

## **ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH AS INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

English is an international language that has an important role to communicate between countries. Today, English is the main language that enters into every aspect of life, one of which is education. In Indonesia itself, English is also included in the school curriculum and must be taught to students. Therefore, this study aims to find out the perception of English students towards English as a language, because English students will be prepared to become educators. The results of this study showed that every English student has a good perception of English. They also agree that English provides many benefits for personal and professional development. Some students also gave reasons why they liked English and their purpose of learning English. However, although the students have a good perception of English, most of the English students rarely use English in their daily life. In conclusion, a good perception of a language does not necessarily mean that the language is used in life.

*Keywords: English, Perception, Students*

## INTRODUCTION

At the present time, most citizens of the world have used English as the main language and also as a tool to communicate with each other from various regions of the world (Utami et al., 2022). Based on data obtained from the British Council book (2013), it is known that there are 1.75 billion people who use English. There are several reasons why English is important to learn. The first is to facilitate a person in finding a job, improve the ability of social interaction with people abroad, expand the search for knowledge or literature internationally, and also to open the horizons of understanding of the use of technology (Putri & Wijayanti, 2008). According to Crystal (1997) at present English is the most superior international language and is used by many people.

Factors that make English an international language include; (1) Political factors. Based on history, the British Empire has conquered various countries such as Australia, Asian countries, Africa, ancient India and also most of the American continent. The British made a rule to use English when communicating with local people. (2) Expansion factor. The expansion factor in this context can be interpreted as language expansion. The language expansion factor at that time occurred in the United States, and after World War II, the United States took a role in expanding trade and using English as a means of communication. Ultimately, English did not only develop in Great Britain or the European region, but also began to dominate in various regions of the world (Baugh, Albert C. 1935. *A History of the English Language*). Up to the present, English has an important role in aspects of life, not only has a role in politics, but English also plays an important role in education.

English is the first foreign language in Indonesia. This statement was based on the decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 096/1967 dated December 12, 1967 (Kartono, 1980: 126). The factor that made English chosen as the first foreign language in Indonesia among other foreign languages was because currently, Indonesian could not be used to communicate with the outside world. Another factor is because English is an international language that plays an important role in various fields, such as politics and education. In politics, English is used as a communication tool to establish cooperation and friendship with other nations. In the field of education, someone can obtain, learn, and understand new knowledge delivered in English. Someone can also have extensive opportunities to study abroad with mastery of English as a default capital (Kartono, 1980: 125). Thus, English is a main priority that must be learned among other foreign languages.

However, Indonesians' perceptions of English as a language are still very diverse. Indonesians who learn English are usually interested in the culture of European society. Based on the theory conveyed by Nababan (1993: 82) Someone who has an interest in learning a language, usually has an interest in the culture of

the place where the language comes from. Nababan also states that language and culture have an interrelated relationship, namely (1) language is part of culture (phylogenetic), and (2) person learns culture through his language (ontogenetic).

Some people who learn English have the aim of communicating with people from various parts of the world, and also as motivation and a means when someone wants to continue their education abroad. Based on research by Eliza Putri Ananda (2023), it was revealed that Indonesian people, especially teenagers, tend to insert English when communicating. This means that they have a positive perception of English. On the other hand, there are still some Indonesians who are not interested in learning English. This can happen because their main focus is not on language development or because they are not interested in the culture of European society.

Many people are willing to make an effort to learn English because they realize that English will provide many benefits for the development of quality of life. Some of the efforts people make to learn English include attending courses, practicing regularly using media such as videos or watching movies, and choosing to enter the English education department to deepen their knowledge of grammar. Someone who is interested in learning English must be influenced by strong motivation. Ellis (2013) states that motivation in learning English cannot be separated from two things, namely the attitudes and affective conditions of learners which will directly affect students' effort in learning a foreign language. These attitudes and affective conditions are factors that will encourage students to make more effort in learning, so that the goal of mastering English can be achieved.

English language learning is mandatory for students. Launder (2008) states that English is a subject that must be studied for three years in junior high school and three years in senior high school. English has been an optional subject since the 1994 curriculum was implemented in Indonesia. However, in reality there are still many students who do not make good progress in their English language skills even though they have been taking English lessons at school for years (M. Thalal, 2010).

Several previous studies, such as research conducted by Ema Dauyah and Yulinar (2018) regarding students' perceptions of English, show that 84% of students are motivated to study English to expand their knowledge pertaining to the world of education. This is because participants feel that English really helps them to understand the world for the better (through reading, films, news, etc.). In addition, 76% of participants agreed that learning English would improve relationships and have an impact on the world of work.

Apart from that, research conducted by Diah Rosyani Meisani (2021) regarding students' perceptions of English as local content showed that 84.54% of 97 participants gave positive responses to English. The participants felt that English could help them get many opportunities. Therefore, the participants were very

enthusiastic about participating in the English learning process in class. On the other hand, there were 15.46% of participants who were not interested in learning English. Some of the reasons put forward by participants included; they have difficulty memorizing vocabulary, understanding vocabulary, understanding English grammar, and also have difficulty pronouncing English words correctly.

Therefore, it is important to know students' perceptions of English as a language. A person's perception of English as a language will influence the process of learning that language. As is known, English is a language that has an important role in various aspects, one of which is the educational aspect. Even though English has an important role as an international language and is a mandatory subject in school, not all students have a positive view and interest in English. This also applies to students in the English language education study program. Consequently, in this case study, researchers explored in more depth the perceptions of English language education study program students towards English as a language, because these students are being prepared to become educators, who will later teach English.

This research was conducted on students of the English language education study program at Palangka Raya University. In Palangka Raya itself, research related to the perception of English as a language is still very rare. Palangka Raya is a province that rarely interacts with people from abroad, and people in Palangka Raya themselves rarely speak out about the importance of English as an international language. The people who will play a role in providing an understanding of the importance of English are those who are currently being prepared to become English teachers in the English language education study program. It is hoped that this research will provide benefits and become reference material for further research.

## **LITERATUR REVIEW**

English has been officially designated as the first foreign language in Indonesia, as stipulated in the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 096/1967 issued on December 12, 1967 (Kartono, 1980). One of the primary reasons for this policy was the limited capacity of the Indonesian language to function as a medium of international communication at that time. In addition, English was selected because of its status as an international language with significant influence across various domains, particularly politics and education. In the political sphere, English serves as a key means of communication for fostering international cooperation and diplomatic relations. In the educational context, proficiency in English enables individuals to access, acquire, and comprehend new knowledge that is predominantly presented in English, as well as to pursue study opportunities abroad. Therefore, English has been prioritized over other foreign languages in Indonesia's education system (Kartono, 1980).

Chaer (2013: 177) states that English is the primary means of international communication and has become the lingua franca for nations around the world. Therefore, English plays an important role for anyone who wants to build extensive relationships with people from various countries. English also plays an important role in acquiring knowledge in a broader and more detailed manner. According to Nevid (2017), perception is a process of interpreting the world as seen through sight or experience. Perception can mean a response or point of view towards something. Djamarah (2011) states in his theory that students are the main subjects in the field of education. Students are subjects who have the goal of seeking knowledge in educational institutions. They need support, guidance, and motivation to explore their potential.

## **METHOD**

In this study, researchers utilized a mix method. Mix method is a synthesis of quantitative and qualitative methods. This mixed method is commonly used by researchers to solve complex problems that are unable to always be achieved using only one method, be it qualitative or quantitative methods (John W Creswell, 2009). In the first step, researchers distributed questionnaires as a form of application of quantitative methods. Based on a statement from Creswell (2014), a questionnaire is a data collection technique that uses questions or written statements to respondents to answer. Another opinion was also expressed by Sugiyono (2017: 42) that a questionnaire is a data collection technique that is done by giving a set of questions or statements in writing to participants. The participants in this study were students of the English education study program at PalangkaRaya University class of 2022. There were 106 students in the class of 2022, and those who responded to the questionnaire distributed amounted to 78 people.

The survey given by the researcher, it contains statements related to English as a language. Participants are given a score for these statements (for example 1-5, yes or no, agree or disagree, and others). In the second step, the researcher used qualitative methods through interview instruments. The researcher used open-ended interviews with the participants. According to Creswell (2014) interviews are a technique for collecting data by conducting direct interactions with participants. Qualitative interviews have the aim of obtaining information and also a deeper and more reliable understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The researcher selected 8 participants from batch 22 to be interviewed. 4 of the 8 participants were students who initially did not plan to enter the English education study program. In the meantime, 4 out of 8 participants had very good English skills.

From the results of this interview, it is known that there are various perceptions towards English based on the participants' backgrounds. In the data analysis process, researchers accomplished several stages. For quantitative

methods, researchers used descriptive statistical techniques. Before conducting statistical data analysis, researchers tested the validity and reliability of questionnaire statements. According to Sugiyono (2020: 202) the validity test is a process to test the real data with the data collected by the researcher. The validity test is used to determine whether each item in the instrument is valid or not. According to Sugiyono (2020: 209) reliability is the process of measuring the same object with the aim of producing the same data. should be done only on questions that have met the validity test. In this study, researchers conducted validity and reliability tests using SPSS. Descriptive statistical data analysis is included in the type of inferential data analysis. Based on the statement from Sugiyono (2014) inferential data analysis is a method of data analysis by describing data without making conclusions that apply to the public. In processing interview data, researchers made very clear interpretations of each participant's diverse answers, making it easier for readers to understand participant perceptions well.

## **FINDING**

Based on the results of the study, the researcher presents the findings obtained from the distribution of questionnaires and answers to interviews. These findings and discussions will describe clearly and in detail about English students' perceptions of English as an international language. This data is presented in two forms. The first is in the form of quantitative percentages taken from the questionnaire statements, and also the results of the description of the interview answers regarding the perceptions of English Education Students Perception of English as International Language. The following are the results of the validity and reliability of each aspect of the questionnaire.

There are two ways to prove the validity of an instrument. The first way is to compare it with the  $r$  table value, the second way is to compare the number with the significance value. The way to compare numbers with the  $r$  table value is to pay attention to the total value of the person correlation. The number of respondents is 78 people with a significance level of 5% and the comparison number is 0.223. This figure will be compared with the person correlation of the results of the spss validity test. If the number is greater than the value of 0.223, the questionnaire statement is declared valid. While the reference for the significance value itself is, an instrument is declared valid if the resulting number is  $<0.05$ . The reliability test is used to test the reliability of the research instrument. A questionnaire is said to be reliable if the answers it produces are consistent over time. The requirement is if the resulting Cronbach' alpha value is  $> 0.6$ . the result showed the reliability of English use in daily life was 0.73. Then, the reliability of the English benefits in everyday life was 0.974. Moreover, the reliability of attitude and motivation in learning English was 0.834.

In the questionnaire distributed by the researcher, there were three aspects of the statement that became a reference to see the overall outline of the perception of English students towards English as a language. The three aspects of the questionnaire included: The use of English in daily life (consisting of 5 statements), the benefits of English in daily life (7 statements), and also the attitude and motivation in learning English (10 statements). For each statement, the participants gave a score. The score consists of 4 (strongly agree), 3 (agree), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree). The results of the tool can be seen below.

### The Use of English in Daily life

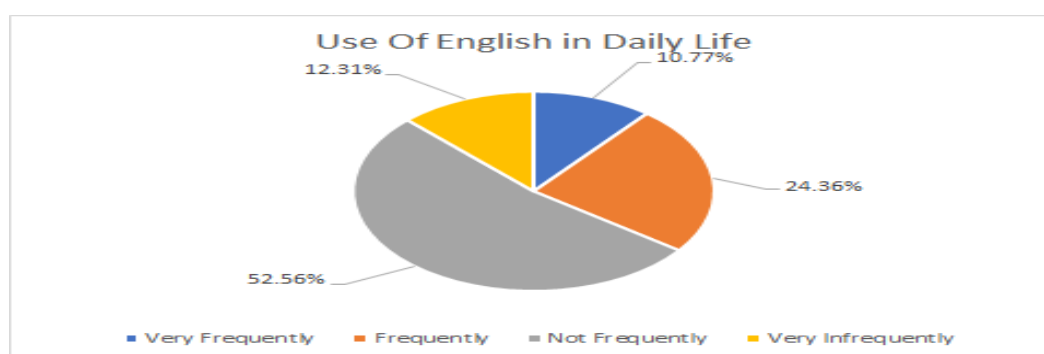


Figure 1.

The five statements in the first aspect of the questionnaire were about how often English students use English in daily life. The results show that more English students do not often use English in their daily lives. This can be seen from 52.56% of students who answered that they do not often use English in their daily lives. Furthermore, 24.36% of students answered that they often use English in their daily lives. 12.31% of students answered that they do not use English very often in their daily lives, and 10.77% of students answered that they use English very often in their daily lives. The percentage of answers from each questionnaire statement can be seen in the histogram below.

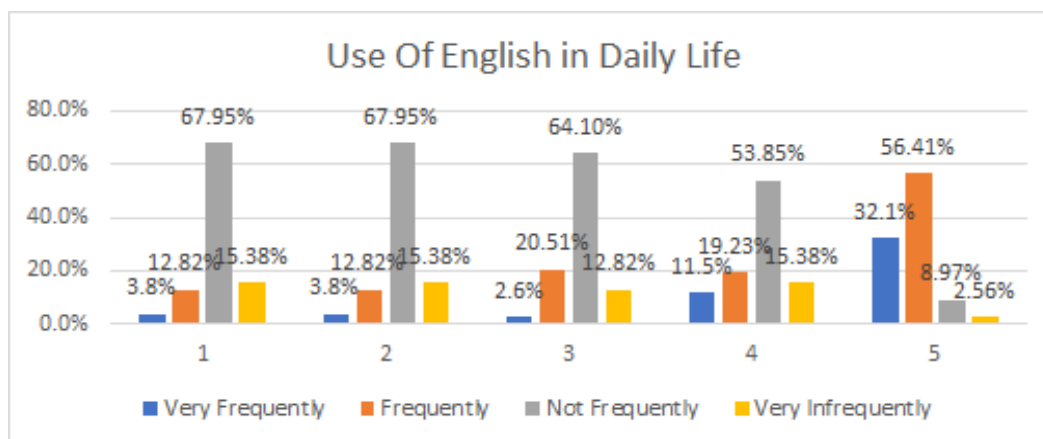


Figure 2.

The first questionnaire item was about all the time using English when on campus. In the first statement, the results showed that 67.95% (53) out of 78 English students did not use English when on campus. The second questionnaire statement was about using English when having informal conversations with friends. The results show that 67.95% (53) out of 78 English students do not often speak English with friends. The third questionnaire statement was about always using English when talking to lecturers, either during study or consultation. The results showed that 64.10% (50) out of 78 English students do not often use English when talking to lecturers.

The fourth statement is about frequently using English in almost all daily life. The results showed that 53.85% (42) out of 78 English students do not use English often in their daily lives. The last item of the questionnaire in the first aspect contained a statement about always looking for new vocabulary to become more fluent in English. The results showed that 56, 41% (44) out of 78 English students often look for English vocabulary to improve their English proficiency. The conclusion that the researcher draws from this first aspect of the questionnaire is that although there are many English students who look up their English vocabulary, the English students tend not to use English in their lives.

## 2. The Benefits of English in everyday life



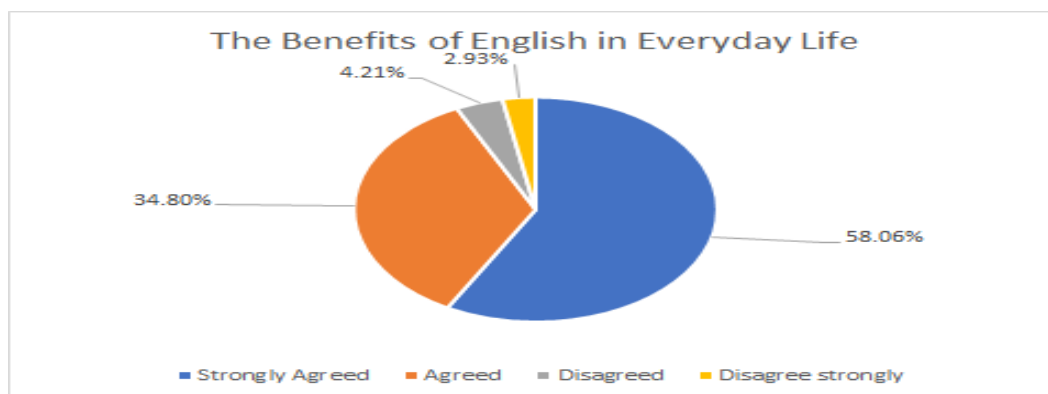


Figure 3.

The seven statements contained in the second aspect contain the benefits of English in everyday life. From the diagram above it can be seen that 58.06% of English education students strongly agree about the positive benefits when learning English. 34.80% agreed about the good benefits of learning English. 4.21% of students disagree with the questionnaire statement. 2.93% of students strongly disagreed with the questionnaire statement. As for the percentage of answers from each questionnaire statement can be seen in the histogram below.

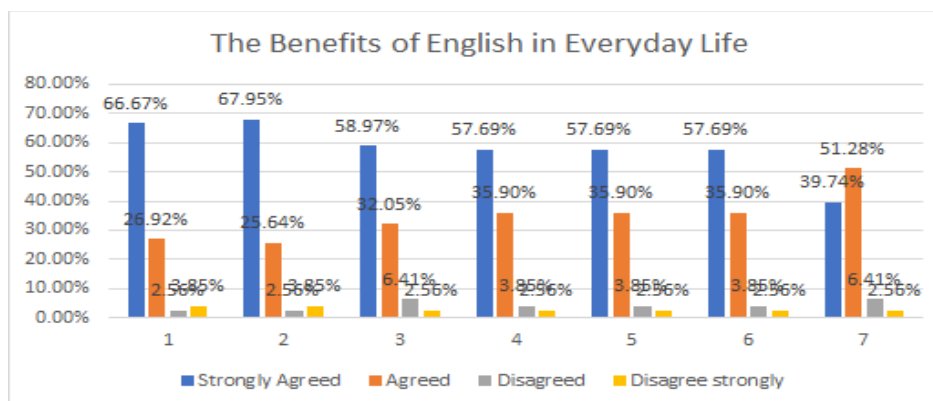


Figure 4.

The first questionnaire item contained a statement about the perceived agreement that English is an important language among other languages to communicate internationally. The percentage results showed that 66.67% (52) of 78 English students strongly agreed with the statement. The second questionnaire item contained agreement with the perception that English can open up opportunities to gain wider relationships. The results showed that 67.95% (53) out of 78 English students strongly agreed with the statement. The third questionnaire item contained a statement about the approval of perceptions related to self-confidence to be able to compete in the world when mastering English well. The results showed that 58.97% (46) out of 78 English students strongly agreed with the statement.

The fourth item of the questionnaire contained agreement with the statement regarding the acquisition of good knowledge with English. The results showed that 57.69% (45) of 78 English students strongly agreed with the statement. The fifth item of the questionnaire contained a statement about agreement with the perception of the role of English in accessing today's technology. The results showed that 57.69% (45) out of 78 English students strongly agreed with the statement. The sixth questionnaire item contained a statement about perceived agreement regarding the role of English in understanding different cultural perspectives. The results showed that there were 57.69% (45) out of 78 English students who strongly agreed with the statement.

The seventh questionnaire item asked about the perception agreement regarding companies that tend to consider prospective employees with good English language skills. The results showed that 51.28% (40) of the 78 English students agreed with the statement. This shows that most English students strongly agree on the benefits of learning English

#### Attitude and Motivation in Learning English

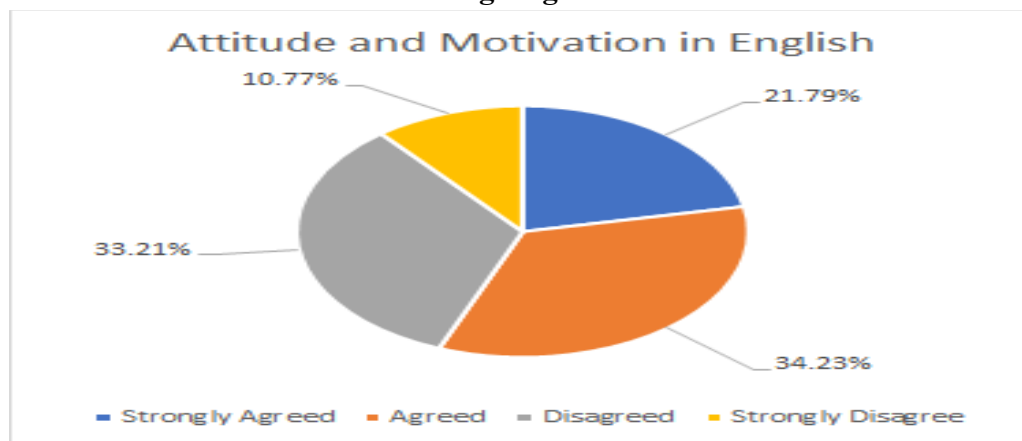


Figure 5.

The 10 statements of the third aspect of the questionnaire were about their attitude and motivation when learning English. The results show that 34, 23% of the English language students strongly disagree (can also be conditioned as strongly disagree) to the statements of the questionnaire. 33.21 % of the students disagreed (not often) with the questionnaire statements. 21.79 % strongly agreed (not often) with the questionnaire statements, and 10, 77 % agreed (often) with the questionnaire statements. The answers to the 10 statements can be seen in the histogram below.

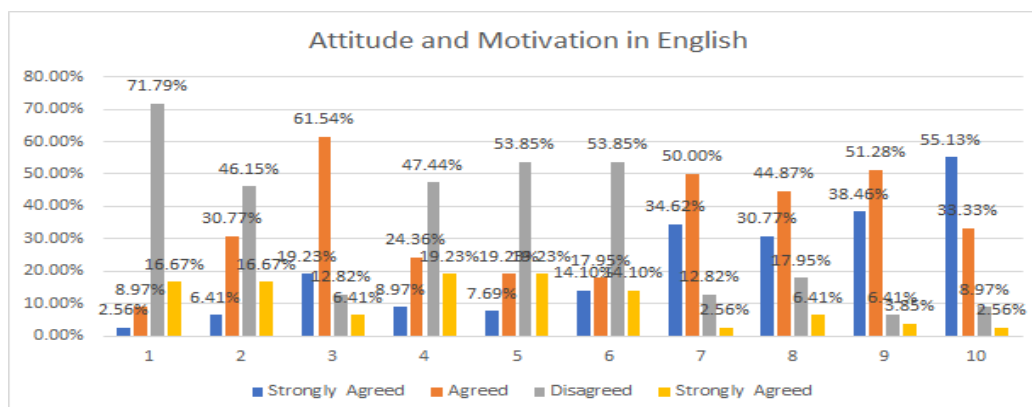


Figure 6.

The first questionnaire item contained the statement that students often practiced their English. The results showed that 71.79% (56) of the English students did not often practice their English. The second questionnaire item contained a statement regarding the agreement of self-perception, that their English is very good for communication. The results showed that 46, 15% (36) of 78 English students disagreed with the statement. The third questionnaire item contained a statement about the seriousness of learning English during college. The results showed that 61.54% (48) of 78 English students agreed with the statement. The fourth item of the questionnaire contained a statement about whether one is confident when speaking English.

The results showed that 47.44% (37) out of 78 English students disagreed (not confident) with the statement. The fifth item of the questionnaire contained a statement about fluency in explaining presentation materials in English. The results showed that 53.85% (42) of 78 English students disagreed (not fluent) with the statement. The sixth questionnaire item contained a statement about not being afraid to make mistakes when speaking English. The results showed that 53.85% (42) out of 78 English students disagreed (still afraid) with the statement.

The seventh item of the questionnaire contained a statement about the desire to learn English well in order to introduce local culture to the international level. The results showed that 50.00% (39) out of 78 English students agreed with the statement. The eighth questionnaire item contained a statement about perceptual agreement when entering the English education study program based on their own motivation. The results showed that 44, 87% (35) of 78 English students agreed with the statement. The ninth questionnaire item contained a statement regarding perceived agreement with the liking of associating with people who speak English. The results showed that 51.28% (40) of 78 English students agreed with the statement. The tenth questionnaire item contained a questionnaire statement about the motivation of learning English to go abroad. The results showed that 55, 13% (43) of 78 English students strongly agreed with the statement.

After obtaining data from distributing questionnaires to 106 English students in batch 2022 of Palangka Raya University, researchers also obtained data from the interview process. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews. According to Sugiyono (2016: 430) semi-structured interviews are interviews whose questions are freer than structured questions, but do not get out of the line of questions that have been arranged. The main aspects of the questions asked in this study relate to the perceptions, motivations, and also the frequency of use of English by English language students. The responses of the eight participants have been thematically analyzed for depth, meaning, and relevance to the main topic of the study.

### **Perceptions of English Before Entering the English Education Study Program**

In this section, the researcher asked the eight participants about their initial motivation to enter the English education study program. The researcher also asked questions related to their views on English before entering the English education study program. Motivation is usually related to perception before realizing something. The following are the answers from each participant.

***Participant 1:** "I did like English before I entered the English education study program. I want to understand many things that are said in English."*

***Participant 2:** "I like English because I think people who can speak English are cool. I like playing games, listening to English music, and watching English movies. That's why I want to understand English better."*

***Participant 3:** "I did like English before entering this study program. When I was in middle school, I joined an English club and also an English debate competition. From there I felt that English is very important to obtain useful achievements."*

***Participant 4:** "I have liked English for a long time, I also have aspirations to travel the world. I am motivated to learn English more deeply so that I can gain a wide range of relationships and experiences."*

***Participant 5:** "I have liked English for a long time. I am also interested in English literature. I realized that language skills can help people to develop better."*

***Participant 6:** "Before entering the English Education Study Program, I realized that English plays an important role in every aspect of life. Therefore, I wanted to study English in depth, the aim was to reach the stage of broad communication and relationships."*

***Participant 7:** "Before entering English education, I really liked English because I wanted to go abroad. I wanted to develop my language skills because when I was in middle school, I majored in languages."*

***Participant 8:** "I really liked English from elementary school. I realized that English can open up wider opportunities."*

Based on the statements given by each participant, the researcher drew the conclusion that all participants had a good perception of English. All participants also felt that English has an important role in the aspect of broad communication

and to obtain useful achievements. English also has an important role in developing self-quality.

### **Perceptions of English after entering the English Education Study Program**

In this section, the researcher asked the participants whether their perceptions of English changed when they entered the English education study program. In addition, the researcher also asked the participants whether they were serious in learning English. The following are the statements from each participant.

**Participant 1:** *"After entering the English Education study program, I studied English seriously. However, there were times when I felt inferior when I saw other people who were more fluent. In addition, my view of English has also changed. I think English is a special language. I realize that in Palangka Raya itself there may still be many people who cannot speak English, so English is a special language that I can learn here."*

**Participant 2:** *"After entering the English Education study program, I immediately realized that English is very, very important to support the quality of life. I saw that people who are good at English have good jobs. Some people who are good at English also have the opportunity to go abroad. As for myself, I am still learning English in moderation, I also adjust it to the abilities I have."*

**Participant 3:** *"After entering the English Education study program, my views on English have also changed. I even want to become a linguistics lecturer. The reason is that I want to teach students that the basis of good English is to learn and understand linguistics well first."*

**Participant 4:** *"Yes, I am very serious about learning English. After entering the English education study program, my views on English have also changed. I increasingly think that English should be taught to school-age children. I eventually want to become an English teacher because I want to make students realize that English is an important language today."*

**Participant 5:** *"During my time in the English education study program, I studied English seriously. My views on English have also changed. First, I found out that English has a level of difficulty when applied to formal situations. For example, when doing scientific writing, I had to try harder to learn it. All this time I thought that English was an easy language because I used it in informal situations."*

**Participant 6:** *"I am serious about learning English because of the demands and responsibilities. My view on English after entering this study program is still the same, where I feel that English is so important to improve myself. In my personal opinion, I don't care about grammar or pronunciation with a certain accent. For me, learning English is about people understanding what we say. The purpose of language is to strengthen communication with each other."*

**Participant 7:** *"I am very serious about learning English. My views on English have also changed. Firstly, I realized that a lot of knowledge can be acquired through English. English is also useful in information acquisition and employment."*

**Participant 8:** *"While studying in the English education study program, I was very serious in studying, I also tried to maintain my GPA. My view on English has also changed. I see that English is a tool that has great potential for many things. I was very inspired when I saw young lecturers going abroad. I also saw that English could provide a good*

*opportunity to gain a wide range of relationships. The point is I want to develop in English so that I can also have the same opportunities"*

Based on the statements made by the participants above, the researcher drew the conclusion that all participants were very serious in learning English. In addition, their perception of English is also good, because they increasingly realize that there are many benefits that can be obtained when learning English.

### **Focus on the Development of English Language Aspects**

In this section, the researcher gave interview questions to participants related to the development aspects of English. The researcher wanted to know which aspects the participants focused on in honing their language skills, be it listening, speaking, reading, or writing. The following are the answers from the participants.

**Participant 1:** *"I focus more on speaking and listening. I don't like reading and writing in English. When writing, we have to pay attention to grammar and writing structure. I think the process is a bit complicated. I feel more comfortable when listening and speaking in English. I can slowly listen to good pronunciation and learn to practice speaking English at the same time."*

**Participant 2:** *"I focus more on speaking. This is because I feel that the most important thing about language is when other people understand what we say."*

**Participant 3:** *"I learn all aspects of English. Be it speaking, listening, reading, writing and also grammar. For now I am focusing on learning linguistics. I find linguistics very interesting but it is very rare to find friends who like to study linguistics too. The reason I study linguistics is because linguistics is the basis of language that can help us to be able to speak like a native speaker."*

**Participant 4:** *"I myself focus more on listening and speaking. Because I think learning a language requires input and output. We have to get used to listening, then practice speaking."*

**Participant 5:** *"I myself focus more on speaking and listening. The more I listen, the more I know how to pronounce English well. I still have difficulty in learning to write because I have to pay attention to the correct language structure. In addition, I am also less interested in reading English, especially scientific articles, because I find many difficult words."*

**Participant 6:** *"I focus more on adding vocabulary and speaking. I don't really care about grammar because the important thing is that what I say can be understood."*

**Participant 7:** *"I focus more on the speaking aspect. I also pay attention to my grammar, because I feel that as an English student, I should also pay attention to the language structure in every aspect of the language."*

**Participant 8:** *"I focus on learning all aspects of English. Although I find it difficult to learn grammar, I think grammar plays an important role in producing a good language. In addition, I also increase my vocabulary by reading."*

Based on the perceptions conveyed by the participants, the researcher concluded that the speaking aspect is the aspect that is the main focus to be

developed by all participants. Some aspects such as listening, writing, reading, grammar and vocabulary were also developed gradually. One participant was even interested in studying linguistics with the aim of being able to master English well.

### **Frequency of English Usage**

In this section, the researcher asked the participants questions about their use of English. The researcher wanted to know whether the participants used English in their daily lives such as; (1) when studying in class and consulting with lecturers. (2) having informal conversations with friends both on and off campus. In addition, the researcher wanted to know how often the participants practiced their English. Although the perception of English is quite good and the participants are serious in learning English, it is also necessary to know whether they have practiced the English they have learned. The following are the answers from the participants.

**Participant 1:** *"Now that I'm in college, I practice English every day. Sometimes I also practice English outside of class hours. I always listen to songs and also watch English movies. However, I rarely use English with my friends because there is no culture of speaking English on campus. When consulting or studying with lecturers, I just follow the lecturer. There are lecturers who do not mind the use of language."*

**Participant 2:** *"Actually, I practiced English by myself. As for speaking English with friends, I rarely do that. Many of my friends on campus can't speak English. Maybe we only occasionally slip words like 'omaigat' or 'what' into our conversations. For consultations with lecturers, I try to use English even though it's still messy."*

**Participant 3:** *"I practice my English almost every day. I like to watch short videos in English, then I like to practice the new words that I hear. I also like to read English comics. However, I very rarely use English when talking to my friends on campus. We usually chat in Indonesian and Banjar. For consulting or studying with lecturers, I only use English in the first semester, and the lecturers don't mind what language I use."*

**Participant 4:** *"I usually practice English alone, through songs and movies. I rarely speak English with my friends on campus. But there are some of my close friends who usually invite me to speak English with light topics. When it comes to consulting and studying with lecturers, I usually use Indonesian only. This is because the lecturers I meet do not want to be complicated and do not make a big deal about the language I use."*

**Participant 5:** *"I happen to have a close friend who usually speaks English with me. Every day, we have daily conversations in English. I always try not to lose my English. Speaking English with other friends on campus is rare. Yes, because my other friends don't speak English either. When it comes to consulting and studying with lecturers, I usually adjust to the lecturer. If the lecturer asks in English, then I will also answer in English."*

**Participant 6:** *"I practice my English by getting used to reading and listening. However, I almost never use English with my friends on campus. I only practice for myself. When it comes to speaking English with lectures during study and consultation, I only use a little bit of it, mostly using Indonesian."*

**Participant 7:** *"When practicing English, I have a habit of watching videos or reading English passages. I usually record vocabulary on notepads and then repeat it back. Speaking English with friends on campus is very rare, we usually use Indonesian and local languages. English is only used during class hours. As for speaking English with the*

*lecturer, I adjust to the lecturer's will. If the lecturer asks a question using English, then I will try to answer in English too."*

**Participant 8:** *"As for practicing English, I always practice by myself. I usually look for vocabulary through twitter, instagram and also English comics that I read. From there, my vocabulary is increasing. Speaking English with friends on campus is very rare. My friends tend to use Indonesian and Banjar. I always speak English with my lecturers when I'm studying in class because I'm a komti. However, when I do consultations, I only use Indonesian."*

Based on the answers from all participants, it can be concluded that the participants were more comfortable speaking English alone. Although they were in an English education study program, there was no rule or initiative to speak English. The intention to learn English emerged from the awareness of each participant. The participants also had different ways to develop their English language skills. In addition, the lecturers of the English education study program mostly did not have strict rules related to language use.

### **Constraints in Learning English and Confidence in Speaking English**

In this section, the researcher asked the participants about the difficulties they experienced while learning English. The researcher also asked whether the participants had good confidence when speaking English in front of others. The researcher also asked the participants whether they felt that their English was good enough to communicate. The researcher also asked the participants whether they were able to explain the presentation material using English. The following are the answers given by each participant.

**Participant 1:** *"The difficulties I usually experience are in the vocabulary and pronunciation. Sometimes I also feel that I don't explore vocabulary with difficult levels, so I think I need to learn more. My pronunciation is also still very lacking and I need to learn more. I am actually not very confident to speak English in front of other people, my ability is still very limited. I think my English is still at 30%. When it comes to explaining English presentation materials, I always try to use English. Although my English is very stuttering. Before the presentation, I always write down the main points to explain spontaneously. If the material is difficult, then I will memorize the text."*

**Participant 2:** *"There are many difficulties that I experience. I am not focused enough on studying. First, my grammar is still messy, my vocabulary is also lacking. I do learn vocabulary from several media, but I always find vocabulary with a difficult level that is very difficult to remember. Honestly, I am very insecure when speaking English in front of others. I feel that my English ability is at the level of 20-30%. In addition, I also have problems with pronunciation, so I am more comfortable speaking by myself. If I want to explain presentation material using English, I tend to memorize or read the text."*

**Participant 3:** *"At the beginning of the semester, I found it difficult in the grammar section. In previous semesters, my grammar grades always went up and down. That's why I needed more time to study grammar seriously to catch up. When it comes to speaking English in front of other people, I am already quite confident. To be honest, when speaking I pay too*



*much attention to my grammar. I mostly only focus on plural, singular and plural nouns or time conditions. Except when writing, I will try to pay attention to grammar properly. Because when speaking, it is very rare to be reviewed, so I focus more on what I convey that can be understood well. When presenting, I am able to explain the presentation material using full English.*

**Participant 4:** *"I usually have difficulty understanding grammar when speaking English. I am honestly afraid to speak English because I am afraid of being judged badly by others. I feel that my English is at level 40 %. The things that I need to improve are understanding grammar, adding vocabulary, and also pronunciation. When presenting material in class, I usually memorize the text or read the English text first.*

**Participant 5:** *"I have difficulty in the listening aspect. People's accents are certainly different and I have to get used to listening to difficult accents in order to understand. In addition, I also sometimes forget some vocabulary, so I have to remember and memorize a lot of new vocabulary. I am also very confident when speaking English, because I often practice with my friends. My English is at 80%. The rest I have to practice a lot of English for formal situations. During presentations, I am also quite fluent in explaining the material using English spontaneously."*

**Participant 6:** *"The obstacle I experienced was in the vocabulary section. I am actually quite confident when speaking English, as long as I master the topic I am discussing. I think my English is at 70%, the rest I have to memorize difficult vocabulary again. I do not experience any obstacles in pronunciation, because it can follow. During presentations, I usually need to study more, and if the material is difficult then I will memorize or read the text."*

**Participant 7:** *"Honestly, I still have problems with speaking. This is influenced by my level of confidence. I am only confident when speaking English in front of my friends. But when I enter a formal situation, I need thorough preparation. My English level is probably around 80%, the rest I have to be more confident. For presentations in class, I can explain the material using full English. Only sometimes, when answering questions from friends, can I mix English with Indonesian."*

**Participant 8:** *"The obstacle I experienced in English is the grammar structure. I really had difficulty understanding grammar at the beginning of the semester. However, now I feel better and understand more. My English is already at 80% level, the rest I need to learn vocabulary at a difficult level. I am also able to explain the material using full English, and I can also answer questions spontaneously using English.*

Based on the answers given by the participants, the researcher concluded that most participants had difficulties when speaking English. Several factors such as lack of vocabulary, low self-confidence, and also inappropriate accent pronunciation were triggers in producing language. In addition, there were several participants who had difficulty in understanding grammar. However, the participants also slowly improved during the process of learning English. This can be seen from several participants who were already able to explain the material using English, although there were several participants who still had to memorize and read English texts when explaining the material.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that most of the English education students of Universitas Palangka Raya class of 2022 agree with the good benefits of English. This is shown by the percentage of 56.06% of English students who answered strongly agree with the questionnaire statement. 34, 80% of English students answered agree with the statement given. This strong perception is also consistent with previous research conducted by Ema Dauyah and Yulinar (2018) where 84% of students are highly motivated to learn English because they realize the good benefits of learning English. In addition, in Ema Dauyah and Yulianar's research there were also 76% of English students who agreed that English had a good impact on the world of work. Another study conducted by Diah Rosyani Meisani (2021) also shows a connection with this study, where 84.54% of 97 students strongly agree with the benefits gained from learning English. Of course, most students have a good perception of English itself. However, the thing that makes the difference between this research and the previous research is that this research not only describes the perception statement towards English, but also explores whether English is used or not in their daily lives. The perceptions obtained by interviewing the participants themselves have shown that they have a good perception of English.

The participants in this study also explained the benefits they get from learning English. Research conducted by Diah Rosyani Meisani (2021) also contains statements from participants explaining their perceptions. "English is very interesting to learn, because it can help me to expand relationships with people from various countries" is one of the perceptions of participants contained in the research of Diah Rosyani Meisani (2021) where these perceptions have the same relationship with the perceptions of the participants involved in this study. In previous research conducted by Ema Dauyah and Yulinar (2018), it shows that motivation in learning English arises because of the students' awareness of the importance of English for life. This is also related to the perception statements given by the participants of this study. However, in this study, it is not only about the participants' perceptions of English, but also about the frequency of using English in their daily lives, the difficulties they experience in speaking English, as well as their fluency and confidence in speaking English. All these points have been listed and explained in detail.

The results of this study also have a relationship with previous research conducted by Raynesa Noor Emilia Sari and E. Kosmajadi (2019) where the purpose of this literature finding is to see students' perceptions of English and also perceptions of English learning. The method used in the literature finding is descriptive statistics, where the results show the percentage of numbers from student perceptions. The method used in this literature review is also used in this study. The findings of this literature also explain the difficulties of students to learn

English well. These difficulties include: lack of understanding of pronunciation, limited understanding of reading texts, and also slow in understanding English vocabulary when listening to audio. This is also similar to the answers given by the participants in this study. The participants in this study also experienced the same difficulties when learning English. For students' perception of English itself, the findings of this literature contain a statement that as many as 206 (24, 52 %) students answered agreeing with the perception of good English. This is also in line with the results of this study, where English students are more likely to answer in the affirmative regarding the benefits of English in daily life even though they do not use English often.

## CONCLUSION

This study indicated that English students of Palangka Raya University had a good perception of English as an international language. However, although students had a good perception of English and agreed with the benefits obtained, students also experienced difficulties in learning English and still rarely used English. The conclusion is that a good perception and a good level of English ability are not necessarily followed by their application in everyday life. There are also some students who do not want to show their abilities to others. On the other hand, there are some students who are not confident when speaking English. It should be understood that the perception and motivation to learn English must be followed by real practice to produce quality English learners. In addition, environmental factors and motivation that come from within oneself greatly influence improving a person's English ability. When English is always practiced diligently, then a person will slowly become proficient in using it.

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