

An Analysis of Students' Difficulties In Learning Intensive Course at The First Semester Students of State Islamic Institute of Bukittinggi Academic Years 2019/2020

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Abstract:

The background of this research was based on the difficulties that students faced in intensive learning courses in the first semester of English Education Students of State Islamic Institute of Bukittinggi Academic Years 2019/2020. The purpose of the research was as follows to find out how many the difficulties face by the first semester students of English Department IAIN Bukittinggi in the learning-intensive course.

This research used a descriptive quantitative research. The sample of this research were the first semester students at English Department (PBI) year 2019. There were four classes on the first semester students of Islamic states of Bukittinggi (IAIN). The researcher uses purposive sampling as a sampling technique, and the sample was 71 students of first semester students.

It was concluded that 61,44% of the students had difficulties in listening. 52,96% the students had difficulties in speaking. 62,75% of the students had difficulties in reading. Lastly, 51,11% of the students had difficulties in writing. Furthermore, unknown pronunciation and accent still made most of them feel difficult in the listening process. Most of the informants felt difficult to speak since they don't know what to say or they have limited ideas of the topic that were being spoken which made them rather quiet or just only speak a little. Most of the informants feel difficult in reading because of limited vocabulary they possess, unfamiliar topics, different text levels, and they can't or lack strategy in remembering the important information about the text they just read. Lastly, grammar, conjunction, and vocabulary are the most things that complicated the informants in writing.

Keywords : *intensive course, difficulties*

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Introduction

Intensive course (IC) is an iconic subject for the English education department, especially for first semester students. By having an intensive course as their primary subject, the students are expected to have balance ability without any significant differences in the English subject. It has the purpose to prepare the students for a more difficult subject for the next coming semester. According to Bouti, IC is an integrated subject that covers all the English skills like reading, listening, speaking, writing. Furthermore, he said that the students who are not able to pass this subject are recommended to change their major. While Talib said that IC has the purpose to make students have English ability that is integrative and able to communicate using English well so that the students are ready to use English whether it is written or spoken. It means that IC is the main subject for English education student, especially for first semester students

In Indonesia, IC has been used as the main subject for college students since 2002. It has 18 SKS and is taught for 28-30 hours a week. According to Cahyono in Djiwandono, IC is organized along with several major points. First, it is given as a one-semester program with 18 credits that have to be taken by the first-year students majoring in English education. Second, it is a course that has to be carried out intensively with an average of 28 to 30 hours per week. Third, the purpose of the course is to improve the students' fluency in English supported by mastery by some basic aspects of language skills and components. Fourth, the course materials are "specifically selected, organized, developed, and used in an integrated manner" for overall proficiency in English. Fifth, the teaching of the course should involve a team working in good coordination. Finally, periodical evaluation should be given to examine students' progress and achievement and to ensure that remedial actions can be given at the appropriate time.

Intensive course is one of the subject in English Education Department that has been used for more than 2 years. It is an integrated subject that covers the English skills such as reading, listening, speaking, writing. It has the purpose to have the students prepared with the upcoming subjects that are more difficult, which is why the IC is taught at first semester students. IC program in English Department IAIN Bukittinggi has 10 credits that must be taken by first semester students, as a basis to learn English which consists of four main skills, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Those four skills have three components support in English subject to improve the students' fluency in English and mastery in some basic aspects of language skills. Based on preliminary research on March 15th, 2019 by interviewing students in IAIN Bukittinggi, it was found some problems. They said that they do not have enough ability to learn the intensive course. One of the students, NG, said that her had difficulty in understanding structure and even though it had been explained many times. The other students, ZD, also said that when his learn intensive course had difficulty example in listening, his had difficulty listening to the conversation on the speaker because the conversation is sometimes too fast so he has trouble listening to the idea of the speakert.

Furthermore, some students said that them did not understand learning English because they had limited vocabulary dan grammar especially in learn about tense. While they were still confused about the basic tense (present, past, future), now they had to learn any other grammar in the English language. Based on the background above, the researcher is interested in researching An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Learning Intensive Course at The First Semester Students of State Islamic Institute of Bukittinggi Academic years 2019/2020.

Method

This research used a descriptive quantitative research. The sample of this research were the first semester students at English Department (PBI) year 2019. There were four classes on the first semester students of Islamic states of Bukittinggi (IAIN). The researcher uses purposive sampling as a sampling technique, and the sample was 71 students of first semester students. And the instrument that use questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire will help the researcher to add the data about the students difficulty and this questioner could also become the prove that students have problem in learning intensive course. And the questionnaire presented in Indonesian language so that respondents could quickly fill out the response. In addition, the questionnaire that was used in this research was made in google form and was distributed through email and whatsapp application. The questions used for this study was close-ended questions. The interview will conduct to students related to difficulty and that students find in understanding of learning intensive course. This interview was made in Indonesia language it is easy to understand. And this interview will be used to deepen the data that would be got from the questionnaire. And the last validity, that should consider the purpose of questionnaire and choose the appropriate validity that will be used. In this research, expert validity was used. It had the purposoe to know whether the test is good or not, the researcher consulted it with the lectures and the English teacher.

Results

In this section, the researcher provided the finding that was gathered from the field. As mentioned before, the informants of the research were the second semester of the English education department of IAIN Bukittinggi. The instruments that were used were interview and closed questionnaire. The researcher would like to provide each finding separately which was started by elaborating the description from the questionnaire and interview and then analyzing the data from the finding

1. Description of the Data

There were 29 items of the questionnaire which were divided into 4 categories based on the difficultiesface by the first semester students of English Department IAIN Bukittinggi in the learning-intensive course of each English language skills, which were listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The questionnaire was given to the informants by using Whatsapp application and email. The questionnaire that the informants received was formulated in Google Forms Format which can bevisited at <https://forms.gle/VXZLEMDhf5r2yiHEA>. From the Google Forms, the responses from every informant were recorded automatically and were saved in Google Drive that the researcher already prepared. There were a total of 71 students that were chosen as the informant. The result of the questionnaire can be viewed on the table below:

Table 4.1 The Result of Learning Difficulty Questionnaire

Item Number	Skills	Alternate Option		Percentage		Percentage of students have got a learning difficulty
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
1	Listening	34	37	47,89%	52,11%	61,44%
2		48	23	67,61%	32,39%	
3		23	48	32,39%	67,61%	
4		49	22	69,01%	30,99%	
5		59	12	83,10%	16,90%	
6		58	13	81,69%	18,31%	
7		42	29	59,15%	40,85%	
8		36	35	50,70%	49,30%	

9	Speaking	33	38	46,48%	53,52%	52,96%
10		53	18	74,65%	25,35%	
11		24	47	33,80%	66,20%	
12		43	28	60,56%	39,44%	
13		35	36	49,30%	50,70%	
14	Reading	52	19	73,24%	26,76%	62,75%
15		39	32	54,93%	45,07%	
16		45	26	63,38%	36,62%	
17		51	20	71,83%	28,17%	
18		57	14	80,28%	19,72%	
19		29	42	40,85%	59,15%	
20		45	26	63,38%	36,62%	
21		65	6	91,55%	8,45%	
22	18	53	25,35%	74,65%		
23	Writing	53	18	74,65%	25,35%	51,11%
24		50	21	70,42%	29,58%	
25		50	21	70,42%	29,58%	
26		13	58	18,31%	81,69%	
27		13	58	18,31%	81,69%	
28		29	42	40,85%	59,15%	
29		46	25	64,79%	35,21%	

The percentage of the students who responded “yes” to the questionnaire was calculated by using $P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$. After finding out the percentage of each item, then the average of each category was measured.

P = Percentage of the result

f = Total students who responded yes

n = total respondents

2. Analyze the Data

Based on the description of the data above, the researcher would like to elaborate and analyze the responses based on each skill difficulty. The responses would be later supported by some interviews with the informants.

a. Listening

The percentage of each table will be interpreted by using the interpretation table below:

Table 4.3. Interpretation Table

None	0%
Almost None	1-19.99%
Few	20-39.99%
Half	40-59.99%
Mostly	60-79.99%
Almost All	80-99.99%
All	100%

Source : Muhidin dan Abdurrahman (128:2007)

This interpretation table is used to explain data from quantitative is used in the following tables. There are 8 questions in the questionnaire that were related to the listening difficulty which was item numbers 1 – 8.

According to the table above, the first question there are half of the students (47.89%) who answered that they have difficulty on topics that are unknown in listening, meaning half of these students have difficulty recognizing topics that are less familiar to them when they listen to listening learning material in intensive-course learning. The seconds, Most of the students (67.61%) answered that they had difficulty concentrating on what the speaker said, meaning that the students had their concentration when listening to audio material on the speakers given by their lecturers, some of them felt that it was difficult. Few students (32.39%) of the students answered that they felt nervous when listening, so only a few students who when listening to audio material did not feel nervous in learning to listen on the intensive course and also did not make it difficult for them to learn to listen.

The majority of students (69.01%) responded that the learning atmosphere that was not conducive disturbed them in the listening process, means of some students the atmosphere in the classroom, as well as calmness in learning to listen, is needed by students in learning in intensive courses because students need a comfortable and quiet classroom atmosphere when learning to listen. Almost all students (83.10%) answered that they had difficulty in pronunciation that was not well known in listening. it means that almost all students who learn to listen experience difficulties in the pronunciation they hear from audio, as the pronunciation they hear is sometimes clear and sometimes unclear, making it difficult for them to listen to the pronunciation in English from the audio listening they hear. Almost all students (81.69%) answered that they had difficulty with foreign accents in the listening process, so almost all of these students have difficulty in foreign accents in learning to listen, The accent is sometimes clear not because in the English department uses two accents namely British and American because this accent is often used in international communication. Half of the students (59.15%) answered that students felt difficulties in an unknown dialect while listening. This means half of the students had difficulty listening to the English dialect when learning to listen on an intensive course. Half of the students (50.70%) answered that they found it difficult to listen to unknown jives/brogue. it means half of the students find it difficult to listen to jive/brogue while learning to listen on the intensive course.

From the table above, it can be concluded that most of the students (61,44%) were still finding that listening skills were difficult. Furthermore, items number 5 and 6 indicated most "yes" responses. The item number 5 was about whether the unknown pronunciation would complicate them in listening and item number 6 was whether the unknown accent would complicate them in listening. This means that unknown pronunciation and accent still make most of them feel difficult in the listening process.

This data above was supported by the interview with the students. WS, AS, and I said that new words or unknown vocabulary made him feel difficult in understanding what the speaker says. SA added that the speed of the speaker's speaking was also made her feel difficult to understand the listening material. S stated that accent, especially the UK accent, is hard to understand. While M added that pronunciation was the thing that made her difficult to understand what the speaker says. On the other hand, OA and GR did not feel any difficulty in listening.

b. Speaking

Based on the table above, half of the students (46.48%) answered that they were nervous when speaking. means half of the students are nervous when speaking in English, it is specifically in English pronunciation because it takes practice in speaking English. Most students (74.65%) answered that the lack of ideas is difficult for them to speak, lack of ideas is a difficulty for students when speaking English, and confused in what ideas they want to say when speaking and also the vocabulary they say too lacking, so the ideas they conveyed were not conveyed. Few students (33.80%) answered that when there were students who dominated the speaking class

too much they would be nervous. it means that only a few of the students are nervous when their friends are good at speaking English, so they are motivated to be better and not feel nervous about speaking English on an intensive course. Most students (60.56%) answered that they preferred to use their native language when speaking in class. means the use of foreign languages when class is rarely used by students because they more often use the mother tongue (Indonesian language) to communicate in class because it is easier. Half of the students (49.30%) answered that they found it difficult about pronunciation in speaking. means that only half of those who find it difficult to pronounce in speaking, because pronunciation in speaking is different from what is written in English so that sometimes it does not match what they see in writing with the pronunciation when speaking

Furthermore, it can be analyzed that half of the students (52,96%) still feel difficulty in speaking after taking an intensive course. Moreover, item number 10 indicated the most “yes” response from the informants. The item number 10 was about whether lacking an idea of what to say complicated them in speaking. This means that most of the informants feel difficult to speak since they do not know what to say or they have limited ideas of the topic that were being spoken which made them rather quiet or just only speak a little.

Also, the data above was supported by the interview. WS, SA, S, AS, and M said that pronunciation was one that made speaking difficult, WS added that it was a shame if speaking in front of the class with incorrect pronunciation. While OA and Ik said that lack of ideas in speaking made her don't know what to say. On the other hand, GR stated that she did not feel any difficulty in speaking.

c. Reading

Based on the table above, the majority of students (73.24%) answered that the lack of vocabulary makes reading difficult, meaning that some of the students have difficulty reading, especially the lack of vocabulary, where the vocabulary they read is new vocabulary making it difficult for them when understanding the meaning of the sentence what they read. Half of the students (54.93%) answered that they found it difficult to understand the meaning of the text they were reading. This meant that half of the students had difficulty understanding the meaning of the text that was given to be read for them. so sometimes they do not know the meaning of the text especially if the words are read when reading it. Most of the students (63.38%) answered that they could not read quickly and understand the text they were reading, meaning that most of the students had difficulty reading fast, moreover the texts they read were long and their difficulties in understanding text reading that is given quickly. Most students (72.83%) answered that an unknown topic was something that made them think reading was difficult. means that some of the students have difficulty in recognizing the topic they are reading, wherein the reading text also has a topic that is sometimes difficult for students to meet, especially if the vocabulary is less difficult for them to discuss an unknown topic.

Almost all students (80.28%) answered that reading texts that have different levels from the text they read before would make it difficult for them. means that almost all of the students have difficulty in reading parts of the text with different levels, the text that is given with the same level does not make the reading level up there, so if the level of the text is added then the difficulty level of understanding the text will add up but the level of adding vocabulary increases too. Half of the students (40.85%) answered that the lack of reading strategies was what made them feel difficult in reading. it means that half of those who experience difficulty in reading strategies lack reading text, however, if the student makes a reading strategy correctly it may be difficult to read reading texts depending on the personality of the student. Most students (63.38%) answered that unknown topics made it difficult for them to read. means that most of the students feel difficulties in unknown topics in the form of background reading material that is different from the previous one, thus making it difficult for them to understand topics that they do not know about, but if these difficulties can be overcome by reading the text repeatedly Next time to

determine the topic and understand the text. Almost all students (91.55%) answered that they could not remember important information in the text they had just read. means that almost all students find it difficult to remember important information in the reading text that they just read, and also to remember all the text information that is understood not all students can if they read the text well and understand it. Some students (23.35%) answered that they found it difficult to conclude from what they had just read, meaning that only a few found it difficult to conclude in reading texts because only the important conclusions in the text made it easy for them to that matter.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that most of the students (62,75%) were feel difficulty in reading even after taking an intensive course. The Item number 14,17, 18, and 21 were indicated as the most item that receives the most “yes” response from the informants. The item number 14 was about whether limited vocabulary complicated them in reading, the item number 17 was about whether the unfamiliar topic complicated them in reading, the item number 18 was about whether the difference of text-level they read complicated them in reading, and the item number 21 was about whether they can remember the important information of the text they just read. Based on this, it can be concluded that most of the informants were feel difficult in reading because of limited vocabulary they possess, unfamiliar topics, different text levels, and they cannot or lack strategy in remembering the important information about the text they just read.

In addition, from the interview with the students, it was found some supporting data. All the interviewees have the same answer which was vocabulary was the thing that made understanding the reading material become hard. Even though Ik said that he could look to google or an online dictionary to find out the meaning, but the unknown vocabulary was still the main thing that made reading difficult.

d. Writing

According on the table above, the majority of students (74.65%) answered that grammar is their obstacle in writing. Some of the students find it difficult to grammar in writing, which makes them difficult namely in determining sentence making as well as a formula the writing they use in writing each sentence or paragraph. Most students (70.42%) answered that they found it difficult to use conjunctions in writing. means that most of these students have difficulty with conjunctions in writing between sentences in English. Almost no students (18.31%) answered that they found it difficult to use punctuation in writing. means that students have no difficulty in using punctuation in writing sentences or paragraphs because it is very easy for students to understand. There are almost no students (18.31%) who find it difficult to use capital when writing, meaning that almost all students do not find it difficult to use capital letters in writing. Half of the students (40.85%) answered that they found it difficult to spell some words in English. means half of the students have difficulty in spelling in some English vocabulary when writing a sentence. Most students (64.79%) answered that the lack of ideas is also one of the things that makes them feel difficult in writing. means that most of the students find it difficult to lack ideas when making a sentence or paragraph in an English text because the development of the topic of ideas given is in the form of an explanation but it is difficult to find ideas that match the sentences or paragraphs made.

Furthermore, it can be viewed that half of the informants (51,11%) responses “yes” to the question that related to writing difficulty. This means that half of the informants still feel difficult about writing skills even after taking the intensive course. Furthermore, item number 23, 24, and 25 indicated most “yes” responses from the informants. Item number 23 was about whether grammar complicated them in writing, item number 24 was about whether they can use the proper conjunction in writing, and item number 25 was about whether they can use the proper vocabulary in writing. This means that grammar, conjunction, and vocabulary are the most things that complicated the informants in writing.

Based on the interview, the students were also given the same answer. All of the interviewees said that grammar is difficult in writing. They tend to forget the grammar rules in writing. This made the grammar becomes the biggest obstacles for the students to be able to write in English.

Discussion

Based on the finding above, it was concluded that half of the informants (57,49%) still feel difficult in English language learning even after taking the intensive course. Furthermore, unknown pronunciation and accent still make most of them feel difficult in the listening process. Most of the informants feel difficult to speak since they do not know what to say or they have limited ideas of the topic that were being spoken which made them rather quiet or just only speak a little. Most of the informants feel difficult in reading because of limited vocabulary they possess, unfamiliar topics, different text levels, and they cannot or lack strategy in remembering the important information about the text they just read. Lastly, grammar, conjunction, and vocabulary are the most things that complicated the informants in writing.

This finding supports the theories from Hamouda, Penny Ur, Martin Bygate, Nuttal, and Aronoff that elaborate on the language learning difficulties that are encountered the most by the language learners. From this, the teachers and researchers could focus their attention on these difficulties and how to overcome these matters. Even though after taking an intensive course, half the language learners, especially the students of the second semester of the English education department in IAIN Bukittinggi, still feel difficulty in learning the English language. This means that the intensive program is neither the best nor the bad way to handle the language learning difficulty. It is still one of the good ways to overcome language learning difficulty until the better one shows up.

From the results of the above research that difficulties in intensive course learning can be overcome if students can be more creative and active in learning during intensive course learning and lecturers can find out these difficulties by evaluating after students have studied intensive course learning in the future.

Conclusion

Based on the finding above, it was concluded that half of the informants (57,49%) still feel difficult in English language learning even after taking the intensive course. Furthermore, unknown pronunciation and accent still make most of them feel difficult in the listening process. Most of the informants feel difficult to speak since they do not know what to say or they have limited ideas of the topic that were being spoken which made them rather quiet or just only speak a little. Most of the informants feel difficult in reading because of limited vocabulary they possess, unfamiliar topics, different text levels, and they cannot or lack strategy in remembering the important information about the text they just read. Lastly, grammar, conjunction, and vocabulary are the most things that complicated the informants in writing.

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