

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this research provided an introduction of the research, covering the background of the research, focus of the study, formulation of research question, purpose of the study, formulation of hypotheses, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and the definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Research

In the globally interconnected world of today, English proficiency plays a vital role in academic, professional, and social settings. English has become a de facto standard for international communication, and it is widely used in scientific, technological, and commercial contexts (P.S. Tolanur, 2022). The ability to engage effectively in English not only enhances access to a variety of educational resources, but it also expands prospects for personal and professional growth. Individuals with greater levels of English proficiency can clearly communicate a wide range of ideas in speaking and writing, and they may interact naturally with other speakers (Mahdi & Qadhi, 2023). In the contexts where English is a foreign language, being proficient in English is critical since it enables access to knowledge and fosters effective communication in a connected world. English is also a valuable language for obtaining a global education (Fatima, 2022) by serving as the primary means of education in university settings, learners and educators across the world are able to successfully access and share knowledge (Sofyan, 2021). One of the successfulness of the nation's future depends on how the youngsters conduct some best efforts since today (Nurhayati, 2019). It can be implied that It emphasizes the importance of youth taking proactive and meaningful steps to contribute positively to the nation's development.

Students who have not profoundly established proper proficiency in English and essential critical skills are most prone to demonstrate poor analytical quality in their literary critical evaluations (Javanmiri & Bdaiwi, 2021). This highlights how the inability to effectively analyze and interpret texts often stems from insufficient linguistic skills and underdeveloped analytical abilities, both of

which are crucial for higher-level academic tasks. For students, especially those studying literature, proficiency in English is not merely a linguistic skill but a gateway to engaging with complex ideas and expressing nuanced interpretations. For undergraduate students, particularly those from non-English speaking countries, acknowledging English is frequently regarded as critical to academic achievement and prospects for the future (Mugheri et al., 2022). This suggests that English functions as both a tool for accessing global knowledge and a skill for increasing competitiveness in academic and professional arenas. By linking the findings of these studies, it becomes clear that English proficiency serves as a foundation for both intellectual development and future prospects. Institutions, therefore, have a responsibility to foster not only linguistic competence but also critical thinking skills to prepare students for the demands of academia and beyond. Together, these studies underline the urgent need to address language and cognitive skill gaps to empower students in achieving academic excellence and professional readiness. When students learn English at school, they will learn the four skills namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. All of these skills must be practiced by students and cannot be separated from one to another if one expects to be able to communicate freely in English. However, it cannot be denied that English is still a crucial problem for Indonesian students. (Nurhayati & Fitriana, 2018)

Acknowledging the importance of language abilities, universities offer a variety of services to help undergraduate students improve their language competence (Shasha Wang & Dezhi Wang, 2020; Xin Zhang, 2019), including offer a wide range of resources to assist students in their academic and personal growth. It highlights the recognition of language proficiency as a cornerstone of student success, prompting universities to provide diverse services tailored to improving linguistic abilities. These include targeted resources such as language workshops, tutoring, and access to advanced learning tools, demonstrating institutional commitment to addressing the challenges students face in mastering language skills essential for academic achievement. Building on this foundation, (Bratko, 2022; Marjolein, et al., 2022), expand the scope by emphasizing the holistic support universities provide to foster both academic

and personal growth. They discuss initiatives such as mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and extracurricular activities, which not only help students refine their academic skills but also cultivate interpersonal and professional competencies. Together, these studies highlight the multifaceted approach universities adopt to empower students, recognizing that comprehensive support systems are vital for nurturing linguistic, academic, and personal development, ultimately preparing students for future challenges in a globalized world. From time to time, science and technology have been rapidly developing and becoming sophisticated. As a result of this rapid development, education becomes one of the interesting studies to explore. One of the factors behind a nation to be called advanced or underdeveloped is determined by the quality of its education. That is why, every person is obliged to pursue education. (Khusna et al., 2022)

Moreover, universities that are concerned about quality, should periodically evaluate students' content with the services provided (Raguz, M., et al., 2021). This study suggests that universities committed to quality assurance recognize the dynamic needs of their student population and the necessity of adapting services to meet these demands effectively. By periodically gathering feedback, institutions can identify strengths, pinpoint areas for improvement, and implement changes to enhance the overall student experience. Such evaluations not only demonstrate a dedication to continuous improvement but also foster a sense of inclusion and responsiveness, as students feel their opinions are valued. Ultimately, this practice contributes to a more student-centered learning environment, which is essential for both academic success and personal growth. In line with that, (Elliott and Healy in Abdul, G., 2019) describe students' contentment with educational experiences as a short-term attitude that arises from reviewing the students' educational experience. The student may be viewed as an additional sort of customer consuming education services. This leads to evaluate into how students perceived their educational quality correlate with their linguistic ability.

Finding how students perceive educational quality provided by their universities, can ultimately predicting the performance and success of

educational institutions. Understanding how they perceive educational quality are important since they represent an individual viewpoint that policymakers often neglect (Tilak, J., 2021). The views of students of educational quality are essential since they reflect the genuine impact of objective conditions on students, directing improvements in higher education services for greater fulfillment and achievements (Zhang, Y., et al., 2020). Once students' views are acknowledged and analyzed, they offer valuable data that can guide targeted improvements, ensuring that services align with their needs and expectations. Moreover, understanding these perceptions enables institutions to identify gaps between intended educational objectives and actual student experiences, fostering an environment where continuous enhancement becomes a priority. By addressing the areas identified through student feedback, universities can create a more fulfilling academic experience, ultimately leading to better student achievements and satisfaction. The perceived quality is a major determinant of the level of satisfaction (Chen, 2019). Typically, higher satisfaction should lead to higher quality. As the study (Salim, H., & Septiana, T., 2020), shows that high satisfaction with academic services in the English Education Department, implies excellent lecturer performance that can contribute to developing students' English competency. Commonly, as educators and teachers, they are definitely required to improve their ability, knowledge, thought and attention. It is closely related to education condition that educational reforms require English college teachers acquire recent acts and styles of instruction, meaning a skilled expansion practice require lecturers to engage in growing individual habit. (Nurhayati, 2018a)

Understanding the relationship between perceived educational quality and students' English proficiency levels matters for assessing the efficacy of language education services and recognizing areas for improvement. A study discovered a positive relationship between students' perceptions of English teaching and their achievement, implying that perceived educational quality, including teaching strategies correlate to student achievement (Effendi et al., 2019). This study intends to find out how students perceived the quality of education correlates with students' linguistic abilities, particularly in English.

This study may yield insights covering its subjects, undergraduate students of English Education. Students contend that the most important factors of quality in higher education are the quality of teaching staff, the politeness of administrative staff, instructors' availability, and the quality of study programs (Raguz, et al., 2021).

The researcher intends to find how the students perceived the quality of educational services provided by their universities and English proficiency are correlated. In this case is students' self-report of how they perceive the quality of educational services by university they gained, it involves undergraduate students of 5th semester in English Education Department. Based on (Mastoi, A., 2019), the quality of education can be assess through various aspects, including administrative quality (e.g. the attitude and behavior of the administrative staff of UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah and administrative processes); physical environment (e.g. support infrastructure, availability of teaching tools and equipment in UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah); core educational (e.g. lecturers of UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah and its curriculum); support facilities (e.g. opportunity for recreational facilities, availability and adequacy of extracurricular activities); and transformative quality (e.g. increase in knowledge, abilities, skills of students, and self-confidence).

Previous study reveals that students with higher academic achievement were more satisfied with the state of their academic program (Nauta in Wach, et al., 2016). It indicates that if students perceived better quality of educational services or programs, the better academic achievement they gained. An existing research of the relationships between students' perceptions of the classroom environment and their academic achievement in higher education was undertaken on specific disciplines. The result showed that students' perceptions of innovative instruction and task orientation were positive predictors of their academic achievement. The study focused on students enrolled in academic programs taught in English, which may not be indicative of students studying in other fields.(Li, 2022).

Previous studies have examined the use of modified English proficiency tests tailored to non-English-speaking countries. For instance, the College

English Test (CET) in China (Zhang, 2022) is a widely implemented local test specifically designed for EFL learners. It assesses general English proficiency with a structure that includes listening, reading, writing, and translation, but its difficulty aligns more closely with the needs of EFL students rather than international benchmarks like TOEFL or IELTS. This test helps gauge language skills while considering local educational contexts and student exposure to English. Despite the relevance of such tests, a notable gap exists in the comprehensive standardization and validation of these localized assessments. Unlike global tests, localized versions often lack robust alignment with international standards or adequate washback studies to assess their impact on learning and teaching practices.

This study attempts to fill this gap by broadening the scope. None of the study conduct an investigation on how students perceived educational quality of their university correlates with language competence, particularly in English proficiency. Investigating the relationship between perceived educational quality and English proficiency among undergraduate students of English Education Department across their university experiences is underlining this study. In addition, a potential gap in this study is examining the university of UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung as the higher education in EFL country using modified English proficiency tests, lies in the limited generalizability and alignment with international standards. While these tests cater to the linguistic realities of EFL learners by being less challenging than international exams, they may not sufficiently prepare students for global academic or professional contexts where higher English proficiency is required. Additionally, this measurement often lack data on the long-term impact of these localized assessments on students' language development, global competitiveness, and employability. Addressing these limitations could enhance the relevance of future research.

This study aims to provide useful insights into how students in higher education settings perceive educational quality and how it correlates with their proficiency in the language. It investigates whether students who rate their education more favorably tend to exhibit higher proficiency in the language,

specifically English. Understanding this correlation can provide insights into how educational experiences, resources, teaching methods, and institutional support contribute to language learning outcomes, offering valuable information for improving educational practices and enhancing language skills among students in diverse academic settings.

B. Focus of the Study

The researcher conducts an exploration into the relationship between perceived educational quality of undergraduate students and their level of English proficiency. This study focuses on finding the relationship between how the students' perceived their educational quality and the level of English proficiency by considering their score test. The main subjects of the study are those who have taken the English proficiency test through TOEP. Undergraduate students of English Education across their university experiences are involved in this study as its population.

The objective of the research is to gain a deeper insight into how students perceived their educational quality correlates with their English competence. The educational quality examined in this study covers administrative quality, physical environment quality, core educational quality, support facilities, and transformative quality.

C. Formulation of Research Question

1. Is there a significant relationship between perceived educational quality of undergraduate students of English Education and their English proficiency?

D. Purpose of the Study

1. To find the relationship between perceived educational quality of undergraduate students of English Education with their English proficiency.

The main aim of this study is to assess and find the relationship between perceived educational quality of undergraduate students with their English proficiency. The study intends to figure out how undergraduate students

perceive the quality of educational instruction, program, or services at their universities. The objective of this research is to acquire insight into students' subjective evaluations of the quality of education they gained, by gathering data on their assessments of various aspects of educational quality, such as administrative quality, physical environment quality, core educational quality, support facilities, and transformative quality.

Through considering the relationship between these two variables, the study attempts to identify whether students who perceive higher educational quality also demonstrate higher levels of English competence. Acquiring a better understanding of the connection between the two, the researcher intends to share insights that might assist educational institutions to enhance the quality of educational services through students' evaluation, which will lead to better language learning outcomes for undergraduate students.

E. Formulation of Hypotheses

In this study, the variables being discussed are perceived educational quality of undergraduate students with their English proficiency. Based on the research question and objective:

1. H_0 : Null Hypotheses ($H_0: \rho = 0$)

There is no significant correlation between perceived educational quality of undergraduate students and their English proficiency.

2. H_1 : Alternative Hypotheses ($H_1: \rho \neq 0$)

There is a significant correlation between perceived educational quality of undergraduate students and their English proficiency.

Perceived Educational Quality: the variable indicates to what extent the students perceive educational quality from their educational institutions. It can be measured using Likert scale questionnaire. The data would typically fall under the ordinal level of measurement. It represents the satisfaction of respondents toward educational quality, through their rate on a scale (e.g., 1 to 5 or 1 to 4), where higher numbers indicate higher value on perceived educational quality.

English Proficiency: the variable represents the English proficiency among undergraduate students. The data fall under the interval level of measurement. It is

represented by scores obtained from standardized language competence tests, including TOEFL.

A positive correlation suggests that students who perceive higher educational quality also demonstrate higher levels of English proficiency. Whereas, a negative correlation suggests students who perceive lower educational quality, tend to have higher English proficiency, and vice-versa.

In other words, dissatisfaction in perceiving educational quality may be correlated with higher language proficiency due to compensatory efforts of students outside formal education.

F. Significance of the Study

Theoretical

The findings of the study may shed light on how students perceive the quality of language education and support services provided by their university. The study may contribute to better understand the dynamics of language learning environments in higher education settings.

Through considering students' evaluations of educational quality, the study reveals insight on the subjective experiences of learners. Considering how students perceive the success and practicality of language education programs can inform educational policies and practices aimed to improve student engagement and satisfaction.

By investigating the relationship between perceived educational quality and students' language proficiency levels, the study may provide helpful insights into the complex interplay between subjective perceptions and objective outcomes in language education settings. It may clarify how educational quality plays an important role for enhances learners' outcome particularly in improving their level of language proficiency.

Practical

Findings from this research may assist colleges and language education departments understand how students perceive educational quality. Institutions can utilize this data to discover areas for improvement in teaching approaches,

resources, and support services which could enhance the quality of English language instruction delivered to undergraduate students.

The discoveries of the research may assist colleges develop more effective resource allocation decisions for language learning projects. This could entail investing in additional educators, instructional materials, technology-enhanced learning resources, or student support services based on identified areas of need. The research may reveal variations in perceived educational quality and English proficiency among undergraduate students of English Education. Institutions can utilize this data to design specific strategies focused at reducing equity and inclusion gaps, ensuring that all students have equal access to high-quality language education opportunities.

Through addressing identified obstacles and maximizing opportunities for improvement, universities can better achieve their mission of providing high-quality education while promoting student success.

G. Scope & Limitation

The main objective of this study is to assess and find the relationship between perceived educational quality of undergraduate students of English Education with their English proficiency. The study intends to figure out how undergraduate students perceive the quality of educational instruction at their university. The population covered are undergraduate students of English Education Department who have taken one test that measured their English proficiency using standardized tests such as TOEP.

To find out the correlation between perceived educational quality of undergraduate students with their English proficiency, this study uses survey design with questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The study focuses on undergraduate students of English Education in higher education institutions. The scope may include students from 5th semester as undergraduate population. The research investigates how students perceived the quality of educational instructions provided by their universities. This may involve investigating students' perceived of teaching approach, resources, support services, and so forth.

The main focus of the study is to analyze the correlation between two variables; perceived educational quality and students' English proficiency. This research may employ statistical techniques to examine the strength and direction of this relationship.

Furthermore, the subjectivity of the evaluation may be influenced by individual biases, experiences, and expectations. Limited participation rates could impact the generalizability of the broader undergraduate population. The study may not have captured all of the contextual factors that influence perceived educational quality and English proficiency. Experience differences, cultural norms, and external factors beyond the scope of the study may also impact the observed correlations.

The data that obtained may be limited to a dominant institution and region that are not representative of the broader population of undergraduate students, and the time-limited data collection may cause the findings differ from previous and future studies along with changes in perceptions and proficiency over time.

H. Definition of Key Terms

Operational

1. Perceive: to come to an opinion about something, or have a belief about something (Cambridge dictionary).
2. Educational quality: Educational quality encompasses imparting knowledge, skills, and capabilities crucial for societal development. It involves factors such as infrastructure, staffing impact, class size, parental involvement, and in-service programs for improvement (Batra et al., 2023)
3. Undergraduate students: individuals pursuing their first degree at a university (Adebisi, 2022). They are individuals pursuing higher education at the bachelor's level (Luo & Lin, 2022).
4. English Proficiency: defined as the ability to use English to generate and convey meaning in oral and written contexts (Ben, 2010); it refers to the level of competence or ability in the English language, particularly in

reading, writing, speaking, and understanding it (John & Kennedy, 2023).

5. Correlation: Correlation describes the statistical relationship between two variables (Mariana, 2022), English proficiency and career readiness are the two variables will be assessed. A positive correlation indicates that as English proficiency strengthens, so does career readiness, whereas a negative correlation suggests the opposite that indicates English proficiency strengthens, however low in career readiness and vice-versa.
6. Standardized Language Proficiency Tests are regulated, organized, objective assessments that are designed to assess the ability to understand and convey properly in spoken and written, in this case is English, to a certain standard. There are most commonly used tests of English proficiency including the TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC (Serliah, 2013), CPE (Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English), Duolingo English Test, iTEP, and so on. Moreover, Test of English Proficiency (TOEP) is an assessment designed to measure a person's proficiency in the English language, often covering areas like reading, writing, listening, and speaking. TOEP scores are commonly used in academic or professional settings to evaluate the language skills of non-native English speakers and may be required for university admissions, job qualifications, or certification programs.

Conceptual

1. Perceive, in a conceptual meaning, is the mental process of becoming aware of, recognizing, or understanding (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries). It is the process of receiving and interpreting external stimuli including interior thoughts, emotions, and feelings, which results in the production of subjective impressions, beliefs, or understandings about the experienced object or phenomenon. It shapes a person's subjective perceptions and understandings of their surroundings.

2. Educational quality refers to the entire effectiveness and quality of educational experiences, programs, and institutions in facilitating learning activity, fostering student growth, and achieving desired outcomes. The UNESCO document “Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education” (2005), describing educational quality as the degree to which the learning environment and educational experiences provided by institutions meet or exceed established standards and expectations, leading to positive learning outcomes and student satisfaction.
3. Undergraduate students, typically refers individuals who are enrolled in postsecondary education programs but have not yet completed a bachelor’s degree (National Center for Education Statistics).
4. English Proficiency refers to the ability of individuals and competence in utilizing the English language for communication, comprehension, and expression in a variety of contexts. The concept of proficiency in a foreign language includes the qualities of being able to do something with the language. Language proficiency includes the communicative abilities, knowledge systems, and skills of learners (C Harsch, 2017). It involves the capacity to comprehend spoken and written English, along with the ability to effectively transmit thoughts, ideas, and information in both oral and written formats. Proficiency in English includes mastery of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension, enabling individuals to communicate confidently and successfully in a variety of social, academic, professional, and cultural settings where English is the primary or secondary language.
5. Correlation: A correlational study is a research method that focuses at a relationship between two or more variables. In a correlational study, researchers collect information on the variables of interest without directly influencing them (Pritha, 2023). Instead, they assess how the variables naturally co-vary or connect to one another in real-world settings. The aim of a correlational study is to discover whether there is a statistical correlation among the variables and to what extent they are

related to one another. Correlation coefficients, such as Pearson's r or Spearman's ρ , are commonly used to determine the strength and direction of this relationship. It is crucial to emphasize that correlational research cannot determine causation, or whether changes in one variable cause changes in another. Instead, they provide valuable insights into the relationships between variables, allowing researchers to find patterns, predict outcomes, and generate hypotheses for future research.