

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher discusses the background of the study, Research Question, Research purpose, Research Significance, Limitations of Research, Terminology, and statements are

A. Research background

English was one of the most popular languages in the world. It originated from England and was used by many people in different countries. English was not only spoken by people in English speaking countries but also by many others around the world as a second or foreign language. It was considered important because it served as an international language. In modern times, people from different countries used English to communicate, especially in education, business, travel, and technology. Many books, websites, and educational materials were written in English. Therefore, those who could speak and understand English had greater access to information and more opportunities for a better future. In Indonesia and many other countries, English was a compulsory subject in school. Students began learning English in elementary school and continued until high school. The goal was to help students understand and use English for daily life, school activities, and future careers. In English classes, students learned how to listen, speak, read, and write, along with vocabulary and grammar usage. In conclusion, English was not just a tool for communication but also an essential subject in schools.

Learning English helped students prepare for the future and become ready for a globalized world.

However, learning English was often difficult, especially for people who did not speak it as their first language. Even though it played a crucial role in education, business, technology, and tourism, many learners faced challenges related to grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, cultural differences, and personal emotions. One major issue was English grammar. The language had many rules that did not always follow a consistent pattern. For example, irregular verbs, tenses, and articles such as “a,” “an,” and “the” were confusing. These grammatical structures were often very different from those in the learners’ native languages. Additionally, English sentence structure differed from many other languages, causing further confusion. Pronunciation posed another challenge. English had many sounds that were not found in other languages. Some words contained silent letters, while others sounded similar but had different meanings like “their” and “there.” These features made it difficult for learners to pronounce words correctly and understand others. Accents from various English-speaking countries also increased the difficulty of listening comprehension. Expanding vocabulary in English was also hard. The language had many words, often borrowed from other languages. Some words had similar meanings but were used differently. Idioms and phrasal verbs were particularly difficult because their meanings were not always clear from the individual words. Cultural elements were another important aspect of language learning. English included not only vocabulary but also ideas, habits,

and perspectives from English speaking cultures. For instance, jokes, idioms, and social rules could be difficult to understand. Cultural differences also made learners feel shy or unsure when speaking English. Lastly, emotional factors such as stress, fear of making mistakes, and low confidence affect language learning. Many students hesitated to speak because they feared being wrong, leading to fewer speaking opportunities and slower improvement. In conclusion, learning English was not easy. It required time, consistent practice, and support. Learners faced many difficulties, but with confidence, effective teaching, and frequent practice, they could improve step by step.

To gain initial insights, the researcher conducted a short interview with an English teacher at SMA Sinar Kasih Sintang. This pre-observation report was based on an interview with Mrs. Eka, conducted on Thursday, June 9, 2025, at 8:45 a.m. in the teachers' room. The purpose was to obtain early information about the students' difficulties in learning English and their perspectives on the learning process. Based on the pre observation results, the teacher explained that many students had trouble learning English. The biggest challenge was vocabulary. Due to limited vocabulary, students had difficulty speaking and reading. Some could not express their ideas clearly and were afraid of making mistakes during speaking activities. Many students were also shy and avoided speaking in front of the class.

In reading, students struggled to understand texts filled with unfamiliar or difficult words, which made them feel bored and less motivated. In writing, they faced issues with grammar, sentence structure, and organizing ideas.

Listening was also difficult, especially when the English spoken was fast or by native speakers. The teacher mentioned that while many students were interested in learning English and understood its importance, some still lacked confidence and were afraid of making mistakes. The teacher's teaching style, classroom activities, and use of learning media (like videos and songs) influenced how students felt about learning English. These early observations indicated the need for deeper research to better understand the challenges students faced.

Other factors also contributed to the students' difficulties in learning English. One of the most significant factors was the teacher. A good teacher could help students by using clear explanations, practical examples, and positive encouragement. Patient and supportive teachers boosted students' confidence. However, if teachers lacked clarity or failed to motivate students, the learning process became less engaging and more difficult. Problems also arose among the students themselves. Some lacked self-belief and assumed English were too hard. This belief reduced their motivation and effort. Many students also lacked effective learning strategies. For example, they did not use helpful tools like songs, videos, or mobile apps. Some students did not review material at home or participate in group study, which slowed their progress. The classroom environment also influenced learning. If teaching methods were unclear or unengaging, students felt bored or confused. Limited class participation and lack of interaction deprived them of opportunities to practice English. Confidence and attitude played a crucial role. Many students were not

confident using English, feared making mistakes, and avoided speaking or writing altogether resulting in fewer opportunities to improve their language skills.

The Conclusion Based on the pre observation and teacher interview, it could be concluded that students at SMA Sinar Kasih Sintang faced several challenges in learning English. The most common issue was limited vocabulary, which affected speaking and reading abilities. Other problems included grammar errors, poor sentence construction, and difficulty understanding spoken English especially when delivered quickly or by native speakers. These language challenges often cause students to feel shy, unmotivated, or afraid of making mistakes. Furthermore, students' motivation, learning strategies, classroom atmosphere, and confidence also significantly impacted their learning experiences. Some students lacked interest, did not see the value of English for their future, or failed to use effective learning resources. Teachers' methods and classroom participation were also important. Many students avoided speaking or writing due to low self-confidence and fear of errors.

In summary, students' difficulties in learning English stemmed from both language related and emotional or personal factors. To support their improvement, it was essential to provide encouraging classroom environments, clear teaching methods, and emotional support. Further research was recommended to explore these issues more deeply and to develop better strategies to help students succeed in learning English

B. Research Question

In line with the background of the study, this research seeks to address the following questions:

1. What are the difficulties faced by the students in learning English skills?
2. What are Student's perspectives on the process of learning English?

C. Research purpose

The main purpose of this study was to explore the difficulties experienced by students at SMA Sinar Kasih Sintang in learning English. Specifically, this research aims to

1. Identify the types of difficulties students have in learning English.
2. Describe the student's perspectives on learning English.

D. Research Significance

This research is expected to give contributions and some informative input:

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, the results of this research are expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of English language education, especially in understanding students' difficulties in learning English skills. The findings may enrich the literature related to language learning theories, internal and external factors affecting students' performance, and learners' perspectives on the English learning process. Furthermore, this study can serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in conducting similar studies or expanding the discussion on challenges in English learning.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, this research is expected to provide benefits for:

- a) **Students:** by increasing their awareness of the difficulties they face in learning English and helping them find better learning strategies.
- b) **Teachers:** by giving insights into students' challenges so that teachers can design more effective teaching methods, materials, and classroom activities.
- c) **Schools:** by providing valuable input to improve the quality of English learning programs and create a more supportive learning environment.
- d) **Future Researchers:** by becoming a reference and comparison for further research in the field of English education and learning difficulties.

E. Limitations of Research

In accordance with the research background, this study is limited to analyzing students' difficulties in English language skills and their perspectives on the English learning process. Furthermore, the research will be conducted at SMA Sinar Kasih Sintang, involving all students as the subjects of the study.

F. Terminology

In line with the variables of this research, there are several terminologies in this research, namely:

1. A Study referred to find out information about something by collecting and looking at data. In this research, the study means finding out what problems students have in learning English and what they think about it.

2. Difficulties referred the problems or things by students, that make learning English hard. These can be things like not understanding the lesson, limited vocabulary, being afraid to speak, or not having enough practice.
3. Learning English Skills meant improving the four main parts of English was listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills helped students used English better in school and daily life.
4. Perspectives by Students meant what students think and feel about learning English. This included whether they like English, how confident they feel, and what helps or makes it hard for them to learn.
5. Sma sinar kasih referred the subject of this research, all students of sma sinar kasih.