

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Learning English as foreign language poses different challenges compared to acquiring it as a second language. In most Indonesian schools, especially in East Nusa Tenggara province, English exposure is limited to classroom settings. This limitation can hinder students from developing sufficient competence in the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For students at the junior high school level, particularly those in grade eight (second grade), these foundational years are crucial in developing a positive attitude toward English and acquiring basic language proficiency.

Nevertheless, there are some factors that influence the process of learning English, and one of them is motivation. This factor significantly impacts a person's ability to understand and learn English. During the learning process, students may also encounter various challenges that must be faced.

As stated by Cordova (2022), the most significant factor influencing a students' success or failure is their motivation. Success or failure in learning English depends on a student's motivation and their strategies for overcoming challenges. Some students may find English difficult and hard to study, but if they have high motivation, they will strive to succeed in learning the language. On the other hand, some students find English boring and a waste of time due to low motivation; as a result, they tend to fail and are unwilling to improve. Motivation that students bring to class is the biggest single factor affecting their

success (Nazirova, 2023).

Motivation is one of the most important factors affecting student's performance in learning English. It has been widely studied by foreign language teachers and researchers for a long time (Lei, 2012). Ryan and Deci explained that to be motivated means to make progress or to have the desire to do something (Sepora, 2013). Motivation plays a vital role in foreign language learning. It helps promote, guide, and maintain learning activities driven by internal strength or mechanisms.

There is a dialectical relationship between motivation and learning: learning can produce motivation, and motivation can enhance further learning. As Ausubel (2009) explains, this complementary relationship between motivation and learning is essential. In learning foreign languages, students with strong motivation tend to achieve better results, while those without intrinsic motivation are often at a disadvantage and struggle with language learning (Long, 2013).

Motivation is a key factor in successful language learning. It acts as a driving force that encourages students to participate actively, persevere in their learning, and strive to achieve better outcomes. Motivation can be intrinsic, driven by personal interest, enjoyment, or the desire to improve, or it can be extrinsic, influenced by rewards, grades, or pressure from teachers and parents. According to Gardner's socio-educational theory, motivation plays a central role in second language acquisition, influencing both the amount of effort a learner invests and their overall success. Without adequate motivation, even the most well-designed curriculum and teaching strategies may fail to produce

meaningful learning.

Therefore, motivation is a desire or driving reason why a person wants to do something, and it is a key element in achieving goals. This aligns with Harmer's (2012) opinion that "some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do something in order to achieve something." Motivation is generally considered one of the primary causes of success and failure in second language learning (Richard & Schmidt, 2010). Without motivation to learn, the learning process cannot occur effectively. Motivation includes two types: intrinsic and extrinsic (Alizadeh, 2016). This highlights the importance of motivation in learning a second language, as it determines how much effort an individual puts into learning the language, often influenced by the sense of satisfaction gained from completing an English task.

Unfortunately, in the process of learning English, students often face obstacles or challenges. These difficulties can hinder optimal outcomes. Such challenges can affect any learner, whether or not they are taking formal English lessons. In order to build strong motivation, students often encounter several challenges in learning English. It has been found that many students need to take English courses to improve and deepen their English skills.

In the context of UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Kupang, the motivation of students in learning English varies considerably. Some students demonstrate a strong interest and enthusiasm for English lessons, while others seem disengaged or lack confidence. Several factors may contribute to these differences, such as students' individual goals, their previous experiences with the language, family background, and the influence of teachers. For instance, students who are

motivated by the desire to communicate with people from other countries or to access global information tend to show higher levels of engagement. On the other hand, students who view English as difficult or irrelevant may show signs of demotivation and passive participation in class.

Equally important are the challenges that students face in learning English. These challenges may be linguistic, cognitive, environmental, or emotional. Linguistic challenges include limited vocabulary, difficulty in understanding grammatical rules, pronunciation issues, and poor listening comprehension. Cognitive challenges refer to students' learning strategies, memory, and ability to focus. Environmental challenges can stem from large class sizes, limited teaching materials, inadequate classroom facilities, or even low exposure to English outside of school. Emotional challenges, such as fear of making mistakes, anxiety during speaking activities, and low self-esteem, can also negatively impact language learning.

Preliminary observations and informal interviews with English teachers at UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Kupang suggest that second grade students frequently struggle with vocabulary retention and sentence construction. Many students are hesitant to speak English in class due to fear of being laughed at or making mistakes. These issues can affect students' willingness to participate and their overall performance in English. Additionally, teachers report that while some students are enthusiastic and enjoy English classes, a significant number appear unmotivated or easily distracted. These patterns indicate a need to explore the deeper factors affecting students' motivation and the specific challenges they encounter.

Understanding the motivational levels and challenges faced by students is critical for designing effective teaching strategies. If students' motivation is high but they face considerable linguistic challenges, then instruction should focus on building language competence through targeted support. If motivation is low, then strategies that enhance engagement, relevance, and student confidence are needed. In either case, a detailed understanding of these factors can help teachers make informed decisions to support student learning more effectively.

This study, therefore, aims to identify and describe the levels and percentages of motivation among second grade students at UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Kupang in learning English. It also aims to analyze the percentage and common challenges faced by these students. By using a combination of questionnaires and possibly interviews, the researcher seeks to provide a comprehensive picture of students' attitudes and difficulties regarding English learning.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in this problem and has titled the research **“Motivation and Challenges of Second Grade Students at UPTD SMP Negeri2 Kupang in Learning English.”**

1.2. Research Problems

Based on the background that the researcher mentioned above, the researcher formulates the problems as followed:

1. What is percentage of second grade students are motivated to learn English and what is the level of motivation they had?
2. What is percentage of second grade students face challenges in learning

English?

1.3. Aims of Study

Based on the research problems above, the researcher aims are:

1. To find out the percentage of motivation of second grade students in learning English and what is the level of motivation they had.
2. To find out the percentage of challenges faced by second grade students in learning English.

1.4. Significance of Study

1.4.1. Implication

This study would support the research by Alizadeh (2016) stating that motivation also has two different types called intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Mostafa (2013), mentions that he had identify some reasons behind the difficulties and challenging faced by teachers and the learners including lack of pronunciation instruction, fear of making mistakes, lack of motivation, and complexity of English Phonology.

1.4.2. Application

The researcher hopes that the result of this research will be beneficial for:

1. For teacher

This research can be used by teachers in order to help the teachers in their efforts and look for the easy and best way to increase the student's motivation for learning English.

2. For students

This research can be used by students to understand that high motivation is needed in the learning process primarily in the learning English.

3. For researcher

This research can help the researcher to find out the types of motivation of second grade students and types of challenges faced by second grade students in learning English.