

Students' and Teachers' Perception of Learning English for Young Learners

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Abstract

During technological and scientific developments, young learners were supposed to be accustomed to the English language. Conversely, studies on how children and teachers view English for young learners seem still limited. Thus, this study aims to find out students' and teachers' perceptions of learning English for young learners. A qualitative descriptive was applied in this study and involved 33 students and 2 English teachers in SDS Cahaya Kasih Batam. An observation checklist, questionnaire, and interview were conducted to collect the data. The indicators which were applied in the instruments are cognitive, affective, behavioral, personality, interests, and expectation. The observation checklist was done to observe the classroom situation. Those questionnaires were distributed to the students and English teachers. The last data, students' and teachers' interviews were conducted to become additional and clarify the results obtained from the questionnaire. The outcome of this study highlighted that the students and English teachers positively perceived learning English for young learners. Teaching English at an early age for young learners helps them accustomed to English and capable to deal with science and technology development.

Keywords: EFYL, Students' perception, Teachers' perception, English for kids.

INTRODUCTION

A well-known and commonly language tool used internationally is English. Mastering English gains advantages to do an international journey, education, trade, job, etc. It happens

because a quarter of the world was under the power of England in the colonial era. So, the emergence of communication in the world has become a crucial thing where English helps people in conveying new information.

In Indonesia, the primary school introduced the English language in 1994 based on government policy about law regulation No. 0487 chapter VIII in 1992. The existence of this law gets a positive impact on society and the development of curriculum makes up many transformations in the education field. In curriculum 2013, the team of development states that English subjects are not contained in Primary School /Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (SD/MI) curriculum structure, therefore English competence and material nationally in primary school (Class I sd. VI) do not have scope. However, English is provided as local content or directly managed as extracurricular activities in the school by the education unit. Whether English is needed by students (KEMENDIKBUD, 2014). It means that teaching English to the young learner in primary school can be done when the local government and the school itself accept to give it to the young learner.

Young learner means children which are agreed from five or six years old in the first of primary school to twelve years old (Bakhsh, 2016, p. 121). It is in line with Linse (2005) who explains young learners' representation generally aged between five to twelve years old teachers' professionalism to give caring and directing instruction. According to McKay (2006, p. 5-14) three general characteristics of young learners are young learners' growth experience in cognitive, social, emotional, and physical, literacy skills which includes reading and writing skills, and vulnerability requires attention to critical thinking and positive self-concept.

Learning English has many benefits if young learner learns it seriously. According to Moon (2006), there are eight components of learning English, namely: the context of learning, students' attitude, teaching methods and strategies, learning activities, classroom management and organization, learning resources, supporting children's language learning, and successful language learner.

There are some problems faced by students when learning English. They feel difficulty pronouncing a word correctly, reading sentences, listening in English, and speaking in English. This problem happens because they are not accustomed to English skills. According to Clarke (2009, p. 8), she states that in particular, young children whose age in first six years are crucial in expanding their first language and identifying culture, and during these early years that young learners build up their knowledge of the world. From the above explanation, learning a new language causes expansion through meaningful communication and interaction with each other.

In Batam, the primary school gives students English learning as local content. It is strengthened by the condition of Batam where Batam is close to neighboring countries like Singapore. This condition affects the use of language and the development of language itself. Progress in technology and education makes English for young learners need to be taught earlier so that late language learning faces a real condition do not rush. It is in line with SDS Cahaya Kasih which students are taught English subject but English is positioned as the main subject in 2021 and is estimated to change to local content in 2022. For the last 5 years, English class was given two times a week. When compared to now, English subject is just given one time per two weeks. The school uses "Grow with English by Erlangga Publisher".

Under the issues above, it is significant to explore students' and teachers' perceptions of learning English for young learners. Perception is important in life to lead to understanding

human behavior and need people's influence through their perception. Perception defines as the process of the human sense to compile, identify, and interpret messages towards society that includes the sense of listening, seeing, tasting, touching, and smelling something to acquire information. It is in line with Démuth (2012, p. 31), who states that perception is the observer's interaction final product between stimulus and internal hypotheses, expectations, and knowledge. It means that perception means how people interpret something through cognitive delivery by using receptors. According to Robbins (as cited in Deriyanto & Qorib, 2018, p. 79), there are two types of perception namely positive perception and negative perception. Positive means an individual's assessment following what they expect and negative perception means personal's contrary to what they expect of the object. Besides perception types, one of the factors that influence perception is the perceiver (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

The perceiver is interpreted by the characteristics of each person itself which involves attitudes, personality, interests, and expectations. First, attitude produces evaluation statements either favorable or unfavorable about objects, people, or events (Robbins & Judge, 2013, p. 70). Attitude relates to giving a response something positive, negative, or neutral. Robbins and Judge assume three main components of attitude namely cognitive component, affective component, and behavioral component. Second, personality describes the behavior of an individual enduring characteristic (Robbins & Judge, 2013, p. 133). There are five main factors of personality Robbins and Judge, namely: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience. Third, according to O'Keefe & Harackiewicz (2017, p. 11), the significant value of personal and positive affect association is characterized as individual interest. Interest is associated with feeling, attention, and curiosity to get to know something. Fourth, the expectation is particular anticipated behavior from a person. It is in line with Buchanan & Huczynski (2017, p. 256), who explains that people tend to fit their perception and less attention to inappropriate information when selecting information. Robbins and Judge (2013, p. 224) focus on three relationships of expectancy theory namely the relationships between performance effort, the relationship of performance reward, and the relationship between personal's rewards goals.

Relevant studies were acknowledged such as Kusmaryati (2020) and Oktaviani & Fauzan (2017). Kusmaryati (2020) identified teachers' perspectives and teachers' problems regarding learning English for young learners. The weakness of her research is that the theory used is not the latest theory and the indicators for making the questionnaire were not explained. Oktaviani & Fauzan (2017) studied teachers' perceptions of the importance of English for young learners in Elementary Schools. However, the theory used was not defined. Consequently, this study contribute to seeking the students' and teacher perception based on the theory of the perceiver factor by Robbins and Judge (2013), Robbins et al. (2020), (O'Keefe & Harackiewicz, 2017), and (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2017)

For further, this study was guided by the question as follows: What are the students and the teacher's perceptions of English for Young Learners (EFYL)?

METHOD

This study used a qualitative research design to accomplish data about learning English for young learners based on students' and teachers' perceptions. This study was conducted at SDS

Cahaya Kasih Batam, the Province of Kepulauan Riau. The researcher selected this school because it looks to have higher attention to English for young learners. So, it was appropriate for researchers to collect the data. The subjects of the study were 33 students in the fourth grade and fifth grades, and the two English Teachers of SDS Cahaya Kasih Batam. The data were taken on January 2021 based on perceiver factors by Robbins & Judge, O'Keefe & Harackiewicz, and Buchanan & Huczynski, such as attitude (cognitive component, affective component, and behavioral component), personality component, interest component, and expectation component. The data were collected through three kinds of instruments a survey questionnaire, interview guideline, and observation checklist. A questionnaire and interview were used to get the students' and teachers' perceptions, the questionnaire was in the form of four Likert-scale and open-ended questions, and the interview was structured. The observation was conducted to confirm the reality of students' and teachers' perceptions in the questionnaire and interview. The procedure for collecting data can be seen in Table 1. The data analysis technique was done based on the type of instrument. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed by putting it into the table and making a summary in form of percentages and frequency. The data from the interview and observation were analyzed thematically (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017) based on the indicators of the instrument.

Table 1. Data Collecting Procedure

Survey-Questionnaire	Interview	Observation
1. Prepared the questionnaire 2. Checked the validity of the questionnaire which was done by the expert. 3. the valid questionnaire was distributed to the students and the teachers	1. Made open-ended questions about students' and teachers' perceptions toward learning English for Young Learners 2. Checked the validity of the questions by the expert. 3. did a structured- interview with the students and teachers	1. Prepared the observation check-list 2. Checked the validity of the observation checklist by the expert. 3. Employed non-participants observation in the situation observed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study was based on perceiver factors that influence perception; they are attitude (cognitive component, affective component, and behavioral component), personality component, interest component, and expectation component.

1. Students' Perception

The result of the data analysis collected by using a questionnaire was presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Data Collecting Procedure

Indicators	Positive	Negative
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Attitude (Cognitive)	15%	5%
Attitude (Affective)	15%	5%
Attitude (Behavioral)	15%	0%
Personality	5%	10%
Interests	15%	0%
Expectation	15%	0%
Total	80%	20%

The table above reveals that young learners were positively perceived in learning English. 80% of students agreed to learn English at school because there were many benefits received by the students. This data was relevant to the interview results in Tables 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8. But it was in contrast to the interview data in Table 4.

Table 3. Interviewing result of cognitive component

a. Is English important to you?	b. Do you think English is complicated to learn? why?	c. Does English help you study other subjects well, such as science and others?
1. Celine 4 th grade: <i>iya penting, karena Bahasa Inggris terkadang digunakan dalam Bahasa sehari-hari</i> (Yes, it's important, because English is sometimes used in everyday language)	1. Celine 4 th grade: <i>tidak, karena mudah dihapal</i> (No, because it's easy to memorize)	1. Celine 4 th grade: <i>iya</i> (yes)
2. Meli 4 th grade: <i>iya penting, soalnya kalau pergi-pergi diutamakan Bahasa Inggris</i> (Yes, it's important, because when you go, English is the priority)	2. Meli 4 th grade: <i>nggak, karena kalo diajar sama teacher langsung bisa</i> (No, because if teacher teaches me i can understand immediately)	2. Misaki 5 th B grade: <i>iya</i> (yes)
3. Misaki 5 th B grade: <i>iya, penting, ketika mau keluar negeri harus bisa Bahasa Inggris karena Bahasa Inggris Bahasa internasional</i> (Yes, it's important, when you want to go abroad you must be able to speak English because English is an international language)	3. Misaki 5 th B grade: <i>tidak, karena ada sebagian pelajaran yang bisa dan ada sebagian pelajaran yang tidak</i> (No, because there are some lessons that I can and some lessons that i don't)	3. Mikha 5 th B grade: <i>iya</i> (yes)
4. Mikha 5 th B grade: <i>iya, karena jika ditanya Bahasa Inggris kita bisa menjawab.</i> (Yes, because if we are asked in English we can answer.)		

The interview data in Table 3 shows that the students perceived English as important regarding its benefit for them. They claimed that English helped them to go abroad because English was an international language and become a priority. The students also stated that learning English was not difficult and helped them to learn other subjects well. Although it was important, they sometimes felt bored because the teacher taught too fast and explained the lesson too long. Their actions to gain more knowledge in English were by joining English courses to improve their skill. Students were never nervous and individual learning became their choice to learn in the classroom. The students positively perceived the teachers' teaching at school and

asked the teacher when they did not understand. From the above explanation, the students had a positive perception of learning English.

Table 4. Interviewing result of the affective component

Are you bored while studying English in class? What things make you bored when learning English in class?
1. Celine 4 th grade: <i>Tidak pernah bosan</i> (Never bored)
2. Meli 4 th grade: <i>kadang-kadang, karena ngomong di kelas, seperti bilang hai</i> (sometimes, because talking in class, it's like saying hi)
3. Misaki 5 th B grade: <i>kadang-kadang, gurunya mengajar terlalu cepat ngomongnya.</i> (Sometimes, the teacher teaches too fast to speak.)
4. Mikha 5 th grade: <i>iya, karena gurunya terlalu menjelaskan terlalu panjang</i> (Yes, because the teacher explained too long)

Based on the item above, it could be seen that the students had various answers to the questions related to the affective component. The students' perception of boredom while studying in English was a positive response got 1 respondent a negative answer 3 respondents. It was classified as a High/Positive rank but this rank meant high in a negative answer which meant the students were sometimes bored with learning English in the classroom. So, it could be concluded as a *negative perception*.

Table 5. Interviewing result of the behavioral component

1. How do you practice your English?	2. Are you taking English courses to improve your English?
Positive answer:	1. Meli 4 th grade: <i>dengan les</i> (by joining course)
1. Celine 4 th grade: <i>diajarin mama</i> (mama teaches me)	2. Misaki 5 th B grade: <i>ya</i> (yes)
2. Meli 4 th grade: <i>dengan les</i> (by joining course)	3. Mikha 5 th B grade: <i>ya, les</i> (by course)
3. Misaki 5 th B grade: <i>diajarin papa saya</i> (my papa teaches me)	4. Celine 4 th grade: <i>ngga ada</i> (no)
4. Mikha 5 th B grade: <i>dengan cara les</i> (by joining course)	

Based on the item in Table 5, it could be seen that the student's perception of the way of practicing English got a positive response from as many as four respondents. Two of them were taught by their parents and the other answers were joining the course. It was classified as Very High/Very Positive. In the second item, the students who joined the English course were three respondents, and two respondents who did not join the English course. It meant that the students had an action to take English courses for improving their English skills. It was classified as a High/Positive rank or *positive perception*.

Table 6. Interviewing result of personality component

Are you nervous when your teacher asks you to speak in English?	What do you prefer between individual learning over group learning?
Positive answer:	Positive answer:
1. Celine 4 th grade: <i>ngga pernah gugup</i> (Never nervous)	1. Meli 4 th grade: <i>kelompok, karena bisa berbagi jawaban</i> (groups, because we can share answers)
2. Meli 4 th grade: <i>ngga</i>	2. Mikha 5 th B grade: <i>kelompok, karena jika dikasih tugas lebih cepat selesai</i> (group, because if we are given a task,

<i>pernah gugup</i> (Never nervous)	it will be completed faster)
3. Misaki 5 th B grade: <i>tidak</i> (No)	Negative answer: 1. Celine 4 th grade: <i>belajar individu, biar ga diganggu sama kelompok</i> (individual, in order not to be disturbed by the groups' members)
Negative answer: 1. Mikha 5 th B grade: <i>iya</i> (Yes)	2. Misaki 5 th grade: <i>individu, karena biar ga berisik dan susah diatur</i> (individual, because so that it is not noisy and difficult to manage)

Table 6 shows that the student's perceptions about feeling nervous when their teacher asked them to speak in English are 3 positive answers and 1 negative answer. 3 of them did not feel nervous and 1 of them felt nervous. It was classified as High/Positive or *positive perception*. In the second item, the students who chose group learning (positive answer) were 2 respondents (50%) and 2 respondents who chose individual learning (negative answer) were 2 respondents (50%). It was classified as moderate rank. The first item of personality was about emotional stability where the answers were positive emotions and the second item was about agreeableness where the answer was moderate. From the answers above, it could be concluded that the students were still nervous if the teacher asked them to speak in English and the way of learning got the same level.

Table 7. Interviewing result of the Expectation component

What do you like about your teacher teaching you at school?
Positive answer: 1. Celine 4 th grade: <i>gurunya sering buat lucu</i> (The teacher often makes funny) 2. Meli 4 th grade: <i>soalnya gurunya ngomong jelas</i> (Because the teacher speaks clearly) 3. Misaki 5 th grade: <i>saat melatih kosa kata penting</i> (While practicing important vocabulary) 4. Mikha 5 th grade: <i>gurunya menjelaskan yang penting dan lebih dijelaskan supaya anak muridnya mengerti</i> (The teacher explains what is important and explains more so that the students understand)

Based on the item above, it could be seen that the interviewed students gave a *positive answer* about liking their teacher when teaching. The students' perceptions related to reason what they liked about their English teacher got a positive response from as many as 4 respondents (100%). The student stated that their English teacher was often making fun of them, speaking, practicing vocabulary, and explaining well to the students. It was classified as Very High/Very Positive or *positive perception*.

Table 8. Interviewing result of Interest component

Are you asking about a lesson you did not understand in class?
Positive answer: 1. Celine 4 th grade: <i>iya</i> (yes, 1 am)

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2. Meli 4th grade: iya (yes, I am)
 3. Misaki 5th B grade: iya (yes, I am)
 4. Mikha 5th B grade: iya (yes, I am)
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Based on the item above, it could be seen that the interviewed students give a *positive answer* about their attention to the lesson by asking questions. The students' perception got a positive response from as many as 4 respondents (100%). The students stated that they asked their teacher when they did not understand the lesson. It was classified as Very High/Very Positive or *positive perception*.

The researcher got 16 items from the classroom observation checklist of learning English for the young learner, they are: (1) Learning process was well-managed by the teacher in the classroom. It was proved by the readiness of the material using the "Grow with English" book by Erlangga. The book is appropriate given to the students because it provided interesting material including pictures, games, songs, tasks, etc. (2) Responses of young learners were very good. They paid attention to teachers' explanations and sometimes they felt shy to ask about materials that they did not understand. However, they still expressed their ideas and wrote down points and translations of teachers' explanations in their books. The students were interested in learning English because the teacher taught lively by applying fun learning. They always answered their teacher's questions loudly. It made the students do their assignments and assessment well. (3) Technique of teaching English to young learners was not explained by the teachers and when the observation did by the researcher, the teacher did not use media or specific techniques. Furthermore, the interaction and communication between students and the teacher run well. It can be seen from the teacher speaking intimately and the students speaking politely to the teachers.

2. Teachers' Perception

Teachers filled out questionnaires to know what the teacher perceived about learning English for young learners. The result obtained as follows:

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Attitude (Cognitive)	Moderate
Attitude (Affective)	Moderate
Attitude (Behavioral)	Moderate
Personality	Very High/Very Positive
Interests	Moderate
Expectations	Very High/Very Positive
<i>Result</i>	<i>Moderate</i>

The result showed the rank of teachers' perceptions as a moderate rank which means they had positive perceptions based on the questionnaire result.

In verifying the results, the researcher arranged ten questions interviews with the teachers about their students' learning in English subject. Both of the teachers strongly agreed that English is important to give because it helped the students to face real-life considering that Batam is close to Singapore and Malaysia. The teachers claimed that students often complained about

English lessons because they thought that it was difficult to pronounce them. They also responded that students were still lack of motivation. Although it was hard, most of the students had more knowledge of English subjects and students should be taught since elementary school grade one. The teachers had not fully been able to do full English because their school is not bilingual. Media and skills in English were given to the students, so the students had more interest in learning English. They stated that they were motivated and repeated the material which did not understand by the students. That is why they gave praise to the students in form of a score or being taken to do an activity outside the school. English had a big positive impact on the young learner, it is proved by their skill to guide their family and looked maps in Singapore. Based on the above explanation, the teachers had a positive perception regarding learning English for young learners.

Discussions

Students' Perception

The results obtained from the students' questionnaire reveal that 80% of students' questionnaire answered positively and it was supported by the interviews with the respondents. First, the students as respondents stated that English is important to fulfill the needs of today. English is perceived positively by the young learner and it is relevant to Kusmaryati's (2020, p. 102) research, it was found that English as an international language, must be studied earlier to make primary school students accustomed to English. Next, the students thought that English is complicated to learn because of the unfamiliarity of learning English and they had more knowledge while studying English. In terms of attitude cognitive above, it showed young learners perceived learning English positively.

In addition, from the answers by the respondents toward the attitude affective component, it could be interpreted that young learners felt proud when studying English. Besides, most of the students did not feel bored when learning English. It was different from the interview result the students uttered that English was boring sometimes because of the teachers' explanation which was too fast and too long. Bakhsh (2016, p. 120), likewise, argued that "teachers are responsible for finding out interesting and attractive ways to teach and motivate their students". It meant that the teachers also needed to notice the students. When the students looked bored, the teachers did games or fun activities to gain students' mood. Again, despite their familiarity with English subjects, the students preferred to speak Bahasa Indonesia in English class. It is related to the observation result where the teachers used primary sources and the materials in students' books are appropriate to be given to the young learner. The students used Grow with English book which provides pictures and activities.

The desire of improving English skills by taking the course was important to be considered where the students mostly chose the course to increase their knowledge of English. Similarly, in a study by Oktaviani & Fauzan (2017, p. 9), it was found that parents had begun to support and facilitate their children to learn English courses to have social and economic benefits in the future. It was supported by the interview results where the students perceived positively taking English courses and pushed themselves to be active in English class and it is related to their positive response to answering teachers' questions in the English language. It is relevant to the

observation result where the students also asked the teachers when they did not know. This means that student's attitude and behavior is perceived positively.

Moreover, the positive perception of students about group learning makes the students often easily distracted while learning in the classroom. This condition caused a feeling of the students often nervous when their teacher asks them to talk in English. Concerning this issue of being nervous, young learners keep interested in learning English by deploying their effort to ask about lessons they do not know and always pay attention to the teacher when explaining the material. The students showed their interest happily because their teacher taught English fun and they always raise a hand to show their attention to the lesson.

Last, the students like to have rewards frequently. Based on the observation done by the researcher, the students did finish all their English assignments well. It was shown by the students who collected their assignments from the teachers. Concerning this issue of giving rewards to the students, Saraswati et al (2020, p. 308) explained that giving rewards to the young learner is one way to shape their behavior. Teachers must be creative to give various rewards. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that students have a positive perception of learning English.

Teachers' Perception

The result obtained from the teachers' questionnaire and interview revealed that both of the teachers were positively perceived about giving young learners learn English in school even though the English curriculum in elementary schools was none yet. Both of the teachers' perceptions of "learning English for a young learner is important" broadly meant being a requirement to have future jobs and having good communication inside or outside the school. The teachers also stated that the students often complained that they did not like English, their parents did not support them, and the limitation of lab languages. In addition, according to Linse (2005, p. 5), "to tailor teaching experiences to meet the developmental needs of individual students, you need to first become familiar with your students". That means that teachers have a big influence to monitor the students while learning English.

In general, although students had not accustomed to speaking English in class, they kept giving their attention to their students. Besides, the teachers agreed of the students who joined the English course to improve their skills. It is supported by the interview result that English should be given at an early age by giving them media while learning. Both of the teachers agreed of making group learning in the classroom to make the students focus in class and sometimes change the class atmosphere. In addition, for students who did not understand English, the teachers gave motivation, asked the students, and repeated the material. That is why the teachers perceived that the students are interested in learning English.

Based on the analysis above, it can be justified that the teachers agree that rewards or praise can bring positive effects for young learners. The reward that the teachers gave was an additional score or an invitation to eat or swim. In line with this statement, Saraswati et al (2020, p. 309) stated that "Rewards are given to motivate the students." This is done to keep the students' enthusiasm. From the above explanation, the teachers had a positive toward learning English for the young learner, there are so many advantages that the students could get by learning the English language.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study, it can be concluded that students and teachers had a positive perception of learning English for young learners. Students felt it is ideal and at the same time realistically achievable for them to learn English. They tried to join English courses to improve their English skill, answer teachers' questions in the classroom, and try to be active in class. There are four conclusions of teachers' perception, namely: English is important and better given earlier to make the students accustomed to English, the teachers will motivate, repeat, and ask young learners who do not understand the material. Third, the teachers make group learning to make a different atmosphere while learning English in class and make the students feel not bored. Fourth, all the teachers agreed that the students always pay attention to their teaching and they give a reward in the form of an additional score or doing activities outside school. From this study, a suggestion is given to some parties. For the other researcher, the researcher hopes that this research helps the next researcher to research the same case and this research can be a reference or a source to the next researcher to do their research. Next, for students, students can improve their four English skills by joining courses outside of school. Then, English teachers, teachers should ask, motivate, be creative, and give some rewards to their students. Last, the government, the government needs to pay attention to English learning in primary school. Besides, the government should make sure that every English teacher has already got training from the government to fulfill the future need of the students.

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