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## THE STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH ON EIGHTH GRADE IN SMPN 7 TARAKAN

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to describe the students' difficulties in learning English skills and components on eighth grade in SMPN 7 Tarakan. Method of this research was case study. The samples were taken by using cluster sampling. The researcher took 48 students from 8 classes to conduct this research. The data of this research was collected questionnaire, field notes, and interview with the teachers and the students. The researcher used methodology triangulation to check the validity of the data. The researcher used different method to get the some data. To get the validity of the data in this research, the research gave questionnaire, wrote field notes, and conducted interview. The result of the research showed 1) From questionnaire, the students' difficulties in learning English skill mostly in speaking. The students hard to speak fluently. The students' difficulties in learning English component mostly in pronunciation. The students usually can't pronounce correctly because in English the way pronounce different with writing. 2) From field notes, the students' difficulties mostly lack of vocabulary and they can't pronounce correctly which make the students feel not interest and lazy in learning English. 3) From interview, the result showed that the teachers have much effort to teach English subject. The teachers guided the students when teaching learning process. The teachers always asked the students what the students think difficult and the teacher and the students learned together. The teachers also gave example how to pronounce the difficult word. The result of the interviews to the students showed that almost students have difficulties in learning English. The most students' difficulty in learning English was the students lack of vocabulary so the students don't understand the meaning when

the students listened what teacher said, when the students spoke, when the students read the text, and when the students wrote their task.

Keyword: *Difficulties in Learning English, English Skill, English Component*

## **INTRODUCTION**

English as a formal subject was given to junior high school (SMP) level, which the goal of teaching and learning English for this level were improving the four English skills. They were the mastery of the receptive skills (reading and listening) and the mastery of the productive skills (speaking and writing), within a specified word level and relevant grammatical structures and notions, in the context of the specified themes which are enclosed for junior high school (SMP) students.

In listening skill, Djiwandono (2009) stated that the general and first problem was the way in understanding information which just listen in several minute and then lost. Added with the form of orthography that not always same with it pronouncing. For example the written form was “made” but in pronunciation was /meid/. When listen the sound, it will be difficult if didn’t know the pronunciation and will be understood.

In speaking skill, according to Brown (2002) speaker looked by people as a good speaker in foreign language if the speaker can speak in other language fluently and can be understood. As a native speaker who learned about foreign language will be difficult if the native speaker not always speak in English especially. In Junior high school generally, this common was not conducted. In competence standard of speaking was give expression of meaning in transactional conversation and simple oral short interpersonal for interacting with around environment.

In Reading, according to Harmer (1991) reading was an exercise dominated by the eyes and the brain. It meant that readers not only read the text but also understand the meaning of written text being read. Reading was meant of transferring information between the writer and the reader. In the competence standard of reading at junior high school was understand functional written text and simple short essay in the form of descriptive and recount related to around environment.

The last was writing skill. Writing skills was the most difficult skills to be mastered. First, writing had to be learnt unlike speech, which was acquired in the other tongue as part of child normal development. Secondly, there was “an audience” factor.

Thirdly, because linguistics difficult. Fourth, the problem related how to organize and sequence our ideas acceptably.

In learning English skills, we knew that also learn about English component. There were three English components; Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation. Firstly was Grammar. Grammar was something that can be considered as a rule structure in language. Brown (2000) stated that grammar was the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence.

Secondly was Vocabulary. Vocabulary was the words which made up a language constitute. It meant that vocabulary was completely important part to be expert in learning certain language including English. Thirdly was pronunciation. Pronunciation was a way in language and a word spoken. Users of the language must knew how to say a word that was how to pronounce it.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher wanted to know the students' difficulties in Learning English. Thus, the researcher conducted a research entitle "The Students' Difficulties in Learning English on Eighth Grade in SMPN 7 Tarakan".

Difficulty in learning consisted of two words, they were difficulty and learning. Before explaining about the meaning of difficulties in learning, needed to explain about the definition of difficulty and learning itself. According to Subini (2012) difficulty meant hardship, worry, situation or condition, and something that was complicated. Difficulty was a condition that displaying obstacle characteristic in activity for getting the goal and needed a good effort to solve the difficulties.

Learning referred to the change in a subject's behavior potential to a given situation brought about by the subject's repeated experience in that situation, provided that the behavior change can't be explained on the basis of the subject's native response tendencies, maturation, or temporary stated (such as fatigue, drunkenness, driver, and so on). According Winkel (1987) learning was an activity that went on active interaction with environment that produced a changing in comprehension, skill and attitude.

English skills were generally divided into receptive skills (listening and reading), and productive skills (speaking and writing). Receptive skills were language skills that involved students being able to receive messages in the form of oral or written language. Therefore, listening and reading were classified into receptive skills. Productive skills were the opposite of receptive skills. Productive skills involved us in the production of messages both orally and in writing. This productive skill included speaking and writing.

## **METHODS**

This presented what was design that used in conducting the research. The approach of this research was qualitative research. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research was an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Qualitative research, in contrast focussed on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the human participants in the research. According to Creswell (2014), case studies were a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher developed an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals.

### ***Time and Location of the Research***

Sugiyono (2012) stated that population was the generalization of region that consists of: object/subject that had quality and characteristics those set by the researcher to study and then made it in conclusion. So in this research, the population was the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 7. The total number of them were 256 students from eight classes.

### ***Data Source***

In this research the researcher used cluster sampling. According to Denscombe (2007), the selection of clusters as appropriate sites for research followed the principles of probability sampling. The researcher took 6 students from each class as a sample.

Research instrument referred to different methods through which the researcher collected data from respondents for a research work. According to Sugiyono (2016), the researcher of a research was one of the research instrument. It meant, the researcher was the human instrument who was the key of instrument that decided the focussed of the research, collected the data,

analyzed the data, and concluded the data. In other hand, this research also used three other instruments as the data sources, there were questionnaire, observation sheet (field notes), and interview guide.

### ***The Technique of Data Collection***

The technique of collecting data in this research The researcher made questionnaire. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the sample in SMPN 7 Tarakan. Students as the respondent filled the questionnaire with duration time 40 minutes. The researcher observed the school, to know some data related with the research especially the classroom when the students learned English subject. The researcher did interview to the two English teachers that taught eighth grade students and three eighth grade students to know students' difficulties in learning English.

### ***The Technique of Data Analysis***

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data. According to Miles and Huberman (1992), there were some data analysis procedures; they were Data Reduction, Data Display, Verification and Conclusion. In qualitative research there were some technique that can be used to make the research data valid. In this research, the researcher used triangulation to check the validity of the data. According to Cresswel (2009), triangulation of data, data was collected through multiple sources. Additionally, Ary et.all (2010) said that the use of multiple sources of data, multiple observers, and/or multiple methods in referredred to as triangulation.

## **RESULTS**

The similarities between this research with the previous research, students were not interested in learning English subject, the students didn't want to explore their ability in English. Most of students found their difficulties but the students didn't want to improve their ability. According to Subini (2012) difficulty meant hardship, worry, situation or condition, and something that was complicated. Difficulty was a condition that displaying obstacle characteristic in activity for getting the goal and needed a good effort to solve the difficulties. Teacher methods in teaching the students were not conducive for their ability. Because just explained the material even though the students didn't pay attention. The teacher had to create favourable environment in the classroom and the students should be diligent to attend the class and pay attention to the teacher's explanation.

## *Discussion*

The result of questionnaire was the highest percentage in English skill was in Reading with total percentage 54% on the difficulty in make predictions the meaning of the word that students rarely heard and the highest total of students' choices was in Speaking skill with total 72 students' choices. Mostly the students found their difficulties in Speaking skill. The highest percentage in English component was in Pronunciation with total percentage 52,08% on the difficulty in pronounce the vocabulary correctly because in English language the way pronounce different with the written word and the highest total of students' choices was in Pronunciation with total 61 students' choices.

The result of observation in listening skill based on the researcher notes, more than a half of total students in the class had difficulties in understand what the teacher said in learning process like when teacher gave them instruction or punishment in English they didn't understand because they lack of vocabulary (listening for details).

The result of observation in speaking skill based on the researcher notes, the students had difficulties in speak accurately in word and pronunciation and students had difficulties to make responses to what teacher said. In 8-7 class, the researcher found that just the leader can lead their friends to greet and lead for pray before the class start and the students can't give the response to the teacher because the students didn't understand the teacher said. But, the teacher used English language first before translate it to Indonesian language to make students familiar with English (responding and initiating).

The result of observation in reading skill based on the researcher notes, the researcher found that students had difficulties to make prediction to get meaning from the text when the students didn't know the meaning from every word even though the students knew some words and the teacher already gave the clue (global comprehension).

The result of observation in writing skill based on the researcher notes, the researcher found that students' difficulties in writing was the students can't combine and arrange the word to make a correct sentence and the researcher also found the students had difficulties when the teacher gave them task to write suggestion from the situation on the book (grammar).

The result of observation in pronunciation based on the researcher notes, when learning process the students can't pronounce the vocabulary correctly even though the teacher already gave them example, the students can't pronounce the vocabulary that they never see before so the teacher had to guide them, and most of students had difficulties because in English language the way pronounce different with the written word. The researcher also found students' difficulties in pronunciation were some of students still can't pronounce the vocabulary correctly and asked their friend to give example to them.

The result of observation in vocabulary based on the reseracher notes, the researcher found that students still difficult mention the vocabulary even though the teacher always gave them punishment to mention vocabulary to make students rich vocabulary. In 8-7 class, the students had to mention 5 until 10 vocabularies and the meaning that teacher already gave. But, some students still did mistakes and forgot the vocabulary and the meaning so they had to try again after they can do it correctly.

The result of observation in grammar based on the researcher notes, the students had difficulties to list the rules because the students didn't know the formula so the teacher explained the formula "S+Must/Must Not+V-1+O" and when the students wrote the sentence that related with the situation on the book and the students still made mistakes with the formula. The teacher already gave example and the formula was "S+Should/Should Not+V-1+O", but students had to lead by teacher slowly and patiently until they understand well.

The result of interview, the researcher found that almost students have difficulties in learning English. Their problems mostly lack of vocabulary and they can't pronounce correctly which make the students feel not interest and lazy in learning English. The teachers gave punishment that have benefit for their students, like ask the students to mention vocabulary. But, the students have short-term memory to memorize the vocabulary that the teachers already give.

## **CONCLUSION**

The result of the questionnaires showed that almost students had difficulties in learning English. The students' difficulties in learning English skill mostly in speaking. The students hard

to speak fluently. The students' difficulties in learning English component mostly in pronunciation. The students usually can't pronounce correctly because in English the way pronounce different with writing. So, the students needed teacher guidance in learning English.

The result of the observations showed that almost students had difficulties in learning English. Their problems mostly lack of vocabulary and the students can't pronounce correctly which made the students feel not interest and lazy in learning English. The teachers gave punishment that have benefit for their students, like asked the students to mention vocabulary. But, the students had short-term memory to memorize the vocabulary that the teachers already gave.

The result of the interviews to the teachers showed that the teachers had much effort to teach English subject. The teachers guided the students when teaching learning process. The teachers always asked the students what the students think difficult and the teacher and the students learned together. The teachers also gave example how to pronounce the difficult word. The result of the interviews to the students showed that almost students have difficulties in learning English. The most students' difficulty in learning English was the students lack of vocabulary so the students didn't understand the meaning when the students listened what teacher said, when the students spoke, when the students read the text, and when the students wrote their task.

The researcher would like to give some suggestions about the result of this research:

For the student, English is second language that we are had to learn from now, because in next year or new era English language is very important for us, besides to improve our knowledge, it was important to face globalization also. Study hard is hopes for student because based on the research, the student still have many difficulties in learning English skill and component.

For the teacher, this result is clear got from research on eighth grade in junior high school. Based on the result we know that student still have difficulties in every skill and component. The researcher suggest to English teacher to give a good method in teaching learning process. Evaluate the learning process seriously and give motivation for student to study seriously and study hard.

For further researcher this result of research can be a references if want to research the



student difficulties in learning English.

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