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## **The Problems of A Thai Student in Learning English (A Descriptive Study at English Education Department Student of UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri)**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to discover and explain the problems in learning English and to find out the expected support of a Thai student for the studies in English education department of UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri. The respondent was a Thai EFL student with four years of study abroad experience at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach to describe findings based on in-depth interview transcriptions. Miles and Huberman's interactive model analysis was used to analyze the data. This study used data triangulation to ensure the validity of the data. The research result showed that the identified Problems in learning English stated by Mohammed Theory were experienced by a Thai student. This research found that the problems faced by a Thai student in learning English were cultural differences, accent, attitude, environment, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. While, other problems experienced beyond the theory mentioned, namely, grasping the lecturer explanation, understanding the learning material and lack of practice. The expected support of a Thai student for the studies at English education department of UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri, includes support from lecturers, language courses, counselling during the study period, native speakers and English competition.

**Keywords:** English learning problem, Support, Thai student.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The spread of English in ASEAN is primarily due to the strength of globalization that is considered more commercial because it is used not just to communicate internationally but also as a lingua franca across diverse ethnic groups in this region (Low & Ran, 2018). Besides that increasing numbers of people around the world are using English, the ASEAN community has used English for a variety of purposes, the most important of which is academic. In terms of academic purposes, learning English has become a requirement for all students around the world, particularly EFL students. The spread of the role of using English could be used by EFL students in non-English speaking countries in the process of learning English. As a result of this circumstance, it allows ASEAN students to study English in Indonesia, where the presence of international students significantly contributes to the socio-economic and cultural development of

both their host institution and country (Nghia, 2015). Many EFL students who study English in Indonesia come from ASEAN countries, one of which is Thailand student who registered as English learners at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri. Hence, the investigation of international students' study experience is great value for institutions, for instance need to adapt and improve the curriculum and teaching methods to a culturally and linguistically diverse (Jianvittayakit, 2012).

As maintained by Andrade (2006), international student is a student who registered to study at higher education institution in another country on a temporary student visa and not a native resident. The presence of international students has an intellectual, cultural and economic contribution that positively impacts the host country's colleges and universities (Martirosyan, Bustamante, and Saxon, 2019). It has become increasingly important for higher education institutions to increase the need to understand student behavior from a crosscountry perspective (Cubillo, Sanchez and Cervino, 2006).

In this research, international students refer to a Thai student in English department at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri. Thai students came to UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri not as interns, observers, or exchange students, but as UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri students. Meanwhile, living in a new country is difficult, especially for international students. In addition to adjusting, they must also adapt to the local culture. During the adaptation process, international students must not only be able to communicate with other students and locals, but also master all aspects of their living environment, including norms, values, community, habits, and so on. International students face many obstacles, including socio-cultural barriers and lack of integration, psychological barrier, physical barrier, emotional barrier, and language barrier (Ningrum, 2019). Related to socio-cultural concerning language and communication in the Indonesia context, which is rich in traditional culture and various languages that are practiced in everyday life (Yulia and Hamamah, 2019). It became an obstacle for Thai student to adjust to the new environment distinct from their homeland.

English has emerged as a widely spoken language globally. Many countries in the world that have their own language have used English as their second or foreign language. Language learning is a communication process that is obtained through the maturation of the body, psychologically and mentally, with stimulation around it (Ozden, 2018). According to Shih and Yang (2008), successful language learning is linked to collaboration, cognitive apprenticeship, and cognition

situated in the target language community. Participating in a community where the target language is used in a real context is a powerful way to learn the language. In that community environment, people who have no experience with a new language can share same percentage of activities with other learners. They may be advised to speak, write, and think using the target language. As a result, language learners can examine the significant contexts they analyze clearly and spontaneously. Therefore, in order to make effective language learning, language practice must appear in actual and significant conversation than in isolated linguistic environments. The process of acquiring language is not easy and must be monitored closely. Meanwhile, language learning is a process that can be accepted well from obtaining formal learning knowledge or independent learning.

During the process of learning a foreign language, learners will inevitably encounter challenges. They probably create mistakes in words, phrases, and sentences throughout the initial stages of language acquisition. Sometimes, students cannot explain their mistakes. Thus, it is necessary to identify and analyze them to evaluate the errors and enhance English language skills. Here are some problems that faced by foreign language in learning English according to experts. Mohammed (2018) stated that there are some problems of learning English, there are:

1. Negative Transfer, involves maintaining the same source language structure in the target language.
2. Cultural differences, cultural knowledge is needed to achieve linguistic abilities, a new language cannot be mastered until students understand the cultural context (Chenowith, 2014)
3. Accent, a language learner's attitude towards their own accent can be a cause for speech difficulties and anxiety.
4. Slang and Colloquialism, the English language contains a large number of slang and colloquialism expressions
5. Arbitrary language, causes foreign language learners to have difficulty comprehending English words since their written forms differ from their spoken forms.
6. Attitude, negative attitude hinders language acquisition.
7. Environment, The combination of a well-designed atmosphere and flexibility of contact in the classroom increases students' participation and their sense of anxiety.
8. Grammar and Vocabulary, The English language possesses a complex set of vocabulary and grammatical rules.

9. Pronunciation, what students can hear and what can say is different and intonation problem.

There, Support for learning has an undeniable effect on academic progress. The support they receive motivates them to enhance their language skills. According Reynoso (2008), the resiliency factors that contributed to the academic achievement of English-language learners:

1. Faculty support, good relationships and support from the faculty encourage students to excel in learning English.
2. Tutoring support, tutoring is very important in helping students improve their skills and solve learning problems because they are monitored directly by supportive tutors.
3. Counseling support, Counseling allows students to discuss their accomplishments, problems, and solutions.
4. Peer support, the peer support might motivate students to increase the learning abilities.
5. Family support, the emotional connection between parents and children also affects children's academic achievement.
6. Self-motivation, Self-motivation emerged as a contributor to the academic success of the college participants.
7. Bi-cultural identity development, Bicultural identity serves as a protective factor that facilitates adaptation to encountered difficulties.

According to Ningrum (2019) earlier studies on the problems in learning English showed two major aspects of difficulties to adjust to Indonesian culture and difficulties to grasp the learning materials. Whereas Chetea (2018) found that that problems in learning English in speaking in the aspect of linguistic including lack of listening skill, vocabulary grammatical knowledge, pronunciation and Non-linguistic problem include afraid to make mistakes, anxiety, nothing to say, lack of practice speaking, using more mother tongue. Research was conducted by Abukhadrah (2015) showed that social interaction is one of the major difficulties confronting international students learning English. Also, the results of students' interviews revealed some difficulties in terms of oral production, comprehension, pronunciation and using the correct lexicon.

The previous studies above show that international students face problems in learning English while studying abroad. However, this study has similarities and differences with the previous study mentioned above. This study is titled "The Problems of a Thai student in Learning English (a Descriptive Study at English Education Department Student of UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri)". After comparing the previous studies, there are similarities between this research and previous

studies that discuss the learning problems of English students. The differences of this research examined more deeply the problems faced by a Thai English student in learning English at UIN Prof.K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri and the expected support of a Thai student for the studies.

Theoretically, the findings of this research can be useful insight for those who are concerned in the world of teaching and learning a foreign language so that these contribute to the educational knowledge by increasing the understanding of English learning problems and the expected support to the English learning activities.

## **METHOD**

This research applies a descriptive qualitative approach to answer the research questions because the researcher explored the data descriptively and the presentation of the findings was in the form of words (Marying, 2014). The qualitative inquiry has the aim of in-depth development of phenomena not to generalize populations (Creswel, 2012). Collecting qualitative data allows the researcher to collect detailed information to gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of participant. Therefore, the reason of choosing this design is because the purpose of this study is to get a deep understanding of the problems and the expected support of a Thai Student to learn English as a foreign language (EFL) in his studies by describing the opinion of respondent.

The information gathered and the available literature provides a basis for understanding and helps suggest various reason for the problems experienced by a Thai student in learning English. A Thai students' expectations and perceptions of language learning are used to ascertain these barriers. The theme related to learning barriers was used to suggest a potential relationship between cultural experience and foreign language learning. The researcher used purposeful sampling of a Thai English student who studied in English department to prevent unqualified sample selection (Palinkas, ) This research focuses heavily on the individual as a suggestion to explain the problems of learning English in which the individual views of the participants as valued and respected as an important source of personalized information by emphasizing the authenticity of the individual experience. Considering the fact that this research is exploratory, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews to a Thai English student because researcher interested in the depth questions and the participant has many perspectives about the phenomenon that was investigated. The interviews are carried out in the form of semi structured, in which the interview questions designed and developed by researcher from Mohammed's theory. During interview, some questions such as the

problems in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) and the expected support of a Thai English student for his studies asked to a Thai student. Based on language proficiency, Indonesian is the language that the respondent and researcher find easiest to utilize to communicate. Therefore, interview conducted face-to-face interview twice in Indonesian to get more detailed data and reduce misunderstanding of the point of view. To analyze the data that have been collected, the researcher describes the data using descriptive qualitative method, which is describing the data into the words. This research uses Miles and Hubberman's (1994) theory framework for qualitative data analysis that consists of three concurrent flows of activity; data reduction, data display and drawing conclusion or verification.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents the result of the research. It is organized to uncover the student's English language learning problems and his expected support for his study at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri. The data described had been gotten from interviews. The researcher obtained data from the response of some question in the interview with a Thai English student. The research finding consists of the transcript from the interview of a Thai male students who study in English education department at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri.

### **Problems in Learning English**

As said by Mohammed's (2018) Theory, all kinds of difficulties have an impact on English as a foreign language learning resulting in problems in front of the learners themselves: negative transfer, cultural differences, accent, slang & colloquialism, arbitrary language, attitude, environment, grammar & vocabulary, and Pronunciation. This respondent is having issues with a number of the difficulties that have been raised. Therefore, this section focuses on the issues that emerged during the interview process and the data that was gathered. The following sections examine each of the English learning problems encountered by a Thai student:

#### **A. Cultural differences**

Based on the interview, Cultural differences are one of the problems a Thai student faces in learning English because blending into English culture is difficult for him. As he said:

"I practice listening by watching videos on YouTube that played with an American accent with subtitles, but sometimes I don't understand what is conveyed. I have difficulty capturing the topics that British natives speak. I don't know what the native says because I can't hear the vocabulary."

His statement indicates that he had difficulties comprehending the English community, especially British. The cultural problem came from his ability to listen to English natives that he could not understand British native says. In addition, cultural differences cause negative transfer in learning English. As he said:

"I have to interpret English using Thai first; if Thai to English is not suitable, it will be changed from Thai to Indonesian, then it will be translated into English."

His statement stated that using the same source language structure in interpreting English caused a negative transfer of what is conveyed. This is because he does not master the target culture and lacks English proficiency causing him to use his own language structure.

Based on the description above, cultural differences influence the adjustment of a Thai student in learning English in Indonesia. This implies that it is important for a Thai student to be aware of the different cultures and provide cultural adjustment. As stated by Nguyen (2011), cultural differences affect foreign language learners who have difficulty mastering English proficiency.

## **B. Accent**

Grounded on the data from the Interview with a Thai English student, another problem faced by a Thai student in learning English is Accent:

"I didn't learn an accent, but I often listened to American natives. I want to speak English using an American accent, but I can't. I'm studying in Indonesia but I don't speak English with an Indonesian accent, so I have my own accent. My own accent still carries it but I want to learn a native English accent."

During the interview, the respondent stated that he didn't learn accent specifically. He speaks English using his own accent. The accent problem experienced by him has implications for his listening ability.

"Listening to a native who speaks with a British accent makes me confused when it comes to listening lessons. I understand a bit about the American accent because I often listen to natives who speak with an American accent rather than a British accent."

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that accent was enough to influence a Thai student in listening English skills. Accent makes him difficult to listen to because it makes him confused. This is consistent with the findings of Darti's (2017) research, which indicates that variances in the accents of different natives are one of the factors that contribute to listening difficulties.

### **C. Attitude**

The indication of demotivation in English learning in the classroom exists in the current study. The research finding is suitable with the theory from Gardner and Nunan in Juhana (2012) that elaborates on the causes of the student's lack of motivation such as uninspired teaching, boredom, lack of perceived relevance of materials and lack of knowledge about the goals of the instructional program. As he said:

“At the beginning of entering university, I felt down because I didn't know the language, I wanted to listen to the explanation of the material from the lecturer but I didn't know what the lecturer was explaining because I didn't understand Indonesian and English well. I felt that I could not follow the learning activity well. When speaking English, I have to prepare a topic first. When all of a sudden, I don't know what to say. I also can't speak or express opinions directly because I must think first. Therefore, I feel anxious.”

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the attitude of the respondent where at the beginning of learning in his class, he feels down and feels anxious because of his lack of English proficiency and the respondent's is unmotivated with boring learning situations that caused by uninspiring teaching and lack of appropriate in delivering materials. This finding is in line with Juhana (2012), who states that psychological factors such as fear of making a mistake, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation hinder students in learning English.

### **D. Environment**

Another critical challenge discovered in this investigation was an environment lacking adequate support. In general, a Thai student who was interviewed have friends who are from the same home country and share a common first language. They naturally converse in their first language with each other rather than practicing Indonesian language as a second language. As he said:

“Pattani Malay is the primary language spoken in the rented house in Indonesia where I am currently living. I don't speak Indonesian at all. Indonesia language is used when Indonesian friends visit the rented house.”

His statement indicates that his adjustment to the academic environment in Indonesia was restricted to the activities that took place in the classroom and to the times when he interacted with his Indonesian friends. A lack of exposure was the source of his English learning difficulty while



learning the language outside of the classroom setting. Meanwhile, he received a lot of peer pressure not to speak English to other Thai students. As he said:

“The environment where I live also does not support my ability in English. When I talk to friends who are non-English and have a closed mindset, I’m a bit embarrassed because they tend to laugh and make fun of English because I speak English.”

His statement shows that the Unsupported environment is one of the problems hindering English language learning because friends in the environment do not support English practice. The unsupportive environment is quite challenging due to the lack of English role in the community. As a result, the lack of exposure causes fears to develop and Using English language outside the classroom. This finding is in line with Patahudin (2017) that stated that the cause of Indonesian EFL students having difficulties in learning English was feeling afraid to develop and use the language with their capability independently in different contexts.

#### **E. Grammar & vocabulary**

Grammar is the respondent's most difficult problem due to different language and structures, especially when learning English. As he said:

“I understood grammar while the lecturer explained the grammar material. However, it is hard to memorize the 16 tense formulas. Therefore, I must improve my ability because I don't apply grammar in speaking English daily activities. I will forget grammar when I do not regularly practice.”

His statement indicates that mastering grammar is one of the difficulties in mastering a foreign language, especially in the countries where the English language is still considered as a foreign language. The reason for his difficulty may be that in Indonesia and Thai, he stressed learning the rules but did not use the rules in real situations, for example, in output skills writing and speaking. Nevertheless, every language has own structure which is sometimes highly different from one another.

The implications of the problems in mastering grammar for his speaking ability where he is afraid of being wrong to speak because he is worried that his friends will find out his mistakes in using grammar, which is not because he doesn't want to improve but because he feels that he lacks his basic English. This finding is line with Tuomas (2015), who that stated many students are afraid to speak in the English language because they keep thinking of grammar and are anxious about grammatical errors.

Besides that, the ability to master vocabulary influences the English language proficiency of a Thai student. The respondent felt difficult with unfamiliar vocabulary. as he said:

“I lack vocabulary but if a native speaker speaks, I can understand. I want to speak but I don't know what to say. When I hear it, I can understand. For reading, I only understand the content that talks about Education and English lessons. Apart from that, the other topic is challenging to understand because I don't have much vocabulary. My writing ability in academic writing is lacking, but I can write for daily activities. I don't have enough vocabulary because I don't recently read English text. When writing a lesson, I will be confused about what to write. Besides that, sometimes I forget the vocabulary that I already know. It hinders me because my vocabulary is not wide enough”

His statement indicates that vocabulary mastery influences his ability in English proficiency to speak specifically in terms of finding proper words, listening comprehension, understanding material through reading outside the classroom, developing ideas at the time of writing. This happens because he is not familiar with the vocabulary. His lack of awareness to read makes his vocabulary not develop, it is difficult to produce words and there is no implementation of vocabulary. This statement is in line with Alqahtani (2015), who said that limited vocabulary could obstruct the success of communication since vocabulary has a crucial role in a language learner.

#### **F. Pronunciation**

The problems that respondent faced is difficult to pronounce the word correctly. As he stated:

“My pronunciation is not very correct. However, I would like to improve my pronunciation.”

His statement shows that he has difficulty pronouncing vocabulary in the right way. This has implications for his speaking ability, which is difficult because of the way he pronounces a vocab and how he produces vocab with his accent. As he said:

“I am confused about pronouncing vocabulary because the written and spoken forms differ. However, I can open a dictionary. My accent is a bit unclear, so my pronunciation influences how I speak.”

He indicates that his difficulty in producing words is also influenced by different pronunciation and writing. His experience in speaking in the way he pronounces things with his own accent makes him think whether his friends can understand what is being said. Besides that, it makes him feel that he is not improving with his pronunciation. As he said:

“I am ashamed to speak because of my accent. When I practice speaking, my English accent is not good enough. So, I feel like just me in the class who cannot speak even though the rest of my friends can speak well.”

This finding is in line with Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) that stated, English pronunciation is an essential part of foreign language learning because this part can take effect on learner's performance and communicative skill.

### **G. English learning problems beyond theory**

#### **1. Grasping the lecturer explanation**

One of the adjustments of international students in the class is struggling to grasp the lecturer's explanation during class. As he said:

“At the beginning of the lesson, when I wanted to listen to the lecturer, I did not understand and did not know what was being said, so it was hard to understand. Now, when lecturers deliver English material, there is a view of what they are saying”

His statement indicated that he unable to participate in class discussions because he could not understand the lecturer's explanation. Therefore, the understanding of the lecturer's explanation is influenced by understanding both Indonesian and English, which require time adjustments to improve his language proficiency.

This is in line with shasrini in Ningrum (2019) stated that, International students have a language barrier to understanding a new language, Because they do not speak the language, they require additional time to "catch the words" and then additional time to "think again" before being able to respond appropriately to the lecturer or their friends.

#### **2. Understanding the learning material**

Based on the interview, the respondent stated that making the transition from learning English at previous degree to learning English at the university was quite difficult. As he said:

“English learning at the time before college still could not speak because use the old method. I think that school is not really educating us to speak English, just to be able to take the exam to get a score. It is not educating us to speak English.”

His statement indicates that his English proficiency at the previous study did not help his ability to be able to understanding English language learning at university. This finding is in line with Chenowith (2014) that stated Some English learners generally find the understanding of most academic material too high for individual who has only recently begun learning the language

### 3. Lack of practice

Adjustment to the academic environment in Indonesia was restricted to the English activities that took place in the classroom and to the times when he interacted with his Indonesian friends. This major obstacle for him is the fact that he only speaks English when it is absolutely necessary in the learning activity. He has clearly explained this issue:

“I have practice speaking English in certain day.”

He did not feel had much opportunity to practice English because it was hindered by the lack of lecture time due to a pandemic which caused learning to be replaced with online learning. His lack of practice made him realize that his ability in English could not improve because there was no support from his surrounding, therefore through his awareness that he lacked practice, he learned independently. As he said:

“When I feel less disciplined in practising English, I make English works on Tiktok and Instagram to stay consistent in learning English, I translate them into Thai. So, I can practice listening, writing and reading. That is why I make content on social media to practice English”

This is line with the method that used to practice English from nuraeni (2019) that explain about the practice carried out by students using interesting methods and learning with their own method at home would help them to be better practice to improve understanding of English language skills

#### **Support in learning English**

Given the opportunity is what a Thai student require by defining the path to future English language acquisition, he determines what he think to be own main limitations. Those are expected support in effectively gaining knowledge would be explained below:

##### **A. Support from lecturer**

Lecturers are becoming the center of attention in class interactions as they become sources of knowledge and demonstrate their capacity to teach their knowledge. If the lecturer's delivery does not reach the students, the students will negatively respond to the material delivered. as mentioned by SS:

“The lecturer is less effective in delivering material. The teacher just delivers the material, and then the students just listen. So, I feel bored, especially when online learning makes me sleepy. The ways lecturers deliver the material does not motivate students to learn English, so they just

teach. I have to find inspiration from outside to improve myself, then I feel less disciplined to practice English, but lecturers must also inspire and motivate us in learning.”

He indicates that the submission of monotonous material makes him bored because he must listen to the material without practice in class. The motivation given by the lecturer can increase students' willingness to keep working hard during learning activity even though they face ups and downs in the language learning process. As said by SS:

“I am motivated by lecturers who study abroad, which inspires me because I am also an international student.”

That statement indicates that the experience of teachers who study abroad provides him with good role models with a positive experience. This leads him to have a positive attitude towards teachers because of the similarity of their experiences. Besides that, because he is a student from Thailand, teachers should understand not only the language difficulty of students in the class but also the cultural issues.

“I need different treatment from the lecturer when studying English. I need help to understand better because the lecturers treat me as same as my Indonesian Friend”

Lecturers are also expected to use the right strategies so that learning can be conducive and not monotonous as well as direct learning practices so that students are motivated to improve their proficiency. As stated by Ningrum (2019) that Thai students cannot fully comprehend what the lecturer is saying because they struggle to understand an explanation of lectures in class because they do not understand the language.

## **B. Language course**

Based on the results of the interview. He is struggling with pre-sessional Indonesian classes would not adequately prepare them for academic study and cultural adaptation. As said by SS:

“For international students, we need a language program provided by the campus to prepare for taking classes. For example, studying in Egypt is also the first year for international students to study the language of the country of destination before entering class in the second year of college. At UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri, at least there a month of Indonesian language course. Like in Unsoed, when a new international student arrives, the campus holds a one-month Indonesian language course program. The campus held it directly, not the Thai student organization, because Thai students initiated the program for Thai students to prepare to study Indonesian. The course held at Wadas Kelir for one month did not really teach Indonesian. The

class was taught about pantonyms and shooting videos or culture-related things. There is not too much teaching to learn Indonesian. To learn Indonesian, we have to practice speaking for ourselves. The point is that we have to take the initiative to improve our Indonesian.”

The lack of pre-sessional Indonesian language courses and the lack of precise Indonesian language learning taught in the course make the pre-sessional Indonesian language learning period ineffective. He felt that his proficiency in Indonesian had not considerably improved. This caused the material taught in the class makes the course not optimal. Furthermore, he lacks sufficient English language abilities because his past education did not enhance his English proficiency. Therefore, he did not grasp English material. As a result, he thinks that by using the English course as a necessity, with that fact he hopes to be able to understand the English material that delivered by the lecturer, as stated by ss:

“Besides that, the faculty should also hold courses for English students”

As previously stated, international students frequently struggle with such skills in learning English due to cultural influences. It would be easier for him to adjust to culture if he accepted a new language. This finding is line with the suggestion from the research by Nguyen (2011) that stated Language courses are needed for international students to maximize their strengths in a new language in order to use it effectively because student progress in learning will be affected by the new environment.

### **C. Counseling during the study period**

The respondent needs the role of lecturers or staff from campus to guide him during the study process to deal with problems that occur while studying in Indonesia. As said by him:

“We also need a mentor who guides Thai students during study at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri so that they can control and help Thai students' difficulties during lectures.”

At the beginning of entering college is the heaviest point felt by a Thai student. He does not master the Indonesian language well and English language proficiency are not enough to prevent him from understanding the material taught by the lecturer. He is very troubled with language. Therefore, it will affect his attitude in language learning activities.

“It was like I wanted to listen to the lecturer but didn't understand, I didn't know what the lecturer was talking about, so it was hard to understand”

This is the biggest obstacle because he cannot follow the lesson well. This made him down because he was confused about learning activity which made him not understand the material. he

also told the difficulties of Thai students in adjusting to the culture in Indonesia. He said that initially, Thai students who came to Indonesia had to live with local residents in order to adapt to the culture in Indonesia. Adapting to a new environment, new people, and new cultural beliefs is undeniably difficult for international students as they begin their lives.

Having faculty support was instrumental in fostering his academic achievement at the university. In the absence of counseling from the lecturer to assist him with related issues, it was difficult for him to solve the problem. Therefore he expects an advisor during his studies to help him consult and share his problems, as well as mentoring him during college. He stated that support from the advisor needed to help him cope with personal challenges faced during a difficult time in his life. This is in line with research results by Reynoso (2018) that explain that the counseling services provided by the campus help students make international students comfortable to be a successful adjustment to their academics.

#### **D. Native speaker**

Based on the interview SS suggest that faculty should provide English students with additional opportunities to develop their English language skills to invite native speakers to teach English at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri, as he said:

“I hope some natives speaker teach at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri. So, we can practice adequately, not only Indonesian lecturers’ who are studying abroad. It’s already excellent but different. So, if I talk to a native, I will really speak English. Right now, if we talk to Indonesians, if we can’t talk, we’ll be helped later, so it can improve our abilities. Like when I did comparative studies at another school when I was in high school that was taught by a native speaker so the students could speak English fluently.”

His statement indicates that the development of program in which students with native speakers while in the university would also provide an opportunity for English language learners to become more familiar with both the language and the English culture. In this way, students would at the very least be able to observe the English culture or gain an opportunity to practice directly with native speakers. That is not to say that students need to forget or give up their heritage cultures, but students would at least have the chance to compare cultures and to understand the context in which the English language functions. This finding is supported by the results of research from Fitriani, Hendrawijaya and Ariefianto (2019) that explain about the role of the practical method in

LKP Andi's English Course in the form of the native speaker method has a role in improving English language skills.

### **E. English competition**

Based on the results of the interview with SS, he showed a positive reaction to his motivation in learning English. He said that learning English will make it easier for him to adapt in the era of globalization because the international community uses English, therefore he also has a desire to be able to blend in with the global community. as he said:

“I'm very comfortable learning English because I like English. By learning English, I get much knowledge, not only studying to prepare for graduation, I will teach but learning English, I can learn other sciences later, I can teach again in a larger community, I'm learning English, so that makes me feel I know more than people who don't study English because now all the information is in English. I Want to explore more things in English. Learning English is very important because I feel that I can speak a little English so I can take knowledge from others and be able to adapt myself in Thailand.”

According to this SS is slightly more strongly integrally motivated to learn English. As Gardner (1968) states, integrative motivation is characterized by the desire to merge and follow the culture to be like valued members of the language community. People with this kind of motivation are more interested in the way and culture of those who can communicate in the language. The university needs to take into consideration both the potential and the strategies for the integrative motivation of students to learn English to increase their proficiency. As he said:

“I want English competitions for English students like writing and speaking to improve the ability of each English student. If there is no competition, we are not very passionate and relaxed. Therefore, let us add our own work and be dedicated in our efforts to study English so that we may enhance our skills.”

According to this, there are two types of competition: achievement competition and competition with other people. The first is achievement competition, students must be aware of their results and then seek to improve them. In addition to learning and comparing their results to those of their peers, students engage in competition with other students (Irsanti, 2017). Because motivation is a psychological process in which attitudes are reflected, both types of competition can be used to increase motivation.



## **CONCLUSION**

This research found that a Thai student had some struggles while undergoing cultural adjustment where the language difficulties reflected in his language proficiency. It can be seen that a Thai student already showed his problems experienced in learning English were cultural differences, accent, attitude, environment, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. While other problems experienced beyond the theory mentioned, namely, grasping the lecturer explanation, understanding the learning material and lack of practice. However, most of these problems were experienced at the beginning of the English learning activity, with his high autonomous learning and the solutions he uses to deal with his problems in learning English make his English skills improve as time passes. Therefore, the support from his surrounding is significantly important.

The finding has significant implications for practitioners, which are beneficial. It is essential for the teacher and educational institutions to take into consideration the problems faced by a Thai student to provide potential solutions in order to support in realizing the full potential in learning English in the future. The continuity of cooperative relationship between UIN Prof. K.H Saifuddin Zuhri and the Thai government makes it possible that there are next Thai students who are majoring in English education program, so this topic is important as an insight that can be useful in the future.

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