



## Exploring Learners' Perceptions and Experiences of Native English Speakers' Roles in Learning Process: A Case Study at Dila Samawa English Club Sumbawa Besar

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### **Abstract**

This current study focused on exploring the learners' perceptions and experiences of native-English speakers' roles in learning process. This exploration was guided by the following questions: (1) What are the learners' perceptions and experiences of native-English speakers' roles in learning process? (2) How do the learners perceive and experience the native-English speakers' roles in learning process? A case study method was employed. The participants were all of the English learners who continuously joined Dila Samawa English Club in Sumbawa Besar. To collect the data, three techniques were employed: observation, interview, and documentation. The process of interview was audio-recorded. Meanwhile, field note was used during the observation. Documentations were in the form of the learning activities document. The results of the study showed that the learners' perceptions of native-English speakers' roles in learning process could be categorized into a number of terms, including the natural exposure, the place for practicing English conversation, competence in teaching, and teaching strategy. Meanwhile, the learners' experiences fell into authentic learning, good creators in teaching method, and good learning motivators. Essentially, those perceptions and experiences were considered very helpful to stimulate learners' willingness and efforts to learn English, especially build up the learners' confidence and enthusiasm in using English in real life situation.

**Keywords:** Perception; Experience; Native-English Speaker

### **Introduction**

Jazadi (2008) argues that the involvement of native-English speaker in learning process give the benefits for the learners if it is supported by the learners' attitudes. Consequently, he further argues that learner's perceptions and experiences of learning English with native-English speakers are the most significant factors supporting learners' willingness and efforts for mastering English; either in formal or natural exposure to English. One of useful ways to make learners maximally expose to English is by involving them in English Club with native- speakers. This kind of natural exposure activity will facilitate learners to be totally exposed to English. Since, this activity enables the learners directly interact with native-speakers in learning process. Thus, the natural exposure to English is offered in this activity.

Dila Samawa English Club (DESC, henceforth) is one of the social programs from Dila Samawa Reading Park, Sumbawa Besar. The aim to build this club is to create a new English environment in Sumbawa Regency, in order to facilitate the ones who want to improve their ability in English, especially for the members of Dila Samawa Reading Park. The program started in 2011. This club is managed by the Human Resources Development of Dila Samawa Reading Park and sometimes assisted by some Native-English speakers who visit DS Reading Park.

In learning process, this club applied small group discussion which consists of six or seven learners. Giving many opportunities to all of the learners is one of the considerations of establishing the small group. This method is very useful because all of the members look very enthusiastic in joining the program and enjoy practicing English with native-English speakers (NESs, henceforth).

### ***Literature Review***

In this subsection, I presented a brief elaboration about some literatures that underpinned this current study. These literatures were successively elaborated as follow:

#### ***Perception***

Unumeri (2009) defined perception as the significance cognitive aspects of human attitude or emotional mechanism that enable individuals to understand, select, organize, and interpret sensory stimulations into meaningful information about thing around the environment. Basically, perception is classifies into some types; it depends on five senses, memory, fantasy, thing, and words (Kaharuddin Putra, 2011). Based on the elucidations above, it can be concluded that perception is delineated as an action of self-conscious of one's surroundings through physical impression, which indicates a personal's ability to understand. Perception toward the roles of native speaker in learning process of English language can affect the learners' efforts or willingness to learn English. Learners' perceptions about the existing of native speaker in learning process can improve and increase their English proficiency and choice the best strategies in mastering the language.

#### ***The Characteristics of Perception***

Unumeri (2009) stated that there are three characteristics of perception. (1) Perceivers-Specific Characteristics include four factors that influence perception. The first is the familiarity with the object of perception. It implies to the better position of a perceiver compared to the others to make a great observation about a particular situation. The second characteristic is perceivers' attitude toward the object of observation. The third is mood. This factor affects the way we perceive others. Thus, when we are in the positive mood or in the negative mood, it will influence our perceptions. The last one is the self-concept of the perceiver is also a crucial determination of perception. Basically, people that possess positive self-concepts tend to perceive positive attributes in other people, while, those with negative self-concepts tend to perceive negative aspects in others. (2) Target-Specific Characteristics refer to the physical appearance of the perceiver; it involves height, weight, estimate age, race, and gender. Non-verbal communication such as eye contacts, body language and so forth are elements of the characteristics that guide the perceiver's impression of the target. (3) The Situation-Specific Characteristics is a very significant factor that affects the impression that is formed about someone by an individual. In other words, the social context of interaction is a major influence.

#### ***The Factors Affecting Perception***

Unumeri (2009) contended that the perceptual mechanism is basically affected by two factors, namely the internal and external factors.

Internal Factors include needs and desires, personality, and experience. Basically, the different level of people's need and desires relate to different perceiving of the same thing. In addition, the motivations, expectations and desires of people also influenced their perception of other and situations around them. Another strong influence on what the perceivers perceive is the personality which is an individual characteristic behaviour. That is, an optimistic personality will perceive and give a positive result, whereas the pessimistic perceive and give a negative result. Last, experience has an ongoing or great impression or impact on one's perception. In other words, successful or impressed experience will increase and promote one's perception and address one to exact perception wanted of a perceiver. Otherwise, it will arouse failure of self- confidence.

On the other hand, external factors include size, intensity, frequency, status and contrast. First, higher perceptual stimulus has more chances to be perceived by a person. This owing to the master of fact that size is always related to the dominance or majority to be selected. For instance, an advertisement with a full page grabs more attention than that of a less than a full page advertisement. Second, intensity is connected with the enhancement of the stimuli to be selected, for example some ways of fostering intensity are by bolding, italicizing, and underlying words. The stimulus which always repeated is likely to be paid attention. Third, frequency functions to lead one's attention emerging from repeated stimulus. This is the matter with art of repetition which mostly interest and stimulate our sensitivity to the impression being conveyed the stimulus that is reiterated with more intensity has more chances to be selected. Fourth, the one's status effects of his or her perception. For example, in an organization someone who has highly positioned is highly appreciated. Fifth, contrast gives common features as being less selected. For example, a person who sees colorful things on dress can attract more attention than the one with normal appearance.

### *Experience*

A famous quotation "Experience is the best teacher" has a strong correlation with the definition of experience itself. It is the combination of mental emotional and physiological stimuli in the process of learning or obtaining knowledge (Hansen, 2000). Thus, experience is a general concept that comprises knowledge of some event gained through involvement in or exposure to the event.

Experience in learning process could influence the learners' motivations and choices of the best strategies to support their learning process or success in learning process. Jazadi (2008) noted that learners' experience is one of the best things that support learner's success in learning process, especially in learning English language; it can affect learners' willingness and efforts in improving and increasing their English competences.

### *Types of Experience*

Cherne (2011) classified a number of types of experiences are as follow. (1) Affectionate experiences as spontaneous effect coming from a built-in reaction model of human; they are connected with the reaction in muscle group. (2) Desired experience which is connected with the personality of a human or it happen through their process of life. (3) Emotional experience being worked out by the resources of situational formation. They are dependent of muscles and process of cellular level. (4) Sensational experience which depends on the human skill to keep one's work of the five organs; kidneys, pancreases, heart, liver, and lungs. It means that the skill to have the experience is relying on the ability to satisfy the nature of feeling. (5) Timely Experience characterized by the skill to learn in diverse satisfying for a period of time and relies on the respiratory system.

### *Experiential Learning*

Experiential learning can be classified as the combination of mental emotional and physiological stimuli in the process of learning (Hansen, 2000). He listed six general conditions noted from the learners'

identifications as follow. (1) There must be a balance visual, audio, tactile, and emotional inspiration; (2) Learning connected with the talent development, practical knowledge and achievement, the result of experiential learning is the long-term memory associated with it. (3) Intrinsic motivations go beyond extrinsic motivation; the learner, the learning process, the goal of learning process, and accountability for actions is the perceived area of the learner.(4) The analysis and reflection process gained from an experience extended it to a larger context and vice-versa.(5) The nature of learning process; associated with objectivity, subjectivity. (6) There is sustainability and stability related with the learning. It means that the learning action is not classified as being related with closeness.

### *Native-Speakers of English*

According to Iyldyz (2007), native speakers are the ones whose first language or mother tongue is a certain language. Andreou and Galantomos (2009) classified a number categories of someone being a native-speaker of English; the one who is born in an English speaking country, uses English as a first language or mother tongue, has learned English in early days in an English-speaking environment, the next has a native accent, able to produce it fluently, active and creative with it, and able to differentiation correct or wrong English form. Based on the definitions, it can be encapsulated that Native-English speaker is the one who has early childhood language education, system knowledge of the language, skills for fluent, spontaneous discourse, creative use of the language, capabilities to communicate within social settings, and accent.

### *The Advantages of Learning English with Native-English Speakers (NESS)*

According to Edwards (2011), there are seven advantages of learning English with the native speaker teacher. (1) Authentic learning: A student will be exposed to the authentic English language. Through learning activities such as games, students will learn about the culture and how to speak like a native speaker. This includes the use of slang and accents. Students will be able to engage in real and regular conversations that English speakers use every day. (2) Pronunciation and language use: Native speaker teachers provide a natural way of learning English words and grammar. Students will learn how to properly pronounce words and phrases. They will also learn how to speak and write using proper grammar and vocabulary. They can provide instant and accurate feedback to help students overcome bad speech patterns. (3) Cultural questions: Because the English language is often integrated with a culture, native speaker teachers are able to provide answers to questions about customs or cultural practices that may come up during class. (4) Grammar: People whose native tongue is English are quick to catch grammar errors. The native speaker teacher will provide positive feedback to help a student. After a series of positive feedback sessions, students will begin to monitor themselves and catch their own mistakes and correct them. (5) English conversation: By conversing with the native speakers, a student of English will be able to pick up on the meaning of phrases and the teacher will be able to make sure the student is applying the proper meaning of the words and phrases they use. The English teacher can explain why a phrase is spoken in a certain way. (6) Verbs: Some English verb phrases can be very confusing. A teacher can explain phrases like “come up with” or “checking in on” much more easily. There are also many irregular verbs used in the English language. Rules for such verbs as “sing, sang, and sung” can be difficult to comprehend. A teacher who is fluent in English can make these rules regarding irregular verbs easier to understand. (7) Strange vocabulary: Explaining the difference between such phrases and words as "wise man and wise guy" can be difficult. The teacher will have an easier time explaining types of words that seem illogical to a student.

### **Method**

The design of the current study utilized a descriptive qualitative. According to Anderson (1998), descriptive qualitative is a form of research that investigates the phenomenon in the real setting and utilizes more than one method to comprehend, interpret, elucidate and convey the meaning of them.

Anderson (1998) divides qualitative research into a few categories based on the ways of conducting the research. Those categories are applied method, case study, ethnography, grounded theory and phenomenology. In the current study, a case was utilized to collect the data. A case study is an investigation defined by an interest in a specific phenomenon within its real-life context (Anderson, 1998). The current study focused on exploring and describing specific case that is the learners' perceptions and experiences of NESs' roles in learning English. The subjects of the current study were all of the members of DSEC who actively joined the English Club. I analyzed data by following technique of data analysis proposed by (Miles & Huberman, 1994). There were three concurrent flows of activity; data reduction, data display, and making conclusion or verification. Data reduction refers to the process of focusing, selecting, and abstracting the data that appear in transcription, notes, or documents. In this flow, I summarized and focused on selecting the important data from site of the study. The second major flow is data display, after the process of reducing data, the data was displayed. In this case, the data was organized and arranged in a design, thus, the data was understood easily. In this current study, narrative text and chart were employed to display the data. The last stream of analysis activity was conclusion or verification. After the process of reducing, displaying the data, I got the clear data. The data in conclusion element was drawn as the final finding of the research.

## ***Results and Discussion***

### *Interview Results*

#### *a. The importance of learning English in natural exposure or non-formal situation*

Natural exposure to English is the process where the learners directly involved to the English environment. In this case, DSEC program enables the learners learning English directly with the NESs in natural situation. Involving in natural exposure provided the learners a lot of chances to practice their English without being worry about the mistake, everything run naturally.

#### *b. The opinions of choosing NESs in Learning*

Learning English directly with NESs involved them to the authentic English learning. The learning activities such as games, the learners learnt about the culture and how to speak like a native speaker. Those included the use of idioms and accents. The learners were able to engage in real life and regular conversation that English speakers use every day. Therefore, the learners preferred learning English with the NESs than the non-native speakers. In line with the point of view above, it is clear that the learners preferred learning English with NESs than non-native speakers because, the NESs could help solving their problems directly and their knowledge in English likes an expert.

#### *c. The NESs' roles in improving learners' pronunciation and listening skills*

Some learners argued that the NESs provided the natural way of learning English words and improved listening skill, especially helping the learners to differentiate the NESs' accents in pronouncing the English words. The learners always paid attention to the accent of each NESs that involved in their learning process as the tutors. The learners paid attention to the NESs' accents because the NESs used the different accents. The learners also claimed that learning English with NESs could help them how to pronounce the words properly and listen the English words in natural. Some of learners claimed that they learnt much from the NESs' ways in pronouncing the words.

#### *d. The NESs' roles in improving learners' confident and enthusiastic*

Being confident and enthusiastic to speak English in real life situation were the most difficult things that faced by the English learners in mastering the language. One of the best ways to solve the problem that learners faced in learning process was by motivating them. In this case, the roles of the best motivators are needed in order to build up the learners confident and enthusiastic. The learners of this research were motivated by the existence of NESs in their learning process. They had experiences that

NESs were the best motivators toward the learners' willingness and efforts in learning English. When having interview, the learners expressed their confident and enthusiastic to speak English in real life situation.

The learners provided positive responses in learning English with NESs, they got great motivation and enthusiastic using English after learning English with the NESs. The learners also acknowledged that after involving in this program, they got a lot of knowledge that could be implemented in their real life.

### *Observation Results*

During the observation, I observed the learners' and tutors' activities in the classroom. The learners were very relax, enjoy, and enthusiastic joining the programs. The class was more active because the NESs as the tutors were good enough in organizing and delivering the materials. The implementation of small group method provided many chances to all of the learners to practice with NESs. The learning process was in non-formal situation, because there was no formal opening session, the tutors entered the room ten minutes before starting the class. Almost all of the activities were focused on improving the listening and speaking skills.

The other aspects of the observation results showed that the learners were very confident and free using their English, especially when they practiced with the NESs. Their conversations were running naturally, since the tutors were good enough in building up the learners confident in using English. The tutors always opened the class by giving some questions that made the learners be active to respond the questions even asked some questions for confirmation and clarification.

Game was on of the successful methods used by the NESs to make the learners more fun in during the class. The NESs as the tutors were involved in this activity. Thus, the class became crowded, because everyone got their turn in playing the game. The learners competed to be the winner. This activity also forced the learners to use their English proficiency. In short, the observations results showed that the learners perceived and experienced the NESs' roles in learning process were the great roles to improve and increase their English proficiency, especially their speaking and listening skills.

### *Discussion*

#### *The Learners' Perceptions Of Ness'roles In Learning Process*

Examining the results of the current study regarding to the NESs' roles in learning process based on the learners' perceptions learning with NESs in natural exposure or in-formal situation, specifically in DSEC Sumbaw Besar, there were some of the NESs s' roles in learning process were worth discussing here.

First, from the results of study some terms of NESs' roles in learning process seemed to be perceived by the learners of DSEC. Basically, those roles were very helpful to improve their English competence. Those roles were as the natural exposure, improving pronunciation and listening skills, and increasing the learners' confident and enthusiastic.

Natural exposure was the most important roles of NESs that perceived by the learners of DSEC. Natural exposure here referred to the process of learning English directly with the owner of the language or NESs in natural situation or non-formal situation. Discussion about the English conversation was also one of the NESs' roles in learning process. By conversing with native speakers, the learners were able to understand the difficult words and helped them maintaining their English, especially to build their

confidence in practicing the language with NESs. In this case, the learners were enthusiastic to join in DSEC because they want to have conversation with the owner of the language to make their English more fluent than before.

The next, NESs' roles in helping and improving the learners' pronunciation and listening skills were perceived as one of the useful roles. Learners perceived that NESs offered the natural ways of learning English words. Thus, the learners learnt the proper ways to pronounce the English words and hear good pronunciations from the NESs during the learning process in English Club.

### *The learners' experiences of NESs' roles in learning process*

This current study had explored the learners' experiences of the NESs' roles in learning process. The data showed that all of the learners were in same experiences. The NESs had great roles in improving their English competence, especially their confidences and enthusiasm in using English in real life. Those roles were the authentic learning, good creators in teaching method, and good learning motivators. Those roles above are elaborates below.

Firstly, the authentic learning was one of the learners' best experiences, since they obtained the worth chance learn English directly with the NESs. This program facilitated the learners to expose the natural English. These activities were guided the learners involving in real life and NESs' daily conversation.

Secondly, based on the analysis of the observation results as well as the learners' comments in interview, and strengthened by the documentation data, the learners were always relax, enjoy, and fun in joining the activities during the learning process with NESs, because NESs tutors used various of teaching methods when managed the class. In this case, the NESs tutors employed the general teaching methods that generally used in formal class, such as direct method, silent way, and total physical response. One of the methods used was direct method; it was great method to encourage the learners to speak English, made the learners contributed actively in learning process. The NESs created new method every meeting; it was success to make the class alive by allowing the learners expressed their thought freely.

Thirdly, the roles of NESs as good motivators in learning process was also experienced by the learners, their roles as the motivators were success to make learners enthusiastic and confident in using English in real life. The learners stated that they were enthusiastic and confident after involving learning English with NESs in natural situation. In short, the NESs had great roles in motivating the learners to master English and building up their confidence to speak English. After involving in this English Club, the learners had high desire to find other NESs or the ones who come from overseas to practice their English.

Referring to the results of study and the discussion presented above, it was strongly clear that the results of this study were very reliable with all of theories about NESs' roles in learning process. All theories about NESs' roles in learning process stated that their roles in learning process were very important in improving the learners' English competence. In briefly, the roles of NESs in learning process, especially in non-formal situation such as in English Club was very important to encourage the learners' willingness and efforts to learn English. It could be seen from the results and discussion presented above. The NESs had great roles in learning process in order to facilitate the learners to be totally exposed to English.

## Conclusion

This current study concludes three points. First, the learners' perceptions of NESs' roles in learning process at DSEC were various terms of perceptions. Those roles were in terms of the natural exposure, English conversation, improving pronunciation and listening, and improving learners' confident and enthusiastic. Basically, the learners perceived those roles were very helpful to encourage the learners' willingness and efforts in learning English. Second, the roles of NESs in learning process based on the learners' experiences learning English in natural situation (DSEC) with NESs were various of roles; the authentic learning, good creators in teaching method, and good learning motivators. Essentially, the learners experienced those roles were very helpful in order to make the learners' enthusiastic in learning English and built up their confidence using English in real life. Third, those perceptions and experiences of NESs' roles were shown by the learners' activities in the classroom during the learning process. Their activities in the classroom during the learning process were shown in form of their earnest concentration to their NESs' tutors in delivering the materials. The NESs' ways in delivering the materials were very interesting and successfully made the learners feel free and enjoy expressing their thought. Those activities were led the learners to be totally exposed to English.

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