learning.

In learning English, there are many factors that influence students to learn. According to Sofa (2008), there are two factors that influence students to learn English.

### **1. Linguistic Factors**

#### **(a) The Differences between English and Indonesian Language**

English and Indonesian have different thing, especially in systems of sounds, vocabulary, structure, and culture. Thus, Indonesians learns English means learning a different system of sounds, vocabulary, structure, and culture. It really needs a long time.

#### **(b) First Language Interference**

There are many interferences in learning English from the native language

when speaking and writing English. This is because it is a natural tendency to think that sounds and sentence structure in English are the same as those characteristics in one's own native language.

On the other hand, the main problem of learner's errors in learning English as foreign or second language is the learner's assumption about the target language operates like the native language. Interference from a student's native language is mostly in the form of pronunciation and sentence structure errors. Pronunciation mistakes are due to the fact that spoken sounds or phonemes are different from language to language.

### **2. Non linguistic Factors**

#### **(a) Teachers**

The teachers are educators who teach students. Dimiyati and Mudjiono (2006: 238) explains the effort for students that teachers for doing : (1) learning organization (2) the presentation of learning materials with a particular learning approach, and (3) to evaluate learning outcomes. In terms of the students, the teacher with the learning effort is a factor of linguistic study.

#### **(b) Students**

One of the goals of education is to encourage students to develop their ability as much as possible, and therefore

education is very beneficial both for students and society (Soemanto, 2006:175). Learning process is complex. The students who decide learning process happen or did not happen. In learning, students face problems internally. If students are not able to cope with the problem, then they can not learn well. The factor influences students in learning process.

However, Sofa (2008) explains that student's bad characteristics in learning English are (a) lack of motivation, (b) negative attitude toward English, (c) being introvert (shy, passive, receptive) and (d) lack in perseverance. These bad problems will affect their language acquisitions

#### (c) Objectives

Learning Objectives are statements that describe what a learner will be able to do as a result of learning. They are sometimes called learning outcomes

#### (d) Methods

Learning methods may be defined as any interventions that are deliberately undertaken to assist the process of learning at individual, team or organizational level.

#### (e) Materials

Besides teacher qualifications and school facilities, another important

determinant of quality of education is the teaching and learning materials. It is essential for quality materials to be made available to the teachers and students in adequate quantities to support the teaching and learning processes.

#### (f) Environment

Environment is the setting or conditions in which a particular activity is carried on. Learning language can be successful if the students have good environment.

#### (g) Evaluations

Evaluations are the first step in getting your student to help in learning and progress in school. The evaluation tells to the teachers what student needs to learn and how they may learn.

#### (h) Time

In learning English, we can not use the time well, then the learning process will be disrupted and not running with planned and will affect the learning outcomes. This is a strategy that should be achieved with the cooperation of teachers and students so that the learning process can be accomplished by the rules that exist.

Actually, the purposes of this research were;

- (1) To know whether the students have motivation problem in learning English at SMA N 7 Padang.
- (2) To know whether the students have attitude problem in learning English at SMA N 7 Padang.
- (3) To know whether the students have personality problem in learning English at SMA N 7 Padang.
- (4) To know whether the students have perseverance problem in learning English at SMA N 7 Padang.

## **Methodology**

In this research, the researcher used descriptive method to investigate the first year students' problem in learning English. It used descriptive. Gay (1987:189) states a descriptive study determines and reports the way things are.

Next, he adds that descriptive research involves collecting data in order to answer the questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. The types of students' problem in learning English were explained descriptively. In other words, this research design is used to describe and collect data in order to

answer the questions concerning the student's problems in learning English.

The population of this research was the first year students of SMAN 7 Padang. It was based on the consideration that they had learned English since junior high school. The number of population members was 354 students and they were distributed in ten classes. Since the number of the population member was quite big, the researcher took sample. Sample is a small population selected for observation and analysis.

To do this, she decided to use cluster random sampling to select it as the sample. Next, Gay (1987:104) explains cluster random sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. The reasons why researcher used this technique because the population was homogenous and the sample was taken on the consideration that all members of selected group had similar characteristics, in term of teaching materials, same qualifications of teachers, and curriculum.

In this research the researcher investigated the students' learning problem in the non linguistic factors and she used a questionnaire. A questionnaire was used to collect data for this study because

questionnaire is not only the best way to collect data from the students, but also appropriate with condition in schools that have a large number population.

The questionnaire consisted of 40 items, concerning the students' problems. The students' problems were categorized into four indicators; they are 1) motivation, 2) attitude 3) personality, and 4) perseverance. The respondents were required to answer the questionnaire in 30 minutes.

In this research, the researcher used Likert scale and each item was provided with four choices: 1) strongly agrees, 2) agrees, 3) disagrees, 4) strongly disagrees. In order to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretations, the instruction and statements of questionnaire items were formulated in Indonesian.

The researcher did the try out first before distributing it. In order to make questionnaire reliable, she used Variant formula and the next Alpha Formula as stated by Arikunto (2009:109-110). Based on Arikunto, this formula is appropriate for analyzing reliability of questionnaire in collecting data. Based on the result of the analysis, the result was very high (0.90). It means that the instrument was reliable for the research.

Technique of gathering data :

1. Identifying the students' response one by one based on each indicator
2. Giving score for each response based on the criteria
3. Counting total score
4. Classifying the final score

Next, to know the result of tried out, the researcher used the degree of coefficient correlation based on Arikunto's idea (2009: 75).

In analyzing the data, the researcher used the procedures as follows:

1. Identifying the students' response one by one based on each indicator
2. Giving score for each response based on the criteria
3. The researcher calculated Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD)
4. After calculating the mean of each indicator, the researcher classified the students who had problem based on the criteria (Arikunto, 2009: 264):
5. Then, the researcher calculated percentage of the students who had problem and no problem in each indicator

## **Finding and Discussion**

After the researcher calculated the data, the researcher interpreted the data.

**a. Student's Problem in Learning English**

The result of analyzing data showed that students had problems in learning English. Generally, 6 students (17.65%) had no problem in learning English, and 28 students (82.35%) had problem in learning English.

**b. Motivation**

Based on data analysis, generally the researcher found that students had motivation problem in learning English. It is proved that 31 out of 34 students (91.18%) had problem and 3 out of 34 students (8.82%) had no motivation problem. The Mean of students' score was 31.7 and the Standard Deviation was 2.5. This was the result of classifying students' score based on the calculation of Mean and Standard Deviation:

- a. Having no problem :  
 $\geq M + 1SD = \geq 34.2 = 3$  students
- b. Having problem :  
 $< M + 1SD = < 34.2 = 31$  students

It was the big problem compared than 4 other indicators. This fact showed the student had low motivation in learning English. There was low motivation or expectation to speak English fluently. They did not want to learn English related to their confidence.

**c. Attitude**

Based on data analysis, the researcher found that students had problem in learning English related to attitude was 28 out of 34 students (82.35%) had problem and 6 out of 34 students (17.65%) had no problem in attitude. The Mean of students' score was 32.5 and the Standard Deviation was 3.8. This was the result of classifying students' score based on the calculation of Mean and Standard Deviation:

- a. Having no problem :  
 $\geq M + 1SD = \geq 36.3 = 6$  students
- b. Having problem :  
 $< M + 1SD = < 36.3 = 28$  students

It showed that many students had a negative attitude toward English. They didn't like English and everything related to English such as watching film and reading English newspaper or magazine

**d. Personality**

The researcher found that students had problem in learning English related to personality was 29 out of 34 students (85.29%) had problem and 5 out of 34 students (14.71%) had no problem in personality. The Mean of students' score was 29.8 and the Standard Deviation was 3.1. This was the result of classifying students' score based on the calculation of Mean and Standard Deviation:

- a. Having no problem :  
 $\geq M + 1SD = \geq 32.9 = 5$   
students
- b. Having problem :  
 $< M + 1SD = < 32.9 = 29$   
students

The data analysis proved that the students had problem with their personality (introvert). They had problem in working together with their pair, and they did not want to ask their teacher or friends if there was something that they did not understand. These conditions caused a bad effect on their study.

**e. Perseverance**

The researcher found that students had problem in learning English related to perseverance was 27 out of 34 students (79.41%) had problem and 7 out of 34 students (20.59%) had no problem in perseverance. The Mean of students' score was 30.7 and the Standard Deviation was 3.1. This was the result of classifying students' score based on the calculation of Mean and Standard Deviation:

- a. Having no problem :  
 $\geq M + 1SD = \geq 33.8 = 7$   
students
- b. Having problem :  
 $< M + 1SD = < 33.8 = 27$   
students

The result of this study demonstrated that the students had problem with perseverance, but the result was low from

the other. They really always had strong perseverance to try although they make mistakes.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher concluded that in general, the first year students of SMAN 7 Padang had problems in learning English. It was indicated by the majority of students (82.35% or 28 students) had problems in learning English. Most of them had dominant problem in their motivation in learning English.

This study explained that the first year students of SMAN 7 Padang had dominant problem with their motivation in learning English. It was proved by the fact that the percentage of students who had problem related motivation was 91.18%. This fact indicated that students' motivation in learning English was low, because without have motivation, the students did not want to learn something, they did not care with the lesson, they gave up immediately and they always disturb in learning process. In other word, the teacher of this school should find the way to increase the students' motivation.

It could also be concluded that the first year students of SMAN 7 Padang had dominant problem for indicator related to students' personality in learning English. It

was proved by the fact that the percentage of students who had problem related personality was 85.29%. It meant that the most of the students were introvert in learning English.

Another problem in this study was their attitude toward English. It was proved by the fact that the percentage of students who had problem related to attitude was 82.35%. This fact indicated that the percentage of students' attitude toward English was negative. They were still lazy to learn English.

The last conclusion could be indicated that the first year students of SMAN 7 Padang had problem for indicator related to students' perseverance in learning English. It was proved by the fact that the percentage of students who had problem related perseverance was 79.14%.

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