

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD ENGLISH: A STUDY ON NON-EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Business Administration Program of the Kupang State Polytechnic, Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The numbers of participants are 30 students. The main instrument used in this study are observation and questioner. The observation was conducted during one semester and questioner was given by the end of it. The result shows that the students of Business Administration Program have a positive perception during the learning process. The level of confidence was also increased gradually during the observation. For improving their skills, most of the students thought that mastering vocabulary is the best topic. Some activities that the students would do was expected to give impacts on their skills.

Keywords: General English 1, perception 2, non-EFL students 3

INTRODUCTION

English becomes language that used in communication between countries who have different language. (Holmes, 2007) stated that English was already well on its way to becoming a genuine lingua franca by the end of twentieth century. Many countries use English as the primary language while others use it as the second language. Furthermore, many countries also treat English as a foreign language where English is not widely used in daily lives. For this case, English is learnt as a foreign language including Indonesia. This notion of EFL are challenged in recent years. People tend not to distinct the notion of ESL (English as the Second Language) and EFL. (Broughton et al., 2002; Howatt & Smith, 2014) study the teachers of English as a foreign language towards teaching English as a lingua franca. They came to the conclusion that nowadays, English should be taught as a lingua franca as the impact of globalization in every sector of life. The spread of digital views opens a new vision of how we see English. Social media is an appropriate example on how English is used today. People around the world comments on Youtube videos for instance, they come to communicate in internet world using English. Crystal (2003) has also already mentioned the English as a global language. Teachers of English as a foreign language are brought to the challenge how to treat English nowadays.

English is a subject that includes in educational curriculum in Indonesia. It is learnt in secondary, in a high school level, and university level. It is widely understood that English is foreign language, learnt by the students that called EFL students. The aim is to provide students to have English skills, so that they can use it when they meet foreigners who speaks English or when they visit countries where English is a primary language or second. At university level, English is learnt in every courses whether EFL or non-EFL classes. This study focuses on English for non-EFL students.

There are numbers of studies on teaching English as a foreign language for non-EFL students. (Risan, 2021) studies the extent of materials provided by lecturers in teaching non-EFL students. She found that most of the students prefer to choose vocabulary as the most needed topics needed in relation to their possible future jobs while others choose speaking, listening, or grammar. (Nur Fitria, 2022; Shyam & Poornachandran, 2018; Yuliana et al., 2015) studies code mixing used by the lecturers in teaching English for non-EFL students. The study found that the lecturers use code mixing by inserting Indonesian words, phrases, and clauses during the learning process.

Recent studies focus on how the students and the lecturers perception toward English as English for Specific Purpose (ESP). This study also takes the non-EFL students as the object of the study and takes English as in general way. It means that the study tries to associate non-EFL students and English as the general course, not in specific course (Anthony, 2007; Hafner & Miller, 2018; Wahyuni, 2018). The object of the study is the first year students of Business Administration Program at the Kupang State Polytechnic. In first and second year, the students take General English course. They take English for Business in the third and fourth year. This study aims to define Business Administration students' perception toward General English course and what kinds of materials or additional activities that the students would do by themselves to improve their English skills.

METHOD

This study uses qualitative approach in order to answer the research questions as (Creswell & Poth, 2016) Creswell (2015) states that this approach try to explore and understand individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems. In doing this, the study takes a group of students which consists of 30 students as the object of the research. The object of the study was purposely chosen as (Creswell, 2014) explains that in the qualitative approach the researcher intentionally choose the objects to understand the phenomenon. In other words the sampling technique is a "purposeful sampling

(Creswell, 2012)The instruments that used in this study consists of two parts. The first one was conducted by doing an observation during one semester from September 2022 to January 2023. In doing this, the observation was conducted during the learning process in General English Course. This observation helps to understand deeply as Creswell states that observation is a process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information. The second one derived from questioner provided to the students. The second instrument is a questioner given to the students in order to understand non-EFL students' perception toward General English course and what materials they need or activities that they would do to improve their skills. This questioner is an open-ended questions where the students have free to explore the answer. The students were free to use google translate or dictionary answering the questions since the questions were provided in English.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Firsthand information on the students' perception toward general English course was derived from observation during the learning process from September 2022 to January 2023. During the observation, most of the students seem to have low proficiency in English. Understanding long English spoken was difficult to the most of the students, exceptional for words, phrases, or clauses that always been taught repeatedly from the very first time they learnt English such as introducing themselves. From some point, the students were categorized as the beginner level. The numbers of vocabularies, phrases, or clauses construction are low. In order to maintain the learning process, bilingual method was used. The use of Indonesian and English alternately increases the students' perception in a positive way. They have a positive perception toward general English course by bilingual method even though most of them have low proficiency in English.

The positive perception was also found during the observation by the use of some online quiz. The use of an online website such as kahoot.id where the students solve the questions via online significantly increases their attention and positive attitude toward English. It could be seen from the enthusiasm of the students to do the tasks. Furthermore, the use of online website encourages the students to do their best in every chance of the quiz. This positive perception to the class growth by the time during the observation. The students were able to find their confidence in learning General English course. The amount of positive perception were also increase by the use of social media as part of the study. The level of confidence was increased by the time. It was identified by the preparation that the students did before uploading a video into their social media. Most of the students were feel free to do some consultation on the video script, doing some corrections then took the video. This positive attitude showed their positive perception as well.

The students' perception on general English course was also derived from the questioner provided to the students by the end of semester. The questioner showed that in general, the students have positive perception toward general English course. Some of them can be seen below.

Data 1.

Of course I was very happy, for some reason this feeling only existed when I was in college. Yes, that's true and I just felt that learning English is very fun.

Data 2.

I feel it was fun, easy to understand. I learn more about British culture and get lots

motivation to improve my English.

Data 3.

From this semester, after I learnt I feel happy because I got new knowledge.

Data 4.

In semester 1 I felt very happy, really enjoyed learning English and very excited about learning English because at the time we played kahoot together, even though I didn't make it top 3. Learning English can be very fun, even though sometimes it's a bit easy and difficult but little by little if I understand every word and the more vocabulary I know I will be more fluent in understanding an English sentence. My feeling when speaking English now I feel wow amazing very cool. I and I feel sad because in semester 1 I was twice late for English lessons. But it's okay, hopefully next semester I won't be late again.

The collected data above indicates that the students mostly find themselves in a positive way of learning English. During at least 4 months learning process, the students gradually find the positive perception toward general English course. The course is fun and enjoyable to learn.

The positive perception were also found from the growth of confidence the students achieve during the process as the data below show.

Data 5.

It was great and fun for this semester, because I learned a lot things and I learned new words, grammar, how to pronounce and be more confident to speak English and probably my English skills is growing.

Data 6.

I feel great because I can learn words that I didn't understand before, I'm also more confident in English than before.

Data 7.

I am very grateful to be able to learn English. Many things that I get and a lot of changes in my English. I feel that my English has changed a lot, even though it's not perfect, but I feel now my English is better than before.

The level of confidence is growing during the learning process. The students were able to find their confidence and got the chance for improving. The growth of confidence level indicates that the students have a good perception toward the subject they learnt. Some students were able to realize their English change during the learning process.

Kinds of Materials or Additional Activities that the Students Would Do

Based on the questioner given to the students there are numbers of materials and activities the students would do in improving their English skills. Vocabulary becomes the most needed to improve by the students. Some students thought that mastering much vocabularies can help them to improve their English.

Data 8.

What I do is I don't know. No, no. what is done is to increase vocabulary in English.

Data 9.

So that my English will improve in the following semester, I will spend time off by increasing my vocabulary, watching vlogs or films in English, and that proves that learning English is very fun just by watching it often we will naturally be trained to hear and speak the language England.

Data 10.

I will practice my pronunciation and I will list vocabulary so I can remember them, also I will watch a lots of youtubers that speak English, and a lots of movies with English subtitles.

Data 11.

I will study even harder so I can add to the vocabulary that I don't know and can use English better in next semester.

Data 12.

What I do to improve my ability to speak English I will try to use my cellphone to listen to music or movies without Indonesian subtitles and the last one I learn to memorize at least 2 vocabulary words a day.

The data show that most of the students think that mastering vocabularies can improve their English. In doing this, most of the students have recognition to use some helpful media such as films, music, or YouTube videos. The students come to realize the English skills can be also learnt from kinds of media as the learning sources. The students would prepare some activities by themselves for improving their English skills such as watching films or YouTube videos, listening to English song, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

English for non-EFL students can be fun and enjoyable. The study on perception of the Business Administration students toward general English come to the conclusion that the students have a positive perception. It can be seen that during the observation, the students gradually find their positive attitude toward English even though their English level are still low. The growth of confidence during one semester proves that the students can find their way to treat English as the enjoyable course. In other hand, mastering vocabularies becomes the most needed topics. The students seems to have same recognition on the more vocabularies they know the better their English will be. Some useful activities that support their learning were also identified based on the questioner. Activities such as listening to English song and watching videos or movies were realized by the students can help them to improve their English skills.

Teaching English nowadays is challenged by the globalization where English had become global language. People use English as a lingua franca because globalization and digital world has opened a new society where people can meet and talk each other via online. This situation also has impact on how to teach English in Indonesia. The students need language skills, English, so that they can enter the digital world with confidence. Being part of digital society requires English skills.

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