

PICTURING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY: STORIES OF ENGLISH ENVIRONMENT AND DAILY HABITS

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Abstract

This research investigates the influence of environment and daily habits on students' English proficiency using a narrative inquiry approach, involving semi-structured interviews with two high-achieving participants experienced in English-speaking environments. Findings emphasize the critical role of a supportive learning environment, exemplified by Kampung Inggris in Pare, which enhances fluency and cultural understanding through daily English use and cultural immersion. Consistent daily habits such as reading, listening to music, and watching movies in English are shown to reinforce vocabulary and comprehension, fostering continuous improvement and reflective practices for assessing progress. Additionally, strategic learning techniques like spaced repetition and the Feynman technique enhance retention and understanding by promoting active engagement and critical thinking. The study highlights the need for educational innovation to create motivating learning environments that support language immersion and encourage positive habits. In conclusion, a comprehensive approach combining environmental exposure, daily practices, and effective learning strategies not only improves language skills but also instills a lifelong learning mindset, equipping learners with the tools and confidence to navigate diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes.

Keywords: *daily habits, english proficiency, environment, daily habits, learning strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

The effect of environment and daily habits on English language proficiency has been extensively studied, spanning various educational levels with qualitative and quantitative approaches. Nguyen (2021) emphasizes the importance of the English language-learning environment in EFL contexts, while Sun (2019) underscores the necessity for teachers to create conducive language environments to enhance teaching efficiency. Daily habits, such as listening to English songs, significantly impact English skills (Isnaini and Aminatun, 2021).

External factors, such as the environment, play a crucial role in language learning by influencing engagement, motivation, and educational outcomes. Aljaser (2019) highlights the benefits of e-learning environments, which enhance student motivation and attention through multimedia. Daily habits also significantly affect English proficiency, with a strong correlation between learning habits, self-efficacy, and learning outcomes (Sukmawati and Mardhatillah Sabillah, 2021).

A supportive environment for English proficiency includes consistent language exposure, regular practice opportunities, access to educational resources, community involvement, cultural immersion, personal motivation, and ongoing feedback. Incorporating daily habits such as dedicated practice time, conversations, writing, language learning apps, and thinking in English can substantially improve proficiency over time.

This research is a development of the result of previous research. To avoid repetition of research result with the same problems, the researcher included previous research. Irawan, Umamah, and Ismiatun (2020) in a journal entitled "The Correlation Between Classroom

Environment and Students' English Achievement,” found a significant correlation between the physical classroom environment and English achievement, but not with the psychosocial classroom environment. The study suggests future research should involve more participants and updated measurement tools to explore the impact of the psychosocial classroom environment further. Additionally, it recommends creating a good classroom environment to support teaching and learning, and highlights the need to explore the interaction between physical and psychosocial environments.

Syaf (2020) in journal entitled “The Effect of Internet Use Habit Toward English Achievement: Survey Study in SMP Al Azhar 8 Bekasi,” the impact of internet use habits on English achievement among eighth-grade students was examined. Using a survey method, the study found a significant positive effect of internet use habits on English achievement, contributing 21.04%. The study suggests integrating internet use into teaching to enhance English skills and emphasizes the potential of the internet for educational purposes.

Pratiwi (2023) in journal entitled "Indonesian Students' Perception of Progress in an English Immersion Program," explored how Indonesian students perceived their development in an English immersion program in Kampung Inggris Pare. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research involved 14 participants and focused on cognitive aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and speaking fluency. Findings indicated the greatest improvement in vocabulary proficiency, followed by speaking fluency and pronunciation. The study also noted that the duration of study was not the sole determinant of language learning success and highlighted the variation in grading systems among institutions.

Based on these studies, the current research adopts a qualitative approach using narrative inquiry to explore participants' stories. This method aims to define the treatment and strategies employed by participants as well as their past experiences.

This study focuses on the effects of environment and daily habits through a qualitative approach, aiming to provide a unique perspective by recognizing the individuality of each participant. The narrative design is used to uncover the strategies and past experiences of participants, addressing gaps in previous research that mainly presented findings without delving into the participants' stories.

METHODS

The research design for this study is qualitative, specifically using a narrative inquiry approach. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) describe narrative inquiry as the study of experiences as stories, emphasizing the way humans experience the world. This methodology involves reflecting on past experiences and retelling them in a narrative format, as outlined by Creswell (2012). The study aims to explore how the environment and daily habits influence English skills by examining participants' stories. Data is collected through semi-structured interviews, which are recorded, interpreted, and analyzed.

The research instrument comprises interview questions, developed through a systematic five-phase approach following Kallio et al. (2016). This process includes identifying prerequisites, integrating previous knowledge, formulating a preliminary guide, pilot testing, and finalizing the interview guide. Validation involved expert review and iterative revisions to ensure the questions align with the research objectives and concepts.

Participants are selected based on specific criteria, focusing on advanced learners with a GPA above 3.7 and experience in English environments like "Kampung Inggris" Pare. Two key participants are Nana and Arya, both seventh-semester students majoring in English education with high GPAs and extensive experience in English language learning and teaching. "Kampung Inggris" Pare, a renowned English immersion hub in Kediri, Indonesia, provides a unique setting for this study.

The primary data source is the participants' experiences, explored through narrative inquiry to understand how their environments and daily habits shaped their English proficiency. Data is collected exclusively through semi-structured interviews conducted in Indonesian. This approach allows for in-depth exploration of participants' narratives, providing specific and detailed information. Data analysis follows Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis procedures: familiarizing with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a report. This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough analysis of participants' narratives. To ensure trustworthiness and reduce researcher bias, the study employs member checking and follows a systematic data analysis process, including data collection, reduction, display, conclusion drawing, and verification. Collaboration with participants further enhances the reliability of the data analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research examines the influence of environmental conditions and daily habits on students' English language proficiency, focusing on the experiences of individuals who studied in Kampung Inggris, Pare. Both participants noted that the immersive environment in Pare, characterized by the pervasive use of English and supportive peers, significantly enhanced their language skills. Facilities like the "Pasar Senja," where transactions are conducted in English, provided practical application opportunities, further aiding their proficiency.

The findings are supported by studies such as those by Zhang (2023) and Eshmirzayeva (2023), which highlight the importance of a conducive learning environment in improving learning outcomes. These environments enhance concentration and efficiency and offer ample opportunities for language exposure through daily interactions, media, and social activities. Such exposure contributes to vocabulary expansion, comprehension skills, and fluency.

Key components of a positive learning environment include a supportive atmosphere where individuals are encouraged rather than ridiculed for mistakes and a community that aids one another. Practical application opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom, help learners practice English confidently and effectively.

The research further explores the role of the environment as an engaging and cultural development component. Immersive environments rich in English-language exposure and cultural contextualization make learning more relevant and enjoyable. Access to diverse content, supportive communities, and technology facilitates flexible, collaborative, and personalized learning experiences. Cultural exchange programs and engagement with cultural artifacts like films and music foster intercultural competence and a deeper understanding of the language's nuances.

In terms of daily habits, participants Arya and Nana adopted different routines to improve their English skills. Arya engaged in morning vocabulary memorization activities and followed a full-day learning system in Pare, while Nana focused on daily reading, listening to music, and watching films to enhance her vocabulary and pronunciation. Consistent study habits, such as these, are essential for reflecting on progress, identifying areas for improvement, and fostering a lifelong learning mindset.

The research also highlights the effectiveness of strategic learning techniques, such as the use of technology, spaced repetition, and the Feynman technique. Technology provides easy access to language learning resources, such as apps and educational videos, enhancing proficiency. Spaced repetition involves reviewing information at increasing intervals to reinforce memory and understanding, aiding in long-term retention. The Feynman technique emphasizes breaking down complex concepts into simpler terms, encouraging deep engagement and active learning.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The research conducted through interviews with two English education students at the University of Islam Malang highlights the significant impact of the environment and daily habits on English language proficiency. A supportive environment, such as "Kampung Inggris," plays a crucial role in improving language skills. Additionally, consistent daily habits, like practicing English through social media or engaging in translation activities, significantly contribute to language development. Arya's approach of increasing speaking and writing activities boosted his confidence, while Nana's habits of reading daily and engaging with English media improved her vocabulary and pronunciation. Suggestions that can be given is the educators should continuously innovate teaching methods to ensure a high-quality learning experience. Adopting student-centered approaches, incorporating technology, and fostering a collaborative atmosphere can enhance student engagement and academic success. For students, should cultivate a supportive learning environment and adopt positive study habits. Regular practice in reading, writing, and speaking English, drawing inspiration from successful language learners, and participating in language clubs or workshops can significantly improve language skills. For future research, should include participants with diverse abilities and cultural backgrounds to provide a comprehensive understanding of language learning factors. Expanding research methodologies, such as longitudinal studies or mixed-method approaches, can enhance the depth and reliability of findings, contributing to the advancement of educational practices and policies.

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Malang, 5 August 2024
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