

**Analysis of Student's Learning Difficulties in the English Language Subject
Class VI Primary School: A Case Study at SDI Kalepu**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to determine the challenges that SDI Kalepu students encounter when learning English, as well as the factors that contribute to these challenges. The research methodology used in this study is a qualitative descriptive technique. This study aims to identify the factors that contribute to SDI KALEPU students' challenges in learning English. and the challenges that pupils have when learning English. The data collection procedure used observation and interviews from grade VI students of SD INPRES KALEPU on April 15, 2025. Every information collected was examined and explained. The results and analysis of the observation sheets and interview techniques were displayed in the data presentation. In addition, this was formed through descriptive explanations as part of the debate. Based on the results of the study, it can be said that SDI Kalepu students face several challenges when learning English. These challenges include the elements of speaking, writing, listening, and reading. And because some of them still have poor English skills, I found that speaking, writing, and pronouncing words are the most common.

Keywords: Learning Difficulties; English Language; Primary School

INTRODUCTION

English language education at the elementary school level plays a crucial role, especially in this era of globalization. Proficiency in English is considered one of the essential skills needed to compete in an increasingly interconnected world (Jiahan, 2021). However, not all students find it easy to learn English, particularly in areas with limited access to educational resources. This is the case at SDI Kalepu,

where many students face significant challenges in learning English. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze the learning difficulties faced by students in English language lessons and the factors contributing to these difficulties. Based on the background described the research questions addressed in this study are: What are the difficulties faced by grade VI students at SDI Kalepu in learning English? What factors contribute to the learning difficulties experienced by these students? By answering these questions, this study aims to provide effective solutions to address the challenges faced by students in learning English.

The primary objective of this research is to identify the difficulties faced by grade VI students at SDI Kalepu in learning English. Additionally, this study seeks to explore the factors that contribute to the students' learning difficulties, both internal factors such as motivation and cognitive abilities, and external factors such as teaching methods and school facilities. This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, this study will offer new insights into the learning difficulties experienced by elementary school students in English language education, particularly in areas with limited access to educational resources. Practically, the findings of this research are expected to help improve English language teaching at SDI Kalepu by identifying effective strategies to overcome the challenges students face, thus enhancing their English proficiency.

This study focuses on analyzing the learning difficulties encountered by students in English language education at SDI Kalepu. The research will examine various aspects related to students' English language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. The primary focus is on students' experiences in the classroom, as well as the factors that affect their success in learning English. Learning difficulties faced by students, particularly in English language subjects, can significantly impact their academic performance. If these difficulties are not identified and addressed promptly, they can negatively affect students' motivation and self-confidence. For example, students who struggle with vocabulary and grammar often feel discouraged and lack the confidence to speak or write in English. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct in-depth research to identify the underlying causes of these difficulties and develop effective solutions to address them.

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research approach to explore students' experiences in learning English at SDI Kalepu. Data will be collected through interviews and classroom observations, allowing the researcher to gain direct insights from students and teachers about the challenges they face in learning English. This approach will provide a deep understanding of the difficulties students encounter and the factors that influence their language learning process. This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the background, problem statement, research objectives, and significance of the study. Chapter two provides a literature review, discussing relevant concepts of learning difficulties, factors affecting English language learning, and previous research on the topic. Chapter three outlines the research methodology, including research design, data collection

techniques, and data analysis procedures. Chapter four presents the research findings and discussion, while chapter five concludes the study with recommendations for stakeholders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The acquisition of English at the primary school level plays a vital role in preparing students for success in an increasingly globalized world. In Indonesia, English is introduced as a foreign language at the elementary level to familiarize students with basic language skills. The primary focus is on developing students' abilities in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. According to Jiahan (2021), the aim is to lay a strong foundation for future learning, equipping students with the essential skills required for communication in a global context. However, students' success in learning English depends not only on the language instruction they receive but also on the learning environment, teaching methods, and personal motivation.

Learning difficulties are obstacles that prevent students from achieving proficiency in a subject, and they can be caused by various factors. In the context of English language learning, these difficulties often arise from challenges in mastering vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and understanding of written and spoken texts. As stated by Sukma et al. (2019), difficulties in language learning are not limited to cognitive or academic challenges but can also stem from emotional factors such as language anxiety and lack of motivation. Moreover, the transition from a student's first language to English can cause significant hurdles, especially if the languages have vastly different grammatical structures and phonetic systems. Internal factors play a crucial role in students' ability to learn English. These factors include cognitive abilities, motivation, and self-confidence. As stated by Wulandari et al. (2020), students with higher cognitive abilities tend to perform better in language learning because they can grasp new vocabulary and complex grammatical structures more easily. Motivation is another critical internal factor, with studies showing that students who are intrinsically motivated tend to achieve better outcomes in language acquisition. On the other hand, a lack of motivation can lead to disengagement and hinder the learning process. Additionally, self-confidence plays a significant role; students who are confident in their language abilities are more likely to actively participate in class activities, such as speaking and answering questions.

In addition to internal factors, external factors such as the quality of teaching, the availability of learning resources, and the socio-cultural environment can influence students' learning outcomes. Nhu & Minh (2019) emphasized the importance of effective teaching methods and the availability of resources such as textbooks, digital tools, and language laboratories in facilitating learning. Moreover, the classroom environment itself—whether it is conducive to learning—can have a significant impact on students' language acquisition. A noisy or disorganized classroom can distract students and reduce their focus on learning. Furthermore, in rural areas like SDI Kalepu, students may lack access to extra-curricular resources

such as English books or the internet, which hinders their ability to practice outside of school hours.

Teachers play a pivotal role in identifying and addressing the difficulties faced by students in learning English. According to Zahra & Rahman (2018), teachers who use varied and interactive teaching strategies are more likely to engage students and help them overcome learning challenges. Approaches such as group discussions, educational games, and multimedia resources can create a more stimulating and effective learning environment. Furthermore, teachers must be sensitive to the individual needs of students, providing extra support to those who struggle and adapting their teaching methods to ensure inclusivity. The teacher's ability to create a positive, supportive atmosphere can also help boost students' motivation and confidence in learning English.

Cultural and linguistic factors also play a significant role in shaping the learning experience of students. According to Wulandari et al. (2020), interference from the mother tongue is a common obstacle in learning English. Students' first language can affect their pronunciation, grammar, and sentence structure in English. For example, in Indonesia, the differences between Bahasa Indonesia and English, such as word order and verb tenses, can make it more challenging for students to understand and produce sentences in English. Additionally, cultural differences can influence how students perceive the importance of learning English. In rural areas like SDI Kalepu, students may have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, leading to a lack of motivation to engage with the language in real-life contexts.

Several studies have explored the factors contributing to learning difficulties in English at the elementary school level. Hasyim (2019) found that limited vocabulary, lack of motivation, and inadequate teaching resources were the primary factors hindering students' progress in English. Similarly, Nurhasanah (2021) noted that many students in rural areas struggled with English pronunciation and grammar, primarily due to insufficient exposure to the language. These findings are consistent with the challenges observed at SDI Kalepu, where students face difficulties in mastering basic English skills such as vocabulary and speaking. Furthermore, the lack of interactive and student-centered teaching methods has been identified as a key factor in students' disengagement and poor language outcomes.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design, which is appropriate for exploring the lived experiences, perspectives, and challenges of students in learning English. As noted by Neergaard et al. (2009), qualitative research emphasizes collecting non-numerical data to gain deep insights into particular phenomena. The focus of this study is to investigate the English learning difficulties of sixth-grade

students at SDI Kalepu, specifically in areas such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, reading, and speaking. The population of this research includes all sixth-grade students at SDI Kalepu, with the sample selected through purposive sampling. This method was chosen to ensure participants had characteristics directly relevant to the research objectives. The final sample consists of five students who face varying degrees of difficulty in English learning and one English teacher who provided perspectives on teaching practices and classroom challenges.

Instruments and Procedures

Data collection in this study employed three main techniques: interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both the selected students and their English teacher to explore their perceptions and experiences related to English learning. These interviews combined predetermined questions with open-ended prompts to encourage detailed responses. Observations were carried out during English lessons to examine teaching methods, student engagement, and classroom dynamics. Document analysis supported the primary data by reviewing lesson plans, observation sheets, and samples of student work, allowing for a richer contextual understanding. The purposive sampling technique was particularly useful in selecting participants with first-hand experience of the challenges being investigated, as emphasized by Suharsini (1996).

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the data gathered from interviews, observations, and document analysis. Following the process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), the researcher transcribed all interview recordings, coded the transcripts to identify key themes, and organized these themes into broader categories reflecting the nature of students' learning difficulties. This approach enabled a systematic interpretation of patterns in the data, offering clear insights into the obstacles students face in learning English. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the research. Informed consent was obtained from both students and their parents, and all participants were assured of their rights to confidentiality and voluntary participation. Pseudonyms were used to protect identities, and all data was stored securely. Despite the valuable insights generated, the study acknowledges limitations such as the small sample size and the focus on a single rural school, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are encouraged to expand the scope to include diverse educational settings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings from the research conducted at SDI Kalepu regarding the learning difficulties faced by sixth-grade students in learning English. The data was collected through interviews with students and their English teacher, classroom observations, and the analysis of relevant documents. The primary focus was on understanding the difficulties students face in the areas of vocabulary,

speaking, reading, and writing. The results of the study indicate that the most significant challenges faced by students in learning English at SDI Kalepu were related to vocabulary acquisition, speaking, and reading comprehension. Many students reported difficulties in remembering new English words, particularly due to the vast number of vocabulary items they were expected to learn. As one student mentioned, “It’s hard for me to remember the words because there are so many of them.”

Additionally, speaking in English posed a considerable challenge for many students. Fear of making mistakes and lack of self-confidence were recurring themes in the interviews. Students expressed anxiety about speaking English in front of their peers and teacher, as one student stated, “I’m afraid I’ll make a mistake when speaking in English, so I don’t want to try.” In terms of reading comprehension, several students struggled to understand English texts, especially when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. Some students also noted that their understanding of sentence structures was limited, which further hampered their ability to comprehend written material. As one student expressed, “I don’t understand the meaning of sentences because they are different from Indonesian.”

The teacher’s perspective highlighted that these difficulties were partly due to the traditional teaching methods used, which often lacked interactive components to engage students actively. The teacher also noted the limited resources available at the school, which affected students' opportunities to practice outside the classroom. The lack of supportive learning materials such as English books and audiovisual resources was identified as a key external factor contributing to students' challenges. The following table summarizes the key difficulties identified through interviews with students and observations made during the classroom sessions:

Aspect	Difficulty Reported
Vocabulary	Difficulty in remembering and mastering new words
Speaking	Fear of making mistakes, lack of self-confidence
Reading Comprehension	Struggles with understanding text due to unfamiliar words
Writing	Difficulty in spelling and writing English sentences
Teacher’s Role	Traditional teaching methods, lack of interactive techniques

The results of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by sixth-grade students at SDI Kalepu in learning English. The findings are consistent with previous research that has identified vocabulary acquisition, speaking, and reading comprehension as common difficulties in language learning (Sari, 2020). In this study, vocabulary acquisition was one of the most prominent difficulties reported by students. The sheer volume of words to be learned was overwhelming for many students, and without consistent exposure to English outside the classroom, students struggled to retain and recall new words.

The fear of making mistakes while speaking English was another significant barrier identified in this study. This aligns with the findings of Zahra and Rahman (2018), who noted that anxiety and lack of self-confidence are common issues among students learning a foreign language. The students in this study expressed fear of speaking in front of others, which prevented them from practicing and improving their speaking skills. The teacher also acknowledged that students were often reluctant to participate in speaking activities due to fear of making errors.

Reading comprehension difficulties were also a major challenge, with many students struggling to understand English texts due to limited vocabulary and unfamiliar sentence structures. This finding is consistent with previous studies, which have shown that vocabulary knowledge plays a crucial role in reading comprehension (Wulandari et al., 2020). When students encounter unfamiliar words, their ability to infer meaning and understand the context of a passage is hindered. This highlights the importance of focusing on vocabulary-building strategies to improve students' reading comprehension.

The teacher's role in addressing these difficulties cannot be overlooked. While the teacher made efforts to explain the material clearly, the use of traditional teaching methods, such as lectures and repetitive drills, appeared to limit student engagement and participation. As noted by Hasyim (2019), traditional methods are often less effective in engaging students and fostering active learning. The lack of interactive teaching methods, such as group discussions and language games, may have contributed to the students' disengagement and passive learning behavior observed in the classroom.

External factors also played a significant role in the students' difficulties. The lack of learning resources, such as English books and audiovisual materials, limited the students' opportunities to practice and reinforce their language skills outside of the classroom. This aligns with the findings of Nhu and Minh (2019), who emphasized the importance of providing adequate learning materials to support students' language development. In rural areas like SDI Kalepu, the availability of resources can be a major obstacle to effective language learning.

Additionally, the socio-cultural context of SDI Kalepu may contribute to the students' learning difficulties. As observed in the study, many students lacked exposure to English outside the classroom, which is a common issue in rural areas

where English is not widely used in daily life. This lack of exposure makes it difficult for students to internalize the language and practice their skills in real-life contexts. In urban areas, students often have more opportunities to interact with English through media, technology, and social networks, which can significantly enhance their learning experience.

To address these challenges, it is essential to adopt more interactive and student-centered teaching methods. As suggested by the teacher, incorporating group work, discussions, and educational games into the lessons could help students become more engaged and reduce their fear of making mistakes. Additionally, providing students with more opportunities for independent practice, such as using digital resources or encouraging reading at home, could help reinforce their learning and build their confidence. Finally, it is crucial to provide students with the necessary resources and support to overcome their learning difficulties. Schools like SDI Kalepu should invest in supplementary materials, such as English books, audio-visual aids, and online resources, to create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment. Furthermore, teachers should receive ongoing training to enhance their skills in using modern teaching strategies and resources that align with students' needs.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify the learning difficulties faced by sixth-grade students at SDI Kalepu in mastering English, with a focus on vocabulary, speaking, reading, and writing. The findings revealed that the most significant challenges included difficulty in acquiring and retaining vocabulary, fear of speaking due to lack of self-confidence, and struggles with reading comprehension. These issues were compounded by limited exposure to English outside the classroom and the use of traditional, teacher-centered teaching methods that failed to engage students actively. Additionally, external factors such as the lack of adequate learning resources, including English books and audiovisual aids, further contributed to the students' difficulties. The teacher's limited use of interactive teaching methods and the absence of supportive classroom environments for language practice were identified as key barriers to student engagement and language acquisition. These findings align with previous research, which emphasizes the importance of motivation, interactive teaching, and resource availability in overcoming language learning challenges. To improve English language learning at SDI Kalepu, it is recommended that the school adopt more interactive and student-centered teaching methods, incorporate more varied learning resources, and encourage greater exposure to English outside of class. Teachers should also receive additional training to enhance their ability to use engaging teaching strategies and create a more supportive learning environment. By addressing these challenges, it is hoped that students will gain more confidence in their English skills and improve their overall language proficiency.

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