

An Analysis of Students' Learning Needs for the Seventh Grade Students at MTs. Barana

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Abstract

This research aims to identify the needs of students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs.) Barana. This research used a qualitative descriptive research design with 10 seventh-grade students as the subjects in this research. In collecting the data, the research instruments in this research were interview guides. The interview was conducted with a student to find out their needs for English lessons. The researcher found that the needs of MTs. Barana students related to English lessons were the need for images in the textbook, vocabulary list to assist students knowing the meaning, more emphasis on pairs learning and learning should more focus on how to read and pronounce the words in English. Additionally, the students also revealed their needs for English lessons. First, the students' necessities are English as a subject at school thus they need it to pass the exam, go abroad, and achieve their dreams as well as they want to learn English because never learned it in Elementary school. The second, is students' lack or difficulty, they are difficult to find the meaning, read the passage and pronounce the word in the textbook. The third, students' wants are images to assist them in guessing the meaning. The fourth, student skills needed are vocabulary, reading and pronunciation. The last, student learning styles are listening or auditory learning and they prefer to learn in pairs compared with individually as well as in groups.

Keywords: analysis, learning needs, textbook, students.

1. Introduction

General English also known as English for General Purposes (EGP) is the English that is taught to the students in formal school such as elementary school, junior and senior high school or Islamic school, and etc. According to Hutchinson & Waters (1987), EGP is commonly defined as English language education at the level of school with the aim of making the students at school be familiar with the English structure or grammar in order to pass the exam. In contrast to ESP (English for Specific Purposes), students in EGP (English for General Purposes) context learn English for no specific reasons other than to pass the English language exam at school or to communicate with others.

However, it does not mean that general english is not important to be learned because ESP (English for Specific Purposes) is a specific edition of EGP (English for General Purposes) that help students perform professional tasks by combining the basic understanding of English learned in a school and the specific English language skills that are required at the vocational or professional level. General English delivers fundamental English language knowledge and abilities at school level where it is not clearly established for students in occupational and higher educational level.

English is universal language where English is frequently used in important meetings between countries and as the standard language for international airports. Wherever someone goes to a foreign country, they are always faced with English when they first arrive at the airport or seaport of the destination country. This demonstrates how widely English is utilized. Therefore, EGP or what we called as English language lesson in schools a necessity

Talking about the importance of English language lesson in schools, what is equally important is learning materials itself. Learning materials are extremely important in educational process since they are the primary tool within the curriculum for achieving educational goals. Learning materials assist educators in the creation of instructional materials and serve as a resource for students throughout their learning journey. There are several kinds of learning materials and one of them is textbooks. Textbooks are extensively utilized as learning resources, particularly in

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country such as Indonesia. Textbooks are essential in the Indonesian educational system because they contain the teaching materials and practices designed by the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture. These are expressed through a syllabus and used as primary learning tools in the classroom. According to Septiana, et. al (2020) students in the classroom may learn from the textbook in an effective and interesting way.

2. Methodology

In this research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative design. The primary objective of this research is to identify some information about the needs of the seventh-grade students at MTs. Barana. This research was conducted at MTs. (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) Barana. It was located on Jl. Ibrahim Tiro Kel. Bulujaya Kec. Bangkala Barat Kab. Jeneponto.

There was only a single type of subject in this research, they are the seventh-grade students of MTs. Barana which consisted a total of 40 students. In this research, the researcher one Instrument only, it was interview. the interview questions were adapted from Litz (2000) in which the aspects of students' needs are based on Hutchinson and Waters (1987) theory, where students' 'needs analysis' interview was carried out. The interview was divided into two parts, namely students personal information and student needs analysis that covers students' target needs namely necessity, lack, want, as well as their learning needs namely skills and learning styles or their way of learning.

3. Findings

The findings of this research are the result to identify the students' needs on English lesson especially English textbook at MTs. Barana.

The researcher conducted need analysis of students' at MTs. Barana to know their actual needs in English lesson. In analyzing the needs, the researcher separated the questions into five aspects based on Hutchinson and Waters (1987). They were necessities, lacks, wants, skills and learning styles.

3.1. Personal Information about the Student

The personal information about the students helps the researcher to know students' background knowledge when they were at Elementary School. It is also aimed to know which school have provided English subject. There are ten students that have been interviewed by the researcher. 5 students come from class A and 5 of them from class B. 5 students are female and 5 students are male. Most of them are 13 years old and come from different elementary schools. There were two students who said that they had received English lessons when they were in elementary school, but these lessons were not mandatory lesson at school, and only their teacher took the initiative to teach them about English. However, there are also students who take the initiative to learn independently via YouTube.

"Waktu SD saya pernah belajar Bahasa Inggris, diajari sama wali kelas tentang pengenalan diri, tentang alamat, sekolah sama nama orang tua." (Respondent 2, January 8th 2024).

[When I was in elementary school, I studied English and it was taught by my teacher. She taught about self-introduction, address, school and state my parents' name.] (Respondent 2, January 8th 2024)

Meanwhile, 8 other students said that they do not receive English lessons when they are at elementary school level. It is because there is not English subject at the curriculum and the school do not provide it as well. However, one of the students admit that he has studied at YouTube.

"Saya tidak pernah belajar Bahasa Inggris waktu SD (Sekolah Dasar)." (Respondent 1, January 8th 2024)

[I never study English when I was at Elementary school.] (Respondent 1, January 8th 2024)

3.2. Necessities

Necessities refers to what goals students actually have to achieve in learning English. In this case, the intended goals are the reasons they are learning English and where they will eventually use the English language. From the results of the interview conducted by the researcher, there are various answers provided by the students. Firstly, the most common answer given by students about their reasons in learning English is because English is a subject at school specially at MTs. Barana, thus they have to learn it in order to get high score and to pass the exam.

“*Karena mata pelajaran di sekolah*” (Respondent 4, January 8th, 2024)

[Because it is a school subject] (Respondent 4, January 8th 2024)

Secondly, their reasons to learn English because they would like to visit another country and English could help them to communicate. They have a dream to go abroad with various different goals. Some want to continue her study, become a doctor, football player, soldier and some just want to go abroad.

“*Ee karena suatu saat mauka pergi ke luar negeri*” (Respondent 6, January 8th 2024)

[Um, because someday I want to go abroad] (Respondent 6, January 8th 2024)

Thirdly, they don't know about English and some students admitted to learning English because they never received that lesson during elementary school.

“*Karena suka, karena saya tidak tahu Bahasa Inggris.*” (Respondent 1, January 8th 2024)

[Because I like it, because I do not know English.] (Respondent 1, January 8th 2024)

Furthermore, regarding the place where they would use English, some of the student state that they would like to use it when they visited other country, some of them would use English to continue their study in the university and when becoming a soldier. In addition, there is also student who said that English will help him in playing games so he only used English in his hometown.

“*Kira-kira nanti kalau bisa ke Mekah, untuk ke Mekah*” (Respondent 7, January 8th 2024)

[Perhaps later, if possible, to Mecca, when go to Mecca.] (Respondent 7, January 8th 2024)

Therefore, for future situation of potential English use, most of the students say that they would use it when having an opportunity to visit another country such as Macca, at abroad when continue their study in order to achieve their dream such as a doctor, teacher, soldier and football player, and last, at his hometown, only for playing a game.

3.3. Lacks

Lacks refer to students' difficulty in learning process or understanding the English lesson at school. In this case, the students asked about their opinion regarding English lessons at school and their difficulty in learning English. The students who are interviewed and had studied English at MTs. Barana said that English is quite easy to learn because the English teacher explain it well. Therefore, it is easy to understand. However, other students argue that English is difficult to learn because it is challenging to pronounce each word. They find it difficult when they have to write, read, especially when pronouncing the words in English from textbook because the written form in English is different from its pronunciation.

“*Saya susah di pembacaannya karena penulisannya beda, pembacaannya beda.*” (Respondent 1, January 8th 2024)

[I have difficulty in reading because the writing is different, and the pronunciation is also different.] (Respondent 1, January 8th 2024)

Furthermore, in the use of English textbook, students are difficult to look for the meanings and difficult to pronounce as well as read in English.

“*Kesulitan belajar menggunakan buku teks adalah mencari artinya.*” (Respondent 2, January 8th 2024)

[The difficulty in learning from textbook is finding the meanings] (Respondent 2, January 8th 2024)

On the other hand, only one of them who say that it was easy to learn English materials because everything is already state or present in the textbook.

“*Tidak ada bu. Mudah karena sudah ada dibuku.*” (Respondent 3, January 8th 2024)

[Nothing, miss. I don't face any difficulty because the materials are already in the book.] (Respondent 3, January 8th 2024)

From the interview result regarding students' difficulties in learning English, especially in using textbook, the researcher found that almost all students feel challenging when they have to find the meaning, read and pronounce every word in the textbook.

3.4. Wants

The next question is about the suggested topics in English. This analysis suggests that the students of International Class Program of Biologi perceived all suggested topics have significance in their learning.

Most of the students say that it is important to include the image in the textbook because it helps them to guess the meaning of the English words by seeing the image.

In addition, images in the textbook make the lessons more clearly and easy to understand. The presence of an image in the textbook makes its appearance more interesting, thus enhancing students' enthusiasm for learning. Therefore, for overall the respondents state that they enjoyed learning using English textbook because it contain subject matter and images that make it easier for them to guess the meaning.

"Penting. Kalau Bahasa Inggris kan kalau tidak ada gambar, kita tidak tahu artinya tapi kalau gambarnya kan gampang untuk ditebak." (Respondent 1, January 8th 2024)

[It's important. For English lesson, if there are not images, we cannot know the meaning, but with images, it will easy to guess it.] (Respondent 1, January 8th 2024)

In addition, students' expectation regarding English class. Students expected to memorize lots of English vocabularies, learn about introduction and colour, animal vocabularies, do the conversation with friends, as well as knowing the English of their daily activities.

"Menghafal kosa kata" (Respondent 3, January 8th 2024)

[Memorizing the vocabulary] (Respondent 3, January 8th 2024)

Finally, the students' opinion regarding using the English textbook to learn. All of the students at the 7th grade stated that they like using English textbook because it used to learn at classroom, the textbook helps them to learning English, there are many pictures and numbers that helps them to understand the meaning.

"Suka karena eee mempunyai banyak gambar yang bisa diketahui. Bilang eee gambar ini eee Bahasa Inggrisnya itu eee artinya juga itu." (Respondent 2, January 8th 2024)

[I like use the textbook because there are many pictures that helps me to knowing the English and its meaning.] (Respondent 2, January 8th 2024)

3.5. Skills

There are three important skills the students' needs based on the respondents, namely vocabulary, reading and pronunciation. Most of the respondent place vocabulary as the first thing that is most important to learn because they can easily understand English by having a wide range of vocabulary. After vocabulary, there are also reading and pronunciation. In this context, they perceive them to be difficult when they asked to read the passage or paragraph in the textbook because they do not know how to pronounce the word.

"Kosa kata penting supaya banyak diketahui" (Respondent 2, January 8th 2024)

[The vocabulary is important because we can know everything.] (Respondent 2, January 8th 2024)

3.6. Learning styles

From the interview result, all of the students have different ways of learning English at the classroom. However, the most effective way for students to understand English language learning is through listening. Either it is listening to explanations from teacher or from other learning sources. For example, listening while looking at English textbook, some also say that they are listening while watching learning videos, there are those who simply sit quietly while listening to explanation and some who need to write the material in the textbook first before listening to explanations from the teacher or other sources such as YouTube, and so on.

"Cara gampang saya mengingat pelajaran, saya tulis dulu dan mendengarkan." (Respondent 5, January 8th 2024)

[The easy way for me to remember the lesson is by writing them down first and then listening.] (Respondent 5, January 8th 2024)

Furthermore, at this point, there are also the students prefer type of interaction. In this case, the respondents are asked about their preference for learning in groups, in pairs, or individual. From the interview result, there are various answers from the students such as learning individually, pairs learning and group learning. There are six students who prefer to choose pairs learning.

“Berdua dengan teman supaya lebih mudah juga saling bertukar eee informasi, pendapat” (Respondent 2, January 8th 2024)

[Together with a friend in order to make it easier to exchange opinion or information.] (Respondent 2, January 8th 2024)

There are three students choose to study individually with the reason it is quieter compared to learning in pairs and especially it has to study in groups.

“eee individu karena lebih tenang” (Respondent 7, January 8th 2024)

[eee I prefer learning individually because it is calmer] (Respondent 7, January 8th 2024)

There is only one person who prefer to learn in groups. the student tough that if the task is only done by two people, it is difficult to complete it because when both of them do not know the answer, there is no one else to help them. Therefore, the student prefers to working in a group with the aim that each member in the group could contribute to the answer.

“Berkelompok karena bisa diskusi sama-sama. Jika hanya berdua, terkadang teman juga tidak tahu jawabannya” (Respondent 4, January 8th 2024)

[I like studying in groups because we can discuss together. If only with a friend, sometimes my friend does not know the answer.] (Respondent 4, January 8th 2024)

However, the majority of students at Mts. Barana prefer learning in pairs with the reasons having someone to help them when they encountered difficulties. In addition, the students' reason for not choosing group learning included the perception that too many people made them less focused, and typically, only one person truly works on the task, while others simply wait for the answers.

4. Discussions

This section interprets the findings from the preceding section. The objective to identify some information about the needs of the seventh grades students at MTs. Barana. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) are used in this research to identify the needs of students. They divide a needs analysis into target needs and learning needs. Where target needs are categorized into three main points such as necessity, lack and want, while for learning needs are categorized into students' skill and learning style.

4.1. Necessities

The discussion of necessities based on Hutchinson and Waters (1987) theory refers to understanding the aim of long-term needs in the context of teaching English to students at MTs. Barana. This theory defines necessity as the act of asking questions regarding different learners' perspectives, especially their goals in learning English. It refers to the specific knowledge and skill that students needed therefore they can use English well in the future.

The most common answer given by students about their reasons in learning English is because English as a subject at school especially at MTs. Barana. After that, for the second reason, they would like to visit another country as well as English can assist them to communicate and the last reason is because they never receive English lesson when they are at Elementary school. This is in line with Cunningsworth (1995), it is essential that textbook should promote students' improvement and bring them as far as possible towards their aims.

According to Cunningsworth (1995), textbook should reflect the current and future uses of language that students will use for their particular reason. Based on the result, students' reason to study English in the term of the place they will use it are when they visit other counties, to continue their study at the University, when becoming a soldier as well as using English on their own country. According to the student statement who said that in the future, she may go for holiday and meet the strangers. At that moment, she can only communicate with them if she can speak English.

4.2. Lacks

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) describe the concept of “lacks” in language learning as the gap between goal competency needs and the learner’s present competency. It means that evaluating the learners’ present level of language ability or what students already know and identifying places where the students’ feel difficult to learn it. This information is important for implementing language learning strategies to overcome students’ learning difficulties and assist students in meeting their needs.

From the findings of students’ interview, most of the students are difficult in pronouncing the word in English and difficult to know the meanings of each word in English. Therefore, for students’ lacks in the context of students at MTs. Barana, the researcher found that the students challenge to write, read as well as pronounce the word in English textbook because the written form was different with the pronunciation. This result was contradictive with William (2000) who argued that a good textbook should provide a tool for teaching pronunciation, as an example phonetic system. The textbook with phonetic system will assist the students in pronouncing each word in English.

Furthermore, in the context of English textbook used at MTs. Barana, from the result of evaluating the textbooks, the English textbook 1 namely “When English Rings a Bell” does not provide the information about how to pronounce the word. While for the English textbook 2 namely ‘English for Nusantara’ has provided the way to pronounce the word but in the form of barcode scan which directed the students to a video that related to the materials being studied. Students can listen to how words are pronounced in English. However, only a few materials have a barcode scanning, one of them is in listening section.

4.3. Wants

The concept of “wants” in language learning, as defined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), focuses on students’ views of what their needs are. In this context, it represents students’ actual motivation in language learning. The result of the interview explains students’ perspectives on the importance of images or visuals of English textbook, which undoubtedly makes students more interested in using the English language textbook. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) emphasize that want is closely related to students’ motivation in learning the language.

From the result of the interview with the students at MTs. Barana, there are three points that address to the students. They are the importance of images in textbook, students’ expectation about English class and their opinion about English textbook. Most of the students argued that it is important to have images in the textbook. It is because images help the students to guess the meaning of English words by seeing the image. This statement is also supported by William (2000) who said that textbook should include relevant images, illustrations, tables, etc. The image made the lesson more clearly and easy to understand. Moreover, students expected that by learning the English lesson at school, they can understand all of the vocabulary especially when students want to state their daily activities in English as well as they can speak English well.

Additionally, in the English textbook 1 ‘When English Rings a Bell’ and English textbook 2 ‘English for Nusantara’ have fulfilled those want and expectation of students. Both of the English textbook have provided images and interesting design of textbook. Therefore, students can more motivate in learning.

4.4. Skills

Based on Hutchinson and Waters (1987), learning needs cover the process of how the students’ study including skills, strategies, abilities and their motivation in language learning. In the context of skills, it is important to know the students’ preferred skill needed in learning English especially in English textbook. From the interview result that was conducted by the researcher, there are three important skills that MTs. Barana students need. The first was vocabulary. The vocabulary was in the first place because students can easily understand the English lesson if they have a wide range of vocabulary. The second is reading. The third is pronunciation. In the context of Mts. Barana students, they found difficulties in reading the passages in the textbook because they do not know how to pronounce the word.

From the interview result that was conducted by the researcher, there are three important skills that MTs. Barana students need. The first was vocabulary. The vocabulary was in the first place because students can easily understand the English lesson if they have a wide range of vocabulary. The second is reading. The third is pronunciation. In the

context of Mts. Barana students, they difficult to read the passages in the textbook because they do not know how to pronounce the word.

Based on the textbook evaluation, the textbook 1 'When English Rings a Bell' achieve a low score in the point of vocabulary and pronunciation because there are not vocabulary list or glossary that could help the students understanding the meaning so that they cannot read well even though the reading texts are interesting. While the English textbook 2 'English for Nusantara' achieve a maximum score for vocabulary because the textbook includes the vocabulary list or glossary for each chapter and the pronunciation achieve a high score as well. Therefore, when the students used this textbook 2, it may be able for them to understand the English lesson.

4.5. Learning Styles

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) explained that the way of students learning the language is included in learning needs. It was also added by Cunningsworth (1995) who argued that element such as preferred learning style should be taken into consideration. There are various different ways of students in learning or also known as learning styles. The first is listening. The second is listening while looking at the image in the textbook. The third is writing then listen to the teacher explanation. The fifth is listening while watching the video. The fourth is watching the video. The last is speaking.

However, from the result of interview, the most effective way for them to understand the English lesson is through listening. Whether it is listening to the teachers' explanation or other learning resources. It is also supported by Cunningsworth (1995) who stated that if possible, the textbook should encourage the use of variety of learning styles so that students have several choices in the way they study.

Hand Sign Language (SL) has become a standard part of communication in the military, especially when voice communication is not desired or silence must be maintained for security (Aravind et.al, 2023). Besides implying a proper and organized communication system, the use of hand codes and symbols ensures important information is communicated clearly and effectively.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions, the researcher concluded as follows, the needs of students at the 7th grade of MTs. Barana who used the English textbooks are divided into five aspects, namely necessities, lacks, wants, skills and learning styles. The first, the students' necessities are English as subject at school thus they need it to pass the exam, go abroad and achieve their dream as well as they want to learn English because never learn it at Elementary school. The second, students' lacks or difficulty, they are difficult to find the meaning, read the passage and pronounce the word in the textbook. The third, students' wants are images in order to assist them in guessing the meaning. The fourth, student skills needed are vocabulary, reading and pronunciation. The last, student learning styles are listening or auditory learning and they prefer to learn in pairs compared with individually as well as in groups.

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