

**EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH VITALITY: DESCRIPTIVE
STUDY IN SECOND GRADE AT SMPN 2 PRAYA BARAT ACADEMIC YEAR
2014/2015**



AN ARTICLE

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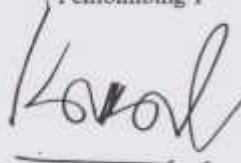
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**EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH VITALITY: DESCRIPTIVE
STUDY IN SECOND GRADE AT SMPN 2 PRAYA BARAT ACADEMIC YEAR
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ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini meneliti tentang persepsi siswa tentang pentingnya belajar bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi persepsi siswa tentang pentingnya belajar bahasa Inggris and aspek-aspek yang mempengaruhi persepsi ini. Populasi dari penelitian ini adalah seratus orang siswa kelas 8 dan contoh yang digunakan yaitu 40 siswa yang didapat melalui tehnik pengelompokan sesuai dengan kriteria tertentu. Data diperoleh dari dokumen-dokumen, observasi, wawancara dan kuisisioner. Kemudian, data yang sudah terkumpul dianalisis melalui identifikasi, deskripsi dan penjelasan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa 51,73% siswa berpersepsi bahwa bahasa Inggris penting untuk dipelajari, dan persepsi ini berbeda berdasarkan latar belakang siswa tetapi tidak berpengaruh penting.

Kata kunci : Siswa EFL, Persepsi, Kekuatan menjaga bahasa, tehnik pengelompokan contoh

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with EFL learners' perception of English vitality. This study is aimed to identify the students' perceptions about the importance of learning English and the aspects which influence these perceptions. The population of this study is one hundred students in second grade, and the sample is forty students obtained by using cluster sampling technique. The data were gained through documents, observation, interview, and questionnaire. Then, the data were analysed through identification, description and explanation. The results indicate that 51,73% students perceive that it is important to learn English. In addition, these perceptions differ according to students' backgrounds (intelligence, economic and domicile) although these aspects have no significant effect on their perceptions.

Keyword: EFL learners, Perception, Ethnolinguistic Vitality, Cluster Sampling Technique

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a huge country with more than 17 thousand islands ranged from Sabang to Merauke. It consists of 34 provinces including West Nusa Tenggara. West Nusa Tenggara has two big islands, namely Lombok and Sumbawa lived by various ethnics with different indigenous languages. There are three native ethnics: Sasak, Samawa and Mbojo. In addition, of course, there are some native languages belong to each ethnic. In Lombok, Sasak is the biggest ethnic group with Sasak as the native language. Besides, to unify those differences, Bahasa Indonesia comes as the National Language.

Bahasa Indonesia is a unifying instrument which relates inter-regional and cross-cultural. Bahasa Indonesia is important to be learnt and understood by all people in Indonesia because it is an instrument used to facilitate people in Indonesia in communication with the other.

The use of Bahasa Indonesia as the national language and the existence of the vernacular language drag Indonesia people to be bilingual people. However, beside Bahasa Indonesia and the vernacular language, some people feel that foreign language is also important in their social activities especially for intellect people. English, an international language, is one of many foreign languages that they learn. English is universal language which can be used as international language, language of science, language of technology, and language of economy. English as international language means that almost all people of the world use it as their daily language in communication. In addition, Journals, articles, science books usually use English as their language. It relates with English as the international language. With using English as the language, people in the world are more understand with the meaning and the function of that articles, journals or science books. Besides, technology and economy is also used English as the instrument to deliver meaning of their purposes. Almost electronic products use English in instruction or information about that product. It is same as in economy. Some people use English to communicate with their partners.

However, that perception is just for some part of the community. Many people, especially for students, have different expectation about English as a foreign language.

Students who live in the city may have different way of thinking about the importance of learning English compared with students who live in rural area. It is possible that they have different perception about it. It can be caused by some factors: the background of resident, age, distances of their resident with tourism object, or gender. Perception is the expectation or what we think about something. Perception means the way one thinks of a certain matter and belief it, or it means the way that you see things with your senses (Gate, et al., 2008, p:1103).

Focusing on this reality, the writer interested in conducting the study at SMPN 2 Praya Barat especially for students in second grade because Praya Barat is the rural area in South Lombok with people who use Sasak as their daily language and are still strange with language from outside. Thus, the writer wants to know their thinking of English vitality. In Indonesia, English is the subject that is taught started from junior high school. In addition, because this research will use intelligence (achievement) as one of the aspects in doing this research, the writer chooses second grade. Thus, it makes the writer chooses “EFL Learners’ Perception of English Vitality: Descriptive Study in Second Grade at SMPN 2 Praya Barat Academic Year 2014/2015” as the title of the study.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Learning English in Indonesia is different with learning it in other country such as Malaysia or Singapore. In Indonesia, English is as a foreign language because it is learnt only as need in globalization not as an instrument in social communication or interaction. Some people see that English as a foreign language and English as a second language are different. They assume that English as a foreign learner is English that is learnt in schools as a part of curriculum, and it is used for certain purposes (e.g. getting scholarship, job). In addition, English as a second language is English used in social daily lives beside the mother tongue. However, some people disagree with this assumption. Dulay, Burt, Krashen (1982 in Setiyadi, 2006, p:21) state that “Second language acquisition includes learning a new language in a foreign language context (e.g. English in Mexico or German in the United States) as well as learning a new language in host language environment (e.g. German in German).” They use the term second language (L2) to refer to both foreign and host languages and the teaching methods apply to the acquisition of both (1982:11).

Although the researchers seem not to agree with the distinction between English as a foreign language and English as a second language, Krashen (1985 in Setiyadi, 2006, p:21) argues that there are two different ways of gaining or developing ability in a target language (in this case is English). The first one is acquisition. It is defined as a subconscious process identical to the process that is used in first language acquisition in all important ways. The second one is learning. Learning is as conscious knowing or information about a target language. Thus, based on the explanation above, it can conclude that EFL learners are the people who learn English as a new language context.

Almost all of people in the world use English as the language to communicate. The common perspective, which refers to as World Englishes, aims to describe phonological, grammatical, lexical and pragmatic features of current use of English as the factor of geographical region. Kachru (1989) cited in Horberger (2010:89) distinguish the three major of English users. That are:

1. The first is native users of English for whom English is the first language in almost all functions which the speakers in this group as the member of the Inner Circle. The example of this group is the speakers from United States, United Kingdom and Australia.
2. The second one is nonnative users of English who use an institutionalized second-language variety of English. The speakers of this group are the member of the Outer Circle. The speakers from Philippines and South Africa are included in this group.
3. The last group is nonnative users of English who consider English a foreign language and use it in restricted domain. The speakers from Indonesia, China and Hungary are the member of this group. The speakers of this group are the member of Expanding circle.

Horberger (2010:89) states that at present, there are a growing number of standardized varieties of English, not only in Outer Circle but also in Expanding Circle. Based on Lowenberg (2002: 431) English actually functions as second language and often develops native norm in certain intranational and regional domain of language use (e.g. across Europe). In Indonesia, as the member of Expanding Circle, English is used only in restricted domains such as in the school as a subject which must be learnt by the students.

Karchu (1983:139) argues that English has ability to blend itself with cultural and social complex of the country and has become 'culture-bound'. Because of that argument, he also argues that new Englishes cannot be characterized in term of acquisitional inadequacy, or be judged by the norms of English in Inner Circle countries.

It is necessary to consider the categorization of current views toward the spread of English of Pennycook (2003) in arranging through various perspectives on present-day of English use. The first is the *homogeny position*. This position views the spread of English as leading to a homogenization of world culture. Heterogeny position is the second position of Pennycook's categorization. In this position, Karchu describes that the features of world Englishes as an indication of pluricentricism that has been brought about by globalization.

The effect of globalization on the use of English based on Pennycook (2003) is 'a fluid mixture of cultural heritage ... and popular culture ..., of change and tradition, of border crossing and ethnic affiliation, of global appropriation and local contextualization'. English as an international language is a term used to share same culture or not between L2 and L1 speakers of English. It is used to make L2 and L1 speakers of English easier to communicate with.

Different people have different perception about something in both of interested or no. Perception means the way one thinks of a certain matter and belief it, or it means the way that you see things with your senses (Gate, et al., 2008, p:1103). In addition, Lindsay & Norman (1977) state that "perception is the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world" (Cited in Pickens, 2005, p:52). It means that person is faced with a situation or stimuli. Pickens (2005, p:54) argues that the perception process follows four stages: stimulation, registration, organization, and interpretation.

a. Stimulation

In this stage, receptiveness of the stimuli is highly selective and may be limited by a person's existing beliefs, attitude, motivation, and personality. A person's awareness and acceptance of the stimuli play a significant role in perception process.

b. Registration

In Registration, the manager's role should be as facilitator versus guiding a question and answer session.

c. Organization

The facilitator's goal is to try to foster interpersonal support by having participants share ideas and experiences.

d. Interpretation

It is important to provide a summary in the end of each session. This shows the activeness of participant.

Our perceptions depend on any aspects such as how learners see a particular event or situation. Perception involves motivation and expectation. The effect of the relaxing classroom, teacher support, personality, self confidence, and fear of making mistake are the factors that influence learners' perception too.

Collins dictionary states that vitality is defined as "the power or ability to continue in existence, live, or grow." In addition, Oxford dictionaries defines that vitality is the state of being strong and active; energy. Thus, Vitality can be defined as the ability or energy to survive and to be strong to continue in existence, live, or grow.

Ethnolinguistic vitality is defined as what "makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations." (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor 1977: 308 cited in Ehala 2009: 38). He stated that the notion of ethnolinguistic vitality is in order to place social identity (and other psychological) processes the ethnolinguistic behavior in their appropriate socialcultural context. He also argued that group's strengths and weaknesses on dimensional of social identity and demographic could provide the overall classification of low, medium, and high vitality. It means that the more vitality of ethnolinguistic group has the more perhaps it would be to survive as a distinctive collectivity in intergroup settings (Ehala, 2009: 38).

In this setting of the study, the learners mostly use the native language, Sasak. Moreover, in teaching and learning process they tend to use Sasak. The learners mostly assume that English just as the subject which must they learn in the school. Meanwhile, Bahasa Indonesia is mostly used by people who are in higher level of education or educated

people. Therefore, they argue that people who use Bahasa Indonesia belong to high social status in the society.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted by applying three steps of research namely, pre-research, research and post research. The writer observed the students, school and situation that were studied as the pre research. Setting of this study, SMPN 2 Praya Barat was observed as a school setting in rural are of Praya. In this study, the writer focused on students' perception in second grade as the population. Then research was conducted by applying interview and giving questionnaire. Questionnaire was given along with the interview. Interview was also conducted to students, head master and teachers to gain the information about the students' characteristics. Then analyzed, described and explained the data, namely post research. In this phase, the writer analyzed and identified the samples and their perception. Next, writer identified, determined and described the perception of students about learning English. Finally, the conclusion was dragged related to the research question. Thus, the writer used descriptive qualitative and quantitative method to collect data. Other sources were assisted to gather more detail and complete data such as the document to gather information about students' academic reports and other information related to the population.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The study is aimed at identifying learners' perceptions on English vitality and based on the level of intelligence, economic background and geographical location of domicile. For this purpose the writer collected data from various sources: documents, observation, questionnaire and interview. The documents in the form of personal and academic records were collected from the school administration. Observation was conducted from the second day of October 2014 up to the second day of November 2014 and four classes of students and three English teachers were observed for their teaching learning activities. The questionnaire was distributed along side with this observation. Several students were interviewed for their perception of English and English lesson and several teachers including the head master, the guiding and counseling teacher and the English teacher were

interviewed for their perception of the students and their learning. The results of this are presented below.

Table 1: Learning English due to closeness to tourism

No	Category	Close		Distant	
		F	%	F	%
1	Strongly Agree	55	21,15	47	18,08
2	Agree	78	30,00	87	33,46
3	Rather Disagree	74	28,46	59	22,69
4	Disagree	40	15,38	39	15,00
5	Strongly Disagree	13	5,00	28	10,77

Table 2 : Learning English due to students' academic records

No	Category	Smart		Less	
		F	%	F	%
1	Strongly Agree	63	24,23	39	15,00
2	Agree	86	33,08	76	29,23
3	Rather Disagree	51	19,62	82	31,54
4	Disagree	43	16,54	40	15,38
5	Strongly Disagree	17	6,54	25	9,62

Table 3 : Learning English due to Economic

No	Category	Rich		Low	
		F	%	F	%
1	Strongly Agree	52	20,00	50	19,23
2	Agree	94	36,15	68	26,15
3	Rather Disagree	64	24,62	69	26,54

4	Disagree	33	12,69	48	18,46
5	Strongly Disagree	17	6,54	25	9,62

Table 1, 2 and 3 contains frequency and percentage of students' perception in learning English due to their domicile, academic records and economic. Based on table 1 student who live close to tourism object have the highest percentage in answer 'agree' with 30,00% and the lowest percentage in answer 'strongly disagree' with 5,00%. Meanwhile, the highest percentage in category distant to tourism is agree with 33,46% and the lowest is 10,77% in answer 'strongly disagree'. It means that the students who live close to or distant from tourism object have same perception that is high perception about the important of learning English.

In addition, the category smart or less has different result. In smart student category, the answers 'agree' is also being the highest percentage with 33,08% and the answer 'strongly disagree' is being the lowest percentage in 6,54%. Besides, The answer 'rather disagree' and 'strongly disagree' with percentage 31,54% and 9,62% are being the highest and the lowest level in less smart category. It indicates that smart students have high perception in learning English rather than the less one.

In economic aspect, the highest percentage of students' perception in learning English of rich criteria is students who answer 'agree' with 36,15% and the lowest one is strongly disagree with 6,54%. Meanwhile, in low criteria the students who answer 'rather agree' with 26,54% are the highest, and 'strongly disagree' with 9,62% is the lowest. It means that students who have high level of economy have high perception of English.

Table 4: Reason for learning English

No	Category	Statement in questionnaire	F	%
1	Access to English speaking area	8, 10	27	5,02
2	Parental support	9	15	5,58
3	For jobs	13	29	5,39

4	To operate English-based instruments	15, 16	58	10,78
5	To study at English Department	17, 20	44	8,18
6	In Favor of English	18	16	5,95
7	Curricular objectives	19	16	5,95
8	For economy development	11, 12, 14	64	7,93
	Total	13	269	51,73

Table 4 consists of reason for learning English implied in the questionnaire. There are eight reasons for learning English. Frequency of each reason is filled out from students' answer in questionnaire which the statement within it relates with appropriate reason in the table. Data used in this table is occurrence of agree and strongly agree of students' answer in all statements in the questionnaire.

In questionnaire there are some reasons for learning English implied. There are eight reasons covered in table 4. Only answer 'agree' and 'strongly agree' used to fill the table. Based on table 4, 10,78% students who answer agree and strongly agree have the highest percentage in reason for learning English to operate English-based instruments. In questionnaire this reason implies in statement 'I learn English in order to operate computer and its media'(15) and 'Most of social media such as internet use English'(16). This reason indicates that technology has big impact for student to learn about English. Seeing the eight reasons in table 4, writer concludes that some students (51,73%) think that learning English is important for them.

CONCLUSION

In this study writer provides EFL learners' perception of English vitality in second grade at SMPN 2 Praya Barat in academic year 2014/2015. Referring to the previous explanation, it is concluded into two major points.

1. EFL learners' perception of English vitality is different in each aspect. The aspects of intelligence of students' achievements (high-low), economic (high-low) and domicile (close-distant) have effect in their perception. 51,73% students perceive that learning

English is important for them with 10,78% learners perceive that they learn English in order to operate English-based instrument.

2. Students' perceptions differ according to students' backgrounds (intelligence of students' achievements, economy and domicile), but not significantly. Based on intelligence of students' achievements, students who have low achievement perceive that learning English is not awfully important, meanwhile the students with high achievement perceive that learning English is important. In terms of economic background, students with high economy level assume that English is crucial to learn, whilst the students with low level of economy tend to consider English is not quite important. Furthermore, learners domicile has a role in affecting students' perceptions in learning English. It is surprise that students living close to tourism object do not feel they need to learn English, while ones who live far from it think English is somewhat required to be learnt.

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