

## SOME REASONS OF INDONESIAN TEENAGERS STRUGGLE IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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### ABSTRACT

*This study explores the various challenges faced by Indonesian teenagers in learning English. It identifies key issues such as the mismatch of learning levels, neglect of essential language skills (reading, writing, and listening), lack of clear learning goals, insufficient feedback on mistakes, and the absence of a structured academic curriculum. Additionally, low teacher professionalism and student motivation are highlighted as significant barriers. The findings suggest that to improve English proficiency, it is crucial to align learning materials with students' proficiency levels, emphasize a balanced development of language skills, set clear and achievable goals, provide constructive feedback, and enhance teacher training and motivation strategies. Addressing these factors can significantly enhance the English language competencies of Indonesian teenagers, thereby boosting their global competitiveness.*

**Keywords:** Learning English, Indonesian Teenagers, Struggle.

### INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in English is an important aspect of human development in Indonesia. Most teenagers do not only learn English in school, but also take some English language courses outside in other school. Some teenagers joined English club to practice their English together with their friends, because most of them believed that schools provide the most rudimentary and basic knowledge thus, they learn outside of schools.

Most of the Indonesian expected by joining the clubs and courses outside of schools will help them tremendously, boosting their knowledge passing through their peers who only studied at school. Students expected to enhance their ability to communicate effectively in English, both in speaking and writing. They want to express their thoughts clearly and understand others without significant difficulty, and akin to a native. They also hoped that by learning English that their proficiency in English will open up more career opportunities, as English is a global language and a key skill in many professions. They hope that being fluent in English will make them more competitive in the job market. Many Indonesian teenagers aspire to study abroad, and proficiency in English is often a prerequisite for such opportunities. They expected that mastering English will enable them to apply for scholarships, attend prestigious universities, and benefit from international educational programs.

The main question of the study is "What are some reasons of Indonesian teenagers struggling in learning English?"

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to Purnell (2023), there are five reasons to struggle in English learning: (1) learning At the Wrong Levels (2) Neglecting Essential Reading, Writing & Listening Skills (3) Learning Without Clear Goals Won't Increase Their English levels (4) Neglection Of Mistakes & Correct Corrections and (5) The Absence of Academic Curriculum And Real Plan.

## **1. Learning at the Wrong Levels**

Too many students are learning at the wrong level, which makes it difficult for them to get better at English. Time lost and irritation can grow as a result of this mismatch. Students encounter major obstacles to learning when they interact with content that is either too basic or too advanced. Studying material that is not aligned with a student's current proficiency level leads to inefficiency. Advanced topics may be too challenging, causing students to feel overwhelmed and demotivated. On the other hand, reviewing topics that have already been mastered can lead to boredom and disengagement. This misallocation of effort prevents students from making meaningful progress, and engaging with overly difficult content can be frustrating and disheartening, leading to a decline in confidence. Students may become discouraged and question their abilities, which can result in a negative attitude towards learning. Conversely, if the content is too easy, students may not feel challenged or motivated to push their boundaries, stalling their growth.

## **2. Neglecting Essential Reading, Writing, and Listening Skills**

Speaking abilities are frequently given priority by teachers while teaching English since they may be completed quickly. But disregarding fundamental abilities like writing, reading, and listening can impede general development and retention. Research underscores the importance of developing all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—for effective language acquisition. An unbalanced focus on one skill over others can lead to significant gaps in a student's ability to use the language comprehensively. For example, while speaking skills are crucial for communication, neglecting reading and writing can limit a student's ability to understand and produce written texts, which are equally important in both academic and professional context. According to Galaczi (2018), someone who lacks proficiency in all four skills will have significantly fewer opportunities in education and the workplace.

### **Listening**

One of the most important elements for effective everyday communication is listening. Bano (2017) stated Despite being a fundamental mental skill that allows us to comprehend and interact with those around us, listening is so common in daily life that we often overlook it. Both social and cognitive processes are involved in listening, namely our interactions with others and the organization of our own knowledge. According to Vani (2023), The ability of students to listen is necessary for them to understand any type of information. Effective listening is essential for both consistent communication and academic achievement. If students can comprehend listening skills, they will succeed in improving their communication skills. Despite being a crucial skill, listening has received little attention in studies on second language learning, instruction, and evaluation. The purpose of this study is to investigate how important listening skills are for improving communication abilities. If students have strong listening skills, they can develop effective communication skills. It has been shown that students' listening skills improve when they practice listening to music, watch English-language movies, and take English language classes.

### **Reading**

According to Noor (2011), Reading opens up a world of experiences that connect people in ways that transcend distance and time. Reading gives the individual experience, allowing him to broaden his horizons, identify, extend, and intensify his interests, and gain a better understanding of himself, other humans, and the world. Reading is essential for students in general in order to cope with new information in a changing world, particularly in the technological age. Reading is a fundamental ability that must be developed while

learning a language (Chandran & Shah, 2019). The primary problem is that, despite being recognized as the most crucial academic skill, reading comprehension is not encouraged or as successful as one might hope among students. This has resulted in a situation in which school children in our country are unable to grasp reading English texts and in result failed to comprehend the meaning of it.

### **Writing**

According to Bhowmik (2021), Writing is a crucial ability for using a foreign language successfully. Writing is especially crucial in an EFL setting since many students study English for advanced writing-related academic and professional goals. In addition to serving as a communication tool, writing is an important productive skill that improves language learning and acquisition for EFL students. It helps students track their language learning progress and help them remember and recognize what they have learnt (Albashir Jamoom, 2021). It is clear that reading and writing always have close and complementary relationships, that's why speaking and writing fluency are directly correlated with reading comprehension among English language learners, this means that learners must practice writing and read a lot of texts in order to strengthen their writing abilities. The process of learning to write in English as a second language is frequently impacted by elements including the mother tongue's influence, a lack of enthusiasm, and a lack of reading opportunities (Thi & Anh, 2019).

### **3. Learning Without Clear Goals Won't Increase Their English levels**

Learning without clear goals is a significant impediment to advancing one's English proficiency. When students lack a defined direction, they often engage in English learning activities without a specific purpose, leading to inefficient use of time and limited progress. This aimlessness can stem from attending classes or studying without a clear understanding of what skills or knowledge they need to acquire. To effectively enhance their English level, students must establish clear, achievable goals and develop a structured plan to attain them. By pinpointing their areas of weakness and focusing on targeted learning strategies, students can make substantial progress and elevate their English proficiency with confidence. Encouraging goal-setting and task analysis will benefit students by assisting them in organizing their approach to a task. Both teachers and students may benefit greatly from taking the time to explain to students how to organize their unique approaches to a task (Rubin, 2003). The teacher can only be convinced that his work is effective and that the methods he employs are appropriate or ineffective if there are clear ways to determine whether pedagogical goals have been attained. When proponents of pedagogical technology examined the conventional teaching approach, this is precisely what they had in mind (Mattiev, 2022).

### **4. Neglection Of Mistakes & Correct Corrections**

Ignoring errors and their fixes is a major obstacle to pupils' progress in their English language skills. Although kids naturally don't like to be corrected, this can seriously inhibit their progress. In order to keep students motivated, teachers must make corrections in a helpful and constructive way. Prompt and efficient corrections enable pupils to grow from their errors and advance steadily in their English language learning process. Recognizing mistakes and finding constructive solutions to them is essential to establishing a secure and supportive learning environment.

### **5. The Absence of Academic Curriculum and Real Plan**

Students frequently find it difficult to improve their English proficiency because they lack a solid academic plan and program. Students may find themselves revisiting the same subjects or studying stuff that are too advanced for them if they don't have a planned learning program that fits their present level. According to Musthafa (2010), access to in-

service training opportunities and professional support are frequently lacking for English teachers in elementary schools. Learning English for Indonesian teenagers forces them to do big efforts. In order for English instruction to function as anticipated, it is imperative that educators maintain a suitable perspective on the nature of children, as this perspective is the foundation of nearly all pedagogical decisions. In the Indonesian environment, proficiency in English is one of the most important components of human growth. This language proficiency opens doors to a globalized world for others who don't speak English, such youngsters in Indonesia (Sayer, 2018). Evidence, however, indicates that there are still difficulties and barriers in Indonesian English language teaching methods (Lamb 2004, 2007, 2013; Marcelino, 2008; Musthafa, 2010; Yulia, 2013), which leads to inadequate English language proficiency among Indonesian adolescents. One of the numerous causes of this is the lack of professionalism exhibited by educators throughout the board, from elementary to secondary education (Waterworth, 2016). However, as numerous studies indicate, skilled English teachers may make up for inadequate learning resources such classroom space, instructional materials, and delivery strategies.

Low learning motivation is another obstacle to raising students' English language proficiency in the Indonesian context, in addition to low teacher professionalism (Lamb, 2007; Yulia, 2013; Supriyanti, 2012). Indonesian teenagers' poor motivation is caused by a variety of reasons, such as fewer creative learning materials, unsupportive facilities, and inadequate teaching strategies. It's possible that Indonesian teenagers lack motivation because they haven't figured out how to get motivated, such realizing how important English language proficiency is to the development of the human index. Because of this, Indonesian youths need to receive direction and encouragement to become more motivated to learn in order to enhance their English proficiency, which raises their competitiveness on the international stage.

In order to acquire the required English competencies, students, such as those at SHS in Indonesia, must be highly motivated to learn and to continue being enthusiastic to study.

## **CONCLUSION**

As a result, teenagers in Indonesia still have inadequate English language proficiency. One of the numerous causes of this is the lack of professionalism exhibited by educators throughout the board, from primary to secondary education. Nonetheless, as a number of studies indicate, skilled English instructors can make up for inadequate teaching strategies, resources, and facilities. Indonesian teenagers face significant challenges in learning English due to several factors. These include the mismatch of learning levels, neglect of essential skills such as reading, writing, and listening, and the absence of clear learning goals. Additionally, the lack of constructive feedback on mistakes and the absence of a structured academic curriculum contribute to their struggles. Moreover, low teacher professionalism and insufficient motivation among students further exacerbate the issue. To improve English proficiency among Indonesian teenagers, it is essential to address these factors by ensuring that learning materials are appropriate for the students' levels, emphasizing a balanced development of all language skills, setting clear learning objectives, providing constructive feedback, and enhancing teacher training and motivation strategies. By implementing these measures, Indonesian teenagers can significantly improve their English proficiency, thereby increasing their competitiveness in the global arena.

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