

## Keyword-Based Model of Teaching English for Adult Learners

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### Abstract

*This study discusses the keyword-based model in learning English to for adult learners who in fact have little free time due to various activities but require the ability to communicate in English. Researchers are triggered to make this model because of their weakness in English, so they often have problems communicating with foreign partners. The research method adopted in this study is a qualitative method with descriptive analysis. "Descriptive analysis is an analysis used to analyze data by describing the data that has been collected as it is without intending to make conclusions that apply to the public or generalizations." (Sugiono. 2016). The instrument used for data collection in this study is a questionnaire. The model's effectiveness test is also carried out by looking at the increase or decrease in the respondents' English understanding of English language. The respondents of this study are lecturers and officers at the Islamic University of North Sumatra which are determined using purposive sampling. The findings of this study is an effective and efficient keyword-based model for adult learners because with a keyword-based model, learners do not need a long time to spend in learning English, so it does not cost too much considering they have little free time.*

### Keywords

model; adult learners; English



## I. Introduction

To be able to speak English, especially among academics (lecturers and officers) is a long-standing dream in Islamic University of North Sumatra. However, in reality until now this dream has not been realized. It is ironic to communicate with partners or co-workers from other countries, if there are still obstacles in communicating with one of the international languages, namely English because English is a very common international language compared to other international languages such as Mandarin and Arabic. Currently, the ability to speak English is very much needed in education and company. As stated in a reseach that "At this time, the use of English is very much needed because of the importance of using English in everyday life, starting from education, business, to technology. If the learning uses an effective method, the output of using English will also produce useful soft skills ranging from the ability to write, speak, listen, and read. Soft skills like these are very much needed in the world of work. Therefore this shows how important the use of English nowadays" (Putra, 2020)

According to Astuti et al (2019) Education is an obligation of every human being that must be pursued to hold responsibilities and try to produce progress in knowledge and experience for the lives of every individual. Education is one of the efforts to improve the ability of human intelligence, thus he is able to improve the quality of his life (Saleh and Mujahiddin, 2020). Education is expected to be able to answer all the challenges of the times and be able to foster national generations, so that people become reliable and of high

quality, with strong characteristics, clear identities and able to deal with current and future problems (Azhar, 2018).

In English Education, ability in communication in English is useful for them who want to study abroad. Furthermore, in the corporates, the ability to speak English is a plus value for hiring employees (Setyowati, 2019). As a university, an education institution, it is a must to produce alumni who are ready to work by qualifying them with good English. Therefore, English is a language that must be mastered either by lecturers and officers. So that, the lecturers and officers can create an English environment that will cultivate English in the campus environment. Then English will affect every person who gets involved in any kind of communication relating to academic matters. At least, any kinds of collaboration among a university in Indonesian with other universities from different countries might run smoothly and successfully. It is what becomes the dreams of every education institution to be able to communicate with English and to successfully collaborate with other universities from other countries, so that there might not be misunderstanding issues found. Therefore, as adult persons, they should, again, learn English to add their competency in English language using. Adult persons mean those who are over the age of schooling. It is over 23 years old and are able to choose freely to get involved in a certain form of instruction, to work as a personal, professional, or social need or interest (Cozma, 2015).

What becomes the resistance is that the desire and seriousness of the teaching participants to learn English is disturbed by the busy schedule of other activities, full time job, or sometimes family members who are relying on them, so that the desire to be able to communicate in English is neglected. As said in a research that adult learners “are highly motivated and are taking responsibility for their learning, but on the other hand, they often have problem with the lack of time and low attendance at classes (Michalska, 2013), although, adult learners realize that they have advantages over children in learning (Wu et al., 2014). Therefore, a teaching model that takes only short time is really necessary for adult learners. In addition, a more effective and efficient English learning model is needed because many teaching participants are worried or afraid to make mistakes when communicating because English has sixteen tenses which they think that they are very complicated (Ekalestari & Pasaribu, 2017). In other words, they need a model in which there is no more sixteen patterns of sentence formula should be mastered which seem acquiring longer time to learn. Thus, they need a new model that effective and efficient for them that matches their spare times. So, it does not take too long to be able to speak English.

Referring to the obstacle faced by adult learners above, this study aims to find a model of strengthening English language skills based on keywords. Furthermore, the urgency of this research is the need for a simple but easy learning model to be applied in a short time in order to improve the ability to communicate in English. Establishing cooperative relationships with foreign agencies and comparative studies abroad requires good English language skills. Apparently, communicating means expressing information, thoughts, and feelings both verbally and in writing which are influenced by situations, topics, and people involved in communication. Therefore, with the ability to communicate in English, as a global language, we can develop science and technology and culture in an easier way than those who do not have the ability to communicate in English (Manurung & Sambayu, 2017).

Nowadays, English should not be underestimated. This is because English has become an international language used in almost all areas of global life. English has also become a world language that dominates the era of communication to connect and transfer

knowledge throughout the world. This gives the assumption that mastery of English is a very important requirement for today's modern society because mastery of English makes it easier for someone to expand their association in the international world (Sophya, 2014). English is really needed in a globalized world. Not only institution, but also individuals are affected by this globalization. Therefore, one of the skill required by them is English proficiency, especially higher education and flexible labour market that will undergo mobility of international affairs (Jendrych & Wisniewska, 2006).

In a study, it is said that Indonesia lags behind other Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam in terms of the use of English. This condition is taken from the survey results by the English Proficiency Index (EPI). The components surveyed are grammar, reading comprehension, and communication as an indicator of proficiency (Poedjiastutie et al., 2018). Mastery of English is one of the basic capitals to be able to compete in the global era, especially in the ASEAN community (Handayani, 2016). In addition, workplace will also give a higher appreciation to people who have the ability to speak English.

Low English proficiency is suspected because the environment does not provide opportunities to speak English actively. Therefore, to create a potential environment for campus community to be able to speak English fluently is really necessary. While, to be able to speak English, it needs to create an intensive program for English language training in an effective time. This program is able to improve the ability to speak English actively at the intermediate level (Hamzah, Amir. et.al. 2018). The intensive program is also able to improve the mastery of English vocabulary. This is proven in a study to students of Stikes Hafshawaty Pesantren Zainul Hasan (Sulistiana et al., 2019).

## II. Research Method

The research method adopted in this study is a qualitative method with descriptive analysis. "Descriptive analysis is an analysis used to analyze data by describing the data that has been collected as it is without intending to make conclusions to be the public or generalizations." "Included in descriptive analysis, among others, is the presentation of data through tables, graphs, circles, pictograms, calculations, mode, median, mean (measurement of central tendency), calculation of mean and standard deviation, calculation of percentage. In descriptive analysis, it can also be done to find the strength of the relationship between variables through correlation analysis, make predictions with regression analysis, and make comparisons by comparing the average (population/sample)" (Sugiono.2016).

This research is conducted at the Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan, Indonesia since its respondents are lecturers and officers at eight faculties within the Islamic University of North Sumatra, and they are categorized as adult learners.

It is said that the test is a systematic procedure used to observe and obtain a person's characteristics by using a numerical scale or category (Khaerudin, 2016). Therefore, the data collection technique of this research is carried out with one instrument, namely a questionnaire. The first step is to distribute the questionnaires needed for the design of a keyword-based learning model.

Previously, a validity and reliability test are made because this questionnaire is new and never been applied in previous research. The researchers tested the validity and reliability of the questionnaire with Correlation Product Momment. Validity and reliability tests are carried out on 30 lecturers and employees on September 15, 2021.

The questionnaire is sent online in google form format (<https://forms.gle/oJi1LWQReiWrwgu6A>), then calculated using the product moment correlation to test the validity of the questionnaire (Priyastama. 2017). By calculation, if t-count is greater than t-table, the questionnaire is said to be valid. The calculation is obtained by the following formula:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n \sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{[n \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][n \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

Dimana :

r = Pearson r correlation coefficient

N = jumlah sampel

In addition, calculations are carried out using Cronbach alpha for the reliability test with the condition that if the Cronbach alpha value is above 0.7, then the questionnaire is reliable. The calculation is obtained by the following formula:

$$r_{11} = \left[ \frac{k}{(k-1)} \right] \left[ 1 - \frac{\sum \sigma_b^2}{\sigma_t^2} \right]$$

Keterangan :

$r_{11}$  = koefisien reliabilitas instrument (total tes)

k = jumlah butir pertanyaan yang sah

$\sum \sigma_b^2$  = jumlah varian butir

$\sigma_t^2$  = varian skor total

After the questionnaire is valid and reliable, then the questionnaire is distributed to respondents. The aim is to find out information about their knowledge related to English. From 122 respondents it is found that 80% of lecturers and officers have little knowledge of English. On the other hand, they need and want to have the ability to speak English fluently. They hope that there is an appropriate model to be able to learn English easily and quickly. Step from this, researchers design a model based on keywords. After long and deep discussion, the researchers formulate the design as follows:

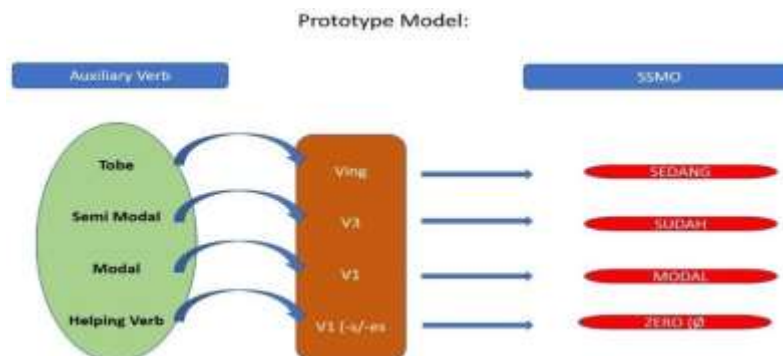


Figure 1. Prototype Model

Then, the model is tested for its effectivity. It is to determine the effectiveness of the model in learning English. Effectiveness is obtained by increasing knowledge of English through increasing scores after treatment using a keyword-based model. The increase in score is obtained by comparing the score before receiving treatment and the score after receiving treatment. After comparing the results or scores, it is found that 73% of the respondents have increased score after the keyword-based model treatment, 20% of respondents have fix score, and 7% of respondents have decreased score. It is seen in the following Grafik:



*Figure 2. The Effectiveness of the Model*

### III. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of the effectiveness test of the model to respondents, the use of a keyword-based model in learning English is able to increase or strengthen the knowledge and ability of adult learners to communicate in English. The treatment of the model which is only carried out in approximately 90 minutes is able to increase English knowledge by 70%. It can be assumed that if learning activities are carried out for more than 90 minutes, then the strengthening of English language skills will be achieved. This is emphasized by the results of interviews conducted by researchers with respondents regarding the keyword-based model they received. This short interview question is made to get the feedback from the respondents related to the model they have just received. Some of the responses from respondents can be seen in the following table:

<b>Tabel 1. Respondents' Responses of the Model</b>	
Question:	“What’s your opinion about the model?”
Responses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “So simple, makes us easier to use English.”</li> <li>- “This model changed my thought that English is so difficult, but the keywords in the model make me easier to understand and to communicate in English.”</li> <li>- “Wow... this model is so cool, marvelous. It is quite different way to understand and to communicate in English from our previous way in learning English.”</li> <li>- “If we do not need long time to learn, I think four or five times is quite enough for us to study English with this model.”</li> </ul>



All respondents have the same response as the responses written in the table above. This shows that the keyword-based model is a proper model to be applied for adult learners because the response strengthens the results of the score after the treatment given to the respondents. The responses show that they feel confident that they would be able to master English quickly by using this model.

The data shows that 7% of the respondents' score decrease and 13% of the respondents' score do not change. It might be assumed that the decreased score will not happen if several treatments are carried out. Three or four meetings are assumed to be able to significantly improve English language skills of the respondents. This keyword-based model stimulates the learners to be able to solve any problems found when they are going to speak or write in English easily. Problem solving is more effective when the learners know the basic knowledge and its application as the primary principles either in theory or practice (Carson, 2007). The basic knowledge in this model comes from the learners' prior knowledge that is displayed in a simple way but easy to be recalled when the learners are solving any problems found when they are producing English sentences in speaking or writing. Furthermore, problem solving will work at its best in an open-ended learning environment in which the learners are triggered to be more active in exploring any problems found with necessary basic knowledge (Bourke, 2016). This model presents four keywords which will stimulate the learners to be more active in solving any problems when they are making sentences in English either in speaking or writing. This model is presented by the basic knowledge of English and its application in communication either in written or spoken form. Therefore, learning English with this model applies problem-based learning as its approach. Problem-based learning is an approach in second and foreign language learning and teaching in which the learners learn the target language by using it. They are not only presented the language structure or formula but they also practice the language (Ellis, 2003). Problem-based learning has many benefits for adult learners because it could be incorporated successfully into an adult learners with positive program (Mathews-Aydinli, 2007). The priority advantage of problem-based learning approach is that this approach might facilitate the learners to improve their English proficiency through problem solving activity because it provides the learners an opportunity to explore their own knowledge. Therefore, they have chance to upgrade their critical thinking, creativity, and imagination during the problem-solving activity (Hasnawan, 2014).

#### **IV. Conclusion**

This research concludes that keyword-based model is a proper model to be applied to adult learners in Islamic University of North Sumatra when they are going to add their skill and competence in communicating using English. This model meets their needs of learning English strategy with their prior knowledge of English. This model also matches to their spare time to learn for it needs only short time to spent in learning English.

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that next research might be conducted related to the usage of the keyword-based model in quantitative research method to see its positive significant effect on teaching English to adult learners because the result of this research could not be generalized for other learners. At this initial research on keyword-based model in teaching English, it might be seen that this model is effective enough for adult learners to learn English in Islamic University of North Sumatra because the learners do not need long time

to spent with the instructor. Thus, this model is suitable enough for those who have limited time due to some duty in their daily life.

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