

English Language Learning for Culinary Arts Students: Obstacles and Expectations

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ABSTRACT

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Mastering English learning as a culinary arts student is important. Culinary arts students need to be able to understand English to help them interact with customers, understand recipes and instructions in English, and also collaborate with culinary professionals from different countries. However, in practice, students often experience obstacles in learning which also leads to students' expectations of English language learning. Therefore, the study aims to find out culinary arts students' obstacles and expectations of English learning. The research subjects were culinary arts students of SMK Muhammadiyah 4 Yogyakarta, consisting of 5 female and 5 male students. The research subjects were randomly selected by the English teacher. In this case, the research method used is descriptive qualitative. The data was obtained by using a semi-structured interview method in a face-to-face. The instrument used in this research is an interview guideline consisting of fifteen questions related to students' obstacles and expectations. Data from the interview were analyzed in a qualitative data analysis stages. After conducting the research process, it was found that culinary arts students' obstacles of English learning were: ontogenic obstacles shown by students' disinterest in learning English; didactical shown by students' dissatisfaction with the way teachers teach; and epistemological obstacles shown by students' lack of understanding in learning English. Students' expectations of English learning also found that students expect a variation of learning, learn outside the classroom, learn English to be adjusted to students' abilities, and prefer learning with more emphasis on speaking skills.

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Introduction

Language is words used by people for communication purposes. Language is one of the essential aspects of human interaction ([Annisa et al., 2023](#)). Likewise, English is also an important aspect of global communication due to its status as an international language. As Fromkin says, "English has been called 'the lingua franca of the world'" ([1990](#)). As an international language, mastering English

is highly recommended and even necessary to communicate in a global level. This statement is supported by Khairani (2016) that mastery of English determines global interaction. Therefore, in this era where we need to interact, learning English is very important.

The importance of English for life has indeed been noticed by the public. This statement is also supported by Septiana, R. et al., (2021) in her research that the importance of learning English is something that has been realized by many people and is a necessity in the present for modern communication. One of them is in the world of education. As stated by Gusti (2015) in her research entitled "Globalization of English: So What?", through the world of education, science-technology and international communication can be developed and even mastered. These efforts have been made by the government by releasing a regulation to make English language learning mandatory at the secondary level (Aulia, 2016).

One of the secondary-level schools that must implement English language learning is SMK or vocational schools. Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, states that Vocational School (SMK) is a secondary level of education that prepares students to work in certain fields. Handoko (2019) mentioned that vocational school prepares students to become productive individuals who can work in their field of expertise after completing a series of education. Therefore, learning activities in vocational schools are conducted through practice rather than theory (Djojonegoro, 1998). Vocational school students' practices and activities are based on their majors. These activities are often conducted outside the classroom; in laboratories for practicum. The implementation of vocational activities is mostly carried out in practical laboratories, and it is different from the ones of regular activities with the concepts and exercises which are performed in the classrooms. In particular, English learning, with materials mostly conceptual and exercises does not require students to move. Hence, students at vocational schools find it difficult to follow.

One of them is in the culinary arts major which does a lot of learning in the cooking laboratory. Culinary arts is a major with the art of that covers the entire scope of food, starting from the preparation stage, processing to the stage of serving food, either traditional or international food (Siahaan, 2019). Due to the difference in the study scope, including practice and theory, there is a difference in the atmosphere between learning in the classroom and the cooking laboratory. The difference in the atmosphere of vocational culinary arts students in participating in classroom learning, especially English, including the level of mastery and student behavior in learning English, leads to the formation of obstacles and expectations. Iklimatunnajah et al., (2023) stated in their research that environmental aspects have a high percentage of affect students in learning and cause learning difficulties. Supported by the opinion of Wati & Muhsin (2019), the learning atmosphere included in the school environment can be a factor in learning difficulties.

Obstacles are difficulties in understanding, and this is usually experienced by students in learning. This obstacle is one of the factors that make it difficult for students to achieve learning goals (Jannah et al., 2019; Saputra, 2023). Learning obstacles have indicators such as: being unable to master the subject, not achieving learning achievements to their abilities, and not showing a good personality in learning as presented by Arifin in Pribadi & Apriyanto (2022). Obstacles can be caused by several factor. According to Brousseau (2002), there are three types of learning obstacles related to the factors of its arising, namely ontogenic obstacles (learning obstacle that occurs due to the limitations of students related to the mental readiness of students to learn), didactical obstacles (obstacles that arise from the methods or approaches used by a teacher in the classroom), and epistemological obstacle (obstacle that occurs due to the limited knowledge that students have in a particular context).

From these learning obstacles, students form expectations of learning implementation. This statement is supported by Lee et al., (2002) in their research about expectation that are formed from learning obstacles. Expectations are something based on individual experience that is used to view things better than what has happened before. Expectation is also defined as the emergence of individual hopes regarding something that will come (Oliver, 1980; Fairus, 2021). Expectations also arise due to supporting and influencing factors. According to Jewel (1998), there are four factors that influence expectations from within a person. These factors are knowledge experience, learning process, environmental conditions, and teacher judgment. Moreover, it is also necessary to know the aspects of expectations, which are mentioned by Snyder (2000) in the study consisting goals (learning expectation that considers the target), pathway thinking (imagining how they will present to reach the goals), and agency thinking (confident in the learning success).

Based on the background in mind, it is important to know students' obstacles and expectations towards learning English. This research also aims to fill the gap from previous research: Bejarano et al., (2012) with the title *Motivation, Needs and Expectations of Nursing Degree Students towards English Language Learning* that examining nursing degree students' expectations of English language learning and Jameel & Suleiman (2023) in their research of *Students' Learning Difficulties and Obstacles in Learning Subjects at the Department of English* that investigate the difficulties and obstacles that EFL students encounter in learning subjects at the Department of English. The two studies examined the obstacles and expectations faced by university-level students. This research seeks to fill the gap of previous studies related to the problems occurred in the implementation of English language learning, especially in students' obstacles and expectations that should be considered from the lower education level than university student's age, including vocational schools. This research is conducted at the school level which is lower than the university level, and also prepared them to face the professional world. This research have two research questions; 1)

What are the culinary arts students' obstacles to English learning?, 2) What are the culinary arts students' expectations of English learning activities? Hence, this research aims to find out culinary arts students' obstacles and expectations of English learning.

Method

This research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive method. Therefore, this qualitative descriptive research can acquire fresh information about the obstacles and expectations of culinary arts students of vocational school towards English learning. The participants of this research were culinary arts students of SMK Muhammadiyah 4 Yogyakarta, which was conducted at the school with a face-to-face semi-structured interview. This research was conducted during the Kampus Mengajar Program from August 2023 until February 2024. The ten selected students were recommended by the English teacher consisting of five female students and five male students.

In this research, questions were prepared in the interview guideline as one of the instruments used to collect data for this research. Interviews that followed an open-ended structure were selected so participants could explain the details about the information. The questions have been modified as research interview materials adapted from the research of Sarkol (2016). The modified instrument contained fifteen questions. The questions were included students' obstacles and expectations towards English learning.

After conducting interviews with these questions, in order to maintain the validity of the data, this research employed member-checking techniques. Member checking is used to validate, verify, or assess the trustworthiness of qualitative results (Doyle, 2007). Member checking conducted in this research was carried out after the data had been transcribed and then the transcription returned to the participants to get approval for the data accuracy from the participants. For the data analysis technique, this research uses the theory of Miles & Huberman (1992) which consists of three activities; data reduction, data presentation, conclusion and verification. In the data reduction process, the researcher only writing answers that do not exceed the limits of the research and eliminating answers that are not in accordance with the topic and research objectives. Then, the data is presented by describing it in sentences that are easier to understand without reducing the meaning conveyed by the interviewees. The last process is conclusion and verification. This stage involves drawing conclusions from analyzing the data that has been obtained from the previous processes. Researchers also verify the results by revisiting the data, test conclusions, and refine interpretations.

Result and Discussion

After conducting the semi-structured interview process with open-ended questions, it was found that the culinary arts students who became the research subjects experienced obstacles in

learning English. Culinary arts students also have some expectations of English learning in vocational schools. These are outlined in the findings and discussion, as follows:

1. Culinary arts students' obstacles to English learning

To discuss the culinary arts students' obstacles to English learning in SMK Muhammadiyah 4 Yogyakarta, it is necessary to check the characteristics of students who experience obstacles in learning as stated by Arifin in Pribadi & Apriyanto (2022). Culinary arts students experienced some obstacles; unable to master the subject, do not achieve learning achievements to their abilities, and do not show a good personality in learning. This information was obtained through interviews with students about those who experienced obstacles in learning, both main questions and additional questions. From this, it can be concluded that the culinary arts students of SMK Muhammadiyah 4 Yogyakarta are suitable with the indicator of students who experience obstacles in learning.

After knowing the indicators of students' experienced obstacles, it is necessary to know the emergence of learning obstacles. According to Brousseau (2002), there are three types of learning obstacles: Ontogenic obstacle (originating from the individual), didactical obstacle (the method used by the teacher), and epistemological obstacle (students' limited knowledge) as explained in before. In this study, the participants' answers have been obtained and there are difficulties they face when learning English involving all three types of learning obstacles. The culinary arts students mentioned these obstacles which are summarized as disinterest in learning English, dissatisfaction with the way teachers teach English, and difficulty in understanding English learning.

The first obstacle comes from the individual, which is the disinterest in learning English. Culinary arts students stated clearly that their interest in learning English was extremely low and even disliked it.

"Sejujurnya merasa tidak minat dengan pelajaran bahasa Inggris" (To be honest, I have no interest in English lessons) DF

"Kalau dari ketiga itu, lebih kepada ketertarikan bahasa Inggris. Saya tidak suka bahasa Inggris" (Of the three mentioned, I think it is more about my interest in English. I don't like English) GM

*"...lebih ke ketidaktertarikan dengan bahasa Inggris" (...more like disinterest in English)
"...tetapi setelah teman sebangku datang, aku lebih termotivasi jadi tertarik" (...but when my peer friend came, I was more motivated so I became interested in learning) JK*

According to Fitriana (2018), interest and motivation are two things that are related to each other in terms of learning English. That means students who have no interest are caused by a lack of motivation. This statement can also be released based on the participant who said that previously he/she was not at all interested in learning English but felt motivated by the presence of a peer who

mastered English. In this analysis, if the school is willing to take motivational actions for culinary arts students, students' disinterest in English will probably be reduced.

The next obstacle comes from students' dissatisfaction with the way teachers teach. In English learning here, according to the participants, everything goes well including the teacher's methods. However, one of the participants hoped for better and when asked about the third problem (individual, teacher, and comprehension difficulties) that bothered them the most, one of the participants answered that the teacher's method was not suitable for him/her. The participant said that even though many could not understand English, the teacher should use English a lot.

"...kalau dari ketiga yang disebutkan itu aku lebih ke gurunya. Sebenarnya juga agak merasa kurang puas juga karena inginnya lebih banyak bahasa Inggris" (...if from the three mentioned, I am more about the teacher. Actually, I'm also a bit dissatisfied because I want more English in learning) RN

The way teachers teach is an important aspect of learning. This is in line with the opinion of Yestiani and Zahwa (2020) that in teaching and learning activities, teachers have a significant role in making the knowledge taught acceptable to students. Therefore, it is important to consider the opinions of students who experience learning problems in terms of how teachers teach, so that the essence of learning can be received. Some culinary arts students expressed dissatisfaction with the teacher who apply Indonesian more often than English. Students want to practice more vocabulary. In fact, several students did not really have a problem with the teacher using Indonesian more often because there were plenty of friends who could not understand, but some other students felt a little disappointed because they should have been able to learn more English by practicing directly. This student opinion is supported by the conclusion of Watupongoh et al. (2019) in their research that students deserve to be taught the use of English while learning so that students can use the language in their lives in the future to communicate when working later. The thing that should be remembered is the vision and mission of the school is to produce culinary arts vocational graduates who can compete at the international level.

The last obstacle is limited knowledge of the English language. Other than individual and teacher-related problems, the majority of participants mentioned that English language difficulties come from their lack of understanding the English learning. The lack of understanding is to comprehend the meaning of the learning material and to understand the explanations both from teachers and texts.

"...lebih kepada susah buat mengerti materi dan paham maksud materi bahasa Inggris"(...it is more about the difficulty to understand the material and understand the meaning of English material) RB

"Ketidakpahaman sama bahasa Inggris. Aku susah untuk memahami bacaan terutama"(My lack of understanding of the English language. I find it difficult to understand the text especially) SA

The difficulties is due to the student's lack of previous English knowledge and the significant differences between English and Indonesian, especially in vocabulary and sentence patterns. In the interview, the culinary arts students mentioned that their biggest obstacle was understanding English texts. Fajri and Numainiati (2019) stated that the dominant cause of students' difficulties in understanding English texts is the lack of vocabulary mastery. The lack of student comprehension causes them to find it difficult to define the existing texts, hence English is considered difficult to understand with these limited abilities. Unfortunately, this problem is experienced by most culinary arts students, which means that students need more vocabulary mastery.

2. Culinary arts students' expectations of English learning

Start from the obstacles faced by culinary arts students. These things lead to students' expectations or wishes for what happens during the learning process in the future. These students' expectations are influenced by four factors; knowledge experience, learning process, environmental conditions, and teacher assessment. These four factors leading to culinary arts students' expectations are in line with the theory mentioned by Jewel (1998) regarding the factors of expectation emergence as mentioned in the previous section.

In the interview, four findings mentioned by culinary arts students are discussed, including the need for a variety of learning methods, the implementation of learning outside the classroom, the adjustment of teaching methods to students' abilities, and the students' request for teaching emphasized on speaking skills. The four findings are in accordance with Snyder's (2000) theory regarding the aspects of expectations that have been presented in the research instrument. These aspects relate to goals (culinary arts students expect learning that considers the target), pathway thinking (culinary arts students imagine how they will present learning if they become a teacher), and agency thinking (culinary arts students are confident in the success of the learning they want). These three aspects became part of the formation of the instrument and resulted in the findings as mentioned. The findings are described and discussed as follows:

The most common one mentioned by the participants during the interview was about learning variations that should be more enjoyable. As stated by participants PR and SY.

"Memvariasikan dengan game dan pembelajaran yang menarik, jadi siswa tidak bosan dengan pelajaran" (Varying with games and interesting learning, so that students are not bored with the lesson) PR

"Kalau proses pembelajaran aku lebih suka dicampur dengan game, seperti tebak kata dan menulis kata bahasa Inggris. juga cerita-cerita. Cerita yang asyik. Oh iya diadakan

lomba juga tertarik..." (For the learning process, I prefer to combine it with games, such as guess words and writing English words, as well as stories. Fun stories. I'm also interested in competitions...) SY

Culinary arts students mentioned the learning variation is aimed at preventing students from experiencing boredom during the learning process. Students' opinions are supported by Hasibuan and Moedjiono (2004: 64) as cited in Tahir and Elihami (2019) that using variation is defined as a teacher's action in the context of the teaching and learning process which aims to overcome student boredom. To overcome the boredom, culinary arts students expect to have games. Games with learning goals, such as guessing words, writing in English, and small competitions in learning. Learning English through game media is one of the most effective ways to increase students' interest and motivation in learning English (Fatima et al., 2019). Therefore, it is not surprising that students ask for a variety of learning by using games in the classroom.

The other learning variation can also be conducted by doing learning outside the classroom. This is what the culinary arts students said in the interview.

"...excited untuk diajak keluar kelas supaya tidak jenuh juga. Sebagai siswa pasti aku ikut" (...excited to be asked to come out of class so that it is not bored too. As a student, I will definitely participate) SA

"Saya suka pembelajaran tour keluar" (I like learning by tour outside) RN

"...bisa dengan diajak outbond, keluar dari kelas...mungkin 90% berhasil (menarik minat siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris)" (... it can be done with outbound, out of the classroom... maybe 90% successful (attracting students' interest in learning English) JK

They expect that learning would be more fun if it is held outside the classroom. They expected learning outside the classroom to be conducted with tours and outbound. In this case, outbound and tour means practicing what students have learned in the classroom. Outside the classroom, the students will learn to interact and try to talk with native speakers in tourist attractions. Students express the thought that it might help them develop their English knowledge. Following the opinion of Fitriani et al. (2019), using practical methods that can be directly applied by students will be effective in learning activities. In addition, considering that culinary arts students have a priority to master speaking skills, then doing outbound tours is a good solution.

The next expectation that came from the culinary arts students was their wishes for teachers. When culinary arts students were asked what they would do if they became teachers, they wanted teachers to teach according to students' abilities. In this case, what students mean is that teachers conduct learning without asking students to understand everything in pressure. As stated by some participants.

“Tergantung kenyamanan siswa, tidak menuntut tetapi diberi paham. Sepaham dengan siswa. santai saja tetapi jangan terlalu santai” (Depending on the convenience of students, do not demand but give understanding. Just relax but don't be too relaxed) GM

“...pokoknya yang santai saja tidak terlalu menekan siswa” (...just relax and not put too much pressure on the students) RP

“Tegas tetapi santai, aku masih bisa santai tapi menjadi paham” (Strict but relaxed, I can still relax but understand) RB

Students wanted relaxed but firm learning environment. Students wanted teachers to be more understand the students' needs. Teachers must have the ability to understand students with various differences in order to help them in their learning difficulties (Abdullah, 2017).

The last point is the culinary arts students' expectation on more speaking practice. Participants stated that learning speaking skills is very important for culinary arts students. As stated by the following participant:

“Kemampuan berbicara, apalagi tata boga pasti membutuhkan itu” (Speaking skills, especially culinary arts, definitely need that) GM

“Kemampuan berbicara sangat diperlukan pada siswa tata boga” (Speaking skills are very necessary for culinary arts students) DF

One participant even stated that if she were a teacher, she would emphasize speaking skills training to her students because she felt that by not having speaking skills, she was left behind.

“... dikarenakan aku mengalami kesulitan itu ya jadinya aku ingin muridku tidak mengalami hal yang sama, kesulitan berbicara bahasa Inggris” (... because I have difficulties, I want my students not to experience the same thing, difficulty in speaking English) SA

Furthermore, this is related to learning by practice which was mentioned in the previous discussion when the culinary arts students wanted to learn outside the classroom. At that point, students wanted to be more able to master speaking skills, and there was even a student who revealed that if he/she became a teacher, the student would do more intensive speaking practice so that his/her students are highly capable in speaking skills. According to Hakim (2019), students' confidence and enthusiasm in speaking are the most important factors in developing communication skills. Therefore, culinary arts students hope that English learning in the future will be emphasized more on speaking skills. According to culinary arts students, speaking ability is very important for them, especially in pursuing a career after graduation. Supported by research from Dewi and Amri (2019) which took the subject of culinary arts students speaking skills are very important for the workplace.

In this research, one interesting students' expectation is the implementation of outdoor learning which can also be practiced by speaking to native speakers aimed at preventing students from boredom. This respond is in line with the theory presented by Djojonegoro (1998) that the characteristics of culinary arts students are 'learning by doing'. Culinary arts students should do physical activities and should not stay in the classroom. As the result, it can affect students' expectations when they are faced with learning that is carried out without doing any practice.

Conclusion

Based on the research conducted and the discussions, it can be concluded that the obstacles faced by culinary arts students in learning English are divided into ontogenic obstacles which are shown by students' disinterest in learning English, didactical obstacles which are shown by students' dissatisfaction with the way teachers teach, and epistemological obstacles which are shown by students' lack of understanding in learning English. Culinary arts students also have expectations on English learning, such as variation of learning, learning outside the classroom, learning English to be adjusted to students' abilities, and the last is the culinary arts students' preference for learning more emphasis speaking skills. Despite only being conducted in a vocational school majoring in culinary arts, this small-scale research still provides in-depth information that can be used as a reference for teachers and schools in considering students' obstacles and expectations in learning English to achieve learning goals. Based on the research limitations, the researcher suggests future researchers can conduct a wider scope of research than what this researcher has done regarding obstacles and expectations.

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