

The Problems Facing Students Learning English in the Era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0

Ratna Sari Dewi^a, ^aPoltek LP3I Cikarang, Email: dewi_melu@yahoo.com

Mastery of English is very important for a student, but unfortunately there are still many students who do not realize this. Various responses can be found in class related to these problems, especially in the attitude of students during the learning process, student learning outcomes, and participation in carrying out group activities. This study aims to describe the problems faced by students in learning English and its causes. This study uses descriptive research with a questionnaire, observation, and documentation. The results showed that the research subjects had various learning difficulties in English. This happens due to the different levels of English mastery.

Key words: *Student problems, effective, English, industrial revolution era 4.0.*

Introduction

Mastery of English is very important for a student, but unfortunately there are many students who do not realize the need for the mastery of English. English is the language that is most widely used throughout the world (Annisaa & Hidayatullah, 2017). The importance of mastering English for students is that it is one of the prerequisites for obtaining his/her title or degree. Mastering international languages is something that needs to be developed at this time (Handayani, 2015). With the establishment of Indonesia as a member of the AEC (ASEAN Economic Community), it is urgent for the upcoming generation to advance their knowledge in terms of science and technology, which is supported by the mastery of good and correct language in instruction.

English, as an international language, connects people with the world in various aspects including educational. Learning English is the most important thing in the LP3I Polytechnic curriculum in Cikarang. Even at the higher education level, all study programs must provide



English subjects for 1 or 2 semesters, even if the discipline taken is not related to English. This shows how important mastery of foreign languages is, especially English, as it is integral to success in one's academic field and in supporting one's career in the world of work (Sinaga, 2010).

Communication can be perfectly built when someone masters or improves the four English skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This also applies to the English learning process, which situates listening and reading as receptive skills, and reading and speaking as productive skills. Often people say that it is only by mastering speaking that a person can be said to be proficient in language. That is not entirely true. The written language is also important to be mastered. For example, when we open the Internet and want to respond to e-mail, the ability of reading, along with the ability of writing with the correct grammar structure, is needed to provide the appropriate answer.

In addition, there are three elements of language that play an important role in supporting the four skills, namely pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. In order to achieve optimal English skills, professional instructors or lectures are needed to produce qualified students. Furthermore, mastery and practice must be provided with a balanced portion. However, to realize an ideal English class is not easy. In order to have sufficient material, an experienced language instructor should know the level of English mastery of each student. Thus, the capabilities of each student cannot be generalized. The expected learning goals will be very difficult to be achieved if the lecturer is unable to detect the capabilities of each student. Basically, every student has different characteristics, including learning techniques, and capacities to take in subject matter, as in the concept of Multiple intelligence (Stanford, 2003).

In the process of learning English, a student certainly has experienced an obstacle in learning. These obstacles can lead to less than optimal student learning outcomes. This could happen to anyone, including students who take English and non-English study programs. Hasan (2000) states that the difficulty faced by many learners of English as a foreign language is the lack of understanding in English pronunciation as it is expressed at normal speed through listening material. In reading skills, Rahmawati (2011) argues that the problem faced for reading text comprehension lies in the lack of knowledge about reading material and ignorance of how to connect ideas between sentences with one another. Writing skills are difficult because these activities require a complex and systematic thought process but they nonetheless need to be mastered by English learners.

According to Rukmini (2011), in communication, writing skills are also important to master. The benefits will be felt when the written language is published and read by many people. Thus, the quality of writing must always be improved. For speaking skills, Megawati &

Mandarani (2016) in her research found that the difficulty students often face when speaking English lies in their lack of English vocabulary.

The industrial revolution has become an interesting critical issue lately, as it prepares itself to enter the all-sophisticated industry 4.0 era. The more advanced a country is, the tighter the competition will be. English, known as the international language, becomes one of the most important components to support this, especially the mastery of English and technology. Mastering English can provide benefits to understand the culture of other countries, and makes it easier for someone to connect with the vast world and compete in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0.

University may develop their students to have soft skills such as English communication skill in order to encourage their students to be employed by industries. The advantage of having English skills for professionals is first and foremost that they are able to communicate with foreign clients when discussing business. English is also very helpful for them when they have to access information through the latest technology. With these skills, the professionals may improve their career path in the company. Then, they are considered more capable and able to face challenges in the industrial era 4.0.

With the problems faced, English lecturers are encouraged to pay more attention to the condition of his students, and be ready in the implementation of learning. Without careful preparation, learning activities will not run effectively. The preparations can be seen from the lesson plan, material, media, and assessment. By understanding the problems faced by students, an educator can reflect on himself or herself to find out how effective the learning process is in the classroom and to improve the quality of students.

Several studies have proven this for each English language skill (Kharma, 1981; Megawati & Mandarani, 2016; Lituana et al. (1999); Hasan, 2016). This also applies to students who are not from the English major. Each student must have an interest in a different field of science, so that not all like English and choose English majors. This cannot be separated from the problems that will arise when the learning process takes place. To fulfil their obligations as students at a university, they are required to take English courses and pass a TOEFL test with a high enough score. For students who do not have a strong background in language, knowledge gained from elementary to high school will feel strained by this. English learners who do not explore knowledge in their fields (ESP learners) have the potential to produce a variety of responses in the learning process (Zuomin, 1995).

Based on the concepts presented in the introduction, it can be said that there are many difficulties faced by students when learning English, especially as a foreign language because the language is used in certain conditions and with people rather than in daily activities.

Therefore, in this article, researchers are interested in digging deeper into the weaknesses experienced by students and the reasons why these occur. This is considered as necessary information material, which can later be used to improve the concept of learning English effectively at the LP3I Polytechnic Cikarang.

Literature Review

Student Problems

According to Winkel (1985), a problem is something that impedes, impedes, or complicates a person achieving certain goals and objectives. Problematic conditions are thus disruptive and can harm the individual and the environment. The problems experienced by students are very diverse. In general, the problem can be grouped into several major problems such as physical, economic, social, economic, family, psychological conditions, environmental problems, social relationships, academic problems. These problems will affect the academic achievement that will be obtained by students if no immediate solution is found.

English Learning

According to Richard (2000), foreign languages are defined as follows: A language which is not the Native Language of large number of people in a particular country or region, is not used as a medium of instruction in school, and is not widely used as a medium of communication in government, media, etc. Foreign languages are typically taught as school subjects for the purpose of communicating with foreigners or for reading printed materials in the language. English as a communication tool is used to convey ideas, thoughts, opinions, feelings, and also to respond or create discourse in social life. To be able to learn English well, knowledge of the characteristics of English itself is needed. Each subject has certain characteristics when viewed in terms of the objectives or competencies to be achieved, or the material studied in order to support these competencies. In terms of objectives or competencies to be achieved, this English subject emphasizes aspects of language skills which include verbal and written language skills, which are both receptive and productive. It is this characteristic that distinguishes one subject from another.

Methodology/Materials

Based on the purpose of this research, which is to find out the problematic of students in learning English, this type of research is descriptive. The study was conducted on students in the academic year 2019/2020. The subjects of the study were LP3I Polytechnic Cikarang students who took English subject II. They were previously had English I subject that taught the basic concept of English. The number of sample research subjects was 378 students.



Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire distribution method, photo documentation, and observation. The questionnaire was distributed to research subjects to find out students' responses about the learning experience of English for two semesters including the difficulties experienced in the learning process. Observation takes place during one semester learning activities to observe students who are classified as active, less active, and passive.

Students can be categorized as active when the learning process shows their participation in answering questions, asking questions, and often expressing opinions during group activities. For those who are less active, it can be seen from the intensity of interaction that is rarely established between the student and the lecturer. They are only active when asked or appointed by lecturers to express their opinions. The latter category is passive where students almost never contribute verbally with lecturers and have low quiz or midterm scores (below 50 out of 100).

Results and Findings

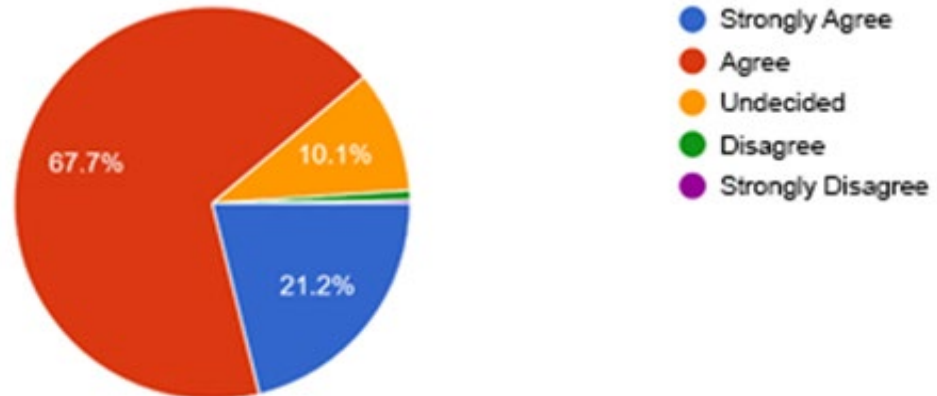
From the questionnaire distributed via Google Form, it was found that 378 students participated in giving opinions through online networks. The results obtained were then analysed with the following results:

1 The majority of students like the English subject. This can be seen through Figure 1. This fact shows that students already have an awareness of the importance of mastering English, because preference is a basic indicator of a person's motivation to learn something. By liking lessons, students are expected to have a desire to learn more and have a greater enthusiasm for mastering English courses.

Figure 1. Response from students on instrument number 1

I like english subject

378 responses

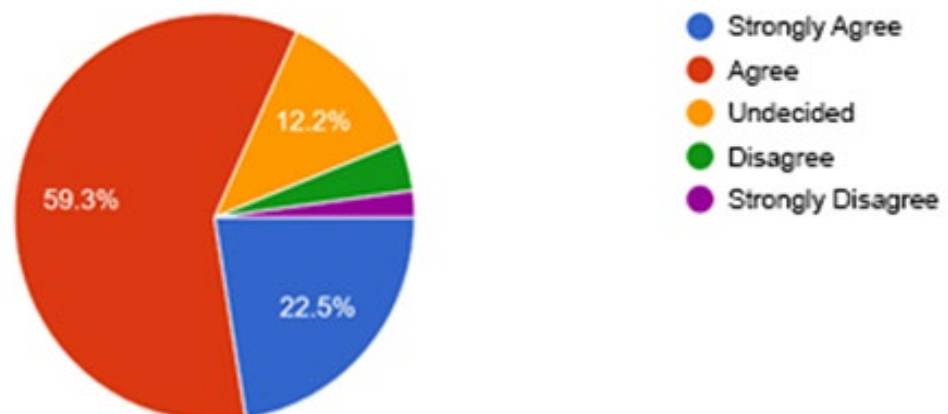


2 The majority of students agree that the English lecturers have taught well and attracted the attention of students. This can be seen more fully through Figure 2. This fact shows that students feel the lecturer shows a fun learning method so that it can attract students' attention in class. This should have a positive impact on students' ability to master English.

Figure 2. Response from students on instrument number 2

English lecturer teaches attractively

378 responses



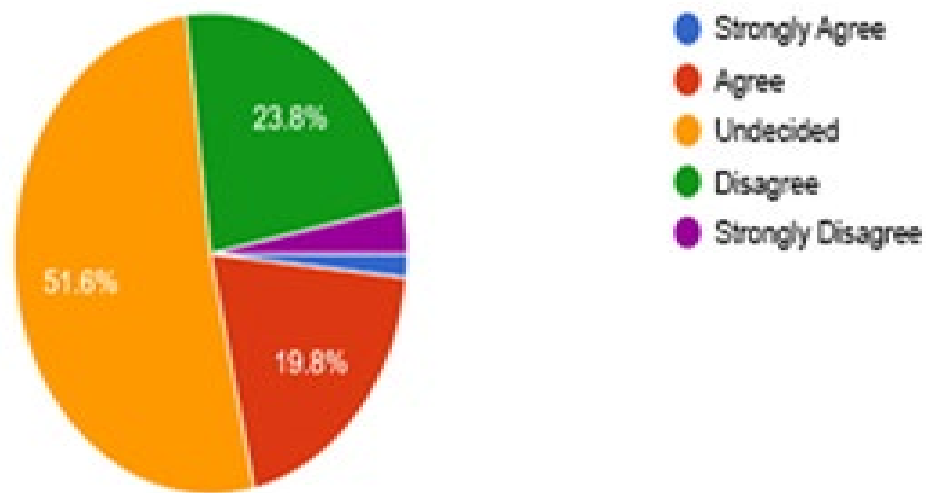
3 The majority of students do not use English in everyday conversation. This can be seen more fully through Figure 3. This fact shows that students have not made English as an

everyday language, and even tend to disagree with the use of everyday English (Zulkifli, 2015). On the other hand, language is a skill that will improve if used in daily life. From this fact it can be assumed that there are doubts in students with their language skills aside from not wanting to be seen as arrogant by their peers.

Figure 3. Response from students on instrument number 3

I use english for daily conversation

378 responses

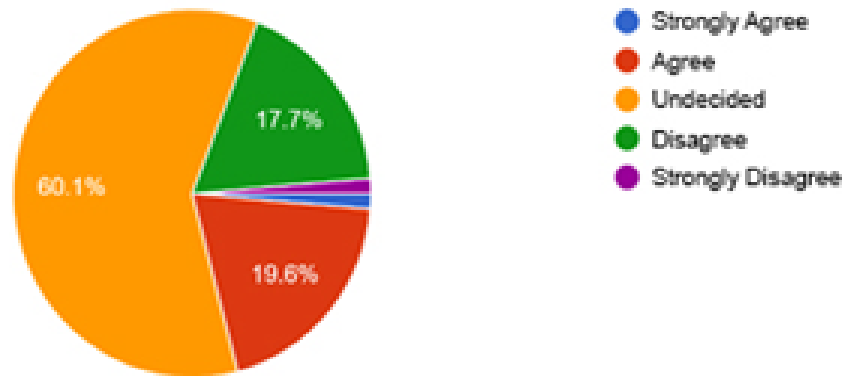


4 The majority of students are unable to converse with foreigners. This can be seen more fully through Figure 4. This fact is clearly not too surprising because in the previous section it was clearly seen that students did not use English as an everyday language, so they could be sure they did not have the courage to have conversation with foreigners using English.

Figure 4. Response from students on instrument number 4

I have the ability to make conversation with english speakers

378 responses

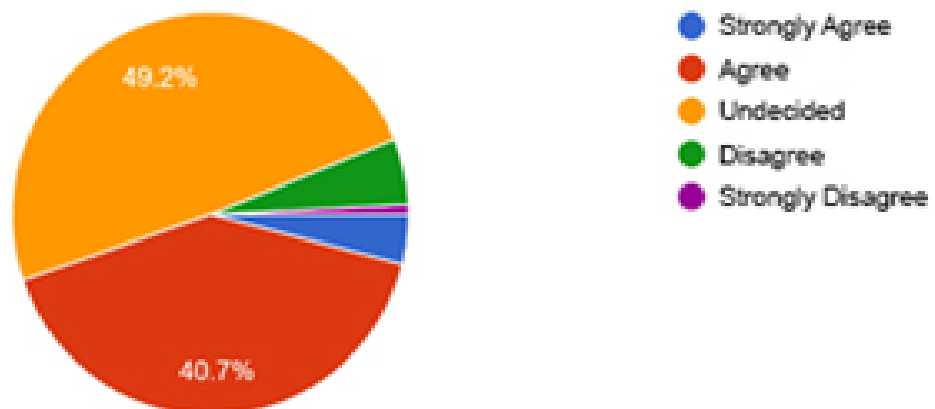


5 This section can still be said to have the same comparison between students who are able to understand without being able to understand. This can be seen more fully through Figure 5. This fact shows that students actually have the ability to understand English texts, but the time constraints, limited vocabulary, and other limitations make them doubtful or even unsure of their abilities.

Figure 5. Response from students on instrument number 5

I have the ability to understand english texts properly

378 responses



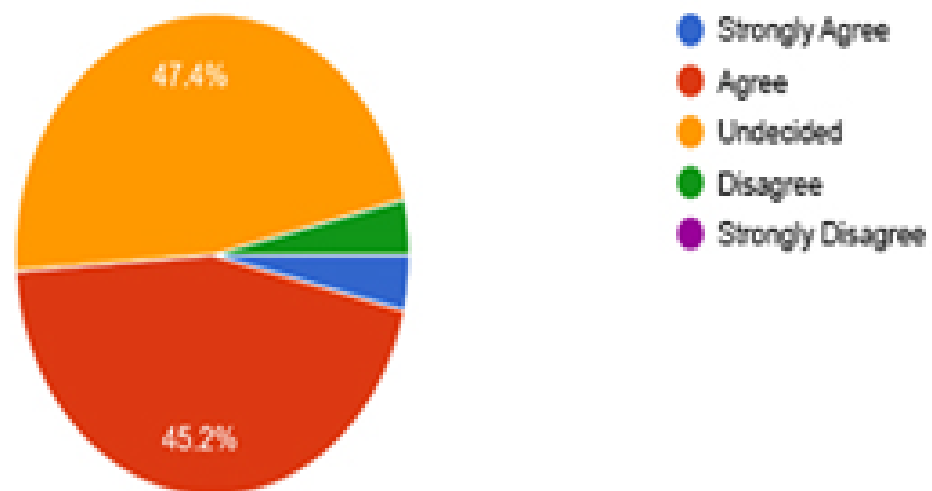
6 In terms of the ability of understanding the texts and writing, it is found that the ability of students to understand text and write texts have relatively the same comparisons. This can

be seen more fully through Figure 6. This fact shows that students actually already have the ability of understanding the text and writing the text, but they are hesitant and unsure of their abilities, so that they do not dare to express what is in their heads to in written form. Writing ability is indeed an ability that is still a problem in learning English in Indonesia (Hartoyo, 2009).

Figure 6. Response from students on instrument number 6

I have the ability to write english texts properly

378 responses



From the results obtained through a questionnaire, all students have diverse opinions about the skills that are the most difficult to master. However, when compared from one language skill with another language skill, the results show that the ability to communicate is the most difficult ability to master (Yuliawati, 2018). Some factors which contribute to the lack mastering of communication include: lack of vocabulary and pronunciation, difficulties with memorization, the differences between English and Indonesian, the fear of making mistakes, the fear of being laughed at by friends, and a lack of grammatical knowledge. Some of the factors causing student difficulties lie in the affective factors of students. This is reinforced by the results of the study of Afisa & Yolanda (2015), which states that the factors causing difficulties in learning English are the frequency of English speaking practice, and psychological factors (in this case, affective factors).

The second position is listening skills and understanding texts. When listening to an English-language program, students do not have the ability to keep up with the normal speed of native English speakers. The lack of mastery of vocabulary and understanding of the English accent

then makes them have further difficulty in understanding the content spoken in the conversation even though the speed has been adjusted to Indonesian speaker. Listening problems are also found by Paakki (2003), who examines the differences between Japanese and Finnish English learners. It was stated that the condition of English learners from Japan is influenced by differences in English accents so that the understanding of listening activities is not optimal. This has an impact on the pronunciation of the target language. Unlike Japanese students, students from Finland feel that British accents are very attached to them so that the resulting language is relatively good. Most students think that reading and understanding text skills are the easiest thing to achieve. The factor, which is used as the basis of answers by students, are reading activities. Hence, even though the lecture is delivered in English they still enjoy the activity. The second reason is that, when the student has reading ability, they will easily answer and understand the set text.

The ability of writing is difficult to master. However, few students consider writing a difficult skill to learn. This is because the students are assisted in learning the writing process. There are several steps that students are required to make before they publish their writing. The writing process consists of outlining (drafting paragraphs), drafting (drafting the initial paragraph), editing (checking on the accuracy of writing), revising (checking on the accuracy of the relevance of the content), and publishing (publishing the writing to be read by friends). The appropriate approach in writing activities is highly recommended, because developing an idea requires a process of activities that can develop ideas and improve the elements in them. In addition, appropriate learning media is needed to minimize the difficulties encountered. One such media that can be used is a comic strip, if the ideas to be developed are related to narrative texts (Megawati & Anugerahwati, 2012).

From the description of the results of the questionnaire analysis, it can be said that there is a contradiction between the interest of students studying English and lecturers with the competencies they have in English. Basically students, who are interested in a lesson, and like the teaching style of the instructor, will be directly proportional to their competence. The results of a questionnaire show that with high interest and satisfaction with high instructors, the ability of students in English should also be high. This condition is then continued to find the truth.

The results of further analysis found that the causes of students having the ability to speak English (understand texts, write texts, and dialogue) were minimal because: 1) students lacked knowledge of English vocabulary, 2) minimal grammar knowledge, 3) were not accustomed to using language England, 4) fear there is a negative response from the surrounding environment, and 5) lack of confidence. This is what prevents students from mastering English and results in them not daring to use English in their daily lives.



Based on these obstacles, students also realize that the main reason for their weak abilities is themselves. Students realize that they are less motivated to master English, are still half-hearted in studying, and are too afraid to try to communicate. At the end, students also write down things they need to do to be able to master English, including: 1) getting used to using English in writing, 2) getting used to listening or watching films in English, 3) practicing English conversation with themselves, 4) increasing self-confidence and getting rid of shame, and 5) studying vocabulary and grammar more actively.

Conclusion

The English Learning process cannot be separated from the emergence of various problems that occur within students. These difficulties can be seen from each language skill or as a whole. In class conditions that have different language competencies, the difficulties encountered also vary. In this study, the research subjects enumerated the following sequence of the four language skills in regard to difficulty: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing. The factors that cause learning difficulties in English are very much influenced by the level of language mastery of each student.

This research provides insight for vocational tertiary institutions, which are expected to produce competent members of the workforce who are ready to face the growing work industry in line with technological advances. Work skills, adaptability and dynamic mindsets become challenges for human resources, which should be obtained when receiving formal education in Higher Education. Graduates who are able to adapt to the Industrial Revolution 4.0 can be produced by increasing the ability of English in students. Understanding existing problems is one of the ways that universities can work towards this end, and also improve competitiveness and attractiveness to prospective students.

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