

## FACTORS CAUSING STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT SMA KRISTEN RANTEPAO

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to know factors causing student's difficulties in learning English at SMA Kristen Rantepao. This research used qualitative research. The data were collected through interviews. In this study, the researcher used snowball sampling. The subjects of this study were ten student's at SMA Kristen Rantepao. Through the analysis of the data, it was found that there are several factors causing student's difficulties in learning English at SMA Kristen Rantepao: internal factor; low learning motivation, students' interest in and attitudes, cognitive skills. External factor; teaching methods, learning facilities and media, the family and social environment. Based on the result above, the researcher concludes that there are internal and external factors causing student's difficulties in learning English at SMA Kristen Rantepao as mentioned above.

**Keywords:** Difficulties, Learning English, Factor Causing Students

### INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, mastery of the English language has become increasingly important, especially in Indonesia, where English serves as an international language. At the secondary school level, particularly at Rantepao Christian High School, learning English is not only a part of the curriculum but also a necessary skill to compete in the workforce and higher education. However, many students face various difficulties in this learning process, which can affect their ability to communicate effectively and achieve the expected academic performance. Therefore, it is essential to understand students' perceptions of English learning difficulties to formulate better teaching strategies.

English learning difficulties among students are often caused by various factors, both internal and external. Research by Hapsari (2018) indicates that vocational high school students experience nine types of difficulties in learning English, including a lack of motivation, vocabulary acquisition, and anxiety. This highlights the importance of understanding the factors causing these difficulties to improve teaching effectiveness. Moreover, Muhtarom and Azizatul Maghfiroh (2021) found that during limited face-to-face learning, students encountered challenges due to a lack of interest and unappealing learning media.

At Rantepao Christian High School, the phenomenon of English learning difficulties requires further exploration to understand the specific challenges faced by students. Students' perceptions of these difficulties can provide valuable insights into how they view the learning process and the factors influencing their learning

experiences. Research by Piyaporn and Ratanaporn (2022) suggests that internal factors such as motivation and vocabulary, as well as external factors like the learning environment, contribute to speaking difficulties in English.

From the researcher's interviews with English teachers and experiences during the PLP II program, most students struggle to comprehend materials, especially when teachers use English as the medium of instruction. Students also find it challenging to read texts and express opinions related to the material in English. Furthermore, they face difficulties in completing assignments, particularly individual tasks. Observations over two months during the PLP II program revealed that students find it easier to understand when the English learning process incorporates Indonesian. Students also struggle with translating sentences from books or direct speech. For instance, when invited to read aloud together, students often encounter pronunciation difficulties. Many students even resort to copying their peers' work during assignments and exams. These findings underscore the fact that students indeed face significant challenges in the process of learning English. However, existing studies and observations reveal a gap that requires further investigation. Previous research, such as that by Hapsari (2018) and Muhtarom and Azizatul Maghfiroh (2021), focuses on general factors affecting English learning but does not address the specific challenges faced by students at Rantepao Christian High School. Additionally, while solutions such as the use of engaging media and motivational strategies have been proposed, their application in this specific context remains unexplored. Furthermore, there is limited insight into how integrating bilingual teaching methods or collaborative learning activities can address these difficulties in a local environment. Understanding this gap will assist in designing strategies tailored to the needs of students at this school.

To address these challenges, alternative solutions can be considered to enhance the learning process. One potential approach is the use of bilingual teaching methods, where teachers integrate English and Indonesian to facilitate comprehension (Harmer, 2007). Additionally, the implementation of interactive media, such as educational applications and engaging audiovisual resources, can make learning more appealing to students (Mayer, 2009). Collaborative learning activities, such as group discussions and peer teaching, may also help students build confidence and reduce anxiety in using English (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Furthermore, providing consistent support for vocabulary enrichment and pronunciation practice can empower students to develop foundational skills (Thornbury, 2002; Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996). By adopting these strategies, teachers can create a more supportive and effective English learning environment.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher aims to identify the factors causing difficulties in learning English with the title, "Factors Causing Students' Difficulties in Learning English at Rantepao Christian High School." The researcher hopes that this study can help teachers anticipate the problems experienced by students during English learning and implement effective solutions to improve learning outcomes.

## METHODS

This research was done at SMA Kristen Rantepao. The participant in this study ten students as a participants. In this research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research. According Maleong (2004:2) descriptive qualitative research is a type of research that does not include calculation or number. So, in this research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative to focus research on factors causing student's difficulties in learning English at SMA Kristen Rantepao. The data Analyze used the theory of Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman.

1. Data Collection

The first step is to collect data from various relevant sources, such as interviews with students. In the context of this research, interviews can be conducted with students to explore their experiences related to English learning difficulties.

2. Data Reduction

Once the data has been collected, the next step is data reduction. This process involves selecting, focusing, and simplifying the information that has been collected to eliminate irrelevant data. The reduced data will help the researcher to more easily find the main themes and patterns that emerge from the students' experiences.

3. Data Presentation

After the reduction process is complete, the data is presented in a more structured and systematic form. Data presentation can be done through descriptive narratives, tables, or graphs that illustrate the main findings of the research. By presenting the data clearly, researchers can make it easier for readers to understand the information obtained and see the relationship between variables.

4. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The final step is to draw conclusions based on the data analysis that has been done. Researchers must verify these conclusions by comparing with existing data to ensure that the conclusions are accurate and can be accounted for. This verification process also includes critical reflection on the research results to ensure that all aspects have been considered.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the research is to know what are the factors causing students' difficulties in learning English at SMA Kristen Rantepao. The researcher had interview ten students as a participants in this research. First, the discussion focus on talking about internal factors causing the student's difficult in learning English (Sagala 2018).

1. Low Learning Motivation

Learning motivation plays a crucial role in an individual's success in learning English, and this can be explained through the Self-Determination Theory developed. This theory distinguishes motivation into two main types: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan in 1985). The researcher concluded that these findings are the same as was said by the opinion above. From the results of interviews that have been conducted, the researcher found. There are

intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation that can cause the students' difficult in learning English. The student's not interested because the way of pronouncing vocabulary in English is difficult and there are different words but the pronunciation is the same, some student's don't like English. Extrinsic motivation, People judgments can be motivation, depending on whether the judgment is positive or negative.

## **2. Student Interest and Attitude**

Students' interest in and attitudes toward the English language are crucial factors influencing learning success, as explained in the Socio-Educational Model developed (Gardner in 1985). The researcher concluded that these findings are the same as was said by the opinion above. In the research result, the researcher found that the student's not confident, afraid being wrong, don't know make sentences in English, don't understand grammar. If they have difficulty in learning English, they ask the teacher, search information from their friends, film, google, youtube.

## **3. Cognitive Skill**

This theory emphasizes that each individual possesses different types of intelligence, which extend beyond traditional academic abilities (Gardner in 1983). The researcher concluded that these findings are the same as was said by the opinion above. In the research results, researchers found that students' intelligence, learning styles varies. So, in learning English they scrolling tiktok, youtube, instagram, have joking with friends, memorize, writing a new word, things around them and the meaning. Also the student's like writing then speaking because they don't know to pronounce it and they not confident. In grammar, student's difficult to study because they often forget the pattern. The student's interested learning English by using a picture or ilustrasion, they difficult in learning English if no pictures and the teacher has to explain. The second, the discussion focus on talking external factors causing the student's difficult in learning English (Sagala 2018).

### **a. Teaching Methods**

Teaching methods play a crucial role in the process of learning English, particularly when referring to the Social Learning Theory proposed by Albert Bandura in 1977. One of the key points of this theory is the importance of effective interaction between teachers and students. The researcher concluded that these findings are the same as was said by the opinion above. In the research results, researchers found that teaching strategies that involve group discussions, role plays, or collaborative projects help students in learning English. The students experience difficulty in learning English when they study alone and do not participate in group discussions, because if there is something they don't understand, they can't ask their friends and study together. This aligns with the findings of Allo (2020), who reported that student enthusiasm and engagement significantly increased when teachers implemented interactive and collaborative learning methods as part of the 2013 curriculum in Toraja classrooms context.

### **b. Learning Facilities and Media**

Learning facilities and media that utilize technology have become essential components in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education, including English language learning. The Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) approach

offers remarkable opportunities to make learning more dynamic and interactive. The researcher concluded that these findings are the same as was said by the opinion above. In the research results, researchers found that use of educational videos, audio in learning process help student's to know English, but they also need teacher's explain the subject. Learning facilities and media did not have a positive impact on increasing their motivation to learn English.

### **c. Family and Social Environment**

The family and social environment have a significant impact on the learning process, particularly in English language learning, as explained in the Ecological Systems Theory proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1979. According to this theory, multiple levels of the environment influence individual development, including the microsystem (family) and the macrosystem (society or culture). These two environments work together to shape how a student learns and develops. The researcher concluded that these findings are the same as was said by the opinion above. In the research results, researchers found that the family environment is the main thing in the educational environment that has an influence on student education. Children who receive more attention from their parents in the process of their learning activities will be more motivated to be more active in improving their learning. Their social environment did not have a positive impact on increasing their motivation to learn English. This is because the social environment is not good and no one understands English. The findings above has a correlation to previous study conducted by Sultra, E. D., & Baharudin, B. (2020). The second previous study above conducted the topic about the Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Learning English at SMA Negeri 1 Batauga. It means that the previous study and the researcher findings is similar about student's difficulties. In the researcher findings, the students' difficulties in Learning English showed that student's low motivation learning and not interest the main factors of learning difficulties.

In the first previous study conducted by Thoriq et al (2024). He concluded the listening and speaking skills are the most difficult for students, with lack of interest and practice as the main contributing factors. The previous study above conducted the topic about the student difficulties in english learning analysed the difficulties experienced by Malang State Polytechnic students in learning English. It means that the previous study and the researcher findings is different. Therefore, the differences between previous study and the researchers findings is in the first previous study found listening and speaking skills are the most difficult for students and in the researcher findings she found internal and external factors causing the student's difficult in learning English.

The result of data analysis from interviewed with the ten students' at SMA Kristen Rantepao found there are internal and external factors causing the student's difficult in learning English. Internal factor they are; low learning motivation, student interest and attitude and cognitive skills. External factors they are; teaching methods, learning facilities and media, family and social environment.

### **CONCLUSION**



Holds the conclusions obtained and suggestions for further research (if any). Based on the findings and discussion in the earlier chapter, the researcher draws the conclusion that there are internal and external factors causing the student's difficulties in learning English. Internal factor they are low learning motivation, student interest and attitude and cognitive skills. External factors they are teaching methods, learning facilities and media, family and social environment.

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