

# English Education Program Evaluation

## Students' Perspectives in an Indonesian Private University

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### ABSTRACT

Despite its pivotal role in the successive curriculum evaluation process, program evaluation focusing on investigating the final semester students' voices, particularly in the Indonesian private teacher training institution contexts has been under-studied. The present study evaluated an English education program in a private university in Indonesia from the viewpoint of the final year's students. The investigation employed a mixed-method evaluative case study design by adopting both positivistic and naturalistic philosophical approaches in collecting and analyzing the data. The data were collected from 60 participants employing questionnaires and interview. The questionnaire contained the inventory of program courses each of which was rated by the students covering three criteria. The interview asked which courses have given the most and the least benefits to the students, whether the course contents or course lecturers contribute more to students' development, and how likely they are going to choose teaching as their future career. The findings showed that while the majority of the compulsory courses had been deemed as instrumental, students' low interest in the institutional courses given in Bahasa Indonesia had a significant effect on how they perceived their personal and academic development. They considered the courses as having less benefit for their study and future endeavor. The results suggest revising and restructuring the curriculum by considering more courses that are instrumental rather than the ones heavily loaded with redundant theoretical contents. Unnecessary courses should be replaced with the subjects for language learning and teaching equipping students with more practical knowledge and experiences.

**Keywords:** English education program, program evaluation, students' perspectives

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Within educational environments, program evaluation has been a prevalent field of investigation, within which Language Program Evaluation (LPE) has occupied an important part (Uzun, 2016). Nowadays, program evaluation has attracted scholars from around the world and has been considered as an important field of study in educational research (Patton, 2002; McNamara, 2006; Owen, 2007; Peacock, 2009; Harris, 2009; Norris, 2009; Uzun, 2016). As stated by Brown (1995), one of three essential elements which constitute the never-ending process of curriculum evaluation is ongoing program evaluation. Its roles may range from formative internal improvements to broad summative judgments (Harris, 2009) which improve the program, ensure educational effectiveness, and the survival of the language teaching profession (Norris, 2009). Fournier (2005) added that evaluations produce decisions which

cover an empirical aspect (that something is the case) and a normative aspect (judgment about the value of something). Therefore, as a part of the never-ending process of development and evaluation, program evaluation plays a paramount role to ensure Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in providing quality education. Considering its great significance, a program evaluation absolutely needed to be carried out in every existing educational institution as a crucial undertaking in curriculum studies.

Further, as an academic field of study, interest in the area of educational or language program evaluation has been growing positively. It has a salient contribution to curriculum development and educational quality assurance (Brown, 1989; Norris, 2016; Tufail & Embi, 2018). A number of studies have investigated various aspects of educational program evaluation both abroad (e.g. Karim et al., 2019; Bueno-Alastuey & Pérez, 2013; Alhuqbani, 2014; Uzun, 2016; Barrot, 2018; Yasmin,

Sarkar, & Sohail, 2016; Oner & Mede, 2015; Chang, Kim, & Lee, 2015; Bryfonski & McKay, 2017; Fenton-Smith & Torpey, 2013) and in Indonesia (e.g. Junus et al., 2015; Ertikanto et al., 2017; Mahande & Malago, 2019; Nuryana et al., 2020; Hidayah & Marhaeni, 2016; Hurmaini & Abdillah, 2015) within the last decade. Notwithstanding, in the Indonesian context, very limited if not zero studies have investigated English education programs particularly from the students' perspectives. Previous studies on program evaluation conducted in Indonesia have focused their investigation on the usability evaluation of an e-learning program in Universitas Indonesia (Junus et al., 2015); evaluation of a scientific inquiry training program for elementary teachers in Lampung (Ertikanto et al., 2017); evaluation of e-learning acceptance in a post-graduate program in Makassar (Mahande & Malago, 2019); evaluation of a School Literacy Movement program in a middle-school in Yogyakarta (Nuryana et al., 2020); evaluation of Program of Graduates Educating in the Frontier, Outermost, and Disadvantaged Regions (SM-3T) in Ende Regency of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province (Hidayah & Marhaeni, 2016); Evaluation of a Social Internship Program (*KuKerta*) in Iain Sultan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi (Hurmaini & Abdillah, 2015). None of those studies conducted in Indonesia investigated the English education program from the view point of the present study which focused on evaluating the English education program. Thus, a study to fill this gap is absolutely needed. This study seeks to shed some light by filling the gap in the literature through the investigation of the students' perspectives.

Additionally, there is a not-so-positive trend in the interest of high school fresh graduates for the English education program run by a private university for recent years. Also, mapping strengths and weaknesses and establishing a commitment to deliver quality education in the English education program, particularly in private universities require evaluation of its programs to assure quality and students' satisfaction. That is to say, the investigation of students' perspectives on the courses' benefits and the courses and lecturers' contribution to their personal and academic development will significantly contribute to further consideration in the curriculum development of the program as well as its quality assurance continuous improvement.

The present study aimed at investigating to what extent English education program in an Indonesian private university setting in Malang has met the students' needs, and to uncover to what degree the students have benefited from the education program in preparing for their future endeavors. Therefore, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. Which courses in the English education program are regarded as the most and the least beneficial by the students?

2. To what degree does the program support students' personal and academic development?
3. Are the course contents or courses lecturers which regarded as more effective in contributing to students' development?
4. To what degree does the education given in the program determine students' choice of being a teacher as their future career/endeavor?

The findings of the study will also contribute to the empirical data of the quality of English education programs in private universities in Indonesia from the perspectives of the students. Additionally, drawing upon the increasing number of newly established English education programs in Indonesia, this contribution is considered crucial.

## 2. METHODS

Similar to Uzun's study (2016), the present study employed a mixed method evaluative case study design adopting both positivistic and naturalistic philosophical approaches in collecting and analyzing the data. To achieve triangulation, it was implemented in two stages: the positivistic-quantitative side of the study formed through the implementation of questionnaire to the participants in the first stage, while the naturalistic-qualitative side of the study constituted by the application of the interview form in the second stage.

The participants were 60 final year's students who had completed all the courses required in the curriculum and considered as having the capacity to provide their point of view on the program. The questionnaire contained a total of 67 inventory courses of the program comprises of 62 compulsory and 5 elective courses. Students were asked to rate the courses based on three criteria: (1) the contribution of the courses to the students "personal" development, (2) the contribution of the courses to the students' "academic" development, and (3) whether they think that "the courses provide them with theoretical and practical knowledge applicable for their future career/endeavor". On each of the three aspects, the students were asked to give points between 1 to 5 which are similar to the Likert scale as follows: (1) Inefficient, (2) Poor, (3) Moderate, (4) Efficient, (5) Very efficient. In the interview form, participants were asked to give their responses to five questions about the contribution of the courses to their personal and academic development (the least and the most contributing), the contribution of the contents of the course in contrast to the contribution of the lecturers to their development, the impact of their education in general, and the influence of the education in determining their choice whether teaching would be their future career/endeavor. The instruments were adapted from Uzun (2016).

Participants' responses regarding the three criteria were processed to calculate the total points and the mean

scores. The total numbers informed to what degree each course given in the program contributed to the three aspects. The interview data were used to investigate using content analysis. Regarding questions 1 and 2, the data were calculated and grouped to show the course rating in relation to the students' GPA and genders. Responses from question 3 were analyzed qualitatively to gain a holistic idea about each student's opinions. The basic opinions and commonly shared ideas from responses of questions 4 and 5 were qualitatively interpreted and then grouped under specific headlines.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Quantitative Results (Questionnaire Data)

The questionnaire results are presented in Table 1 for the compulsory courses which were rated as the highest and the lowest. Table 2 is for the elective courses. Based on three criteria (contribution to personal development—*CtoPerD*, contribution to academic development—*CtoAcD*, and the students' belief on the usefulness of the course knowledge for their future career/endeavor—*KtoUse*), the mean score of each course is provided with the total mean (*Total M*) scores of all courses.

It was surprising that 53 of a total of 62 compulsory courses and 2 of a total of 5 elective courses were rated with mean scores above 4 out of a possible 5. From those 53 compulsories and 2 elective courses, 9 courses, namely Intermediate English Grammar, Vocabulary, Sentence Writing, Paragraph Writing, Advanced English Grammar, Academic Speaking, Essay Writing, Translation II, and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) were rated the highest. The means of eight courses were 4.7 while Intermediate English Grammar was given 4.8 marks. These findings interestingly showed the typical Indonesian English learners who are mostly attracted to learn English grammar, vocabulary and skills better than the other aspects of the language. Thus, even for students of English teacher training program, those three types of subjects were considered as the most contributory. Additionally, the course which provides practical knowledge (Translation II) and information and communication technology (ICT) integration in the classroom (CALL) were also seen as the most valuable. With only a very slight margin below the aforementioned subjects, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Instructional Media, Classroom Management and Teaching Learning Strategy, Microteaching, and Teaching English for Young Learners were also among the subjects regarded as the most instrumental which were marked between 4.6 and 4.65 together with Translation I, Thesis, and other grammar and skills courses. These results clarified that, besides grammar, vocabulary, and skills courses, subjects which provide useful practical knowledge, ICT integration in the

classroom, and the ones that provide students with experience to learn and practice in creating, developing, and utilizing teaching learning materials and strategies in classroom settings were also reckoned as pivotal. The results were similar with Uzun (2016) study where he found that the courses given the highest marked by the participants were the ones particularly concerned with teaching strategy and practice. Therefore, the findings merit particular attention in the preparation or development of English education program.

Meanwhile, there were 8 compulsory and 2 elective courses which were rated below 4. Although the number is quite small, it is critical to note that the seven compulsory courses rated below 4 were the institutional courses that did not use English as the medium of instruction and given to all teacher education students regardless of their departments. Those courses were *Pendidikan Pancasila* (The Education of Indonesia's Five Principles), *Bahasa Indonesia*, *Landasan Pendidikan* (The Foundation of Education), *Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan* (Civic Education), *Jatidiri Kanjuruhan* (The Identity of Kanjuruhan), *Bimbingan Konseling* (Guidance and Counseling), *Logika Dasar* (Basic Logic), and a newly included course in the program; Multiculturalism. It is therefore possible to consider further scrutiny to these courses based on the views and needs of all stakeholders and also the concerns from all parties having an interest in the outcomes of the program. For the elective courses, students were particularly not satisfied with Journalism and Popular Culture courses. Their total mean scores were 3.8 and 3.85 which were below the standard 4 to be considered as efficient. Thus, regarding *Research Question 1*, the most beneficial course among all was Intermediate English Grammar, while *Jatidiri Kanjuruhan* (Identity of Kanjuruhan) was the least beneficial course. Considering the three criteria (contribution to personal development, contribution to academic development, and knowledge to use), Intermediate English Grammar was rated 4.8, 4.9, and 4.65 respectively. It showed that students' satisfaction related to their contribution to their academic development was almost excellent. On the contrary, *Jatidiri Kanjuruhan* (Identity of Kanjuruhan) was rated 3.5, 3.6 and 3.2 respectively for each criterion which showed that it was regarded as less efficient in supporting students' personal and academic development and in the usefulness of the knowledge gained from the course for students' future career/endeavor.

**Table 1.** The means score of the compulsory courses

Course names	Mean scores			
	CtoPerD	CtoAcD	KtoUse	Total M
<i>Pendidikan Pancasila</i>	3.85	3.7	3.55	3.7
<i>Bahasa Indonesia</i>	3.75	3.7	3.6	3.7
<i>Landasan Pendidikan</i>	3.7	3.8	3.65	3.7
Intensive Course 2: Basic Listening & Speaking	4.5	4.7	4.45	4.55
Intensive Course 3: Basic Writing & Grammar	4.6	4.7	4.55	4.6
<i>Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan</i>	3.7	3.75	3.7	3.7
<i>Jatidiri Kanjuruhan</i>	3.5	3.6	3.2	3.4
Survival Speaking	4.55	4.65	4.6	4.6
Literal Listening	4.5	4.65	4.6	4.6
Intermediate English Grammar	4.8	4.9	4.65	4.8
Vocabulary	4.65	4.8	4.7	4.7
Sentence Writing	4.8	4.75	4.65	4.7
<i>Bimbingan Konseling</i>	3.85	4.1	3.45	3.8
<i>Logika Dasar</i>	3.7	4.05	3.65	3.8
TEFL	4.75	4.75	4.5	4.6
Interpretative Reading	4.65	4.6	4.6	4.6
Interpretative Listening	4.55	4.6	4.6	4.6
Paragraph Writing	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.7
Advanced English Grammar	4.8	4.85	4.65	4.7
Academic Speaking	4.8	4.75	4.65	4.7
Critical Listening	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.6
Translation I	4.5	4.7	4.55	4.6
Critical Reading	4.6	4.5	4.65	4.6
Essay Writing	4.75	4.75	4.7	4.7
Instructional Media	4.55	4.65	4.6	4.6
Classroom Management and Teaching-Learning Strategy	4.7	4.7	4.55	4.65
Argumentative Essay Writing	4.7	4.65	4.6	4.65
Extensive Reading	4.6	4.6	4.65	4.6
Translation II	4.7	4.75	4.6	4.7
Computer-Assisted Language Learning	4.8	4.65	4.6	4.7
<i>Multiculturalism</i>	3.85	4.05	3.95	3.95
Microteaching/PPL 1	4.5	4.8	4.5	4.6
Teaching EYL	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.6
Thesis	4.75	4.75	4.3	4.6
<b>Total means of the three criteria</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.36</b>

**Table 2.** The mean scores of the elective courses

Course names	Mean scores			
	CtoPerD	CtoAcD	KtoUse	Total M
English For Business*	4.4	4.3	4.05	4.25
English For Tourism*	3.95	4.05	4.1	4
<i>Journalism*</i>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.8</b>
<i>Popular Culture*</i>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.85</b>
Interpreting*	4.2	4.1	4	4.1
<b>Total means of the three criteria</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4</b>

Concerning *Research Question 2*, of all three criteria being investigated, the total mean scores for all compulsory courses were on par (see Table 1). The total mean score for the first and the second criteria was both 4.4, while the total mean score for the third condition was 4.3. It means that when generally evaluated the degree to which the program supported both the students' personal and academic development could be claimed as equally high. All three conditions were rated above the satisfactory threshold of 4 with the total mean score of 4.36 which can lead to a statement that the program altogether is satisfactorily effective. These results were in line with the study conducted by Karim et al. (2019), that is to say, the program had been considered instrumental for students' development. Uzun (2016) stated that the results between the range of 4.00 and 5.00 out of 5.00 are required to deserve a claim as not only sufficient, but also an ideal and influential program. On the other hand, students were not as significantly satisfied with the contribution of the elective courses to their personal development, academic development, and the usability of the knowledge they have got from the courses for their future career/endeavor (see Table 2). The mean scores for the three criteria respectively were 4, 4.1, and 3.9. It means that the elective courses supported the students' personal and academic development to a quite satisfactory degree although not as significant as the compulsory courses in general.

### 3.2. Qualitative Results (Interview Data)

The data gained from the interview questions 1 and 2 were discussed in order to get a better interpretation of and support the findings of the first and second research questions. While interview question 3 provides an answer for the third, answer for the fourth is gained from the responses of interview items 4 and 5.

Concerning the most and the least contributing courses for students' development, further discussions were provided for the subjects nominated by 10 or more students.

***Courses students had benefited the most:***

Grammar ( $f = 15$ )

Writing ( $f = 15$ )

Speaking ( $f = 12$ )

Reading ( $f = 10$ )

Classroom Management and Teaching Learning Strategies ( $f = 11$ )

Microteaching ( $f = 11$ )

PLP/School-based practicum ( $f = 10$ )

***Courses students had benefited the least:***

*Jatidiri Kanjuruhan*/Identity of Kanjuruhan ( $f = 21$ )

*Logika Dasar*/Basic Logic ( $f = 11$ )

Based on responses to interview questions 1, the courses students had benefited the most during their study were Grammar, Writing, Speaking, Reading, Microteaching, PLP/School-based practicum, and Classroom Management and Teaching Learning Strategies. The results support the data from the questionnaire which showed that all the courses mentioned by the participants as the most beneficial courses were all rated above 4.5, while the two least beneficial courses were rated below 4. Further, the students mentioned that grammar courses were considered as one of the most beneficial courses since it was useful and helpful in developing their grammatical knowledge and ability which become crucial in communicating through oral and written language. Students become more aware of the grammatical aspects of the language through the grammar courses during their study. The contents and the way the courses were organized and delivered gave the students a particular satisfaction. Meanwhile, for writing, speaking and reading courses, the respondents believed that the courses had been particularly useful in cultivating their English skills. Some students mentioned that the courses had fulfilled their needs since they chose English program because they wanted to learn and improve their English skills. Furthermore, for Classroom Management and Teaching Learning Strategies, the students mentioned that the courses had provided them with practical and useful knowledge for teaching and classroom management skills which they believed would be paramount for their future career as a teacher.

In comparison, in line with the questionnaire results, responses to the second interview question showed that students had benefited the least from *Jatidiri Kanjuruhan* (Identity of Kanjuruhan) and *Logika Dasar* (Basic

Logic). Students thought that the contents of *Jatidiri Kanjuruhan* course was already covered in other institutional courses such as *Pendidikan Pancasila* and *Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan*, and it had no beneficial effect on their study. They believed that there was redundancy among the mentioned course contents. Meanwhile, the contents of *Logika Dasar* course were described as very general and related to basic knowledge which had no significance for their study progress and English skills. As Harris (2009) suggested, these findings could be used to recommend formative internal improvements in the curriculum and instruction by considering the revision and restructuring of the institutional courses. Students' needs and expectations as the main stakeholders of the program should be taken into particular consideration.

In accordance with the answer for *Research Question 3*, it was determined that, from all of the participants ( $n = 60$ ), 50% of the students ( $n = 30$ ) believed that both the lecturers and the course contents equally contributed to their development. Further, 30% of the respondents ( $n = 18$ ) reported that it was the lecturers who contributed more, while 20% of them ( $n = 12$ ) pointed out the course contents as having more contribution to their development. It showed that half of the participants actually had equally good appreciation of both the lecturers and course contents, and they believed both factors had worked side by side in giving a contribution to their growth during their study. However, by taking into consideration the addition of the participants who specifically regarded one of the factors as having more contribution, it could be interpreted that the course contents were less significant than the course lecturers. It means that the students had a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the course contents. It was parallel with Uzun's (2016) study in which he reported that the teacher trainees were mostly in favor of lecturers/instructors as being more influential to their development. The results suggest that in order to provide students with the greatest benefit the courses and the course contents might need to undergo some further evaluation. In this way, the program will better provide assurance for the courses effectiveness and students' appreciation on the courses contents.

With regard to the answer for *Research Question 4*, it was notable that the data gained from the fourth and fifth interview questions' responses showed that the majority of the participants had positive impression to the education in the program in general. About 78% ( $n = 47$ ) of the participants stated very positive comments on their education in general, about 18% ( $n = 11$ ) of them had somehow mixed feelings, and about 3% ( $n = 2$ ) gave negative comments. The followings are some of the positive impressions given by the students:

*"It was so great. I learned many things with inspiring lecturers".*

*"If I have to assess in score between 0 - 100, I'll give score 90 because in English Education the lecturers are very qualified, they can educate the students and also can be friends with the students".*

*"Well I can proudly say that my education during my S1 degree in English Education of unika is quite excellent. I rarely skip my classes, I really love to learn, I do my best jika dapat tugas, and my GPA is good".*

*"Pendidikan dimasa studi saya sangatlah berkesan dan sangat bermanfaat (The education during my study has been impressive and useful)".*

This positive impression led to their stronger belief to choose teaching as their future career/endeavor. About 80% ( $n = 48$ ) confidently said "yes" with the possibility of choosing teaching as their future career between the range 75% and 100%. There were also 5% ( $n = 3$ ) of the students stated that they were still not convinced about it and they had about 50% possibility of being a teacher. However, there were about 15% ( $n = 9$ ) of them said "no" and stated that teaching would not be the choice of their future career. Those who said they did not want to be a teacher particularly mentioned that they were looking for a better job with a higher salary since they considered teaching career as financially less appreciated. The followings are some of the statements related to their choice of a future career as a teacher:

*"Maybe it is about 80%, because being a teacher is my dream".*

*"I think about 85% I would like to choose to teach for my profession".*

*"Sebesar 100%. Saya sangat ingin menjadi pengajar nantinya. Amin (About 100% I really want to be a teacher in the future. Amen)".*

*"After I finish my study, the percentage is about 90% I will choose to teach because my educational background is also in education".*

#### 4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the present study conducted an evaluation of an English education program in a private university in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The participants were final year students who had passed all the compulsory courses. The results suggested that the program had generally fulfilled the students' expectation quite satisfactorily and they had positive impressions about their education experience in general which then led into strengthen their possible plan for their future endeavor in the field of education. The subjects which provide useful practical knowledge and skills, information and communication technology (ICT) integration in the classroom, as well as experience to

learn and practice in creating, developing, and utilizing teaching learning materials and strategies in classroom settings were pointed out as instrumental. However, there should be further evaluation process investigating the efficiency and effectiveness of the institutional courses required for the students which were delivered in Bahasa Indonesia by non-English lecturers. The courses fell short in meeting students' expectations and needs. These courses need further program evaluation scrutiny based on the views and needs of all stakeholders and also the concerns from all parties having an interest in the outcomes of the program. The results suggest revising and restructuring the curriculum by considering more courses that are instrumental rather than the ones that are heavily loaded with redundant theoretical contents. Unnecessary courses should be replaced with the subjects for language e-learning and teaching equipping students with more practical knowledge and experiences.

The findings of the present study are not only beneficial as a significant input for the program curriculum improvement but also for corresponding programs intended to prepare or develop their curriculum through program evaluation undertaking. Additionally, considering small number of studies exploring this specific type of curriculum studies in Indonesia, to have a bigger and better picture of English Education Programs in a wider context, more studies are strongly encouraged to investigate similar programs from different areas of this country. Diverse aspects and perspectives of investigation are also recommended to provide distinct results and information to contribute and enrich the body of knowledge of curriculum studies particularly in the Indonesian context.

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