

Factors that influence the low interest in learning English among junior high school students

Radiana Andi Syahrir¹, Puspa Sari²

^{1,2}Universitas Muhammadiyah Palopo

¹radianasyhr@gmail.com

²Puspasari@umpalopo.ac.id

Abstract

There are various factors that influence English learning in junior high school. The problems faced in learning English in junior high schools are related to student conditions, the environment, learning media, and teachers' teaching methods which are considered less attractive. This research aims to find out what factors can cause low student interest in learning English. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative with the research subject being class VIIIH. Data collection techniques include observation and interviews. The research results show that there are internal and external factors that influence students' low interest in learning. Internal factors include students' perceptions that English is a difficult subject, especially because of the large amount of vocabulary that must be memorized and difficulties in pronunciation. Meanwhile, external factors include: 1) Learning media that is less interesting, where students feel that the media used by teachers is not relevant to current developments and tends to be boring because of the dominance of printed books which only contain explanatory text. 2) Teachers' teaching methods are less interesting, where teachers more often use monotonous approaches, such as providing explanations and assignments without involving practical activities.

Keywords: *Learning Interest, English; Students*

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that plays a major role in the life and development of a country. In this era of globalization, especially in the world of education, a new curriculum has been established, namely the independent curriculum (Kemendikbud, 2021), bringing new changes, one of which is that English learning is a compulsory subject starting from elementary school level. Although it has become a compulsory subject in schools, many students are not interested in learning it, causing factors of low interest in learning English, especially for elementary school students. As stated in research conducted by (Sondakh & Sya, 2022) students are not interested in learning English because the vocabulary is considered difficult to understand.

The low interest of junior high school students in learning English can be attributed to various factors. One of the factors that causes students to have difficulty understanding English is low interest in reading. As reported by (Indrasari, 2024) the interest in reading in Indonesia is still very low, in fact the number of people in Indonesia is still more who are less interested in reading books. To increase interest in reading, there needs to be an awareness that there are already many sources of reading knowledge that can be used, not just printed books, but there are already more updated ones along with digital the developments so that there are electronic books, e-books, and journals or research results available on various trusted platforms.

There are external and internal factors that influence the lack of interest in learning English. (Johnson, 2006) stated that internal factors are very influential in defeating external factors. If external factors are in a perfect position, then internal factors can change success. There are several internal factors such as anxiety, negative attitudes, low confidence and demotivation. There are external factors such as lack of support from family and school environment factors that are not supportive. These factors influence the process of learning English for students in the classroom. For example, there are students who are not active in class because they are influenced by their own anxiety, they already think that it is difficult and are afraid of making mistakes.

Another factor that affects students' interest in learning English is lack of motivation. Many primary school students fail to see the relevance of learning English in their daily lives, especially when the language seems disconnected from their immediate social and cultural context. Without a clear understanding of its practical application, students may not feel motivated to invest time and effort in learning English. In addition, uninteresting teaching methods, such as memorizing vocabulary and grammar, fail to capture students' attention and discourage active participation language learning. The absence of interactive or creative activities further exacerbates the lack of motivation, making the learning process feel monotonous and irrelevant.

The lack of student interest in learning English is a major challenge for educators in many educational environments (Mills, 1959). The importance of this study is so that we can see the phenomenon of students who are not interested in learning English in schools. We will investigate what might be the main causes and we will evaluate how this impacts the overall educational process. We will also discuss various efforts and approaches. Therefore, this article will discuss the difficulties and problem factors experienced by students in learning English in elementary schools, both from internal and external factors. One of the factors that causes students' lack of interest in learning is due to the fear of students themselves in learning English with the first reason that English is difficult to pronounce and understand. (Amri, 2018) The second reason is that students still have difficulty in mastering 4 skills in English, namely Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Of these four skills, all of them must be mastered by students. However, in learning activities, students experience difficulties, this makes students lazy to learn English. The problems experienced by students in learning English are taken from the perspective (view) of junior high school teachers who have implemented English learning in their schools.

Similar previous studies discussed the low interest in learning English but only focused on one factor, namely the difficulty of learning vocabulary, resulting in low interest in learning English in elementary school students. According to (SUCANDRA et al., 2022) Poor vocabulary is a problem that must be solved to improve it because vocabulary is very important in learning English. Therefore, it is necessary to increase innovation and creativity in the progress of vocabulary or student lessons.

In previous research, most of the research focused on the difficulty of using vocabulary. However, this study looks deeper into several factors that cause low interest in learning English. From observations that have been carried out, one of the students who has been interviewed found several factors that cause low interest in learning English, the reason is because according to them it is difficult to understand it and he said that there was one factor that made him less interested in learning English, namely when he learned about fruits in English, according to him it was difficult to understand the vocabulary. Therefore, when learning English, the student just slept in the back. Another factor is also because the student had great difficulty in pronouncing what he learned in English. What makes the student less interested in following English learning is because the learning media used is still manual, only references from printed books, the lack of the latest and interesting learning methods that make students less interested in following and paying attention to the learning brought by the teacher.

If seen from the results of observations of English learning in the school still uses manual methods so that students are less interested in the learning process. However, with the lack of methods used by teachers at the school, researchers can develop methods that can attract students' interest in learning. This study aims to find out what factors can cause low student interest in learning English. After knowing the researchers will improve the teaching process of teachers and students by changing more interesting learning methods such as playing games so that students can learn in a relaxed and fun way so as not to make the learning process tense and scary.

METHOD

Research Design

The research method used is descriptive qualitative. Defined by Bogdan and Taylor (1975) qualitative research is one of the procedures that can produce data in the form of speech or writing and the condition of the person being observed so that in this qualitative research, more accurate data is obtained for researchers who can use it. This study focuses on the low interest in learning English of junior high school students. Aims to understand what factors can influence the low interest in learning English for these students. Qualitative descriptive research produces data that describes who, what or factors and experiences from a subjective point of view as stated by (Kim et al., 2017). This study uses interview and observation methods as instruments to collect data and select respondents who are recommended as participants to be used as samples (Creswell et al., 2012).

Participants

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling. The researcher selected three students to be interviewed based on certain criteria that matched the characteristics that had been previously determined. Of the nine classes in grade 8 of junior high school, class 8H was selected as a participant because it was considered to represent students who had low interest in learning English. Most students in class 8H had low English scores, which were thought to be caused by a lack of motivation to learn and difficulty in understanding the material. During the learning process, some students even chose to go to the canteen or felt bored, so they did not follow the learning properly. Therefore, the participants of this study were focused on junior high school students in grade 8H.

Data collection tools

In this study, the tools used in data collection through observation and interviews. The data collected are in the form of written and spoken words that emerge from interactions.

The researcher used interview techniques, as stated in the book (Fadhallah, 2021) interviews are one of the techniques used in data collection. where one person as an interviewer, asks several questions that have been prepared to the informant to get answers related to the research problem. The types of interviews are structured interviews, unstructured interviews, and semi-structured interviews.

Researchers use the observation method because observation is the collection of data or information that must be carried out by making direct observation efforts at the place to be studied as stated by (Arikunto, 2010). The observation used by the researcher was only two days to see the condition of the class and the condition of the students during the English learning process in order to find out the information investigated by the researcher.

Technique/Procedure of Collecting Data

The observation technique used by the researcher was only two days. On the first day, the researcher collected data by conducting observations in class 8H by first observing the class conditions when English learning was taking place. The researcher also observed the learning methods used by the teacher when teaching English in class to find out whether the method used was still using the old learning method or had been updated to be more creative and sophisticated.

On the second day of data collection, the researcher observed the condition of students during English learning so that the researcher could find out the low interest in learning English by observing students who were less focused or did not pay attention and students who did not follow the learning during English learning. After observing the students, the researcher selected 3 students as participants to be interviewed.

The researcher used data collection techniques with interview techniques, namely by using unstructured interview techniques because it makes it easier for researchers to get more in-depth answers by interviewing students casually by asking questions that can go beyond the

questions that have been prepared. The researcher used this type of interview in providing focused questions to 3 8th grade junior high school students to be interviewed in more depth who were classified as having low interest in learning English. With this interview technique method, it is easier for researchers to find out the factors that cause low interest in learning English in students.

Technique/procedure of analysis data

During the observation, the students' conditions, the researcher looked at the list of students' English scores so that the researcher knew which students had low scores in English and then noted down several students who had low scores to conduct interviews.

During the interview, the researcher gathered 3 students who had been selected as participants. Before starting the interview, the researcher first turned on the voice recording and recorded it during the interview process. Then the researcher began the interview by giving questions that had been previously provided by the researcher. The questions provided by the researcher were only 3 questions from each of the 3 students. The rest of the time, the researcher only spoke casually and added questions outside of the questions that had been prepared previously if they still wanted to know more while noting down important points from the students' answers.

When the researcher finished collecting data and had answered all the questions from the study and had found the factors, the researcher closed the interview and turned off the voice recording.

The researcher reanalyzed the data by re-listening to the audio recordings, then transcribing them into written form according to the contents of the recordings. After the transcription was complete, the data was processed through a coding process to identify answers to the research questions. Furthermore, the coding results were extracted to reveal factors that influence students' low interest in learning. Based on these findings, the researcher sought solutions that could help increase students' motivation in learning English.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Researcher [R] asked participant 1 [P1] to find out their low interest in learning English. He answered that his interest was low, the reason why [P1] had low interest in learning English was because the examples given were different from the questions given. This is different from what was expressed by participants [2].

1.1 Extract P1

R : “Apakah belajar Bahasa Inggris itu membuat adek lebih bersemangat belajar atau malah rendahnya minat belajar ta pada saat pembelajaran berlangsung? ” (**Does learning English make you more enthusiastic about learning or does it make you less interested in learning during the lesson?**)

P1 : *“rendah minatnya”* (**Low Interest**)

R : *“Oh rendahnya minat ta pada saat belajar Bahasa Inggris”*
(**Oh, Ta's low interest in learning English**)

1.2 Extract P2

R : *“menurut ta’ saat proses pembelajaran belajar Bahasa Inggris itu mudah atau sulit?”*

(**Do you think the learning process of learning English is easy or difficult?**)

P2: *“Sulit”* (**Difficult**)

R : *“Oh sulit okeh, selanjutnya Apa saja faktor yang membuat sulit belajar ta Bahasa Inggris , apa saja yang menyebabkannya ?”*

(**Oh, it's difficult, okay, next What are the factors that make it difficult to learn English, what causes it?**)

P2: *“Hmm eee kurang mengerti terus belibet ngomongnya”* (**Hmm, I don't understand, I don't understand what I'm talking about**)

R : *“Oh belibet dalam public speakingnya, okey okey ee pada saat proses pembelajaran materi apa yang guru yang biasa guru bawaan di kelas ?”* (**Oh, I'm confused about public speaking, okay, okay, during the learning process, what material does the teacher usually bring in class?**)

P2: *“Materi tentang keseharian tentang kayak eee bertanya jam e nama nama”*
(**Material about daily life like eee asking the time e name name**)

Participant 2 [P2] said that he felt difficulty learning English in pronunciation and vocabulary. this was also said by participants [3].

1.3 Extract P3

R : *“dari semua pembelajaran itu apa yang pembelajaran materi apa yang menurutta susah untuk kita pahami ?”*

(**Of all the learning, what learning material do you think is difficult for us to understand?**)

P3 : *“Hurufnya dan nama nama hewan dalam bahasa Inggris”* (**Letters and animal names in English**)

R : *“okeh okeh eeeh penyebutannya dan kosa katanya ya?”* (**okay, okay, eeeh, the pronunciation and vocabulary?**)

P3 : *“iya”* (**yes**)

Researcher [R] wanted to know the reasons why they had difficulty learning English, in contrast to [P1's] answer, where [P2] and [P3] had the same difficulty for pronunciation and vocabulary lessons. The reason why Participant 3 [P3] said that he also experienced difficulties in pronunciation and vocabulary in English

After conducting research, it was discovered that the low interest in learning English among junior high school students was caused by two main factors, namely internal and external factors as stated by (Aulya & Farida, 2023) and (Johnson, 2006).

Internal factors come from within the students themselves, many students consider English to be a difficult subject. This is due to the difficulty of memorizing vocabulary that is considered complicated (Sondakh & Sya, 2022), as well as the difference between writing and pronunciation in English, which often confuses them.

External factors are things or circumstances that come from outside the student, including the situation and conditions of the surrounding environment. External factors that influence students' low interest in learning include:

- 1) Learning media: Based on interviews, students stated that the learning media used by teachers was less interesting and not relevant to current developments. The dominant use of printed books makes students feel bored and have difficulty understanding the material because they only contain text explanations.
- 2) Teachers' less interesting way of teaching: Teachers tend to use monotonous learning methods, such as only providing explanations and assignments without including practical activities.

Limited school facilities that still rely on manual learning media, such as printed books, also become an obstacle for teachers to present interactive learning materials, for example through videos, PowerPoint presentations, or other more modern media. This causes students to feel less motivated to learn. As stated by (Ramos Holguín & Aguirre Morales, 2016) that if learning facilities are inadequate, the teaching and learning process will be hampered.

The results of the interviews were that there were differences in the reasons for children's low interest in learning English, such as [P1] the low interest in learning English was because the examples given were different from the questions given. Meanwhile, [P2] and [P3] have the same difficulty in learning pronunciation and vocabulary, which results in their low interest in learning English.

CONCLUSION

Students' low interest in learning English is influenced by various interrelated factors, both within the students and external factors. One of the main factors is students' negative views of English, such as finding it difficult or boring, which makes the situation worse. Lack of motivation is also a cause, which stems from the disconnection of English from their daily lives or the habits that have been formed. In addition, teaching methods that are less interesting or do not suit students' learning styles also play a role in reducing their interest. Limited facilities and learning support resources also influence student interest. All of these factors interact with each other and have an impact on students' low interest in learning English.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all parties who have provided support during the process of completing this research. Their continuous support was instrumental in the smooth preparation of this work. I would also like to thank all the participants who took their time and provided their insights, so that this research could be carried out well. Your cooperation and contribution is very meaningful. Furthermore, I thank my family and friends for their extraordinary support and understanding, especially when facing challenges. Their patience and trust have been a source of strength and motivation for me. Lastly, I also want to appreciate myself as a researcher who remained persistent and patient in completing this research even though I faced various difficulties. Thank you to all parties who have contributed to this research, both directly and indirectly. Your help is very much appreciated

REFERENCES

- Amri, S. (2018). Pengaruh Kepercayaan Diri (Self Confidence) Berbasis Ekstrakurikuler Pramuka Terhadap Prestasi Belajar Matematika Siswa Sma Negeri 6 Kota Bengkulu. *Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika Raflesia*, 3(2), 159.
- Arikunto, S. (2010). Prosedur penelitian suatu pendekatan praktek. (No Title).
- Aulya, A. F., & Farida, N. (2023). *AL-KHIDMAH Analisis Faktor Rendahnya Minat Belajar Bahasa Inggris Siswa SMP Negeri 18 Raja Ampat*. <https://e-jurnal.iainsorong.ac.id/index.php/>
- Creswell, J. W., Columbus, B., New, I., San, Y., Upper, F., River, S., Cape, A., Dubai, T., Madrid, L., Munich, M., Montreal, P., Delhi, T., Sao, M. C., Sydney, P., Kong, H., Singapore, S., & Tokyo, T. (2012). Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research FIFTH EDITION. *Education Research*, 10–12.
- Fadhallah, R. A. (2021). *Wawancara*. Unj Press.
- Indrasari, Y. (2024). UNESCO Sebut Minat Baca Orang Indonesia Masih Rendah. *Rri Radio Rebulik Indonesia*, 1.
- Johnson, B. J. (2006). (2006). *Foreign Language Learning: An Exploratory Study on The External and Internal Influences Affecting Success*. Thesis. Unpublished. Faculty of Baylor University. 6.
- Kemendikbud. (2021). *Panduan Implementasi Kebijakan Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)*. 1–66.
- Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., & Bradway, C. (2017). Characteristics of qualitative descriptive studies: A systematic review. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 40(1), 23–42.
- Mills, C. W. (1959). *The sociological imagination*. Oxford University Press.
- Ramos Holguín, B., & Aguirre Morales, J. (2016). English Language Teaching

- in RRamos Holguín, B., & Aguirre Morales, J. (2016). English Language Teaching in Rural Areas: A New Challenge for English Language Teachers in Colombia. *Cuadernos de Lingüística Hispánica*, 27, 209–222. <https://doi.org/10.19053/0>. *Cuadernos de Lingüística Hispánica*, 27, 209–222.
- Sondakh, D. C., & Sya, M. F. (2022). Kesulitan Pembelajaran Kosakata Bahasa Inggris Tingkat Sekolah Dasar. *Karimah Tauhid*, 1(3), 346–351.
- SUCANDRA, S., Budiman, M. A., & Fajriyah, K. (2022). Analisis Kesulitan Penguasaan Kosakata Pembelajaran Muatan Lokal Bahasa Inggris Pada Siswa Kelas Iv Di Sd Plus Latansa Kabupaten Demak. *Wawasan Pendidikan*, 2(1), 71–80. <https://doi.org/10.26877/wp.v2i1.9664>