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Students' Perception on the Role of English Day Program in Speaking Skill Development

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of English Day Program in speaking skill development. To achieve the objective, a questionnaire and interview were administered to collect the perception of 35 eight graders of SMPK Penabur Kota Wisata, Bogor. The quantitative data collected by the questionnaire and the qualitative data obtained from the interview were analyzed employing the descriptive analysis technique. The results showed that students' motivation to master English speaking was very high, and they expected the English Day Program would help them develop English speaking. However, only slightly more a half of them were enthusiastic to join English Day Program due to its previous poor implementation.

Keywords: *Perceptions, English day program, speaking skill*

Introduction

In every second and foreign language teaching and learning, speaking has always been considered as the most essential skill to be mastered due to several reasons. First, speaking leads to improved language acquisition. Swain (2005) claims that "the act of producing language (speaking or writing) constitutes, under certain circumstances, part of the process of second language learning", p. 471). When a language learner tries to speak to others or speak to himself

in the target language, he may notice what is incorrect or what he does not know about his language production. This will help him to reflect when he learns the rules of the new language he previously does not know. Second, language teaching researches and conferences have long focused on the approaches and methods for teaching speaking. Third, a huge number of conversation and other speaking course materials and media, be they are in print or online, are endlessly published. Finally, many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of mastering a language. They define fluency as the ability to converse with others, much more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. For them, speaking is the most important skill to acquire.

In the present era of globalization, the ability to speak in English is very important because people around the world have been more and more interconnected and integrated. To succeed the process of integration, the people need languages, and English has been elected as the main language for the global communication. Crystal (2012) emphasized that English today is the leading international language.

To be more specific, the followings are some of the main reasons why the ability to speak English is highly needed. First, the ability to speak in English provides a person more job opportunities. Today's businesses need employees who can communicate fluently with English-speaking partners and clients. In addition, the ability to speak in English makes it possible for businesspersons to access a wider range of customers. Second, the ability to speak English makes it easier to travel. Because English is spoken as a first or second language in almost all countries, it is always easy to find English speakers as well as printed information in English, especially at hotels and in areas visited by tourists. Third, English speaking mastery makes it easy to exchange ideas, e.g. in an informal forum or in international seminar and conference. Finally, English is now the main language of science and technology. A person with a good English speaking skill has more opportunities to collaborate in these fields and to share ideas and innovations.

Since English speaking is very important to every individual, it is very crucial to find and employ the best instructional methods, materials, activities, media, and other requirements that will facilitate the learners to master speaking skill. A great number of studies aimed to help learners master speaking skill in the teaching of English as a second language (ESL) or English

as a foreign language (EFL) has been conducted. However, many ESL or EFL learners still find speaking difficult to master. To many of them, speaking is still “the most complex and difficult skill to master” (Hinkel, 2005, p. 485). According to Tuan and Mai (2015), the problems that teachers can come across in helping students to speak in the classroom could be classified into four factors: inhibition, lack of topical knowledge, low participation, and mother-tongue use. Therefore, reducing students’ inhibition, developing their topical knowledge, increasing their participation, and minimizing their mother-tongue use are the most important aspects to consider facilitating learners to master speaking.

The results of recent studies have indicated that the key to a successful speaking lesson is the employment of good communicative speaking activities, such as role play, simulation, information gap, storytelling, discussion, interview, and so on. Such activities will place the learners in real-life situations that require communication in the target language (Kayi, 2006). Such activities can also be effective for reducing students’ inhibition, developing their topical knowledge, increasing their participation, and minimizing their mother-tongue use.

In addition to the use of communicative speaking activities, English Day Program (EDP) has been implemented as another strategy to help students develop their speaking skills. EDP is a program organized by a community to use English as a communication facility or media in English teaching and learning process on a certain day. This community certainly does not use English as a mother tongue. The purpose of this program is to encourage the members of community to speak English. Thornbury (2005, p. 1) claims that *speaking is so much a part of daily life that we take it for granted*. Therefore students' speaking skill needs to be developed and practiced day by day, especially on English day.

In the school context, EDP is a program wherein a certain day principal, teachers, students, support officers must communicate in English all day long. The main supporter of EDP is English teachers, who should share their knowledge and skills about English with other teachers. The announcement, the name-board of school and room, the handout and worksheet of all subjects must be written in English. Every interaction is conducted in English. All these efforts are aimed to accelerate to create English environment in school. In Indonesia, EDP is usually carried out in international standard school.

According to Hasanah and Syafri (2015), EDP is Based on two approaches in teaching language, namely Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which accentuates the students to use the language rather than know the language, and Community Language Learning (CLL) which is primarily directed to reduce anxiety of the students to communicate in a foreign language where the teachers' role is to be a counselor for the students. In general, the community which runs EDP rules out that every member should use English only as the means of communication during the specified days. If the community is a school, all teachers, students, and support officers must communicate in English, including in the classroom. In many schools, outside of the class time, some activities are carried out to enrich the students with language inputs. Some of the most common activities are picture labeling, English songs appreciation, proverbs exchanging, short story reading, interviewing, movie appreciation, debating, and so on. These activities are designed to create an informal and relaxing atmosphere so that the students do not feel stressed or shy to speak English.

In Indonesia, EDP is a relatively new strategy to help students develop their speaking skills. Therefore, little research has been carried out regarding this program. Saputra's (2011), a study on the influence of EDP to students' speaking ability at the second year of State Islamic Senior High School 2 Pekanbaru revealed that the program increased students speaking ability as seen through the mean score of their speaking post-test. The results of Mudyanita's, (2011) study on the contributions EDP towards students' speaking skills in International Standard School SMK N 1 Pacitan showed that EDP could improve students' and teachers' speaking skills. However, the implementation of the EDP was not done well, mainly because the students were still shy to use English and they had some difficulties to understand English conversations. The study of Latif (2012), conducted to investigate the implementation of EDP for the second, fourth, sixth and eighth semester students of the English Education Department of Muria Kudus University showed that (1) the program implementation inside the class is a good but the implementation outside the class is not really good; (2) the main problem encountered in the program implementation outside the class was that the students felt shy and ridiculous to speak English in front of other people in the public area. Another study by Khikmiah (2010) was carried out to investigate the impact of English Club (a program having similar nature with EDP)

towards students' speaking skill. The results revealed that an English Club has many advantages for improving students speaking skills. She also concluded that an effective way to obtain more practices to speak English is by joining an extracurricular program like an English Club). Finally, Liyanni (2015) conducted a study to analyze students' speaking activity on English Day at SMA Taruna Bumi Khatulistiwa. The results revealed that EDP can facilitate the students to develop their speaking ability although some linguistic and psycholinguistic problems were still occurring.

Reviewing these related studies, it is obvious that none of them concern with the students' perceptions of the EDP, whereas students' perceptions play a very important role to succeed learning because students are at the center of every learning process. Derived from the Latin word '*perceptio*', perception refers to the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the environment. It is the process by which individuals select, organize, store and interpret the information gathered from these senses. Slameto (2010, p. 102) describes perception as a process that involves the entry of messages or information into the human brain, through human perception of continuous relationships with the environment. This relationship is done through the senses, namely the senses sight, listener, touch, taste, and smell.

Perception does not appear by itself, but through processes and many factors affect one's perception. This causes why everyone has a different interpretation despite seeing or facing the same thing. According to Robbins (2003, p. 108-109), there are three factors that affect perception. The first is the perceiver. When looking at something and trying to give an interpretation, an individual will be influenced by his or her characteristics such as beliefs, attitudes, motives, interests, experiences, cognitive structures, expectations, and cultural upbringing.

The second factor is the object or target being perceived. It can be persons, objects, or events. This affects one's perception. The target of perception is not something that is viewed in theory but in relation to others involved. This causes one tend to group similar people, objects, or events and separate them from other groups that are not similar. The greater the similarity, the

greater the probability we will tend to perceive them as a group, and vice versa. This domain may cover such as those as novelty, motion, sounds, size, background, proximity, and similarity.

The third is the context of the situation in which the perception is made. Elements in the surrounding environment influence our perception. Perception must be considered contextually, which means the situation in which the perception appears should obtain attention. The situation is a factor contributes to the process of establishing a person's perception. Situation covers time, work setting, and social setting.

Bada (1997) accentuated that “learners are no longer free from the responsibility of contributing to their language learning; rather, they are active participants in designing and evaluating their language learning process” (p.20). He also added that learner-centeredness has extra responsibilities both for teachers and students. Teachers should evaluate themselves in a critical way. Students, on the other hand, share the teachers’ burden. They are expected to produce something. Thus, teachers should accept the fact that without learners’ participation in the English class, there will not be an effective and enjoyable teaching and learning will be up to failure.

This article discusses the findings of a study recently conducted to investigate the students’ perceptions of the role of EDP in speaking skill development at SMPK Penabur Kota Wisata. An awareness of the students’ perceptions will hopefully be beneficial for teachers to help their students develop their speaking skills by means of EDP.

Methodology

This study employed the explanatory mixed method design which, according to Creswell et al. (as cited in Pardede, 2011), enables us to gather qualitative input to explain and extend quantitative results in order to gain a comprehensive insight of the research. The participant in this study 35 students of the eighth graders of SMPK PENABUR Kota Wisata. The school is located on Jalan Transyogi km. 6, Kota Wisata, Gunung Putri, Bogor. The study was conducted in the 2017-2018 academic year. EDP has been carried out in the school since 2014. Previously, the program was done two days a week (Monday and Wednesday). Since the 2017-2018 academic year, it is conducted three days in a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday).

A “15 item questionnaire” was administered to obtain quantitative input. The questionnaire was constructed to gauge the perceptions and attitudes of the students towards the role of EDP in their speaking development. The questionnaire was constructed based on Robbin’s (2003) three domains of perception: perceiver, target, and situation. These three domains were distributed equally in all 15 statements. Statement 1, 4, 7, 10, and 13 are allotted for perceiver dimension; statement 2, 5, 8, 11, and 14 for target; and statement 3, 6, 9, 12, 15 for situation. To respond to the questionnaire, participants should indicate their agreement arranged in 5 Likert’s scales: ‘Strongly Disagree’ (SD=1); ‘Disagree’ (D=2); Agree (A=3); and ‘Strongly Agree’ (SA=4). Focused semi-structured open-ended interviews were conducted to gather qualitative input to 10 students who were respondents to the questionnaire administered. The themes that emerged during the interview sessions were coded in accordance with the quantitative dimensions of the questionnaire. The intent of the interview is to meet a deep understanding of the students' perceptions collected through the questionnaire. Thus, it was not meant for generalization. The obtained data were analyzed using the descriptive analysis techniques.

Finding and Discussion

As it was described in the methodology section, the fifteen items included in the questionnaire can be divided into three parts. The first part, including statement 1, 4, 7, 10, and 13, concentrates on the participants’ perception of the role of English day program on speaking skill development viewed from the perceiver dimension. The second part covering statement 2, 5, 8, 11, and 14 focus on the participants’ perception viewed from the target dimension. The last part, which includes statement 3, 6, 9, 12, and 15 concentrates on the participants' perception as seen from the context dimension.

1. Students' Perception of EDP Viewed from the Perceiver Dimension

Table 1:

Students' Perception of the Role of EDP to Speaking Skills Development Viewed from the Perceiver Dimension (N=35)

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
1	I'm very enthusiastic about studying English	4 (11.43)	25 (71.43)	5 (14.29)	1 (2.86)
4	I enjoy chatting in English with my friends	5 (14.29)	14 (40.00)	10 (28.57)	6 (17.4)
7	I'm interested in EDP at my school.	1 (2.86)	16 (45.71)	15 (42.86)	3 (8..57)
10	EDP made English more interesting to me.	2 (5.71)	14 (40.00)	15 (42.86)	4 (11.43)
13	EDP makes me confident to speak English.	4 (11.43)	17.(48.57)	11 (31.43)	3 (8..57)
Total		16	86	56	17
Percentage Average		9.14	49.14	32.00	9.71

The findings related to the respondents' perception of the role of English day program in speaking skill development viewed from the perceiver dimension (as shown in Table 1) revealed that 82.86% of the students "strongly agreed" and "agreed" they are enthusiastic to study English. In general, more than a half of them "strongly agreed" and "agreed" that they are interested in EDP and that EDP makes them confident to speak in English. In addition, 54.29% of them "strongly agreed" and "agreed" that they enjoy chatting in English with friends. Seeing from the response percentage average, the findings revealed only 58.28% of them positively perceived the role of EDP in their speaking skill development.

These findings indicated that there were a bit more than a half of the students who personally perceive EDP plays a good role in their speaking skill development. A bit more than a half of them quite enthusiastically support and love to join EDP. These are supported by the qualitative data obtained through the interview.

"Yes, I like it [EDP], because I can improve my English,"(Interviewee B).

"I don't think English day effective. I feel it only adds my burdens."(Interviewee C)

"I like English day program because I want to study English more. But not all teachers and students willingly participate." (Interviewee F)

"yea. I definitely like English day program." (Interviewee G)

"I want to improve my English skill. But English day only wastes my time." (Interviewee H)

"I actually like it, because I'm not speaking English at home and it's really nice to speak English at school. But it should be implemented more strictly." (Interviewee J)

2. Students' Perception of the Role of EDP Viewed from the Target Dimension

The items included in the respondents' perception of the role of EDP in their speaking skill development are meant to explore the students' motivation to learn English speaking (item 2, 5, 8, and 14) and their expectation that EDP can help them develop their English speaking skill (item 11). The findings (as shown in Table 2) revealed that the students' instrumental motivation (item 2 and 8) and integrative motivation (item 5 and 14) are high. More than 80% of them "strongly agreed" and "agreed" that English speaking mastery will enable them to study abroad. Those who "strongly agreed" and "agreed" that English speaking mastery will help them to get a good job even reached 94.28%! The response that 97.14% of them "strongly agreed" and "agreed" that their mastery of English speaking will help them travel around the world indicated that their integrative motivation was also very high. However, only around two-thirds (62.86%) of them viewed English speaking mastery support them to chat in social media.

Table 2:

Students' Perception of the Role of EDP to Speaking Skills Development Viewed from the Target Dimension (N=35)

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
2	I hope by mastering English I could study abroad.	11 (31.43)	30 (50.14)	4 (11.43)	0 (0)
5	I hope by mastering English I could travel around the world.	24 (68.57)	10 (28.57)	1 (2.86)	0 (0)
8	I must master English to get a good job.	20 (57.14)	13 (37.14)	1 (2.86)	1 (2.86)
11	I wish EDP support my speaking skill	18 (51.43)	14 (40.00)	1 (2.86)	2 (57.1)
14	English support me to chat in social media	7 (20.00)	15 (42.86)	9 (25.71)	4 (11.43)
Total		80	72	16	7
Percentage Average		45.71	41.14	9.14	4.00

The students' expectation that EDP can help them develop their English speaking skill was also very high because 91.43% of them "strongly agreed" and "agreed" that EDP will support their speaking skill.

These findings designated that the students' instrumental and integrative motivations to master English speaking were very high. Their expectation that EDP would help them develop their English speaking skill was also very high. The qualitative data obtained through the interview clarified these findings.

"I expect that I can do English well and grammar gone be well,"(Interviewee A).

"I hope I can speak English with my friends. "(Interviewee B)

"I expect all students can talk English in English day. "(Interviewee C)

"I hope someday I can speak English fluently like others. Maybe like the English teachers. "(Interviewee D)

"I expect that we know a lot more grammar and we can speak fluently in English Day. "(Interviewee E)

"For me, the English day program is already good. "(Interviewee F)

"I expect from English day program, I can speak English fluently. "(Interviewee G).

"I expect to be more active in speaking. "(Interviewee H)

"I expect the day will be full in English. "(Interviewee I)

"I really want to study abroad. So, It's help me to improve my English. "(Interviewee J).

3. Students' Perception of EDP Viewed from the Situation Dimension

The distribution of the students' perceptions of the role EDP to speaking skills development viewed from the situation dimension revealed that the program implementation was not good enough. Although more than three-fourths (77.14%) of them "strongly agreed" and "agreed" that the program was implemented on time, and 67.4% "strongly agreed" and "agreed" the program supports their school activities, the findings indicated some principle weaknesses in the program. Only 48.57% of them "strongly agreed" and "agreed" their teacher consistently speak English during the implementation. The student's consistency to speak in English during the implementation was even lower. Only 28.57% of them "strongly agreed" and "agreed" that their fellow students speak in English during the implementation, and only 42.86% of them "strongly agreed" and "agreed" each of them speaks in English during the implementation.

These findings indicated that the EDP run in the participants' school was not yet well implemented, especially because many teachers and students did not consistently speak in English during the implementation. This is supported by the qualitative data below.

Table 3:
Students' Perception of the Role of EDP to Speaking Skills Development Viewed from the Situation Dimension (N=35)

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
2	The EDP runs on time	5 (14.29)	22 (62.85)	7 (20.00)	1 (2.86)
5	The EDP supports my school activities	3 (8.57)	24 (58.57)	7 (20.00)	1 (2.86)
8	My teachers speak English during the EDP.	3 (8.57)	14 (40.00)	13 (37.14)	5 (14.29)
11	My friends speak English during the EDP.	1 (2.86)	9 (25.71)	16 (45.71)	9 (25.71)
14	I actively speak English during the EDP.	3 (8.57)	12 (34.29)	17 (48.57)	3 (8.57)
Total		15	81	60	19
Percentage Average		8.57	46.29	34.29	10.86

"Yea, when I was lucky, some teachers and friend speak English to me on the English day. So, I can learn more. But some other teachers and friends break the rule by speaking in Bahasa Indonesia."(Interviewee A)

"Some teachers speak English but some of the students still speak Bahasa, actually my friends never speak English to me in English day"(Interviewee C)

"Some of them support the English day but not all. Because some of them can't speak English fluently so they feel speaking English difficult"(Interviewee D)

"I think no because not everybody understands what the meaning of English day because not all use English every day in English day. We do only morning devotion and great our teacher in class but not using conversation in English."(Interviewee E)

I don't have someone to speak English at home. So I love our English day. But some teachers and students prefer to speak Bahasa."(Interviewee J)

These findings indicated that there were more students who personally perceive EDP plays a good role in their speaking skill development. However, the percentage is not very high;

only slightly more than a half of them quite enthusiastically support and love to join EDP. Seeing from the average percentage of students' overall responses to the three domains, "perceiver" domain got the lowest positive responses (see Figure 1). These indicated the students should be provided a better understanding of the usefulness of the program to develop their English speaking.

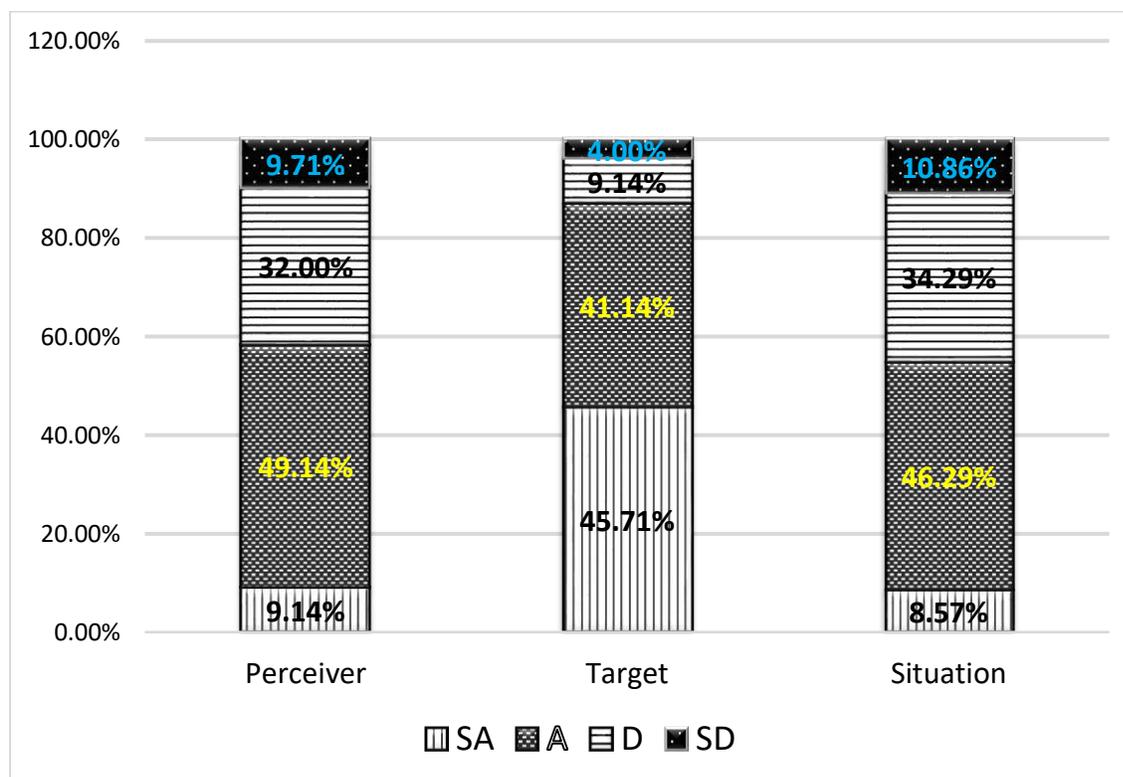


Figure 1: The Average percentage of Students' Overall Response to the Three Domains

The students' instrumental and integrative motivations to master English speaking were very high and their expectation that EDP would help them develop their English speaking skill (as shown by the average percentage of students' overall responses to the 'target' domains) got the highest positive responses. More than 86% of the respondents indicated their agreement to the statements in this domain (see Figure 1).

If their motivations and expectation were very high, why did only a slightly more than a half of them quite enthusiastically support and love to join EDP? To a certain extent, this was

caused by their perception that EDP they had participated in was not yet well implemented, as indicated by the average percentage of their overall responses showing 45,15% of them “Disagreed” and “Strongly Disagreed” to the statements in ‘situation domain’. This is in line with Latif’s (2012) finding that one of the phenomena of EDP implementation was its poor implementation. However, if the poor implementation of EDP in his study was because of that the students felt shy and ridiculous to speak English in front of other people in public area, the cause in this study was that some teachers and students were not consistency in using English during the program implementation.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the discussion above it can be concluded that the eighth graders of SMPK PENABUR Kota Wisata had high instrumental and integrative motivation to develop English speaking. They also had a high expectation that EDP could help them develop their English speaking skill. However, almost half of them were not enthusiastic to participate in EDP since they had previously experienced poor implementation of the program.

There were some limitations to the current study which need to be addressed in future research. First, the data were obtained only through a questionnaire and "simple" interview. Thus, future researches are recommended to gather the more comprehensive data through observations and document study. Second, this study involved only 35 eighth graders. To get more comprehensive data which make it safe to make a generalization, future studies are recommended to use a larger number of participants, including the seventh and ninth graders, teachers, and other school officers.

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