



The Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Speaking English of Eight Grade Students at SMPN 1 Majasari

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Abstract

This research aims to describe and analyse the factors of students' difficulties in speaking English language faced by eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Majasari. This research uses a qualitative approach and descriptive analysis technique. The population in this study were 82 students in the eighth grade; which were divided into three classes (VIII A consisted of 29 students, VIII B consisted of 30 students, and VIII C consisted of 23 students). Therefore, the sample of the population in this research were taken by a simple random sampling technique; six students (two students each class) to answer the interviews, and 33 students (11 students each class) to answer the questionnaires. In collecting data, the instruments used in this study were tests in the form of multiple choice questions and recorded interviews. While to analyze the data, qualitative data analysis procedures were administered through data display, data reduction, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the factors of students' difficulty to speak English in class VIII SMPN 1 Majasari were; affective factors (low motivation & anxiety), listening ability, inhibition, focus on grammar, social environment and mother-tongue use. It is recommended for the English teachers to use some strategies to help the students overcome their difficulties in speaking.

Keywords: Difficult aspect of conversation; speaking English; student difficulties; English conversation

Introduction

Background

Learning to speak is one of the branches of language skills as a communication tool in conveying something to others. Speaking is one of the skills that must be mastered by students to learn English, as H.G. Widdowson (1997:58) states that English as a foreign language consists of four skills namely; writing, listening, reading, and speaking. These four skills are usually considered as integrated system because they support each other. For most people, speaking is the most difficult part of learning a foreign language because the meaning of its use involves the manifestation of the phonological system or grammatical system of the language. It can be concluded that the 4 skills in learning English are not necessarily mutually supportive if one of them is not fulfilled, for example

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speaking. From Widdowson's (1997:58) statement, it can be seen that learning to speak English is difficult, especially when you think about grammar and phonology.

Like many students in other countries, Indonesian students have difficulties and obstacles in learning English such as limitation of language exposure or input of language itself. For instance, it is noted that listening and speaking skills are problematic in English foreign language students while they are studying in English speaking countries.

To know and understand the students problem above, there are some previous studies on students' difficulties in speaking English, including Arita (2008), Loubazid (2012), and Gebre-Eyesus (2014). Those researchers found that there are many causes of Affective (psychological) factors such as fear of the stage, low self-esteem, shyness, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes. All of the previous studies analyzed high school students, college students and university students, however in this research the researchers analyzed the junior high school students and the research was conducted in Eight Grade at SMPN 1 Majasari, Pandeglang. The research entitles "The Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Speaking English Faced by Eighth Grade at SMPN 1 Majasari Pandeglang".

Research Questions

Based on the above limitations, the researchers want to state the problem, "What are the factors of the students' difficulties in speaking English at the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Majasari in the academic year of 2019/2020?" and "How to analyse and identify the difficulties in speaking English of eighth grade students of SMP 1 Majasari?"

Literature Review

Definitions of Speaking

Richards states (in *Methodology in Language Teaching*, 2008: 19) that the mastery of speaking skill in English is a priority for many second language pf foreign language learners. Consequently, learners often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how much they feel they have improvedd in their spoken language proviciency. So it is stated that speaking skills are the main goal in learning English as a foreign language or second language before mastering other English skills such as: listening, reading, and writing. It is also a measure of how well and successfully people learn English.

a. Types of Speaking

According to Brown in Azizah (2016: 6-7) that there are two types of spoken language: 1) Monologue: one speaker uses spoken language without interference. For example: speeches, lectures, readings, news, broadcasts, and the like; and 2) Dialogue involves two or more speakers with any interruption or response and expression.

b. Purposes of Speaking

Various attempts have been made to classify the function of speech in human interaction. Brown and Yule in Azizah (2016) made a useful distinction between the interactional function of speech, which functions to build and maintain social relationships, and the transactional function, which focuses on the exchange of information.

c. Factors Influence Speaking

Speaking a language is very difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication requires the ability to use language appropriately in social interactions. Diversity in interaction involves not only verbal communication but also paralinguistic elements such as tone, stress, and intonation. In addition, non-linguistic elements such as gestures and body language/posture, facial expressions, and so on can accompany speech or convey messages directly without speech. In addition, "there is tremendous variation cross-culturally and cross-linguistically in the specific interpretations of gestures and body language" (Brown in Azizah, 2016). Furthermore, different cultural assumptions about the purposes of particular interactions and expected outcomes of encounters also affect communication.

d. Common Difficulties of Students in Speaking

Speaking English is not easy for students, because they have to study hard if they want fluency and good understanding to speak therefore they have to learn more about Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Grammar and they must have willpower. Based on Chens' (2009) research entitled: A Pilot Study of Some ROCMA Cadets' Difficulties in English Speaking, students' common difficulties are inconfidence, limited fluency and limited vocabulary.

e. Speaking ability

According to Brown (in Islamiyah, 2007: 14) that speaking is a productive skill that can be observed directly and empirically, that observation is always limited by accuracy and fluency. While he (Brown in Islamiyah, 2007: 14) also states that speaking is a product of creative construction from linguistic strings, speakers make choices of lexicon, structure and discourse. Harris in Wijarwadi (2008:18) states that speaking is a complex skill that requires the simultaneous use of different abilities that often develop at different rates. Five components are generally recognized in analyzing the speech process, namely pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency (ease and speed of speech flow) and comprehension (understanding of what the examiner is talking about and being tested or the ability to respond to speech and initiate it).

English Learner Problems

There is a huge problem out there for English learners and English learners. These students know a lot of English. They know a lot of grammar rules. The problem is they cannot understand instantly and easily. They cannot speak clearly, confidently, and easily. They know about English linguistics, the academic study of linguistics, nouns, verbs, pronouns, phrases, clauses, and different

forms of verbs, all that, but they cannot do it. All the adult students out there who actually do not speak English very well and understand it well, even though they know a lot. Most schools, most programs and, indeed, most students in those schools focus on Academic English. Academic English is English used in schools, colleges and universities at the highest level. This is Academic English. So what do they focus on? They focus on the rules of grammar. In other words, they focus on linguistics and they focus on writing.

Based on Michael (In www.EXLenglish.com, 2010:1):

He studied English for more than 10 years and he has lived in England for 3 years. He is very good at reading English. He reads many textbooks, research papers, and so on. But he can't speak English automatically and fluently. He just couldn't express himself. That's so embarrassing. Because of that, he's just afraid of talking to people.

Some Inhibiting Factors in English Speaking

a. School System

According to Lewis and Hill (1992:8-9),

In the majority of cases a basic textbook is chosen and it is this which provides the practical classroom syllabus. Inevitably, teachers tend to follow the book, deciding in advance how long they can spend on each unit so that they will finish the book in a certain time. But the object of the course is to teach the students, not finish the book!

It is stated that textbooks, syllabus, and lesson plans can divert the attention of an English teacher to focus on students' needs, especially speaking and writing, so that the teacher only thinks about completing the syllabus making book. Therefore, the teacher does not have to finish the book but focuses on the needs and abilities of students.

b. Environment

Based on Wyse and Jones (2001: 178), "Pre-school experience of social interaction is a desperately important factor in the child's ongoing language development. The significance of the adults around the child at this time should not be underestimate." It has been recognized that they provide a number of important conditions for children because they:

- a) Provide access to an environment where speech has a high status
- b) Provide access to competent language users
- c) Provide opportunities to engage in conversation
- d) Provide responses that recognize the child as a competent language user. (Wray et al, 1989:39)

Based on the search for relevant previous research, the researchers found several relevant studies. There are three studies as follow: First, Arita (2008) who conducted the research about "*A Study of Student's Problems in Daily English Speaking Activity at SMA Pomosda Tanjung Anom Nganjuk*" aims to study students' problems in daily English speaking activities. This study tries to find students' problems, causes and ways to solve problems in daily English speaking activities in junior high school. Second is Gebre-eyesus (2014) who conducted research on "*The Exploring the Causes of Students' Reluctance in English Speaking Classroom*". This study attempts to explore the causes of students' reluctance to speak English in Gode preparatory and secondary school EFL classes in the Somali state of Gode town. The last is Loubazid (2012) who studied "*Exploring The Difficulties Facing EFL Students' Participation in Oral Expression Course supervised by Aichaoui*". This

research is a case study on third year LMD (Master Doctoral License) students in the English Department of Biskra University.

From previous studies, researchers found the difference is on the title and the object of research. Arita (2008) conducted the research about “*A Study of Student’s Problems in Daily English Speaking Activity at SMA Pomosda Tanjung Anom Nganjuk*”, Gebre-eyesus (2014) conducted the research about “*The Exploring the Causes of Students’ Reluctance in English Speaking Classroom*”, while Loubazid (2012) conducted the research about “*The difficulties facing EFL students’ participation in oral expression course supervised by Aichaoui.*”

The researchers also found the differences from the object of the previous studies. From the research of Gebre-Eyesus (2014), the researcher found that Students of Gode secondary and Preparatory school in Somali is the object of his research and Arita (2008) described the students’ problems of the second grade students of SMA Pomosda Tanjunganom Nganjuk, while Loubazid (2012) investigated the case of third year students (LMD) at the English Department.

From some of the similarities and differences in previous studies mentioned above, the researchers found gaps or differences that were not researched or described by previous researchers; there are the differences in the object of research. Researchers take the object of research in eighth grade junior high school students in this study and tried to found the differences from previous researchers whether the cases would be the same or different to be studied and described.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study used qualitative research methods. The researchers took the object of case study research design on the factors of difficulties experienced by students and English speaking problem faced by eighth grade students at SMPN 1 Majasari. The researchers used descriptive qualitative research to describe the obstacles or difficulties to speak English faced by eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Majasari for the 2019/2020 academic year. Researchers collected data from observations, interviews, and questionnaires.

Research Sites

In this part, the researchers conducted the research at SMPN 1 Majasari, Pandeglang. SMPN 1 Majasari which is located on Jl. Raya Labuan Km. 3 Kuranten, Kel. Saruni, Kec. Majasari, Kab. Pandeglang Prov. Banten.

Research Subjects

The subjects of this study were English class students in class VIII SMPN 1 Majasari. There were three classes for class VIII students of SMPN 1 Majasari for the 2019/2020 academic year. Each class consisted of 23-30 students. The researchers chose students VIII A (consisting of twenty-nine

students), VIII B (consisting of thirty students), and VIII C (consisting of twenty-three students) as the subjects of this study.

Research Object

Research object contains data and research data sources. Moleong (2004:112) explains that the data sources in descriptive research include humans as research instruments, images, documents, objects and achievements. The data sources are as follow:

a. Population and Sample

The events in this study were activities in the English conversation class for eighth grade students in grades A, B and C in the 2019/2020 school year at SMPN 1 Majasari. It consists of all activities in the classroom. To obtain data from the population, the researchers observed the activities of the sample students and teachers in the English conversation class, interviewed with random sampling techniques, and gave questionnaires.

b. Sampling Technique

The researchers took the sample of the population on this research by using a simple random sampling technique. The sample of this research were the students in eighth grade of class A, B, and C at SMPN 1 Majasari. The researchers took 6 students (two students each class of class A, B, and C) to answer the interviews, and 33 students (11 students each class of class A, B and C) to answer the questionnaires.

c. Questionnaires

Questionnaires were given to students in grades VIII A, B, and C. In the questionnaire, the researcher gave questions that required responses that reflected the opinion of the respondents and they had to choose 1 correct answer. Researchers used questionnaires & interviews to collect data. Through a questionnaire, researchers got information about students' opinions that are in accordance with the research problem.

Data Collection Techniques

In this study, researchers collected qualitative data to answer research questions. Researchers used several techniques to collect data.

a. Observation

Sugiyono (2015: 145) says that observation means that researcher observes and records the activities of data sources. The researchers recorded the conversations of the students to get data. The researcher did the observations to find out the students' difficulties in the English conversation class. The observation technique used by the researchers was participant observation. The researchers observed the student activities in the classroom.

b. Interview

Interview aims to obtain information to respondents. Moleong (2004: 135) says that the interview is a conversation that involves the interviewer asking several questions to be answered by

the interviewee. Interviews were conducted to students of English conversation class. To collect data, the researchers took two students from each class who were active and passive in their class.

c. Questionnaires

Arikunto (2005: 152) distinguishes two types of questionnaires, such as:

- 1) Open questionnaires: the respondents can answer the questions using their own words.
- 2) Close questionnaires: the respondents are given the answer with choose a, b, c, d, or e.

Researchers used a questionnaire to ask respondents to answer questions using the answers given by the researcher. Questionnaires were used to reveal students' difficulties in English conversation class. The questionnaire consisted of 15 numbered items. The researchers used the percentage of respondents' responses to calculate the results of the questionnaire manually. The researchers gave a questionnaire to class VIII A, B and C students.

Technique of Analysing Data

The activities on analysing the data include data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion. Steps of data analysis are as follow:

a. Data Reduction

Data reduction means the process of selecting, centralizing, simplifying, reducing, and organizing the data that has been collected. The collected data is organized and irrelevant data is discarded.

b. Data Display

The researcher classified and identified the data from the conversation of the students. The researcher described the data that had been collected. The researcher presented the data based on the factors of the students' difficulties in the session in English class.

c. Drawing Conclusion

The last step is drawing conclusions. Drawing conclusions involves moving back to consider what the data being analyzed means and to assess whether the findings of the data are in line with the research objectives. Researchers draw conclusions based on data from research results in English class sessions.

Trustworthiness of Data

Denzin in Moleong (2004: 178) defines that Triangulation is a technique to examine the validity of data. There are four kinds of triangulation. The researchers used data triangulation to compare the validity of the data. Data were taken from observations that had been made during the teaching and learning process and data from data interviews with teachers and students in class and questionnaires to eighth grade students in English conversation in classes A, B, and C. From the data that had been collected, the researchers compared them to find out students' difficulties in English classes in the 2019/2020 academic year.

Research Findings and Discussion

Research Findings

a. Data Description

This research was conducted at SMPN 1 Majasari located in Saruni, Majasari, Pandeglang, Banten. Researchers obtained data about students' difficulties in English conversation classes and the factors of students' difficulties in performing English conversation classes at SMPN 1 Majasari for the 2019/2020 school year. Before presenting the findings, the researchers presented a description of the subject. In this study, researchers collected data from observations, interviews, and questionnaires.

Researchers conducted research on students of class VIII A, VIII B, and VIII C and all the data of this study amounted to 33 students. The researchers made observations in two meetings in each class, interviewed 2 students in each class. The researcher also gave questionnaires to all students in grades VIII A, VIII B, and VIII C. The data obtained were as follow:

1) Data from Interview

In this study, the researcher conducted interviews with 2 students in each class and the teacher in the English conversation class. Researchers present data from each subject described as follow:

a) Data from interviews with teachers

From the interview, the teacher said there were some students who had difficulty in class. The difficulty faced by students was lack of vocabulary, this is because vocabulary is an important part and sometimes students do not master a lot of vocabulary and it is difficult to pronounce in English. The teacher also said that the students were not used to performing English conversation with other people.

b) Data from interviews with students

Based on the data from interviews with students, there were some conclusions that could be taken. If English lessons are taught in a fun and interesting way, not monotonous and full of variations in teaching such as discussing songs, music or movies, it will attract students' interest and make students more interested and happy to learn English.

2) Data from Questionnaire

Researchers summarized the questionnaire data based on the percentage of students' answers. This questionnaire was given to three classes which consisted of 33 students each. The results of the questionnaire answers are: Most students are motivated to speak English when the method is role playing/dialogue, second most when discussing hoaxes, the third when discussing problem solving for a topic, and the last order most rarely chosen is debate & discussion about a topic.

Finding

The factors of students difficulty in speaking English at SMPN 1 Majasari in academic year 2019/2020.

The researchers found that there are several factors of students difficulties in their English class. The factors of difficulties are:

1) Affective Factor

The researchers found that there were students who had good or low motivation and it depended on the students. Students with low motivation in learning conversation would find it difficult to catch material from the teacher. Motivation could influence and be influenced by the components of language learning. If learners had a hostile attitude towards language, they would not have a substantial improvement in acquiring the different language features.

The second part of the affective factor is about student anxiety, the researchers found from the results of observations and questionnaires that many students experienced anxiety when having conversations in front of the class. The students felt anxious because they did not master many parts of English. They also felt embarrassed if their friends are laughed at when they make mistakes. From the results of the questionnaire, students said that they felt anxious in class but had already prepared the topic of conversation.

2) Listening Ability

The researchers found that sometimes the factor that made it difficult for students to learn conversation was the ability to listen. The student said that sometimes they find it difficult to catch or respond if the teacher or speaker speaks English quickly. This is because students had low listening skills.

3) Inhibition

In English conversation class, students felt inhibited when speaking English conversation in front of the class. They were afraid of making mistakes because they did not master many parts of the English language.

4) Use of Mother Language

Mothers of identical people use their mother tongue when speaking English. The students in the English conversation class are no exception. From the results of the questionnaire, there were 17 students who agree if they use their mother tongue when speaking English conversation in class and 5 students who strongly agree. This means that the mother tongue is very influential in the use of English. This is one of the factors that make students face difficulties in class.

5) Social Environment

From the observation, the students' environment is not supportive to speak English. This is because English is not the main language used. The social environment is one of the factors that make students face difficulties in the classroom. In the social environment, classroom environment factors

also influence the student learning process. Good class conditions will make students feel comfortable learning in class.

Discussion

In terms of factors, there are several results obtained from the questionnaire and recorded interviews which will be presented below. Based on the recorded interviews of several students, the results found were the inhibiting factors of students of SMPN 1 Pandeglang who spoke English were lack of vocabulary, fear of being wrong, worry, and inconfidence. Students at SMPN 1 Majasari felt that English lessons are the most difficult and they did not like it because they felt foreign and they did not understand the language because it did not interest them. While the results found in the questionnaire explain that the majority of students at SMPN 1 Majasari did not get used to speaking English with friends outside the classroom, and most of these students were afraid of making mistakes in pronunciation when practicing speaking in English classes and some were afraid of grammar errors. In the practice of speaking in English classes, most students were not confident when speaking English, they also would not take lessons if it was held at school and some of them did not want to spend time learning English and were reluctant to learn English. In terms of Strategies, based on the questionnaire and the recording of the interview, it is found that several strategies used by students to overcome these problems were: First, intact students getting used to English from entertaining things like songs / films. Students were interested in English lessons because the material was fun and the teacher was engrossed in his nature. Second, students need teachers who can joke with students in the class (humor) and communicative, so students feel a role in the conversation brought by the teacher and they do not get bored, and there is no opportunity for students to pay attention to others because it is more exciting to pay attention to the teacher in front of the class. Third, students prefer learning methods "forced to", such as compulsory speaking English during lessons, rather than not being "forced to". Fourth, students need friends who help each other in learning so they can do it together. Lastly, students also need the task of memorizing word-for-word from the dictionary every day continuously, such as 1 day 1 word or 1 day 2 words, done consistently and continuously.

The factors of students' difficulties in the English conversation class at SMPN 1 Pandeglang for the 2019/2020 school year.

Based on the results of the study, the researchers found that there were several factors that made it difficult for students in performing the English conversation class. Researchers found several factors of students' difficulties in class. These factors are affective factors (including students' motivation and anxiety), listening skills, barriers, use of mother tongue, and social environment. The factors that make students difficult in doing English conversation in class in the research findings are relevant to Tuan and Mai's theory (2015:10). Here, the researchers want to discuss about the factors that make it difficult for students in doing English conversation in class.

a. Affective Factor

This is one of the factors that make students' difficulties in class. Affective factors include students' motivation and anxiety. Students may still have difficulty in English conversation because conversation means students are active in spoken language activities. This means that students have low motivation in learning English in class. Students who have low motivation in learning English in class. Students who have low motivation will have little opportunity to speak in conversation because they are usually difficult to follow the material, while students who have good motivation in learning conversation in class will dominate and actively speak even though they feel their English is not good in speaking. Each student has different motivation in learning conversation in class. This affects students in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The second part of the affective factor is anxiety. Anxiety can make it difficult for students to speak English in class. Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or ease about something with an uncertain outcome. In English conversation class, some students feel anxious when speaking English conversation in front of the class. Shyness and nervousness are the main factors that make it difficult for students in English conversation class.

b. Listening Ability

Listening ability can affect when students speak English. Sometimes students cannot respond when someone speaks English very fast. This is because students have not mastered listening skills. Listening ability is a factor that keeps students in the classroom because without good listening skills students will find it difficult to catch what the speaker is saying.

c. Inhibition

This is something that holds back or hinders the ability to speak English, such as worrying about mistakes and fear of criticism. Most of the students admit that speaking English is more difficult than writing. Students may still not be able to accept this situation because so far writing activities are more familiar than speaking. They rarely try to speak in class. While in English conversation class, they are taught to speak English. In addition, they perceive grammar as a barrier to speaking fluently causing them to fear making mistakes and being criticized. Barriers are a factor that makes it difficult for students because many students are worried about making mistakes when speaking in English.

d. Use of Mother Language

Some students usually use their mother tongue, they feel it is natural to speak in a foreign language. The use of the mother tongue becomes a habit when speaking English because everyday usually uses the mother tongue. Some students use their mother tongue when doing conversions in class, this is one of the factors that makes students difficult in conversation.

e. Social environment

A good social environment makes students enjoy learning conversations. Sometimes the student environment does not support them to speak English. When students speak English, students

do not support their friends. So that students are not accustomed to speaking English because their social environment does not speak English.

Conclusions And Suggestions

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the researchers found students' difficulties in speaking English, the factors causing difficulties in speaking English, and the strategies they used to overcome difficulties in learning to speak English.

1. Students' difficulties in speaking English.

There are several difficulties faced by students in class. This is because many students do not master the parts of English conversation. The difficulties faced by students in class are: Lack of vocabulary and low grammatical structure are the biggest problems faced by students because they do not understand how to make good sentences according to structure, incorrect pronunciation, and low fluency.

2. Factors that cause students to have difficulty in learning to speak.

The researchers found the factors of students' difficulties in speaking English, namely: Affective factors include students' low motivation and anxiety, listening skills, barriers, use of mother tongue and social environment. Students have low motivation in learning conversation in their class, because they think that conversation is a difficult skill. In affective factors, students have problem from themselves because they do not want to learn or in other words is reluctance in learning or speak English. Besides students also easily feel afraid in speaking English, are afraid of mispronunciation when speaking English or anxiety which is quite inhibiting. Students also find difficulties to listening ability in English words because they are unfamiliar and feel strange. In Inhibition, students feel shy and nervous when speaking English in front of an audience in class. Students have low motivation to speak English. The students also find English difficult if they speak English because of limited vocabulary, grammar and low pronunciation. The last problem is the mother tongue.

3. Strategies used to overcome difficulties in learning to speak.

Students have different strategies for example from listening to English songs, watching English videos on YouTube to study, reading English books or novels, and watching English movies. Students also have strategies for memorizing songs and verbs that they find in English dictionary, they will find out the meaning of verbs they do not know in the dictionary. Some students form study groups and participate in learning English activities together in study groups and ask friends or teachers to correct their English.

Suggestions

After concluding the data based on the research findings, the researcher would like to propose suggestions that can be taken as consideration in the teaching and learning process, especially in foreign language learning. The suggestions are:

a. For Teacher

Teachers should know that speaking is a difficult skill and understand what difficult aspects of conversation are faced by students. The teacher should plan the class carefully, be more active in managing the class, and use several strategies to help students overcome their difficulties in speaking. Because with good planning to manage the class, students will feel comfortable in class and not feel anxious. Teachers should encourage and motivate students to learn more about speaking. The motivation of the teacher can make students brave and confident in the classroom. In addition, what the teacher has to do is make students often and accustomed to hearing words and conversations in English so that students are accustomed and not awkward when learning English and applying it in daily life.

b. For Students

Students must motivate themselves to learn more, ask more questions and do more in the learning process. Students must prepare their material if they want to appear in front of the class. Students should try to speak naturally when the teacher asks to appear in front of the class. The students should learn more about aspects of speaking English such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and fluency. This will make it easier for them if they want to start a conversation.

c. For Other Researchers

This research can be used as a reference for other researchers who do similar research. Researchers hope this research can be useful for people who are interested in this research and future researchers can conduct research better.

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