



Politeknik Harapan Bersama's Students' Perception to English Club Related To English Ability Enhancement

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ABSTRACT

Poltek English Club (PEC), which is a student activity unit, is asked to become an agent of change that changes students' perceptions to speak English as an active language. Even so, the existence of PEC at Politeknik Harapan Bersama is still very young. This requires research whether this PEC has an impact on improving the English language skills of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students. Research conducted using data triangulation; observation, interview and documentation. The results of this study are the perceptions of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students towards the existence of the English Club (PEC) Polytechnic on their English language skills. There are three dominant perceptions found. The first is that joining PEC is not interesting, as they are learning English as the lesson in the class. The second is the students feel that they are already mastered English as they are learning it from the elementary school until college. The third is they don't interest in learning English as it is not use directly to speak with the foreigner as they don't go to other English spoken countries. The conclusion of this research is many students of Politeknik Harapan Bersama do not perceive PEC as an interesting activities to be followed. Thus, PEC managements should think a solution to boost students' curiosity and interest.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the times demands the importance of mastering English for educated people in Indonesia. The need for English is related to the ability to communicate orally and in writing and is a priority for increasing human resources for nation building. This is because English is the most widely used language in the world, more than 400 million people around the world use English both at work and in social life (Iriance, 2018).

English is a compulsory component of education material in Indonesia, this can be obtained formally from elementary school to university. English is a tool for communicating orally and in writing that is used internationally. Communicating is understanding and expressing information, thoughts, feelings, and developing science, technology, and culture. The ability to communicate in a complete sense is the ability to discourse, namely the ability to understand and/or produce spoken and/or written texts that are realized in the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills are used to respond to or create discourse in social life. Therefore, the English course method is directed at developing these skills so that students are able to communicate and have discourse in English. Therefore, Indonesia must also place English in the same position as Indonesian so that it can play a bigger role at the international level in the fields of science, economics, politics, technology and culture. The Indonesian government issued article 33 paragraph 3 of Law Number 20 of 2003 which reads "Foreign languages can be used as the language of instruction in certain educational units to support students' foreign language skills (Indonesia, 2006)." That is one of the most important reasons why humans must learn English at school. school.

Teaching English is given as a course that characterizes the vision of Politeknik Harapan Bersama as an institution which wants to graduate alumni with global work competitiveness. The English course is a General Subject (MKU) that must be taken in each study program by adjusting the main learning outcomes and the study program curriculum. Syllabus and teaching materials are designed according to the needs of existing study programs. However, based on the results of an evaluation of the implementation of teaching English at the Politeknik Harapan Bersama, it shows that students' abilities are still low, this is evidenced by the average score of students in one of the study programs who received a C of 60% in English 1 course.

Various factors are thought to be the cause of students' low English

proficiency, one of which is an unsupportive learning environment and lack of guidance in learning English. English is not only about theory and grammar rules, but also requires practice, as stated by Finocchiaro and Brumfit (Werdingisih, 2022) who state that in the process of teaching and learning in language learning it is better to focus on the use of language not on knowledge of language. This means that language learning should maximize its practical and communicative use. The second problem is the low quality of students' English, especially non-English students, the cause is the lack of awareness of students in learning it. Therefore, students should take part in various additional activities such as private lessons or other study groups.

One of the problems faced by the low quality of English, especially students of the Politeknik Harapan Bersama, is the lack of awareness of students to learn English. One way to increase students' awareness of learning English is to form activities in the form of Student Activity Units (UKM) or communities. English Student Activity Units (UKM) such as the English Club are urgently needed to become a place for students to be able to communicate well in English and add insight and competence in English. English Club is an English learning group that meets regularly to study and practice English. Not only that, the learning also tries to solve the learning problems of its members (Malu & Smedley, 2016).

Politeknik Harapan Bersama formed the Poltek English Club (PEC) as a means for students to develop their ability to communicate in English. The English Club Polytechnic was initiated in 2018 with more than 200 internal student participants. The English Club Polytechnic has several activities including English Conversation. To This activity is very good for improving students' ability to speak English. In addition, this activity can train students' courage in expressing opinions. The second activity is English Gamification Learning in which students learn to compose English words through games with online and offline media. The third is the English Competition Preparation with the aim of students being able to take part in various kinds of English-language competencies, students are trained in various abilities that are often tested in English competitions.

Considering the optimal English Club activities on the Politeknik Harapan Bersama campus and the large benefits of its activities, students and English lecturers really need to work together in synergy in order to realize English communication. The effectiveness of learning English in the classroom is still lacking, this can be seen from the few students who are willing to communicate using English outside the classroom or class activities. There are still many students who consider English as a side subject or only a course requirement. Following up on this matter, Politeknik Harapan Bersama assigned the Language Unit and Student members of the English Club Polytechnic community to hold an English Day which was held by the entire academic community on Thursday and Friday.

Poltek English Club community activities at the Politeknik Harapan Bersama campus has the aim of developing talents, interests, intellectuals and skills by:

1. Providing assistance to students in improving English language skills,
2. Organize activities that stimulate children's creativity and develop talents, interests and explore student competencies
3. Mobilizing students in procuring wall magazines. Based on this, the researcher intends to conduct a study on the evaluation of the English Club program at Politeknik Harapan Bersama, Tegal. to find out about the implementation of English Club activities, as well as find out about the obstacles or obstacles that cause the English Club program to be less effective

Even though the English Club Polytechnic has been formed and has a work program, there are many Politeknik Harapan Bersama students who don't look at it and have little interest in participating in this PEC activity. The perception that has been built regarding the Polytechnic English Club (PEC) as a forum for improving English proficiency needs to be improved. Perception is an individual process in interpreting, organizing and giving meaning to the stimulus that comes from the environment in which the individual is located which is the result of the learning process and experience (Asrori, 2020). The English Club Polytechnic in the success of increasing the ability of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students certainly cannot be separated from the perceptions of students which determine their steps to take part in PEC activities.

This research focuses on the perspectives and opinions of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students regarding the existence of an English Club to improve their English proficiency. One way to increase students' awareness of learning English is to participate in English language improvement activities such as the English Club, this activity can be a forum for each student to be able to communicate well in English and add insight and competence to students in English (Fitria, 2018). That's why this research was conducted to find out the perspectives and opinions of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students about the English Club.

METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative approach. Descriptive research is research conducted to determine the value of an independent variable, either one variable or more (independent) without making comparisons, or connecting with other variables. Descriptive research is research that reveals problems, circumstances or events as they actually occur in the sense of finding facts (Nawi, 2017).

This research is a survey research that is quantitative descriptive in nature. This study uses a research sample. The sample technique used is a specific purpose technique. These responses serve to reduce the tension caused by changes in energy within him, for example: proportional random sampling. The proportion is based on the Department that has been selected by simple random. This study seeks to reveal the description of learning motivation, the perceptions of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students.

The population of this study were all students of the Politeknik Harapan Bersama. Data collection was carried out using an instrument in the form of a questionnaire. Questionnaires are used to reveal the reasons that encourage students to study (both internal and external), student opinions about the grades obtained, and the methods taken to get high scores in the courses programmed.

FINDINGS

The urgency of mastering the ability to communicate using English in the global era is still not fully realized by the younger generation, as well as students of Politeknik Harapan Bersama. Most of the students who were the respondents of this study thought that they had learned enough English so they did not need extracurricular learning such as joining the English Club. This is certainly not entirely wrong, considering that English has become a subject from elementary school or even to kindergarten. The ability to speak English is actually a skill that is felt to have been mastered by most students.

As has been researched, the cause of the emergence of a perception is internal and external. Students who are dominated by the younger generation are actually faster in receiving information and sensitive to changes in their surroundings. This study sees that students, most of whom are the younger generation, are the most appropriate objects related to a social phenomenon. Of course in this case, a perception underlies an activity or human action. In this study, students' perceptions of the existence of the English Club as a student activity unit at Politeknik Harapan Bersama became the main object. The student's initial perception of the existence of the English Club Polytechnic became one of the determinants of the student's participation in learning to communicate in English with the English Club Polytechnic.

Some of the perceptions of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students are known to be the reasons underlying their non-participation in the English Club Polytechnic. The first perception is that students feel that they have sufficiently mastered English skills. This is one of the reasons many students do not join the Poltek English Club. The second perception is that students feel that they will not need English skills in the near future, therefore they do not study seriously and do not need to take part in activities such as the Polytechnic English Club. The third perception is that students feel that communicating in English must be done where there are foreigners (native speakers), not with fellow Indonesians and not in Indonesia so participating in PEC is not important for them. These three perceptions are perceptions that are often expressed by students regarding the existence of the English Club Polytechnic and its activities.

Although the perceptions found all lead to students' beliefs if they have mastered English skills, in reality many of them do not even know the English translation of numbers or the objects around them. This research succeeded in uncovering the perceptions of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students related to the existence of the English Club Polytechnic towards improving their English skills. The results of this study are expected to be a material consideration for the managers of the English Club Polytechnic to be more active in conducting training to improve English proficiency.

This study aims to determine the perceptions of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students regarding the existence of the English Club Polytechnic towards

improving the ability to communicate in English. This research is a qualitative research which uses data triangulation techniques; interviews, questionnaires & documentation. The researcher combined these three data findings to be able to see the perceptions of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students towards the existence of the English Club Polytechnic.

The process of interviews, distribution of questionnaires and documentation was carried out with the help of students who are members of the English Club Polytechnic. This is done because students will be more open and will feel more relaxed in answering questions asked by their friends so that there is nothing that makes them embarrassed to express their opinion regarding the existence of PEC in improving their English skills. The purpose of carrying out the data collection process in this way is so that the answers obtained can be accounted for. If data collection in the form of interviews is carried out by researchers who are English lecturers, it is likely that students who become respondents will give positive responses or answers related to the questions asked by lecturers.

DISCUSSION

Politeknik Harapan Bersama students have an age range of 18-22 years, this age range is classified into the young age range. Individuals aged 18-22 years will be very sensitive to changes in their environment and the influence of the environment they are in. This is the main reason related to taking student perceptions that needs to be considered. Some perceptions were given by students during the data collection process but there were similarities in the perceptions given by students. There are three same perceptions given by students during the data collection process.

The first perception is the perception that they regard English skills as abilities that they have mastered because they have been taught since elementary school so they do not need to take part in extra activities such as the English club. Learning English from elementary school makes students think if they have mastered English well (A. Maulana, personal communication, September 12, 2022). The existence of the Polytechnic English Club towards improving students' English proficiency is considered less effective by students. Learning English in the classroom is quite confusing with the assignments given and also other subjects (I. Tegar, personal communication, September 12, 2022). Students feel learning as a burden not as a fulfillment of needs.

Several students also gave opinions that were in line with the first perception. For Politeknik Harapan Bersama students, joining the English Club is not an interesting or prestigious thing to be a part of. English Club activities are considered the same as learning activities in the classroom (H. Lutfiani, personal communication, September 12, 2022). Students also feel bored to learn English outside the classroom. Student boredom in learning English is contagious and forms a perception where students feel that they have had enough in learning English.

The first perception described above is the most dominant perception expressed by students regarding the English Club. This is the main task for the management of the English Club Polytechnic in compiling an activity that attracts student interest and participation. As we know that students who are the younger generation in this era prefer activities that are lively, prestigious and highlight their abilities.

Furthermore, the second perception is that students feel that English proficiency is not what they need in the near future. They think that other abilities learned during lectures are more important for them (A. Farraz, personal communication, September 12, 2022). Students seem to be less aware that the world of work and industry is currently competing in a global direction and communication skills are very crucial. Students still think that their process of entering the world of work is still far away, so there is no need to worry (N. Yofa, personal communication, Desember 2022). Some students also think that they don't need to participate in Poltek English Club activities just to learn English, this is because not all companies require English proficiency so they don't have to worry if they don't speak English (F. Nisrina, personal communication, Desember 2022).

The second perception should not be owned by students of the Politeknik Harapan Bersama which is a vocational campus which prepares all its graduates to be ready to work in the business and industrial world. Students seem not aware of their identity as vocational campus students. In response to this student perception, it is better if there are activities to build student readiness for the world of work on campus so that the perception of seeing English as a skill that does not need to be mastered before exploring the world of work can be transformed into a positive perception. See English language skills as their provision for work in the future.

Lastly is the third perception, the perception of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students where communication using English must be done when in an English-speaking country as the mother tongue or at least it can be done in Indonesia when we meet and communicate with foreigners who only understand English. Participating in the Polytechnic English Club, where the participants are dominated by their own friends and there are no native speakers, is less attractive to most students (M. Syafiq, personal communication, Desember 2022). This third perception is the perception of students which is a bit difficult to understand by the researchers and the team. Students who have this perception are dominated by first year students. Students assume that learning will be more effective if faced directly with real situations and with real learning partners. Even so, students must be given an understanding of learning that should be done as preparation before facing real situations.

The perceptions above represent all the perceptions of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students obtained by researchers. These perceptions not only limit students from participating in English clubs but also limit students' curiosity to learn English further. Researchers and the team know that learning English has been given since elementary school, but in reality the practice in class is slightly different as seen from the scores of Politeknik Harapan Bersama students. The researcher hopes that this research can help many parties related to the existence of student perceptions regarding the existence of the Polytechnic English Club (PEC) at Politeknik Harapan Bersama.

CONCLUSION

From the research that has been done, it is known that participating in extracurricular activities (such as the English Club) to learn English is not attractive for students of Politeknik Harapan Bersama. The three dominant perceptions of students towards the existence of the English Club Polytechnic (PEC) to improve English language skills lead to a conclusion that students need

an extra-curricular activity that accentuates their abilities. Polytechnic English Club activities which are considered to be the same as lecture activities in class by students make students reluctant to participate or take part in this PEC.

Polytechnic English Club (PEC) is an excellent forum for improving English language skills for students. The benefits obtained in participating in PEC cannot be felt immediately, but these PEC activities have very good intentions and goals for improving English proficiency. Suggestions for PEC managers are that PEC can hold a new activity related to student talents. Suggestions for other researchers in the future is that research related to student perceptions of the existence of this community or English Club is still minimal. Research related to students' interests and reasons for students to join the English Club could be a very good thing for further research.

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