



SIXTH-SEMESTER ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AT ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF DARUL ULUM ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STUDY TIME (MORNING VS. NIGHT) IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract

This study explores students' perceptions of the most effective study time to support their understanding of English language courses. It aims to determine the perceptions the sixth-semester English Education students at the Islamic University of Darul Ulum regarding the effectiveness of studying in the morning versus at night in learning English. The focus of this research is to identify which study time is considered more effective by students and the factors that influence their preferences. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, with data collection conducted through semi-structured interviews with two selected students. Based on the research findings, the effectiveness of study time in learning English depends on individual preferences, personal conditions, and contextual factors. There is no universally ideal time, as students have different biological rhythms, environments, and learning strategies. Some prefer studying in the morning due to fresh mental states and supportive environments, while others find nighttime more effective due to its quietness and flexibility. Students' study habits can also shift based on academic demands and external influences. Therefore, English learning should be flexible and adaptive, allowing students to choose the study time that best supports their learning. The benefit of this study is expected to provide insights into students' learning patterns and serve a consideration for lecturers in designing more flexible, student-centered English learning strategies that align with their needs.

Keywords: Learning time effectiveness; Qualitative research; Morning vs. Night study.

INTRODUCTION

The time someone chooses to study plays a big role in how effective their learning process will be, especially when it comes to learning English. Each student has their own preferred study time because of different body clocks and personal habits. Some students find that studying in the morning works best for them since their minds are clear and they feel energized after waking up. A. Wardani et al. (2024), stated the same thing, that the morning is the most optimal time for studying compared to other times, as students are still in a fresh and enthusiastic condition, making it an ideal time for learning activities. The calm and fresh atmosphere in the morning often helps them stay focused and motivated. However, other students feel more comfortable studying at night because the environment is quieter and there are fewer distractions. During the night, they feel they can concentrate better and spend more time studying without interruptions. In line with the opinion of Irwandi et al. (2023), training held at night provides participants with the opportunity to concentrate better and engage more actively in the activities, as well as allowing them time to rest and complete their tasks beforehand.

Picking the right study time is not just about personal comfort. Other things can affect it, like daily routines, academic workload, physical condition, and surroundings. For example, students with busy mornings due to classes or extracurricular activities might prefer studying at night, even if they are tired. Conversely, students who get sleepy quickly at night or are naturally early risers usually pick morning hours to study because they feel more productive then. Psychological factors such as motivation, stress, and sleep habits also play a significant role. For example, staying up late on gadgets can reduce sleep quality and, as a result, affect concentration and performance the next day. Therefore, it's important for students to understand their own learning preferences and adjust their study times based on their physical and mental state to maximize their learning efficiency.

According to research by Sato et al. (2024), students with morning or intermediate chronotypes tend to have higher motivation for learning compared to evening types. This suggests that studying during the morning or afternoon is generally more effective because it supports better concentration and motivation. Another study by Jankowski et al. (2023), found that students who are more active in the morning scored higher in crystallized intelligence, which refers to the knowledge and skills they've gained over time. However, their fluid intelligence and sleepiness levels were not significantly affected. That research also found no meaningful difference in performance between morning and afternoon classes.

This research aims to explore how sixth-semester English Education students perceive the effectiveness of studying in the morning versus at night, especially in improving their English learning. Sixth-semester students were chosen because they have experienced enough academic activities to provide more thoughtful and relevant opinions. The study focuses on their preferred study times, any changes in their study habits, perceived effectiveness, concentration, motivation, and understanding of the material. By understanding these perceptions, this study hopes to offer useful insights for other students, lecturers, and educational institutions to develop better learning strategies. Moreover, it can serve as a reference for future studies that want to explore the link between study time and academic success in English learning.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a semi-structured interview design aimed at exploring the perceptions of sixth-semester English Education students regarding the effectiveness of study time (morning vs evening) in learning English. The respondents in this study consist of two sixth-semester students from the English Education program at an Islamic university in East Java, selected purposively based on specific criteria, such as active involvement in academic activities and availability for interviews. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing the researcher to explore the students' views in depth using a flexible yet guided set of questions. The interviews were conducted online via the WhatsApp platform, using the voice note feature to ensure data accuracy. This method enabled the researcher to obtain more detailed information relevant to the objectives of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study explores the perspectives of sixth-semester English education students regarding the effectiveness of study time (morning vs. night) in learning English. The focus is on their preferred study time, changes in study habits, study time effectiveness, concentration, motivation, and comprehension of the material. From this research, six key findings were identified:

Finding 1: Respondent 1 and Respondent 2 have different opinions regarding their preferred study time. Respondent 1 feels that studying in the morning enhances their understanding of English, while Respondent 2 believes that studying at night improves their comprehension of English.

Respondent 1 prefers studying in the morning because they find it easier to understand the material with the guidance of the lecturer, while Respondent 2 prefers studying at night due to a calmer environment that supports better concentration.

Respondent 1 stated:

"For me personally, I like both, but I prefer studying in the morning, especially when learning English and the lecturer is present, so I can better understand the material being taught."

Respondent 2 stated:

"I like studying at night because I feel calm and more focused at night. Usually, when I study in the morning, I get distracted by activities like cleaning the house."

Finding 2: Since studying in the English education program, both respondents have experienced changes in their study schedules.

Both have experienced changes in their study time since entering university; Respondent 1 now often reviews material at night, while Respondent 2 tends to study at night due to household activities in the morning.

Respondent 1 stated:

"Yes, a lot has changed. Since studying in the English education program, I prefer to review previously taught material at night, especially when there are many assignments."

Respondent 2 stated:

"Yes, it changed a bit. As I grow older, there are more activities in the morning, both inside and outside the house."

Finding 3: There is a difference of opinion between the two respondents regarding the most effective time to study English.

Respondent 1 believes that morning is more effective for learning because the body and mind feel fresh, while Respondent 2 thinks that night is more effective because it allows learning in an enjoyable way, such as watching movies with English subtitles.

Respondent 1 stated:

"In my opinion, learning English is more effective in the morning because we feel fresh and the brain can absorb the material better. Meanwhile, at night it's mostly just for reviewing the material that was taught before."

Respondent 2 stated:

"I think it's more effective at night because I can do listening practice like watching movies with English subtitles. Besides entertaining, it also enhances my understanding of English."

Finding 4: Independent learning at night increases focus during study.

Both respondents feel more focused when studying independently at night; Respondent 1 because ideas come more easily close to deadlines, and Respondent 2 because there are no distractions when working on tasks.

Respondent 1 stated:

"I'm more focused at night or when the assignment deadline is near because at that moment, the ideas come quickly and flow easily."

Respondent 2 stated:

"When there are lectures, I focus better in the morning. But for independent tasks given by lecturers, I concentrate better at night so my focus isn't split, and I can concentrate solely on that one task."

Finding 5: Studying at night is proven to be effective in increasing motivation and helps complete tasks more efficiently.

Studying at night boosts motivation for both respondents; Respondent 1 feels more relaxed and motivated while listening to music, while Respondent 2 is able to complete tasks more quickly even if their focus is divided.

Respondent 1 stated:

"Yes, studying at my preferred time, especially at night, makes me feel more enthusiastic because I can study while listening to my favorite music. It not only helps me understand the material better, but also makes me feel more relaxed."

Respondent 2 stated:

"Yes, I feel more motivated when studying at my preferred time. I once finished two assignments in one night, even though my focus was divided between the two tasks. Still, I managed to complete both of them."

Finding 6: Morning classroom sessions are sometimes ineffective in increasing comprehension, especially when the classroom environment is disorderly.

Both respondents feel that comprehension in morning classes can be disrupted by an unorderedly environment, so they tend to ask friends for clarification or review the material at night to better understand it.

Respondent 1 stated:

"Sometimes I also feel I don't understand the material being taught by the lecturer in class, especially when the classroom environment is not orderly. So, when I don't understand

something, I immediately ask a friend who sits closer to the lecturer what the explanation was about."

Respondent 2 stated:

"I also sometimes don't understand the material in the morning when the lecturer explains it, so at night I still don't understand the topic. As a result, before the assignment deadline, I ask a friend about the task's meaning, and only then do I proceed to work on it at night."

The results of this study indicate that the effectiveness of study time, whether in the morning or at night, largely depends on each individual's preferences and conditions. Every student has different biological rhythms, environments, and learning styles, which causes the most effective time for studying to vary from person to person. Some feel more capable of absorbing material in the morning because their minds are still fresh, while others are more focused and motivated at night due to the quieter atmosphere. Therefore, there is no universally ideal study time for everyone, as learning effectiveness is highly influenced by personal factors.

The first finding revealed a clear contrast in study time preferences and learning effectiveness between the two respondents, illustrating how biological rhythms and environmental conditions play a role in English language learning. Respondent 1 stated that morning study sessions significantly support the comprehension of new material, especially in a formal classroom setting with direct explanations from lecturers. Mornings provide a more refreshed physical and mental state, where the mind feels clearer and energy is better preserved, thus facilitating the learning process. This view aligns with the findings of Imam et al. (2024), who found differences in academic performance between students with morning and evening chronotypes, where morning-type students showed better academic outcomes. The study also revealed a significant correlation between chronotype and academic performance, with morning-type students consistently achieving higher academic scores. This supports Respondent 1's belief that morning is the most effective time to understand material, especially in the context of English language learning. On the other hand, Respondent 2 preferred studying at night due to the quiet and minimal distractions, such as the absence of household activity or noise. This fact shows that learning effectiveness is strongly influenced by internal factors (such as energy levels, focus, and mental readiness) and external factors (such as the learning environment and surrounding distractions).

The second finding demonstrates a change in study habits over time, as both respondents admitted to shifting their study schedules since entering the English Education program. This change reflects adaptability and a growing understanding of their academic needs. Respondent 1 now often reviews materials at night, which likely complements the morning lectures guided by lecturers. This adaptation indicates a shift from dependence on structured learning toward independent learning strategies, a critical aspect of language acquisition and academic maturity. Meanwhile, Respondent 2's shift to studying more frequently at night was due to household responsibilities in the morning, showing that non-academic external factors also influence study patterns. Both cases illustrate that study schedules are dynamic, and effective learning is often the result of continuous adjustments. These adjustments demonstrate students' flexibility in balancing academic and personal lives and reflect their growing autonomy in determining when and

how to study. Over time, learners develop study strategies tailored to their personal and academic demands, which ultimately enhance their ability to stay engaged in language learning consistently.

The third finding highlights differences in perceptions regarding the most effective time to study English. Respondent 1 believed the morning to be more effective due to the freshness of body and mind, indicating the importance of cognitive readiness in absorbing new language concepts. Meanwhile, Respondent 2 felt that studying at night was more enjoyable and effective, particularly through activities such as watching English-language films with subtitles, combining entertainment with learning. This difference shows that effective language learning doesn't always rely on formal academic situations but can also occur through informal methods aligned with personal interests. Respondent 2's method indicates that when learning is aligned with personal enjoyment, engagement and retention increase. Interestingly, the preference for night-time study is supported by research from Wangsa et al. (2022), which found that the evening chronotype was most dominant among first- to third-semester students. The study showed that the number of students with evening chronotypes consistently surpassed those with intermediate or morning chronotypes in each semester. This suggests that studying at night is not unusual or deviant, but rather may reflect a common pattern among students, particularly in the early stages of university. Conversely, Respondent 1's preference for formal learning reflects trust in the efficiency of structured instruction. These contrasting perspectives illustrate that effective English learning is subjective, influenced not only by time but also by learning methods and the students' cognitive and emotional conditions. In language learning, emotional factors such as comfort and enjoyment are just as important as cognitive factors like focus and memory.

In the fourth finding, both respondents stated they felt more focused when studying independently at night, even though their overall time preferences differed. Respondent 1 felt that ideas flowed more easily under pressure, especially at night when deadlines approached, suggesting that time pressure can enhance focus and productivity. This relationship between pressure and creativity is interesting, as it shows that some students may be motivated by pressure and use it to concentrate and produce work. Meanwhile, Respondent 2 considered night time ideal for completing independent tasks due to the minimal distractions, allowing them to engage more deeply with the material. This underscores the importance of a conducive environment in supporting concentration. The shared experience of increased focus at night suggests a possible pattern among students who find the quietness of night conducive to language processing, especially for independent tasks. Additionally, the preference for night-time study for individual assignments, regardless of general time preference, suggests that night offers psychological space that supports deep and reflective thinking,

which is essential for advanced language skills such as writing, translating, or text analysis.

The fifth finding shows that both respondents felt more motivated when studying at night, especially during their preferred time. Respondent 1 enjoyed listening to music while studying, which they felt enhanced relaxation and enthusiasm. This suggests that integrating learning with personally meaningful activities, such as listening to music, can create a positive emotional atmosphere that drives motivation and engagement. Although Respondent 2 acknowledged divided focus, they still managed to complete their tasks at

night, indicating that motivation does not always depend on full concentration but also on internal drive and the ability to manage multiple cognitive processes simultaneously. This finding shows that motivation is strongly influenced by the comfort and flexibility offered by night-time study. The night allows students to customize their learning environment and methods, enabling them to shape learning experiences aligned with their personal preferences. When learners have control over when and how they study, they tend to experience positive emotions related to learning. This emotional satisfaction can ultimately enhance performance, as learners are more likely to engage consistently and deeply with the material when they feel empowered and motivated.

The sixth finding shows that morning classes were sometimes ineffective in promoting comprehension, particularly when the classroom environment was not conducive. Both respondents stated that their understanding of the material was often disrupted by disorderly classroom situations, leading them to ask friends for clarification or to review the material themselves at night for better comprehension. This finding reinforces the importance of the learning environment in either supporting or hindering understanding. A disruptive classroom environment reduces the effectiveness of direct instruction, which could otherwise be highly beneficial. When students fail to grasp material presented during lectures, they must take the initiative to make up for it, often by studying again at night. This shows an interaction between formal and informal learning spaces, where the shortcomings of one can be compensated by the strengths of the other. For language learners, comprehension is not only the result of exposure but also the quality of that exposure. Therefore, creating an optimal learning environment that minimizes distractions and supports concentration is essential to help students maximize their study time, whether in the morning or at night.

I also found another opinion stating that the most effective time for studying can vary. According to Rachmat et al. (2022) Each part of the day has its own optimal role in learning activities. Morning to afternoon is considered the freshest and most productive time, making it ideal for understanding material, conducting research, writing, and summarizing. The pre-dawn (sahur) time is effective for memorization due to its quiet atmosphere and clear mind. Meanwhile, nighttime is better suited for reviewing and rereading lessons to strengthen understanding and memory of the material. In contrast to the opinion of Rahmah et al. (2022), Islamic religious education conducted at night can be considered quite effective; however, there are still several shortcomings that need to be addressed. This is due to certain obstacles encountered during the learning process at night.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings discussed, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of study time in learning English, whether in the morning or at night, greatly depends on individual preferences, personal conditions, and contextual factors. The findings show that there is no universally better study time, as each student has different biological rhythms, environmental conditions, and learning strategies. Some students feel more productive in the morning due to fresh physical and mental conditions and the support of a conducive classroom environment, while others are more focused and motivated at night because of the quiet atmosphere and the flexibility to choose learning methods that match their personal interests. Moreover, students' study habits are dynamic and may change over

time depending on academic demands and external factors. The importance of motivation, emotional comfort, and concentration also significantly influences learning effectiveness, especially when students have control over when and how they study. Therefore, an effective approach to English language learning should be flexible and adaptive to individual needs, providing students with the opportunity to identify and choose the study time that suits them best.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, the author would like to express gratitude to the two informants who kindly took the time to assist in the completion of this article. Second, the author would like to thank Ma'am Andi Asmawati, S.Pd., M.Pd., for reading, reviewing, and providing valuable feedback to the author. Lastly, the author also extends thanks to friends who have supported and helped in the completion of this article.

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