

## **Investigating The Learners Profile of EFL Intermediate Speakers in 21<sup>st</sup> Century : A Case of Senior High School Students**

**Jihan Fauziyah Nurafifah, Ilman Nafi'a, Nana Priajana**

IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon

[jihanfauziyah5258@gmail.com](mailto:jihanfauziyah5258@gmail.com), [Ilman.crb72@gmail.com](mailto:Ilman.crb72@gmail.com), [Priajana@gmail.com](mailto:Priajana@gmail.com)

### **Article Info**

### **Abstract**

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This descriptive research aimed to analyze and describe the learners profile of Senior High School students at A Private Senior High School Cirebon in the academic 2022/2023. The subject of this study is the tenth grade students of Senior High School Cirebon. There were 4 students and 1 English teacher who were chosen as the subject of the study. Interview and literature review technique was applied in determining the subject. In order to collect the data for this study, the interviewed by face to face directly to find out how many characteristics Learners Profile their have in 21<sup>st</sup> century and find out the factors students have to make them successful as English students in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The research finding show that students get six characteristics of Learners Profile such as students have critical thinking, collaboration, a good communication, have creativity skill, have innovation think and their have own self-direction. To be a successful English students must have grow a sense of motivation within yourself, have supportive learning community surround them and students uses media technology in learning English.

Keywords: 21<sup>st</sup> Century,  
EFL Intermediate  
Learners, Learner  
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□ Correspondence Address: Cirebon, Indonesia  
E-mail: [jihanfauziyah5258@gmail.com](mailto:jihanfauziyah5258@gmail.com)

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In Indonesia, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is taught from junior high school up to university. This means that students learn English in a country where the speakers are not native. Also their lack of exposure to English speaking environment. Students learn English only at school but they do not use English in their

daily communication. The study revealed from some previous study that high achievers tend to use assessment methods to help and turn to a mother tongue. Dewi (2007) has been investigated the strategies deployed by Indonesia senior high school students in their speaking problems. In reality, many students still cannot speak English although they have been studying English for

many years. Many students feeling anxiety when speaking English, even some of them don't know how to speak English properly. Most Indonesian students have difficulty speaking and writing in English, this could be because non international students are not taught the best ways to learn English. (As cited in Sulistiyo, 2016).

The skills mentioned are claimed as the skills of 21<sup>st</sup> century, specifically in industry 4.0 in which students are much related to the development of technology. That teacher and student involve to master several skills, besides their academic achievement. They are skills of communicating, collaborating, creative and critical thinking, information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, leadership, initiative, productivity and social skills. Those skills can be develop through a foreign language. The concept of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills by Trilling and Fadel (2009) can be categorized in three points: learning and innovation skills (critical thinking and problem solving, communications, collaboration, creativity and innovation), digital literacy skills, career and life skills (initiative and self-direction, leadership and responsibility). The partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills presents the 4Cs of communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking as the main skills of learning and innovation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Erdogan, 2019).

In education learner profile are expected to be able to actualize them with what they learn in school and implement it in their life, so that what they learn can benefit both themselves and the environment in all conditions. Lerner are able to adapt both conditions, environment and differences so that they reflect the learner profile (Ghazali, 2020). There are some possibilities from this points, firstly, the time to learn English subject at school is limited. Secondly, at school teachers teach English through Indonesian is carried. Thirdly, English subject is not used as a teaching medium for other subjects. Lastly reasons, students' in Indonesia never use their English language to each other.

It's very important to speak English well if you want to be successful in school and work, especially now that the world is so connected. This study looks at how well people can talk. According to Imane (2016) says that talking is important for learning a language and for

connecting with other people. This is one of the four things you can do with language: reading, listening, writing or speaking. The ability to speak well was very important part of teaching language based on history. Speaking is important and interesting for those learning English as a foreign language.

#### **Characteristic of Learner in 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The characteristic of Learner in 21<sup>st</sup> Century are defined by their ability to adapt to rapid changes, embrace technology, collaborate effectively, think critically, and possess lifelong learning skills (Smith, 2018, Page. 45). Johnson (as cited in Tindowen, Bassig & Caguragan, 2017) divided that 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are not only more than technological literacy but also include critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and teamwork needed to succeed in work and life.

Regarded as the "4Cs" of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, "communication", "collaboration", "critical thinking" and "creativity" are essential skills that the individuals must have to keep up with the shifting paradigms of the globalized systems. Current educational programs integrated with these skills create a universal perspective that regards not only the individuals, but also the societies with respect to the change without the limitation of boundarie (Gursoy & Kurba BAG, 2018). The 21<sup>st</sup>-century education highlights how learners are able to combine content knowledge, specific skills, expertise, and literacy necessary to succeed in work and life (Ledward & Hirata, 2011) cited in (Menggo, 2019). However (Hixson, Ravitz, and Whisman, 2012) as cited in (Tindowen, Bassig & Caguragan, 2017). Identified eight skills that every student should possess in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

- a. Critical thinking skills refer to students being able to analyze complex problems, investigate questions for which there are no clear-cut answers, evaluate different points of view of sources of information, and draw appropriate conclusions based on evidence and reasoning.
- b. Collaboration skills refer to students being able to work together to solve problems or answer questions, to work effectively, and, respectfully in teams, to accomplish a common goal, and to assume shared responsibility for completing a task.

- c. Communication skills refer to students being able to organize their thoughts, data, and findings and share these effectively through a variety of media as well as orally and in writing.
- d. Creativity and innovation skills refer to students being able to generate and refine solutions to complex problems or tasks based on synthesis, analysis, and then combining or presenting what they have learned in new and original ways.
- e. Self-direction skills refer to students being able to take responsibility for their learning by identifying topics to pursue and processes for their learning and being able to review their work and respond to feedback.
- f. Global connections refer to students being able to understand global, geopolitical issues including awareness of geography, culture, language, history, and literature from other countries.
- g. Local connections refer to students being able to apply what they have learned to local contexts and community issues.
- h. Using technology as a tool for learning refers to students being able to manage their learning and produce products using appropriate information and communication technologies.

#### **The Factors to be Successful English Learner**

The Factor for successful English language learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century include learning motivation and independence, use of technology and digital resources, practice of active language in authentic contexts, and involvement in learning communities and collaborations. With paying attention to these factors, English learners have a greater chance of achieving success in acquiring good English skills in the modern era. The first factors; motivation and independent learning are important factors in the success of English language learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Johnson, 2018), Second factors; factor of using technology such as electronic devices, online learning platforms, and English language applications can enhance the English learning experience. Learners can access diverse digital resources, interact with native speakers, and hone their language skills through interactive

activities (Brown, 2021), the last factors; the engagement in a supportive learning community, such as study groups, language courses, or online forums, and collaboration with fellow English learners facilitates growth and success (Lee, 2020). To be a factors for successful language learners; Tend to be independent and autonomous in doing self-study by reading, Seeking the opportunity to practice independently, successful learners try to get language exposures from any sources, have wee motivated, take responsibility for their learning, create their own learning, able to improve their language competence, and use learning strategies (Cahyani, 2010).

#### **RELATED REVIEW**

Several previous research has been conducted about EFL learner, Nielsen (2020) a study about *The English Language in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Different Identities of a Global Language*, the research finding shows that why English is a global language, build links between English language, culture and student identity. English has taken over the history of people who speak it and structure it.

Another research on *The Integration of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills into English Language Learning* conducted by Albahlal (2019), this study explore how 21<sup>st</sup> century skills can be integrated into learning English with a focus on English as a foreign language (EFL) and the research finding shows that indicate that 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are very important in the education system in developed countries. The skills of 21<sup>st</sup> century English students consist of communication, collaboration, problem solving, technology skills, critical thinking, decision making, creativity, innovation, and self-direction.

Besides Marwa, Herlinawati & Herdi (2023) a study about *21<sup>st</sup> Century skills/4C Skills'Integration in English Teaching Documents Used in EFL Classroom*, the research finding shows to analyze the skills of the 21/4C century that are integrated with the culture in universities. The research context is based on the teaching document/syllabus. By integrating the 4C skills. The result shows that the integration of the 4C skills analyzed from the teacher's teaching syllabus reaches the "meet Competency" level.

The 4C skills that students must possess include communication, creativity, critical thinking and collaboration.

Another previous research from on *Relationship between 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, speaking and writing skills: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach* conducted by Motallebzadeh, Ahmadi & Hosseinnia (2017), this research aims to analyze the relationship between the components of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and the speaking and writing skills of EFL learners. This research finding show that 21<sup>st</sup> century skills have a very significant relationship with students who have writing and speaking skills. EFL students who met the 21<sup>st</sup> century communication and collaboration skills criteria had the highest correlation with speaking scores. Foreign language and technological literacy have the highest foreign language assessment scores.

In response to above condition, the writer would like to investigate students characteristics 21<sup>st</sup> century they have in English learning by looking closely at their learning activity in English classroom. Hence, the study will be focused on investigating the tenth grade student of A private senior high school Cirebon.

Based on the background explained above, the research questions of this study can be formulated are: (1) "What are the characteristics of learner profiles in 21<sup>st</sup> century?" (2) "What are the factors that making EFL intermediate learners successful in speaking skills?". The study is mainly to answer the research problems under the study which has previously been formulated. Based on the above research problem, this study is conducted to investigate the learners profile of EFL intermediate speakers in 21<sup>st</sup> century in mastering speaking skill.

## OBJECTIVES

The researcher conducted the research to achieve the following objectives;

1. To explore the characteristics of learner profile in 21<sup>st</sup> century.
2. To investigate the factors that making EFL intermediate learner can be successful in speaking skill.

## METHOD

This study is classified into a qualitative descriptive study. The focus of the study is to investigate how many characteristics Learners Profile their have in 21<sup>st</sup> century and find out the factors students have to make them successful as English students in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The research is aimed at giving description on particular phenomena as they were. (Creswell, 2009, p.4) the qualitative research is the research for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem, the researcher who uses qualitative design making interpretations of the meaning of data. (Ary, 2005) states that a qualitative research is conducted to describe the current status of phenomenon that while exist at the time of study.

Hence, the current status of the phenomenon in this study is the learners profile of EFL intermediate speakers in 21<sup>st</sup> century. This study was conducted at A Private Senior High School Cirebon. The participant of this study was the tenth grade students and a English teacher of senior high school. There were 4 students and 1 English teacher who became the subject of the study. In taking sample of this research, the researcher applied two types of data; primary source and secondary source. Primary sources used by the researcher are from interview and observation. The result of the interview can be capable data to get information. Primary source is source which can allow beneficial information precisely (Sugiyono, 2017: 225). Secondary source are such books, journals, and review of the research. Secondary source is a secondhand description written by someone who may have heard about an event from others but it did not directly experience it (Ary et. al., 2010: 443). This study used the secondary data source from e-book and article journal.

In other to collect the data in this study, reserach interview and literature review. Gall, D, M., Gall, P, J., & Borg, R, W., (2003) stated that interviews consist of oral questions asked by the interviewer and oral responses by the research participants. This study identified 'participant as observer' which has actively participants and becomes an insider in the event being observed so that the researcher experiences events in the same way as the

participants (Ary, 2010: 433). Second technique of collecting the data of research which is acquired. Library research used in getting the sources of the data. Library research involves the step-by-step process used to gather information in order to write a paper, create a presentation, or complete a project (Elener E. Rasmuson Library, n.d, "Library research process", para. 1). The data was taken from some literature (journals) related to the perception of how many characteristics of 21<sup>st</sup> century of high school students have.

Since the study is designed in a qualitative approach, the use of descriptive analysis is an appropriate method to classify and analyze the data. The following detail explanation about the technique. The first step done in analyzing the data was measuring the students answers interviews. It is used to find out the characteristics of learners in 21<sup>st</sup> century. After collecting and reducing the data, the researcher displayed those data in the form of descriptive. Data display in this research will be using tables and brief notes in narrative text. After displaying the data, a conclusion is drawn. The conclusion is analyzed continuously and verified the validity to get the perfect conclusion about the Senior High School Students are successful in English speaking skills.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Result of interview

RQ 1 = "What are the characteristics of learner profiles in 21<sup>st</sup> century?"

The interview involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions were given to the samples to gain necessary data in this research. The following were the students' responses toward the open-ended questionnaires given.

Table. 1.1 Answers of participants in the Critical Thinking

| Characteristics   | Participants | Answer of Participants  |
|-------------------|--------------|---|
| Critical Thinking | S1           | She speak in front of the class, she doesn't pay attention the word and grammatical structure used.                         |
|                   | S2           | He speaking in front of the class he use the correct word and grammatical arrangement based on the situation and condition. |
|                   | S3           | I have to learn more about <u>grammar. Thus, I would use</u>  |

sentences with the grammatically correct.

It can be seen from the table above found some different answers between S1, S2, S3, and S4 in critical thinking. S2 has a good critical thinking. S2 can "applying" her vocabulary, "applying" grammatical structure and "analyzing" the question that given by her teacher. However most of students have the critical skill. It could be seen by the students' answer that the tutor tried to increase their critical thinking skill by asked them to speak English for each theme. By asking that questions, other students have to think and found missing information from their friends.

Table. 1.2 Answering of participants in Collaboration

| Characteristic | Participants | Answering of Participants  |
|----------------|--------------|--|
| Collaboration  | S1           | We divide tasks to find opinions or answers about the problems we discuss and respect each other as well   |
|                | S2           | We want to complete a task we have to exchange opinions because by exchanging opinions we can complete the task quickly.   |
|                | S3           | We collecting opinions from other friends because each member has different opinions, if we have found the right opinions we can collect that ideas and we can complete the task well. |
|                | S4           | We usually discuss with each other then we seek the material will be discuss it, we must have the opinion from self and we can combine our ideas.                                      |

As can be seen from the table above, the majority of the students have similar answer where all of the participants are doing the same things when they collaborate with their friends in a group for getting some information. In collaboration, the students could collaborate were with their friends because most of their assignment were related to group assignments. Unfortunately, the group assignment focus on

writing task that is correcting the wrong grammar from each sentence given by the tutor. Thus, collaboration could not be maximize in students' speaking skills since it just a peer work.

listening English music on Spotify and watching short English conversation on Youtube.

To be a creative student, she want to take a course in Pare to increase her English

Table. 1.3 Answering of participants in Communication

| Characteristic | Participants | Answering of Participants  |
|----------------|--------------|--|
| Communication  | S1           | To communicate with teacher, she polite words, but when she communicate with her friends she just say what she want to say.        |
|                | S2           | To communicate with teacher, he use polite words, but when he communicate with his friends he just speak using words that he know. |
|                | S3           | When she communicate with teacher, she use polite words.   |
|                | S4           | When she communicate with teacher, she use polite words. Then when she communicate with her friends, she use any words.            |

S4 material, she understand the material by herself and use looking at several sources on the internet and books. To developing her speaking skill, she listening English music and watching English conversation on Youtube.

The table shows that all the participants

were not fulfilled creativity skills. The teacher did not provide something that increase creativity

skills. By that case, the students watch YouTube to improve their creativity skills. They were learning for

The table points out that S1, S2, S3, and S4 have similar perspectives when they were doing communicate with their teacher, they will use polite words because they think that their tutor is the person older than them. Meanwhile,

understand in YouTube. In that platform, the students said that they can imitate the creators' creativity in making the video for learning English.

there are some differences when they make communicate with their friends. S1, S2 and S3 use the word they know and they just say what they want to say what they want with their friends, but S4 always use polite words with their teacher. It can be conclude that all of the participants here have good communication.

Table 1.5 Answering of participants in Innovation

| Characteristics | Participants | Answering of Participant   |
|-----------------|--------------|--|
| Creativity      | S1           | To combine the opinion she has to listen the opinions of friends in the group and get result. She would practice and study English more often for speak English well.                      |
|                 | S2           | To combine the material, he would listen opinions from other friends then he choose good opinion it and the he can combine them opinion to find the final result to get complete the task. |
|                 | S3           | To combine the material, she would hear the opinions from other friends and then if those opinions related she would combine those opinion to find the perfect answer it.                  |
|                 | S4           | To combine the material, she would hear the opinions of other friends in other group, after that she can choose opinions that are indeed included in our material.                         |

As can be seen from the table above all the participants have same answer such as the way combine some opinion from their opinion and friends opinion, they say that if we want to combine some opinion we should ask they opinions first and then we listen it, and then we can take the important opinion, after that we can combine their opinion together with other friends

opinions. The second is about innovation in the way to be good in speak English, from the participants answer, the researcher has found good answer, that is from S3, she say that she will develop a strategy and arrange the steps that she will take to achieve it, learn and practice it with her friends.

Table 1.6 Answering of participants in Self-Direction

| Characteristics | Participants | Answering of Participants  |
|-----------------|--------------|--|
| Self-Direction  | S1           | My learning style that I use to understand the material I prefer to group or study with other friends, usually I'm not be confidence when I speak in front of the class because I haven't mastered a lot of vocabulary and grammatical structure, looks like, I will speak English as I can.                       |
|                 | S2           | My learning style prefers to be in groups, because in groups we will get some information from various sources, to be confidence speak in front of the class I have prepared the word what I want to say so that makes me confidence when speaking English in front of my friends.                                 |
|                 | S3           | For learning strategy I'm typically person who like to study alone, for speaking in front of the classroom sometimes I'm not be confidence person but I always try to speak as I can, we should not afraid to make mistake, if I doing mistake in English speaking my tutor give me some input directly to better. |
|                 | S4           | For learning strategy, I'm a typical person who likes to alone if it's to improve my abilities, to be brave for speaking in front of the classroom our mindset must be believed if we can, we should not be afraid to make mistakes.   |

As the question about self-direction, the table points out that the differences answer, some of them is prefer to learn with a group, but there is participants who prefer learn alone, because they have own style when learning English. S1, S2, S3 & S4 are good students, they can try to be brave when they speak English in front of the class, and they always happy when they join in speaking class program, they can learn and practice to increase their ability especially in speaking skills.

RQ 2 = "What are the factors that making EFL intermediate learners successful in speaking skills?"

The interview involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions were given to the samples to gain necessary data in this research. The following were the students' responses toward the open-ended questionnaires given.

Table 1.7 Answering of Participants in Students' Motivation

| Factors    | Participants | Answer of Participants  |
|------------|--------------|---|
| Motivation | S1           | To practice S1 not too often, she thought that there is no friend to talk with. But, she usually invites her sister to a little bit speak English. He often to practice English.  |
|            | S2           | He usually practices to speak English at school, sometimes with his friends at course, and also with his family at home, especially with his sisters. He usually practices it after the end of the class. He directly practice it with his sisters even though there are a lot of sentences ungrammatically correct and not fluent in English.                                |
|            | S3           | She often to practice speaking English with her friends even though her sentences was not ungrammatically correct. She often practices to speak English to get more vocabularies and could practice it in her school. She not often to practice English because she less interact with her friends. She was too shy to study friends and did not confident to practice alone. |

It can be seen from the table above that found similarities and differences between the answer of S1, S2, S3 and S4. The similarities were come from S2 and S3 where they have high

motivation in learning English. They practice it regularly either in the classroom or outside the classroom. The first and fourth student thought that by practice more, they would be more fluent in speaking English. However, S1 & S4 have low motivation. The students feel shy to speak English and they did not have partner outside the classroom.

Table 1.8 Answering of Participants in Supportive Learning Community

| Factors | Participants | Answer of Participants |
|---------|--------------|------------------------|
|---------|--------------|------------------------|

|                               |    |   |   |
|-------------------------------|----|---|---|
| Supportive Learning Community | S1 | <i>She need support from the environment around her. She needs support from her family and friends to be more confident to speak English and to be more enthusiasm to learn English.</i>  | really helps our English skills, so apart from reading the subtitles, we also have to understand the meaning of the subtitles.  |
|                               | S2 | <i>He needs support from others but he also though that he should stand on her motivation too. He thought that he just needs to be believed in herself, so that he would be understand the materials. But, if he got motivation from the people around him, he would be really happy.</i>   | The media that he uses his hand cellphone. He learn English from YouTube, watching western movies on Netflix, and listen English songs on Spotify and he usually uses the internet to browsing the materials. |
|                               | S3 | <i>She really need support from others like her family, friends, and tutor. Their support makes her to be more enthusiasm in learning English. But, she was too shy to speak English in front of her mom although her mother always support her to speak English, she said do not stop just because of her, just go ahead. Her tutor also gave her support in the end of class. The tutor said that they have</i> | She utilize media on Youtube, listen English music on Spotify and read some articles on the internet to help.   |
|                               | S4 | <i>to be more spirit in learning English so that they could go abroad</i>   | She utilize media from her phone. She usually browsing the material on internet when she have assignments and did not understand the materials.   |
|                               | S4 | <i>She did not really need support from others. She thought that if she could did it independently, she would learn alone, like learning English. She would tried to understand the materials until she understand well.</i>  |   |

The table points out that all the participants utilize some digital media in learning activity. The result show that S1, S2, S3 and S4 are same, they usually use cellphone as media in learning English such as they uses watching movie, listening music, watching YouTube video and make conversation on social media with English language. Most of students were using

As can be seen from the table above the answer from S1, S2 & S3 need others support in learning English. The participants have motivation not only from themselves but also from the people around them. For S4, she didn't need support from around her because she is an independent woman and she doesn't give easily to reach something. The student must have supportive learning from surround them and say that having friends at school will not only make school feel more fun, but it can also help in terms of learning to be better. Successful students will usually work together and with each other, learn with friends, they will always share knowledge to enhance the insights they have (Lianasari, 2016). Supportive learning community is needed to increase students' willingness and ability.

technology to browsing the materials from many sources.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the research findings, several conclusion can be taken. The students have six characteristics of learners profile in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Related to the former characteristics their have that is critical thinking skill, collaborative skill, communicative skill, creative skill, innovate and self-direction. This study has the problem is the knowledge of grammar. The lack of grammatical knowledge can lead to the feeling of being afraid of making mistakes when speaking that is a problem found in the collaboration and communication skills they have. It included the feeling of unconfident, shy, idea development and the lack of the opportunity to speak English.

However, to be a successfull English students must have contributing some factors; Students have motivation, students get a supportive learning community from surround them, students has their own learning strategies, hasself-confidence and have resposibility in learning English.

Table 1.9 Answering of Participants in Media

| Factors | Participants | Answer of Participants   |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Media   | S1           | The media that she uses from her cellphone for translating, listening English songs, watching short conversation on Youtube, read some E-books or E-novels in English language and then when she watch Korean shows she use English subtitles and that |



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