

Exploring Students' Perception on English Learning Challenges: A Case Study at LPBA Nurul Jadid

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ABSTRACT

An overview of this research study conducted to explore the challenges faced by LPBA Nurul Jadid students in learning English. This study aims to investigate the perception and challenges faced by LPBA students in learning English, as well as the methods and strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. A qualitative research approach using a case study technique is employed to analyze and capture the complexity of the phenomenon within individual LPBA students. LPBA students perceive learning English as crucial for personal and professional success in today's modern world. The challenges faced by these students are diverse and often deeply personal, including difficulties in speaking like a foreigner, practicing English grammar in real-life situations, and pronunciation. Environmental factors, such as a lack of immersion in an English-speaking environment, can also hinder language learning. To overcome these challenges, LPBA students emphasize the importance of consistent practice through various methods, such as listening to English through songs and movies, engaging in face-to-face interactions, participating in English competitions and activities, and developing a consistent habit of practicing English. This study sheds light on the perception, challenges, and strategies employed by LPBA students in learning English. It highlights the importance of addressing individual differences and environmental factors in language learning, and provides insights into effective methods for overcoming challenges and fostering success in English language acquisition.

Keywords: *Student Perception; Learning English Challenges; LPBA Nurul Jadid*

INTRODUCTION

In education, it is crucial to understand how teachers and students think. (Jamil & Muhammad, 2019) While perceptions and opinions based on appearance can play a role, deeply held beliefs drive action and influence outcomes. (Buttler, 2020) Distinguishes between core beliefs (deeply held beliefs that shape teaching methods) and peripheral beliefs (ideas that are less influential and sometimes lead to inconsistencies in practice). Likewise, English learners' cognitive beliefs about learning strategies directly influence their performance. Strong beliefs from teachers or learners are associated with higher motivation.

For students in Islamic boarding schools, mastering English is more than just learning another language. (Holandyah et al., 2022) It becomes the key to self-improvement, cultural heritage preservation, and world engagement. Through English, they can connect with the larger Muslim community, access rich educational resources, and actively participate in global discussions about Islam. Integrating English into the pesantren system allows Santri to face the difficulties and opportunities of the modern world while remaining firmly rooted in its Islamic values and traditions. (Zhang & Liu, 2019).

Therefore, dealing with the importance of English existence as a language necessary in learning, Nurul Jadid Boarding School, one of the biggest Pesantren in East Java, provides a language institution as receptacle for students to master foreign language. The provided language institution is delivered into two ways, they are formal and non-formal institutions. The formal institution includes BPK (Badan Pembinaan Khusus of MT's Nurul Jadid), LIPS (Intensive Program of SMP. Nurul Jadid), LA (Language Acceleration of SMA Nurul Jadid). The non-formal institution includes LPBA Nurul Jadid (Lembaga Pengembangan Bahasa Asing Nurul Jadid). From those institutions, LPBA Nurul

Jadid is a central institution that focuses on learning foreign languages exactly English and Arabic language.

LPBA Nurul Jadid is one of the non-formal educational institutions under Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. The establishment of LPBA Nurul Jadid started from the desire of KH. Zaini Mun'im to provide special institution for Santri of Nurul Jadid Boarding School exactly in the field of Arabic and English language skills. This aimed to be an effort to prepare and create the young generation or Santri to be able to compete in the international while having high quality in the Arabic and English fields. However, the Santri is also facilitated to master and understand the classic book as a characteristic of Nurul Jadid students.

Historically, LPBA Nurul Jadid was established by a group of foreign language lovers, especially in Arabic and English. At the time, there were small groups in several unorganized places and it was officially established on July 7, 1989 through the Decree of the Head Nurul Jadid Boarding School with number: NDJ / II / B / X-1989. The establishment of LPBA Nurul Jadid is an attempt to accommodate and facilitate the interests and talents of Nurul Jadid students in Arabic and English skills.

Effective English language learning strategies encompass a combination of methodologies that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. By incorporating these strategies into language education, educators can nurture an environment where students not only acquire language skills but also develop a lifelong love for learning and communicating in English. As a result of fairly high commitment to improve the directed learning process, the students of LPBA Nurul Jadid intently get some achievements. The students attentively participate in various competitions such as, speech, storytelling, Olympiad and debate, not only in term of region and province but also in term of national or even international competition. Certainly, in achieving those accomplishments, there are some factors rely behind the successful of the students, one of them is challenges in learning English language.

There several factors that effect, one of the most important things in teaching learning process is the student dealing the various challenges. When students have it in learning process, they more understand with the materials given, especially English. Besides, by having various challenges, students have more power to reach what they expect from what they learn. Students' learning challenges experiences changes in behavior to carry out learning activities. Therefore, challenges happen on the students have a big role in a student's success in learning. Students who are highly having challenges in learning likely obtain high learning outcomes as well. Thus, challenges are attentively giving impact to the students learning process.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Students's Perception

Before understanding learners' perspectives, it is essential to understand what it is and how it is generated. Perception is the result of a process that begins with sensing, which is receiving a signal through the individual's sensory organs. (Leikert, 2021) Additionally, perception as the awareness of one's surroundings via bodily sensation; this indicates the individual's capacity to understand. (Armstrong, 2023) Perception is taking and interpreting a thing through the senses. (Fish, 2021) In short, perception is the impression formed by the five senses; these senses are processed, understood, and evaluated to produce meaning.

The teacher's understanding of how students perceive things is crucial because it allows them to assess the effectiveness of their teaching methods based on the results of their learning processes. Teachers must consider the students' perceptions to assess the effectiveness of their teaching and learning. (Carpenter et al., 2020)

Challenges in Learning English

Much research has been done in the investigation of challenges and solutions associated with the learning of a language. Almost all individuals have an internal desire to understand or create their meaning in response to their surroundings. (Spilka et al., 2019) A study by Muhammad Hamzah

Masood that examined the obstacles to the learning of English as a second language (L2) in Pakistan has revealed that the lack of practice and the interference of the first language (L1) have led to challenges. (Masood et al., 2020). Regarding to Getie state that students' attitudes, abilities, and language learning methods affect their success. (Getie, 2020) Students are responsible for their learning because the attitude toward language learning is not directly observed during lessons but is instead deduced from the responses that are provided during the learning process. This demonstrates the students' autonomy in their learning, as they construct meaning on their own and participate actively in the tasks. This will further enhance the students' engagement with the second language. (Gu & Sun, 2021) Autonomous learning is part of the 21st-century approach to learning that allows students to utilize the target language with as much freedom as possible during classroom and extra-curricular activities with various exciting tasks. As a result, it promotes students' faith in communication in the second language (L2) without limit and with greater ease. As documented by Sabine Hoidn and Kurt Reusser, by changing the class's activities, students take charge of their learning, increasing the interest and enjoyment of the lessons. When the lesson is student-centered, students can practice, participate more actively, and demonstrate excellent abilities. (Hoidn & Reusser, 2020)

Method and Strategies in Learning English

As the global demand for English language ability grows, experts have focused on developing effective methods and strategies for learning English. The literature in this field focuses on a multidimensional approach to English language education and acquisition. One of the most significant strategies covered in this study is the communicative approach, which emphasizes the significance of involving students in authentic and contextual communication. This method emphasizes communicative ability in pupils by giving opportunities for interactive, real-world language use rather than grammatical structures or memorization. (Savignon, 2018) Research has demonstrated that a communicative strategy can help English language learners increase their fluency, self-confidence, and overall language ability. (Coskun et al., 2011). The literature also emphasizes the value of a learner-centered approach, which focuses on students' unique needs, preferences, and learning styles. Educators may encourage a more interesting and effective language learning experience by modifying their teaching methods and giving opportunities for autonomous learning. Learner-centered practices, such as using tailored learning plans and taking into account students' interests and goals, have been found in research to improve language acquisition and retention. (Ushioda, 2011)

METHODS

This research used qualitative research, with a case study technique. The researcher uses a case study method to analyze and capture the complexity of the phenomenon within an individual. A case study focuses on what is special about individual units, such as an individual student, a specific class, or a specific school. (Martinez, 2022) Qualitative research is more beneficial for finding and defining evidence that can be counted, such as behavior, thoughts, and attitudes. (Ruslin et al., 2022) Qualitative research is a sort of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data that aims to derive meaning from data that help us understand social life through the study of a particular population or location. This study, therefore, the researcher aims to find out how LPBA students' perception face on challenges relying on learning English, the researcher aims to find out the challenges of LPBA students regarding to the learning of English, the researcher aims to find out methods and strategies that LPBA students faced relying on the challenges that are included into a qualitative study.

According with the book of (Creswell, 2007), a qualitative approach is characterized by the use of post-positivist claims to formulate knowledge (the idea that cause and effect is the basis for knowledge, the reduction of variables to specific hypotheses and questions, the use of experiments and surveys, and the collection of data with pre-designed instruments that produce statistical results.)

Subject of the research is eight students of LPBA Nurul Jadid, who are chosen regarding to the researcher's criteria. The selected student is initials AFEA, SH, GFR, NHA, RAP, MD, NAE, MHW. The interview was conducted on June 05th, 2024 at LPBA Nurul Jadid.

Data Source

The data for this study was gathered from eight LPBA Nurul Jadid students who learn English from very basic in this academic year. On the other hand, the data source is derived from supporting or supplementary data to the primary data. The data were acquired from genuine, authentic, and official websites of respected journals with an emphasis on research at LPBA Nurul Jadid. As a result, the data from this study is very valid and reliable.

Data Collection

There are two types of techniques for data collection. In this study, the researcher obtained data through observation and interviews. (Alam, 2021)

Data Analysis

After gathering the data, the researcher begins the data analysis. The data studied are solely selected and valid data that are relevant to the study's problem. It is to determine the type of students' challenges for studying English. In this step, the researcher investigates the pupils' challenges for learning English. The researcher then seeks to determine the relationship between the form of challenge and the data acquired. The next stage is to employ the theory to categorize students' challenges for learning English.

FINDINGS

What is the biggest challenge you face in learning English?

1. **AFEA:** "We are sure that we cannot stay away from our mother tongue. So, my biggest challenge in learning English is the habit of always speaking English as my mother tongue, because my mother tongue makes it difficult for me to speak like a foreigner. But now I still keep the courage and always try to speak in the way of a foreigner."
2. **SH:** "In the long my journey in learning English, the biggest challenge I have is when I can not practice English grammar into reality due to, I have learned and changed my mother tongue into English. Moreover, my laziness in the daily activity also affects me not to be spirit in learning English. But it is not easy as what as we think. Hence, I put a principle of being FLDI member in myself that is study hard, pray hard, and work hard, all them are the key of being successful."
3. **GFR:** "The biggest challenge of me in learning English is my laziness. Moreover, when I got many jobs but I delay to finish even consider it as formality, and what I confuse from myself is when I have question to myself how to fight my laziness to face my learning English. And in my perspective, it is caused by the low eagerness of me to know English. Because, I do not totally find my view on how important English in my life or let me say English des not anyway has a significant role."
4. **NHA:** "Pronunciation is the hardest challenges for me. To accustom my speaking to be such a foreigner or native speaker is hard caused by mother tongue in my environment when I am learning English in Foreign Language Development Institute."
5. **RAP:** "I am pretty sure, in being English learner is really confusing me. Because first thing that I should prepare in speaking English is pronunciation. So, I am really hard in pronounce my daily vocab. Because the first language that I learn was not English. So, it is really complicating me to speak even pronounce as great as foreigner."
6. **MD:** "Joining some competitions in National. From this step I can correct that there so many people who have ability more than me and it does not matter for me personally it can be the challenge to add my knowledge further than before and through this I considered it as my motivation to learn more and more."
7. **NAE:** "Of course, if people are being asked this question, probably they will surely answer that pronunciation is becoming the biggest challenges. Yes they are totally right, and it also

happens on my environment which is not English environment, they speak with their mother tongue language.”

8. **MHW:** “The biggest challenges of learning English is when I do not want to stay in a new environment and it continuously jeopardizes my eagerness to learn English. Due to the fact, it is caused by my laziness. This characteristic really breaks everyone eagerness to know English. Whereas, English is an international language that can be our parameter to have better life in today’s civilization.”

The biggest challenges faced by individuals in learning English are diverse and often deeply personal. For some, the habit of speaking their native language can be a significant obstacle, making it difficult to speak like a foreigner. Others struggle with practicing English grammar in real-life situations due to the influence of their native language or laziness. Pronunciation is also a significant challenge, particularly when the learner's native language has a different sound system. Additionally, environmental factors such as not being immersed in an English-speaking environment can limit opportunities to engage with the language. Overall, the biggest challenges in learning English are often related to the learner's own habits, environment, and personal characteristics, requiring a conscious effort to change habits, stay motivated, and engage with the language in meaningful ways.

What strategies or methods do you use to overcome challenges in learning English?

1. **AFEA:** “To overcome all challenges, we as English learners must always speak our native language. The goal is to reduce or completely forget our native language as a foreigner speaking our native language is the solution to overcome this problem.”
2. **SH:** “I think, FLDI’s system becomes my great way to overcome my challenge that I have. Various precepts with thousand benefits within in FLDI’s system is my great method to improve. Because by joining FLDI’s system such as; reading, and speaking English everyday. I feel that I get better development in learning English. With my mind I think that, a laziness comes from myself with the one who overcomes is only myself too. It is why that I always to force myself accustoming some beneficial activities every time while deepen my English language.”
3. **GFR:** “To overcome the problem, we are young generation as agent of change have personal power to impact change, rewrite the responsible that has happened for long time and I do believe that by having strategy to overcome challenge in learning English can motivate myself in learning. I really admit system that is undergone by me in FLDI becomes an effective method. Such as accustoming in reading English, small talk with my friend even joining English competition.”
4. **NHA:** “Accustoming myself to always listen English through movie, song, speech video, etc. As being English learner with the second language is hardly implemented in the real of my life, due to the challenges that I face in learning English. I often accustom with the environment of English learner too. By then, I face it with having fun and always joking such how the foreigner look like.”
5. **RAP:** “Accustoming myself to always listen English through song and movie. Those manners even methods are really helping me to overcome many challenges exist during I learn this international language. Because it really simplifies me to always try in speaking English.”
6. **MD:** “Listening song, International speech, and speak natively. Those methods are really effective for me as English learner because from those methods I can effectively try to my friend even environment that I am staying right now from this I also know about pubic figure like Elon musk who always try to speak behalf of people in sharing his story by using speak natively as well.”
7. **NAE:** “According to myself, I will use face to face method, because it becomes very effective method to learn English language deeply. We ask everything about English to our teacher in the direct method. We can also practice to speak English natively in the teaching learning process.”

8. **MHW:** “Many people aspect that English is full of challenges, but English song interests and influences me to learn English. By then, every of young generation should consider English as a fun language. I need to consider English as my favorite language. Because, through accustoming myself to always speak English everyday can be my motivation in solving my laziness.”

To overcome the challenges of learning English, individuals emphasize the importance of consistently practicing the language through various methods. Many learners find that accustoming themselves to listening to English through songs, movies, and speeches helps simplify the process and makes it more enjoyable. Additionally, speaking English natively and engaging in face-to-face interactions with teachers or friends can be highly effective in improving language skills. Some learners also believe that joining English competitions or participating in activities like reading and small talk can be beneficial. Overall, the key to overcoming challenges lies in developing a consistent habit of practicing English and finding enjoyable ways to do so, which can help overcome laziness and motivate continued learning.

DISCUSSION

Regarding to data obtained that LPBA Nurul Jadid Students have various biggest challenges faced by individuals in learning English are diverse and often deeply personal. For some, the habit of speaking their native language can be a significant obstacle, making it difficult to speak like a foreigner. As being non-native speaker, they need to accustom with their mother tongue as always. By then, the obstacles and the challenges that they face will be easily overcome. Some students also need struggle with practicing English grammar in real-life situations due to the influence of their native language or laziness. Pronunciation is also a significant challenge, particularly when the learner's native language has a different sound system. Additionally, environmental factors such as not being immersed in an English-speaking environment can limit opportunities to engage with the language. Overall, the biggest challenges in learning English are often related to the learner's own habits, environment, and personal characteristics, requiring a conscious effort to change habits, stay motivated, and engage with the language in meaningful ways.

English learners' habits, such as reading and speaking habits, can significantly impact their learning outcomes. For instance, a study on reading habits among students found that reading habits determine academic achievements to a great extent. (Baba & Affendi, 2020) It highlights that the importance of developing good reading habits, which can lead to better understanding and retention of material. Similarly, speaking habits are crucial for effective communication in English. (Miranda & Wahyudin, 2023) Learners who are motivated to learn and practice speaking skills tend to exhibit positive behavior and enthusiasm in their learning process.

A study on the impact of learning English on psychological and sociological behavior found that learners who study English in a non-English speaking setting must experience real communicative situations to improve their speaking skills. (Kashinathan & Abdul Aziz, 2021) It emphasizes the importance of immersive learning environments that simulate real-life communication scenarios. Additionally, the availability of resources and facilities can also impact learners' motivation and engagement in English classes. (Luan et al., 2020).

Personal characteristics, such as motivation and attitude, are also crucial for English learners. A study on demotivating factors among gifted students in speaking classes identified factors such as teacher, material and content, facilities, attitude, and teaching learning context as hindrances to learners' motivation. (Albalawi & Al-Hoorie, 2021) It underscores the importance of creating a supportive learning environment that fosters learners' motivation and engagement. Furthermore, learners' personalities and emotional tendencies can also impact their learning outcomes. Regarding to the data obtained that overcoming the challenges of learning English, individuals emphasize the importance of consistently practicing the language through various methods. Many learners find that accustoming themselves to listening to English through songs, movies, and speeches helps simplify

the process and makes it more enjoyable. Listening to English songs can be an effective way to improve listening skills. (Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021) Songs often use simple and repetitive language, making them easier to understand. Additionally, the rhythm and melody of music can help learners remember new vocabulary and phrases. For example, a study on the use of songs in language learning found that learners who listened to songs in the target language showed significant improvements in their listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition compared to those who did not listen to songs. (Isnaini & Aminatun, 2021).

Watching English movies can also be a valuable tool for improving listening skills. (Irvan Bagus Aji & Sugeng Susilo, 2020) Movies often use a variety of language structures and vocabulary, which can help learners develop their comprehension skills. Furthermore, movies can provide learners with a more engaging and entertaining way to practice listening, which can increase their motivation to learn. A study on the use of movies in language learning found that learners who watched movies in the target language showed significant improvements in their listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition compared to those who did not watch movies. (Sari & Aminatun, 2021)

Listening to English speeches can also be beneficial for learners. (Tilwani et al., 2022) Speeches often use formal and structured language, which can help learners develop their comprehension skills. Additionally, speeches can provide learners with a more formal and professional context in which to practice listening, which can be useful for learners who need to improve their listening skills for professional purposes. Additionally, speaking English natively and engaging in face-to-face interactions with teachers or friends can be highly effective in improving language skills. (Akhter et al., 2020) A study on the impact of learning English on psychological and sociological behavior found that learners who interact with native speakers show significant improvements in their speaking skills and overall proficiency, due to the native speakers use the language in a way that is natural and authentic, which can help learners develop their skills more effectively.

Some of LPBA Nurul Jadid learners also believe that joining English competitions or participating in activities like reading and small talk can be beneficial. These activities provide learners with opportunities to engage in authentic communication, practice their language skills in a natural and interactive environment, and receive feedback from judges or peers. (Chien et al., 2020) By incorporating these activities into their learning routine, learners can improve their overall proficiency in English and become more confident in their ability to communicate effectively in the language.

CONCLUSION

The key finding is that the challenges faced by individuals in learning English are diverse and often deeply personal. Participants identified various obstacles such as the habit of speaking their native language, difficulties in practicing English grammar due to the influence of their mother tongue, pronunciation differences between English and their native language, and limited opportunities for immersion in an English-speaking environment. These challenges require a conscious effort to change habits, stay motivated, and engage with the language in meaningful ways. Participants in this study identified consistent practice as a crucial strategy in overcoming the challenges of learning English. They stressed the importance of immersing oneself in English through various methods such as listening to English songs, watching movies, and listening to speeches. This exposure to natural and authentic English can simplify the learning process and make it more enjoyable. Additionally, engaging in face-to-face interactions with teachers or friends who are fluent in English was highly effective in improving language skills. Many participants also found joining English competitions or participating in activities like reading and small talk to be beneficial in cultivating a consistent practice habit.

Ultimately, the key to overcoming the challenges of learning English lies in developing a daily routine of practicing the language and finding enjoyable ways to do so. Participants emphasized the need to overcome laziness and stay motivated by making the learning process enjoyable. By integrating English learning into their daily lives and making it a part of their habits, learners can ensure a consistent improvement in their language skills. The individuals interviewed for this study strongly emphasized the importance of learning English in today's modern world. They believe that English is

crucial for personal and professional success, as it is widely used in workplaces, communication, and technological advancements. The challenges faced by learners in acquiring English skills are diverse and often deeply personal, but they can be overcome through consistent practice and finding enjoyable ways to engage with the language. By recognizing the significance of English, learners can make a conscious effort to develop their language skills and enhance their opportunities for success in today's globalized society.

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