

PERSEPSI MAHASISWA TERHADAP PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA INGGRIS PADA MAHASISWA FAKULTAS FARMASI INSTITUTE KESEHATAN HELVETIA MEDAN

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis persepsi mahasiswa Fakultas Farmasi Institut Helvetia Medan terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Penguasaan Bahasa Inggris dianggap krusial bagi mahasiswa farmasi untuk bersaing di era global. Meskipun demikian, observasi awal menunjukkan adanya kendala berupa rendahnya motivasi dan kemampuan berbahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kuantitatif dengan pendekatan survei. Populasi dan sampel penelitian adalah 125 mahasiswa Fakultas Farmasi yang telah mengikuti mata kuliah Bahasa Inggris. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner dan dianalisis dengan statistik deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa rata-rata persepsi mahasiswa berada pada kategori tinggi, dengan *mean empirik* 32,55 yang lebih besar dari *mean hipotetik* 25. Temuan ini didukung oleh analisis frekuensi yang menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas responden (88 orang) berada dalam kategori Tinggi. Namun, penelitian juga menemukan adanya polarisasi yang signifikan, di mana 77 responden memiliki persepsi Rendah. Polarisasi ini mengindikasikan bahwa pandangan siswa tidak sepenuhnya homogen. Persepsi ini dipengaruhi oleh faktor internal seperti motivasi dan *self-efficacy*, serta faktor eksternal seperti metode pengajaran dan relevansi materi. Secara keseluruhan, meskipun persepsi cenderung positif, masih ada kelompok besar mahasiswa yang memerlukan perhatian khusus untuk meningkatkan pandangan mereka terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Persepsi, Mahasiswa Farmasi, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Institusi Pendidikan.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe and analyze the perception of Pharmacy Faculty students at the Helvetia Institute of Medan towards English language learning. English proficiency is considered crucial for pharmacy students to compete in the global era. However, initial observations revealed challenges such as low motivation and poor English skills. This research uses a quantitative descriptive method with a survey approach. The population and sample of the study were 125 Pharmacy Faculty students who had taken the English course. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed with descriptive statistics.

The results showed that the students' average perception was in the high category, with an empirical mean of 32.55, which was greater than the hypothetical mean of 25. This finding was supported by a frequency analysis which showed that the majority of respondents (88 people) were in the High category. However, the study also found a significant polarization, where 77 respondents had a Low perception. This polarization indicates that students' views are not entirely homogeneous. These perceptions are influenced by internal factors such as motivation and self-efficacy, as well as external factors like teaching methods and material relevance. Overall, although the perception tends to be positive, there is still a large group of students who need special attention to improve their views on English language learning.

Keywords: Perception, Pharmacy Students, English Language Learning, Educational Institution.

I. INTRODUCTION

Higher education, especially in the field of pharmacy, requires students to have comprehensive competencies, not only in pharmaceutical sciences but also in supporting skills, one of which is English proficiency. English has become the lingua franca in the world of science, technology, and health. Scientific publications, medical literature, drug guides, and international conferences are mostly presented in English. Therefore, good English skills are crucial for pharmacy students to access up-to-date information, participate in global discussions, and enhance

their competitiveness on both national and international stages (Sari & Susanto, 2019).

The Helvetia Institute of Medan, as a higher education institution with a Faculty of Pharmacy, recognizes the importance of English in its curriculum. However, the effectiveness of the English learning process often depends not only on the curriculum or teaching methods but also on the students' perception of it. Perception is an individual's view, attitude, and understanding of an object or phenomenon. A positive perception of English learning can increase motivation, active participation,

and ultimately, better learning outcomes. Conversely, a negative perception—for example, feeling that English is difficult, irrelevant, or boring—can hinder the learning process and make students less optimal in mastering the material. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Brown (2007), attitudes and motivation play a crucial role in the success of second language learning.

According to the Self-Regulated Learning view, successful learners are those who have the ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning process (Zimmerman, 2013). In the context of language learning, students' perception of English courses can reflect their level of learning independence. Students with a positive perception tend to be more proactive in seeking additional learning resources and practicing outside of class. Furthermore, the Language Education Ecology theory considers language learning as a complex system where the environment (lecturers, teaching materials, peers, and social context) influences each other (van Lier, 2004).

Students' perceptions are not only shaped by their experiences in the classroom but also by their interactions with friends, social norms on campus, and the availability of resources outside of class. Therefore, this study will examine students' perceptions as part of a broader learning ecosystem. Students' perceptions are a key factor in determining whether they can succeed in their studies or not. Nelson-Smith (2008:26) states that perceptions are influenced by their experiences and expectations; perception is what they see as reality, and what they believe will happen, whether it's true or not. Carr, cited in Nelson-Smith (2008:27), further defines perception as the image that exists where and when the mind feels.

The ability to communicate in English is very beneficial for students in various aspects, including academic development, social-political, economic, and cultural communication, and even in daily life (Megawati, 2016). Due to its importance, English is a compulsory subject for all students across various fields of study in higher education. The goal is for students to have adequate skills to succeed in academia and the professional world. However, the reality in the field shows a serious problem: many students, especially in private universities, have low English proficiency and are less motivated to learn it. This condition is evident from their secondary school years and does not show significant improvement in higher education.

Some students even openly express their dislike for English (Megawati, 2016; Santosa, 2017). Given this difficulty, continuous efforts are needed from academic institutions and

lecturers to find solutions. One way is to increase students' motivation to learn, because without motivation based on needs, drives, and goals, learning success will be difficult to achieve (Yusroh, 2016). While motivation is important, researchers also need to delve deeper into psychological factors. Before motivating, it would be more effective to first understand the main causes of students' learning difficulties. Understanding this is not only the responsibility of the lecturer but must also be synergistic with the policies and facilities provided by the institution. Therefore, this study aims to collect data on students' perceptions of English language learning as input for improving academic policies and creating a supportive campus environment (Bahri & Trisnawati, 2018).

In line with the vision and mission of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the Helvetia Institute of Medan, graduates are expected to have not only technical competencies in pharmacy but also good communication skills, including in English. However, initial observations show that many students still find it difficult and are less motivated to take English courses. A lack of understanding of the relevance of English to the pharmacy profession, as well as teaching methods that are considered less interactive, are suspected to be the main causes of low participation and learning outcomes. Therefore, this research is highly relevant and urgent. The findings of this study can provide direct input to the study program in revising the curriculum and teaching strategies to be more effective and suitable for the needs of pharmacy students.

Although the importance of English is recognized, and many studies have examined students' perceptions of English language learning in general (Haryanti, 2018), there has been no specific research examining the perception of students at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Helvetia Institute of Medan, towards the English language learning they receive. The existing research tends to be general and does not address the specific context of pharmacy students at this institution. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by thoroughly describing and analyzing the perceptions of Faculty of Pharmacy students at the Helvetia Institute of Medan towards English language learning.

Based on the background, theory, context, and research gap described, this study is expected to make a significant contribution to curriculum development at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Helvetia Institute of Medan. The findings on students' perceptions of English learning can serve as material for evaluation and improvement for the faculty in designing teaching strategies that are more relevant, effective, and in line with the

needs of the pharmacy profession in the future. Thus, graduates of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the Helvetia Institute of Medan will not only have strong academic competencies but also be equipped with adequate English language skills, ready to compete in the global arena.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The research was conducted for two months at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Helvetia Institute of Medan. This study used a quantitative descriptive method with a survey technique to obtain a description or detailed information about students' perceptions of English language learning. The population consisted of 125 Pharmacy Faculty students who had taken an English course in the last two years, all of whom were included as the sample using a total sampling technique. In line with the technique used (survey), data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires to respondents. The questionnaire contained closed-ended statements about the English language course, with five alternative answers provided: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Undecided (RR), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). For the purpose of analysis, each alternative answer was given a weighted score of 4, 3, 2, and 1. The perception indicators used to compile the questionnaire were based on Walgito's theory (1990:54), namely "absorbing, understanding, and evaluating." The collected data was processed using the SPSS for Windows version 25.00 program and analyzed with a descriptive statistical approach, aimed at determining the frequency of respondents' answers and their percentages and interpretations.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Data Description

The data in this study was obtained from 125 Pharmacy Faculty students at Helvetia University of Medan who had previously taken an English course. Based on the research conducted, the data obtained is described below:

Table 1. **Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Persepsi	125	17	40	32.55	4.936
Valid (listwise)	N125				

Based on Table 1, the descriptive analysis for the perception variable from 125 respondents shows that the perception score has an average value of 32.55, with a score range from a minimum of 17 to a maximum of 40. This average value, which is closer to the maximum value, indicates that in general, respondents have a fairly positive perception. The data also shows a relatively high consistency among respondents' answers, as seen from the small standard deviation value of 4.936, which means that the perception scores tend to cluster around the average. In conclusion, students' perceptions of English language learning are believed to be at a good level, although there are still some students who have a less positive view.

2. Variable Average Category

The data analysis conducted to determine the average tendency of each variable is based on the categorization of the average tendency level of each variable. The following guidelines are used to interpret the average tendency of each variable (Muhid, 2019): a. If the hypothetical mean < empirical mean, it can be concluded that the average variable is high. b. If the hypothetical mean > empirical mean, it can be concluded that the average variable is low.

The formula for determining the hypothetical mean is by multiplying the highest score with the number of items, and then dividing by 2. The empirical mean for each variable can be seen in Table 1 regarding Descriptive Statistics. The determination of the hypothetical mean can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Hypothetical Mean Results

NO	Variable	Maximum Score	Number of Items	Hypothetical Mean
1	<i>Persepsi</i>	4	10	40

Based on the hypothetical mean results in Table 2, Perception obtained a value of 40. After finding the hypothetical mean, the researcher conducted a test to determine the tendency in the variable in this study using the empirical mean results. The following are the results of the comparison between the hypothetical mean and the empirical mean in terms of the average tendency of each variable:

Table 3. Comparison of Hypothetical Mean with Empirical Mean

No	Variabel	Mean Hipotetik	Mean empiric	Deskriptio
1	<i>Persepsi</i>	25	32.55	High

Based on Table 3, the comparison between the Hypothetical Mean (25) and the Empirical Mean (32.55) shows that the empirical value is greater than the hypothetical value. Referring to the interpretation rule mentioned, namely "If the hypothetical mean < empirical mean, it can be concluded that the average variable is high," it can be concluded that the average category of the perception variable is at a high level. This finding indicates that overall, the respondents' perceptions tend to be very positive toward the topic studied.

3. Value Category for Each Variable

To determine the category of the frequency of values obtained for each variable, from very low, low, medium, high, and very high, the formula in the following table can be used:

Table 4. Categorization of Frequency Values for Perception

No	Variab le	Guidelines	Score	Categoriza tion	N
1	Persepsi	$X \leq (\text{Mean} - 1,5 \text{ SD})$	$X \leq 16$	Very low	0
		$(\text{Mean} - 1,5 \text{ SD}) < X \leq (\text{Mean} - 0,5 \text{ SD})$	$16 < X \leq 22$	Low	77
		$(\text{Mean} - 0,5 \text{ SD}) < X \leq (\text{Mean} + 0,5 \text{ SD})$	$22 < X \leq 28$	Medium	10
		$(\text{Mean} + 0,5 \text{ SD}) < X \leq (\text{Mean} + 1,5 \text{ SD})$	$28 < X \leq 37$	High	88
		$X \geq (\text{Mean} + 1,5 \text{ SD})$	$X \geq 37$	Very high	20

Based on the data in Table 4, the majority of respondents have perceptions that fall into the High category, with a total of 88 people. However, the number of respondents in the Low category is also significant, namely 77 people. Meanwhile, the group with a Very High perception numbers 20 people and Medium only 10 people. No respondents had a perception in the Very Low category. Overall, this finding shows a fairly clear polarization in respondents' views. The majority of respondents have a positive or high perception, but there is another large group with a low perception. This indicates that views on the "Perception" variable are not entirely homogeneous, meaning there are significant differences in the experiences or views of the respondents.



Based on the pie chart of "Students' Perception of English Language Courses," it can be seen that students' views are dominant in the high category, which is shown by the largest part of the graph. This indicates that most respondents have a positive perception of the course. Nevertheless, there are smaller portions for the low and medium categories, indicating that some students have less positive or neutral views. The very low and very high portions appear very small, implying that very few students have extreme perceptions of the English course. Overall, this graph shows that students' perceptions tend to be positive, but there are still significant variations in their views.

DISCUSSION

The research results show that students' perceptions of English language courses tend to be dominant in the high category, as seen from the empirical mean (32.55) being greater than the hypothetical mean (25). This indicates that most students have a positive view and find English courses beneficial. This finding is consistent with Tanamal's research (2018), which found that students with a good perception of foreign language subjects tend to show high learning motivation and better results. This positive perception can also be influenced by a supportive learning environment, as highlighted by Rahayu and Agustina (2019), who emphasized the importance of the teacher's role in shaping students' positive perceptions through the use of innovative and relevant methods.

However, although positive perceptions dominate, the research results also reveal a significant polarization. A total of 77 respondents are in the Low category, indicating that there is a large group of students who still have a less positive perception of English language courses. This condition implies that students' views are not homogeneous and vary substantially. This

polarization can be an important area for further research. A low perception may be caused by several factors, such as non-interactive teaching methods, a lack of relevance of the material to daily life or a profession, or perhaps learning trauma from the past. As explained by Setiawan and Wibowo (2020), language learning difficulties are often rooted in affective factors such as anxiety and negative attitudes influenced by previous experiences.

Furthermore, students' perceptions of English can also be influenced by their awareness of the importance of the language for their future. According to Instrumental Motivation Theory, a high awareness of practical benefits (such as career or education) will correlate positively with motivation and a good perception of the subject (Suryadi & Widayanti, 2017). On the other hand, this finding also indicates a challenge for teachers. Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy explains that students' negative perceptions often arise from a sense of inefficacy in mastering the material (Widyantoro, 2019). When students feel they are not capable, they tend to develop a poor perception of the subject. Therefore, teachers need to understand the individual needs of students.

Referring to Social-Cognitive Learning Theory, students' perceptions are formed not only from direct interaction with the material but also from observing their surroundings. If they see others succeed or fail in learning English, it will influence their own views (Bandura, 1997). In addition, the Language Education Ecology Theory emphasizes that learning is the result of the interaction between individuals and their learning environment (van Lier, 2004). Therefore, students' perceptions of this course are a reflection of the learning ecosystem they experience.

Thus, although students' perceptions of English language courses are generally good, the school, especially the teachers, needs to design strategies that can accommodate both groups. For students with low perceptions, special interventions and more personalized approaches may be needed to improve their motivation and views. Meanwhile, for the group that already has a high perception, teachers can provide greater challenges to maintain and develop their enthusiasm for English language courses.

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