

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE ADVANTAGES OF LEARNING AND
USING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on students' perceptions towards the advantages of learning and using English language. The research methodology is based on an online questionnaire that was distributed to 200 participants. Participants were randomly chosen among the National Defence University Malaysia students. Data was collected and analysed. The differences of students' scores on their perceptions towards the advantages of learning and using the English language were analysed using the descriptive analysis. The findings revealed that there were many positive perceptions towards acknowledging the advantages that students attained when they learned and used the English language as a routine. This positive perception was seen as a significant determiner for the students to learn and use the language even more. This study revealed that knowing and acknowledging the advantages of learning and using the English language molds a constructive mindset to empower the English language and use in all contexts.

Keywords:

1. Introduction

The English language has long been a spoken language on the planet. In this age of technology, most children have been exposed to the English language from an early age. Children can easily find the language from songs, cartoons, movies, restaurant menus, and other sources (Soraya & Abdullah, 2021). Upon enrolment in school, the language has become a compulsory course in primary and secondary school. The government requires all students to take an English test in order to enroll into higher education institutions. Basically, these students should be interested in learning the English language, as it is an important medium of communication used by people in a wide range of disciplines, such as career, academia, and business. In order for students to see the

importance of a language, they need to gain experience in learning the language in a positive way, and be prepared to take the responsibility in learning the language (Balla, 2014). In addition, the degree of use of the English language and mastery of a person in various events depend on a particular intention. For example, the English language term for engineering for engineering students is different from the terms for ICT students. Their use of the language does not make a big difference in the classroom but later, in their lives especially when they start work. Therefore, these students must be aware of the importance of strengthening the English language, not only in class sessions but also in daily life.

2. Literature review

Because it is the most widely spoken language on the planet, the English language is considered a global language. A thorough classroom-language policy, such as that adopted by Hong Kong in 2020, has been attributed to the English language, as has been the case in other nations such as the United Kingdom (Wong, 2020). It has been established by researchers that second language learners have more academic success when they motivate themselves to acquire concepts and literacy in the second language while still remembering to use their native language. Students regarded the English language as a tool for developing multiple intelligences and proving the language's value in a global educational context, according to researchers (Pahrozi, 2022). As a result of the globalisation of higher education, the English language has always been a component of their educational curriculum, whether in elementary or secondary school. English becomes the international communication since it has successfully dominated the world of globalisation.

Improved English communication abilities can result in better social interactions as well as future work chances, from interviews for jobs to actual professionals. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively is one of the most crucial abilities in the world, and understanding the English language makes this possible (Jindal, 2022). English language skills was cited by international students and graduates as being crucial for landing jobs in their fields of interest. In particular, they believed that interpersonal and communication skills, as well as the ability to communicate with co-workers and clients, were crucial. Accent were brought up as a potential barrier to finding employment in their chosen field (Arkoudis, et al., 2009). On the other hand, Hiew et al. (2021)

opined that given that the majority of employed and unemployed graduates fell within the Intermediate and Upper Intermediate language proficiency level, there was insufficient evidence to conclude that English language competency was the primary factor determining employability.

Students who empower the English language will be able to communicate with people from all over the world, not only those who speak the language (Rintaningrum, 2021). This is because, the students have the confidence to speak with other people in the English language despite the difference in their native languages. Consequently, another advantage of learning and using the English language is the students are able to learn the culture, history, and myths of the origin country of the language. This is due to the fact that these students will be drawn to the culture of the group that speaks the language, and many of these students have a strong desire to become fully integrated into the language (Balla, 2014). Those who empower the English language will be able to communicate with other people from all around the world. This is because, in most countries, the English language has been used as a tool to travel as well as has been used effectively in many different kinds of parts in the world. The language itself will allow the students to explore and travel more confidently to the countries they visited. They will be able to travel the world with solid communication skills in English since the English language has been designated as an international language, making it simple for them to receive support and assistance in any area of the world (Nishanthi, 2018).

The next advantage is learning the English language will let these students to have better access on the world-class either in education system's or entertainment system's establishment. Many of the world's best universities are using the English language as the main language for their courses. Therefore, it is essential to achieve proficiency in the English language if they wish to enter these world-class universities. According to Rindal (2014), the English language has been dominant in many sectors, including education. Many education institutions either in primary school or secondary school and even higher institution have acknowledged and used the English language as their main language in giving lectures. It is also said that learning and using the English language improves or increases students' cognitive ability.

Furthermore, learning a second language is proven to be the best way to keep our brain challenged and active. It is also proven that students who speak more than one language fluently have better memories and are more cognitively creative than the students who do not. Studies showed that students who have empowered a second language from the early age have better achievement scores than the students who do not (Mangone, 2020). In addition, according to Wong (2020), students who get English language training are better equipped to overcome their difficulties in forming relationships with others. Samples for his study are people in his nearby vicinity as well as friends from all over the world. It has been asserted that when youngsters learn English, they are better able to communicate with people since they are not excessively concerned with grammar. Language educators (in this example, English professors) commonly commented that pupils who are sincerely eager to study will succeed regardless of the conditions in which they find themselves.

3. METHODOLOGY

The quantitative design methodology is employed in this study, which includes a series of structured questions to collect data. According to Henning (1986), quantitative research may be described as "any research approach that involves the tallying, altering, or systematic aggregate of vast amounts of data in a systematic fashion." The quantitative approaches have the capacity to examine not only if there is overall support for a hypothesis, but also whether the degree of the support varies depending on the characteristics of the research being considered (Green & Hall, 1984). In other words, the quantitative approaches may be used to study interactions as well as primary effects while doing research. It was chosen by the researcher since it has been shown to be quite beneficial in the analysis of a wide range of data. This study employs descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. The questionnaires are handed down to the samples by providing them a link to access the form or questions on Goggle form by the researcher.

4. Results and Discussion

A group of questionnaire items' internal consistency or reliability is measured by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. On a uniform 0–1 scale, Cronbach's Alpha assesses the degree of agreement.

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Higher numbers denote items with greater agreement. The coefficient value of the questionnaire is given in the table below.

Table 1: Reliability of the items in the questionnaire

Real Questionnaire	N of Items
0.887	10

Table 1 shows the score of Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.887. (The score of Cronbach’s Alpha for pilot test is 0.859). This shows that the reliability score is very good and this indicates that the response values for each participant across a set of questions are consistent. A high consistency value means that the measurements are reliable and the items might measure the same characteristics.

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ON THE ADVANTAGES OF LEARNING AND USING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The advantages of learning and using the English language was analysed based on the data obtained from the questionnaire in Section C. The data are transformed into frequencies and percentages as shown in the figures and tables below.

Table 2: Frequency of Valid/Missing Data

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
Valid	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3: Frequency and percentages for Questions 1 to 10, Section C

Question		Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1	Total
1	Frequency	143	49	8	-	-	200
	Percentage	71.5	24.4	4	-	-	100%
192 (1), 0							
2	Frequency	122	65	13	-	-	200
	Percentage	61.0	32.5	6.5	-	-	100%
187 (2), 0							
3	Frequency	117	65	15	3	-	200
	Percentage	58.5	32.5	7.5	1.5	-	100%
182, 3							

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4	Frequency	119	63	17	1	-	200
	Percentage	59.5	31.5	8.5	0.5	-	100%
182, 1							
5	Frequency	123	58	17	2	-	200
	Percentage	61.5	29.0	8.5	1.0	-	100%
181, 2							
6	Frequency	111	71	18	-	-	200
	Percentage	55.5	35.5	9.0	-	-	100%
182, 0							
7	Frequency	106	71	21	2	-	200
	Percentage	53.0	35.5	10.5	1.0	-	100%
177, 2							
8	Frequency	123	60	14	3	-	200
	Percentage	61.5	30.0	7.0	1.5	-	100%
183, 3							
9	Frequency	114	55	24	6	1	200
	Percentage	57.0	27.5	12.0	3.0	0.5	100%
169 (10) Highest Neutral, 7							
10	Frequency	120	64	15	1	-	200
	Percentage	60.0	32.0	7.5	0.5	-	100%
184 (3), 1							

4.1.1 Learning English will open more job opportunities for me

Table 3 shows the percentage of the respondents' answer for Question 1. The highest percentage is 71.5% (143) which represents the respondents who answered "STRONGLY AGREE" to the questions. As for "AGREE", the percentage of the respondents is 24.5%, (49) whereas it is the second highest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for "NEUTRAL" answer, it represents the lowest percentage among others, covering 4% (8) of the respondents.

4.1.2 Learning English will help me in higher academic achievements

Table 3 shows the percentage of the respondents' answer for Question 2. The highest percentage is 61% (122) which represents the respondents who answered "STRONGLY AGREE" to the questions. As for "AGREE", the percentage of the respondents is 32.5% (65), whereas it is the second highest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for "NEUTRAL" answer, it represents the lowest percentage among others, covering 6.5% (13) of the respondents.

4.1.3 Being good in English let me help my friends

Table 3 shows the percentage of the respondents' answer for Question 3. The highest percentage is 58.5% (117) which represents the respondents who answered "STRONGLY AGREE" to the

questions. As for “AGREE”, the percentage of the respondents is 32.5% (65), whereas it is the second highest percentage for the question. There are 1.5% (3) respondents answered “DISAGREE” to the question, and it represent the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for “NEUTRAL” it only covering 7.5% (15) of the respondents.

4.1.4 Studying the English language is important because it will make me more educated

In Table 3, the percentage of the respondents’ answer for Question 4 can be seen. The highest percentage is 59.5% (119) which represents the respondents who answered “STRONGLY AGREE” to the questions. As for “AGREE”, the percentage of the respondents is 31.5% (63), whereas it is the second highest percentage for the question. There are 0.5% (1) respondents answered “DISAGREE” to the question, and it represent the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for “NEUTRAL” it only covering 8.5% (17) of the respondents.

4.1.5 I can converse with many people from different countries when i can understand English

In Table 3, the percentage of the respondents’ answer for Question 5 can be seen. The highest percentage is 61.5% (123) which represents the respondents who answered “STRONGLY AGREE” to the questions. As for “AGREE”, the percentage of the respondents is 29% (58), whereas it is the second highest percentage for the question. There are 1% (2) respondents answered “DISAGREE” to the question, and it represent the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for “NEUTRAL” it only covering 8.5% (17) of the respondents.

4.1.6 I learn English because I can contribute more to society

In Table 3, the percentage of the respondents’ answer for Question 6 can be seen. The highest percentage is 55.5% (111) which represents the respondents who answered “STRONGLY AGREE” to the questions. As for “AGREE”, the percentage of the respondents is 35.5% (71), whereas it is the second highest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for “NEUTRAL” answer, it represents the lowest percentage among others, covering 9% (18) of the respondents.

4.1.7 I gain more confidence upon learning English

The percentage of respondents who responded to Question 7 is shown in Table 3. The highest percentage is 53% (106) which represents the respondents who answered “STRONGLY AGREE”

to the questions. As for “AGREE”, the percentage of the respondents is 35.5% (71), whereas it is the second highest percentage for the question. There are 1% respondents answered “DISAGREE” to the question, and it represent the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for “NEUTRAL” it only covering 10.5% (21) of the respondents.

4.1.8 Learning English will help me to achieve more of my goals

The percentage of respondents who responded to Question 8 is shown in Table 3. The highest percentage is 61.5% (123) which represents the respondents who answered “STRONGLY AGREE” to the questions. As for “AGREE”, the percentage of the respondents is 30% (60), whereas it is the second highest percentage for the question. There are 1.5% (3) respondents answered “DISAGREE” to the question, and it represent the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for “NEUTRAL” it only covering 7% of the respondents.

4.1.9 I am able to finish my homework faster when I learned English

The percentage of respondents who responded to Question 9 is shown in Table 3. The highest percentage is 57% (114) which represents the respondents who answered “STRONGLY AGREE” to the questions. As for “AGREE”, the percentage of the respondents is 27.5% (55), whereas it is the second highest percentage for the question. There are 3% (6) respondents answered “DIASGREE” and 0.5% (1) respondents answered “STRONGLY DIASGREE” to the question, and it represent the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for “NEUTRAL” it only covering 12% (6) of the respondents.

4.1.10 I am able to understand my teacher easily when I understand English

Table 3 displays the percentage of respondents that responded to Question 10. The highest percentage is 60% (120) which represents the respondents who answered “STRONGLY AGREE” to the questions. As for “AGREE”, the percentage of the respondents is 32% (64), whereas it is the second highest percentage for the question. There are 0.5% (1) respondents answered “DISAGREE” whereas it represents the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for “NEUTRAL” it only covering 7.5% (15) of the respondents.

4.2 DISCUSSION

What are students' perceptions towards the advantages of learning and using the English language. An overwhelming 71.5% of respondents believed that mastering the language increases their employability. Although many researches support this, there are still studies which deny such connection. Being good in the language makes you one level higher than another job candidate, and employers will definitely choose one who has the English language proficiency over one who do not have it. Next, 61% of respondents claimed that mastering the language helped them get better results in tertiary education. Having proficiency in the English language helps one to score better especially when learning materials are mostly in the English language. They can understand the material or references better, thus do better in their studies. Thirdly, when they understood English, 60% of the students could readily understand their teacher. This is true is the medium of instruction is the English language at the institution. Lastly, the highest neutral answer is (12%) for the statement they were able to finish their homework faster when they learned the English language. Samples neither agree nor disagree to this claim where they claimed that having mastered the English language does not influence their speed in completing homework.

In this research, a vast majority of the students know that learning and using English language will bring huge advantages either in their present life or future life. The students have demonstrated when there is an additional component such as these advantages, their perception towards learning and using the English language will change into a better perception and they will be more interested to learn the English language. Besides having more job opportunities, make them look more educated, students will also be able to converse with foreigners from different countries and achieve more of their life goals.

5. CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that we live in a technologically advanced society, some students are still unaware of the practicality and benefits of studying and utilising the English language. However, when the students know that English is essential and it is used in many industries and work aspect and also in order to secure jobs for themselves, the students need to use English frequently and learn English. As a result, with all the encouragement and the knowledge of the students about the advantages, the students will now use English more frequently and there will be no such thing of students not knowing English language.

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