



The Fun Way to Face Students Difficulties While Learning English

Serina^{*1}, Rustan Effendi², Hasmiah Herawaty³

^{1,2,3} State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Parepare

e-mail: [*serinarin5@gmail.com](mailto:serinarin5@gmail.com) , rustan198304@gmail.com² , hasmiahherawati@iainpare.ac.id³

Abstract Learning fun English so far can be done in various ways, and each way creates its own diversity of results. Of course, this can be happened after the teacher knows the situation of the class and students, before preparing teaching plan. The strategy of involving students in learning is a powerful way to support their better understanding, because directly practice what they have learned can support their memory to imprint deeper, especially in auditory, visual, or even kinesthetic learners. The main point is that students are directly involved when learning, not just seeing or hearing but in thinking, speaking, and analyzing learning activities. Considering how difficult it is to keep students interested when learning English, involving them from the start to keep them active, focused, and motivated is a step that can be taken.

Keywords: *English; Fun; Learning; Involving; Students*

Abstrak Belajar bahasa Inggris yang menyenangkan selama ini dapat dilakukan dengan berbagai cara, dan setiap cara menciptakan keragaman hasil tersendiri. Hal ini tentunya juga terwujud setelah guru mengetahui secara pasti situasi kelas, siswa, sebelum menyusun rencana pengajarannya. Strategi pelibatan siswa dalam pembelajaran merupakan salah satu cara ampuh untuk menunjang pemahaman mereka menjadi lebih baik, karena dengan melibatkan mereka berarti mereka langsung mempraktekkan apa yang telah dipelajari sehingga mendukung ingatan mereka membekas lebih dalam, terutama pada pembelajar audiroty, visual, atau bahkan kinestetik. Intinya siswa terlibat langsung ketika belajar, tidak hanya melihat atau mendengar tetapi dalam berpikir, berbicara, dan menganalisis kegiatan belajar. Mengingat betapa sulitnya membuat siswa tetap tertarik saat belajar bahasa Inggris, melibatkan mereka sejak awal agar mereka tetap aktif, fokus, dan termotivasi adalah langkah yang bisa dilakukan.

Kata Kunci: *English; Fun; Learning; Involving; Students*

INTRODUCTION

Learning English is not easy, especially for beginners, because there are many rules, structures, and a wide scope of discussion. The estimate is the same as comparing the process when studying math or other calculation lessons, because English indeed broad in scope, even having formulas for certain things. As a teacher, meeting the students who have just learned English and have absolutely no basic in English is a natural things, especially English is not the same as other subjects, which have been taught to them from the start such as mathematics or even Indonesian. As in Indonesia, the students may not find English immediately when they enter school, that's why they are called beginners. But that is the essence of what is called learning. English is a new thing for them and they will learn as the burden of their learning needs goes. The teachers have many and different roles, considering that they act like helpers or facilitators in the knowledge society (Stoimcheva-Kolarska, 2020). The ability of teachers to interact with their students is also a separate support in the creation of an active learning environment.

There are some teachers who do not challenge their students, rarely give homework, are often behind on grading, and give "free" days on a regular basis (Nagashibaevna, 2019). That is one of the causes of a decrease in student interest when studying, because they are faced with something that reflects routine, such as coming to school, attending class, sitting, studying, getting assignments, and going home. Teacher need to understand the learning characteristic of students (Berkeley & Ray, 2019). Most of the students will be feel motivated by something new, which can attract their attention. Even if the routine cannot be changed, it can be processed, such as how to process the learning activities to be more fun.

English is the world language. Because of that, English is used by people from one country to communicate with people from other countries. This makes learning to speak English is quite mandatory for almost all people. Furthermore, it also requires almost everyone to understand at least two languages, their first language and English. To know English deeper, learn English should start as early as possible (Putri, 2021). As well as mention by Karini that English is very important even can be said to be mandatory, especially in early childhood. (Karini, 2018). There is nothing wrong with introducing English from a young

age to children. Especially since we know that when they are still at that age (golden age) children will learn more easily, and they are interested in all things. Utilizing it to introduce English is a way that can be used to help them in the future.

Again, back to the statement *English is fun*, some words that are possible for ordinary people in English are foreign terms, where they think it is a complicated thing how can it turn out to be fun? Or is that a burden for students who are still studying this subject? How to change a person's perspective to help him to understand something easier and better? Is there anything that can be done to at least raise a minimum of interest in something that is initially mundane to students? Those are things that if it think logically, stick and continue to overshadow the development of learning English.

According to Sung and Spolsky in their Book states that increasing globalization has resulted in the elevated status of English as an international language (Sung & Spolsky, 2015). English is hard to learn because it has different grammatical structures from Bahasa Indonesia or students' mother tongue. Therefore, teachers should make English learning easy and exciting (Ma'arif & Bahtiar, 2021). In addition, they also need to understand and master English language skills known as the seven keys, namely speaking, listening, reading, writing, tenses, grammar, and vocabulary. If the scale is expanded, then there will be more things that need to be considered in order to truly understand English as a whole. Because as Stojkovic states that learning a language means acquiring and developing language skills (Stojkovic, 2019). And this is the center of attention of teachers and researchers who continue to develop English because it is the reason for students' difficulties when learning English.

As a case example, it can be believed that since the beginning of the students' encounter with English, about 50% of them have no interest in learning, the reason is because it is difficult and incomprehensible, or maybe the scale can be smaller than that. If students do not have an interest in English lessons from the start, it will be difficult to teach them, and the learning process in the classroom will not be optimal. It is an example of a case that may be experienced when students first encounter English, if it thinks logically. But in fact now,

English language enthusiasts from year to year continue to grow, which shows that its development is specially progressing well.

Language teaching has always been facing various difficulties in the process of seeking successfulness (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019). Along with the development of interest in English, as well as the teaching methods that were created. Not only methods, but there are also accurate tricks made by professional or experienced people to help make learning English easier and even fun. Even today, researchers are still on their way to discovering, shaping, or even updating every teaching method used previously. It is all the result of hard work from the learning they have received before.

There are tons of media, tools, and even techniques that support fun English learning. Such as, songs, videos, pictures, templates, games, and everything that involves students' senses when learning. It is logically proven that by using this media, students' interest in learning English increases significantly. The reason encountered and understood is because it is interesting and not boring. For example games. Games are facilitators of knowledge and bring down tension and anxiety, it is also provide an enjoyable environment (Camargo & Lacer, 2001). Although basically, to improve their understanding, appropriate teaching methods are also needed, and this is the key to make an effective learning.

Just like the reciprocity of the same coin, where there is good development, there will still be problems that follow. Throughout the course of a day, teachers find themselves pulled in many directions (Susanti, 2018). Teachers need to understand what language is if they are to teach effectively (Badger, 2018). It is undeniable that there are many teaching methods that can be used for English to be easier and more enjoyable, but that does not mean that the method is perfect and has no loopholes for failure. The best way to face it is by continue to cover and cover the problems that arise with the shrewdness of them who have titles as teachers, not as a suppressor, but it is purely the duty of a teacher. As previously mentioned, that the main problem of the existence of a non-optimal English learning process is that students do not have an interest in learning.

Fun learning, is part of the learning process that is desired by all teachers. Fun learning in general binds all the components that support the student's

learning process, whether it's their motivation, interest, understanding, and activity. What is not better than students who understand and respond to the material actively and enthusiastically? A comfortable and relaxing learning environment will increase all these possibilities, more clearly this has a greater effect than learning that only uses the lecture method. At least all the skills and knowledge of students will significantly increase by learning in a fun way.

English is a subject that has its own mastery, with a broad scope. Parallel to important subjects such as mathematics and science. It can be proven that English is one of the requirements for student graduation, namely the national exam. As one of the important subjects in school, English should be taught to students from a young age. Because in the future it can be ascertained that it will be useful for them. Not only as a support for personal communication, but also as a support for their bright future. But like other subjects, not all students like English, and consider that this subject is one of the most difficult for them.

According to Krashen (1982) and Littlewood (1999), in Metom (2013), a learning situation that has a low affective filter can lessen anxiety and make the learners more comfortable. This encourages them to use language while playing the game, and thus, making learning more effective and meaningful (Metom, 2013). Indeed, good learning includes also how to create comfortable conditions for the students themselves, because if they feel comfortable when studying, it will broadly open up opportunities for them to learn more optimally. Also, they will understand the material easily and enjoy the learning process as much as they enjoy their hobby. Comfort while studying is one of the keys. It is, not only to help students learn, but also to eliminate the possibility of possible mistakes that interfere with their learning, such as not focusing or even boredom.

Unfocused and bored are the virus that causes students to lose interest and motivation to learn, not only in English but also in other subjects. Motivation is key aspect in many situations of teaching and learning activity (Ekayati & Rahayu (2019), so it can't be ignored. However, it can be emphasized that most students in Indonesia get bored easily and quickly when are learning English. The strongest reason is the English is not the language used in their daily life, because it is a second language or even the third language which is also one of the subjects in school. Even though the outline of the need to learn English is no

less important, such as studying religious subjects, social studies, science, or even mathematics.

Actually, learning English is not difficult as the student's opinion in general, as long as the teacher can use appropriate media and the student like it, it will make them feel happy during study. Following the changing times, where increasingly sophisticated technology has become one of the paths that can be used to develop English language learning. Moreover, it is known with certainty that even millennial students cannot escape it. It is like the law of nature, using what can be used, and taking advantage of what can be used, but still within safe limits and not excessive. All to create a fun and effective learning environment for students, because that is the role of a teacher. Teacher grows a positive motivation towards the teaching profession and helping student achieves better (Khasawneh, 2021).

Learning English by involving students is one way to make the learning process fun, because the students will be directly involved which will attract their attention and maintain their motivation when learning. There are many media that can also help run a fun English class. This media can also be made as creative as the teacher and adapt it to the material they will teach. The media that are often used are songs, videos, films, authentic material, storytelling, role playing, group thinking, and even games. Of all these media, involving students can be done. But keep in mind that to use learning media carefully. The media must at least contain more education than just to please students, because it will only make them play around in class instead of studying. The term of the media is 80% learning, and 20% entertaining. By maintaining the harmony of the media, the learning process will also run smoothly.

By involving the students in groups, we can see more ways of learning from each student, not only individually. Also, at the same time seeing how their ability to interact, give opinions or rebuttal, express their thoughts and share information with their friends. This can be an effective way of learning. Students are made responsible for each other's' learning (Cochran, 1989). The presence of the teacher remains as their supervisor and mentor who is ready in any confusion or shortage they face. When learners exchanged ideas with their peers and/or the teacher, they developed higher order thinking skills in addition to

acquiring language (Wonder, 2021). Using group work is one of an activities involving students when learning and it is supported by a statement from Situmorang who explained that most of the teachers used the group work method in learning activities (Situmorang, 2021).

Activities that involve students in the learning process can be used both in class and outdoors in terms of learning from outside the classroom. However, as it is well known, most learning activities are carried out in the classroom, so make sure to develop a suitable lesson plan and use media that can be used indoors. Taking advantage of the actual atmosphere is a great way to involve students, and a different atmosphere from the classroom is expected to have a distinct effect on the student.

From all sides, to learn English with fun, you must pay attention to all kinds of aspects that contribute to the learning process. Methods and strategies as aids for learning, as well as easy techniques and tricks that support the learning process. In practical activities, the message most often heard from an English teacher, or anyone who teaches on this special subject. Then, it will continue to suggestion, instruction, emphasizing, and even focus on practice. Always practice what has been learned so that it stays in the brain so that later it can naturally be done well like a native speaker. Like a word that is usually attached at the bottom of notebooks in Indonesia as short notes that students may often ignore, namely "**practice makes perfect**", which means, the more they practice what they have learned, the more proficient they will become in English.

METHOD

The method used in this study is qualitative method. Observation and interviews are used to collect data from participants. Participants came from young students, fresh students, grade 1 at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri, Sidenreng Rappang. Participants consist of 5 classes, each class has approximately 30 people. However, due to the rule to maintain health protocols due to the effects of the pandemic, it resulted in each class being divided into 2 parts and having a change schedule for going to school.

The focal point of the problem taken is; *When learning English, what is the most difficult obstacle experienced by the students.* Observation is in the form of

direct observation during the learning process, by clearly seeing which parts are their difficulties when learning English as well as Interviews by asking students directly, in this way, various answers will be seen with the level of difficulty they feel.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the interview and observation process for 1 month, with descriptions of 17 face-to-face class meetings. It can be concluded that there are many obstacles for students when learning English. Not only in terms of interest and motivation as previously mentioned, but there are also other things. That is;

1. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the thing that students mention the most, because it's hard and there's a lot to pay attention to. Moreover, they are often confused with the dialect or style of language, such as British or American. What they also mention is spelling, where words in English are difficult to spell out. If they succeed in knowing one word, then after learning another word, if the case is not forgetting then the words are mixed up. From the results of separate observations, where when students are invited to read the dialogue, there are indeed many who are still wrong in their pronunciation. 70% of them still find it difficult to pronounce English words correctly. Whether it is when reading one word, there is a letter that pronunciation is wrong, or evens the whole word is wrong.

2. Vocabulary

Regarding vocabulary, actually the answer from the interview is how to interpret? It is another problem that students face when learning English. The way to interpret what they mentioned is how to understand English by using their native language. Whether when they read one dialogue, they can understand what is written in the dialogue in their native language or not? Therefore, it is concluded that the main problem is vocabulary. As is well known, the basis of English is to have a lot of vocabulary which in fact helps us to understand English and after the observation, it is also evident

that they still lack vocabulary. If it can be measured then it is stated that their vocabulary is still at the basic level.

3. Grammar and Tenses

About grammar and tenses, it's not just the students who have trouble. An interesting fact proves that even students from the English department also often find it difficult when it comes to these 2 camps of harmony in English. The students have difficulty in understanding tenses because there are many formulas and also in grammar because they are difficult to understand. They considered that the grammar and tenses which in fact were also basic in English were the same as the previous pronunciation as the most difficult level in learning English.

4. Boring

The final answer from the interview results regarding the same problem is boring. Their interest is at a level that is difficult to rise, even tends to decrease when learning English. From the observations, there are many reasons why this can happen, namely a bad mood, sleepiness, and being distracted by something else. These three things often happen in a classroom environment that lacks attention. Although boring answers may be mentioned by students who from the start did have a lack of interest in the subject of English lessons.

Of the four problems faced by students when learning English, it can be understood that there are separate causes so that unpleasant situations occur that trigger a lack of student motivation in learning English, where in the end they judge that it is very difficult to learn. But it's a response that doesn't mean it can't be changed. As long as they are willing to learn and the teacher does their job professionally, the response to difficult learning will turn out to be fun.

Such as **Pronunciation**, there are many steps to practice it. For example using the media song. Listening to English music and practicing pronunciation will certainly reduce the difficulty in pronunciation itself. Therefore, involving students in pronunciation activities with song media, making them practice singing will help solve this problem. Another way to practice pronunciation is to listen directly to a native speaker when speaking. It might be a little difficult to

meet a native speaker in person, so another thing to try is watching western movies or using social media to find a native speaker and listen to the conversation they are having.

As with the lack of **Vocabulary**, the media that can be used are English videos or English films. By using this media, students will see directly and listen to understand the meaning of a word better. All that remains is to involve students, for example in question and answer activities, to mention what they have just seen in the video and interpret it by them self, it can help improve their vocabulary. Also, getting into the habit of mentioning things using English in everyday life, even if not entirely, can be a step to help their practice activities and understanding. As teachers, we still need to provide guidance and monitor their activities in learning, correct mistakes and continue to motivate them so that no one gives up halfway.

For **Grammar and tenses**, there are no short steps except by seriously studying both of them from the beginning, not just reading and viewing the material, but also directly practicing what they have learned, in this case getting involved again with practical activities. For example, practicing the *simple present tense* and *simple past tense* together, looking for differences and how to use them. By engaging in thinking and practicing activities it will significantly improve their understanding. Another step to easily learn grammar or tenses is to understand the various examples of the two rules. In addition to getting the material, the presence of examples will certainly make it easier for students to understand when learning. To support this, the teacher's attention to the needs of students should not be broken even in the slightest thing.

For **Boring** reasons, it will be an important task of a teacher how to keep the class he teaches active and fun. There are many ways to do it. There are many fun learning media, easy strategies, as well as a variety of teaching materials. As mentioned earlier, teachers should carefully choose how their teaching plan will work in the classroom taking into account the possibility that students can stay active and excited. A little extra, make sure when doing learning activities, there are no things that can affect the focus of students from their learning. The most important thing is electronic devices such as cellphones, and others. If the learning environment is really focused on learning, supported by good learning

media and a fun way of delivering material, it can be guaranteed that the learning process will run smoothly and actively in the classroom.

Of all the ways that can be used, the most effective assistance is also to *involve students in learning activities*. Not only taught materially, but also taught in practice so that they are easy to understand. Involving them in every learning activity in any material generally opens their skills to understand the material much more easily. Even though it is known that students also have different learning styles but still, with a combination of material methods as well as practice, it still brings good results for students.

The strategy of involving students in English learning activities can be adapted to all types of media, techniques, and also existing learning strategies. The next step depends on how a teacher composes, processes, and shapes their lesson plans using any media or technique and ensures that student involvement in the process is a necessary requirement.

Perhaps the question will arise *Why should involve students?* The perfect answer of course already exists. **To make students understand the material being taught easily.** For example, learning the material for *expressions of congrats* in English, if they are only taught materially they will only know what is *the expression of congratulations*. It's different if you involve students in their understanding practice activities. Not only understand in terms of material, but they will also know how the expression is used, the structure of the language, how to mimic and gesture, they even learn more things when practicing. Therefore it can be concluded that if involving students in learning activities can make them better understand the material and learn independently.

Another focus by involving students in learning activities is to be able to maintain their activeness in class. They will unconsciously continue to respond to directions from the teacher and so on. Their motivation will last, it can even increase if they feel happy with the activities they are doing. Then, another reason is, by involving students as well as enabling them to learn independently, the teacher is there as their mentor, and they work on and respond to understanding practices using the knowledge they have. With this situation, their thinking ability will be tested as well as the new material and knowledge they get from the activity, which they will continue to remember and last a long time,

because in fact, things they do on their own initiative will leave an imprint on their memory. So with the same hope, the knowledge will remain and they will not forget it.

From the many benefits obtained with the strategy of involving students in learning activities, it is a very good thing to create a pleasant learning environment. But it should be underlined, that in learning there are also ways that must be considered carefully if you want to involve students. We do not immediately involve them without instructions from the beginning, nor do we immediately involve them randomly, because it will cause chaos in the classroom, but come back with an organized plan and certainly in accordance with the materials and teaching methods chosen by the teacher. A fun and smooth class, is a class that already has a structured teaching plan, while following the teaching plan and keeping class conditions good, students will also naturally act as they should learn and study at school. Last, but not least, a suggestion from the best guidebook for English teachers that can give us more motivation to teach, that; 'Effective teachers continually to explore and experiment with new ways to engage all students is successful learning' (Carr & Bertrando, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Creating a pleasant environment when learning English so that the learning process also runs well are the desire of the teacher and also the students. But before that happens, it is necessary to develop a serious study plan. English subjects, which incidentally are a language that everyone needs to learn, also do not escape the failures of their development, ranging from lack of interest in students when studying, being difficult, or even boring. Creating fun English learning that can help students understand the material is a teacher's task and challenge, as well as being the center of student knowledge development. There are many media that can be used as well as strategies that support. One of them is by **involving students in the process of learning English**. In addition to helping them be active in learning, it also helps them quickly and easily understand the English material they are learning, because they are directly involved in the activities. When they are directly involved, they will use all their

skills and knowledge, as if they are learning independently which will help them absorb and understand the material easily and last long in their memory.

REFERENCES

- Badger, R. (2018). *Teaching and learning the English language: A problem-solving approach*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Berkeley, S., & Ray, S. (2019). *Reading Fundamentals for Students with Learning Difficulties: Instruction for Diverse K-12 Classrooms*. Routledge.
- Camargo, N. I., & Lacer, B. (2001). The fun approach to English learning. *PROFILE: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 2(1), 9-11.
- Carr, J. W., & Bertrando, S. (2012). *Teaching English learners and students with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom: A guidebook for teachers*. WestEd.
- Cochran, C. (1989). Strategies for Involving LEP Students in the All-English-Medium Classroom: A Cooperative Learning Approach. Program Information Guide Series Number 12.
- Ekayati, R., & Rahayu, Y. S. (2019, March). Building up Students' motivation in Learning English Through Fun English Learning Strategy (FELS). In *Multi-Disciplinary International Conference University of Asahan* (No. 1). <http://jurnal.una.ac.id/index.php/seminter2019/article/view/583>
- Karini, Z. (2018). Learning Fun English Using Total Physical Response Method. *International Journal of Education & Curriculum Application* <http://journal.ummat.ac.id/index.php/IJECA> ISSN, 2614-3380.
- Khasawneh, M. A. S. (2021). Language skills and their relationship to learning difficulties in English language from the students' point of view. *Science and Education*, 2(9), 261-272. <https://www.openscience.uz/index.php/sciedu/article/view/1846>.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*.
- Ma'arif, I. B., & Bahtiar, Y. (2021). Designing LEEF (Learning English Easy and Fun) as Learning Media for the Seventh Grade of Junior High School. *FOSTER: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 2(3), 372-386. <https://foster.pbi-iainpalopo.ac.id/index.php/contents/article/view/50>

- Metom, L., Tom, A. A., & Joe, S. (2013). Mind your grammar!– Learning English grammar the fun way. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 3(7), 402-402.
<https://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/jesr/article/view/980/1011>.
- Nagashibaevna, Y.K. (2019) Students' Lack of Interest: How to Motivate Them?. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 7(3), 797-802.
<https://www.hrpub.org/download/20190228/UJER20-19511698.pdf>.
- Namaziandost, E., & Nasri, M. (2019). The impact of social media on EFL learners' speaking skill: a survey study involving EFL teachers and students. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 6(3), 199-215.
<http://www.jallr.com/index.php/JALLR/article/view/1031>.
- Putri, N. S. "Learn English Can Be Fun". researchgate.net, January 2021, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Novi-Putri-3/publication/355860026_Title_Learn_English_Can_Be_Fun/links/6181c183a767a03c14e7e3c4/Title-Learn-English-Can-Be-Fun.pdf.
- Rohmawati, D. "Several Fun Ways To Learn English in Modern Era". academia.edu & google scholar, December 03, https://scholar.googleusercontent.com/scholar?q=cache:BbCs3V7oaiIJ:scholar.google.com/+how+to+learn+fun+english&hl=id&as_sdt=0,5.
- Situmorang, M. A. (2021). Students' Perception of Using Group Work in English Class. *Journal of English teaching*, 7(1), 81-88.
<http://ejournal.uki.ac.id/index.php/jet/article/view/2302>.
- Stoimcheva-Kolarska, D. L. (2020). The Impact of a Relaxed and Fun Learning Environment on the Second Language Learning. *Online Submission*, 2(1), 9-17. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED606062>.
- Stojkovic, N. (2019). Positioning English for Specific Purposes in an English Language Teaching Context. Amerika Serikat: Vernon Art and Science Incorporated.
- Sung, K., & Spolsky, B. (Eds.). (2015). *Conditions for English language teaching and learning in Asia*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Susanti, S. (2018). Fun activities in teaching English by using kahoot!. *PROCEEDING IAIN Batusangkar*, 1(2), 453-458.
<https://ojs.iainbatusangkar.ac.id/ojs/index.php/proceedings/article/view/900>.

Wonder, K. (2021). Understanding Student Perceptions of Class Participation. *Journal of Effective Teaching in Higher Education*, 4(1), 40-59. <https://jethe.org/index.php/jethe/article/view/58>.