THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SLOW AND FAST LEARNERS IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the characteristic owned by slow and fast learners in SMAN 1 Porong, to know how the teacher teach slow and fast learners and to explore the challenges experienced by the teacher in teaching English. Design of this research used descriptive qualitative. The subjects of the study are English teachers and students SMAN 1 Porong. Data instruments of this research used observation checklist and questionnaire. Based on the research findings, the students who were include in characteristic of slow learner there were 7 slow learners and fast learner there were 11 fast learners. The teacher did well the teaching learning process. The teacher when teach the class also gave some different treatment to slow learner. The teacher used mix Indonesian and English language. The teacher faced challenges due to the lack of motivation in slow learners, the large number of students in the class, the questions given by fast learners that are too difficult, requires several times to explain to slow learners, requires special strategies to teach both of them and difficult to convey the material. For EFL teachers must learn more to teach English, comprehend about the characteristic from their student. For EFL students, they can learn English by memorizing vocabulary or by taking courses that require them to use English in daily communication. For future researchers should conduct additional research on the difficulties associated with English language teaching.

Keyword: Teaching English, Slow Learner, Fast Learner, Challenges

INTRODUCTION

In the world, there are many types of languages used to communicate, to socialize, and to adapt to the environment. One of them is English language. It is an international language must be learned by all people in the world. According to Mappiasse and Ahmad (2014: 1), English has become the world's most extensively used language. Based on Lauder (2008:3), English is utilized to keep up with technological and scientific breakthroughs and to gain a better career. This demonstrates the importance of English in numerous parts of life, such as education, business, politics, and others. Therefore, both developed and emerging countries should recognize the value of learning English.

The goal of learning English for individuals all around the world, particularly in Indonesia, is to keep up with the development of a more advanced world. Even if the English we learn does not look like what native speakers speak, we must still learn well as foreign language learners. As an English teacher, teacher should be able to pay attention to the learners while teaching. In the class, learners have various differences, such as their understanding, achievement, participation, and readiness to learn a foreign language. The differences in each of these classes can make teachers define this class as a mix-ability class because it consists of students who are slow and fast in learning. According to Bremner (2008) mixed-ability classes include learners with a variety of learning methods and preferences, as well as students with diverse abilities. Moreover, mix-ability classes consist of slow and fast learners who have different abilities such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills.

Slow and fast learners have many differences in the class. It can be said slow learner because of those who are less or late in receiving lessons and their lack of participation in learning foreign languages. But it does not deny that slow learners have another factor that causes them to be like that. The example factor that causes learners not to participate in learning is the existence of a gadget that makes them shift their focus to the gadget rather than to the teacher in the classroom. Then, for fast learners, they quickly capture an explanation or lesson in the class. Their participation is also a factor in the ease of understanding a lesson or a foreign language. Fast learners can sometimes learn on their own and only need a teacher's guidance to get the most out of it.

There are a lot of challenges experienced by English teachers in teaching foreign languages. One of the challenges is teaching foreign languages in a class that consists of slow and fast learners because the teacher needs to explain and to convey knowledge with a strategy that both learners can understand. According to Al-Shammakhi & Al-Humaidi (2015), one of the most difficult challenges faced by teachers teaching students learning English as a foreign language is teaching a mixed-ability class. According to the research, the challenges faced by teachers in Oman in teaching mixed ability classes are related to teaching and learning, motivation, materials, and classroom management.

In the previous paragraphs, it has been explained that there are ideas about the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English to slow and fast learners. Therefore, the researcher wants to explore the challenges faced by teaching English to slow and fast learners at senior high school and also wants to know how the teacher teaches both of them.

Teaching English

The process of teaching English to students who do not speak English as their first language is known as teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) (Rohmah, 2013). TEFL is frequently taught in the student's home country, either in public or private schools. TEFL instructors can be either native or non-native English speakers. Santoso (2010) defines TEFL as a degree that allows you to teach English to non-English speakers at commercial language schools and colleges of higher education both abroad and in the United Kingdom. TEFL as a degree allows you to teach English to non-English speakers in commercial language schools

and colleges both abroad and in the UK. TEFL can also allow you to travel the world and learn about different cultures while gaining valuable experience.

According to Patil (2008), as stated in Rasheed, Zeeshan, and Zaidi (2017) teaching English helps students read, write, and speak the language proficiently in addition to imparting knowledge. An important component of teaching and learning English is teaching. Teaching English is a pleasant experience. Baker and Westrup (2000) stated that many governments and ministries of education believe that teaching English to youngsters is an important obligation. Secondary school and university courses are taught in English in numerous nations. But there are other difficulties in the English language classroom that can test our endurance and productivity. Students acquire four language abilities when learning English: speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

Challenges in Teaching English

The school and the caliber of the teacher are two main sources of obstacles in education that impact student progress. Lynch (2008) as referenced in Fajaryani, Masbirorotni, Nuraini, Nafrial, and Nopianti (2018) claimed that many experts in today's educational discourse support stricter teacher credentialing, more standardized testing, smaller classrooms, or school vouchers as ways to improve student achievement. Surprisingly, none of these ideas address what actually happens in the classroom. If the concerns are not remedied, they will escalate into major problems.

English teachers face major difficulties when teaching English in the classroom. Lynch (2008) as cited in Fajaryani, Masbirorotni, Nuraini, Nafrial, and Nopianti (2018, p. 66) identifies three major problems in classroom English teaching and learning: First, students could not be motivated or enthusiastic about learning English. They find it difficult to participate in class activities and pick up the language since they are terrified of failing tests and even relationships with other students. In the classroom, teachers need to inspire students and give them opportunity to learn the language. Secondly, inadequate time, materials, and resources English cannot be learnt or taught in the same way as your native or first language because it is a foreign language. It takes time and a sufficient amount of resources and instruments to create an English classroom environment that supports teaching and learning when teaching English as a second language.

Third, overcrowding in the classroom; a typical classroom can have fifteen or twenty students, but it can also have a large number of thirty-five, forty, or even fifty students crammed into a language learning environment. This is especially true for teachers who work with private students. Large courses cause a variety of issues, including discomfort in the classroom, decreased attention, evaluation, trouble controlling the class, sustaining learning effectiveness, and so on. As previously stated, the three major challenges must be overcome in order to increase the quality of English language teaching.

Slow Learner of EFL

A slow learner is a student whose intellectual potential is slightly below normal, but who is not mentally impaired (Nurfadhillah et al., (2021). Slow learners are usually identified academically by the scores they achieve on intelligence tests, with an IQ between 70-89. The slow learner experiences some delays in thinking, responding to stimuli and adapting, but is better than the mentally impaired, slower than normal. Slow learners in the classroom take longer to learn than their peers. Their intelligence is below average, but they are not incapable student, but they need a hard struggle to master what is required in regular classes.

According to Borah (2013), slow learners can be identified by five characteristics. First, these students work very slowly and do not have the ability to work on complex or diverse problems. Second, slow learners perform poorly in school and show recurrent immaturity in relation to other students. Third, these students are known to be slow in mastering academic skills, such as spelling or timetable rules. Fourth, these students are said to lack the ability to communicate what they learn between tasks; and lose track of time and events. Lastly, these students are reported to find it difficult to set and keep track of long-term goals.

Fast Learner of EFL

Fast learners are students who are very fast in receiving, understanding and mastering the lessons given to them with very good achievements. Good achievement results are not only in certain subjects but cover all subjects. So that the results of learning achievement achieved can be seen on the report card and the final exam score is very good. Hedge (2000) emphasized that 'Self-Directed Learners' have the following characteristics: they know how to use resources independently; they work productively with teachers to achieve their objectives; they know their needs; they learn both outside and inside the classroom; they adjust learning strategies accordingly; they divide and manage time in learning properly; they learn with active thinking; and they work and coordinate with the teacher to learn language. Hedge (2000) provided evidence to support this point of view by arguing that fast language learners are independent, metacognitive and intellectually aware of the role they have to perform in language acquisition, monitor their learning, create learning opportunities, and make an effort to control the process of learning both inside and outside of the classroom.

Hedge (2000) defined "self-directed learners" in another context to describe rapid learners. Fast learners employ self-sufficient and successful strategies (Hedge, 2000). These students do not just repeat everything the teacher says; rather, they digest the knowledge and make it their own. Moreover, Hedge (2000) stated generally eager to acquire language and are willing to give their all to complete any work are fast learners.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study was conducted at SMAN 1 Porong. The researcher choses the subjects from X grade of senior high school in English class. The researcher used a descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive research is employed with the objective of depicting and interpreting

the characteristics of a specific object or phenomenon (Sukardi, 2003: 11). The instruments used by the researcher in this study are observation checklist and questionnaire.

In conducting the research there are some steps that the researcher should do. Firstly, the researcher made the table of observation checklist and the questionnaire. Secondly, the researcher entered the classroom during English lessons and observed the state of the class and the students. It was to find out which students were slow and fast. The researcher also observed how the teacher taught slow and fast learners in class. She also filled the observation checklist. After doing the observation, the researcher gave the questionnaire to the teachers, and they answered the questionnaire given. Thirdly, the researcher collected the data from both of instruments and analyses the result of data. Finally, the researcher performed the result of data.

FINDINGS

1. **The Characteristic of EFL Slow and Fast Learners Owned by Students in SMAN 1 Porong**

   a. Slow Learner
   1) First Meeting
      The class was conducted for 2 hours and the teacher conducted the teaching and learning activities well. In this meeting the researcher found several students who had the characteristics mentioned by Borah (2013) as a reference for researcher when conducting observation checklists. Slow learners had difficulty when the teacher explained a material, they looked confused and could not understand directly but they also did not want to ask questions because they felt embarrassed. Furthermore, slow learners in the class had difficulty speaking to express what they did not understand. It is made them unable to work quickly when given a task by the teacher. In this meeting the researcher found 7 learners who were included in the characteristics in the observation checklist.
   2) Second Meeting
      The second meeting was conducted on 14th Mei 2024, in this meeting the class was conducted for 2 hours just like the previous meeting. The researcher followed up on the findings about the character of slow learners in the class. Slow learners who were noted at the previous meeting are now the focus of researcher to find out more deeply and confirmed it. Slow learners at this second meeting also showed the same characteristics as the first meeting, they listened to the teacher when the teacher explained but when given a task they could not understand the lessons that was conveyed and finally could not do the task properly. The slow learners found in this meeting were also the same as those found by the researcher in the previous meeting.
   b. Fast Learner
   1) First Meeting

The first meeting was conducted on 7th Mei 2024. Fast learner in the classroom, they really focused to the teacher when explaining. Sometimes when the teacher asked about the material before the teacher explained like question for brainstorming, they could answer though not really corrected. Fast learner in that classroom also could handle their friends who noised when the teacher explain the material, they could understand what the teacher explain although the teacher explained the bottom line. In this meeting the researcher fined 11 students that fall into the characteristic of fast learner in the observation checklist.

2) Second Meeting

The second meeting was conducted on 14th Mei 2024 the researcher entered the class again for ensuring the fast learner who had noted in the first meeting. Fast learners in that classroom could perform with their self when the teacher asks them to perform in front of the class. At this meeting the researcher also found some of the same fast learners from the previous meeting. They could create a good learning atmosphere and helped teachers explained to their friends who could be said to not understand or who slow learners are. The fast learners found in this meeting were also the same as those found by the researcher in the first meeting.

2. How the Teacher Teach Slow and Fast Learner in SMAN 1 Porong

a. First Meeting
The first meeting was conducted on 7th Mei 2024. Before the class started, the teacher started the lesson by opening greetings. The teacher checked the student attendance list. The teacher did the brain reflection to recall the last material. The teacher explained the learning objectives or basic competencies to be achieved and conveyed the scope of the material and descriptions of activities. The teacher introduced the topic before start teaching. The teacher gave an explanation the material until finish. The teacher gave students the opportunity to ask questions about the material that was explained. The teachers gave special explanations to slow learners because some of the students still did not understand the material. The teacher gave oral questions related to the material that was explained to students. The teacher gave some exercise to the student. The teacher asked the students to answer the exercises that was given and corrected together. The teacher gave feedback and reflection on teaching and learning activities. The teacher gave closing greetings to students.

b. Second Meeting
The second meeting was conducted on 14th Mei 2024. In this meeting in the teaching and learning process, the teacher gave treatment in class little different from the previous meeting. Before the class started, the teacher started the lesson by opening greetings. The teacher checked the student attendance list. The teacher did the brain reflection to recall the last material. The teacher introduced the topic before start teaching. The teacher gave an explanation the material until finish. The teacher gave students the opportunity to ask questions about the material that was explained. The teachers gave special explanations to slow learners because some of the students still did not understand the material. The teacher gave some exercise to the student. The

teacher asked the students to answer the exercises that was given and corrected together. The teacher assigned tasks to be done at home and collected at the next meeting. The teacher gave feedback and reflection on teaching and learning activities. Students paid attention to the lesson plan for the next meeting. The teacher gave closing greetings to students.

3. The Result of the Teacher Responses for Questionnaire

In this part, the questionnaire was given to teachers to determine the results of teacher responses regarding the challenges in teaching English for slow and fast learner and the questionnaire was distributed to 2 teachers. From data collection through questionnaires, teachers' responses to the challenges in teaching English for slow and fast learner were analyzed by using percentage in order to give clear information about the amount of "Yes" and "No" answers. The total of the questionnaire can be shown as follow:

**Table 4.1 of Questionnaire Answer**

No	Questions	Teacher's Response		Percentage of "yes" answer	Percentage of "no" answer
		yes	No		
1.	Apakah anda mengetahui tentang pelajar lambat?	2	0	100%	0
2.	Apakah anda mengetahui karakteristik yang dimiliki pelajar lambat?	2	0	100%	0
3.	Apakah anda mengetahui tentang pelajar cepat?	2	0	100%	0
4.	Apakah anda mengetahui karakteristik yang dimiliki pelajar cepat?	2	0	100%	0
5.	Apakah anda memerlukan teknik/strategi khusus untuk mengajar kelas yang terdiri dari siswa lambat dan cepat belajar?	2	0	100%	0
6.	Dengan menggunakan strategi tersebut, Apakah bisa membantu anda dalam mengajar	2	0	100%	0

No.					
	keduanya?				
7.	Apakah anda perlu menjelaskan beberapa kali pada siswa yang lambat belajar?	2	0	100%	0
8.	Apakah Anda menemukan beberapa tantangan dalam mengajar keduanya dalam satu kelas?	2	0	100%	0
9.	Menurut anda, Apakah kurangnya motivasi siswa menjadi tantangan anda dalam mengajar palajar lambat?	1	1	50%	50%
10.	Apakah terlalu banyaknya siswa dalam kelas menjadi tantangan anda dalam mengajar pelajar lambat?	2	0	100%	0
11.	Dengan adanya siswa yang lambat dan cepat dalam satu kelas, apakah anda kesulitan dalam menyampaikan materi?	2	0	100%	0
12.	Apakah siswa yang cepat belajar pernah menanyakan pertanyaan yang sulit?	1	1	50%	50%
13.	Apakah itu menjadi tantangan anda dalam mengajar pelajar cepat?	1	1	50%	50%
14.	Apakah pelajar cepat pernah menyulitkan anda dalam membuat pertanyaan?	1	1	50%	50%
	Total Value	24	4	120%	20%

Although, the researcher analyzed the questionnaire descriptively, the researcher also needed to simplify the description by using this column chart below. It is because the researcher wanted to make the description more vivid to be understood well.

Figure 4.1 Column Charts of Teacher Responses
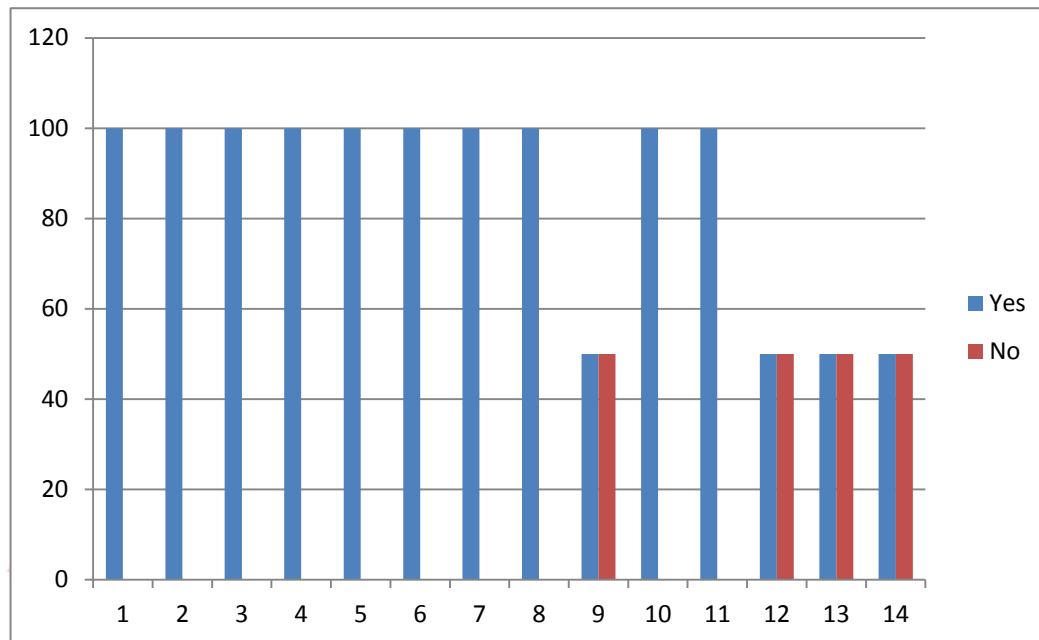
Based on data display above, it can be concluded that teachers had several challenges to face when teaching slow and fast learners.

DISCUSSION

In this part, the researcher discusses the findings of the observation checklist and the questionnaire at SMAN 1 Porong. From the result of observation checklist for characteristic of slow learner, it was concluded that the slow learner in the class there were 7 slow learners. The character of slow learner in the class related with the characteristic that conducted from Borah (2013). The slow learner shall improve their knowledge and ventured to ask the teacher. From the result of observation checklist for characteristic of fast learner, it was concluded that the students in this class who were include in the characteristic of fast learners there were 11 fast learners. The characteristic of fast learners in the class was related with characteristic that conducted from Hedge (2000). The fast learner shall help the slow learner to increase their knowledge.

From the result of observation checklist for teacher during teaching and learning process in the class was conducted for two meetings, it was concluded that the teacher did well in practically all aspect when teaching in the class that consist slow and fast learner. In pre teaching, the teacher gave greeting, checked the attendance list, gave brainstorming. The while teaching, the teacher explained the material in detail and gave more explanation to the slow learners who had any difficulties. The teacher gave the question to the student and

corrected together. The teacher gave feedback and reflection to the learning process. Then in post teaching, the teacher ended by giving the lesson plan for next meeting and gave closing greeting. The steps above were related with steps from Maghfiro (2022). The teacher not used full English language because the teacher knew about the student in the class could not understand well especially slow learners. The students from slow or fast learners were also can followed the teaching and learning process well and paid attention.

From the result from the questionnaire that has been given to determine teacher challenges in teaching English for slow and fast learner, almost all questions got very great responses although some question got negative responses. The teachers answered yes were 120%. It means more than 50% the teacher had some challenges in teaching English for slow and fast learners. The teachers answered no were 20%. It means fewer than 50% the teacher had not challenges in teaching English for slow and fast learner. It was the same with finding from previous study by Bilal Zakarneh, Najah Al-Ramahi & Mahmoud Mahmoud (2020) the teacher had some challenges in teaching English for slow and fast learner. The challenges were identified such us the lack of motivation in slow learners, the large number of students in the class, the questions given by fast learners that are too difficult, requires several times to explain to slow learners, requires special strategies to teach both and difficult to convey the material. The teacher can increased their knowledge to teach and found the strategy to overcome the challenges in teaching English for slow and fast learners.

The previous study from Bilal Zakarneh, Najah Al-Ramahi & Mahmoud Mahmoud (2020) suggest that the challenges include mixed-ability classes tending to be uncooperative and fast learners get bored easily; challenging in planning for the lesson to teach a mixed-ability class; challenging in creating appropriate work-materials for the mixed-ability class; lack of best approaches to manage mixed-ability class; challenging in getting attention of all learners in mixed-ability classes; and frustration when teaching mixed-ability classroom because of low motivation of weak students. This study also found the challenges of teaching English but this thesis found the challenges teaching for slow and fast learners in senior high school. Different with the previous study, this thesis made the teachers knew more about the challenges in senior high school which is students still need guidance from their teachers. The advantage of this research was that teachers can learn the characteristics of slow and fast learners to improve their teaching methods. This study contributed to education to increase understanding of slow learners and fast learners so that teachers or schools provide more treatment for slow learners. Meanwhile, this study also had shortcomings in data collection on slow and fast learners due to the limited time used by researchers.

CONCLUSION

Base on the result of this research, the researcher concluded the challenges in teaching English for slow and fast learner in senior high school. The students who were include in characteristic of slow learner there were 7 slow learner and students who were include in characteristic of fast learner there were 11 fast learners. The teacher did well the teaching

learning process. The teacher when teach the class also gave some different treatment to slow learner like explained more detail to them but the teacher did not use full English because the teacher knew how the characteristic of slow learner. Therefore, the teacher used mix Indonesian and English language.

After analyzing the data from previous chapter, the teachers faced some challenges in teaching slow and fast learner in the class. This study demonstrated that the teacher faced challenges due to the lack of motivation in slow learners, the large number of students in the class, the questions given by fast learners that are too difficult, requires several times to explain to slow learners, requires special strategies to teach both of them and difficult to convey the material.

RECOMMENDATION

The researcher would like to provide several recommendations to EFL teachers, students and future researchers. EFL teachers must learn more to teach English, be willing to develop a range of teaching materials, comprehend the broad characteristics of the student language and the structure of English, and have a warm, comprehend about the characteristic from their student, welcoming demeanor that will compensate for the students' lack of knowledge. Teachers should have a solid approach in place to ensure that students are interested in the classroom. Discover and build a new way to construction. For EFL students, they can learn English by memorizing vocabulary or by taking courses that require them to use English in daily communication, especially in conversation classes, and practice listening skills by listening to English music, find the motivation to study about English language.

Future researchers should conduct additional research on the difficulties associated with English language teaching. Future researchers should provide additional explanations, identify new challenges that may affect English language teaching, and propose solutions to reduce the problems especially for teaching slow and fast learners. Thus, it is hoped that this study can be a reference for future researchers who will conduct research with the same title. Hopefully, it provides the benefits in the future as a quality input for the teaching and learning process.

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