

## Conference Paper

# The Perception of Learning English by Undergraduate Students

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## Abstract

This research analyzed the perception of undergraduate students on learning English. This research adopted the theory on perception proposed by Efron (1968) in which he stated that perception is the primary cognitive contact of person with the world around him. It was completed by adopting quantitative method in which the data were collected by sharing questionnaire to undergraduate students as its respondents. The questionnaire was tested by *Product Moment Pearson* to meet its validity with t-table larger than r-table, and by *Alpha Coefficient* to meet its reliability with *Cronbach's Alpha value* larger than 0,6. Furthermore, the data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed by using *Likert Scale* with four alternative responses. They were *Strongly Disagree* (0% - 24.99%), *Disagree* (25% - 49.99%), *Agree* (50% - 74.99%), and *Strongly Agree* (75% - 100%). The research found that the perception of the respondents towards English learning is 66%.

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## 1. Introduction

A research on students' perception needs to be known because as said by Brown that "researchers need to continue assessing teachers' and students' perceptions of FL teaching, as the field will most assuredly change over time and idiosyncratic perceptions of FL teaching among teachers and students will most definitely remain a reality of the FL classroom. The most practical and far-reaching impact of future research in this area will take place in individual FL classrooms where teachers become researchers who desire to better understand their own perspectives on FL teaching, their students' perspectives, and how to reconcile the two (Brown, 2017: 271). This inspires the researcher to do a research on the perception of the students' towards language teaching. The problem of this research is "What is the perception of Learning English by undergraduate students?" Therefore, the purpose of this research is to find out

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the undergraduate students' perception towards English learning. The scope of the research is focused on the perception with some indications such as: the students' interest in English, the students' interest in items of English, the students' interest in English proficiency, and the students' interest in English teachers. Finally, this research, hopefully, may contribute formidable information for English teachers in fulfilling their task with good teaching achievement because by recognizing the perception of the students, teachers may design proper method or way of teaching.

## 2. Literature Review

Perception is the primary cognitive contact of person with the world around him [3]. This statement means a general scope or field that can be perceived. This research is under educational field, specifically foreign language learning. Thus, the perception focuses on the language learning, and in this research, it is learning English. English as an international language is regarded as foreign language in some countries. Students' perception of learning English is really important to know because there are many researchers found that students feel anxious in learning English. For example, a research by Žefran (2015) concluded that a worryingly negative attitude is felt by health sciences students towards learning English and towards their primary and secondary school foreign language teachers. It is correlated with their foreign language achievement. Most of the students feel that their knowledge of English is insufficient and afraid of speaking English to other people [8]. Other research found that the causes of the students' anxiety in learning English are "feeling shameful to their friends of making mistake and being afraid of making mistake. In other words, they feel anxious because of negative social evaluation (Ekalestari, 2016: 719). Related to students' perception in learning English, some researchers have worked on it. For example, a research found that undergraduate students have good eagerness to learn English, it means that they have positive attitude towards English language learning. It is driven by their needs of having competence in speaking English because of requirement in getting job. Thus, they are encouraged to learn English in courses [7]. Different research inferred that teachers have great effect to the students' perception in learning. In other words, teachers have significant role in building the perception of learning by students [6]. Therefore, to have good perception of learning, it is not a matter of infusing a course of study with the newest and most sophisticated educational technology, but it is about how to utilize technology to meet the real needs and interests of the teachers and students [2].

### 3. Research Method

This research is accomplished by adopting quantitative mood which is based on the measurement of the quantity or amount. Furthermore, the data are obtained from the questionnaires that are shared to the respondents of this research (Kothari, 2004).

The respondents of this research are students of the first undergraduate students of Faculty of Economics, Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara (UISU), Medan, Indonesia. They are the samples of this research chosen by *deliberate sampling technique*. Particularly, it refers to *convenience technique* because the sample is selected based on the ease of access [5]. There are 97 respondents of this research who come from two different classes.

The instrument of this research is questionnaire which is firstly tested by *Product Moment Pearson* to meet its validity with t-table larger than r-table;  $N=97$ , the 2-tailed significance 0.05 and the r-table is 0.1975. Then, the score of each item that is less than 0.1975 will be deleted. The questionnaire is also tested by adopting *Alpha Coefficient* to meet its reliability with *Cronbach's Alpha value* larger than 0,6; the count result is larger than the score in r-table. It is 0.674. in other words, the questionnaire used in this research is valid and reliable.

The data of this research are obtained from the response of the respondents on the questionnaire given to them (Appendix 2). The questionnaire contains twenty five questions related to the indications of the students' perception as mentioned in the introduction of this research. Furthermore, the data are analyzed by using SPSS 20 to see the frequency of the *Internal Consistency* in the *Likert Scale* with four alternative responses. They are *Strongly Disagree* (51% - 100%), *Disagree* (34% - 50%), *Agree* (26% - 33%), and *Strongly Agree* (0% - 25%).

### 4. Analysis

The data analysis is fulfilled by obtaining the frequency analysis by using SPSS 20. The analysis is started from the analysis of each item of the questions related to the perception, followed by the recapitulation of the whole calculation of the analysis. However, the graph display is only given for the recapitulation calculation.

The analysis is also emphasized by using *Likert Scale Calculation*. It is by making the range of the frequency related to the internal consistency adopted in the questionnaire. The internal consistencies applied in the questionnaire are *Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Agree*, *Strongly Agree*. Likert Scale will calculate the range of those items with interval value 25. Therefore, the range of each item is as follows:

TABLE 1: Question 1.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	8	8.2	8.2	8.2
	2	2	2.1	2.1	10.3
	3	46	47.4	47.4	57.7
	4	41	42.3	42.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 2: Question 2.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	1	7	7.2	7.2	8.2
	2	49	50.5	50.5	58.8
	3	36	37.1	37.1	95.9
	4	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 3: Question 3.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4.1	4.1	4.1
	2	45	46.4	46.4	50.5
	3	45	46.4	46.4	96.9
	4	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 4: Question 4.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	16	16.5	16.5	16.5
	3	61	62.9	62.9	79.4
	4	20	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

1. 0 % - 24,99 % = Strongly Disagree

2. 25 % - 49,99 % = Disagree

TABLE 5: Question 5.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	1	19	19.6	19.6	20.6
	2	53	54.6	54.6	75.3
	3	23	23.7	23.7	99.0
	4	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 6: Question 6.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3.1	3.1	3.1
	2	25	25.8	25.8	28.9
	3	60	61.9	61.9	90.7
	4	9	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 7: Question 7.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4.1	4.1	4.1
	2	25	25.8	25.8	29.9
	3	59	60.8	60.8	90.7
	4	9	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 8: Question 8.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	6	6.2	6.2	6.2
	2	31	32.0	32.0	38.1
	3	50	51.5	51.5	89.7
	4	10	10.3	10.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

3. 50 % - 74,99 % = Agree

TABLE 9: Question 9.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3.1	3.1	3.1
	2	27	27.8	27.8	30.9
	3	54	55.7	55.7	86.6
	4	13	13.4	13.4	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 10: Question 10.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	2	25	25.8	25.8	26.8
	3	59	60.8	60.8	87.6
	4	12	12.4	12.4	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 11: Question 11.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3.1	3.1	3.1
	2	22	22.7	22.7	25.8
	3	63	64.9	64.9	90.7
	4	9	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 12: Question 12.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	1	1	1.0	1.0	2.1
	2	30	30.9	30.9	33.0
	3	60	61.9	61.9	94.8
	4	5	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

4. 75 % - 100 % = Strongly Agree

TABLE 13: Question 13.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	30	30.9	30.9	30.9
	2	51	52.6	52.6	83.5
	3	10	10.3	10.3	93.8
	4	6	6.2	6.2	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 14: Question 14.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	2	1	1.0	1.0	2.1
	3	54	55.7	55.7	57.7
	4	41	42.3	42.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 15: Question 15.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	5.2	5.2	5.2
	2	42	43.3	43.3	48.5
	3	39	40.2	40.2	88.7
	4	11	11.3	11.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 16: Question 16.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	25	25.8	25.8	25.8
	2	53	54.6	54.6	80.4
	3	13	13.4	13.4	93.8
	4	6	6.2	6.2	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Then the final result is obtained by the formula: Total Score / Highest Score x 100

TABLE 17: Question 17.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	5.2	5.2	5.2
	2	7	7.2	7.2	12.4
	3	43	44.3	44.3	56.7
	4	42	43.3	43.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 18: Question 18.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3.1	3.1	3.1
	2	3	3.1	3.1	6.2
	3	62	63.9	63.9	70.1
	4	29	29.9	29.9	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 19: Question 19.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4.1	4.1	4.1
	2	7	7.2	7.2	11.3
	3	52	53.6	53.6	64.9
	4	34	35.1	35.1	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 20: Question 20.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2	2.1	2.1	2.1
	1	21	21.6	21.6	23.7
	2	50	51.5	51.5	75.3
	3	21	21.6	21.6	96.9
	4	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

The total score is obtained from the amount of the whole calculation of each item multiplied with the frequency of the respondents' response.

TABLE 21: Question 21.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2	2.1	2.1	2.1
	1	49	50.5	50.5	52.6
	2	35	36.1	36.1	88.7
	3	9	9.3	9.3	97.9
	4	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 22: Question 22.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	29	29.9	29.9	29.9
	2	50	51.5	51.5	81.4
	3	16	16.5	16.5	97.9
	4	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 23: Question 23.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	1	2	2.1	2.1	3.1
	2	7	7.2	7.2	10.3
	3	60	61.9	61.9	72.2
	4	27	27.8	27.8	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Respondents who answer *Strongly Disagree* (Item Code: 1) are 237  
 Respondents who answer *Disagree* (Item Code: 2) are 636  
 Respondents who answer *Agree* (Item Code: 3) are 1.094

Formua:

T x Pn

T: total respondents who choose the item

TABLE 24: Question 24.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	1	2	2.1	2.1	3.1
	2	4	4.1	4.1	7.2
	3	68	70.1	70.1	77.3
	4	22	22.7	22.7	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 25: Question 25.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	1	2	2.1	2.1	3.1
	2	3	3.1	3.1	6.2
	3	31	32.0	32.0	38.1
	4	60	61.9	61.9	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Pn: Item Code

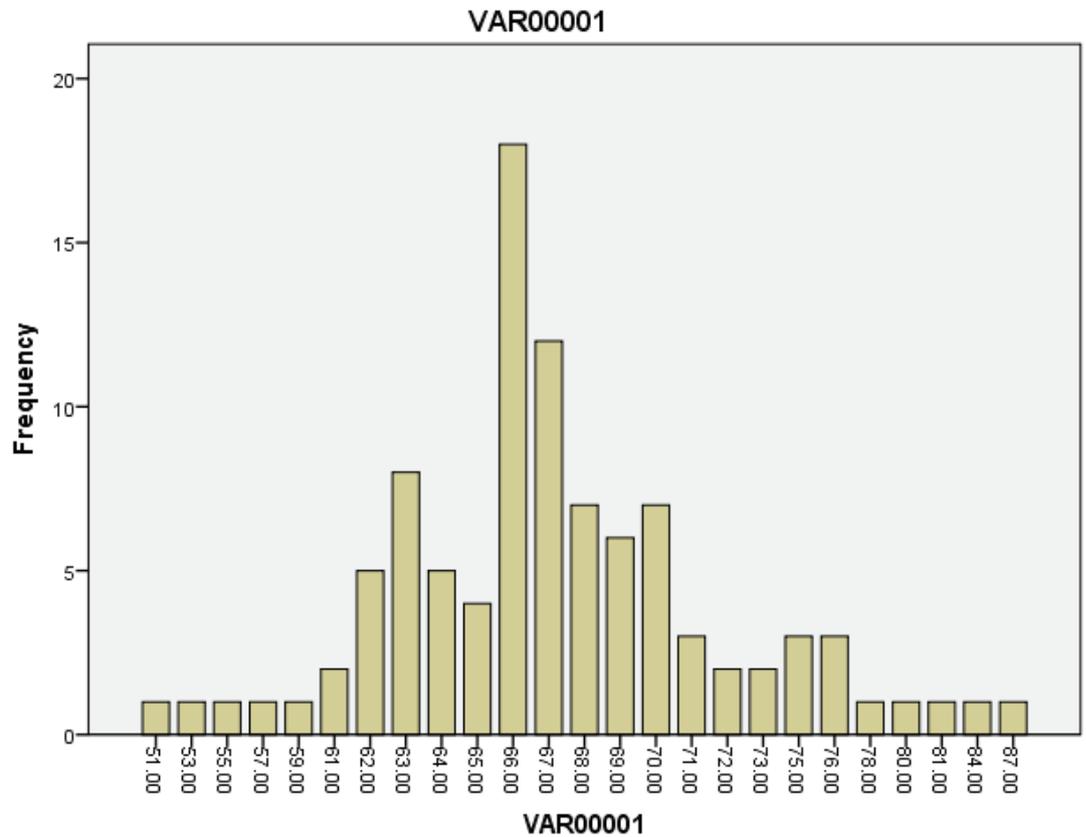
Respondents who answer *Strongly Disagree* (Item Code: 1) are 421  
 Respondents who answer *Strongly Disagree*:  $237 \times 1 = 237$   
 Respondents who answer *Disagree*:  $636 \times 2 = 1.272$   
 Respondents who answer *Agree*:  $1.094 \times 3 = 3.282$   
 Respondents who answer *Strongly Disagree*:  $421 \times 4 = 1.684$   
 Total score: 6.475  
 Final result:

Total Score / Highest Score x 100 → 6.475 / 9.700 x 100 = 66,8 % (Agree)

This result is shown in the table and bar chart as follows:

TABLE 26: VAR00001.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	51.00	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	53.00	1	1.0	1.0	2.1
	55.00	1	1.0	1.0	3.1
	57.00	1	1.0	1.0	4.1
	59.00	1	1.0	1.0	5.2
	61.00	2	2.1	2.1	7.2
	62.00	5	5.2	5.2	12.4
	63.00	8	8.2	8.2	20.6
	64.00	5	5.2	5.2	25.8
	65.00	4	4.1	4.1	29.9
	66.00	18	18.6	18.6	48.5
	67.00	12	12.4	12.4	60.8
	68.00	7	7.2	7.2	68.0
	69.00	6	6.2	6.2	74.2
	70.00	7	7.2	7.2	81.4
	71.00	3	3.1	3.1	84.5
	72.00	2	2.1	2.1	86.6
	73.00	2	2.1	2.1	88.7
	75.00	3	3.1	3.1	91.8
	76.00	3	3.1	3.1	94.8
	78.00	1	1.0	1.0	95.9
	80.00	1	1.0	1.0	96.9
	81.00	1	1.0	1.0	97.9
	84.00	1	1.0	1.0	99.0
	87.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	



## 5. Conclusion

The analysis shows that the perception of the undergraduate students towards learning English is 66%. It means that their perception on learning English is in the range of item code 3 (agree). It implies that the respondents have positive perception on learning English because the questions in the questionnaire are positive questions.

## 6. Recommendation

This research shows that undergraduate students have positive perception on learning English, thus it is a task for English teachers or instructors to perform their teaching performance to meet their teaching achievement. Teachers and lecturers need to create a breakthrough on modular teaching and teaching method since new or different modular teaching and method will give different or even better teaching achievement. New modification is really important and crucial for language teaching to meet the interest of the students and the teachers. In other words, research on language learning must be sustainable.

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