Investigating Students'Ability in Learning English: a Case study in the first semester of Communication department of STISIP Mbojo Bima

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Article Info	Abstrak
	Sebagai bahasa internasional, bahasa inggris menjadi tantangan bagi seluruh pengajar dan pelajar di suatu lembaga pendidikan. Mata kuliah ini wajib dipelajari pada semester awal oleh semua mahasiswadi hampir setiap program studi di perguruan tinggi. Sayangnya, kemampuan bahasa inggris setiap orang berbeda-beda. Banyak hal yang mendukung dan menghambat proses pemahaman dan penerapannya di kehidupan sehari-hari. Adapun penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang menjadi latar belakang mahasiswa yang memiliki kemampuan berbahasa inggris kurang maupun lebih. Dengan merujuk pada potensi mahasiswa ilmu komunikasi dalam berkomunikasi secara efektif di dunia kerja sangat besar, maka peneliti memilih tempat penelitian di Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Mbojo Bima (STISIP Mbojo Bima) yang mempunyai program studi Ilmu Komunikasi. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif , khususnya studi kasus dengan menggunakan teknik pengambilan sampel yaitu *purposive sampling*. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi yang dilakukan pada dua kelas di semester awal, wawancara dilaksanakan pada dua orang mahasiswa yang pintar dan dua orang mahasiwa yang kurang dalam kemampuan berbahasa inggris, serta dokumentasi berisi hasil kegiatan mahasiswa di ruang kelas. Kemudian, data dianalisis dengan triangulasi. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa kesulitan dalam mengatur jadwal belajar sejak sekolah, pola pikir yang kurang tepat, malas membaca dan menyimak serta lingkunganyang kurang memotivasi dapat menyebabkan mahasiswa sulit memahami dan mengaplikasikan kemampuan bahasa inggris. Namun, sebaliknya mahasiswa yang mendapatkan motivasi tinggi dalam meluangkan waktu belajar , senang melatih diri dengan tontonan dan bacaan berbahasa inggris, pola pikir yang benar dan lingkungan yang mendukung dapat membuat mahasiswa mendalami kemampuan berbahasa inggrisnya.
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1. INTRODUCTION

English is one of the subjects that are generally required to be met by new students in each study program and carried out in the first semester of lectures. Having English language skills is certainly quite difficult for students who do not like this course. Lecturers must prepare appropriate teaching materials and methods for students who have difficulty learning English. For students who are not from the English department, there must be some who question the reason for the existence of English subject which they actually got when they were in junior and senior high school. A brief explanation of the description of the English subject is provided by the lecturer when providing directions related to the learning contract. Meanwhile, students who have proficient English

language skills will have a great opportunity in the world of work. Like MSMEs which are the responsibility of the government, they also need English language training to increase their selling power in order to develop businesses regarding product buying and selling transactions, namely business speaking and public speaking (Surani & A, 2020).

Proficiency in English is not required for students majoring in English. Students who come from non-educational study programs and English literature can also take advantage of the opportunity to study abroad or cooperate with foreign companies. Some of the jobs that require English are journalists, HRD (Human Resource Development), public relations, tour guides and others. These jobs have the potential to be achieved by students from the communication science major. After finishing college, communication students who master foreign language soft skills, especially English, will benefit from the skills they have. Students can pass jobs that demand an English interview with self-confidence. However, to reach maximum results, students need to identify the difficult parts of the English language in order to solve the problem immediately. Absolutely, this process needs the role of the lecturer to classify the needs analysis of English subject.

Preliminary observations show that many students still consider English as formality subject. Lack of understanding can lead to different perceptions about English. Inactivity in class is a picture of misunderstanding that arises from daily habits that do not pay attention to lessons properly and correctly at home and in the classroom. On the other hand, active students have a tendency to repeat or learn to be better. Lack of reading habits can be one of the factors causing poor literacy culture for future generations. Talking a lot without reading and understanding various sources will be a negative impact for synergizing in increasing knowledge. Likewise with foreign languages, the lack of listening and learning to remember and also practice is one of the difficulties for the younger generation.

One of the results of dedication to improve English language skills and marketing management via the web for homestay owners in the Kandri Tourism Village, Semarang is an increase of the ability to speak English at the homestay (W.D et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important for generations of people living in Bali and West Nusa Tenggara to also know foreign languages, especially English. In addition to several indicators of achievement of speaking skills that must be achieved, students also need to pay attention to the cultural values contained in speaking activities, in particular, those students who come from the communication department. Previous research related to speaking skills for students also explained that students need to pay attention to the pattern of coordinating and subordinating relationships in speaking because respecting the culture of the interlocutor is also important apart from the linguistic aspects observed in the style of language they use (Rosadi & Hermanto, 2021).

Along with the development of technology, reading resources about English learning strategies can be accessed and downloaded through electronic communication media. Students should be able to practice at home and continue with self-development together with lecturers in the classroom. However, the fact is that students are not too focused on this. The mindset of students who feel that English is a difficult subject becomes a big obstacle in the learning process, especially for regional students from non-English majors who have limited facilities and lack of motivation to learn. The limitations of students to complete the indicators of English subject become homework for the lecturer. The beliefs and expectations of the lecturers must be stronger to raise the confidence of their students so that they are more enthusiastic and like foreign languages that are required to be taken. At least they master the basic of English education for their future generation. Lecturers are expected to be able to present their lessons not only with methods that are in accordance with currently developing theories, but also with a personal approach to their students who are indeed lacking in this English subject.

Language is a form of human behavior can change students' insight. Learning English needs to be evaluated every year because each student comes and grows from a different environment and leturers who teach in each study program must focus on the output of the world of work that requires English. Lecturers of English courses need to add insight and conduct research on this subject in non-English study programs. Therefore, the title of the research that will be discussed entitled Investigating Students'Ability in Learning English, a case study in the first semester of Communication department of STISIP Mbojo Bima.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used in this research is qualitative. In language education research, qualitative research refers to a phenomenon on a theoretical framework that is structured during the research. it is necessary to understand the concepts from the literature so that the series of questions compiled during the research data collection process can be explained with conditions in the field (Nugrahani, 2014). This research focuses on the concepts and practices of English language skills, among others, explaining the indicators of learning about learning the four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) and the ability to analyze English grammar (grammar) and memorize vocabulary words (vocabulary). All of these indicators can be measured by researchers while in class.

Language research is usually carried out inductively, namely language symptoms that are observed first from direct speech and are built using concepts to understand phenomena (Zaim, 2014). The sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling. This technique focuses on sampling data sources and certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2003) in (Shidiq & Choiri, 2019). Data collection was attained in several ways, namely observation, interviews and documentation. The research was conducted from early October to early November. Several students were interviewed based on their ability in English, both excellent and poor.

Selected students who are included in the research are students of communication department of STISIP Mbojo Bima. In this study, the researcher is also in the same environment as the research subject. The criteria for determining the sample are as follows: (1) they have been involved in the activity or field of research for a long time and intensively; (2) they are fully connected in the field; and (3) they have sufficient time to be asked for information (Rahmadi, 2011). Data were analyzed using triangulation which includes (1) method triangulation, (2) data source triangulation, and (3) theoretical triangulation (Rahardjo, 2010).

3. RESULT & DISCUSSION

The development of science and the advancement of technology needs to be balanced with mastering one of the most popular foreign languages, namely English. As an international language, English is a communication tool to connect foreigners who come from abroad with native citizens. There are various purposes of person to travel to a country, such as tourism, college or comparative studies, work and other matters. Therefore, a country visited must at least have human resources who can establish good and effective communication. The explanation about this is also in line with the results of research and thoughts from a journal article, namely as students, they must also pay attention to foreign language learning, which can lead to cultural understanding competence and mutual communications (Damayanti & Maharani, 2011). The adaptation of students to foreign languages, especially English, is not only about how they can speak and write in English, but also they must strive to read and listen more about foreign cultures and how to communicate them.

For English lecturers, teaching activities in non-English study programs is a challenge. The researcher as one of the English lecturers at STISIP Mbojo Bima also experienced obstacles in completing the material and setting strategies so that students were motivated to desire to learn English. With the limited abilities that students have and inadequate infrastructure such as language

laboratories, it is hoped that students of the STISIP Mbojo Bima communication department can follow the English learning process extensively. Despite the typical Bima accent, students of communication department should attempt to speak English with confidence and clearly. The background of students needs to be identified by the lecturer about the reasons behind the difficulty in understanding English.

Several students admitted that they helped their parents to work in the fields when they were in school until now. However, they are still learning and struggling to achieve their goals. Portraits of students who still care like this are rarely found in big cities. As illustrated in an interview with a student from communication science (YD) who said about one factor being unable to speak English *"Terkadang waktu untuk belajar bahasa asingpun seperti bahasa inggris kurang karena pulang sekolah saya juga membantu orang tua dan liburanpun seperti ini"* (*Sometimes I don't have time to learn a foreign language like English because after school I also help my parents and holidays are like this*). From the results of this interview, it can be identified that the motivation of students is influenced by their environment related to learning. There are two factors that include learning activities, involving internal factors, namely attitudes towards learning, learning motivation, study concentration, study habits and external factors, among others, the learning process is driven by students' intrinsic motivation (Susanthi, 2021). The student realized that since school he did not have time to focus on studying, including learning English. Situations like this become a dilemma for some students who assist their parents earn a living. Thus, the enthusiasm of students to learn foreign languages is less.

By observing the initial conditions of student learning and absorption of knowledge, it can be seen that they have difficulty in building ideas in writing, systematically compiling sentences, writing spellings, and so on. As for speaking skills, students who are unable to speak English are usually caused by a lack of listening and listening to authentic sources about an English film and reading. The following is the documentation of students who do not and almost meet the indicators of writing a descriptive text about their campus.
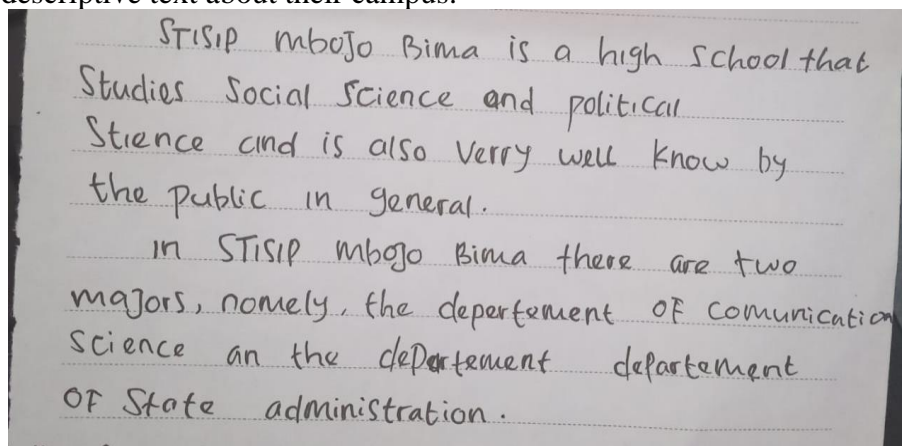
Picture 1. Descriptive text about campus (student AD)
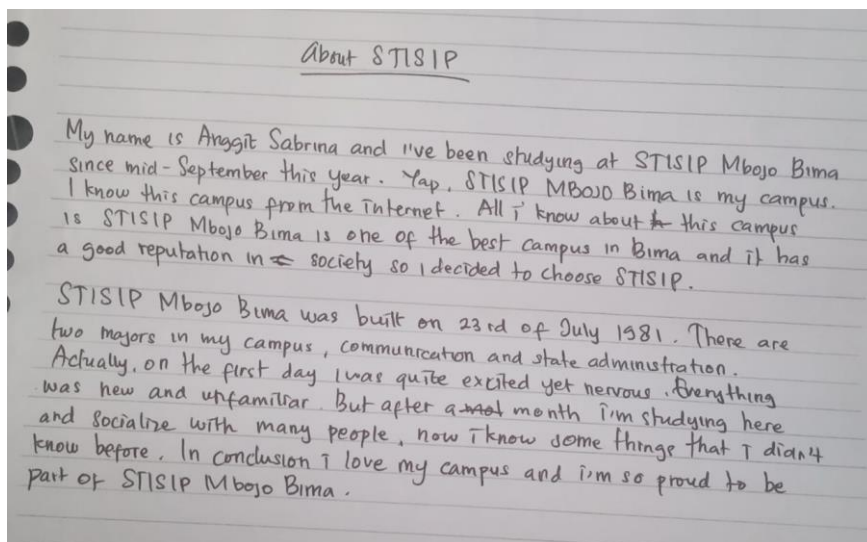
Picture 2. Descriptive text about campus (student AN)

Figure 1 above can be identified that the student's writing still contains several elements of error. Some of them are about the number of sentences in a paragraph, writing wrong spelling like *verry* should be *very* and not accustomed to writing in English as evidenced by the word *stience* should be a *science*. Meanwhile, the lecturer has also allowed students to use google translator as a tool to assist their learning process due to their limited English vocabulary. Picture 2 show that the student was able to fulfill the indicators of writing skills. Errors that occur in Figure 1 are things that often happen to students. Bryne (1988) said that linguistic aspect like grammar, vocabulary, language use, and choice of sentences in writing must have fully monitoring, because English is a foreign language. However, they took advantage of the speaking skills shown in the written assignment presentations. The following is evidence of their appearance in front of the classroom.

Picture 3. Talking about campus

Picture 4. Debating skill

In picture 2, a male student is presenting his writing entitled "STISIP Mbojo Bima" and in picture 3, a female student is having an opening debate. In the debate class, students are divided into several groups and each group must support each other to be better. The difficulties they face

in learning English are not problems that cannot be solved. The mindset that exists when they are in school should be avoided to optimize their English skills. The lack of understanding of basic English at school affects the next step in taking English courses in college. The student of communication department (AD) also revealed *"saya tidak mengerti bahasa inggris karena karena saya bingung tentang pengucapan dan penulisan sehingga saya tidak bisa mengucapkannya secara sempurna dan berpikir bahasa inggris sulit."* (*I don't understand English because I am confused about pronunciation and writing so that i can not pronounce English perfectly and think English is difficult.*") From the results of this interview, it can be illustrated that the mindset of students about English since school is a difficult subject to understand. Similar research results are also expressed in his research entitled "Teaching in Rural Indonesian Schools: Teachers' Challenges". (Febriana et al., 2018) describes that students' mindset causes a lack of interest in learning English.

Meanwhile, students who are able to speak English are students who come from vocational schools, especially tourism, precisely at SMKN 1 Kota Bima. The magnitude of the demands for the competence of 21st century educators encourages teachers in vocational schools to improve quality in dealing with the learning bilingual ecosystem and prepare their students to have 21st century skills such as communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. Among the important priorities that need to be considered by SMK graduates are English language skills which are a tool for communicating internationally (Lee et al., 2017). According to one of the students of communication science (NF) who came from the vocational school, the tourism major she took when she was in vocational school was able to enhance her English skills. (NF) admitted that to be able to develop what she was learning at that time, there were various ways, such as chatting and having virtual face-to-face with outsiders using English through several social media applications. Even though she comes from a village boy in Bima city, her enthusiasm to be proficient in English can be proven in various ways.

Students need support from the environment and educators. In this era of society 5.0, humans are enforced to have the expertise to use technology as a tool to make work easier. Society 5.0's ultimate purpose is to improve people's quality of life by mobilizing the productive and technological potential of Industry 4.0 (Harayama, 2017) in (Ferreira & Serpa, 2018). Particularly in communication activities, the world of work today is not only face to face, but also growing online. When meeting in person in a place, each individual will definitely speak using a language that is understood by each other. When a large company has broader job responsibilities even to the international realm, the workers who are in that place need to adjust to the company. Some companies are looking for workers who at least can communicate well and have English language skills. Even in the technological era, improper use of communication tools causes noise that can hinder the process of delivering messages to communicators. For example, in a conversation, it is not possible for someone to talk to a foreigner from abroad while using a translator application, unless the conversation is done in writing or online.

There is a student of communication science (AN) who comes from the Bali area. The international world has known Bali for its beautiful and comfortable tourist destinations. With the presence of foreign tourists who come to Bali, then at least the community will feel there is an additional language and culture that they obtain from these tourists. Conceptual models of culture-based English learning have also been developed including elementary school English competency standards, basic competencies, themes, materials that must be taught for elementary schools (Padmadewi et al., 2009). The attention of teachers and researchers on foreign language learning has resulted in a generation that can take advantage of opportunities to become proficient in English. English language skills are in great demand in the world of work, both as employees in large companies and as entrepreneurs or businessmen. For prospective students, they can choose majors that use English a lot besides education majors, for example, majoring in communication science and majoring in international relations.

On the other hand, one of the students (AN) from Bali has good English skills to communicate both orally and writing. She admitted that when she taught English at her school, her teacher often asked her to practice speaking with foreign tourists. Later, she had an uncle who married a woman from Denmark. So, that reason is what makes her excited to learn English. She has a social media account (twitter) to write opinions on various issues and to seek information about her idols from abroad. Almost all opinions are written in English. She also opened a service account for writing sentence captions for a fanbase. She managed to add extra money for shopping. As a student of communication department at STISIP Mbojo Bima, she hopes to assist her friends who are having difficulties in learning English. She is very lucky than her friends who are in Bima because she has talked with foreign tourists and often hears them talking. The evidence for her writing is shown in picture 2 above.

Based on the phenomenon of the students of communication department of STISIP Mbojo Bima who still have problem learning English courses, lecturers need to take extra action to direct students to be enthusiastic about mastering English even though it is only basic. The actions taken can be in the form of variations in learning activities that can motivate and invite students to rise from their negative perspectives and learning experiences with conditions that are less conducive to learning. Sometimes the variation is in the form of a teaching style that must be adapted to the circumstances of active or passive learners. Majid in (Rahmat & Jannatin, 2018) describes several teaching styles according to classroom conditions, including classical teaching styles for passive students, technological teaching styles using available media sources, personalized teaching styles prioritizing interests, experiences, and patterns. The mental development of students and interactive teaching styles highlight dialogue with students as a form of dynamic interaction.

4. CONCLUSION

The difference in students' English language skills is a phenomenon that is often faced by teachers in each department. An environment that was less motivating to learn were the reasons some communication science students had difficulties. On the other hand, there are still students of communication department who are active and understand English well. This is based on their intelligence in managing time schedule, forming a positive mindset, directing themselves to actively read and listen to English-language sources and get an environment that supports themselves to develop in mastering English language skills.

5. SUGGESTION

For further research, it is necessary to examine the teaching style of teachers or lecturers in English classes and develop teaching materials that support English lectures for non-English department.

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