

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

MARIANN EDWINA MARIADASS* & EVELYN PHILIP

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. Students from National Defense University Malaysia were selected at random to participate and data analysis and collection were done and gathered for this study. The differences of students' scores on their perceptions towards the advantages of learning and using the English language were analyzed 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 which can contribute to future research studies related to the field of ESL and education.

Keywords: Students' perceptions; English language learning; English language usage

INTRODUCTION

The English language is a widely used language that is commonly used in every area and parts of the world. 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 in which each student is required to take an English test in order to enroll into higher education institutions in Malaysia. 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). Furthermore, a person's proficiency in the English language and level of use in different contexts are dependent on their intended purpose. Because each discipline has its own jargon or technical terminology that should be employed in the study, the English language phrases for engineering, for instance, differ from those for ICT students (Kandagor & Joseph 2018). 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.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The English language is considered a global language as it is known to be the most widely used language in most regions of the world as the lingua franca. 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. According to Pahrozi (2022), students regarded the English language as a tool for developing multiple intelligences and proving the language's value in a global educational context, as a result of the globalization of higher education, the English language has always been a component of the educational curriculum in Malaysia whether in elementary or secondary school. Therefore, the use of the English language is important as it is known for international communication due to its domination in the world of globalization.

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). International students and graduates regarded proficiency in English as essential to getting employment in their desired fields (Ting, Marzuki, Chuah, Misieng & Jerome 2017). They held that communication and interpersonal skills, together with the capacity to interact with clients and coworkers, were very important. Accents were mentioned as a possible deterrent to getting work in their desired sector (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). The English language will enable those who master it to speak with people worldwide. This is due to the fact that the English language has been effectively used in many various types of places throughout the world and has been utilized as a travel tool in the majority of countries. The pupils will be able to travel and experience the nations they visit with greater confidence thanks to the language itself (Nishanthi 2018).

The next advantage is learning the English language will let these students have better access to the world-class either in the 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 institutions 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.

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.

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. 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.

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%
2	Frequency	122	65	13	-	-	200
	Percentage	61.0	32.5	6.5	-	-	100%
3	Frequency	117	65	15	3	-	200
	Percentage	58.5	32.5	7.5	1.5	-	100%
4	Frequency	119	63	17	1	-	200
	Percentage	59.5	31.5	8.5	0.5	-	100%
5	Frequency	123	58	17	2	-	200
	Percentage	61.5	29.0	8.5	1.0	-	100%
6	Frequency	111	71	18	-	-	200
	Percentage	55.5	35.5	9.0	-	-	100%
7	Frequency	106	71	21	2	-	200
	Percentage	53.0	35.5	10.5	1.0	-	100%
8	Frequency	123	60	14	3	-	200
	Percentage	61.5	30.0	7.0	1.5	-	100%
9	Frequency	114	55	24	6	1	200
	Percentage	57.0	27.5	12.0	3.0	0.5	100%
10	Frequency	120	64	15	1	-	200
	Percentage	60.0	32.0	7.5	0.5	-	100%

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 question 1. 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 the "NEUTRAL" answer, it represents the lowest percentage among others, covering 4% (8) of the respondents.

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 the "NEUTRAL" answer, it represents the lowest percentage among others, covering 6.5% (13) of the respondents.

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 question 3. 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 who answered "DISAGREE" to the question, and it represents the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for "NEUTRAL" it only covers 7.5% (15) of the respondents.

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 question 4. 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 who answered "DISAGREE" to the question, and it represents the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for "NEUTRAL" it only covers 8.5% (17) of the respondents.

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 question 5. 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 who answered "DISAGREE" to the question, and it represents the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for "NEUTRAL" it only covers 8.5% (17) of the respondents.

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 question 6. 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 the "NEUTRAL" answer, it represents the lowest percentage among others, covering 9% (18) of the respondents.

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 question 7. As for "AGREE", the percentage of the respondents is 35.5% (71), whereas it is the second highest percentage for the question. 1% of respondents answered "DISAGREE" to the question, and it represents the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for "NEUTRAL" it only covers 10.5% (21) of the respondents.

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 question 8. 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 who answered "DISAGREE" to the question, and it represents the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for "NEUTRAL" it only covers 7% of the respondents.

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 question 9. 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.

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 question 10. 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 who answered "DISAGREE" whereas it represents the lowest percentage for the question. Last but not least, for "NEUTRAL" it only covers 7.5% (15) of the respondents.

DISCUSSION

Based on the data that was collected, 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 a 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 does 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 because the medium of instruction is the English language at the institution. Lastly, the highest neutral answer is (12%) for the statement that 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 that 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 in learning the English language. Besides having more job opportunities, making them look more educated, students will also be able to converse with foreigners from different countries and achieve more of their life goals.

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.

REFERENCES

- Arkoudis, S., L. Hawthorne, C. Baik, G. Hawthorne, K. O'loughlin, D. Leach, & E. Bexley. 2009. *The Impact of English Language Proficiency and Workplace Readiness on the Employment Outcomes of Tertiary International Students*. Melbourne: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
- Balla, E. 2014. Need and motivation in learning English language. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(6 SPEC. ISSUE): 217–221. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n6p217>
- Henning, G. 1986. Quantitative Methods in Language Acquisition Research. *TESOL Quarterly*. 20(4):701-708. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586520>
- Hiew, W., Tibok, R. P., Ngui, W., Gabda, D., & Suyansah, Q. 2021. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*. Vol. 20, No. 7, pp. 23-43, July 2021

- <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.20.7.2>
- Green, B. F., & Hall, J. A. 1984. *Quantitative methods for literature reviews. Glass 1976*, 37–53.
- Jindal, N. 2022. Role Of English Language Lab In Shaping And Enhancing The Employability Skills Of The Technocrats And Professionals: A Challenge Or A Chance. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*. 6(8): 2093-2099.
- Mangone, D. 2020. *Social and Emotional Development to Foster Academic Growth in English Language Learning Preschoolers* (Thesis, Concordia University, St. Paul). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/teacher-education_masters/21
- Nishanthi, R. 2018. The Importance of Learning English in Today World. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development*, Volume-3(Issue-1), 871–874. <https://doi.org/10.31142/ijtsrd19061>
- Pahrozi, A. 2022. Integrating Multiple Intelligences Theory in English Language Teaching. *Premise Journal of English Education*. 11. 348. 10.24127/pj.v11i2.4823.
- Rindal, U. 2014. *Questioning English standards: Learner attitudes and L2 choices in Norway. Multilingua*, 33(3-4).
- Rintaningrum, R. 2021. *The Importance of Learning English for Millenniase*. April, 11. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/AdetyaForrestiawan/publication/352054553_The_Importance_of_Learning_English_For_Millennials/links/60b6fc054585154e5ef9a3fc/The-Importance-of-Learning-English-For-Millennials.pdf
- Soraya, S., & Abdullah, L. 2021. *Learn English in daily life. July 2019*.
- Ting, S.H., Marzuki, E., Chuah, K.M., Misieng, J. and Jerome, C., 2017. *Employers' views on the importance of English proficiency and communication skill for employability in Malaysia. Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(2):315-327.
- Wong, R. M. H. 2020. The effectiveness of using english as the sole medium of instruction in English classes: student responses and improved english proficiency. *Porta Linguarum Revista Interuniversitaria de Didáctica de Las Lenguas Extranjeras*, 119–130. <https://doi.org/10.30827/digibug.31927>

MARIANN EDWINA A/P MARIADASS*
Language Centre
National Defence University of Malaysia
57000 Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur MALAYSIA

EVELYN PHILIP
Language Centre
National Defence University of Malaysia
57000 Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur MALAYSIA

*Corresponding author: wina_e29@yahoo.com

Received: 19 December 2022 / Accepted: 6 November 2023 / Published: 15 December 2023