

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD THE HIGH TARGET
SCORE OF USEPT AT THE FACULTY OF COMPUTER
SCIENCE**

A Thesis By

Azlina Aisha

Student Number: 06011281823026

English Education Study Program

Language and Art Education Department



FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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Approved by,

Advisor,



**Dra. Rita Hayati, M.A
NIP. 196006161988032002**



Certified by,

**Coordinator of English Education
Study Program**



**Hariswan Putera Jaya, S.Pd., M.Pd
NIP. 197408022002121003**

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Azlina Aisha

06011281823026

**This thesis was defended by the writer in the final program examination and
was approved by the examination committee on:**

Day : Wednesday

Date : January 12, 2022

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

1. Chairperson : Dra. Rita Hayati, M.A ()

2. Member : Soni Mirizon, M.A., Ed.D ()

Indralaya, 18th January 2022

Certified by,

Coordinator of English Education

Study Program



Hariswan Putera Jaya, S.Pd., M.Pd

NIP. 197408022002121003

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned:

Name : Azlina Aisha

Place, date of birth : Surabaya, August 3rd, 2000

Student Number : 06011281823026

Study Program : English Education

Certify that the thesis entitled “Students’ Perception Toward the High Target Score of USEPT at the Faculty of Computer Science” is my own work, and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face the court if I find to have plagiarized this work.

Indralaya, January 15th 2022

The Undersigned,



Handwritten signature of Azlina Aisha.

Azlina Aisha

06011281823026

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

My beloved and lovely parents, my mother and my father who always had confidence, believe, and offered me the encouragement and supports in all my journeys. Thank you for being such a supportive, caring, and loving family.

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Indralaya, 15th December 2021

The Writer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Azhina', with a stylized flourish at the end. Below the signature is a small, faint logo.

Azhina Aisha

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Students' Perception Toward the High Target Score of USEPT at the Faculty of Computer Science

ABSTRACT

One way to measure someone's English ability is by giving tests to them. English language proficiency becomes one of the ways to measure students' ability in English. The aim of the research was to explore students' perception toward the high target score of USEPT test at the Faculty of Computer Science and to find out the difficulties faced during the USEPT test. The subjects of this research were six of seventh semester students of *Fasilkom* (Faculty of Computer Science), Sriwijaya University from 3 different study programs which are Computer System, Information System, and Informatic Engineering. The data for this study were collected through demographic profile, document review, and interview. Qualitative method was used in conducting this study. The interview results were analyzed using thematic analysis method. The result showed that 500 as the standard score is not effective for *Fasilkom* students as a graduation requirement because it was quite high and it could burden students graduation. There were difficulties faced while taking the USEPT which came from external and internal factor. The external factor that affected students' performance during the test was place condition and situation. Meanwhile, the internal factor was lack of motivation to learn English and low English proficiency.

Keywords: *English Proficiency Test, Perception, USEPT test, Fasilkom Students, Faculty of Computer Science, Challenge in doing USEPT*

A Thesis by an English Education Study Program Student, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University

Name : Azlina Aisha
NIM : 06011281823026

Certified by

Head of English Education Study Program



Hariswan Putera Jaya, S.Pd., M.Pd
NIP. 197408022002121003

Approved by

Advisor



Dra. Rita Hayati, M.A
NIP. 19600616188032002

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses about introductory points of the whole content of the research. It covers (1) background of the study, (2) research questions, (3) research objectives, (4) significance of the study, and (5) limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Foreign language is a language that is not commonly used and spoken in particular place. Berns (1990) interprets foreign language as target language in countries that do not use the language as a speech community. There are many foreign languages that have developed in Indonesia due to the importance of language skills in the modern era. Unlike to the neighboring countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Hongkong, and the Philippines which English is commonly used in daily activities as their second language, English has become one of the foreign language that is more likely to be taught and learnt in any schools, universities, or courses in Indonesia. It means that English is taught and learnt only during formal education in Indonesia, and the teaching learning process also mostly in the classroom rather than in daily activities or societies. Negash (2011) have investigated that in educational aspect, English becomes the main language of academics, because most of the academic publications are written in English. In learning English, students should master four language skills which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Thus, all of these 4 skills are important and must be learned by the students. Then again, students should master some components of language such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Therefore, teaching and learning English have such challenges for both teachers and students, because they do not commonly use English in their daily activities nor inside the class. Apparently, it is challenging for some Indonesian students since English is not their mother tongue. In fact, it seems that there are some reasons why English becomes a foreign language in Indonesia. Lauder (2008) stated there are three main categories of the language position in Indonesia

such as *Bahasa Indonesia* as a first language or mother tongue, the regional or vernacular language as a second language, and foreign language as a third language.

English has become one of the most dominating languages in the world that has its impact on every field of education. Mahmud (2014) delivered that English is important not only in education, but also in many public sectors where people interact. The importance of mastering English is very crucial thing for Indonesian people. Having an ability of mastering English gives people great opportunity to be connected in a global world. Ismawati (2014) stated that English is needed in many fields of professional jobs, which is needed nowadays. As a result, almost every country in the world speaks English language, since it is a universal language. Therefore, someone should at least understand even a little about English, because it is an International language. Someone will get a job based on their expertise, but it is different now in the 21st century, someone must have expertise in both communication and writing skills. Lotto and Barrington (2006, pg 20) stated that both oral and written skills are important, but communication is one of the most important skill applied in 21st century workplace.

There are many ways and requirements that needs to be accomplished to know and develop someone's English capability. As an International language used in various worlds, English becomes a top priority that someone must master if they want to compete in this modern era, especially in 21st century. However, since English is one of the most widely spoken language in the world, it seems that it has far more advantages over other languages. The role of English is needed both in mastering communication technology and for direct interaction (Handayani, 2016: 103).

One way to find out whether students understand English or not is by giving tests to them. A test is aimed to measure students' understanding, ability, knowledge, and performance of the subject matter. Desheng and Verghese (2013)

showed that test not only evaluates the progress and achievement of the students but also the effectiveness of its teaching materials and methods used. Therefore, it is very important to create reliable and valid tests of English proficiency for the students to determine their knowledge and ability. Huges (2003) delivered that a proficiency test aims to measure someone's ability in a language. Using test in the educational field is a best way that is believed can make a change and have an impact in learning, teaching, material, and learning system.

English language proficiency become one of the requirements in the recruitment process such as scholarship programs, recruitment of employees, study abroad, graduation requirement, and many others. In particular, there are many Indonesian educational institutions having their own types of testing whether it is self-developed test or external public tests for graduation requirements. One of the main reasons each university held English proficiency test is that they wanted the students to achieve the minimum standard score before the students graduate from their study programmes. There are various kinds of English language proficiency tests in Indonesia that have been accepted internationally such as: (1) Testing of English for Foreign Language (TOEFL), (2) International English Language Testing System (IELTS), and (3) Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). In fact, there are many other types of English proficiency tests, but these three types of tests are the types that are most often performed in Indonesia and carried out based on the needs. However, one of the most common among these three is TOEFL test. Phillip (2000) delivered that TOEFL is a test to measure the English ability of someone who are not a native speaker of English where it is required in the institution or universities. By using an English proficiency tests such as TOEFL, all the universities and insititutions in Indonesia have the aim to measure their students' ability of the English language skills. TOEFL is one of the special requirements for applicants as determined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Applicants for a diplomatic position are required to master English both verbally and in writing. This mastery is proven through:

“TOEFL score of 550 (five hundred and fifty) or an IELTS of 6.5 (six point five). As for the languages of other members of the United Nations (UN) such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, French, and/or other foreign language (German and Japanese) is proven by a language test score which is equivalent to a TOEFL score of 550”

Sriwijaya University becomes one of the institution that conduct an English language proficiency tests for its students. As an English Education students in University of Sriwijaya, TOEFL has been mentioned since in the first semester of the study because it is kind of similar with the official English test which is held in Sriwijaya University. However, Sriwijaya University had its own name of English proficiency test which was called SULIET test or (Sriwijaya University Language Institute English Test). The name of the test was changed to USEPT (Universitas Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test) in the year of 2020. This test was organized by Sriwijaya University to know UNSRI students' comprehension about English ability. It also becomes a requirement for graduation of the alumni candidates of Sriwijaya University students. However, the standard passing grade for USEPT by each faculty is different, it can be 400, 425, 450, and 500 scores.

When it comes to the non-English department students, especially *Fasilkom* (Faculty of Computer Science) students whose major is not English Education, they are required to pass the minimum scores from the USEPT test as graduation requirement. Based on the information from Sriwijaya University Guide Book (2019), they need to have 500 as a minimum score to fulfill the graduation requirements. Meanwhile, non-English students have an English subject and learn English in the classroom only in the first semester with two credit hours. Therefore, non-English students probably will get some problems and difficulties when they face and pass the test since they do not have the basic to learn English in the classrooms. They might wonder about the high scores that they have to pass which is as the same level as the English Education study program students who already have the basic of English language from the first

until the last semester. Therefore, they might think that the high minimum target of the USEPT test they have to pass will become a problem because it is too high for them. However, in their daily lives and activities, non-English students probably will not use English in the class nor in the workplace. As far as I know, they prefer to use the first language which is *Bahasa Indonesia* or sometimes *Palembang* language to communicate with each other in and outside the classroom.

However, despite their environment which is computer that they are operating almost use English in its programs, many *Fasilkom* (Faculty of Computer Science) students still have problems and difficulties to reach the minimum score of USEPT. They still struggle to reach the target score that they think too high for them as non-English students department.

Moreover, there have been several studies related to this research. One of them was written by Devy Zuhayana (2018) which entitled “TOEFL as Requirement of Graduation: What Challenges”. The study results showed that TOEFL was not effective as a graduation requirement, there was a correlation between prior course and TOEFL score of students as well as the challenges in taking TOEFL. Another latest study by Siti Masfufah (2018) which entitled “Indonesian College Students’ Perception of TOEFL Preparation Class”. The study results showed that the majority of the students were satisfied with TOEFL preparation class. From these brief descriptions, there are interesting issues that make the researcher interested to conduct the study about “Students’ Perception Toward the High Target Score of USEPT at the Faculty of Computer Science” where the researcher focuses on the *Fasilkom* students’ perception about the minimum target score that they need to pass before they graduate as a requirement and the difficulties they face to pass the target score.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

This study was expected to answer these two following research questions:

1. What were the *Fasilkom* (Faculty of Computer Science) students' perception toward the high target score of USEPT that they had to pass?
2. What were the difficulties faced by *Fasilkom* students during the USEPT test?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

To achieve the result from the research questions above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To explore *Fasilkom* Students' perception toward the high target score of USEPT test that must be achieved.
2. To find out the difficulties faced by *Fasilkom* Students' during the USEPT test.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The research of this study are expected to contribute theoretical and practical significances for the university as the following way:

1. Theoretically,

The result of this study was expected to provide literature information from this study regarding *Fasilkom* students' perceptions toward the high score of the USEPT test that must be achieved.

2. Practically,

The result of this study was expected to provide information also suggestions for lecturers about the difficulties faced by *Fasilkom* students' in taking USEPT test. Then, researcher hopes that it would be beneficial for *Fasilkom* students' to improve their English ability by knowing from its difficulties and the problem solving in taking USEPT test. The last thing, researcher hopes that the result of this study can contribute to be used by future researchers as a reference related to this case.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Based on the background that has been described, this study focuses to explore *Fasilkom* students' perception toward the high target score of USEPT test and to find out the difficulties that they faced in doing USEPT test. This study has some limitations due to Covid-19 pandemic situation in Indonesia, especially in the environment of Sriwijaya University.

First, all of the activities and interactions between the participants and researcher in this study will be conducting online without having to meet in person due to Covid-19. Therefore, to collect the data, the researcher will use Google form as a questionnaire to collect the information about their background, perception, and their USEPT result. After that, the researcher will select several participants who meet the criteria to be interviewed.

Second, the participants of this study were limited to the *Fasilkom* Students' opinion toward the high target score that must be achieved in the implementation of the USEPT test. Researcher chooses students who will be the participants for this study from the 7th semester students' of Computer System, Information System, and Informatic Engineering. Researcher hopes that this research can provide a clear explanation by using data collection techniques related to the topic.

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