



The Perception of Non-English Major Students on Joining English Speaking Club to Support Their Speaking Practice

Rahmawati¹ and Honesty Yonanda Ayudhia²

Universitas Negeri Padang

Correspondence Email: watiirahma870@gmail.com

Article History

Published: 2024-08-09

Keywords:

Perception, UKBA, Speaking

Abstract

Speaking is an important but difficult skill to master in English. One of the popular ways for non-English major students at UNP to practice their speaking skill is joining the speech division at UKBA. This research uses descriptive design and qualitative approach by involving 5 non-major English students to be interviewed in depth. The purpose of this study is to find out how students' perception about the speech division and how activities in this division can support speaking practice. The results of this study indicate that the majority of non-major English students have a positive perception of the speech division. Based on the interviews, the activities in the speech division can support and help students to improve their speaking skills. The speech division also can help students to overcome their problem in speaking. However, in order to be more effective in helping students to learn to speak English, the speech division needs to do some evaluations such as upgrading classroom conditions and developing learning materials such as grammar. In addition, further research is recommended to examine students' perceptions of other divisions in UKBA related to grammar or other English skills.

©2024 The Author(s) Publish by Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris FBS UNP. This is an open access article under the CC-BY-NC license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

How to Cite: Rahmawati, Ayudhia, H. Y. (2024). The Perception of Non-English Major Students on Joining English Speaking Club to Support Their Speaking Practice. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 13 (3): pp. 841-848, DOI: [10.24036/jelt.v13i3.130295](https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v13i3.130295)

INTRODUCTION

Non-major English students at Universitas Negeri Padang realize the importance of being able to master speaking English skills. Based on Rao (2019) speaking is one of the skills that must be mastered because students can get benefits, one of which is being able to have a good career. However, based on interviews and observations, as non-English major students they experience difficulties in being able to speak English. For examples such as lack of knowledge of speaking aspects, lack of confidence and having limited time to study. In order to overcome their speaking problems, many of them joined UKBA.

UKBA is a popular foreign language organization in Universitas Negeri Padang that has a similar format like an English club. In 2023 around 232 students joined and 81% were students from non-English majors. In UKBA students can learn English in several divisions such as debate, storytelling, toastmaster and speech.

Based on data from UKBA, the speech division is the popular division in UKBA. Students expect that the speech division can facilitate them to develop speaking practice. Quynh (2021) also stated that joining a foreign language organization is one way to be able to speak English fluently. Therefore, this study aims to reveal how students' perceptions of activities in the speech division at UKBA to support their speaking practice.

According to Qiong (2017), perception is a person's interpretation of their environment with biological processes. Perception is produced through the process of selecting, organizing and interpreting. Everyone's perception has diversity because it is influenced by personal aspects. These aspects are cognitive, affective and conative (Walgito, 2004). Therefore, perception is subjective. This research will find out about students' perception about speech division. Students' perceptions are important to know for the evaluation of activities in UKBA considering that many students join and have expectations that UKBA can help them to develop their speaking skill. In addition, based on Pangaribuan (2015) in Karismanda and Kher (2022), a person's learning process and motivation are influenced by perception.

Several studies have also discussed foreign language organizations to help learn about English. The first research from Phuong and Phuc (2022) with the title "Enhancing First Year Students' Speaking Skills through English Club", second research entitled "Students' Perceptions of the English Club Extracurricular Program in Terms of Improving Motivation to Learn English" by Bauty et.,al (2023), third research Juliana (2022) entitle "English Club Activities to Increase the Nursing Students' Motivation in Learning English: Students' Perception". Different from these studies is this research uses a qualitative approach to focus on discussing how the speech division activities in UKBA at Universitas Negeri Padang support students to practice their speech skills.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. Participants in the study were selected using purposive sampling. The participants chosen were non-English major students who were active members of the speech division with the active year 2022-2023. To obtain data, this research uses in-depth questions as an instrument. The interview has 32 question items that have been validated by a lecturer from Universitas Negeri Padang who is capable in this topic. This interview will be conducted with 5 participants. Miles and Huberman's theory will be used to analyze the interview data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

The results of this study are based on two research questions relating to how students' perceptions of the speech division and how these activities within the speech division support their speech practice. The interviews were based on Walgito's (2004) theory of perception aspects, namely cognitive, affective and conative. The findings of this research is that the majority of students have positive perception about the speech division activities because it supports them in improving their speaking skills.

1. Students' perception about speech division based on cognitive aspect

In the cognitive aspect, students' perceptions of the speech division are based on their knowledge and experience during their time as members of the speech division. Students' perception about the speech division can be seen from the answer given during the interview.

First, the students were asked about their speaking problem and how speech division helped them to overcome it. Most students mention that they have problems in speaking skills such as pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. They said division speech helps them to overcome their problem because the tutor in this division teaches them and the activities like performing speech. Speech division also provides a supportive environment to them to practice speaking English.

Second, the students were asked based on their experience whether division speech can help them to speak better. All of the students claimed that speech division makes their speaking better. 3 of 5 students said this is because of the way the tutor teaches. The other said that they speak better because they often do speeches here and also do communication with other members.

Third, the students were asked about activities that help them to practice speaking. 3 of 5 students answer that speech is the activity that helps them. Other activities mentioned by the remaining students were games, English sunset, and interaction with other members.

Fourth, the students were asked about the new knowledge that they get after joining this division. 4 of 5 students claimed that they get knowledge about how to have good speech. Another one said that grammar is not really important in informal speaking.

Fifth, the students were asked whether speech division can help them to improve their pronunciation. 4 out of 5 students answered that this division helped improve their pronunciation because they were used to using English and also because it was taught by the tutors. The rest thought that interacting with native speakers in English sunset.

Sixth, the students were also asked whether speech division can help them to improve their grammar. 3 out of 5 students answered that the speech-making activity helped them learn grammar. The other 2 students thought that this division activity was less helpful for grammar.

Seventh, the students were asked the speech division can help them to improve their vocabulary. 3 out of 5 students thought that the game activities helped them improve the game. The rest thought that the speech practice and listening to the interaction of the tutors and members helped them acquire new vocabulary.

Eighth, the students were asked speech division can help them to improve their fluency. All students agreed that the speech division activity helped them. 3 students out of 5 thought that speech practice and communicating in English were activities that helped them. One student stated that the tutor taught them how to speak fluently. While another student thought that the environment was supportive for speaking practice.

Ninth, the students were asked speech division can help them to improve their understanding of communication in the English language. Every student expressed that this division is helpful because they are used to communicating in English here.

Next, the students were asked about the best activity in speech division to overcome their speaking problem. 3 out of 5 students think that speech practice is the best activity to overcome their speaking problems. One student thought that English sunset. Another student thought that games were the best activity.

Lastly, the students were asked about improvements that need to be made by the speech division. 3 of 5 students think that class activities should be held outdoors more often because the classroom is cramped and the temperature is quite hot. One student thinks that the speech division needs to change their material to be more crucial for speaking. Other students think that the speech division does not need any improvement.

From this data, mostly students had positive perception in cognitive aspects. However, some students have a negative perception of the uncomfortable classroom conditions and would like classes to be held outdoors more often.

2. Students' perception about speech division based on affective aspect

In this aspect, students' perceptions are based on the feelings and emotions that students feel while being a member of this speech division. Students' perception about the speech division can be seen from the answer given during the interview.

First, students provide reasons for being interested in joining the speech division. All of the students are interested in joining this speech division because they want to improve their speaking skills. Another reason is that some students want to find a place that is suitable for them to practice speaking and feel that the division can fulfill their expectations.

Second, students were asked how they felt when they had to speak in front of the speech division members. Students were asked how they felt when they had to speak in front of the speech division members. Overall, students felt comfortable and confident to practice speaking here despite their initial fear and nervousness. They felt that there was no bad judgment and ridicule that they would get.

Third, students were asked how they felt about the pronunciation improvement after joining the speech division. All students felt happy and satisfied because joining the speech division made their pronunciation improve compared to before. This was due to the tutors who taught them and evaluated their pronunciation. There was a student who thought that meeting native speakers in this division made his pronunciation better.

Fourth, students were asked about their confidence in their pronunciation after joining the speech division. Every student felt more confident with their pronunciation because of the speech division. This is because they are used to using English. In addition, the majority of students are also more confident because members and tutors support them and therefore there are no insults.

Fifth, students were asked how they felt about the grammar improvement after joining the speech division. 4 out of 5 students felt unhappy and unsatisfied as they felt there had been no improvement in grammar. This is because the speech division does not really focus on teaching grammar. Almost all students revealed that the activities in the speech division have not been able to make improvements to their grammar. Meanwhile, one student felt happy because the speech activities made him able to construct correct sentences and reduce grammar mistakes.

Sixth, students were asked their confidence in their grammar after joining the speech division. Although the students on average were not satisfied with the grammar improvement, all students agreed that joining the speech division made them more confident in their grammar. The reason is that they are not afraid of bad comments if their grammar is wrong because this division is a supportive environment for them to learn.

Next, students were asked about fun activities that help them understand grammar. 3 of 5 students answered that games are fun activities to learn about grammar. This activity is fun but not enough to improve their grammar. Meanwhile, the other students claimed the speech division had no fun activity to help them understand grammar.

Eighth, students were asked how they felt about the vocabulary improvement after joining the speech division. Every student felt happy because of the increase in their vocabulary. This happened because of activities such as games and speech practice. Students claim from these activities, they get a lot of new words.

Ninth, students were asked about their confidence in using new vocabulary after joining the speech division. All the learners felt more confident using their new vocabulary. This confidence is due to the support from members and tutors. Even though a few of them still lack confidence if they use new vocabulary outside the UKBA environment.

Tenth, students were asked what activities made them feel an increase in vocabulary. Students had a variety of different answers. 2 out of 5 students answered that they got a lot of new vocabulary from the game. While other students answered English sunset, "word of the day" session and other members' speech performance.

Next, students were asked how they felt about the fluency improvement after joining the speech division. Most students were satisfied with the improvement in their fluency after joining the speech division. Most answered that this was due to the supportive environment where they felt comfortable practicing their fluency. Other students argued that the tutors taught and evaluated their fluency. This enables the students to know about their progress.

Twelfth, students were asked what activities made them feel an increase in fluency. All of the students revealed that it was during speech that they could feel the improvement in their fluency. This is because of the feedback given by the tutors and other members on their speeches. So they are more confident with their fluency improvement.

Next, students were asked how they felt about the comprehension improvement after joining the speech division. 4 out of 5 students answered that they have a better understanding of communication in English. After participating in activities in this division, they can respond to conversations that are appropriate to the context and with the correct sentence structure. However, one student revealed that the activities in the division did not make any improvement to his comprehension when speaking.

Next, students were asked about their understanding of English conversation after joining the speech division. Most of the students responded that they are better at understanding English conversations after joining the division. According to the students, this is because they often communicate in English. This even made some students feel motivated and confident to start a conversation first.

Last, students were asked about the tutor's teaching method that they liked the most. 2 out of 5 students answered that they liked the tutor because he used good English. One student argued that she liked the tutor's straight to the point delivery. Another student said that the tutor's way of teaching was casual and fun. The other mentioned that the tutor immediately corrects and gives suggestions for improvement if there are mistakes during the speech.

From this data, it indicates that mostly students had positive perception in affective aspects. Unfortunately, some students have a negative perception because they have not seen any improvement in their grammar after joining this division.

3. Students' perception about speech division based on conative aspect

In the conative aspect, students' perceptions are based on their behavior to achieve their goals through participating in the speech division. Students' perception about the speech division can be seen from the answer given during the interview.

First, students were asked about their actions to improve their pronunciation. The majority of students said that they often practiced their pronunciation to improve it based on the tutors' suggestions. Examples include watching TED talks, singing, imitating movie narrators, watching movies and repeating pronunciation. However, there was one student who did not practice their pronunciation very often.

Second, students were asked about their actions in correcting grammar mistakes. Overall, students correct their grammar mistakes corrected by the tutor by self-study. They look for info related to the grammar they want to learn and then correct the mistakes they make. In addition, they are also willing to ask the mentor if there is something they don't understand. Some of them also immediately practiced the newly corrected grammar in the next meeting.

Third, students were asked about their actions to get new vocabulary that they get in the speech division. 4 students made a list of words to remember the vocabulary they got. In addition, there are those who continuously use the new words they get in order to continue to remember and be able to use them according to the context.

Fourth, students were asked about their actions to improve their fluency. Almost all students practice their speaking fluency by practicing speech even outside UKBA. They practice their speech fluency by doing speeches in front of their families, by recording themselves and speaking in front of a mirror. In addition, there are students who practice their fluency by communicating with native speakers through online games.

Fifth, students were asked about their actions to improve their comprehension. Nearly all students revealed that they practiced comprehension by frequently communicating with other members in UKBA and their friends outside UKBA. Meanwhile, there are also those who choose to practice their comprehension by chatting directly with native speakers through online games and English sunset.

Last, students were asked about their motivation to improve their speaking skills. All students felt motivated by seeing mentors who were already fluent in speaking. There are also those who want to get the opportunity to exchange students abroad after seeing the experience of other members. Therefore, they want to continue learning so that their speaking skills improve.

In this aspect, almost all students showed positive behavior. Overall, after joining the speech division, students practiced their speaking skills although with different frequencies. Students follow the suggestions from the tutors to improve their speaking skills.

Discussion

Finding in this study is that almost all students have a positive perception of speech division in all aspects. From the students' answers, it can be concluded that the speech division is a supportive environment for practicing speaking here. Elnadeef and Abdala (2019) claimed that the advantage of joining the English club is that students get a supportive place to improve their speaking skills. The students also think that the activities in the speech division supported them to practice speaking. This makes their speaking skills better. The improvement of speaking ability is influenced by the existence of activities and a supportive place (Virawan, et.al., 2021).

The speech division also makes students feel more confident in speaking English. Students are not afraid that they will get ridiculed when they make mistakes in speaking. Hijrah and Umar (2021) stated that increasing confidence and motivation to speak English can be done by joining an English club. In addition, students also like the way the tutor teaches and the tutor's personality.

Students also show positive attitudes related to this division. After joining this speech division, they are motivated to improve their speaking skills. Therefore, students often study independently by following the tutor's advice in order to achieve their goal of improving their speech. With the initiative to learn independently, it can help students improve their speaking skills (Sbh, et.al., 2021).

The majority of students indicated that having a positive perception of the speech division's activities to support their speech practice. Positive perceptions arise when perceivers consider a thing or object of perception to meet the standards they expect (Robbins, 2002). However, almost all students had complaints about the uncomfortable classroom atmosphere. This should be a concern because according to Widiastuti et. al., (2020) the condition of facilities, for instance classrooms, has an effect on student learning outcomes. In addition, students also do not feel satisfied because the speech division has not been able to improve their grammar. This is contrary to Phuong and Phuc (2022) who claimed that English club can improve students' grammar. This is indicated as a negative perception because their expectations were not fulfilled (Robbins, 2002).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that most students have a positive perception of almost all activities in the speech division in every aspect. The students can improve some of their speaking skills through participating in activities in the speech division. It is also a supportive environment for students to speak English. Therefore, students also feel more confident and motivated to continue improving their speaking skills. However, it was found that students are still not satisfied because of the uncomfortable classroom conditions and have not seen any improvement in their grammar after participating in this division. Therefore, future researchers can explore

other divisions of UKBA with the aim of solving other English skill problems experienced by Universitas Negeri Padang students.

REFERENCES

- Bauty, J. M., Bauty, R., Surveyanie, R. F., Vania, T. R., Wati, H., & Marhamah, Z. (2023). Students' Perceptions of the English Club Extracurricular Program in Terms of Improving Motivation to Learn English. *IALLTEACH (Issues in Applied Linguistics & Language Teaching)*, 5(2), 87-93.
- Elnadeef, E. A. E., & Abdala, A. H. E. H. (2019). The Effectiveness of English Club as Free Voluntary Speaking Activity Strategy in Fostering Speaking Skill in Saudi Arabia Context. *Online Submission*, 2(1), 230-235.
- Hijrah, H., & Umar, N. H. (2021). English Meeting Club: Students' Perception and Their Speaking Skill. *Journal of Development Research*, 5(2), 174-178.
- Juliana, J. (2022). English Club Activities to Increase the Nursing Students' Motivation in Learning English: Students' Perception. *Lingua Didaktika: Jurnal Bahasa dan Pembelajaran Bahasa*, 16(2), 144-154.
- Karismanda, P., & Kher, D. F. (2022). Students' Perceptions toward Synchronous Online Learning at the English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 11(4), 536-543.
- Phuong, N. T., & Phuc, H. (2022). Enhancing First Year Students' Speaking Skills through English Club.
- Qiong, O. U. (2017). A Brief Introduction to Perception. *Studies in literature and language*, 15(4), 18-28.
- Quỳnh, N. T. N. (2021). Students' Perception of Speaking Practice in Step Up English Club at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 1(3), 123-134.
- Rao, P. S. (2019). The Importance of Speaking Skills in English Classrooms. *Alford Council of International English & Literature Journal (ACIELJ)*, 2(2), 6-18.
- Robbins, S. P. (2003). *Organizational Behavior*. New Jersey: Prentice International Hall Inc.
- Rukmaryadi, R., Zaim, M., & Anwar, D. (2020). An Analysis of Non-English Department Students' Speaking Ability at Universitas Riau. In *2nd International Conference Innovation in Education (ICoIE 2020)* (pp. 28-34). Atlantis Press.(2020).
- SBH, R. T. A., & Susanti, A. (2021). The Correlation Between Students' Speaking Skills and Self-Directed Learning Virtual English Community. *Paramasastra: Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa Sastra dan Pembelajarannya*, 8(2), 146-163.
- Virawan, O., Susilawati, E., & Suhartono, L. (2021). An Analysis on the English Club to Support Students' speaking Performance. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Khatulistiwa (JPPK)*, 10(3), 1561-1568.
- Walgito, B. (2004). *Pengantar Psikologi Umum*. Yogyakarta: ANDI
- Widiastuti, K., Susilo, M. J., & Nurfinaputri, H. S. (2020). How Classroom Design Impacts for Student Learning Comfort: Architect Perspective on Designing Classrooms. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 9(3), 469-477.