

**A LEARNER OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM
OF THE TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION FACULTY
OF RIAU UNIVERSITY IN LEARNING ENGLISH**

Syofia Delfi

English Study Program of FKIP Riau University

Abstract. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners have personal perception about learning English. A study on a learner of English Study Program of the Teacher Training and Education faculty of Riau University gives an overview about the learner's reflection on learning English. The main focus of this paper is based on the research questions of the study: (1) What is the first impression about English of a learner of English study program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University? (2) How does a learner of English study program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University learn English? (3) How does an English Study Program learner of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University keep on learning English? In answering the research questions, the data were collected by interviewing the participant for the design of qualitative research in a case study. The findings of this study are: (1) The first impression about English of a learner of English study program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University is that English is unique and interesting. (2) A learner of English Study Program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University learn English by evaluating one's ability, reading course books on grammatical system, practicing listening, focusing on speaking, understanding the course books on the content courses, and reading for increasing vocabulary, (3) A learner of English Study Program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University keeps on learning English by reading for improving speaking and increasing vocabulary. This paper also discusses the methodology used and the related studies used in answering the research questions.

Key Words: *Language Learning*

INTRODUCTION

The role of English in Indonesia is as a foreign language (EFL) and all Indonesian learners are EFL learners. They learn English from elementary school until university level. Hence, Indonesian learners learn the language for specific purposes or in this case for academic purposes. In other words, they learn English as a subject. It means that they need to perform in the examination (Verhoeven, 2011). What learners learn is in line with the national curriculum which involves language aspects such as vocabulary, grammar,

and pronunciation as content areas. For Indonesian learners, learning English is not for communication purposes. They are not in the context in which the language is used.

Indonesian learners will have ability in English when they do their personal activity in learning English. The learners' personal activities can be based on personal perception about English, experience in learning English, and how they keep on learning English. Richards and Rodger (2007) point out that language learning theory may be provided by the theory of the language; structural view, functional view, and interactional view while learning occurs as a result of experience (Brown, Carlie, & Stack, 2008).

One of the experiences of successful learners in learning English is as the experience of the participant of this study. She is a learner of English study Program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty Riau University. She was not grown in Pekanbaru; she comes from a district in Riau province. She took time about one semester to adapt to English teaching and learning situation in university. She did not really involve in the class activities at the first semester. She thought that her classmates were more competent in using English. Since the writer taught the participant from semester one until semester six for different Subjects the writer noticed that the participant's ability in English increased from one semester to another semester.. The experience faced by learners may be one's prior experience or the experience of others. It may be structured or unstructured, formal or informal, inside or outside a classroom.

Acquiring a language for EFL learners needs language acquisition by learners. To the context of this study, the participant increased her ability in English due to her prior knowledge to English and her classmates' ability. Therefore, she guided herself with her own ways to increase her ability in English.

Language learning theories relating to the context of this study is Second Language Acquisition (SLA). A general theory of second language acquisition needs language acquisition by learners. The meaning of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in this study refers to Ellis' (2003, 2012). Ellis (2003) defines that Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is as the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of the classroom. Hence, Ellis (2012) claims that SLA is the product of many factors pertaining to the learner and the learning situation. The acquisition is in a variety of characteristics in contexts (Lightbown and Spada, 2011).

Since the learning of second language takes place some time later than the acquisition of the first language, learners should be exposed to the language used. This is in line with the Input Hypothesis Theory offered by Krashen (1982). To the context of this study, this theory will be used as the basic theory in order to gain the objectives of the study.

Krashen (1981) discusses the Input Hypothesis Theory focusing on the context in understanding the language system that learners have not known. The Input Hypothesis says that we acquire by “going for meaning” first, and as a result, we acquire structure. It is expected that learners use more than the linguistic competence to help them understand language. It is for understanding language containing language aspects that they have not known yet. Hence, Krashen classifies the Hypothesis into three parts; (1) the Input Hypothesis Theory relates to acquisition, (2) We acquire by understanding language that contains structure beyond our current level of competence ($i + 1$). This is done with the help of context or extra-linguistic information, (3) Communication is successful when the input is understood and there is enough of it, “ $i + 1$ ” will be provided automatically, (4) Production ability emerges and it is not taught directly. Krashen (1985) points out that second languages are acquired by receiving comprehensible input; language that is heard/ read and that is slightly ahead of a learners’ grammatical knowledge. It means that learners can acquire the language learnt through listening and speaking. Consequently, Krashen’s emphasizes that second languages are acquired by understanding messages.

In perceiving the meaning of the Input Hypothesis, this study also refers to what Gass (1994) means with input. He claims that input refers to what is available to learners. It can be in spoken and written form to which the learners are exposed. Native speakers make adjustments to their speech and the areas of pronunciation, grammar, and lexicon. These areas are also the areas for comprehensibility. An additional factor determining comprehensibility is the ability of non native speaker to contextualize the language by using appropriate vocabulary and linking devices. Produce the language appropriate to the situation.

The Input Hypothesis Theory (1982) by Krashen simplifies that understand the language aspects like vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation for meaning in acquiring the language. Input by Gass (1994) are what are available to learners in spoken or

written. Indonesian EFL students who are not in the environment in which English is used orally, they may involve in the context in which the language can be acquired through reading.. The Input Hypothesis Theory (1982) by Krashen and Input by Gass (1994) indicate that EFL learners may do reading to acquire the language. The students' understanding to the language aspects make them acquire the language for the process of understanding the reading materials. This is the context to acquire the language used in the context.

This article is based on a research report about a participant's experiences in increasing her ability in English. The participant of the study is a student of semester seven of the English Study Program of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Riau University. She was chosen because her ability in English increases from semester one. The main focus of this paper is based on the research questions of the study: (1) What is the first impression about English of a learner of English study program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University? (2) How does a learner of English study program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University learn English? (3) How does an English Study Program learner of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University keep on learning English?

METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative research which is designed in the form of a case study in order to answer the three research questions. Yin (2009) defines that research design is a logical plan for questions to be answered through a number of major steps like collecting and analyzing data. The focus of a case study is on a few instances of a particular phenomenon with a few to provide an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in the particular instance (Martyn, 2007 and Bernard & Ryan, 2010). The experience explored in this study is individual experience in learning English. Yin (2009) also suggests that knowledge gained by conducting a case study can be as the contribution of individual or group including education. The experiences found are as the contribution of experiences faced by one of successful language learner in learning English. To the context of this study, the experiences are faced by a learner of

English Study Program of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Riau University.

The sampling used was purposively sampling. The use of such kind of sampling is for the purpose to find the perceptions of the successful learner exploring her experience in learning English as a student of English Study Program of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Riau University. This is in line with what Maykut & Morehouse (2003) and Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2008) mean. They point out that qualitative research generally relies on purposive selection of participants. Purposively sampling is based on the assumption that investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight (Merriam, 2009). On the other hand, Suharsimi (2010) claims that the researchers may decide to use purposively for specific aim. In order to gain the aim of the study, the researcher needs to identify the criteria of the participants selected. The criteria of the learners to be the participant of this study is the learners who always increase her academic record. The student fulfilling the criteria was chosen to be the participant of this study. One semester seventh student matches to the criteria to this study. The participant's academic record at the first semester was 3.10 out of 4.00, and at the second semester the record was 3.50. and at the sixth semester was 3.80. She was also considered because she experienced taking whole courses

The instrument used in collecting the data about the student's experience in learning English was interview. Martyn (2007) points out that one of the four ways of the data collection for case study is interviews. The type of the research interview was semi structured. Suharsimi (2010) claims that semi structured interview is appropriate for case study. The answer of open-ended questions emphasizing on interviewee elaborates points of interest (Martin, 2010). The questions of interviews were constructed in terms of the participant's experience, opinion, feeling, and sense about learning English. The questions were developed during the interview. The development of the questions was useful to follow up more detailed information that the researcher needs for this research. The questions in interviews were constructed into themes in line with this topic. The interviews were conducted two times.

The writer implemented the explanation building technique in analyzing the data. The goal of building technique is to develop the idea for further study (Robert. K. Yin,

2009). The elements of explanation building technique are to explain the sets of causal relationships of something happened. It occurs in narrative form along with networks for deeply understanding about the data (Sugiyono, 2010). Yin (2009) classifies the procedures of this technique six stages. The stages are: (1) Making an initial proposition, (2) Comparing the findings of initial case, (3) Revising the statement of proposition, (4) Comparing other details of the case against the revision, (5) Comparing the revision to the other cases, (6) Repeating this process as many times as is needed. The writer followed these procedures relating to the contexts of the participant.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study found that the participant experienced learning English developing her ability in English. The result of the analysis proves that the experience was begun from her first perception about English. She recognized English for the first time when she was at the age of ten. She often watched the film in English. To her at that time, English was unique because the language is different from Indonesian. The sound was interesting to her although she did not understand what the speaker said. The first perception on English makes the participant know more about English. She did reading for learning English. She guides herself to learn English since she has had her own perception about English. She sometimes asked her teacher what she did not understand when she learnt English formally at sixth grade of Elementary School. She also asked her brother if she still did not understand. She also asked her friends whether their teachers know more about English. It shows that she wanted to learn English with whom she could learn. Her interest in learning English was supported by her mother. At that level, her mother let the participant to join the English course.

The participant's first perception about English guided her to learn English until university. At the last semester of her study at English Study Program of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Riau University, she still keeps on doing things relating to individual activities in learning English. The participant's first perception about English is as the answer of the first question of this study "What is the first impression about English of a learner of English study program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University?" The answer of this question is "The first impression about

English of a learner of English study program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University is that English is unique and interesting.”

The result of this study also found how the participant learnt English. She had many experiences developing her ability in English. The experiences can be classified from one semester to the following semester. The classification of the focus in each semester is the thing she needs to develop her ability at that time.

At the first semester, she developed her ability in English in terms of learning the grammatical aspect of the language. To her, learning the grammatical system of the language will be useful for her to increase her ability in productive skills; speaking and writing. She read all of course books on structure. Her experience at the first semester made her gain 3.10 out of 4.00 for her academic record. At the second semester, beside learning grammatical system, she also focus on listening. She often listens to English program in the radio. This effort made her academic record increased from 3.10 out of 4.00 to 3.53. She had not been really satisfied for her ability in using English, therefore, at the third semester she keeps on learning English and focusing on listening. The personal learning activities done by the participant from semester one also reflected on her academic record at the third semester. Her academic record at semester 3 is 3.80. She always gain 3.80 until the last semester she took courses, to the context of this study is at the sixth semester. She focused on speaking at semester IV. At semester IV, she felt confident as a student of the English Study Program because she has been confident to speak English. At semester V and semester VI, she focused on understanding for content courses. She thought that she should have to understand the course books for content course. Therefore, she did more reading at these two semesters in order to understand the content. At semester VII, she still kept on reading for the focus on understanding the words of the reading materials. Her experiences indicate how she learnt English.

The experience faced by the participant in learning English as own effort is as the answer of the second question of this study “(2) How does a learner of English study program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University learn English?” A learner of English study program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University learns English by evaluating one’s ability, reading course

book on grammatical system, practicing listening, focusing on speaking, understanding the course book on content courses, and by increasing vocabulary.

Several ways that the participant did in learning English as a foreign language for an English Study Program student of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Riau University. The ways are really useful in increasing her ability in English. The ways made her confident use the language. Her successfulness in using the language did not make her stop learning the language for oneself activity. She still did activities to learn English by reading for improving speaking and increasing vocabulary. These are the way how the participant keeps on learning English. These ways are as the answer the third question of this study “How does an English Study Program learner of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University keep on learning English?” A learner of English Study Program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University keeps on learning English by reading for improving speaking and increasing vocabulary.

The participant’s experiences in learning English are as the reflection of Krashen’s theory (1982) *The Input Hypothesis Theory*. The participant’s understanding on grammatical system made her understand listening. Her understanding on listening made her competent in speaking. Having experience in reading content course made her realize the need of increasing the ability on vocabulary. The participant acquired English by doing autonomous learning and what she did for learning increased her ability which means $i+1$ in Krashen’s theory. As the goal of learning English as a language, the participant could also have the ability in productive skill, especially speaking. Krashen (1982) said that production ability emerges and it is not taught directly. The participant increased her ability in English by understanding what she should learn as an English Study Program student of the Faculty of Teacher and Education of Riau University. She also did her own personal activity in increasing her ability in English

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The main objective of this study is about how an English study program learner of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Riau University learn English. It is for finding the participant’s first perception about English and what she did in developing

and maintaining her ability in English. The findings of this study are: (1) The first perception about English of a learner of English study program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University is that English is unique and interesting. (2) A learner of English study program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University learns English by evaluating one's ability, reading course books on grammatical system, practicing listening, focusing on speaking, understanding the course books on the content courses, and reading for increasing vocabulary. (3) A learner of English Study Program of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University keeps on learning English by reading for improving speaking and increasing vocabulary.

This study proves the successful of a language learner of English Study Program of the Faculty of Teacher and Education in developing herself in learning English. This study is useful for English Study Program Learners, especially, English Study Program learners in Riau University, parents, English teachers, and English lecturers, and researchers. The findings of this study are useful for English Study Program Learners in developing their own ability as English Study Program learners in Riau University. They need to recognize their English ability from the first semester and they should know how she develops their English ability. However, it depends on the first impression about English as the first impression about English of the participant of this study. To her, English is unique and interesting. This first impression directed her to know more about English. She enjoyed developing her English ability because to her, English is interesting. Therefore, it is expected that parents create the situation to make children have positive impression about English. Teachers and lecturers also are also expected to design teaching and learning activities guiding the students to develop their ability in English. This study also recommends for the following research on learning English of learners of English Study Program. More sources can be used in collecting the data; not only learners, but also their friends, their parents, and their lecturers.

English Study Program Learners of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Riau University can develop their ability in English as long as they have positive first perception in English, recognize one's ability, and know what they need to do.

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