

## Students' Perceptions of English Learning during Teaching Assistance Program in Vocational High School

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### A B S T R A C T

English plays an important role in vocational education because it supports students' workplace readiness and future career opportunities. However, previous studies mostly focused on digital media and classroom methods, while studies examining students' perceptions during teaching assistance programs, in which university students assist classroom instruction, remain limited. This study aimed to analyze students' perceptions of English learning during the teaching assistance program at SMKN 1 Abung Selatan based on Bimo Walgito's theory, which includes cognitive, affective, and conative components. This study employed a descriptive quantitative design with a 24-item questionnaire distributed to 33 students of class XI Accounting 2. The instrument was reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.730. The findings showed that students had a very positive perception, with an overall mean score of 4.50 (90.08%). The cognitive component gained the highest score, followed by affective and conative. These results indicate that the program effectively improved students' understanding, motivation, comfort, and participation in English learning.

**Keywords:** *Students' Perception, English Learning, Teaching Assistance Program, Vocational High School*

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## INTRODUCTION

English has evolved into an international language with a strategic role in various sectors of modern life, such as global communication, higher education, international trade, digital technology, and workforce mobility. In the era of globalization, proficiency in English is no longer seen as an additional skill, but as a fundamental requirement for young generations to participate in the global society. In the context of Indonesian education, English is taught as a foreign language from elementary to secondary levels, including vocational high schools (SMK). Vocational students' perceptions of English learning are important because positive attitudes toward English may strengthen employability readiness and support English for Specific Purposes (ESP) competencies needed in future workplaces. According to (Annisa et al., 2023), vocational students consider English important to support their future careers and professional work needs. Similarly, (Ulyani & Tenggara, 2025) explain that English competence is closely related to the job readiness of vocational graduates in the modern industrial era. Furthermore, (Raudhah et al., 2025) state that English skills help students access digital learning resources and international communication. A similar finding was conveyed by (Fadia et al., 2026), who found that tourism students see English as an essential skill for serving foreign tourists. In addition, (Apoko et al., 2025) emphasize that vocational students consider English relevant for enhancing critical and creative thinking skills.

Despite its important role, English language learning in vocational high schools (SMK) still faces various challenges. Many students perceive English as a difficult subject due to differences in language structure, limited vocabulary, low self-confidence when speaking, and

a lack of exposure to authentic language use. (Ulumiyah & Gozali, 2023), Some vocational students show a positive attitude toward English, but still experience difficulties with grammar and learning strategies. (Annisa et al., 2023) found that students' investment in learning English is often hampered by teaching methods, uncomfortable classroom environments, and limited social support. (Dewi et al., 2024) explains that the integration of technology in English language learning still faces obstacles in students' understanding and readiness. (Rahman et al., 2025) also found that students' dependence on Google Translate is quite high due to their low basic English proficiency. In addition, (Tanjung & Daulay, 2025) mention that students' motivation to learn increases when lessons are presented in an engaging and interactive manner.

To address these challenges, teachers are required to create innovative, communicative, and student-centered learning. Monotonous English instruction tends to decrease student engagement, while interactive learning has been proven to increase students' interest and participation. (Raudhah et al., 2025) show that the use of Wordwall is perceived positively by students because it makes learning more interesting and easier to understand. (Irzawati & Unamo, 2023) found that the Duolingo application is considered fun, motivating, and facilitates English learning. Research by (Herawati et al., 2023) states that the use of Quizizz can increase students' enthusiasm for learning English. (Effendi & Wijirahayu, 2024) explain that collaborative learning encourages active engagement of vocational students in reading activities. These findings indicate that the quality of the learning experience is greatly influenced by the teaching strategies used by teachers.

One innovation that has recently developed in Indonesia is the teaching assistance program, which involves university students in helping the teaching and learning process at schools. The presence of these students in the classroom is expected to add variety to learning methods, strengthen academic support, introduce new learning media, and create a more dynamic learning atmosphere. According to English training results in several vocational schools, students have shown positive perceptions toward the presence of learning assistants, as they feel more motivated and confident to communicate in English (Alamsyah et al., 2025). (Sugandi et al., 2026) emphasize that students' perceptions of teacher quality greatly influence their motivation to learn English. Research by (Akbar et al., 2024) also shows that collaborative learning with assistants increases student engagement in writing classes. In addition, (Dewi et al., 2024) explain that students feel more comfortable learning when there is direct help available during difficulties. (Apoko et al., 2025) add that a supportive learning environment strengthens meaningful learning for vocational students.

To understand how students assess their learning experience, the concept of perception becomes a relevant theoretical foundation. According to (Walgito, 2010), perception is the process of organizing and interpreting stimuli received by an individual so that these stimuli become meaningful to them. In the context of education, stimuli can take the form of teaching methods, teacher attitudes, lesson materials, learning media, or classroom atmosphere. Walgito divides perception into three main components: cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive component relates to students' understanding and evaluation of learning. The affective component is associated with feelings, interest, comfort, and motivation. Meanwhile, the conative component concerns behavioral tendencies such as participation, learning effort, and active involvement. According to (Irzawati & Unamo, 2023), students' positive perceptions are related to higher learning motivation. (Effendi & Wijirahayu, 2024) add that good perceptions encourage active classroom involvement. (Mahardika & Jaya, 2025) also show that positive perceptions increase students' acceptance of learning innovations.

Although many studies discuss students' perceptions of learning media, digital technology, or particular methods, research that specifically examines students' perceptions of English learning during the teaching assistance program at vocational high schools (SMK) is still relatively limited, especially in the context of regional vocational schools. Most previous studies focused on perceptions of digital applications such as Duolingo, Quizizz, and Google Translate, rather than the learning experience through the presence of teaching assistants in

the classroom. In fact, the teaching assistance program has the potential to be a concrete strategy for improving the quality of English learning. Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze students' perceptions of English learning during the teaching assistance program at SMKN 1 Abung Selatan based on the cognitive, affective, and conative components according to Bimo Walgito. The results of this research are expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the study of learning perceptions as well as practical contributions to schools, teachers, and organizers of the teaching assistance program.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive design. The quantitative approach was chosen because the study focuses on collecting numerical data, which is then analyzed statistically to describe students' perceptions of English learning during the teaching assistance program. According to (Creswell, 2021), a quantitative approach is appropriate when researchers want to measure tendencies in attitudes, opinions, or responses of respondents using structured instruments. Meanwhile, a descriptive design is used because this study does not aim to test causal relationships or provide experimental treatment, but to describe the actual conditions based on field data. Quantitative descriptive research is widely used in the field of education because it can provide an objective, systematic, and measurable picture of a learning phenomenon (Kamila et al., 2025)

### Respondents

The research was conducted at SMKN 1 Abung Selatan with 33 students of class XI Accounting 2 as the research subjects. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling because this class consisted of students who directly participated in the English learning process during the teaching assistance program. Thus, all respondents have relevant experience with the research object and can provide assessments based on their actual experiences. (Sugiyono, 2013) explains that purposive sampling is used when researchers select subjects based on specific considerations relevant to the needs of the study.

### Instruments

The data collection technique used a questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was chosen because it is effective for efficiently measuring respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and responses in a certain quantity. The Likert scale is one of the most commonly used instruments in social and educational research to determine the degree of respondents' agreement with a statement (Koo & Yang, 2025). The answer options in this study consisted of: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. The higher the score given by the respondents, the more positive the students' perception of English learning during the teaching assistance program. The questionnaire items were adapted from previous perception studies and further developed based on Bimo Walgito's perception framework. The instrument was designed to measure cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of students' perceptions toward English learning.

Table 1. Questionnaire Rating Scale

Score	Answer Category
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

The research instrument consisted of 24 statement items developed based on Bimo Walgito's theory of perception. According to (Walgito, 2010), perception is the process of organizing and interpreting stimuli received by individuals so that it becomes meaningful. Perception consists of three main components: cognitive, affective, and conative. Based on this theory, the research instrument was developed into three main dimensions. The cognitive

component includes understanding of material, clarity of explanations, learning structure, and relevance of the material. The affective component covers interest, comfort, attitude, and learning motivation. Meanwhile, the conative component includes active participation, involvement in learning activities, effort to understand the material, and follow-up learning after the lesson is completed.

Table 2. Research Instrument Blueprint

Component	Aspect	Item Number	Total
Cognitive	Comprehension, Clarity, Structure, Relevance	1-8	8
Affective	Interest, Comfort, Attitude, Motivation	9-16	8
Conative	Participation, Engagement, Effort, Follow-up	17-24	8
Total		1-24	24

Odd-numbered items were positive statements, while even-numbered items were negative statements. Negative items were scored using reverse scoring to maintain consistent score interpretation.

### Procedures

The research procedures were carried out in several stages. First, the researcher constructed the questionnaire items based on Bimo Walgito's theory of perception, which includes cognitive, affective, and conative components. Second, the instrument was submitted for content validation through expert judgment by a lecturer in English education to assess the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of each item. Revisions were made based on the expert's suggestions before the questionnaire was distributed. Third, the validated questionnaire was tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. Fourth, the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents, namely 33 students of Class XI Accounting 2 at SMKN 1 Abung Selatan. Fifth, the completed questionnaires were collected and tabulated for further analysis. Finally, the data were analyzed and interpreted to describe students' perceptions of English learning during the teaching assistance program.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis technique was carried out using descriptive statistics in the form of mean scores, percentages, and interpretation of students' perception categories. The mean value was used to determine the general tendency of respondents' answers, while percentages were used to facilitate the interpretation of students' perception levels. In addition, the data were analyzed based on each perception component: cognitive, affective, and conative, so it could be determined which aspect was most prominently experienced by students during the teaching assistance program. According to (Alkharusi, 2022), descriptive analysis of Likert scale data can be performed using means and percentages to systematically describe the tendency of respondents' attitudes.

Table 4. Score Interpretation Criteria

Percentage	Category
81% - 100%	Very Positive
61% - 80%	Positive
41% - 60%	Fair
21% - 40%	Negative
0% - 20%	Very Negative

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Results

This study aims to determine students' perceptions of English learning during the teaching assistance program at SMKN 1 Abung Selatan. Data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires to 33 students of class XI Accounting 2, consisting of 24 statement items based on the three perception components according to Bimo Walgito: cognitive, affective, and conative. Before the main analysis was conducted, the instrument was first tested for reliability to ensure consistency among the statement items.

### Instrument Reliability Test

The results of the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha showed a value of 0.730. This value is above the minimum threshold of 0.70, so the instrument is considered reliable and suitable for use as a data collection tool. Instruments with an alpha value above 0.70 have a good level of internal consistency for social and educational research. Thus, all statement items in this study are considered capable of measuring the perception construct in a stable and consistent manner.

Table 5. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Minimum Standard	Description
Students' Perception	0.730	0.70	Reliable

### Overall Student's Perception Results

After the data were declared reliable, the next step was to calculate the overall mean score of students' perceptions of English learning during the teaching assistance program. The analysis showed a mean value of 4.50 with a percentage of 90.08%. Based on the interpretation criteria, this value falls into the very positive category.

Table 6. Students' Overall Perception

Variable	Mean	Percentage	Category
Students' Perception	4.50	90.08%	Very Positive

These results indicate that, in general, students gave a very positive assessment of English learning during the teaching assistance program. Most students felt that the learning activities provided real benefits, supported the learning process, and created a positive learning experience. In educational research, a high average score on a Likert scale indicates a strong tendency of acceptance toward the assessed object.

### Result based on perception components

To obtain a more detailed overview, the data were analyzed based on the three perception components according to Bimo Walgito's theory. The findings were interpreted based on Bimo Walgito's framework, in which the cognitive component reflects understanding and evaluation, the affective component reflects feelings and motivation, and the conative component reflects behavioral tendencies toward learning.

Table 7. Results Based on Perception Components

Component	Mean	Percentage	Category
Cognitive	4.58	91.59%	Very Positive
Affective	4.48	89.70%	Very Positive
Conative	4.45	88.94%	Very Positive

Based on the table above, all components received a very positive category. The cognitive component obtained the highest score, followed by the affective and conative components.

## Discussions

### Students' Perception in the Cognitive Component

The cognitive component obtained the highest average score of 4.58 or 91.59%. This indicates that students view English learning during the teaching assistance program as highly beneficial in terms of understanding and knowledge. According to (Walgito, 2010), the cognitive component relates to how individuals understand, assess, and interpret an object based on thought processes. In the context of this study, a high score in the cognitive component shows that students found the material easy to understand, the explanations from teachers or teaching assistants were clear, the learning was systematically organized, and the material was considered relevant to their needs. These findings indicate that the teaching assistance program successfully enhanced instructional quality in the classroom. The presence of student assistants likely provided additional academic support for students, especially when they had difficulties understanding the material. In English learning, re-explanation and individual assistance are very important because students are not only learning content but

also language structures different from their mother tongue. This finding aligns with (Raudhah et al., 2025), who found that vocational students had positive perceptions of English learning using Wordwall because it helped material comprehension and clarified learned concepts. Furthermore, the high cognitive component shows that vocational students tend to be more responsive to practical learning that has real benefits. Since vocational students are oriented toward the working world, they tend to value learning that is applicable, clear, and relevant to their future needs.

### **Students' Perception in the Affective Component**

The affective component achieved a mean of 4.48 or 89.70%, falling into the very positive category. This result shows that students felt comfortable, interested, had a positive attitude, and were motivated during English lessons. According to Bimo Walgito's theory, the affective component relates to feelings, emotions, interests, and attitudes toward an object. Therefore, a high score in this component demonstrates that students' emotional experiences during learning were very good. The affective aspect is often a determining factor in learning success. Many students have adequate learning ability but face emotional barriers, such as fear of making mistakes, shyness in speaking, or feeling that English is a difficult subject. When the teaching assistance program fosters a friendly, supportive, and enjoyable classroom atmosphere, these barriers tend to decrease. Another possible factor influencing the high affective score is the close age gap between students and the teaching assistants. More relaxed and communicative interactions can make students feel more comfortable asking questions, discussing, and trying to use English without fear of being judged. This finding is in line with studies on the use of Quizizz in English learning, showing that a pleasant learning environment significantly increases students' motivation and enthusiasm. Thus, this study shows that the success of English learning is determined not only by the material taught but also by the emotional atmosphere formed during the learning process.

### **Students' Perception in the Conative Component**

The conative component achieved a mean of 4.45 or 88.94%, and also fell into the very positive category. This component relates to students' behavioral tendencies after receiving learning stimuli. In this study, a high conative score shows that students actively participated in learning, were involved in class activities, made efforts to understand the material, and engaged in follow-up learning after class. Although this value is slightly lower than the other components, it still indicates that the teaching assistance program affected not only students' thoughts and feelings but also encouraged real actions in learning. This is important because the success of learning is ultimately reflected in students' learning behavior. When students have positive perceptions of learning, they tend to be active. Conversely, negative perceptions generally result in passive behavior, lack of focus, and minimal involvement. This finding aligns with (Effendi Suheri Try & Wijirahayu Suciana, 2024), which showed that collaborative learning increases vocational students' participation in English classes because students feel more comfortable and responsible for learning together. Thus, the teaching assistance program not only improves perceptions but also fosters productive learning habits.

### **Comparative Analysis Between Components**

When compared among components, the cognitive component received the highest score, while the conative component received the lowest, although still very positive. This pattern shows that the most dominant impact of the teaching assistance program was felt in the aspect of understanding the material. This may be because students directly felt academic benefits from additional assistance, more detailed explanations, and varied learning methods. Meanwhile, changes in learning behavior take longer because they are related to habits, discipline, and students' internal motivation. This finding is important because it shows that the teaching assistance program is effective as an initial strategy to improve learning quality. However, to shape long-term learning behaviors, a continuous follow-up program is needed.

### **Implications of the Research Results**

The results of this study have several important implications. First, schools could consider the teaching assistance program as a supporting strategy to improve the quality of

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English learning. Second, teachers may adopt more interactive, communicative, and student-centered approaches as applied during the assistance program. Third, higher education institutions can see that involving university students in schools provides real benefits for students. In addition, these results reinforce Bimo Walgito's theory that perception consists of interrelated cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions. When students understand the learning well (cognitive), they tend to feel comfortable and motivated (affective), and then show active behavior in learning (conative).

### Research Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the number of respondents was only 33 students from one class, so the results cannot be widely generalized. Second, the data were collected through questionnaires, so they depend on respondents' honesty and subjectivity. Third, this research is descriptive, so it does not explain causal relationships between variables. Therefore, future research is recommended to use larger sample sizes, involve several schools, and use mixed methods to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

### CONCLUSIONS

This study found that students had a very positive perception of English learning during the teaching assistance program, indicating that the program was well received and provided meaningful benefits in supporting students' learning experiences. Based on Bimo Walgito's theory, all perception components achieved very positive results, with the cognitive component obtaining the highest score, followed by the affective and conative components. These findings suggest that the program successfully improved students' understanding of learning materials, created a comfortable and motivating classroom atmosphere, and encouraged active participation in learning activities. Therefore, the teaching assistance program can be considered an effective strategy for supporting English learning in vocational high schools through improved classroom interaction, academic assistance, and student motivation. The study also contributes theoretically by applying Bimo Walgito's perception framework in the context of vocational English learning and practically by providing evidence of the benefits of collaboration between universities and schools. However, since this study involved only 33 students from one class, further studies with larger samples and broader settings are recommended to obtain more comprehensive findings.

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