

THE PERCEPTION OF EFL STUDENTS ON THE IMPACT OF TRAVELING OVERSEAS ON THEIR LEARNING ATTITUDE

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ABSTRACT.

This qualitative study was conducted to investigate the perception of students on the impact of traveling overseas on their learning attitude. The study participants were eight students from the Department of English Language Education batch 2017 who have been to Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia in 2019. The instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guideline. It consisted of ten pre-designed questions. Besides, there were also more questions based on the participants' answers. The findings showed that traveling overseas makes all participants feel happy. Besides, 3 out of 8 students got new knowledge. Moreover, 3 students stated that it opened their mindset. Traveling overseas also motivated 5 students to learn English more and 6 students to become confident in speaking English. In addition, through their conversation with foreigners, 1 student said that it gives new vocabulary. It was because of their experiences there.

INTRODUCTION

Many scientific journals and books are written in English. Hence, by mastering this language, it enables us to explore many things in this world. To have a good command of English, EFL learners have to master four basic language skills, so-called listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking and writing skills are productive skills while listening and reading are receptive skills. Speaking and writing skills can help students to share their ideas. Of the four skills, they can directly communicate and give their opinion in English. However, mastering the speaking skill is not easy for EFL learners to master. Lack of confidence, the fear of making mistakes, the shyness, unfriendly environment make them unable to speak English fluently

(Mridha&Muniruzzaman, 2020). Besides, writing in English is also quite challenging for students. The students have to consider grammar, vocabulary, and other skills to make good writing. In line with that, receptive skills help learners to improve their productive skills. Through listening and reading, the students will get more 2 English vocabulary and it will make the students familiar with English words, including the pronunciation. However, as EFL learners who use English as a foreign language, the learners will not often be exposed to English words, especially in public places. Usually, Indonesians do not use English outside the classroom, so they have limited exposure to English (Yoestara & Putri, 2018). In other words, most Indonesian students have difficulty because English is a foreign language for them.

In 2019, some students and lecturers of the English Department at UIN ArRaniry went to Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia for 10 days. They went to those countries for educational purposes. In ten days, the lecturers and students visited some colleges such as Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University (UNISSA), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), Kolej Universiti Perguruan Ugama Seri Begawan (KUPU SB), and International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Besides, they also visited some tourist attractions such as their mosque, museum, and others. The trip made the students feel new experiences and see many new things. 3 Brunei Darussalam is an Asian country that uses the Malay language as its official language. But, they also use English in educational and other formal places (Haji-Othman & Mclellan, 2014). This fact made English department students use this opportunity to hone their speaking skills while enjoying the beauty of Brunei Darussalam, especially in their university and college environments. This trip was also utilized by the students to improve their English skills such as speaking English with some people right there, both the people inside and outside universities. It also needed students' listening skills to communicate. Besides, the trip also gave a chance to the students to improve their writing and reading skills through English writing which can be found in almost every area in Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam.

This study concentrates on traveling overseas and the student's perception of its impacts on their learning attitude. First, the researcher explained about 4 definitions of traveling overseas and skills in English. After that, a link between traveling overseas and students' perceptions is established. This study was

conducted in the English Department, at the Faculty of Teacher Training of UIN Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh. Here, the researcher interviewed eight students who have been to Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia. The researcher asked about their traveling experiences in Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia and found out if it had an impact on their learning attitude.

The result of a previous study shows that traveling overseas has positive impacts. Staffieri, Cavagnaro, and Rowson (2017) mentioned in their research on Italian youth that young people who travel abroad feel a change more than those who choose a destination close to their home. The information in this research is expected to help students, teachers, and readers look at the perception of students on the impact of traveling overseas on their learning attitude. Besides, it gives some information about Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, and how traveling overseas affects English department students' learning attitude.

METHOD

To conduct this study, the researcher used a qualitative approach. Qualitative research aims to study people's experiences. This study helps the researcher explore and understand the social or human problems faced by individuals or a group of people (Creswell, 2009). Besides, Cropley (2020) stated that this research investigates people's minds about their life experiences. The data is called 'narratives', which needs speaking or writing. The present study investigated the perception of students on the impact of traveling overseas on their learning attitude.

This qualitative research used semi-structured interviews as the instrument for collecting the data. The interview is an instrument that makes the researcher have to speak to the respondents orally. It is a face-to-face conversation between the researcher and the respondents (Kabir, 2017). Specifically, in-depth interviews were used in this research. An in-depth interview is a method for data collection that is needed to get more information about people's opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings. Showkat and Parveen (2017) stated that an in-depth interview is a method used to get more detailed information and a deep understanding of an issue. To get information about students' experiences, there were ten predesigned questions asked to the participants in the interview. The following questions were prepared by the researcher before the

interview: 1) Have you been to Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia?; 2) Did you enjoy your traveling?; 3) What experiences did you get by going overseas?; 4) What language(s) did you use in Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia?; 5) Was there a language barrier while traveling overseas?; 6) How did you overcome the barriers?; 7) Did traveling overseas have an impact on you?; 8) How are you feeling after spending some days overseas?; 9) Did traveling overseas change your speaking skills?; and 10) What are the differences between your speaking skills before going overseas and your speaking skills after spending some time in Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia?

After doing in-depth interviews with the participants to get the information, the researcher wrote the transcript by using the recording. In addition, the researcher analyzed it based on the goals of this study. This research aims to find out the perceived impact of traveling overseas on English department students' learning attitudes. The researcher analyzed the data related to the aim of this research using the narrative analysis method. Here, the researcher identified the relationship between English Department students' experiences in traveling overseas and their learning attitude. After the data had been analyzed and the connection had been found, the researcher interpreted the data and explained the findings.

DISCUSSION

In this part of the discussion, the researcher elaborated on the analysis result of English department students' interviews. The students have been to Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia in 2019. They went to those countries for educational purposes. In ten days, they visited some colleges and tourist attractions such as the mosque, museum, and others. This analysis is used to find out if there are perceived impacts of traveling overseas on English Department students' learning attitudes. To simplify the explanation, the researcher used codes for each participant. For example, P1 referred to participant 1, P2 referred to participant 2, and so on.

The data in this research were collected through semi-structured interviews with some English department students who have been to Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia in 2019. Based on the interview answers, the findings can be divided into six themes namely: make students happy, improve knowledge, open students' mindset, motivate students, become confident, and add vocabulary. 1) Make Students Happy Traveling

overseas is an activity of going to other countries for various purposes. Some people go overseas to get new experiences, vacation or do something fun. Some others go overseas for job business and so on. 2) Improve Knowledge Traveling overseas gives a chance to the travelers to explore many things in foreign countries, feel new things that they never felt before, and learn new knowledge overseas. The English department students who have been to Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia in 2019 also got these chances while traveling there. They got new knowledge there and learned many things. It can be proved by the statement mentioned by the fifth participant. P5 said, "Firstly, of course, I got to feel a new atmosphere, the culture and the environment, and also new knowledge". The statement from P5 showed that traveling overseas improves students' knowledge. Besides, the students can feel new things that they never had in Indonesia, such as the atmosphere, the culture, and the environment. Even though Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia are neighbors of Indonesia, the students still can feel the different aspects there. 3) Open Students' Mindset Traveling overseas allows travelers to meet many people with various characteristics that perhaps they never met in their home country. It also gives them the experience to feel something new, such as the air, the cultures, the view, and others. The experiences give them something new in their way of thinking. Sometimes, travelers get new knowledge and feel refreshed while traveling, it opens their mindset. 4) Motivate Students, Motivation is needed for everyone, including students. It makes students know what they want and are passionate about learning. This also applies to mastering English. Students who are motivated to learn the skills will be more diligent in learning. The interview showed that traveling overseas motivated students to learn English as the third participant said:

Yes, sure. Coming back from Brunei feel my English speaking skills are still not enough. So, I try to communicate more often, often practicing in class. Try to often talk to friends on campus so that my speaking skills are better.

Traveling to Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia makes P3 feel motivated to learn English more. 5) Becoming Confident, English has four essential skills to learn, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Speaking is one of the challenging skills in learning English. So that English learners must have confidence in speaking English in front of other people. Based on participants' responses, it was found that traveling

overseas reduced students' nervousness and made them more confident in speaking English than before. It can be seen by the second participant's statement who said "Yes, my confidence is higher than before when I have been traveling there". Through the statement, it can be seen that traveling overseas has a positive impact on the students. One of them is increasing their confidence. P2 confessed that after traveling to Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia, she has higher confidence in speaking English than before. It is a positive thing that is needed by students who learn English. By having confidence, students can express their ideas easily and help them in the teaching and learning process. 6) Added Vocabulary English is an international language that is used by Indonesian as a foreign language. Those who learn English have to learn 4 skills and other things that should be learned to help the learners express their thoughts in English correctly, one of which is to remember English vocabulary. Understanding English vocabulary as much as possible can help learners to communicate in English easily. Many methods can learners used to improve English vocabulary, including for those who learn English as a foreign language. Those who travel overseas will meet foreigners and the residents who speak foreign languages. Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia use Malay as their first language and English in their daily life.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to find out the perceived impacts of traveling overseas on English Department students' learning attitudes. Based on the findings, this study found out that the students who have been overseas got six impacts from their experiences in foreign countries. The impacts are positive. The first finding shows that traveling overseas makes the students feel happy. The feeling of experiencing a new environment, new culture, and other foreign things makes the students feel happy. Secondly, it improves students' knowledge because they face many new things there. By traveling overseas, students get many things that they can learn, so that the experiences improve their knowledge, especially about the country. Traveling overseas also gives new perspective to the students and it opens their minds. In line with this, the finding also shows that traveling overseas has a positive impact on students' motivation to learn English. Traveling

experiences make the students want to go back to that country or other foreign countries. It becomes a motivation for students to learn English more because it is an international language that is used by most people in the world and it is useful in foreign countries.

Understanding English and being able to speak English fluently can help students and other people explore foreign countries, especially the countries that use English in their daily lives. The findings also show that traveling overseas makes the students more confident in speaking English. It makes the students more confident in speaking English with others, even though they have returned to their home country. Moreover, traveling to foreign countries requires travelers to speak English to communicate with foreigners. It is needed to get information from other people or to tell our ideas or opinions to others. The interview result shows that the experiences make the students get used to English and become more comfortable when speaking in English. By experiencing it, after they spent ten days in other countries, the students became more confident in speaking English. Talking to foreigners also gives new vocabulary to the students. The conversation with foreigners makes the students realize new words, understand the meaning of the words, and where to use them.

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