

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

This chapter shows and discusses the findings of the research. The researcher conducted this research to investigate the students' difficulties in learning English. In this chapter, the researcher describes and discusses the students' difficulties in learning English. In addition, the information is supported by the statements from the participants and discussed with some related theories.

The Difficulties Faced by Students in Learning English

In this part, the researcher obtained some information related to the research question, namely "what are students' difficulties in learning English at a state vocational high school". There were eight students in grade 12 that became the participants of this research. Hence, the participants shared about their difficulties in learning English at school. The findings are divided into three parts, from students, environment, and the language.

The difficulties coming from students. When learning English, the difficulties in learning could come from some aspects. One of the aspects was the students who faced the difficulties in learning English. The difficulties coming from the students are lack of motivation, lack of vocabulary, difficulty in memorizing the vocabulary, lack of grammar mastery, and anxiety.

Finding 1: Lack of motivation. From the data obtained, there were two participants argued that they felt lazy to learn English since English was difficult. The difficulties came because they did not have any interest in learning English. In

addition, the second participant said that sometimes he feels lazy to learn, and they are sometimes not. Participant two, Beta stated “To be honest, I feel lazy during English lesson in the class”. In line with Beta, Nina said “Since elementary school until now, I am not interested in learning English”. From their statements, it indicated that they got difficulties with their motivation.

Lack of motivation is the most significant difficulties in learning English. Raju and Joshith (2017) stated that lack of interest or motivation in learning English becomes the crucial difficulties. Besides, the students who have low motivation will only think how to pass the class, and sometimes, they will not focus to the teacher even they do not learn anything. Brown (2007) said that motivation as an affective factor plays a central role in learning a second or foreign language. If the students have lack of motivation in learning something, they will feel difficult in mastering the lesson, and they will also be easier to forget the lesson given by their teacher (Raju & Joshith, 2017).

Based on the finding of this study, lack of motivation becomes one of the crucial difficulties in learning English. Lack of motivation influences the students’ attitude in the teaching learning process. Students who have lack of motivation tend to have negative attitude. Therefore, they sometimes do not pay attention to the teacher, and they get lower score than students who have high motivation.

Finding 2: Lack of vocabulary. Another problem faced by the participants was lack of vocabulary. Some of them mentioned that they faced difficulties because of lack of vocabulary. Nina stated “I got difficulties in speaking because my vocabulary is low.” In line with statement mentioned, Caca mentioned “Moreover if

we have limited vocabulary, so we will be more confused to arrange the sentences.” This problem was also found by Dedy who stated that “Sometimes we do not know the meaning when we are listening.” In addition, Renata stated that “I got difficulties in reading when I found a new word, and sometimes it was difficult to understand, but sometimes, I did not know the meaning.”

From the finding above, it could be concluded that lack of vocabulary became the difficulties faced by the students in learning English. The statement was in line with Fen, Hong, and Amster (2013) who found that students who have limited vocabulary size always face reading difficulties. In addition, Hadijah and Shalawati (2017) mentioned that the students wrote incorrect vocabulary in completing a part in listening activity. Besides, lack of vocabulary will produce difficulties for the students to master in English.

To sum up, the students who have lack of vocabulary will face many obstacles in learning English. Also, the students find difficulties in writing, listening, speaking, and reading. Accordingly, from the difficulties mentioned, it can make the students feel difficult to master English.

Finding 3: Difficulty in memorizing vocabulary. Another problem faced by the students was difficulty in memorizing the word. Beta stated that “I feel difficult in memorizing English vocabulary, and it makes English difficult.” Similarly, Caca said that “The main problem is memorizing the vocabulary when I learn English”.

Some students had difficulties in memorizing the word when learning English. When they had difficulties in memorizing the words, they faced the difficulties in mastering English. Webb and Chang (2012) argued that students face

difficulty in memorizing the word and it becomes the common problem appeared. In addition, Sari (2012) said that students in Indonesia faced the difficulty in learning English especially in learning vocabulary because students feel difficult to memorize English words.

Learning English means that students should know and understand the meaning of the vocabulary. Besides, the students find the difficulties when they have to memorize various vocabularies. Hence, the students' difficulty in memorizing the vocabulary make them get problem in understanding the language especially English.

Finding 4: Lack of grammar mastery. Students faced difficulties with the grammar in English. They felt confused to implement the grammar to their activity in learning English. Renata mentioned "I am confused when reading because I do not know the grammar rules". Dedy stated "I do not know the grammar and I feel difficult to understand it". The participants said that "when I speak English, I feel confused because I feel difficult in understanding and applying the grammar". Another statement came from Jerry who mentioned "I am confused in placing the right vocabulary to make correct sentence". The statement mentioned was also in line with Caca who stated that "the difficulties that I get is arranging the vocabulary into a good sentence, and unarranged sentences makes me confused to interpret the meaning. From those statements mentioned, it can be concluded that lack of grammar mastery become the problem in learning English.

According to Meklafi and Nagaratnam (2011), one of the results in their research is that the students are able to recall the grammar rules, but they still have problem in applying it in an actual communication. Students face difficulties when

they have to apply the grammar rules into the real communication using English. In line with the statement mentioned, Shiu (2011) stated that the difficulties faced by the learners are to know the English rules and memorizing English terms in order to create the correct sentence forms. Therefore, grammar becomes one of the difficulties which make students still get the difficulties in learning English since many students argued that grammar is difficult to understand.

Finding 5: Anxiety. Anxiety also became the problem faced by the participants. Some of them felt nervous or afraid to make mistakes when learning English. Anxiety usually became the barrier for the students to learn English. Students could feel anxiety in almost whole English skills. The finding was supported by the participants' statements. Alfa mentioned "I am nervous and afraid of making mistake when I write". In line with the statement mentioned, Tommy stated "The first problem in speaking is afraid of making mistakes." From the statement above, it can be concluded that the students still feel anxious in learning language.

Wu (2010) and Zheng (2008) argued that in language education, anxiety becomes a problem since anxiety is a burden for foreign language learning. Some activities which make students panic are when the teacher asks them to read, but they do not have any idea on how to pronounce the word correctly (Raju & Joshith, 2017). Cocuk , Yanpae, Yelken, and Ozer (2016) stated that anxiety is counted as one of difficulties which happens in writing. Besides, anxiety in writing becomes problem in developing writing skill. In addition, Chen (2010) asserted that students feel afraid of making mistake because they feel anxious, and their friends will laugh and

underestimate them if they make mistakes. Therefore, anxiety becomes the barrier in learning English.

The difficulties coming from the environment. The environment becomes the second factor that make students get difficulties in learning English. The difficulties faced by the students is unsupportive environment.

Finding 1: Unsupportive environment. Another problem mentioned by the participants was that the environment did not support them in learning process. Caca said “I will lose my concentration if the class is so crowded, and it makes me feel bored to have classroom activity because my class is crowded.” From the statement mentoned, it means that Caca will lose her concentration if the class is so crowded. Another participant, Jerry mentioned “I got the problem with my class because my class is not conducive.” Thus, the participants felt that the class was not conducive when learning process.

Based on the finding above, it can be summarized that participants have problem with their class environment. The class atmosphere does not support the learners’ learning. This finding was in line with Han and Bridglall (2009) who stated that school which has crowded class room space supports the failure of the students. Accordingly, the students who learn English in crowded situation or in unconducive class will face problem to learn..

The difficulties coming from the language itself. The characteristics of the language that students learn became the next aspect by the cause of difficulties in learning English. From the statement mentioned, students faced difficulties in some aspects such as spelling difficulties, listening difficulties, and misintination.

Finding 1: Spelling problem. There were some participants who mentioned that they found spelling difficulties when learning English. Alfa mentioned that “there are some double letters in English, and those make incorrect in writing.” English letter and Indonesian letter were different. The differences might cause the problem for the learners. In line with this finding, Beta also mentioned that “there are double letter in English word that makes me feel confused to write”. Hence, those statements mentioned showed that the participants got problem with the spelling in learning English.

This finding mentioned was in line with Alfaki (2015) who stated that the spelling problem in writing becomes the familiar problem since the English spelling system which has become inconsistent is complex for students. In addition, Hadijah and Shalawati (2017) argued that the most significant challenge for the students is transferring correct spelling of a word. Spelling problem becomes the common problem that happens among the English learners since the letter in English is different with Indonesian.

In regard to the finding, it showed that students faced difficulties in writing skills. Their difficulties come because of the differences between Indonesian and English spelling. To master English writing, students should know the correct spelling in English writing.

Finding 2: Listening difficulties. Some participants mentioned that they got difficulties when they had to listen to English conversation. Beta as participant of this research mentioned that “The speaker speaks too fast; it makes me feel difficult to catch the words”. Another student, Caca mentioned that “The problem that I get is

that because the speaker usually speaks English too fast. Moreover, if our vocabulary is limited, it will make difficulties when we have to translate it into Indonesian language". To conclude, those statements showed that the students get difficulties with the speakers' speed when they speak, and the students have to listen to their speaking.

Flowerdew and Miller (1996) asserted that one of students' difficulties in listening is the speed of the delivery in speaking, and students are rarely exposed by the authentic source when they have listening activity. Besides, they often listen to their teacher whose pronunciation is different from the native speaker. Also, it makes the students get difficulties when they have to listen from the native speakers.

Finding 3: Missintonation. Intonation was another problem faced by students when learning English. The third participant said that "The problem like the intonation when I have to speak English". From the statement mentioned, the participant got problem with the intonation in English. The meaning of a sentence was influenced by the intonation (Shiu, 2011). If a sentence was pronounced by incorrect intonation, the meaning would be different. This statement was in line with Zhang and Yin (2009) who asserted that the different intonation will influence the meaning of the sentence, the learners often make mistake with the intonation of the sentence when they pronounce the word.

To conclude, the intonation influenced the meaning of the sentence. If the intonation was incorrect, misunderstanding might happen among the speakers and the listeners. Therefore, this finding showed that students get problem with their intonation in pronouncing English words.