



ANALISIS HALANGAN YANG Dihadapi SISWA KELAS IV SEKOLAH DASAR DALAM MEMAHAMI PETUNJUK DALAM BAHASA INGGRIS DAN UPAYA UNTUK MENGATASINYA DI SDN 060878 KRAKATAU MEDAN TIMUR

ANALYSIS OF OBSTACLES FACED BY FOURTH GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN UNDERSTANDING INSTRUCTIONS IN ENGLISH AND EFFORTS TO OVERCOME THEM AT SDN 060878 KRAKATAU MEDAN TIMUR

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Abstract

This study investigates the difficulties faced by fourth-grade students at SDN 060878 Krakatau Medan Timur in understanding English classroom instructions. The research identifies four main obstacles: limited vocabulary mastery, low confidence and motivation, less varied teaching strategies, and minimal English exposure outside school. The study also highlights effective teacher efforts such as repeating instructions, providing bilingual explanations, using demonstrations, and implementing interactive activities. These findings are expected to guide teachers in creating more adaptive and supportive instructional practices in elementary English learning.

Keywords : *English instruction, learning obstacles, elementary students, vocabulary, teaching strategies.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji kesulitan yang dihadapi oleh siswa kelas empat di SDN 060878 Krakatau Medan Timur dalam memahami instruksi pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di kelas. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi empat hambatan utama: penguasaan kosakata yang terbatas, rendahnya kepercayaan diri dan motivasi, strategi pengajaran yang kurang bervariasi, serta paparan bahasa Inggris yang minim di luar sekolah. Penelitian ini juga menyoroti upaya efektif guru, seperti mengulang instruksi, memberikan penjelasan bilingual, menggunakan demonstrasi, dan menerapkan aktivitas interaktif. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat membimbing guru dalam menciptakan praktik pengajaran yang lebih adaptif dan mendukung dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di tingkat dasar.

Kata Kunci : Instruksi bahasa Inggris, hambatan belajar, siswa sekolah dasar, kosakata, strategi pengajaran.



1. INTRODUCTION

English is one of the international languages that has been used all over the world. It is a language used to understand information in various activities such as political activities, scientific conferences, research activities, especially in the fields of education and medicine (khasawenah, 2021). Humans need to master English in order to easily keep up with the development of the times and technology. This is also supported by Hosan et al. (2022) that English in this digital era has become an important language to maximize opportunities, especially in international organizations.

The success of learning activities is measured from three aspects, namely learning resources, learning strategies, and learners who are learning (Kusuma, 2019). English is a subject that requires complex critical thinking skills in the learning process. To increase learning motivation in elementary school students, learning must be carried out in an interesting manner. As stated by Syed & Wahas (2020), one of the challenges teachers often face in teaching English to children is creating an enjoyable learning environment. Forming an effective and valuable learning environment with enjoyable materials and methods can improve students' motivation and learning achievement (Matyakhan et al., 2024). This is also supported by Ali et al. (2020), who state that it is important for teachers to create more innovative and new learning strategies to minimize students' difficulties in understanding and mastering the learning material provided.

Hosan et al. (2022) also stated that improving students' English skills, including speaking and writing, can be easily done by adapting a suitable learning method. The challenge in teaching English does not always come from the low quality of models, methods, or teaching strategies, but also comes from the teacher's ability to implement these learning methods. The main competency that must be enhanced to achieve successful English learning is the teacher's own English proficiency and skills (Kusuma, 2019). This is also supported by Ali et al. (2020), who stated that the limited knowledge and ability of teachers regarding certain topics such as grammar and tenses is one of the causes of students' low English learning achievement.

In the independent curriculum, it is emphasized that in carrying out English learning, teachers hold the control to implement learning freely according to the standards set by the government. However, the determination of learning materials must still be based on the framework set by the government. There is a difference in the pattern of English learning between the 2013 curriculum and the independent curriculum. In the 2013 curriculum, learning activities emphasize a thematic-integrative strategy, prioritize literacy skills, critical thinking, and communication. In the independent curriculum, teachers emphasize project-based learning focused on 21st-century skills. Freedom in this context means that teachers are required to be more creative in developing materials and English learning strategies. However, in reality, this freedom often makes teachers the center of the learning activities. This was conveyed by Derakhshan (2015) that English learning activities are dominated by teachers, and students only need to listen and absorb information from the teacher. This teacher-centered learning habit must be minimized to prevent ineffectiveness and failure in learning activities.

English is important in various aspects of life, one of which is in education. Learning English is effectively taught from elementary school because, in the age range of 6-12 years, children's thinking abilities can provide understanding and information gathering in learning English. Generally, to make learning English easier for children, English learning is usually designed according to the students' abilities so that the learning can be more meaningful and not burden the



students (Meisani and Musthafa, 2019;2010).

One of the important aspects that teachers must master is giving instructions or directions that students can understand. Giving instructions is a common form of communication used by teachers to provide guidance or directions to students on what to do, how to do it, and when the task begins. Students' ability to understand these instructions is key for the learning process to run smoothly, as misinterpreting instructions can cause confusion, errors in carrying out activities, or a decrease in learning effectiveness.

According to Dang & Huong (2024) in the journal "Instruction-Giving in EFL Classrooms," giving instruction is defined as the teacher's action of delivering directions systematically so that students understand the tasks they will undertake. They explained that the process of giving instructions consists of several stages, starting from preparation (preparing the instructional words), delivering the instructions, and checking understanding after the instructions are given.

Furthermore, in the journal "Giving Instruction in the English Language Classroom" by Radeva (2021), instruction is viewed as a classroom management strategy, where verbal or written instructions are structured with imperative words such as first, next, then, finally, to make it easier for students to understand the steps of an activity.

In the context of 4th grade elementary school students, understanding giving instructions may be more difficult due to limited vocabulary, limited experience listening to instructions in English, and still limited attention span. These obstacles can hinder students from responding to instructions correctly and efficiently. Therefore, analyzing these obstacles is very important, as well as formulating appropriate solutions (for example, instruction repetition methods, use of demonstrations, or comprehension checks) to improve students' understanding of giving instructions and facilitate the learning process.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a. Research Design

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because the research aims to provide an in-depth description of the obstacles experienced by 4th grade elementary students in understanding giving instructions in English language learning and to identify solutions that can be implemented by teachers. Qualitative research allows researchers to obtain data naturally according to real conditions in the field through observation, interviews, and document studies.

b. Techniques and Data Collection Instruments

1) Interview

We use this research method because it allows researchers to obtain information directly from teachers, who are the ones most familiar with the conditions of classroom learning. Through interviews, researchers can explore teachers' views, experiences, and strategies more deeply compared to just through observation. In addition, interviews provide an opportunity for researchers to ask about things that are not apparent in the learning process, such as the reasons students experience difficulties, non-technical factors that affect understanding of instructions, and teachers' considerations in choosing certain teaching strategies. This method is also flexible because researchers can ask follow-up questions to clarify answers, resulting in richer, more detailed data that aligns with real-world contexts. Thus, interviews become an appropriate technique to obtain a comprehensive picture of students' obstacles in understanding giving



instructions and the solutions implemented by teachers. This study conducted semi-structured interviews with Mrs. Lucy as the English subject teacher. The interview was conducted to obtain information regarding: 1. Difficulties often experienced by students in understanding giving instructions 2. Learning strategies that have been used so far 3. Teachers' efforts in overcoming students' obstacles The interview instrument consisted of an open-ended question list that allowed teachers to provide broader and deeper answers.

2) Literature Study

Researchers also collected information from various national and international journals relevant to the topic of giving instructions, English language learning in elementary schools, as well as factors affecting instruction comprehension. This literature study is used as a theoretical basis and as a comparison with field findings.

3) Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using the qualitative analysis technique of the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages:

- ✓ Data reduction, which involves selecting, simplifying, and focusing on data obtained from interviews, observations, and literature.
- ✓ Data presentation, which involves organizing findings in the form of descriptive narratives to make them easy to understand.
- ✓ Conclusion drawing, which involves formulating findings regarding students' difficulties in understanding giving instructions and solutions that emerge based on field data and theories from journals.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students' difficulties in understanding instructions from teachers are greatly influenced by several main factors, especially limited vocabulary mastery and ineffective classroom management. When students do not master the vocabulary used in instructions, they will experience obstacles in grasping the meaning and intent of the teacher, so the instructions are not delivered properly. In addition, poor classroom management or an uncondusive classroom environment causes disruptions in the delivery of instructions, making it difficult for students to focus and understand the teacher's directions. Internal factors such as perception abilities, memory, cognitive processes, and student attention also influence the understanding of instructions. External factors, such as the learning environment and teacher's teaching methods, also play a significant role. This aligns with findings that some students do not pay attention to the teacher's explanations due to less engaging teaching methods and suboptimal class management, thus affecting their understanding (Magdalena, 2020).

Repeated practice of simple instructions can help improve students' understanding, but its effectiveness depends on the individual characteristics of the students. Some students quickly grasp instructions, while others need more repetition and a more personal approach such as direct guidance and additional time. Delivering instructions repeatedly, especially for students who do not understand, can increase their level of comprehension success without having to remove them from the classroom (Ulfa Yuliasari & Fera Dwidarti, 2024).

The instructions that are most difficult for students to understand are usually those that use difficult vocabulary and unclear instructions. To overcome these barriers, teachers often use a bilingual approach by explaining instructions in Indonesian and English alternately to ensure students' understanding (Ulfa Yuliasari & Fera Dwidarti, 2024).



In a learning environment, the phenomenon that occurs is that students are more often competing to answer quizzes rather than helping each other. This indicates that a culture of peer collaboration in learning has not been established, which could potentially become a barrier to improving the effectiveness of collective understanding of instructions (Ulfa Yuliasari & Fera Dwidarti, 2024).

The most effective strategy to improve students' ability to understand and follow English instructions is to focus on strengthening vocabulary mastery as well as creating a fun and interactive learning environment. Incorporating games or activities that involve vocabulary can make students more active and motivated, thus making learning more effective. Creative approaches and engaging learning media are key to enhancing students' understanding and engagement (Ulfa Yuliasari & Fera Dwidarti, 2024).

With the support of this citation, this paragraph covers the main factors causing students' difficulties in understanding teacher instructions, the effectiveness of repetitive practice, types of instructions that are hard to understand, the influence of social environment on learning, and effective strategies for English language learning at the elementary level.

This research reveals several main obstacles experienced by fourth-grade students at SDN 060878 Krakatau Medan Timur in understanding instructions in English. These obstacles include limited vocabulary, suboptimal classroom management, and ineffective ways of delivering instructions by teachers. Some students have difficulty understanding instructions due to an insufficient grasp of vocabulary and instructions that are unclear or too strict, causing confusion and competition among students. This is in line with the findings of Nurdina et al. (2025) that comprehension difficulties can occur due to variations in language proficiency and language interference in bilingual learning in elementary schools.

Repeated practice of simple instructions is considered to have the potential to improve student understanding, but its effectiveness depends on the individual student. Teachers provide free time and direct personal guidance to students who have not yet understood so that they can continue to follow the lesson without leaving the class. This strategy is very important considering the variation in students' ability to receive instructions (Nurdina et al., 2025) and emphasizes the need for responsive and adaptive classroom management.

The instructions that students most often do not understand are instructions containing difficult vocabulary or instructions that lack clear context. Teachers try to overcome this obstacle by using a mix of Indonesian and English and providing direct translations so that students can follow the instructions better. This bilingual approach in delivering instructions is also supported by Sugiharti & Riftina (2018), who highlight the importance of vocabulary mastery and interactive learning methods to elementary students' English comprehension.

In addition, environmental factors also play a role in the dynamics of learning, where peers tend to compete in answering questions rather than helping each other. This indicates a high level of competition among students that can disrupt group learning and collaboration. This phenomenon highlights the need for learning strategies that can promote cooperation while also encouraging student motivation (Lena et al., 2023).

The most effective strategy to improve students' ability to understand English instructions is to emphasize vocabulary mastery and integrate learning with games to enhance focus and active student engagement. Using vocabulary-based games can make the learning process more enjoyable and interactive, motivating students to learn English more.



4. CONCLUSION

English has now become a very important international language used in various fields, including education and technology. Therefore, it is important for us, especially elementary school children, to start learning English in a fun way so that they are motivated to learn. In the learning process, teachers also need to apply creative and easy-to-understand methods so that students do not feel difficulties, especially in understanding the instructions given during lessons. One of the very important things in learning English is how students can understand instructions from the teacher well. Many students encounter difficulties because of limited vocabulary and their experience in listening to English is still limited. Therefore, recognizing these obstacles is very important so that teachers can find the right ways, such as repeating instructions or giving direct examples, so that the learning process becomes smoother and students understand more easily..

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