



NON-ENGLISH STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROBLEMS OVER LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract.

Most of the lecturers has focused on how to make English class more interest without seeing whether there is a problem within. However, this study aims to investigate the non-English students' perceptions of their problems over learning English in the one of university in Garut, Indonesia. This study adopted the quantitative method with survey design for this research with 75 respondents to find out the research problem. Likert Scale Interpretation was conducted to analyze the data. The result showed that there is a problem over learning English in four skill language: listening's skill, speaking's skill, reading's skill, and also writing skill. In addition to that, the score of each skill was different. Furthermore, speaking's skill was the skill with the biggest score and need more attention in learning English process.

Keywords: Problem Learning English, ELT, Learning English in University level

INTRODUCTION

English can connect people with the world in various aspects including aspects of education and communication. The ability to communicate will be better if you master the four language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking skills (Muliana, 2021). There are several advantages when someone masters English. This was conveyed by Rao (2019), that English is a language that is widely used in the fields of scientific research, education, business, internet, travel and tourism, media and newspapers, software, medicine, engineering, information and technology, entertainment, banking, and so on. Therefore, it is not only for English education but English can be learned by majors in other fields (Allen and Widdowson, 1974). What's more, English is made by the University as a general subject that must be taught (Miranti., et

al, 2015). However, to achieve optimal English proficiency, professional language teachers are needed to produce quality students (Megawati F. , 2016).

In the process of learning English, a student certainly has experienced a problem in learning. These problems can lead to less than the maximum student learning outcomes. It can happen to anyone, including students who take English and non-English study programs. Next, Hasan (2000) found that the problem faced by many English learners of a foreign language is a lack of understanding of English pronunciation which is expressed at normal speed through listening material. Moreover, Mandarani (2016) stated that the problem that students often face when speaking English lie in the lack of English vocabulary. Also, other problems that happened in the students are not qualified enough to write their English journal (Zahra, 2016). This statement is supported by Ngersawat & Kirkpatrick (2014) in their findings that the students cannot choose the vocabulary to write their journal or academic paper, do not have English vocabulary for write an essay, and also, they cannot paraphrase English passages. From the problems faced, it certainly encourages a teacher to pay more attention to the condition of the students followed by readiness in the implementation of learning. Through understanding the problems faced by students, an educator can reflect on himself to find out how effectively the learning process is implemented in the classroom and to improve the quality of the students (Lituanas, Jacobs, & Renandya, 1999).

Furthermore, there are previous studies that strengthen the non-English students' perceptions of their problems over learning English. First, the study has been explaining the language problems and learning their strategies over learning English (Ngersawat & Kirkpatrick, 2014). Second, the study clarifying about the problems, needs and concerns over learning English (Akbari, 2016). Third, the main problems over learning English in university level is a difficulty in writing a scientific paper (Megawati F. , 2016). Lastly, another research is more on the analyzing learning problems over learning English in university level (Sabrina Sormin, 2018). Thus, those researchers are providing information about the topic.

According to the statements above, the researcher believes that so many problems that students have which means it should investigate to increase their optimal English language skills. Furthermore, the researcher interested in digging deeper into the problem's students experience in the four language skills, especially for non-English students. This research is deemed necessary as information material which can be used to improve the concept of effective English learning for non-English students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English Language Teaching in Foreign Language

Teaching English all around the world has its own roles, it is evident from the standing of English itself in a nation. The status of English varies because it is the mother tongue of some nations, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, (Crystal, 2003). According to Moeller & Catalano (2015), a language is considered to be foreign if it is mostly learnt in a classroom and not used in the community where it is being taught. Moeller & Catalano (2015) also stated that teaching English in a foreign language is where English is usually taught in the classroom but it is not a common language which means can be easily found and does not play an essential role in a social life. As a foreign language, English is occasionally used to fulfill specific requirements, such as passing a test or studying abroad, as well as to meet the demands of the global community.

English Language Teaching in Indonesian Schools

The development of teaching English was evident after Mr. Wachendorf, the first person to hold the position of Head of Inspectorate for the English Language Teaching Center at the Ministry of Education, issued Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 096/1967 on December 12, 1967. The decision stated that English was the first foreign language to be taught in high schools in Indonesia. The purpose of teaching English, according to Wachendorf, is to equip students with "working knowledge of English" (Alfarisy, Kebijakan Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia dalam Perspektif Pembentukan Warga Dunia dengan Kompetensi Antarbudaya, 2021). The teaching of English is based on the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture, No. 096/1967, which is still valid till now. The ultimate goal of teaching English in the curriculum 1946, 1953, 1962, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994 for Junior High School, and 1950, 1962, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994 for Senior High School, is in principle the same, namely to equip students with English proficiency with mastery of skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. However, in the 1984 and 1994 curriculum it was stated that the priority had changed to: reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

The Indonesian curriculum also records several changes in English education policies which are reflected in the number of hours of English education at each level of education from Elementary School, Junior High School and Senior High School. Changes in the implementation of the education curriculum from 1947 to the 2013 curriculum brought its own views on learning English. Government policies regarding English language education at the primary, secondary and senior levels based on the curriculum are shown in the following table.

No	Curriculum	Number of Hours/Week			
		Elementary School	Junior High School	Senior High School	
1	Curriculum of 1947	-	4 hours	2-3 hours	
2	Curriculum of 1958	-	4 hours	3-4 hours	
3	Curriculum of 1964	-	4 hours	3-4 hours	
4	Curriculum of 1968	-	3 hours	3-4 hours	
5	Curriculum of 1975	-	4 hours	3-7 hours	
6	Curriculum of 1984	-	4 hours	3-7 hours	
7	Curriculum of 1994	-	4 hours	4-6 hours	
8	KBK 2004 (Competence Based Curriculum 2004)		2 hours	4 hours	4-6 hours
9	KTSP 2006 (School-Based Curriculum 2006)		2 hours	4 hours	4-5 hours
10	Curriculum of 2013	-	4 hours	2 hours	
11	Emancipated Curriculum		2 hours	6 hours	2 hours

Based on the table above that adopted by Alfarisy (2021) it can be concluded that basically the English language education policy at the education unit level is different for each curriculum. At the elementary school level, it is understood that English education was officially introduced based on the curriculum in 2004 and 2006 with only 2 hours. English subjects are not written explicitly in the subjects taught but are included in Muatan Lokal (mulok) (Alfarisy, Kebijakan Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia dalam Perspektif Pembentukan Warga Dunia dengan Kompetensi Antarbudaya, 2021). It is different with the previous curriculum; the 2013 curriculum eliminates learning English at the elementary school

level. Undoubtedly, even English teachers at the elementary level become victims of this policy, they do not have teaching hours while students do not have a basic for learning English. At the junior high school level, English was introduced when the first curriculum was made by the Indonesian people, namely in 1947 until the 2013 curriculum. The number of hours allocated for learning English was 3-4 hours. On the other hand, the number of hours allocated for English education at the senior high school level has decreased from the previous curriculum. Starting from the time allocation of 2-3 hours in the 1947 curriculum, increasing to 3-7 hours depending on the student's major in the 1975 curriculum. However, there was a drastic reduction in the 2013 curriculum, which was only 2 hours. This reflects that the government cares more about Indonesian language education in the curriculum before the 2013 curriculum.

English Language Teaching in Indonesian Colleagues

Regarding English language teaching in Indonesian colleagues, Ahmad (1997) stated that this course has not received serious attention from all universities in Indonesia. The type of learning English in universities can be divided into 2, as a general subject for non-English students and learning English as a field of study (Dwi Hatmanto, 2018). The two types of learning English have different goals. As a general subject, English is one of the means to develop the field of study that students are studying. Meanwhile, as a field of study, English is the subject of study that is studied by students so that a deep understanding of mastery of the English language itself is required. In the university curriculum, English courses are usually called "English courses" which were classified as complementary courses from the beginning of independence until the early 1970s, then became "Mata Kuliah Umum" (MKU) until the early 1980s, "Mata Kuliah Dasar Umum" (MKDU) until the 1990s, and now every university is free to determine whether English will be included in MKU or "Mata Kuliah Dasar Keahlian" (MKDK).

Iskandarwassid (2008) explained that the number of students in general English courses in one class usually consisted of 100 students, so that it was categorized as a large class. The amount of time allotted for MKU is generally two credits. Some colleges allocate three to four credits. Thus, for eight semesters (four years) or more, students only study English for two hours a week for one semester, or a maximum of two semesters (Afrizai, 2016). Learning English as a general English course in universities aims to assist students in dealing with English learning resources. Therefore, more emphasis is placed on mastering reading skills than other English skills. (P.W.J & Nababan, 1984).

Previous Study

The researcher has found relevant studies which are related to this research. The first study is conducted with a titled "An Investigation of ACT Students' English Language Problems and their Learning Strategies in Grade 10 Bilingual Program" by Sarintip Ngersawat & Robert Kirkpatrick which involved administering questionnaires of rating scales. The research was carried out in university levels. The results of the study indicate that there is a problem over learning English in the pronunciation skills when they are communicating with foreign or English native speaker (Ngersawat & Kirkpatrick, An Investigation of ACT Students' English Language Problems and their Learning Strategies in Grade 10 Bilingual Program, 2014). The second study was conducted by Zahra Akbari in Iranian using a questionnaire instrument entitled "The Study of EFL Students' Perceptions of Their Problems, Needs and Concerns over Learning English: The Case of MA Paramedical Students". The study revealed that the students' have a problem in memorizing a vocabulary and a set of grammatical rules. It makes

them have a difficulty in writing a paper (Akbari, *The Study of EFL Students' Perceptions of Their Problems, Needs and Concern over Learning English: The Case of MA Paramedical Students*, 2016). It is in line with the third study that was conducted by Fika Megawati using a survey study with the titled “*Kesulitan Mahasiswa dalam Mencapai Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Secara Efektif*”. The research was carried out at the university level in Indonesia. This research found that they have a problem in writing scientific papers and lack of confidence in speaking English (Megawati, 2016). In addition, another study was conducted by Ayunda Sabrina Sormin on analysis of difficulties of learning English at universities level with a titled “*Analisis Kesulitan Belajar Bahasa Inggris Mahasiswa*” shows that they are lack of motivation and low knowledge of basic English, so that the students feeling unmotivated in learning English (Sabrina Sormin, 2018).

From the research above, we can conclude that there is a problem over learning English in previous studies, such as in speaking skills, the student having a problem in spelling and pronunciation, and also, they feel lack of confidence in speaking English. Moreover, the students having a problem in writing skills, such as they feel difficult in memorizing the vocabulary in writing process and they have a grammar proficiency issue. Lastly, the researcher found the problems in behavioral aspects, such as the students lack of motivation and low knowledge of basic English.

In addition to that, the researcher found some differences and similarities with the previous studies. The differences between this study and previous studies are the settings, time, the data analysis and the sample of the study. Meanwhile, the similarities between these studies and previous studies are the research objective, the levels of the participants, and the research methodology that used in this research.

METHODOLOGY

This research design carried out the survey design with quantitative approach that contained analysis descriptive statistical with a survey study. This study was conducted at one of the Universities in Garut. In this research, participants were chosen by using the purposive sampling with the specific criteria. The criteria are the students who are at one of the educational universities in Garut, the students who have at least 10 years of experience learning English since they have been studied from elementary school until colleges, and the students who have attended English classes during lectures. The participants in this study were the students of the non-English students. These students have different levels of English proficiency. Then, the researcher chose 75 students as sample of this study for questionnaire. The questions that used in the research is adopted from a journal by Zahra Akbari (2016) with the title “*The Study of EFL Students' Perceptions of Their Problems, Needs and Concerns over Learning English: The Case of MA Paramedical Students*”. Furthermore, considering the native language of the participants and the researcher is Indonesian, the researcher used Bahasa as the language in both of the questionnaire and interview to make it easier and more communicative. Questionnaire consisted of 28 questions with some alternative answers: *Strongly Agree (SA)*, *Agree (A)*, *Neutral (N)*, *Disagree (D)*, and *Strongly Disagree (SD)*. The researcher divided them into 4 categories aspects, they are; Listening skills problems, speaking skills problems, reading skills problems, and writing skills problems. The data obtained from the survey were analyzed using a Likert scale interpretation. To analyzed the data, the researcher analyzed the data adopted by Sundayana (2016). First, the researcher identified response rate and response bias, such as developing a table for the percent of responses to the survey or developing a table for the wave analysis response bias. Second,

the researcher descriptively analyzed the data to identify general trends. Third, the researcher wrote the report presenting the descriptive results used advanced statistics.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Listening's Problems Over Learning English

Table 1 Listening's Problems Likert Scale

450	810	1170	(1354)	1530
1890	2250			
Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high

Based on the table above, it showed that the listening problems over learning English is on the moderate level (1354). Most of them are having problems in understanding native speakers based on the questionnaires. It showed that many students lack of listening ability and struggles to understand in English conversation. Thus, the students need to be assisted to improve their listening skills based on the results.

Speaking's Problems Over Learning English

Table 2 Speaking's Problems Likert Scale

525	945	1365	1785	(1930)
2205	2625			
Very low	low	Moderate	High	Very high

Based on the table above, it showed that the speaking problems over learning English is on high level (1930). Most of them are having problems in expressing themselves in English and they are not comfortable to talk in English with native speakers. They are not able to express themselves in English since they are not usually using English in their daily activities. Moreover, they are also rare to meet native speaker which affect uncomfortable situation for them. To conclude, speaking problems has high level in terms of problem and need to be critically solved.

Reading's Problems Over Learning English

Table 3 Reading's Problems Likert Scale

450	810	1170	(1304)	1530	1890
2250					
Very low	low	Moderate	High	Very high	

Based on the table above, it presented that the reading problems over learning English is on moderate level (1304). Most of them are having a problem in recognizing new vocabulary in their learning process. It means most of the students have lack vocabulary and they are also lack of reading fluency. Lastly, reading English is difficult for non-English students.

Writing's Problems Over Learning English

Table 4 Writing's Problems Likert Scale

525	945	1365	(1401)	1785	2205
2625					
Very low	low	moderate	High	Very high	

Based on the table above, it presented that the writing problems over learning English is on moderate level (1304). Most of them are having a problem in writing an academic paper and they are not able to use of correct grammatical rules. Thus, writing is one of the English skills that they want to avoid in learning process.

There are some results of the survey for each problem. First, for the listening's problem shows that the score was 1354 from the survey. It shows that the problem was at a moderate level. It reflected that most of the students are having problems in understanding native speakers based on the questionnaires. Moreover, the description of the scores could be seen in Table 1. Second, the problems that has been analyze was Speaking problems. It is stated that the score was 1930 which means this problem was at high level. It is also shows that the students' problems of the speaking are having problems in expressing themselves in English and they are not comfortable to talk in English with native speakers. They are not able to express themselves in English since they are not usually using English in their daily activities. Furthermore, the description of the scores could be seen in Table 2. Third, the different score appeared in reading problems which has 1304 score. It presented that the problem was at moderate level. Moreover, it also shows that the students' problems in reading problems are the students has a difficulty in recognizing new vocabulary in their learning process. It means most of the students have lack vocabulary and they are also lack of reading fluency. Moreover, the description of the scores could be seen in Table 3. Lastly, in writing problems presented that the score was 1401 which means this problem was at moderate level. Furthermore, it is stated that the problems of writing skills are the students having a problem in writing an academic paper and they are not able to use of correct grammatical rules. Thus, writing is one of the English skills that they want to avoid in learning process. Furthermore, the description of the writing problems score could be seen in Table 4.

Moreover, this result supported by the previous studies which was stated that there is a problem in writing skills, such as the students have a problem in grammar proficiency, master the vocabulary, and writing skills (Akbari, 2016). It is in line with Megawati (2016) that the students also have a problem in writing skills, such as they feel difficulty in writing a scientific paper, because they have a problem in grammar proficiency. In addition to that, those data of each component have the same result with the previous studies to the problems in writing skills.

Even though those researchers above have supported to this study, there were some of differences towards this study that the writer conducted. This study used only survey design while other studies used a mix method design (Megawati, 2016; Sabrina Sormin, 2018). In addition to that, the previous studies also applied a qualitative analysis technique as the way to get the final conclusion from the study itself (Akbari, 2016; Ngersawat & Kirkpatrick, 2014). Meanwhile, this study used analysis descriptive statistical with a survey design. Moreover, the other result of the previous studies shows that most of the students have a problem in writing skills (Akbari, 2016; Megawati, 2016) especially in writing a scientific paper, because of their grammar proficiency. Meanwhile, this study shows that the most students' problems was at their speaking skills, such as the students have a problem in expressing themselves in English and they are not comfortable to talk in English with native speakers. Moreover, they are not able to express themselves in English since they are not usually using

English in their daily activities. Finally, the researcher believed that there is a differences and similarities result for the students' problems in four skill language over learning English from the previous study to be compared with this research.

CONCLUSION

This study used a survey design in purpose to get the non-English students' perception of their problems over learning English at one of the universities in Garut. The subject of this study are non-English students which were Information System, Mathematics Education, Physics Education, Biology Education, Information Technology Education, Social Education, Indonesian Literature and Education, Civic Education, and Elementary School Teacher Education. In addition, the participants were undergraduate students within in range of 4th to 8th semester with 19 to 23 years old. Moreover, the data were analyzed by Likert Scale Interpretation to obtain the descriptive statistics and prove the theories of the previous studies that had been mention in the previous chapter.

The findings confirm that the non-English students' problem over learning English had moderate score for listening's skills (1354), reading's skills (1304) and writing skills (1401). Meanwhile, for the speaking's skills, it had high score (1930) that are most different with the other skills. It means that the speaking skills should be given a serious attention to find a way to solve it. It can conclude that there is a problem over learning English, such as the students feel difficulty in writing a scientific paper, because they have a problem in grammar proficiency, the students feel difficulty in memorizing a vocabulary and the students have a problem in expressing themselves in English and they are not comfortable to talk in English with native speakers.

Furthermore, the result of Discussion section showed that there is a difference results and similarities between this research and previous studies. The differences are the most of the students have a problem in writing skills (Akbari, 2016; Megawati, 2016) especially in writing a scientific paper, because of their grammar proficiency and memorizing a vocabulary while in writing process. Meanwhile, in this study shows that the most students' problem was at their speaking skills, such as the students have a problem in expressing themselves in English, the students could not confident in speaking English and they are not comfortable to talk in English with native speakers. Meanwhile, the similarities results showed in writing skill, the students have a problem in grammar proficiency and master the vocabulary. It is in line with the research by Akbari (2016) that the results of the writing skill focused on problems in grammatical rules and difficulty in memorizing a vocabulary while writing process.

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