



**English Teacher's Difficulties In Teaching English at SMPN 1 Kayangan Lombok Utara
(A case study at SMPN 1 Kayangan Lombok Utara in 2022)**

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Abstract:

As one of importance language, English is included as compulsory subject for junior and senior high school in Indonesia. It aimed to increase the ability of students in communicating using international language. However, in some areas or schools, some teachers face difficulties in teaching English, one of them was teachers in SMPN 1 Kayangan Lombok Utara. This study aimed at investigating the difficulties that were faced by English teachers in SMNPN 1 Kayangan Lombok Utara. This study belonged to qualitative study and purposive sampling was used in taking the sample of the study. In depth interview was used in collecting the data. There were two teachers to be interviewed in this study. The result from the data indicated that there were several difficulties that were faced by teachers in this school namely students' low of vocabulary mastery, students low motivation, lack of school facilities and conventional method in teaching. From those difficulties, low vocabulary mastery became the main challenge for teachers in teaching English in SMPN 1 Kayangan Lombok Utara.

Keywords: English teachers, teaching difficulties

INTRODUCTION

People all over the world are familiar with English as an international language. Because of its popularity and importance, people from many countries strive to learn it in order to communicate with people from other countries. Despite its widespread use, English is still considered a foreign language in Indonesia and is taught as one of the most important subjects in junior and senior high school.

The Indonesian government hopes that by making English a compulsory subject in school, students will be able to communicate in English. Nonetheless, the fact remains that many students in junior

and senior high school, particularly those in developing countries, have low English proficiency. Many students study English solely to pass national exams, rather than to prepare themselves to communicate in the language itself.

This situation becomes the responsibility of the government as well as English language teachers. Because English is still considered a foreign language, English teachers may face some difficulties in instructing their students. The difficulties may be caused by the students themselves or by the school environment. Even when teachers use effective methods, students' English proficiency remains low in some cases. This phenomenon must be

investigated in order to solve the problem. This study was conducted in SMPN 1 Kayangan Lombok Utara because this area has potential for tourism development but from the information gathered, the students still have problem in learning English as well as the teachers in teaching the language. This research was being carried out in order to account for the difficulties that teachers face when teaching English to students at SMPN 1 Kayangan in Lombok Utara.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation is one of the most important factors in developing students' engagement in classroom learning. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are the two types of motivation. Intrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from within a person without any external pressures, and the willingness to do the activity comes from within that person because he or she appears to enjoy doing it (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 56). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is defined by Ryan and Deci (2000, p.60) as a person's willingness to do an action regardless of external influence, such as the presence of rewards or compliments from others. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are essential in student learning. Intrinsic motivation is beneficial to students' learning though since students have a strong desire to learn, which can increase students' achievement in learning. However, intrinsic motivation cannot be found in all students in a class because each student has a unique interest. "Some activities are intrinsically motivated for people, while others are not, and not everyone is intrinsically motivated for any given task" (Ryan & Deci, 2000. p. 56).

Teachers are supposed to increase students' extrinsic motivation because intrinsic motivation cannot be found in all students in a class. To increase students' extrinsic motivation, teachers can use engaging activities in class, rewards, and compliments. Teachers hope to increase students' learning achievement by

encouraging students' motivation. One study, conducted by Mediawati (2010), discovered that learning motivation influenced students' learning achievement. It demonstrates that motivation plays an important role in increasing students' learning achievement.

Vocabulary mastery is another factor that may contribute to students' achievement in learning, particularly in the English language. Since English is a foreign language in Indonesia, it is only taught in school, and students' opportunities to explore English are limited to classroom activities. This makes it difficult for students to obtain input in the English language. As a result, students only acquire a limited vocabulary. Students are unable to communicate effectively in English due to a lack of vocabulary mastery.

Siyanove (2016) concluded from an investigation of previous studies that vocabulary mastered in an EFL context lags behind what is expected. This indicated that vocabulary mastery is still an issue in English teaching in Indonesia. Although vocabulary mastery remains a problem in the EFL context, teachers are expected to provide engaging and motivating learning so that students are motivated to learn vocabulary. Thus according Wilkins (as cited in McCarten, 2007, p.19), "without grammar, very little can be conveyed, and without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." This demonstrates the importance of vocabulary in learning a new language, such as English.

McCarten (2007) discusses some strategies that teachers can be used to teach or increase vocabulary mastery. First and foremost, teachers must concentrate on vocabulary. Second, provide variety. In this strategy, the teacher may use a picture, a card, or any other interesting media to draw students' attention to vocabulary learning. This method works to keep students from becoming bored. Third, repeat and recycle, provide opportunities for vocabulary organization, personalize vocabulary

learning, do not overdo it, including using strategic vocabulary in class.

School facilities are one of the factors that influence the teaching and learning process at school. Supporting facilities such as the school building, school environment, availability of media in teaching, class size, and so on are essential for teacher teaching performance. Without these supplementary resources, teachers will most likely have struggles teaching English in the classroom, notably in teaching English. If a class has a large number of students, the teacher may not be able to teach effectively, especially when it comes to teaching speaking, since each student may not get an equal amount of practice speaking.

Suralaga (2021, p.131) stated that the organization of school facilities influences students' motivation to learn. As a result, it is absolutely essential for the school committee to provide appropriate facilities to the school in order to improve learning achievement. Because based on what have been mentioned above, school facilities including the environment of the school affect the students' performance in learning

METHOD

Another factor that determines an important role in the process of teaching and learning is the teaching methods used among teachers. The method used by the teacher is highly dependent on the material taught in class as well as the context in which the teacher teaches (Watkins, 2005.p.10). In this situation, the teacher is expected to use appropriate and varied methods to ensure that the material presented is easily understood by the students. Teachers must remember that they are not expected to rely solely on one method of instruction. In other words, in order for students to be motivated to learn, teachers must employ a variety of teaching methods and strategies.

In some cases, teachers continued to teach in the traditional manner, and as a result, students were unable to comprehend

the material. Aside from that, students are bored because teachers only use a tedious method of teaching.

This is a case study that falls under the category of qualitative research. This study describes the difficulties that English teachers face in teaching English at SMPN 1 Kayangan in Lombok Utara. In this study, in-depth interviews were used to collect data. Purposive sampling is being used in the study to select an interviewee sample. Two English teachers from SMPN 1 Kayangan Lombok Utara participated in this study as interviewees. Each teacher's interview lasted about 25 to 30 minutes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the interviews with the teachers revealed there were some difficulties that the teachers encountered while teaching students at SMPN 1 Kayangan Lombok Utara such as follows:

1. *The lack of students' vocabulary mastery*

To begin, the most significant difficulty for teachers in teaching English is vocabulary mastery. Many students still have a limited vocabulary, giving them the impression that English is a difficult subject to grasp. This is especially true for seventh-grade students at this school. The students in seventh grade lacked a solid foundation in the English language because most elementary schools in Lombok Utara did not include English as a subject. As a result, students begin learning English in seventh grade of junior high school. Aside from that, the mismatch between the written form of a word and its pronunciation made it difficult for students to learn English.

The following excerpts are about those difficulties that have been delivered by teachers during the interviewing process:

“There was almost no basic introduction to English since elementary school.” (Interview T1)

“... As a result, they are a little slow in understanding English.” (Interview T1)

“Students are less likely to practice mastering English vocabulary due to the limitations of learning supporting factors such as dictionaries and labs.” (Interview T1)

“Curriculum changes and learning time duration are limited to cover the entire class of student learning.” (Interview T1)

“...inability of students to maintain and grasp the meaning in English.” (Interview T2)

“Aside from mathematics, English learning is still regarded as a frightening experience for students.” (Interview T2)

“Students believe that we do not understand our language, and even more so if we use a foreign language.” (Interview T2)

Besides that, students in eighth and ninth grade of this school also still have problem with the vocabulary mastery since the vocabulary that they have learned were not frequently used in daily communication.

2. The low students' motivation

Second, the motivation of students is the second challenge that teachers face when teaching students. Although teachers have attempted to evoke students' motivation, many students have low motivation in learning English. This is due to students' lack of awareness of the importance of English itself. Furthermore, students were unwilling to learn English because there was no real implementation of the importance of English in the environment.

The following excerpts are about those difficulties that have been delivered by teachers during the interviewing process:

“They are enthusiastic about English practice, but not so much about writing.” (Interview T1)

“They usually have difficulty speaking and writing in English, so we immediately practice how to read it in order for them to understand. There are

differences in how to read and write English.”

(Interview T1)

“The teacher continues to encourage students to engage in direct English learning, such as greetings among them at school.” (Interview T1)

“Students who take the course are students who are able to make the class more enthusiastic.” (Interview T2)

“There is too much distraction from online media, so students are less motivated to learn.” (Interview T2)

3. The low resources of school's facilities

Third, the school's facility is a challenge for teachers when teaching English. The school committee has provided students with dictionaries, one dictionary for every two students. This facility assists students in expanding their vocabulary, but it is intended to grow into a single dictionary for each student. This fact in accordance with what has been stated by Suralaga (2021, p. 131) that school facilities give impact to students' performance in learning. Another issue is that there is no English-specific laboratory. As a result, students may not have the opportunity to practice listening or speaking skills in the laboratory. The school has provided some learning materials such as books.

The following excerpts are about those difficulties that have been delivered by teachers during the interview:

“The school provides a dictionary for each class of ten students, but because each class has more than twenty students, each pair of students receives one dictionary.” (Interview T1)

“Teachers cannot compel students to purchase additional dictionaries or books due to financial constraints in their families.” (Interview T1)

“The availability of learning aids such as books English textbooks are adequate for student learning.” (Interview T1)

“Finally, good grades are only obtained by students who are well-off with additional courses outside of school.” (Interview T1 & T2)

“There is no English-learning support lab.” (Interview T2)

“... depending on the teacher's creativity in packaging additional media as a learning support.” (Interview T2)

4. The conventional of teaching methods

In terms of teaching methods, teachers most commonly use the explanation or monologue method. Aside from that, the teachers employ a variety of media created in class. The use of media is determined by the content of the books. However, the teachers continued to use the traditional method of teaching English. Another challenge in teaching students is the environment in which they live, whether at school or at home. Because they did not understand the significance of English, the family did not provide enough encouragement for the children to study it. Furthermore, due to time constraints, the language learned in class cannot be used to its full potential in school.

The following excerpts are about those difficulties that have been delivered by teachers during the interviewing process:

“The introduction of student learning themes has been limited to the school property.” (Interview T1)

“Using puzzle games to help students differentiate between adjectives and nouns.” (Interview T2)

“My students are asked to create simple sentences using the vocabulary provided.” (Interview T2)

“I believe that the previous curriculum made teaching easier for me than the current curriculum. (Interview T2)

CONCLUSION

From the data gathered, it can be concluded that there were some difficulties that English teachers in SMPN 1 Kayangan Lombok Utara still face. First, the most

significant difficulty was the low vocabulary mastery of the students especially students in seventh grade. This happened due to there was no any background of English subject the students learn in Elementary school. Thus, students started to learn English at seventh grade of junior high school. This made the English teachers have to allocate their teaching time to teach vocabulary to students. The second difficulty was students' low motivation in learning English. This was caused by there were no any real implementation of the importance of English around the school and the environment where students live w.here in fact, this area has tourism potential. The third was the lack of facilities of the school especially for English subject. This includes the non-existence of language laboratory and limited dictionary. There was no any laboratory for practicing the language and the teachers much more relied on teaching material from the books. Besides, the numbers of dictionary were not enough and not effective since one dictionary was used for two students. The last was the use of conventional teaching method. The teachers still tended to use conventional method in teaching where this led the students to feel difficult in comprehending the material. This also caused the students were easy to be bored.

SUGGESTION

To minimize the difficulties that were faced by teachers in teaching English in SMPN 1 Kayangan Lombok Utara, the government especially in Lombok Utara is supposed to include English as one of subject in Elementary school. This aims at increasing vocabulary input for students and give general description about English language. Students in early age such as in Elementary school are known to have good period in learning new language. Besides that, the teachers are supposed to give motivation and real examples of the importance of English continuously to increase the motivation of students. This can be done by taking the students to

tourism area near the school and giving explanation about the importance of English and the job opportunity that students can get if the students master the target language such as English language. The teachers also need to use variety of method in teaching English in order to ease the students in comprehending the material and avoid the boredom. The teachers also need to develop variety of methods or techniques in teaching English to increase students' engagement in learning. This also functions to increase teachers quality in teaching the target language at school.

Related to the facilities of the school, government of Lombok Utara and also school committee in SMPN 1 Kayangan are supposed to pay attention on the facilities in this school. Since Lombok Utara is an area where tourism aspect has potential, it is urgent to facilitate the school with language laboratory in order to provide the students to learn and explore the language maximally.

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