

A STUDY ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD ENGLISH LEARNING AT SMP KATOLIK ST. THERESIA TANAWANGKO

DESY F. ANSOW, SANERITA T. OLII, TIRZA KUMAYAS

English Education Department

Faculty of Languages and Arts

Universitas Negeri Manado

Correspondence author: saneritaolii@unima.ac.id

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Abstract: In Indonesian, English has been decided as a first foreign language by the national education which can be learned started from elementary school up to university level, but there are some students who are not interested in learning English. One way to find out the reasons for students' disinterest in English learning arises from the data is from their own perceptions. The purpose of this study was to describe students' perceptions/opinions on English learning in SMP Katolik St. Theresia Tanawangko. Since it dealt with students' perceptions/opinions, this study was categorized as a survey research. The sample of this study was ninth students at SMP Katolik St. Theresia Tanawangko in the academic year 2019-2020. Since students' perceptions were the focus of this survey, the data were collected using a questionnaire. It focused on four indicators and the questionnaire itself consisted of 20 items with 5 items per indicator. Result of the data analysis leads the researcher to arrive at the following conclusions: (1) majority of the sampling students (87%) had positive attitudes toward English learning, (2) 90% were strongly motivated to learn English or love learning English, and (3) 93% learn English because it is a compulsory subject. They learned the language for the following purposes: to have internet access (89%), get job in the future (95%), and widen their knowledge of the world (91%). After knowing students' perceptions, it is important for English teacher to further increase motivation and foster a sense of courage in students at school, especially in English learning.

Keywords: *Perception; Students' perception; English learning; EFL*

INTRODUCTION

Language is very important in our daily activities, because language is a human communication tool. English is one of the languages that is currently worldwide and has

become an international language. English is also one of the most widely studied international language and is used in communication.

In Indonesian, English has decided as first foreign language by the national education which can be learned started from elementary school up to university level, but there are some students who are not interested in learning English. Why? One way to find out the reasons for students' disinterest in English learning arises from the data is from their own perceptions.

(Pareek, 1996) suggests that perception is the process of receiving, selecting, coordinating, interpreting, testing and reacting to sensory stimuli or data. Perception is closely related to the five senses because perception occurs after the object concerned sees, hears, or feels something and coordinate sand interprets it so that perception arises. The process also occurs in students' perceptions of learning in class to produce an achievement. We can take examples people's perceptions about English learning. For some people, learning an international language is very important, because they think a lot whenever they can speak English, and also it is very usefull in the future, in the era of globalization. But for most other people, it's not important, they don't even care about it. From that example, we can see that people's perception vary. Likewise with students. Not all have the perception that learning English is important.

Based on explanation above, knowing students' perceptions is very important. In line with there search done by (Wangka, 2013) in her study entitled "Students' Perceptions of Their English Teachers' Interpersonal Skills". This study intends to give a description of the students' perception of their English teachers' interpersonal skills. The results of this study show that most of students at SMA Negeri 1 Airmadidi have dominantly positive perception of their English teachers' interpersonal skills. (Asumbi, 2010) in her study with title "A study on Students' Perception Toward English Subject at SMK Negeri 3 Tondano". It can be concluded that the student's perception toward English subjectat SMK Negeri 3 Tondano is dominantly positive. Based on the findings, it is recommended that English teachers use this method to find out students' perceptions so that teachers can provide better motivation.

Then, we can find out how many students are not interested in learning English and vice versa, so that we can provide more motivation to achieve the expected achievements. So in this research the writer wants to find out what the students' perceptions on English learning and their achievement.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Perception

Perception is an active process through standard sensations from the environment interpreted, use knowledge and understanding of the world, so they become

meaningful experiences (Bernstein & et all, 1988). Perception is the process of organizing and interpreting information sensory to give meaning (Santrock, 1991). In short it can be said that perception is a process of interpreting information obtained through human sensory system. The process of perception includes sensory recording, recognition pattern, and attention.

According to (Slameto,2003) perception is a process that involves the entry of messages or information into the human brain. Through human perception continuously making contact with the environment. (Shale & Wahab,2004) perception is a process combining and organizing our sensory data to be developed in such a way that we can realize it around us including aware of ourselves. When people talk about perception, which is meant is that what someone wants to see is not necessarily the same with the facts.

From some of the definitions expressed by the expert above, the perception is the process taken by individuals to understand objects in their environment by the process, organizing and interpreting sense impressions in order to give certain meaning to their environment.

Students' Perception

According to (Shidu, 2003) students' perception are students' point of view toward something that happened in learning process class and produced it with suggestions or arguments for teacher or classmate to improve their learning process. Perception is someone thought about something that they learn to measure how their attitude toward using something, whether they agree or not about the method or about something that they learn (Hong: 2003). It means that students have their own opinion toward something that get from teaching learning process and how they reach toward it.

According to (Adediwura, 2007) students' perception of teachers' knowledge of subject matter, attitudes to work and teaching skills is absolutely dependent on the fact that they have been taught by the teachers under evaluation and are familiar with them. They therefore, have minds already pre-occupied with memories and reaction that inventory for data collection will measure.

From the definition above, students' perception is how students' thought to responds about what they have done or about what they learned.

English Learning

(Sivaraman & et al, 2014) conducted a study on Omani students' English learning problem in an Engineering college in which they found that students were not comfortable in language classrooms where medium of instruction was English. The study revealed that language barrier, affected the performance of the students because

of their lack of language proficiency in English. This also shows that learners have a great fear of English medium of instruction which seemed to be a major problem in learning English. (Al-Issa, 2014) conducted a study in Omani context regarding the factors that influenced English learning motivation. He used some triangulation techniques and semi structured interviews to conduct data. The discussion of the study showed that there were several motivating factors.

Motivation

Motivation is a power that dynamics behaviors of individuals for certain purposes, direct these behaviors and ensures those to maintain consistently (Demiral & Acat, 2002). Examining motivation within educational environment (teacher, student, environment, attitude of student etc.) and evaluating relation between them (Akbaba, 2006). According to (Liando, 2009) student motivation is considered one of the factors contributing to students' success in learning a foreign language.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to describe students' perceptions/opinions on English learning. Since it dealt with students' perceptions/opinions, this study was categorized as a survey research.

Data Collection

Since students' perceptions were the focus of this survey, the data were collected using a questionnaire. "Questionnaire is printed form for data collection, which includes questions or statements to which the subject is expected to respond" (Seliger & Schohamy, 1989). (Lodico & et al, 2006) puts it, "A questionnaire is the main tool or instrument used to collect data in a descriptive-survey research study". It focused on four indicators, namely: (1) English attitude (how can students speak English more fluently), (2) Motivation: affection (the reason that makes students less interested in English learning), (3) konasi (how big is the level of student confidence in English learning), (4) behavior (how is the seriousness of students in responding to English learning). The questionnaire itself consisted of 20 items with 5 items per indicator.

Table 1 : Indicators in Questionnaires

Indicators	Aspects	Number of items	Total
Establishment and influence on English learning	English Attitude	1, 2,3, 4, 5	5
Motivation	Affection	6, 7, 8, 9, 10	5
High self-confidence	Mentally	11, 12, 13, 14, 15	5
Seriousness in responding to learnin	Behavior	16, 17, 18, 19, 20	5
Total Number of Items			20

The questionnaire which is used is multiple choice type. The concise of five alternative is based on the Likert Scale Type.

The formula typical level Likert Scale item is :

- 1 = Strongly Agree
- 2 = Agree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Dissagree
- 5 = Strongly Dissagree

Data Analysis

This survey research was quantitative in nature; therefore, the data were quantitatively analyzed. The simplest way to present the results was to indicate the percentage of respondents who selected each alternative for each item, using the formula:

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100 \%$$

P = percentage

f = total of respondents' answer

n = total number of respondents

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 : Data on Students' perceptions

No.	Indicator / Level	Statement / Question	SS	S	N	TS	STS
1		Dalam komunikasi global, kemampuan berbahasa Inggris sangat diperlukan.	13	27	6	0	0
2	Establishment and influence on English learning: Attitude toward English	Pihak sekolah perlu mewajibkan penggunaan Bahasa Inggris di lingkungan sekolah	18	19	6	3	0
3		Penguasaan bahasa Inggris mempermudah pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris saya di sekolah	14	24	4	4	0
4		Pengetahuan berbahasa Inggris harus ditunjang oleh sikap dan perilaku berbahasa yang baik	20	22	4	0	0
5		Bagi saya, latihan dan penggunaan Bahasa Inggris secara terus menerus perlu dilakukan	19	23	4	0	0
6		Saya bangga bila menggunakan Bahasa Inggris di lingkungan sekolah.	17	25	3	1	0
7		Saya senang bisa berbahasa Inggris dengan teman-teman dan guru-guru	16	22	6	2	0
8		Motivation: Affection	Saya akan menggunakan kemampuan Bahasa Inggris saya untuk mengakses internet atau majalah yang berbahasa Inggris	18	23	5	0
9	Saya belajar bahasa Inggris agar mudah mendapatkan pekerjaan di kemudian hari,		20	24	2	0	0
10	Saya belajar bahasa Inggris agar saya dapat mengenal dan mengetahui tentang berbagai hal.		19	23	4	0	0
11	High self-confidence: Mentality	Saya akan berbahasa Inggris di sekolah karena diwajibkan oleh guru	19	24	2	1	0
12		Saya akan terus belajar Bahasa Inggris agar kemampuan berbahasa	18	24	4	0	0

		Inggris saya lebih bagus					
13		Saya lebih sering berbahasa Inggris di sekolah	4	6	22	9	5
14		Saya akan berbahasa Inggris dengan orang yang saya temui sesering mungkin	5	7	21	12	1
15		Saya akan berbahasa Inggris dengan guru dan teman-teman di sekolah	4	7	22	9	4
16	Serious-ness in responding to learning: Behavior	Saya menjawab dan mengerjakan tugas menggunakan Bahasa Inggris	18	22	4	2	0
17		Saya mengikuti les untuk meningkatkan kemampuan Bahasa Inggris saya	12	15	12	5	2
18		Saya melatih Bahasa Inggris dengan mempraktekannya di sekolah	13	18	13	2	0
19		Saya mengajak teman-teman saya untuk berkomunikasi dalam Bahasa Inggris	11	13	16	5	1
20		Saya meningkatkan Bahasa Inggris saya dengan mengikuti acara-acara di TV/media asing	14	21	8	3	0

Since there are four indicators of perception on English learning, the analysis was done per indicator by counting the percentage of students' responses to each of the existing options (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). These options themselves could be categorized into three categories: positive perception (strongly agree & agree), neutral, and negative perception (disagree and strongly disagree).

“Respondents responses to statements related to Attitudes on English learning”

The result of the analysis related to sampling students' responses to the first indicator, *Establishment and influence on English learning: Attitude toward English*, indicated that majority of the sampling students (87%) had positive attitudes toward English learning. Only 10% had neutral, and 3% negative attitudes toward. Visually, responses to the three categories are displayed in Figure 1.

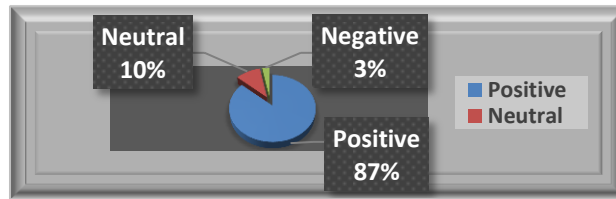


Figure 1. Attitudes: Total responses per category (Positive, Neutral or Negative)

“Respondents’ responses to second indicator: Motivation: Affection”

Result of the analysis of the respondents’ responses to statements dealing motivation (item no. 6 – 10): affection on English learning indicated that majority of the respondents (90%) strongly motivated to learn English or love learning English. They learned the language in order to have internet access (89%), got job in the future (95%), and widened their knowledge of the world (91). The responses to these indicator is displayed in Figure 2.

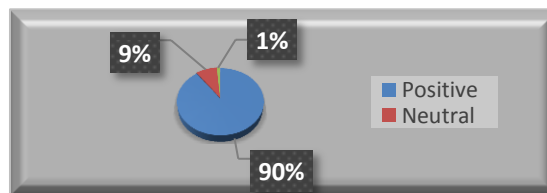


Figure 2. Distribution of responses to second indicator: Motivation: Affection

“Responses to third indicator: high self confidence: mentality”

The data dealing with the indicator, *high self-confidence: mentality*, indicate that, per option, 22% strongly agree, 29% agree, 31% neutral, 13% disagree and 4% strongly disagree. Per category, the data show that 53% respondents are highly-self-confident in their learning of English; 31% are neutral or in doubt, and 18% have negative self-confidence. If we have a close look at their responses to item 11, majority of the respondents (93%) learn English because it is a compulsory subject. In item 12, most of them (91%) have the intention to make themselves competent in the language. However, when asked whether they frequently used the language at school (item 13), or used with people they frequently met (item 14), or spoke the language with their teachers or classmates, most of the respondents tended to remain neutral, and had negative perceptions related to item No. 13, 14 and 15. The responses to the third indicator are displayed visually in Figure 3.

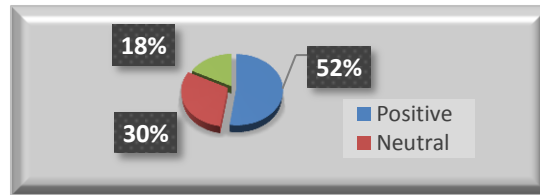


Figure 3. Distribution of responses to third indicator: *high self-confidence: mentality*

“Responses to fourth indicator: *Seriousness in responding to learning: Behavior*”

The data analysis related to the fourth indicator, *Seriousness in responding to learning: Behavior*, (see Table 6) show that per option, respondents’ responses are: strongly agree (68%), agree (39%), neutral (23%), disagree (7%), and strongly disagree (1%). Per category, the following responses are obtained: positive category (68%), neutral (23%), and negative category (8%). The responses indicate that more than half of the respondents have positive behavior toward English learning. However, it should be noted that some of them (23%) are in doubt about learning the language. The distribution of their responses is displayed in Figure 4.

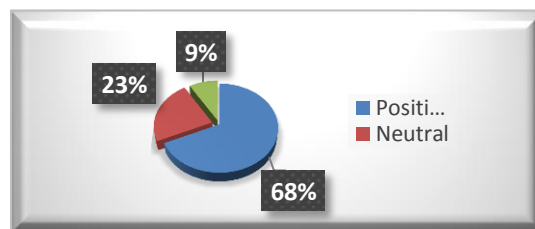


Figure 4. Distribution of responses to fourth indicator: *Seriousness in responding to learning: Behavior*

As pointed out in 4.1, there are four indicators of perception on English learning, namely (1) *Establishment and influence on English learning*, (2) *Motivation: affection*, (3) *High self-confidence: Mentality Attitude toward English*, and (4) *Seriousness in responding to learning: Behavior*. Result of the data analysis shows that: (1) majority of the sampling students (87%) had positive attitudes toward English learning. Only 10% had neutral, and 3% negative attitudes toward, (2) majority of the respondents (90%) strongly motivated to learn English or love learning English. They learned the language in order to have internet access (89%), got job in the future (95%), and widened their knowledge of the world (91), (3) majority of the respondents (93%) learn English because it is a compulsory subject. Most of them (91%) have the intention to make themselves competent in the language (item 12).

However, most of the respondents remain neutral and when asked whether they frequently used the language at school and with people (item 13), or used with people they frequently met or with their teachers and classmates (item 14 and 15), and (4) more than half of the respondents have positive behavior toward English learning. However, it should be noted that some of them (23%) are in doubt about learning the language.

COCLUSION

Result of the data analysis leads the researcher to arrive at the following conclusions: (1) majority of the sampling students (87%) had positive attitudes toward English learning, (2) 90% were strongly motivated to learn English or love learning English, and (3) 93% learn English because it is a compulsory subject. They learned the language for the following purposes: to have internet access (89%), get job in the future (95%), and widen their knowledge of the world (91%).

However, they rarely use the language to communicate with other people, especially teachers and classmates at school.

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