

## EXPLORING ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXPOSURE TO STUDENTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM UNIVERSITAS NEGERI GORONTALO

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### ABSTRACT

Language proficiency is a critical skill, and understanding the dynamics of language exposure is fundamental to its acquisition. This research applied quantitative descriptive research aims to describe language exposure among 2021 English Department students at the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP), Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. The study is guided by Magno's exposure framework, encompassing home, friends, school, and media. The background of the study highlights the importance of language exposure in language acquisition, with a specific focus on the four exposure types within the context of ELESP. The objectives centre on providing information about the language exposure experiences of the 2021 cohort, guided by these four exposure types. The methodology employs a quantitative descriptive approach, using surveys and written interviews. The practical significance of this study lies in its potential use as a resource for ELESP, offering insights into the effectiveness of their English language exposure across these four types. Theoretically, the research contributes to the academic discourse, serving as a learning resource for students of ELESP and offering a new perspective for future researchers in the same field.

**Keyword:** *Language exposure, English Language Education Study Program (ELESP), EFL Students.*

### INTRODUCTION

Language is a system of intentionally created symbols that are uniquely human and non-intuitive, used to communicate concepts, feelings, and desires. These signals are primarily auditory and are produced by the so-called "organs of speech" (Sapir, 1921). This indicates that language serves as a means of communication where the mind and emotions are intertwined, enabling us to convey our thoughts to others. It is a significant social phenomenon that people naturally employ worldwide to interact with one another. Given this social phenomenon that highlights the importance of language, it is essential for every individual to either master or learn more than one language.

In general, learning a new language, whether one we use daily or a foreign language, is always effective in enhancing our understanding and speaking ability. Learning a language that is not our native tongue can be quite challenging. Often, acquiring a new language may take several years. This is because to grasp the language being learned fully, we must begin by listening to unfamiliar sounds, reading and comprehending a new sentence structure, and even speaking in various patterns and styles—particularly when the language is neither a first nor a second language. A language not specifically spoken or used by community, society, or country members is regarded as a foreign language.

In other words, it describes any language that a particular group does not speak of people. For example, Indonesia is a country that only has one official language, Bahasa Indonesia. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. This is because most locals do not use it daily. However, some Indonesians speak English quite well, especially when dealing with big companies from big cities, where most international companies only hire Indonesians who can speak English. In Basalama, Bay, and Abubakar (2020), many people need to learn English because it is an international language spoken in many nations, particularly in the educational system.

In addition, by studying a foreign language, individuals acquire an essential instrument that will help them solve new challenges in the future. This allows individuals to broaden their cognitive thinking and gain more insight and global understanding. Mastering English is considered crucial, as almost all global information sources related to every aspect of life, including educational institutions, use this language.

In 1967, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture released a regulation outlining the roles and goals of teaching English in secondary schools. It is due to the importance of English in Indonesia and throughout the world. These conditions and policies indicate the increasingly steady and solid English as a foreign language in Indonesia's teaching and education world. The decree also created a relationship with other nations (Daar, 2021). Over time, the Indonesian government and the people have become increasingly aware of the importance of English in education. Not only because it reminds us of the language of the world but also because the era of modernisation is starting to blend in. Technology and information are developing day by day, including the use of English. So, the best and most systematic way for people to master English, especially the younger generation, is by giving them considerable language exposure to the language itself.

According to Al-Zoubi (2018, p. 152), English language exposure is the contact between the learner and the language they are attempting to learn. Inside the classroom, the teacher plays the most central role in providing the learners with adequate exposure to practice the target language. Considered a qualified speaker, the teacher can give practical examples of language such as videos, websites, books, and magazines.

English language exposure is important in language learning. This is because exposure helps the learner learn the correct pronunciation of a word and adequately understand the

grammar and structure of the language. Acquiring a new language will be far more challenging without exposure. Success in learning English depends on the standard of the language environment to which the learner is exposed. However, a learner is exclusively exposed to classroom drills and conversations. In that case, they may develop a firm grasp of classroom communication skills but struggle to interact with others in a natural language setting.

The Ministry of Education and Culture's decision that English must be taught at school also applies to Indonesian universities, including Universitas Negeri Gorontalo (UNG). At UNG, there is a study program called the English Language Education Study Program, also known as ELESP, where students learn and have more exposure to the English language.

Those who major in the ELESP will have extensive exposure to the target language. This is because almost all the subjects taught in ELESP are in English. Also, in ELESP, there are subjects specifically taught to train performance skills, such as listening, speaking, writing, and reading.

Furthermore, many information banners are placed in several spots in the ELESP area. There are also a few signs written in English. The information board hung on the wall included the structure of lecturers, the instructions on how to contact the lecturer properly, etc.

These sources of language exposure help the students familiarise themselves with the language they are learning, which in this case is English. That is why the influence of language exposure is valuable and important when learning a language.

Based on the consideration above, this research will describe how the ELESP exposed its students to English. Furthermore, it will also provide information to ELESP on whether they dominate the students' source of English exposure or whether there might be other dominant sources of exposure, such as home or media. This means it will be taken as a reference to improve the quality of English language exposure to ELESP.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Following Reedy (2022), Language learning will be defined as the process of acquiring and using language for communication. Reedy explains that two guidance aspects are involved in language learning. The first aspect states that the definition of language learning should introduce the hint element involved in the language learning process. The second aspect is that the definition of language learning should explain how these elements associate with one another to process language learning. The first element to be included in language learning is “*input*.” This element indicates the language that is being learned and can come out of various formats. The “*input*” can be accessed through various forms such as spoken language, written language, or signed language as well. Language learning through language exposure refers to acquiring a new language primarily by immersing oneself in an environment where the target language is spoken regularly and consistently. This approach is often associated with natural

language acquisition, similar to how children learn their native language by being exposed to it from birth.

### **LANGUAGE EXPOSURE**

Exposure refers to the learner's contact with a specific language they studied. English language exposure leads the speaker to make tremendous improvements. The language exposure depends on how long the learners interact with the multilingual speakers. The contact between them might happen in any situation, formal or informal. The learner would get more exposure if they involve themselves in a conversation that demand them to speak the target language. For example, English language exposure happens when learners speak the target language with their family, friends, classmates, and colleagues. Nevertheless, even if they do not participate in a conversation and become a passive participant instead, they would still get contaminated with the exposure.

### **THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE EXPOSURE**

Defined by Nurhayati et al. (2016), as cited in Magno et al. (2009), language exposure refers to the total period that a person interacts with a language, whether it be in written or verbal form, formal or informal methods of communication, and in which the person may have either an active or passive role. Therefore, a learner would gain language exposure in formal situations like in class through proper learning and any kind of media exposure related to the target language. The source of language exposure could be anywhere. We can get exposure through learning activities at school, talking with a native speaker who speaks the target language, meeting with a colleague from abroad, and accessing the platform where it has a variety of language exposure. Simply, the nature of language exposure refers to how each individual happens to have contact and interaction with a specific language in their daily activities. It involves various aspects of language acquisition and development, including the contexts and circumstances under which language exposure occurs. As mentioned by Ji et al. (2022), the language exposure nature or characteristics may include frequency, duration, different types of activities (e.g., small group activities, whole group activity), teacher qualification and training on language input and DLL education, the presence of the bilingual teacher and other DLL peers, and quality also quantity of bilingual learning.

### **TYPES OF LANGUAGE EXPOSURE**

Language exposure indicates the various ways in which a person meets and interacts with a particular language. Different types of language exposure can impact an individual's proficiency and fluency. According to Magno et al. (2009), there are four main types or categories of language exposure: home exposure, friends (environment), school exposure (formal and informal study), and all forms of media exposure, whether aural or printed.

#### **1. Home Exposure**

Individuals acquiring English, whether as a second or foreign language, experience pronounced influence from their social interactions. These interactions offer extensive language exposure, with the home environment being the most impactful. Home plays an

important role as a source of language exposure since home hours are longer than any hours that we spend outside

#### 2. Friends (environment)

The factor of English environments, including friends and their surroundings, is one of the language exposures for the learner. Following Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), the effectiveness of language learning dramatically depends on the quality of the language environment. Everything a language learner hears and sees in their new language is part of their language environment. This means friendship is included as a language environment because it helps the language learner communicate.

#### 3. School (formal and informal study)

School is the primary caregiver for the kids. It is because school provides the child with experiences that spark his interest by providing books, courses, and other forms of knowledge (Asita & A-Okujagu, 2022). At school, children learn from each other and the teacher by working together on a common task and talking about their work, approaches to problems, thoughts, feelings, desires, and memories.

#### 4. Media

The term "media" refers to a broad range of communication channels, including digital data and printed paper. Media includes books, magazines, the internet, television, radio, and other information that can reach or influence people. It also includes art, news, and educational content (Rosencrance, 2023). By using media, learners would have a wide range of sources of information all around the world. Therefore, incorporating media into teaching and learning can help teachers better impart knowledge to their students.

### **LANGUAGE EXPOSURE IN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

In the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP), language exposure is given from a foundation of English. In 1<sup>st</sup> semester, there will be a subject called IC, known as the Intensive Course. This subject is divided into five branches: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Grammar. In addition to the lecturer, there will be a handbook for each student to guide them during class. Also, they will learn English Phonetics and Phonology as the foundation of English linguistics.

Then, in the second semester, the subjects given are more specific. For example, they will learn how to speak English properly in English grammar, English Morphology, Poetry, and Skills subjects (Reading, Speaking, Writing, and Listening) in a Professional context.

As in 3<sup>rd</sup> semester, the subject would be CCU or Cross-Cultural Understanding. Students learn about various cultures from all over the world in the Cross-Cultural Understanding course. Not only about the cultures worldwide but English language Education Study Program students at Cross-Cultural Understanding (CCU) are also taught about cultural understanding in other regions of Indonesia. There are other subjects like Prose, English Syntax, Curriculum and Material Development, and Skills subjects (Reading, Speaking, Writing, and Listening) for Academic Purposes.

In the fourth semester, some subjects will help the students understand more about Research Methods, which will be useful for their final thesis later. The subjects remain Qualitative and Quantitative Research on Language. Several subjects are related to the branches of linguistics (Semantic-Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics) and literature (Drama). There is also a subject of Translation and Tourism.

For the 5<sup>th</sup> semester, students may choose 20 credits out of 48 credits available for 24 elective topics. The elective topics may choose 20 credits out of 48 credits available for 24 elective topics. In semester 7, students can choose one of the projects which weighs 20 credits. Semester 8 is solely for thesis writing, which weighs 6 credits.

Exposure to language comes not only from the subject but also from the interaction between the lecturer and students. For example, when the lecturers are guiding the last-semester students on their undergraduate thesis, sometimes the lecturer talks in English. The banners, signs, and all the information boards in ELESP are also written in English.

A previous study examined students' English language exposure. This section discusses several similar studies.

Precious C. Domingo (2020). *English Language Exposure of Students at Visayas State University*. This study applied a descriptive survey research method. The data was gathered from 203 students selected from a random sampling technique. Utilising the questionnaire adapted from Magno et al. (2009), the result of the data found that students have moderate exposure at home and with friends, while they have high exposure from school and media. Furthermore, the similarity between Precious and this study is that the questionnaire applied in this study is also adapted from Magno et al. (2009). What makes it different is that this study is not conducted to determine the level of language exposure to the target language.

## **METHOD**

In conclusion, this study employs a systematic research methodology, drawing on Kothari's framework, to investigate the English language exposure of students from the English Department at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. Utilising a quantitative research method with a descriptive approach complemented by a questionnaire adapted from previous research and open-ended written interviews, the study aims to capture participants' experiences and perceptions comprehensively. With a sample size of 30 students, data collection primarily occurs through Google Forms for the questionnaire and open-ended questions for additional context. The analysis involves quantitative techniques, such as frequency analysis and qualitative thematic analysis of interview responses, following Braun and Clarke's method. Ultimately, the findings will be synthesised into a cohesive report, contributing to a deeper understanding of English language exposure among college students and providing valuable insights for educators and researchers in the field of language education.

## **FINDING & DISCUSSION**

### **FINDING**

The researcher gathered the data source of English language exposure on students of the English Department 2021 by adopting a questionnaire provided by Magno et al. (2009). The questionnaire was given virtually using Google Forms. The Google form consists of 21 statements and 4 additional questions to get more detailed information about the student's answers to the statements.

These findings are being collected by 30 participants who happened to be students of the English Department 2021. The questionnaire consists of statements based on the 4 types or categories of English: home (bilingualism), friends (environment), school (formal and informal), and all media platforms, including aural and printed. Each statement offers 5 options: *always*, *often*, *sometimes*, *rarely*, and *never*. These findings also consist of the participant's answers to the 4 additional questions.

Therefore, to analyse the last 4 questions, the thematic analysis method is used. Under Braun & Clarke (2012), thematic analysis is a technique for methodically locating, classifying, and providing context for themes—patterns of meaning—across a dataset. This method was chosen to facilitate the identification and classification of data. After collecting the data from 30 participants, the researcher found the data as follows:

### **Home exposures (Bilingualism)**

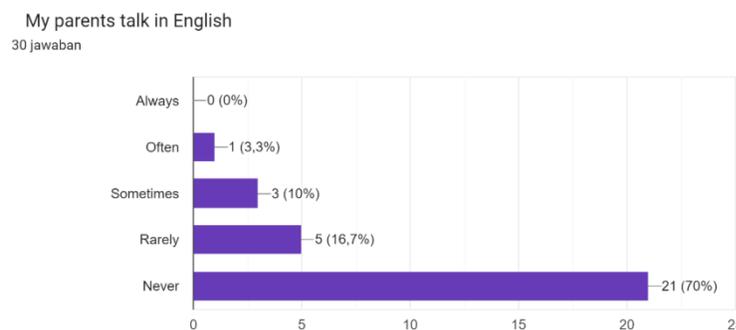


FIGURE 1. My Parents talk in English

To know how the participant got exposed to the target language, they were asked about their parents' frequency of talking in English. The chart above shows that 70% of 21 students answered that their parents do not talk in English. At the same time, there are 16.7% chosen by 5 students who said that their parents rarely speak English, and 10% chosen by 3 students who sometimes hear their parents talk in English. The chart above shows that most students' parents do not speak English.

### **Friends (environment outside the classroom)**

My friends speak in English  
30 jawaban

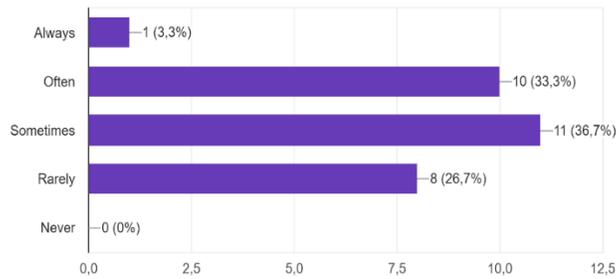


Figure 2. My friends speak in English

As shown in the chart above, the most often chosen option is sometimes. Participants' friends mostly speak in English; the result for this option is 36,7% chosen by 11 students. The second most chosen option follows this, often 33,3% chosen by 10 students. The third place is the option rarely, which has 26,7% chosen by 8 students. Lastly, the option is never 3,3% chosen by only one student.

### **School/college exposures (academic)**

My lecturers speak in English  
30 jawaban

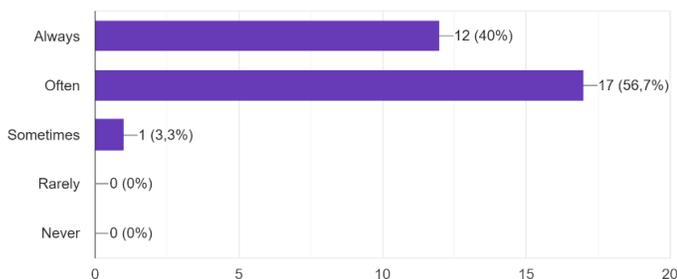


Figure 3. My lecturers speak in English

Based on the diagram above, the *always* frequency score was 40%, and 12 students chose it. Their interaction with lecturers is mainly in English, especially during lecture hours. Moreover, there is also one subject, the interpreting class, where the lecturer only speaks English. Seventeen students, or 56.7%, chose the frequent frequency. The reinforcement given by lecturers has a significant impact on their English exposure. As for the third frequency, *sometimes*, it is chosen by 3.3% or 1 student only. It can also be seen that the last 2 frequencies serve 0%, which means that the lecturer is one of the most important inputs in students' English exposure.

### **Media exposure**

I chat online in English  
30 jawaban

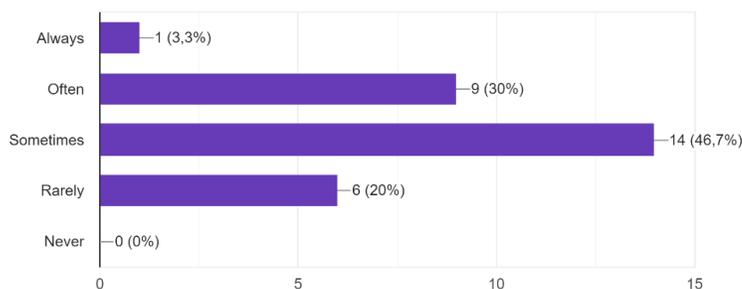


Figure 4. I chat online in English

The 11<sup>th</sup> chart shows that 14 students sometimes choose a frequency of over 48.7%, which dominates the chart. It is followed by 30%, chosen by 9 students often. Then, we rarely have 20% chosen by 6 students. As for the *always* frequency, it is chosen by only 1 student or 3.3%. The chart above shows that most students *sometimes* chat online in English.

## DISCUSSION

### EXPOSURE AT HOME

The researcher would start discussing the first 3 statements related to home exposure. Home shows that it does not influence the students' language exposure. This is because people at home or with family members do not speak English. They mostly used Bahasa Indonesia in daily. Thus, if English is not spoken at home, there will be no interaction, equaling no language exposure. Participants' parents are mainly from Gorontalo, and they are not familiar with English. In Gorontalo, it is rare to find an English-speaking family since the city itself is not as modern as other cities. The participant's parents also come from a small village in Center Sulawesi. This implied that English is not popular in a small village.

Furthermore, even though most parents do not know how to speak English, they are still curious about it. This is proven by the answers from the findings above, which state that parents always rely on their child as a walking dictionary. This means they would ask their child to translate an Indonesian word into an English word. Parents are interested in learning English by doing so with their children. Several participants also always try to speak English with their families since their parents encourage them to do so. So, one of the participants said that they like to play pranks on their siblings or tell jokes since their sibling is the closest family member and their ages are not far from one another. This is because English is familiar to youngsters.

### EXPOSURE FROM FRIENDS

Friendship is included in the language environment since it helps the learner communicate. According to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), the effectiveness of language

learning depends on the quality of the environment, which includes everything a language learner hears and sees.

In this section, the researcher would like to discuss the English language exposure of students from their friends. Being in an English environment provides the learner with language exposure, such as having a friend with higher English skills. Participants implied that having a friend who is more fluent in English could motivate them to improve. It also helps them to mark them as an example of how the pronunciation of words should sound.

Following the phenomenon above, the researcher discovered that English is not fully used as a communication tool. This means that they do not speak or speak full English; instead, they mix it with Bahasa Indonesia. This might come with the possibility that they lack the vocabulary or want to imitate the Jakarta people, known as “Jaksel”, as in Jakarta Selatan. Jaksel language is famous among youngsters. It is a mixture of 2 languages: Indonesian and English. The other reason they only sometimes speak or talk in English is that English is used only during learning hours or presentations. They used English to make some arguments during the presentation. Presentations in English language education study programs are primarily conducted in English since most subjects are English-related.

#### **EXPOSURE AT SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY**

School is one of the sources of language exposure that comes after home. According to A(sita & A-Okujagu (2022), this is because the school is the primary caregiver. The school provides things that spark the learner’s interest, such as books, courses, and other forms of knowledge. So, in this section, the researcher would like to discuss the exposure of schools or universities to their students or, in this case, the participants.

The researcher found that the exposure from university is quite intense. The phenomenon shows how lecturers give the participants a lot of language exposure. Talking in English during lecturer hours gives positive reinforcement to their students and encourages them always to speak English. Lecturers would give them positive reinforcement, for example, by giving them a silent correction such as repeating the non-structured sentence said by the student into the correct structure.

#### **EXPOSURE FROM MEDIA**

Media can be defined as a wide range of interaction channels, including digital data and printed paper. It includes books, magazines, the internet, TV, radio, and other information that can reach and influence people. Art, news, and educational content are also included (Rosencrance, 2023).

According to the phenomena of English language exposure on students, the researcher found that listening to English songs, watching English movies, and reading English books were the average answers by the participants. First, the researcher will discuss listening to English song statements.

There are a lot of songs written in English that have a good arrangement. This kind of good arrangement exists in the English songs that would attract more listeners, especially youngsters. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, English is not only a knowledge but also a lifestyle. By listening to English songs, the plus point of the listener will also increase. Moreover, English songs are not the only content consumed by the participants; English podcasts are also used. The more English content they consumed, the more new vocabulary they gained.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study "English Language Exposure on Students of English Department 2021" sheds light on the dominant sources of English language exposure among undergraduate students, with media emerging as the primary influencer, followed by university, friends, and home, in descending order. These findings align with previous research, indicating a consistent pattern across different contexts. Recommendations for future research include fostering immersive English language environments within university settings, establishing rapport with research subjects for improved data collection, and exploring diverse facets of language exposure to enrich theoretical contributions to English Language Education programs.

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