

Students' Interest in Learning English: A Need Analysis for Teaching Large English Classes

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Abstract

In many universities in Indonesia, teaching large English classes is not unusual. It is common to have more than 50 students seated in a class taking an English subject. It is also prevalent that the students are studying different majors, but none of them are English department students. This study aims at obtaining information that will be taken as the base to have a well-designed language program. This study was descriptive research using a survey as the main instrument. A set of questionnaires were distributed to 100 students taking an English subject at the university, aiming at gathering information under three notions; what students believed in learning English, what they expected and how they measured their English ability. The research findings showed that 98.4% of the students believed that English was important due to its dominance in almost every aspect of their life. In addition, 95.2% of the students expected that English class would help them in their speaking since speaking was often said the first way that people took to measure a person's ability. However, 90% of the students admitted that their English had not improved in any significant way, that they prefer to be taught basic English. Referring to the research findings, it can be concluded that every large English class teacher should be wise to determine the input or the content of the lesson for the students, the process presented and what expected learning outcomes should be highlighted.

Keywords: Large classes, need analysis, English subject

Minat Siswa dalam Belajar Bahasa Inggris: Analisis Kebutuhan untuk Mengajar Kelas Bahasa Inggris Besar

Abstrak

Di banyak universitas di Indonesia, mengajar kelas bahasa Inggris dalam jumlah besar bukanlah hal yang aneh. Sangat umum untuk memiliki lebih dari 50 siswa duduk di kelas yang sama mengambil mata pelajaran bahasa Inggris. Bahwa siswa belajar jurusan yang berbeda, tetapi tidak satupun dari mereka adalah mahasiswa jurusan bahasa Inggris adalah hal yang lazim. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memperoleh informasi awal yang akan dijadikan dasar untuk memiliki program bahasa bagi kelas berkapasitas besar. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif dengan instrumen utama berupa survei. Serangkaian kuesioner dibagikan kepada 100 siswa yang mengambil mata pelajaran bahasa Inggris di universitas, yang bertujuan untuk mengumpulkan informasi di bawah tiga pengertian; apa yang siswa yakini dalam belajar bahasa Inggris, apa yang mereka harapkan dan bagaimana mereka mengukur kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 98.4% siswa percaya bahwa bahasa Inggris itu penting karena dominasinya di hampir setiap aspek kehidupan mereka. Selain itu, 95,2%

siswa mengharapkan kelas bahasa Inggris akan membantu mereka dalam berbicara karena berbicara sering dikatakan sebagai cara pertama yang dilakukan orang untuk mengukur kemampuan seseorang. Namun, 90% siswa mengakui bahwa bahasa Inggris mereka tidak meningkat secara signifikan, mereka lebih memilih untuk diajarkan bahasa Inggris dasar. Mengacu pada temuan penelitian, setiap guru kelas besar bahasa Inggris harus bijaksana untuk menentukan input atau isi pelajaran bagi siswa, proses yang disajikan dan hasil belajar apa yang diharapkan harus disorot.

Kata Kunci: *Kelas berkapasitas besar, analisis kebutuhan, Bahasa Inggris*

1. INTRODUCTION

In many underdeveloped nations, such as Indonesia, large classes are prevalent. One of the reasons why colleges offer huge classrooms is to save money (Hornsby & Osman, 2014). In many Asian countries, a large number of language teachers attend a class with a large number of students (Minh Trang, 2015). This type of atmosphere is widely regarded as posing a danger to educational quality (Hornsby, 2013). Having 50 to 60 kids seated in one lesson is challenging and complicated. One of the difficulties is in ensuring that each student receives the same treatment (Makniyah, 2020). One of the reasons why pupils do not get the intended learning outcomes is because of an imbalance in treatment (Kher & Rani, 2019). Because there are so many pupils in class, it is painful for teachers to provide aid to kids in developing their language skills (Anindya et al., 2020).

Several articles have been published about the issues of teaching large groups. It is believed that large classes limit teachers' abilities to give high-quality instruction. The learner's learning environment (Blatchford & Mortimore, 1994). Bahanshal examines the influence of huge groups of students, noting that one or all of the three difficulties is asking questions (Bahanshal, 2013). Similar findings have been made by Alam that assigned college students and large-group

learning (Alam, 2016). According to the findings of the study, many pupils are overlooked, and worry reigns supreme in the classroom. It also mentions that due to the huge number of students, the practice of the target language and the progress of students' spoken language are limited. This result is supported by Harmer, who found that large classrooms impede the teaching and learning process, particularly for teachers and students (Harmer, 2000). Teachers find it difficult to create effective and creative activities, pay attention to or communicate with everyone, especially those who prefer to sit behind and hide because there are so many people.

Many studies on the subject of teaching big groups of students have attempted to develop standards for managing large groups of students. Because large classes are generally associated with poor student performance, specific pedagogical methods are required.

There are two techniques for managing big classes: small-class management and problem-solving management (Maringe & Sing, 2014; Shamim, 1993). Another guideline that teachers can follow to deal with the issues of having a big number of pupils in their classroom is to combine theory and innovative teaching methods with advice on excellent teaching practice (Gibbs & Jenkins, 2014).

In Nigeria, posters, visual illustrations, and PowerPoint presentations are believed to be useful teaching techniques for big groups (Aduradola & Akeredolu-Ale, 2013). Text messages sent via mobile phones are effective in increasing student involvement in large classes (Kuznekoff et al., 2015).

The parallels between the two studies are an attempt to get students to participate more in class. During the teaching and learning process, it is common to see that just a few pupils focus on the process while others work on irrelevant tasks. The teacher's capacity to produce well-managed courses and cultivate teaching abilities is crucial to managing huge classes. The teaching process will be reinforced by effectively planning and implementing techniques for teaching and assessment (Asodike & Onyeike, 2016).

Although there has been a lot of studies discussing the efforts and solutions for teaching large English classes, only a few that research the students' interest and motivation to be seated in an English class where English is a foreign language, and the classes consist of many students majoring different study programs. Moreover, there is a tendency to merely follow what beings' trends in teaching practices that often considering what students probably need and want seem useless. While interest and motivation are paramount in doing a need analysis, which is a crucial step in designing a language program, it is pivotal to investigate what these students as foreign language learners, required to pass an English subject, seated in a class full of other students studying different major.

Since the key to success in the learning process is motivation, some professionals have their definitions of

motivation. According to Hayikaleng, Nair, and Krishnasamy, motivation is a crucial factor in a student's ability to succeed in English (Hayikaleng et al., 2016). Motivation may also be understood as a person's path in life or what drives them to do something, to wish to do something again, and vice versa (Alizadeh, 2016). Moreover, Motivation and academic achievement, as measured by grade point average, are also important factors (Tambunan & Siregar, 2016).

At all stages of education, from elementary to college, average and success are positively associated. It can be seen from the preceding description that motivation is a combination of effort and desire. Desire, which explains why people do what they do, what they want, and what they need to get what they want.

The goal of learning is to achieve a goal. In line with that, motivation is defined as reasons for behavior that is characterized by willfulness and volition (Achtziger & Gollwitzer, 2018). Motivation involves a set of beliefs, perceptions, values, interests, and behaviors that are all tightly related.

Students, on the other hand, will be enthused to learn if they receive an incentive. Being capable of having effective communication, English Teachers should be aware of the importance of motivation in the lives of their students. They can assist learners to enhance their motivation by making some adjustments to language learning (Alizadeh, 2016).

Motivation is the mechanism that initiates, directs, and maintains behavior (Santrock, 2004). It indicates that motivation is pushing and demonstrating to pupils that they should accomplish something and maintain doing it. Motivation is the process by which goal-directed activity is proposed and

perpetuated (Schunk et al., 2012). It means that motivation can influence someone's conduct to help them reach their objectives. By motivation, a person has a goal and is motivated to accomplish anything in his or her life.

Motivation is a desire to achieve a goal combined with the energy to do it. Motivation has long been a popular area of study in psychology. Many hypotheses and notions have been proposed by psychologists to characterize human motivation. Motivation has also been recognized as an important factor in the cognitive process (Yuzulia, 2021).

Due to its importance, several studies on motivation have proven how motivation significantly correlates to students' learning achievement. Those who have high motivation are high achievers, meanwhile, the low motivated are low achievers (Jun-ming, 2017).

Referring to studies of motivations and interest explained previously, it is clear that understanding what students seek for and expect in their study are paramount. The information helps any language teachers to formulate and design their teaching content that best suit their students' condition. This study aims at examining students' interest and motivation in learning a required English class since the two aspects play a significant role in determining how a language program is presented. What students want to learn and what they expect is always part of need analysis. Need analysis is the first phase in designing any program, including a language program. It is what teaching program designers take into consideration.

2. METHOD

This study was descriptive research using the survey method. Survey research aims at gathering

information about people's beliefs toward a case (Gay et al., 2009). Questionnaires were distributed to 150 students who took English subjects at the university. The questions were to find out what they expected from learning English, how they felt about joining English class considering that they were not majoring in English, to what extent they believed they needed to study English. The data were analyzed by using a simple descriptive statistic to obtain the percentage of each item in the questionnaire on which the explanations were based.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the research were explained under three notions; students' expectations, students' belief toward English, and the students' perception of their English ability.

Students' belief in learning English.

From the questionnaire, it was found that 98.4% of the students said that they agreed English subject was necessary. Although they studied different majors, they admitted that English had been another paramount requirement for future life. Being skillful in English would be an extra point for their upcoming plans, for example when they intended to apply for scholarships for a higher degree or to get a good job.

People used to acquire jobs if they were experts in their industries, but in today's world, specific skills must be complimented by effective communication. In order to make job seekers gainfully employed, it is critical to place a strong emphasis on English communication growth.

Moreover, they acknowledged that English was everywhere, monopolizing every aspect of their life, social media used English, high rating movies were in English, international

songs were in mostly in English, journals and articles that could support their study were in English, the internet was mostly in English, even they said being able to use English contributed a positive impression in society. These students were mostly first-year students. They learned English formally for 6 years in high schools. However, only 5.6% of the students confirmed that learning English is easy. More than 93% said that English was somehow pretty difficult.

Thus, it was concluded that despite the merits of being capable of using English, the majority of the students believed that English was a difficult subject.

Furthermore, the value of English has risen dramatically as jobs have become more worldwide. It has grown in importance as a means of communication at both the international and intra-national levels over time. The value of spoken English is much greater, because there are numerous instances in which someone knows their subject well but fails to communicate it effectively. As a result, it is critical to practice spoken English. Learning English in a place where it is not the local language opens up a world of possibilities. The importance of good communication has been recognized and embraced more than technical competence in today's corporate world.

Students' Expectation and Attitude in learning English

Since almost all students agreed that English was not easy, they did have expectations in learning or taking the English course at the university. Among the four English skills, 95.2% of the students expected to be able to speak in English. They wanted to learn English so that they could speak fluent and correct English. The students admitted that speaking ability would be best needed

when it came to interviews for job vacancies for instance. They obtained information that the trend of a work requirement would be being capable of answering a set of questions in spoken English. They also claimed that their grades in their certificate would not be the main consideration to get a good job. The paper was more for administrative purposes. Thus, they believed being skillful in spoken English would contribute positive extra points for their performance in the workplace.

However, 49% of the students said that they perceived English in a less favored way. They conveyed that they never expected to be seated in an English class once they graduated from high school. They even said one of the reasons they were studying their major was because they wanted to avoid having English classes. In some universities, English was the most favored major, seen as one promising program for the future. Yet, since they realized they had no chance in English due to their incapability, they decided to take a different study program. They once thought that they would never study English again. The fact that it was one of the compulsory subjects at the university left them an option, following the class to pass the class.

Students' Perception on their English ability

Another question asked to these students was how far they understood English after several years of studying in high schools. 90% of them admitted that they did not master the beginners' level mostly on the discussion of how English sentences were constructed, the tenses or the aspect, when to use which verb, why they had to be modified when to use which be. The students affirmed that they could not produce longer sentences

in English. Introducing themselves in English was not even better than how they did in high schools. They realized their English had not improved anything of significance yet it appeared to be more confusing. They admitted that they were lack of basic English grammar mastery, that even constructing simple sentences were difficult for them. They realized their English ability was not as how university students' English ability should be.

Based on the research findings, it was possible to confirm that the students highly believed that English was important for them specially to work on their future life (Asmali, 2017). In addition, they had high expectations on the improvement of their speaking ability, that was what they foresee when they were obliged to take English subject at the university (Iwaniec, 2014). However, at the same time, they admitted that English was somehow complicated that it was quite hard for them to understand, and often they did not mind passing the class without having to make achievements. When the subject was difficult, the understanding was not the target, they just wanted to pass the class. Their expectations were not to be having English ability, yet to pass the class so that they could graduate since English was one of the compulsory subjects.

Therefore, there are some considerations in designing a language program for a group of students studying different majors in which their English ability was low. Three things every language designer have to deeply consider were the input; what to give to the students, the process; how the inputs should be presented, and the outcomes; what the students have to be able to do after going through the set processes. By referring to the main three findings explained previously, a large English

class teacher can not only focus on the expected learning outcomes. The teacher or the lecturer should not be setting high expectations believing that they are university students already and then assuming that they have to be on the advanced level of English class. It is always better to pick basic content to facilitate their needs. It is better to ensure that they understand basic English, preparing them to study a higher level of English on their own once they are no longer in the English class. Although they are university students, it does not guarantee that their English skills reflect what types of students they are. It is very common to see that the majority of the students speak not better than most of the high schoolers did. Thus, it is wise to adjust the level of the content to students' abilities.

Then, it is necessary to figure out ways to present the content. There are a lot of teaching strategies that the teacher might apply. Some of them were popular due to more and more teachers or language practices either using them or simply recommending them. However, it is not suggested to select one technique or strategy, or model due to its popularity. Every teacher should understand that each model or strategy, or technique is equipped with certain phases that sometimes do not suit every type of student. It is fine to use old methods, strategy or techniques as long as they meet how the conditions of the students are as what a need analysis is meant for.

In addition to that, every language teacher needs to be aware that expected learning outcomes should be based on what processes the students had been through. It is not wise to set high expected learning outcomes merely based on the demands of society or the trend in language teaching. What learning is meant and how the process

should be completed are the essence of learning. It should always be based on the learning experiences that the students achieve, not merely on what the students should be able to make or produce in the intended subject.

Also, since language input or what to give to the students is one of the paramount considerations in designing a language program, and the it is already known that the students' English ability happened to be low, teaching basic grammar can be a solution even though the are not high school students anymore. Language teachers are responsible for developing and presenting grammar information to students. The importance of materials selected from grammar features cannot be overstated. In terms of grammar books, it is vital to have references that might aid in the teaching and learning process. Certain tasks should be completed by a pedagogical reference book. To begin, determine which grammatical objectives will be included in the syllabus, school textbook, lesson, or instructional sequence. The reference should then define grammar rules and make them understandable to language learners. The specification can be delivered in a variety of ways, including explanations, illustrations, exemplifications, and student discovery of rules. Then, decide what role a given exercise can play in enhancing learning activities or develop learning goals for specific exercises and activities. Furthermore, the citation should discuss the methods used to create and evaluate the grammar problems. Finally, the reference can be utilized to assess a learner's proficiency.

One of the important concepts is that all teachers should understand what students' wants and desires are in the classroom (Ryegård et al., 2010). He refutes the notion that students dislike

teachers who spend the majority of their time speaking in the classroom. Students become demotivated during lecture time because they dislike being passive in class. As a result, learners have little control over the learning process. If this occurs, the learning process will not proceed as smoothly as the teacher anticipated.

Teachers must develop their expertise to be able to highly motivate students to learn. It is discovered that pedagogical influences performance in teaching. Referring to several previous studies, it is concluded that pedagogic competence or the knowledge about teaching frames what teachers should do to run their classes. however, the knowledge that is mostly based on theoretical studies should be completed with experiences.

There are things that knowledge cannot provide, but are best learned through experiences. Teachers may know what materials should be presented by considering phases in designing a teaching program, such as conducting needs analysis, determining the output, considering the input, deciding the process following how curriculum designers teach them.

Nevertheless, during the real-time teaching, there are things not explained in any books but there, happening in the class. Sometimes plans do not work as how they are expected to work. Sometimes students behave differently showing symptoms that books never explain. What can save teachers during these situations is the experiences. For example, in planning a lesson, teachers usually focus on ways to teach and how to evaluate.

Personality competence is the other competence that every teacher has to have. This competence requires every teacher to be friendly, empathetic, sensitive, and have integrity. Teachers

should be able to know what is happening in their classes. The sensitivity is obtained through experiences. It is not something to learn, it is something that can be obtained naturally by involving in different kinds of situations.

However, there will always be students that do not follow the lesson, prefer to do some other unrelated activities, tend to lose focus during the lesson, disturb other students, or any activities that may distract class attention. A well-experienced teacher knows how to give immediate responses to these issues that they will not lead to bigger problems.

Being experienced requires practical contact with the observations of facts or events. Supposed that a teacher knows her subject very well, knows how to apply certain strategies, but when the teacher means to manage her classes behavior, which is one influencing aspect that determines the success of the learning, the teacher can no longer base her treatments on the theories she probably has read in the book, because giving treatments are based on how good she has observed different students' attitudes and choose one appropriate response. Which response to choose is often governed by mistakes that she probably did in the past. Maybe once she took one technique that did not work out handling a particular behavior, that when the same pattern appears, she will not apply the treatment that once she believed. This is one example of how experiences become very crucial.

Being a teacher is a lifetime of learning. It is important to upgrade the professional competence by joining workshops, attending seminars or conferences, taking a higher education because time changes, the world is developing, students are exposed more to technology, what is believed to be true

in the past few years may somehow inapplicable in the future. Teachers need to be aware of the changes. At the same time, teachers have to carefully observe what is happening to the classes, to the students, how they behave, what influences them, what makes them interested, what makes them bored. As time goes by, the information keeps changing, so do the teachers. That way, teachers will always be the main source of learning, places to ask for, the most influential factor to succeed in a teaching program, as well as in the achievement of educational goals.

Various ways of teaching a language such as English have been widely promoted in many research by many language practices, teachers, and language experts. There are a lot of strategies, choices of teaching materials, techniques that language teachers may easily select to be applied. For instance, those that people focus on teaching large English classes.

However, no matter how promising and seems applicable the offerings are, information gathered from a need analysis should always be used as the main consideration to design a language program. Every teacher should be selective in deciding what to choose.

Knowing what the students need and what suits them best are more paramount compared to the knowledge of knowing various teaching strategies. It is reasonable to say that both knowledge and experience are two paramount aspects of running a teaching program. Teachers cannot only rely on their knowledge about teaching, but they need to be experienced when it comes to applying certain teaching techniques.

Teachers are knowledgeable, they understand their subjects, they master the materials. Yet, since teaching is beyond having to teach, it is about building a relationship, building trust,

making students believe that they can learn, making students' confidence when they feel like giving up, making them see positive things in their life, preparing them for a better future.

Learning materials which are based on the considerations of students' needs should also be completed with appropriate instructions or books equipped with various tasks or assignments, skillful and competence teachers, having both pedagogical competence and personality competence are the essential package to have a better or well-designed language program addressed to large English classes seated by university students majoring different subjects or study programs.

4. CONCLUSION

It is then concluded that many things should be considered in designing a language program. Not only what students want, desire or expect, but also what they feel about it and how the feel the lesson is better presented. Knowledgeable and experienced teachers are indeed needed.

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