

A STUDY ON THE FOURTH SEMESTER STUDENTS' PERCEPTION IN CHOOSING ELECTIVE COURSES IN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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Abstract:

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The objective of the research is to find out the students' perception in choosing elective courses. In order to achieve the objective of this research, the researcher used descriptive quantitative method of research to identify students' perception in choosing elective courses. Population of this research was all of the fourth semester students of English Education Study Program in 2017 academic year consisted of 110 students. The sample of this research was class C consisted of 34 students which were taken by using cluster random sampling technique. The result of this research showed that the mean score of the students' perception in choosing elective courses was 77.65. These scores are categorized into positive. It can be concluded that students had the positive perception toward the elective courses in English Department especially in English Education Study Program UNM.

Key words: *Students' perception, Elective Courses*

1. Introduction

State University of Makassar has several faculties, departments, and Study Programs. One of them is English Education Study Program in English Department in Faculty of Languages and Literatures (FBS). In English Education, there are two kind of courses namely, compulsory courses and elective courses. In the elective courses in the English Education Study Program, there are four courses available namely, Translation, English for Young Learners (EYL), Business English (BE), and English in ICT. Those four elective courses have different objective and purposes.

Besides, each student has different ideas or perceptions about elective courses before they choose one of them and it becomes the reason for them in choosing elective course. Moreover, perception can influence students' behavior in learning. It may influence students in doing something and making the decision. As Robbins and Judge (2013) stated that perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment.

Students' perceptions of elective courses are very different, it cannot be denied that they have certain reasons for choosing their elective courses. Another thing that cannot be denied is the presence of elective courses that are of little interest and there are elective courses that many interested in, such as those in English Education students at State University of Makassar who prefer choose translation as their elective course rather than other elective courses.

Based on the researcher's personal experience when she was chosen translation as her elective course, she realized that the method used by lecturers in teaching was

very boring with a noisy and hot classroom atmosphere because there were too many students in one class. Then, it supported by the observation of English Education students, State University of Makassar. Students give some different responses to their elective course. According to the students, the learning methods used by lecturers who teach are boring and there is no increase in the methods used while interesting learning methods can make students enthusiastic and active in learning. Another case is about choosing elective courses, some students choose their elective courses because they are interested in learning the subject and some of them choose elective courses because they follow their friends.

Based on the findings above, the researcher concluded that it is necessary to know the students' perception in choosing elective courses because there have been no studies on elective courses at UNM especially in the English Education Study Program. It can be used as a reference and guide the students in choosing their elective courses. In English Education Study Program side, it is the way to evaluate the theory or concept of Elective Courses for the development. Therefore, the reason mentioned above motivates the researcher to conducting research entitled "A Study on the Fourth Semester Students' Perception in choosing Elective Courses in English Department".

2. Statement of the Problem

The problem of this research was based on the researchers' casual observation who found that there is a different perception between some students in choosing elective courses. Based on the research problem above, the researcher formulates the research question as follows:

1. What is the students' perception in choosing elective courses at English Education Study Program in State University of Makassar?
2. Do the expectations of students for their elective courses meet with the reality?

3. Objective of the Study

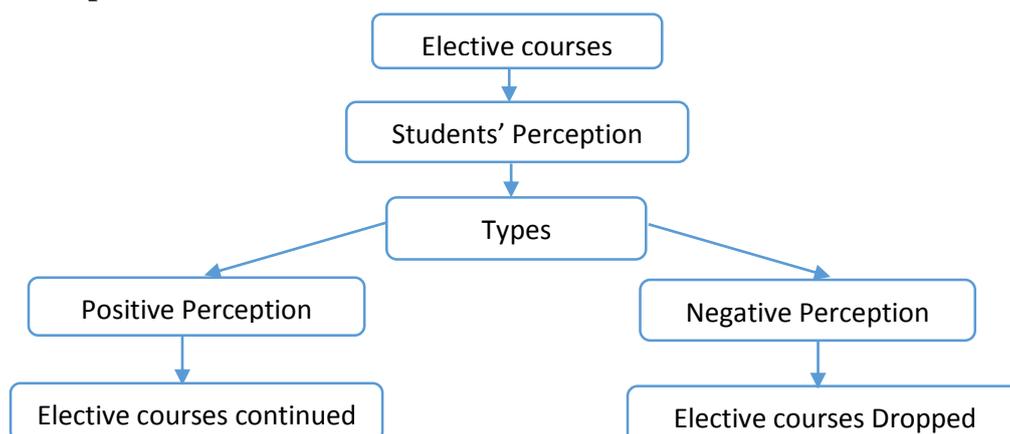
The main objectives of conducting this research are to find out:

1. Perception of the students' in choosing elective courses.
2. Whether or not the students' expectation about elective course is suitable to the reality.

4. Scope

This research is limited to the fourth semester students at English Education Study Program in 2017 academic year.

5. Conceptual Framework



6. Research/Sampling Method Used

This research used descriptive quantitative method. The descriptive study involves assessing attitudes or opinions toward individual, organizations, events, or procedures (Gay, 1981) using cluster random sampling technique.

7. Respondents

The respondents of the research were the fourth semester students of English Education Study Program of English Department UNM.

8. The Data Gathering Instruments

The research instrument used in this research were questionnaire and interview. The questionnaires was distributed to 70 students in class. The total questions are 20 that consists of 10 positive and 10 negative five scale choices namely strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (DA), strongly disagree (SDA). Then, the researcher interviewed two students as the representative of each elective course to gain accurate data.

9. Research Procedure

The procedure of collecting data took one meeting. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the students on order to fill it. After the students' answer the questionnaire, the researcher asked to collect it. Next, the researcher picked two students as representative of each elective course to be interview.

10. Statistical Treatment

Frequency and percentage distribution were used to determine the students' perception in choosing Elective Courses in English Education Study Program students. Students' perception was positive.

11. Findings and Discussion

The findings of this research displays the presentation of the data that have been analyzed through quantitative descriptive analysis. They were collected from 34 students that have participated in this research through questionnaire.

The descriptive analysis of this research encompasses the rate frequency and percentage, and the mean score.

Tabel 4.1. Perception Classification

Range of Scale	Frequency	Percentage	Student's Perception
85-100	8	23.5%	Strongly Positive
69-84	19	55.9%	Positive
53-68	7	20.6%	Moderate
37-52	0	0.00%	Negative
20-36	0	0.00%	Strongly Negative
Total	34	100%	

From the table above, we can see that the fourth semester students had different perceptions about elective courses.

The result of mean score in the questionnaire that was calculated as below:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\bar{X} &= \frac{2640}{36} \\ &= 77.65\end{aligned}$$

The total score from questionnaire was 2640 with the total sampling was 34. It shows that the mean score of the students' perception in choosing elective courses is 77.65 which is classified as positive. Most students had positive perceptions, some had negative perceptions. This is supported by Irwanto (2002) which explained that there are two types of perception, they are positive perception and negative perception.

In other hand, the researcher found from the result of questionnaire that some students from class C 2017 tend to choose English for Young learners as their elective courses, it was proven by the following diagram:

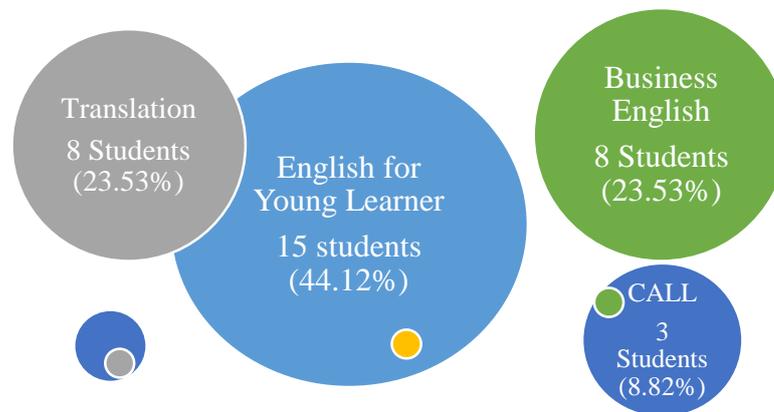


Diagram 4.1 Frequency and Percentage of Students' Elective Courses

From the result of the interviewed, the researcher found that the students' expectations about their elective courses meet with reality. It is in line with Fiske & Taylor (1991) mentioned that perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting information. We select information based on salience that are visually or aurally stimulate our needs, interest, and expectation, organize information based on proximity, similarity, and difference.

Moreover, there are also students stated that their elective courses are in line with their expectations, but not appropriate in other contexts. For example the way the lecturer delivered the material is good but the method he uses is not in accordance with the expectations of students. This was not in line with Suharyono (1991: 82) mentioned that the teaching and learning process will take place optimally and effectively if well planned and well managed.

12. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the finding and discussion of the previous chapter, the researcher concludes that the fourth students' perception in choosing elective courses is positive. It was proven by the result of the students' rating mean score which was 77.65. The students expectation about their elective courses are suitable to the reality that happened. It then strengthened by the result of the students' interview that their expectations about elective courses meet with reality.

It is suggested for the students before choosing elective courses, they must first ask for advice to the supervisor and consider their own opinions. The lecturer should use a more varied teaching method so that students are happier. The lecturers also have to

attend classes more often and more often interact with students. It is suggested for English Education Study Program UNM to add facilities required for students to support the teaching and learning process. It is also suggested for the next researcher especially for those who are interesting in conducting a study which is related with perception in different occasion and context. This study can be used as the consideration for those who want to conduct similar studies beyond the scope of this study, for example to analyze more deeply about one of the four types of elective courses in English Department UNM.

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