

# CALP Among Language Center UIN Bandung Based on Student Toefl Score Percentage and Influencing Factors

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## ABSTRACT

Language proficiency, particularly Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), is essential for academic success and the ability to perform complex tasks. In Indonesia, English proficiency remains a challenge, as reflected in the 2024 EF English Proficiency Index, where Indonesia ranked 80th out of 116 countries in the "low proficiency" category. This study, entitled "CALP Among UIN Bandung based on toefl score Students Percentage and Influencing Factors", seeks to (1) measure the percentage of UIN Bandung based on TOEFL score students who achieve CALP proficiency and (2) examine the factors influencing this achievement. Grounded in Cummins' theory of CALP, the research employed a qualitative descriptive design using document analysis and interviews using the theory of Zarate (2022). Participants were sixth-semester students from the Language Center at UIN Bandung who had taken the TOEFL test. TOEFL scores were analyzed to assess students' academic language levels, followed by interviews to explore internal and external factors affecting proficiency. The findings show that only 10% of students reached CALP level proficiency, highlighting a significant gap in academic English skills. Internal factors such as motivation, attitude, and anxiety, along with external factors such as media exposure and teaching effectiveness, were found to shape students' performance. The study suggests that curriculum enhancement, interactive teaching strategies, and greater exposure to academic English are necessary to strengthen students' CALP. Institutional support and personal motivation are also critical in equipping students for academic success and future professional demands in a globalized context.

**Keywords :** CALP; Factors; Influence; Language Center; Proficiency; TOEFL.

## ABSTRAK

Bahasa, khususnya *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP), sangat penting untuk keberhasilan akademis dan kemampuan untuk melakukan tugas-tugas yang kompleks. Di Indonesia, kemahiran bahasa Inggris masih menjadi tantangan, sebagaimana tercermin dalam Indeks Kemahiran Bahasa Inggris EF 2024, di mana Indonesia berada di peringkat ke-80 dari 116 negara dalam kategori "kemahiran rendah". Penelitian ini, berjudul "CALP di antara UIN Bandung berdasarkan Persentase Mahasiswa Skor TOEFL dan Faktor-faktor yang Mempengaruhi", berusaha untuk (1) mengukur persentase mahasiswa UIN Bandung berdasarkan skor TOEFL yang mencapai kemahiran CALP dan (2) memeriksa faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi pencapaian ini. Berdasarkan teori CALP Cummins, penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan analisis dokumen dan wawancara menggunakan teori Zarate (2022). Peserta adalah mahasiswa semester enam dari Pusat Bahasa UIN Bandung yang telah mengikuti tes TOEFL. Skor TOEFL dianalisis untuk menilai tingkat kemampuan bahasa akademik mahasiswa, dilanjutkan dengan wawancara untuk mengeksplorasi faktor internal dan eksternal yang memengaruhi kemahiran. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa hanya 10% mahasiswa yang mencapai tingkat

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kemahiran CALP, yang menunjukkan adanya kesenjangan yang signifikan dalam keterampilan bahasa Inggris akademik. Faktor internal seperti motivasi, sikap, dan kecemasan, serta faktor eksternal seperti paparan media dan efektivitas pengajaran, ditemukan berperan dalam membentuk kinerja mahasiswa. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan kurikulum, strategi pengajaran interaktif, dan paparan yang lebih besar terhadap bahasa Inggris akademik diperlukan untuk memperkuat CALP mahasiswa. Dukungan institusional dan motivasi pribadi juga penting dalam membekali mahasiswa untuk meraih kesuksesan akademik dan tuntutan profesional di masa depan dalam konteks globalisasi.

**Kata Kunci** : CALP; Factors; Influence; Language Center; Proficiency; TOEFL.

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## INTRODUCTION

Language proficiency plays an important role in the academic learning that all students must possess thereby enabling individuals to participate effectively in the global world. As the world becomes increasingly connected, the ability to communicate in global languages, such as English, has become a key factor in increasing career opportunities, encouraging international collaboration, and increasing national competitiveness. However, despite its importance, English proficiency is still a challenge for many countries, especially in countries where English is not a native language including Indonesia.

The latest Education First (EF) English Language Proficiency Index data in 2024 provides a very worrying picture for Indonesia, which is ranked 80th out of 116 countries in English language proficiency. In fact, in the Asian ranking, Indonesia is ranked 12th out of 23 countries below neighboring countries namely Malaysia, the Philippines and also Vietnam. This ranking places Indonesia in the "low proficiency" category, lagging behind several neighboring countries in Southeast Asia. This data highlights the pressing issues facing Indonesia in its efforts to improve global competitiveness and educational outcomes.

At the city level, even though Bandung is ranked 3rd out of 20 big cities in Indonesia with a score of 523, facts on the ground show that people's English language skills in general are still relatively low. This can be seen from the lack of effective communication skills in English in various sectors, including education, business and public services. The score achieved by Bandung does not necessarily reflect success, but rather illustrates the gap between the efforts made and the real needs in the field. [EF 2024 [1]]

In educational settings such as universities, low English language skills pose a significant challenge. As an institution that focuses on academic and skills development, students' English language proficiency remains limited, particularly in their English skills. One example is their speaking skills, where many students often feel less confident when speaking or discussing in English. From their reading skills, they usually lack an understanding of reading in a text. Additionally, due to their limited listening skills, they are less able to understand and capture what they hear. Their writing skills often lack proficiency in connecting or linking ideas in writing. Base the example above on a university

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environment like this when facing professional situations. This condition hampers their potential to compete at national and global levels.

A more specific and critical issue lies in students' Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), a concept introduced by Jim Cummins, which refers to the ability to understand and use language in academic settings. CALP includes the use of formal, abstract, and discipline-specific vocabulary that is essential for academic success, especially in higher education. It extends beyond everyday conversation and requires more complex cognitive processing. While many students may demonstrate Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), which enable them to engage in casual conversations, a significant number still struggle to reach the more advanced level of CALP, making it difficult for them to comprehend lectures, engage in academic discourse, or produce structured and analytical academic writing.

The low level of English proficiency in Indonesia, both at the international, national, and local levels, such as particular university Bandung, can be explained through the concept of CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency). This concept was originally introduced by Jim Cummins in 1979[2] who explained that a person's ability to understand and use language in an academic context and is related to more complex cognitive matters such as arrange scientific papers, writing reports, and arrange logical arguments. According to the Threshold Hypothesis also developed by Cummins (1976), individuals need a certain level of language mastery to develop CALP. However, looking at the environment shows that many students have not reached this level. For example, their abilities in speaking, listening, reading, writing are still low, making it difficult for them to understand academic literature and participate in academic discussions. This condition is in line with Cummins' theory which states that CALP requires considerable time and exposure to academic language to develop.

Moreover, Merrill Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985)[3] reinforces the idea that language learning is not solely dependent on input such as listening and reading but also on the active production of language through speaking and writing. Swain emphasizes that in order to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), students must be given opportunities to use language meaningfully, particularly in academic contexts. However, many students still struggle with key aspects of English proficiency, which limits their academic engagement. CALP is closely related to the concept of language proficiency, which reflects a person's ability to use language effectively and appropriately in various situations. Various standardized tests or frameworks such as Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), Pearson Test of English (PTE), TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and Cambridge English Tests (FCE, CAE, and CPE) are often used to assess language proficiency which includes speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

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Understanding students' proficiency levels, however, is not sufficient without exploring the underlying factors that influence their development of academic language. As noted by Zarate (2022)[4], several interrelated factors affect students' language acquisition, particularly their academic language proficiency. These factors include linguistic background, motivation, learning environment, teaching methodology, exposure to the target language, and socio-emotional aspects such as anxiety and self-confidence. Therefore, the following section will discuss these influencing factors in depth to better understand the challenges and opportunities in helping students reach the CALP level.

## **METHOD**

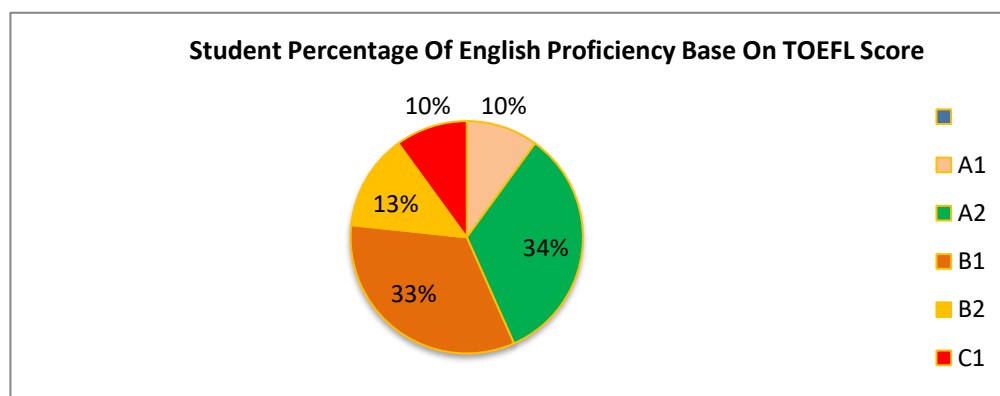
A qualitative research design using a descriptive methodology was used in this investigation. The purpose is to measure the percentage of students at UIN Bandung who achieve the CALP level based on their TOEFL score. To provide a methodical explanation of the factors influencing students' CALP level achievement in UIN, the descriptive technique was employed. This research examined a variety of data sources, including documents and interviews. To validate the data and ensure that the results are sufficiently qualified. According to Creswell (2014)[5], qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of complex educational issues by collecting detailed data through document analysis and interviews.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents the findings of the analysis regarding the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) Achievement level at the Language Centre, UIN. The findings are organized into two main sections: findings and discussion. In the findings, the data shows how to answer the research question. Then, in a discussion, the data will be elaborated and analyzed.

### **The Data Result of Percentage Percentage of Students Who Reach the CALP Level Base on TOEFL Score**

To answer the first research question, researchers collected data based on TOEFL scores from 6th semester students at UIN. The data were then analyzed and categorized according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which provides standardized proficiency levels ranging from A1 (beginner) to C2 (mastery). To obtain data on the results of English proficiency levels, the researcher collected data from 30 student in 6th-semester at UIN who had taken the TOEFL test. The selection of 6th-semester students was based on the fact that they had gained enough academic experience and exposure to the English language. Using the TOEFL test results as a measuring tool, the researcher was able to identify the level of English proficiency of each student and classify them into proficiency levels.



**Chart 1. Student Percentage Of English Proficiency Base On Toefl Score**

The pie chart results show that out of 30 students, three students (10%) reached the A1 level of English proficiency. Ten students (33.3%) reached the A2 level, and another ten students (33.3%) reached the B1 level. Four students (13.3%) reached the B2 level, while three students (10%) reached the C1 level. Additionally, none of the students reached the highest level, C2.

The results of the pie chart show that of the 30 students whose English proficiency level was measured, three students, or 10%, were at the A1 level. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), level A1 (Beginner) is the most basic stage in language learning. At this level, a new learner can understand and use widespread everyday expressions and simple sentences to fulfil basic needs. For example, they can introduce themselves, as well as ask or answer simple questions regarding personal information such as where they live, who they know, and what they own. Students at this level tend to have limited vocabulary, have difficulty constructing sentences, and rely heavily on memorized phrases.

Furthermore, 10 students (33.3%) were at the A2 level. Based on CEFR, students at this level fall into the Elementary User category. They can communicate in simple and routine tasks that require direct exchange of information on familiar matters. They can understand sentences and expressions that are often used in everyday topics such as personal information, shopping, location, and work. Nonetheless, they still face difficulties in understanding more complex academic texts. (Cambridge Assessment).

Then on level B1, which is occupied by 10 students or 33.3%. Based on CEFR, B1 (Intermediate User) reflects the ability to understand the main points of standard communication on topics commonly encountered in daily life, school, or work. Students at this level have started to be able to handle basic academic situations, such as understanding instructions or writing simple paragraphs. However, their ability to use English academically is still limited to the use of direct and simple sentences. At this level, students are also beginning to be able to express personal opinions and give simple reasons. However, the sentence

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structure and vocabulary used are not yet entirely accurate or varied. (Nation & Newton, 2009)[6].

Furthermore, four students or 13.3% were at level B2 (Upper-Intermediate). At this level, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), level B2 indicates a person's ability to interact with fluency and spontaneity to allow communication to run smoothly with native speakers without significant difficulties for both parties. Students at this level can understand the main ideas of complex texts, both concrete and abstract, including technical discussions in their field of specialization. In addition, they can write explicit, detailed texts, express opinions, explain the advantages and disadvantages of various solutions, and have a stronger command of grammar and vocabulary, enabling them to communicate effectively in social and professional situations (Hinkel, 2006)[7].

Lastly, there are three students or 10% who managed to reach level C1 (Advanced Proficiency). According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), students at this level can use English flexibly and effectively across social, academic, and professional contexts. They are capable of producing clear, well-structured, and detailed texts on complex topics, employing cohesive devices and logical organisation. They can comprehend lengthy academic passages, including scientific and argumentative works, that require inferential reasoning and an understanding of implicit meanings. They also articulate opinions and arguments coherently and adjust their register and style according to situational demands. (Cummins, J. 2008)[8]

This amount is relatively low when compared to the academic needs in the current era of globalisation, where mastery of academic English is the main prerequisite in accessing scientific literature, writing papers, and participating in international seminars. This can be caused by several factors, including differences in educational background, learning motivation, anxiety in using English, and lack of exposure to academic media outside the classroom. As stated by Cummins (1979), the development of CALP takes longer than social language skills (BICS), because CALP is directly related to critical thinking, academic reading and writing, and understanding complex language structures. In addition, a study by Zarate (2022) also showed that internal factors such as attitudes and anxiety, as well as external factors such as teaching effectiveness and media exposure, greatly influence the development of students' CALP. Students who do not have access to learning methods that encourage active use of academic language will be slower in reaching this level.

This finding confirms that students' English proficiency in Indonesia remains generally low, with only a small percentage achieving the C1 or advanced level of proficiency. This aligns with national data: according to Talentics' data from more than 12,000 job seekers, only about 0.4% of job seekers reached the C1 level, while the majority approximately 90% were at the B1 level or lower (Talentics, 2023). This finding also aligns with a study in Aceh, which noted that only one or two percent of university students reached C1 on the TOEFL test,

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while most were at lower levels (Ismail et al., 2022). Thus, the lack of students reaching C1 in this study is not an isolated phenomenon; rather, it is part of a national trend that indicates minimal advanced English language attainment among Indonesian students (Ismail et al., 2022).

The results of the pie chart show that none of the students managed to reach the highest level, namely C2, in the classification of English language skills. This means that, of all the participants who took the TOEFL test in this study, none fell into the Mastery or Proficient User categories according to the standards set by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) C2 users can express themselves freely, fluently, and precisely, even in the most complex scenarios. Their language skills are extremely varied and complex, allowing them to effectively convey subtle shades of meaning while naturally adapting their tone, style, and register to any environment, whether social, academic, or professional.

In conclusion, the fact that only 10% of students reached the C1 level, which reflects Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), indicates that most students have not yet attained the level of academic English proficiency expected in higher education. The data also shows that the majority of students are concentrated at the A2 level (33.3%) and the B1 level (33.3%), which are still considered intermediate or lower levels of proficiency. This means that the advanced language abilities required for both academic and professional success are not yet achieved by most students.

### **The Factors That Influence Students CALP Level Base on TOEFL Score**

To answer the second research question regarding the factors that influence students' English language proficiency, the researchers interviewed three students who were selected because their TOEFL scores were above 550, which means that they had reached the CALP level. Based on the interview results, students' English proficiency is influenced by several internal factors, including motivation, attitude, and anxiety, as well as external factors such as media exposure and teaching effectiveness.

Students' English proficiency is shaped by both internal and external factors. Motivation is the primary driver, with all students aiming to improve their English for career purposes, although their attitudes vary. Students demonstrate persistence and positivity, whereas lower-scoring students often experience anxiety. Additionally, all students reported being afraid of public speaking. External factors, such as exposure to digital media (e.g., YouTube, podcasts, and movies), improved vocabulary and listening skills, while effective teaching methods clear explanations, structured lessons, and constructive feedback supported the development of academic English. However, limited class time (16 sessions per semester) and complex language usage pose challenges, especially for students.

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## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a study on Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) among Language Center UIN Bandung based on students TOEFL score, including percentages and influencing factors, it can be concluded that most students have not yet reached the level of academic English proficiency expected in higher education. The measurement results show that only about 10% of students achieved the C1 level, which is a reflection of CALP mastery. This suggests that students' English proficiency, particularly in academic contexts, still needs improvement to meet future educational and professional demands.

In conclusion, students' English proficiency is shaped by both internal and external factors. Motivation is the primary driver, with all students aiming to improve their English for career purposes, although their attitudes vary. Students demonstrate persistence and positivity, whereas lower-scoring students often experience anxiety. Additionally, all students reported being afraid of public speaking. External factors, such as exposure to digital media (e.g., YouTube, podcasts, and movies), improved vocabulary and listening skills, while effective teaching methods clear explanations, structured lessons, and constructive feedback supported the development of academic English. However, limited class time (16 sessions per semester) and complex language usage pose challenges, especially for students.

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