STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE ENGLISH DAY PROGRAM AT SMA IT AL-HUSNA PEKANBARU

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Abstract: *English is an international language that is widely used in today's globalized world as a means of communication. In Indonesia, English is used in every formal education setting, from elementary school to university. However, it can be challenging for language learners to practice their English in a natural environment because most of students spend very little time in class and only sometimes practice their English. Therefore, it needs some efforts to help students communicate and use English in daily activities, and one of the alternative ways is called English Day Program. This study aims to find out the students' perceptions of the English Day Program in improving students' English skills. The quantitative data collected by the questionnaire and the qualitative data obtained from the interview were analysed employing the descriptive analysis technique. The sample of this research is the second-grade students of SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru. The results showed that students have a positive perception of the English Day Program in terms of improving their English skills because the overall percentage of agreement levels was higher than the disagreement levels, as well as considering the positive responses from the interview sessions were higher than the negative responses.*

Keywords: Perception, English Day Program, English Skills

PERSEPSI SISWA TERHADAP PROGRAM ENGLISH DAY DI SMA IT AL-HUSNA PEKANBARU

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Abstrak: Bahasa Inggris adalah bahasa internasional yang banyak digunakan di dunia global saat ini sebagai sarana komunikasi. Di Indonesia, bahasa Inggris digunakan di setiap lingkungan pendidikan formal, dari sekolah dasar hingga universitas. Namun, mungkin sulit bagi siswa untuk melatih bahasa Inggris mereka di lingkungan alami karena sebagian besar siswa menghabiskan sangat sedikit waktu di kelas dan hanya kadang-kadang melatih bahasa Inggris mereka. Oleh karena itu, perlu beberapa upaya untuk membantu siswa berkomunikasi dan menggunakan bahasa Inggris dalam aktivitas sehari-hari, dan salah satu cara alternatifnya disebut English Day Program. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi siswa terhadap English Day Program dalam meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka. Data kuantitatif diperoleh melalui kuesioner dan data kualitatif diperoleh dari wawancara, kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik analisis deskriptif. Sampel penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas dua SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa memiliki persepsi positif terhadap Program English Day dalam hal meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka, itu dapat dilihat dari hasil persentase keseluruhan tingkat kesepakatan lebih tinggi daripada tingkat ketidaksepakatan, hal tersebut di dukung oleh respon positif dari sesi wawancara lebih tinggi dari respon negatif.

Kata Kunci: Persepsi, Program English Day, Keterampilan Bahasa Inggris

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most frequently used languages in the world in fields such as education, business, trade, science, law, tourism, international relations, health, and technology. Many countries around the world commonly use English as their second language. According to Mudyanita (2011), English is considered as an international language. As an international language, English is spoken as a first, second, or foreign language by many people worldwide. It is useful to learning English because is crucial in practically every aspect of life, including communication, trade, economics, politics, education, science, and technology. Seeing the development of an increasingly competitive era, the ability to speak English, which is an international language, is the main requirement that must be tested to be able to compete in the era of globalization. This is in line with Hamied & Musthafa (2019), who stated that foreign languages, particularly English, have been recognized as an essential tool in international competition and cooperation, as well as in science and technology, and other human interaction activities. This is the reason that nearly every segment of society, young and old alike, starts taking learning English seriously, including in Indonesia. The Republic of Indonesia's Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's laws are referred to when discussing English language instruction (ELT) in schools. The guidelines for curriculum implementation in the context of learning recovery are governed by these regulations. Students can communicate with people from all around the world who have different cultural backgrounds by learning English. Students with strong English language skills will be afforded greater chances to interact via diverse resources (Kemdikbud, 2022). In Indonesia, English is used in every formal education setting, from elementary school to university. However, this is insufficient to enable students to master English.

However, Daud et al. (2019) stated that it can be challenging for language learners to practice their English in a natural environment because most of students spend very little time in class and only sometimes practice their English. Since they do not live in a place where speaking English is required in daily interactions, most of them never utilize it outside of the classroom. Therefore, it needs some efforts to help students communicate and use English in daily activities, and one of the alternative ways that SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru can do is make a program to increase students' creativity in English. The program is called English Day. English Day Program is a day that requires all participants, including principals, teachers, students, and support staff in a school area, to communicate in English during the specified day (Sinaga, 2018). Furthermore, Nurcholilah (2018) said that the English Day Program is a fundamental exercise designed to acquaint and train that trains and familiarizes students with the usage of the English language in daily activities. Munir et al. (2023) conducted a study on the English Day program entitled "A Qualitative Exploration of Students' Perception on English Day Program at SMAN 1 West Sumatera." According to his findings, SMAN 1 West Sumatera should continue to run an English Day program. The findings of the students' opinions of the English Day program are summarized as follows: Developing speaking skills, increasing vocabulary, improving grammatical comprehension, pronunciation correction, and enhancing students' understanding of English.

The English Day program at SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru runs on Tuesday and Wednesday (twice a fortnight). This school offers the English Day program as an

extracurricular activity to develop the English habit and enhance the English abilities of all the school members, especially for students. Students can showcase their abilities on English Day, such as: speech, storytelling, role play, word chain game, etc. All these activities are fundamental practices that train all students how to communicate in English, which aims to accelerate the creation of an English environment in school so that the students do not feel stressed or shy to speak English. Furthermore, one of the English teachers in this school, Miss Faulina Fitria Sari, S.Pd, said this activity was also designed for students to have good motivation to learn English; many students don't like English and think that English is difficult. So, this activity was designed to change their mindset that learning English is fun and not difficult. The English Day program is a solution for students to develop their communication abilities by implementing English in daily conversations and school activities because the more frequently a foreign language is studied and used, the greater the language mastery. Through this program, students will be required to speak in real-life situations to establish a comfortable environment where students will not feel pressured or afraid to speak in English. The writer has observed that the English Day program serves a variety of purposes, such as: motivate students to practice English, help students express their ideas confidently, and prepare students for international scholarship opportunities.

Based on the researcher observation, there are some problems faced by students in implementing the English Day program. The writer found some phenomena, such as: some students are not confident when speaking English orally, probably because they have difficulty pronouncing words and still do not understand the use of grammar. In addition, they seem to have difficulty expressing ideas spontaneously and there are some students who still use Indonesian during the English Day. Therefore, English Day program is intended to overcome such problems, fulfil the needs of students, and establish English as an active language in the school environment. However, many students have yet to effectively use this program to improve their English skills. For example, some students break the rules by continuing to speak Indonesian on English Day. This can be influenced by several factors, including student motivation, attitudes, and perceptions. 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 (Sinaga, 2018). Bimo (in Yuliandasari., & Kusriandi, 2015) defined perception is obtained through the human's five senses, which are then used to interpret something. Furthermore, Rakhmat (in Yuliandasari., & Kusriandi, 2015) stated that perception is the experience about objects, events, or the relations that are gotten by concluding the information and interpreting the message. Everyone's brain has its own beliefs. Even though individuals have nearly identical brain shapes, each person has different thoughts, ideas, or perceptions based on the stimulus received by the five senses. This is in line with Walgito's (2004) claim that perception is preceded by a perceptual process. It is a process through which everyone receives stimuli by using their senses. Surwano (in Jannah, 2022) adds evidence to the belief that perception can draw conclusions from what individuals see or hear by making reasonable assumptions. Simply put, perception can be understood as a process by which individuals select, arrange, or understand things using their five senses. Furthermore, perception is a useful source of information. It implies that as attempts to comprehend a thing, perception is a conscious recognition of a thing using the five senses.

According to Robbins & Judge (2013), perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment. However, what we perceive can be substantially different from objective reality. He further said that perception is important because people's behaviour is based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself. Robbins said there are three dimensions that influence the formation of perception. The perceiver is the first factor, perceiver means someone who perceives something. An individual will be influenced by their beliefs, attitudes, motives, interests, past experiences, cognitive processes, and expectations when attempting to interpret something. The target is the second factor, it could be people, things, or events. One's perception can be strongly influenced by the characteristics of the perception target, such as novelty, motion, sounds, size, behaviour, speech patterns, background, proximity, and similarity. The third factor is the situation, in which the perception is formed. Our perception is influenced by the elements in our surroundings. Perception must be examined contextually, which means that the situation in which the perception arises should be given attention. One factor that affects how someone forms their perception is their situation, which includes place, time, and social context. As a results, the researcher is interested in answering the research question, namely: "How is the students' perception of the English Day Program at SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru?". By knowing students' perceptions of the English Day program at SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru can allow the principal and English teachers to better understand their students and make the English Day program more effectively.

METHODOLOGY

This research used a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design. According to Creswell (2014), sequential explanatory mixed methods appear to be a design that combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This research consists of two phases: the first phase involves gathering quantitative data, and the second phase involves gathering qualitative data that is planned or constructed based on the analysis and findings of the first phase. The kinds of participants who will be specifically chosen for the qualitative phase and the questions that will be asked to them are usually determined by the quantitative results. The overall aim of this design is to use qualitative data to help explain the quantitative results in more detail. So, the data in this research were collected from the distributed questionnaire and conducted interview. The population of this study is the second-grade students at SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru. They are divided into two classes (22 students from the science class and 25 students from the social class) with total number of 47 students. The sampling technique in this research uses total sampling, in which all research participants in this research are sampled. The school is located on Jalan Sekolah, Kubang Jaya, Kec. Siak Hulu, Kab. Kampar, Riau. The study was conducted in the 2023/2024 academic year. The program is conducted two days in a fortnight (Tuesday and Wednesday).

For data collected through questionnaire, a researcher was distributed a set of closed-ended questionnaires to the 47 second-grade students to find out their perceptions of the English Day program at SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru. The 25 questionnaire was adapted from Sinaga (2018), Wahyu (2020), Saputra (2011) and Mudyanita (2011) was constructed using Robbin's theory. Robbins & Judge (2013) argued that perceiver, target, and situation are the three dimensions of perception. These three dimensions were distributed equally in all 30 statements. Statement 1-10 are

allotted for perceiver dimension; statement 11-20 for target; and statement 21-30 for situation. To respond the questionnaire, participants should rate their agreement on a Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. As according to Sugiyono (2015) who stated that the Likert scale is used to gauge an attitude, opinion, and perception of a person or group concerning phenomena. This Likert scale allows respondents to rate items based on the circumstances they experience, and each statement item does not have a right or wrong answer, but it represents students' perception of the English Day Program at their school.

For data collected through interview, the researcher used a semi-structured and open-ended interview guided by an interview protocol. The researcher conducted interview with six students (three students from XI IPA and three students from XI IPS) who were respondents that get the highest score, median score, and the lowest score to the questionnaire have been distributed before. The themes that emerged during the interview sessions were coded in accordance with the quantitative dimensions of the questionnaire. This interview was used to gain more detail information and deeper understanding to enhance the data gained via questionnaire. When conducted interview, the researcher was listening carefully and record what the informant says, and then the researchers transcribed and interpreted the data into a computer file for analysis.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

As it was described in the methodology section, the thirty items included in the questionnaire can be divided into three parts. The first part, including statement 1-10, concentrates on the students' perception of the role of English Day Program on English skills development viewed from the perceiver dimension. The second part covering statement 11-20 focus on the students' perception viewed from the target dimension. The last part, which includes statement 21-30 concentrates on the students' perception as seen from the situation dimension.

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

Table 1: Students' perception of EDP viewed from perceiver dimension (N=47)

No	Statement	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
1.	The EDP makes me enthusiastic to studying English.	15 (32)	19 (40.4)	11 (23.4)	1 (2.1)	1 (2.1)
2.	The EDP made English interesting to me.	13 (27.6)	26 (55.3)	7 (15)	0 (0)	1 (2.1)
3.	The EDP makes me confident to speak English.	7 (15)	18 (38)	15 (32)	7 (15)	0 (0)
4.	The EDP makes me enjoy chatting in English with my friends.	2 (4.2)	22 (47)	21 (44.6)	2 (4.2)	0 (0)

5.	The EDP helps me improve my speaking skills.	11 (23.4)	23 (49)	12 (25.5)	1 (2.1)	0 (0)
6.	The EDP helps me increase my vocabulary.	13 (27.6)	14 (30)	16 (34)	3 (6.3)	1 (2.1)
7.	The EDP helps me improve my grammar mastery.	14 (30)	19 (40.4)	11 (23.4)	3 (6.3)	0 (0)
8.	The EDP makes my pronunciation much better.	11 (23.4)	20 (42.5)	15 (32)	1 (2.1)	0 (0)
9.	The EDP makes me comprehend English well.	9 (19.3)	24 (51)	12 (25.5)	1 (2.1)	1 (2.1)
10.	The EDP at my school is going well.	13 (27.6)	13 (27.6)	19 (40.4)	2 (4.2)	0 (0)
	Total	108	198	139	21	4
	Percentage Average	23.01	42.12	29.58	4.44	0.84

According to table 1 above, it is found that the percentage of the total number of students' perceptions viewed from the perceiver dimension is 23.01% strongly agree, 42.12% agree, 29.58% neutral, 4.44% disagree, and 0.84% strongly disagree. Based on the data, most students have a positive perception. These are supported by the qualitative data obtained through the interview:

"There are many activities that we learn while playing during English Day. It is very fun, and I like it so much." (Student 2).
"I thought English was very difficult for me, but after one more year of joining English Day, I can start to like English because it is not as terrible as I thought." (Student 3).
"This program is very helpful, and even I can talk to someone without being nervous and more confident to speak." (Student 5).
"I am not confident enough to speak up because I have difficulty pronouncing a word in English." (Student 6).

The majority of students are enthusiastic to learning during the English Day, they said that English Day helped them to get better at their English because during the day, they were able to study English through fun activities including games, storytelling, and conversations. Because the exercises weren't boring, students were happy and excited to learn. The percentage of perceiver dimension from the questionnaire results, which showed that 65% of students answered "agree" and "strongly agree," served as evidence. It is backed up by the findings of an interview session with students regarding their perceptions of English Day. The majority of the students who participated in the interview expressed that they enjoyed English Day because it was an enjoyable learning activity that encouraged them to learn the English language. However, they lack confidence in their ability to communicate in English. The results of the third questionnaire indicate that only 53% of students feel

comfortable speaking in English. In comparison, there are 47% of students who are still not confident enough to speak English. The successful execution of the English Day program has a significant impact on students' ability to communicate effectively through speech. Based on the questionnaire results, more than half of students feel that their school's English Day program is going well. It is similar to the interview results that the majority of students assume the English Day program has been well implemented at their school so far.

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

Table 2: Students' perception of EDP viewed from target dimension (N=47)

No	Statement	SA (5) f (%)	A (4) f (%)	N (3) f (%)	D (2) f (%)	SD (1) f (%)
11.	I hope the EDP can help me master English, so I can travel around the world.	26 (55.3)	10 (21.2)	7 (15)	3 (6.3)	1 (2.1)
12.	I hope the EDP can help me master English, so I have an opportunity to get a good job easier.	30 (64)	13 (27.6)	3 (6.3)	1 (2.1)	0 (0)
13.	I hope the EDP can help me master English, so it can support me to chat on social media.	16 (34)	13 (27.6)	15 (32)	3 (6.3)	0 (0)
14.	I hope the EDP can help me master English, so I can study abroad.	14 (30)	17 (36)	15 (32)	1 (2.1)	0 (0)
15.	I wish the EDP would support my speaking skills.	20 (42.5)	18 (38)	7 (15)	2 (4.2)	0 (0)
16.	I wish the EDP would enrich my vocabulary.	12 (25.5)	21 (44.6)	12 (25.5)	1 (2.1)	1 (2.1)
17.	I wish the EDP would improve my grammar mastery.	14 (30)	22 (47)	10 (21.2)	1 (2.1)	0 (0)
18.	I wish the EDP made my pronunciation sound like that of a native speaker.	10 (21.2)	20 (42.5)	16 (34)	1 (2.1)	0 (0)
19.	I wish the EDP made it easier for me to comprehend English.	31 (66)	11 (23.4)	5 (10.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)
20.	I wish the EDP	9 (19.3)	15 (32)	18 (38)	4 (8.5)	1 (2.1)

schedule could add more.					
Total	182	160	108	17	3
Percentage Average	38.78	33.99	22.96	3.58	0.63

According to table 2 above, it is found that the percentage of the total number of students' perceptions viewed from the target dimension is 38.78% strongly agree, 33.99% agree, 22.96% neutral, 3.58% disagree, and 0.63% strongly disagree. Based on the data, most students have a positive perception. These are supported by the qualitative data obtained through the interview:

> "I like this program because I know that English is an international language, so it is important to master English because I aspire to study abroad. I want to attend a university in Korea…" (Student 1).
> "English Day makes me a little bit understand grammar in English, especially in present tense and past tense. I get used to hearing teachers and my friends speak English, so it feels like I know when we use present tense and when we use past tense in a sentence." (Student 2)
> "I think there is a little bit of improvement in my English right now." (student4).
> "I got new vocabulary, and my pronunciation is better now." (Student 6)

The majority of students hope that the English Day program will help them become more fluent in English so they can achieve their goals. It can be seen by the percentage of the target dimension that 73% of students selected "agree" and "strongly agree." The findings of the researcher's interview session regarding the advantages that students receive from English Day lend support to this. When asked about the benefits that they received from joining English Day, nearly every student responded in the same way. They hoped that the English Day program can help them to achieve their goals, such as they can travel around the world, they can get a good job easier, they can study abroad, and so on. The students said that by participating in the English Day program, they had become better in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In an interview regarding the advantages of English Day, students said to have improved their vocabulary and spoken English more fluently. Based on the students' perceptions, it was concluded that participating in English Day enhanced their speaking abilities in addition to their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In the past, they had difficulty speaking and pronouncing a few English words. But slowly, they became better at pronouncing words correctly. The student's ability to communicate in English has improved.

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

Table 3: Students' perception of EDP viewed from situation dimension (N=47)

No	Statement	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
21.	The EDP runs at the right time for me.	29 (61.7)	11 (23.4)	7 (15)	0 (0)	0 (0)
22.	The EDP take place is	9 (19.3)	27 (57.4)	11 (23.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	acceptable for me to access.					
23.	I communicate in English when I meet my teacher during the EDP.	15 (32)	17 (36)	14 (30)	1 (2.1)	0 (0)
24.	I communicate in English when I meet my friends during the EDP.	10 (21.2)	11 (23.4)	16 (34)	5 (10.6)	5 (10.6)
25.	My friends communicate in English when they meet others during the EDP.	14 (30)	11 (23.4)	16 (34)	6 (12.6)	0 (0)
26.	I enjoy participating in EDP.	17 (36)	22 (47)	4 (8.5)	3 (6.3)	1 (2.1)
27.	I communicate in English during the EDP by force.	26 (55.3)	16 (34)	4 (8.5)	1 (2.1)	0 (0)
28.	I choose to be silent when I cannot communicate in English during the EDP.	18 (38)	9 (19.3)	15 (32)	4 (8.5)	1 (2.1)
29.	I ask my friend to correct my pronunciation when I make a mistake during the EDP.	14 (30)	17 (36)	11 (23.4)	4 (8.5)	1 (2.1)
30.	I use code-mixing (English-Indonesia) if I get problems in conversation.	19 (40.4)	17 (36)	9 (19.3)	2 (4.2)	0 (0)
	Total	171	158	107	26	8
	Percentage Average	36.39	33.59	22.81	5.49	1.69

According to table 3 above, it is found that the percentage of the total number of students' perceptions viewed from the situation dimension is 36.39% strongly agree, 33.59% agree, 22.81% neutral, 5.49% disagree, and 1.69% strongly disagree. Based on the data, most students have a positive perception. These are supported by the qualitative data obtained through the interview:

"The English teacher always speaks English so that we get used to it. Sometimes we still speak up using English mixed with Indonesian because I do not know what my teacher or my friend said because I do not know the meaning of some words." (Student 1).
"When I speak, I still use more Indonesian than English." (Student 2).

"I can't speak English spontaneously because it is making me blank" (Student 3).

"I enjoyed it because when I speak English, I feel that I am cool." (Student 5)

When asked about the situations of English Day, students gave a variety of answers. Students indicated that the teachers were highly energetic in guiding them through the activities. It can be seen that 70% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed with the situation dimension. Many of them already use English when communicating with their teachers and their friends. However, most of them still used code mixing when getting problem in conversation. It is supported by the findings of an interview conducted by the researcher regarding the interactions between students on English Day. The majority of the students who participated in the interview expressed their intention to use English whenever possible while interacting with their peers and in daily situations. When they run into difficulties with interactions, some students sometimes use code-mixing. The results of questionnaire number thirty show that only 24% of students communicated in full English. On the other hand, 76% of students still used code-mixing when speaking. Nevertheless, most of them feel enjoyed participating on the English Day.

The percentage of students' overall perceptions of EDP from the three dimensions is also presented in the following column chart:

Figure 1: Percentage of students' overall perceptions from the three dimensions
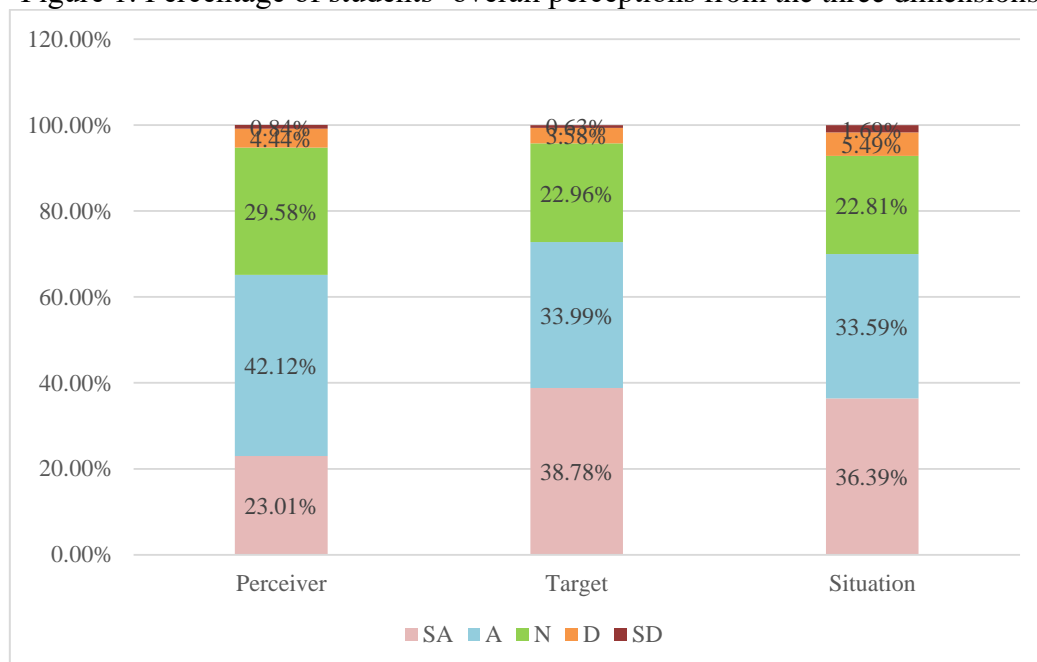
According to Figure 1, the target and situation percentage is higher than the perceiver. It means that most of the students obey the rules to use English in daily activities. It shows that they like to practice the language. These findings indicated that many students who personally hoped English Day Program can help them to be master in English so they can achieve their goals.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Based on the research finding and discussion, it can be concluded that the majority of students had positive opinions of the English Day program in terms of improving their English language proficiency. At the English Day, students were able to practice their English language skills in depth. Additionally, it has a strong ability to motivate students to regularly practice speaking English with their peers. Because of the more fun and interesting learning activities, they were more eager to practice their English on the English Day. Consequently, the majority of students conveyed their enthusiasm at being able to take part in the English Day. They indicated that the English Day program is important and helpful in enhancing their vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and speaking fluency. It showed how effectively the English Day program is run.

To sum up, the second-grade students in SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru gave positive perception toward English Day program. According to Robbins' theory, the perception was considered from three dimensions: the perceiver, which was based on the students' motivation, interest, and experience; the target, which was viewed as a result of something the students wanted to achieve; and the situation, which was viewed from the opinions of the students based on their own and those around them who had an impact on the English Day situation. It is consequently possible to draw the conclusion that English Day has a beneficial impact in improving the English skills of second-grade students at SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru because the overall percentage of agreement levels was higher than the disagreement levels, as well as considering the positive responses from the interview sessions were higher than the negative responses.

Recommendation

The following recommendation hopefully can contribute dealing with the process of English day program at SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru: 1) The headmaster should keep control of the English Day program's implementation in the school and tighten the regulations that are applied there. Since the program is beneficial for students and was planned and conducted by the school, it must continue. 2) English teachers should continue encouraging students to use English willingly by providing a pleasant environment. To ensure the program is implemented successfully, the teacher has to assess each and every strategy used at SMA IT Al-Husna Pekanbaru. 3) Students need to understand the importance of English in the face of globalization, so you need to be more active in the English Day program. 4) The next researchers can use the findings of this study as an additional reference or as a basis for new research with a different discussion. Furthermore, because this study only included second-grade students, future research should include a wider number of participants, including first grade and third-grade students.

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