

STUDENTS' DEFIANCES DISCOVERED AT SMP NEGERI 1 PEMATANG BANDAR IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT- Considering that learning English in Indonesia is mandatory and makes learning English a mandatory subject in the education system in Indonesia, schools act as the main means to improve students' English language skills. This research aims to analyze the challenges faced by students at SMP Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar in learning English, as well as finding effective solutions to overcome these obstacles. Through observations, interviews with teachers, and distributing questionnaires to students, this research found several main factors causing difficulties in learning English, such as lack of interest and lack of motivation in learning English, and lack of an English-speaking environment around students and the teacher's unsupportive way of teaching. This research will be accompanied by providing recommendations for solutions, including implementing more interactive learning methods, using technological media in learning, and increasing school support to create an environment that supports English learning.

Keywords: *Students' defiances, Learning English, SMP N 1 Pematang Bandar*

INTRODUCTION

Learning English may seem difficult for many students, especially for those who are just starting out, especially for high school students and have not had many opportunities to practice. Learning English is not easy, especially for those who do not have the provision at elementary school level as like SMP Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar. SMP Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar is one of the state schools in Simalungun Regency, specifically in Pematang Bandar District, specifically in Talun Madear Village.

Several predecessors have conducted research relevant to this theme such as *Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Learning English Speaking Skills in Junior High Schools*, where this research analyzes students' difficulties in speaking English, including internal factors (lack of self-confidence and vocabulary) and external factors (lack of practice and teaching methods). The research methods used are interviews and observation.

There is also research entitled *Factors that Influence Motivation to Learn English in Junior High School Students*. This research focuses on students' motivation in learning English, both from intrinsic factors (personal interests) and extrinsic factors (pressure from parents or teachers) by collecting results through questionnaires and interviews.

For other qualitative research, there is research entitled *Barriers to Learning English in Rural Junior High Schools* where the main aim of this research is to identify the special challenges faced by students in rural areas in learning English, such as access to learning materials and teacher competence. and there are many other studies that are very relevant to the research theme that the author raises in this article which are not possible to list one by one.

THEORETHICAL REVIEW

Self Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan 1985)

Self-Determination Theory is a contemporary motivation theory proposed by Edward L. Deci and Richard Ryan. They define this theory as “An individual's ability to make choices and manage his or her own life, driven by the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness.” SDT focuses on how a person's basic psychological needs influence his or her motivation and behavior.

According to Reeve, Deci, and Ryan (2004) define self-determination as a quality of human functioning that involves the experience of a sense of will, choice, and freedom in initiating and directing one's own actions because motivation derived from self-determination tends to be more sustainable than motivation imposed from outside. This is in line with the opinion of Baumeister and Leary (1995) who state that self-determination is closely related to basic human psychological needs, including social connectedness.

From these definitions, it can be concluded that self-determination is an important concept that emphasizes students to determine the direction of their lives and actions, which is driven by the fulfillment of basic psychological needs. This concept is very relevant to understand how students can be motivated to improve their English proficiency both internally and externally.

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory was first introduced by Adam Smith in his work *The Wealth of Nations* and then further developed by economists such as Gary S. Becker and Theodore W. Schultz. According to Adam Smith (*Wealth of Nation*, 1776) stated that human capital includes the skills, talents and knowledge possessed by individuals. He called human capital an important part of a nation's wealth. workers' skills and abilities are valuable assets because they can increase work productivity. Investment in education and training is considered a way to increase the value of human capital.

According to Gary S. Becker (*Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special Reference to Education*, 1964) defines human capital as a result of investments in education, training, health, and experience that increase individual productivity. Education is not much different from physical capital, such as machines or buildings, which provide future benefits in the form of higher income. He emphasized that human capital contributes directly to the economic growth of individuals and society.

Theodore W. Schultz, in the article states that human capital is an individual's ability obtained through education, training and good health, which is then used to increase economic productivity. Schultz argues that education is one of the most important forms of investment in human capital. He also linked this concept to economic development, especially in developing countries, stating that improving the quality of human resources is the key to overcoming poverty and underdevelopment.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that Human Capital Theory is a concept that explains that investment in a person's education and skills will increase individual productivity and welfare and provide long-term economic and social benefits for society. This can be explained if it gets higher . A person's education or the more training they have, the more abilities they have and the skills possessed are getting higher.

1. The Relevance of Human Capital Theory in English Language Learning

Learning English at the junior high school level is not only part of the educational curriculum, but is also a long-term investment for students in facing future challenges. Learning English from high school is an important investment because it gives students a strong foundation to face future academic, professional, and social challenges. By mastering English,

students can prepare themselves to compete in an increasingly connected global world. In addition, with learning starting early, students have more time and opportunities to master the language effectively.

Children seem easier to acquire a new language than adults. children form neural connections quickly, making learning a new language easier. As the brain develops, it becomes more specialized and strengthens commonly used neural pathways. This means that if you learn a second language as a child, your brain can change and adapt, which helps you become a native speaker of the second language. However, the brain's ability to change and form synaptic connections decreases with age. This is what causes children to learn a second language better than adults.

Those with more flexible brains, such as middle school children, will accept new languages more easily than adults. According to psycholinguistics, a person's ability to learn grammar and language structure is strongest until the age of 17.4 years. This is also because children learn new languages more easily than adults, because they are not yet too attached to the patterns of their mother tongue.

Learning a foreign language such as English really helps children develop into good problem solvers. They will be trained to think critically. Another advantage is that they will be skilled at composing sentences, arranging words, and conveying ideas well. Children who are accustomed to learning English from an early age tend to be more confident in communicating with other people, especially with native speakers. Good communication skills will help students interact with friends from diverse cultures, thereby increasing tolerance and empathy.

Teaching English at junior high school level can also be a foundation for them to continue their studies to a higher level. Considering the progress of the current digital era, everything is now connected to technology which cannot be separated from English. Most internet and technology content is in English, those who have been taught English are better prepared to take advantage of modern technology. In this way, students can more easily understand digital literacy concepts presented in English. It is easier for students to understand subject matter that uses English more easily, especially in the fields of science, technology and arts that they will face at the high school level. Middle school students who are equipped with knowledge of English will be ready to receive a global-based curriculum and be ready to face the era of globalization.

In an increasingly sophisticated world, the ability to master a foreign language has become an important skill. The government urges all schools to maximize their students' English language skills. Various institutional backgrounds from both urban and rural areas encourage students to compete to learn new languages in order to expand job opportunities and knowledge, develop international relations, and understand other cultures, especially in preparation for continuing to high school. However, many students are discouraged, unmotivated, drop out of school midway, or are even reluctant to follow the school curriculum. Those who are trapped in a problem that they cannot solve well do not even know exactly what obstacles they are facing. On the other hand, there are also various inconsistencies between teachers and students in the teaching and learning process. This research identifies the challenges teachers face in teaching English in rural areas. The focus is on the lack of facilities, less effective teaching methods, and students' lack of motivation to learn English.

Similarities and Differences Between Previous Studies and this Research

No	Previous Study	Similarities	Differences
1	Rauldatul Husni, Erva Nuri Saputri (2023). <i>Difficulties of Middle School Students in Learning English.</i>	Both studies inspect Difficulty English learning and using qualitative research as them research methods.	This research aims to determine the level of difficulty speaking English is only limited to Pematang Bandar 1 Middle School students.
2	Hamad (2013). <i>Factors Negatively Affecting EFL Students' Speaking Skills.</i>	This research both discusses the challenges faced by students in learning English. It's best to highlight internal factors, such as anxiety and lack of motivation.	Hamad's research focuses specifically on speaking skills, whereas this study covers challenges in the entire English language learning process, including speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills.
3	Tuan, N.H., & Mai, T.N.(2015). <i>Factors</i>	This second study equally highlights	Tuan and Mai's research focused on high school

	<i>that Influence Students' Speaking Performance at Le Thanh Hien High School.</i>	challenges in English language learning related to student skills and environmental support.	students and speaking skills, whereas this research was conducted at the middle school level and covered a wider range of challenges.
4	Xu, J. (2015). <i>Problems and Strategies of Teaching English in Rural Areas of China.</i>	This research has similarities in its context, highlighting the challenges of learning English in rural areas, as was also raised in research at SMP Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar.	Xu's research focuses more on teachers' perspectives and teaching strategies, while this research focuses more on the challenges students face in the learning process.

FINDING & DISCUSSION

Defiances in Learning English

English is considered one of the most difficult subjects to master. Based on the data presented in the table below, we can see in table 4.1, precisely in number 1, that there are around 75% of students of SMP Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar who have difficulty in learning English. The situations faced by each student are different. The following table below contains the views and responses of students of SMP Negeri 1 Bandar.

No/ Answer		Yes	No		
1	Are you having difficulty learning English?	75 %	25 %		
		Yes	No		
2	Are you studying English because it is a subject at school?	75.77%	24.23%		
		Vocabulary	Grammar	Pronunciation	Writing
3	Which part of the English language	18.23%	25.78%	34.64%	21.35%

	is the most difficult for you?					
		Very helpful	Helpful	Neutral	Doesn't help	Very unhelpful
4	Does the learning media used by the teacher help you learn?	46.92%	35.38%	14.23%	2.69%	0.77%
		Very excited to come	Come	Feeling normal	Come if you have time	Not come
5	If there were free English extracurricular, I would.....	18.46%	24.62%	7.69%	46.54%	2.69%

Table 4. 1 shows the percentage of multiple choice answers

In addition to the above data, there is also data collected through a Likert scale questionnaire, which is used as a measuring tool for students' attitudes and perceptions towards learning English.

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Not agree	Strongly not agree
1	I find difficult to understand English vocabulary.	9%	9.23%	35.77%	26.54%	19.23%
2	Learning English is very fun	6%	6.54%	28.85%	34.23%	24.23%
3	The teacher provides explanations that are easy to understand.	5%	4.62%	29.62%	29.23%	31.92%
4	I need more practice speaking English.	2%	5.38%	10.77%	29.23%	52.69%
5	Learning facilities at school (books, internet) are quite adequate.	5%	12.69%	37.31%	19.23%	25.77%
6	I find learning English interesting and fun.	7%	6.15%	25.38%	28.08%	33.08%
7	I study English to get good grades in reports.	3%	4.62%	14.62%	28.46%	49.62%
8	I study English because I think learning English is important.	3%	1.92%	18.46%	22.69%	53.46%
9	I feel grateful because there are no English subjects in elementary school.	44%	16.54%	16.15%	11.54%	11.92%
10	I'm always confused about how to start learning English independently.	10%	6.54%	27.69%	29.23%	26.92%

Table 4. 2 shows the percentage of Likert scale answers

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted through interviews and questionnaires and continued with field observations, it can be concluded that there are several obstacles faced by students in learning English. This conclusion is based on the collected data that has been presented in the two tables above.

1. Low Students Motivation

Table 1 shows that 75.77% of students learn English only because English is one of the subjects at school. Table 2 shows that around 60.54% of students feel grateful because there are no English subjects at elementary school level. Students really don't realize how important it is to learn English. This is due to minimal exposure to this language in everyday life. Students become less motivated to learn English because they do not see the direct benefits in their lives. Their environment, which is still far from urban areas, is very supportive, making them unmotivated in learning English. Students' low interest in learning is due to their lack of awareness of the importance of the role of language in the current era of globalization.

2. Incompetent Teachers

The second table shows that around 61% of students think that the teacher does not explain the learning material clearly. Apart from the low motivation of students to learn English, the quality of teachers also has a very important influence in improving students' language proficiency. Teachers who have adequate qualifications and competencies are one of the main factors in the learning process. There are several teachers at this school who have inadequate quality and competence. Teachers provide English language instruction and tend to use traditional, less interactive methods such as translating text from textbooks.

3. Low knowledge of English Benefits

One of the main challenges in learning English at this school is students' low understanding of the benefits of mastering this language. Many students think English is not very important because it has no direct benefits to everyday life. Moreover, the use of English in this place is very minimal. Students have no interest in learning English because they are less aware of the academic and professional opportunities that can open up with English language skills. Table two shows that around 76% of students think that English is not important. Because of this thought, table two shows that around 82% of students feel uninterested in practicing English.

4. Difficulty in learning

Many students think that English is a very difficult subject to learn. This is because of the gap between the mother tongue and the language. This makes students have difficulty learning and are not confident in using English in daily communication. Table two shows that around 61% of students are not interested in learning English and feel learning English is a pressure. The first table shows that around 75% of students find it difficult to learn English.

CONCLUSION

The level of English language proficiency at SMP Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar is still very far below average. This is due to various challenges, both from within the student and also due to conditions from outside. Low motivation to learn is supported by a lack of knowledge about how important it is to learn English. The lack of awareness of the benefits of English and the difficulties in learning it further aid the situation. Apart from that, teaching methods that only focus on books make students less interested in learning. The teaching method given by the teacher makes students depressed. An unsupportive environment is also a factor that causes students' low English language skills and ultimately ignores how important English is in the current era of globalization. Therefore, to improve the quality of English language learning in this school, a big role is needed from the school institution to overcome these problems. In improving English language learning at SMP N 1 Pematang Bandar special attention needs to be paid to.

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