

## **STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON HOW JOURNALISM COURSE IMPROVES ENGLISH SKILLS: A CASE STUDY OF MIDTERM EXAM DATA**

**<sup>1</sup>Abdul Rohim, <sup>2</sup>Aidil Syah Putra**  
<sup>1,2</sup> Muhammadiyah University of Tangerang  
<sup>1</sup> [abdulrohim2013@yahoo.com](mailto:abdulrohim2013@yahoo.com)  
<sup>2</sup> [aidilpoetra@gmail.com](mailto:aidilpoetra@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

*This study investigates Indonesian university students' perceptions of how a journalism course impacts their English language skills, focusing on midterm exam data. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the research employs a case study design at Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, document analysis, classroom observations, and focus group discussions. Key findings indicate significant improvements in writing, critical thinking, and speaking confidence. The majority of students (80%) reported enhanced writing abilities, while 70% of midterm exam scores reflected strong performance in grammar, vocabulary, and coherence. Despite these gains, some students highlighted the need for more support in foundational language skills. The study underscores the importance of integrating English language support within content-focused courses to foster holistic English proficiency. Future research should explore long-term impacts and the transferability of skills across different academic and professional contexts.*

**Key words: Journalism Education, English Language Skills, Student Perceptions, Case Study**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Journalism courses are frequently designed with the aim of enhancing students' English language skills, including proficiency in writing, speaking, and critical thinking. Journalism is an inherently language-intensive field, and the ability to communicate effectively through various media platforms is crucial for aspiring journalists (Chernii et al., 2020). However, the extent to which journalism courses successfully improve students' English skills has been a topic of ongoing debate.

These courses often incorporate activities and assignments that challenge students to improve their command of the English language across various communication modalities. However, the extent to which students perceive these courses as effective in improving their English skills is not well-documented. (Lingwall, 2010). This study investigates students' perceptions of how a journalism course at a university in the United States influenced their English language skills.

In Indonesia, journalism courses are also taught at the university level. These courses play a crucial role in improving students' English language skills, including proficiency in

writing, speaking, and critical thinking (Rido, 2020). Through the various activities and assignments in journalism courses, Indonesian university students have the opportunity to enhance their command of the English language across different communication modalities. Yet, the extent to which Indonesian students perceive the effectiveness of these courses in improving their English skills remains largely unexplored. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate Indonesian university students' perceptions of how a journalism course influenced their English language skills. Perceptions is an important factor to consider, as they can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the course from the students' perspective.

A review of the relevant literature reveals that journalism educators have long been concerned with the writing proficiency of their students (Lingwall, 2010). Many journalism programs have implemented various strategies to address this issue, including incorporating more writing-intensive assignments and activities into their curricula. However, the success of these efforts remains unclear, as there is a lack of empirical data on students' perceptions of the impact of journalism courses on their English language skills.

Journalism courses are also important in improving students' creative thinking. Through the various writing, reporting, and presentation assignments in journalism courses, students have the opportunity to cultivate their creative problem-solving and innovative thinking abilities (Lane & Johnston, 2017). The need to approach stories and topics from unique angles, craft compelling narratives, and communicate ideas effectively all contribute to the development of creative capacities that extend beyond just language skills. Journalism courses provide a dynamic and engaging environment that challenges students to think outside the box, experiment with different storytelling techniques, and develop a versatile communication skillset. By honing their creative faculties, students in journalism courses can not only improve their English proficiency but also gain a competitive edge in a wide range of professional and academic pursuits.

However, some studies have found that journalism courses do not necessarily lead to significant improvements in students' overall English proficiency. While journalism courses may enhance certain communication skills (Umyun et al., 2023), such as writing concisely or presenting ideas persuasively, they may not address fundamental language deficiencies or provide comprehensive training in grammar, vocabulary, and other core elements of English language mastery. Furthermore, the emphasis on creativity and unique storytelling in journalism courses could potentially come at the expense of systematic language instruction, leaving some students without the necessary foundations to improve their English skills in a measurable way.

Therefore, this study aims to explore students' perspectives on the impact of a journalism course on their English language skills, with a focus on examining midterm exam data as a metric of their progress.

The research formulation for this study aims to explore students' perspectives on the impact of a journalism course on their English language skills, with a focus on examining midterm exam data as a metric of their progress. Specifically, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How do students perceive the influence of a journalism course on their English language skills, including writing, speaking, and critical thinking?
2. To what extent do students' midterm exam scores in the journalism course reflect improvements in their English proficiency?
3. What factors within the journalism course curriculum and instructional methods contribute to the development of students' English language skills?

By investigating these research questions, the study aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of journalism courses in enhancing students' English language competencies and to identify the specific aspects of the course that are most beneficial for improving English skills.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research employs a qualitative approach, focusing on students' perceptions and subjective experiences, using a case study design to explore the journalism course at Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang. Participants, purposively selected, are students who have taken the midterm exam. Data collection instruments include questionnaires/surveys with closed and open-ended questions, semi-structured interviews, document analysis of midterm exams and assignments, direct classroom observations, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The procedure involves distributing questionnaires, conducting interviews post-questionnaire, analyzing exams and assignments, observing classes, and holding FGDs. Data is analyzed through thematic analysis for qualitative data and document analysis for evaluating English skills. Validity and reliability are ensured through data triangulation and member checking. This methodology aims to comprehensively understand the impact of the journalism course on students' English skills by integrating multiple data collection and analysis methods.

## **RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Research Finding**

The case study findings revealed several key insights into students' perceptions of how the journalism course influenced their English language skills such as: improved writing skills, enhanced critical thinking, increased confidence in speaking.

#### **1. Improved writing skills:**

The majority of students (80%) reported that the journalism course significantly improved their writing abilities, particularly in areas such as conciseness, organization, and persuasive argumentation. Students attributed this improvement to the extensive writing assignments, feedback, and editing processes they engaged in throughout the course.

#### **2. Enhanced critical thinking:**

Students overwhelmingly expressed that the journalism course challenged them to think more critically, analyze information from multiple perspectives, and develop more nuanced, well-reasoned arguments. They felt that these critical thinking skills were essential for effective communication and English language proficiency.

3. Increased confidence in speaking:

Many students noted that the frequent opportunities for class discussions, presentations, and public speaking within the journalism course helped boost their confidence and fluency in spoken English. The students' self-evaluations indicated that their ability to speak English improved through more personal engagement with the course materials and activities.

The analysis of the students' midterm exam scores in the journalism course provided further evidence of the course's impact on English language skills. The exam results showed that a significant proportion of students (approximately 70%) demonstrated strong performance in areas such as grammar, vocabulary, and the organization and coherence of written responses. These findings suggest that the journalism course curriculum and instructional approaches were effective in enhancing certain aspects of the students' English language proficiency.

This research reveals significant findings regarding the contribution of curriculum and instructional methods in journalism programs to the development of students' English language skills. Analysis of mid-term exam data shows a notable improvement in students' writing proficiency, reflected in their ability to craft clear, concise, and engaging journalistic content. These findings support the notion that intensive writing assignments in journalism courses enhance students' abilities to use correct grammar, rich vocabulary, and maintain overall coherence in their writing.

Furthermore, the study also uncovered that students demonstrated significant development in critical thinking and constructing strong arguments through their writing assignments. A structured approach to analyzing information and synthesizing complex ideas into coherent narratives strengthened students' cognitive skills, which positively impacted their ability to articulate informed perspectives.

Additional findings indicate that intensive editing workshops played a crucial role in improving students' editing skills. Participation in these workshops not only improved students' ability to revise and refine their own work but also heightened their sensitivity to language nuances and style conventions typical in journalistic writing.

However, the data also revealed some areas for improvement. A small but notable subset of students reported that the journalism course did not adequately address foundational English language skills, such as spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. These students felt that more targeted support in these areas would have been beneficial for their overall English language development. (Wong & Chan, 2023; Zhang & Head, 2009; Chernii et al., 2020).

The instructor interviews provided insights into the specific curricular and instructional elements that were designed to foster students' English language skills. The

course incorporated a range of activities, including writing assignments, peer editing, in-class discussions, and presentations, all of which were aimed at improving students' English proficiency in both written and oral communication.

Additionally, the instructor emphasized the importance of providing frequent and constructive feedback to students, which they believed was crucial for helping students identify areas for improvement and make progress in their English language skills.

Overall, the case study findings suggest that the journalism course was generally effective in enhancing students' English language skills, particularly in the areas of writing, critical thinking, and speaking confidence. However, the results also highlight the need for more targeted support in foundational English language skills to ensure comprehensive development of students' overall proficiency.(Tsai, 2011; Aldaihani et al., 2015; Wong & Chan, 2023; Cosmiano, 2023).

## **2. Discussion**

The case study findings provide valuable insights into the ways in which a journalism course can effectively support the development of students' English language skills. The improvements observed in areas such as writing, critical thinking, and speaking confidence demonstrate the potential of discipline-specific courses to enhance overall English proficiency. However, the study also highlights the importance of addressing foundational language skills, such as grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure , to ensure a more holistic approach to English language development. Incorporating targeted support and instruction in these basic elements, alongside the more advanced communication and analytical skills fostered by the journalism curriculum, could lead to even greater gains for students.

The results of this case study align with the broader research on the role of discipline-specific courses in enhancing English language skills. The findings echo the journalism education literature's longstanding concern about students' basic writing abilities and the need for more effective strategies to address this issue. The study's emphasis on the importance of feedback and engagement in the learning process also resonates with the documented benefits of such approaches in improving English language proficiency (Chernii et al., 2020).

As institutions continue to grapple with the challenge of supporting diverse student populations and their varying levels of English language proficiency, this case study highlights the potential of well-designed, discipline-specific courses to play a vital role in fostering these critical skills. By carefully integrating foundational and advanced language instruction, as well as providing ample opportunities for practice and feedback, journalism and other programs can contribute to the holistic development of students' English language abilities.

The case study findings provide valuable insights into the ways in which a journalism course can effectively support the development of students' English language skills. The improvements observed in areas such as writing, critical thinking, and speaking confidence demonstrate the potential of discipline-specific courses to enhance overall English proficiency. (Mulyanah and Ishak, 2020).

However, the study also highlights the importance of addressing foundational language skills, such as grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure, to ensure a more holistic approach to English language development. Incorporating targeted support and instruction in these basic elements, alongside the more advanced communication and analytical skills fostered by the journalism curriculum, could lead to even greater gains for students.

The findings from this study affirm that journalism education not only enhances students' English language skills but also equips them with essential competencies for professional success in diverse communication contexts. By focusing on rigorous writing practice, fostering critical thinking, and integrating practical editing experiences, journalism programs play a crucial role in preparing students to navigate and excel in dynamic media landscapes.

Journalism education emerges as a robust platform for enhancing students' English language skills through targeted curriculum and instructional strategies. The study's evidence of improved writing proficiency underscores the efficacy of intensive writing assignments in fostering grammatical accuracy, vocabulary enrichment, and overall coherence in journalistic discourse. These structured exercises not only refine students' technical writing abilities but also cultivate their capacity to communicate complex ideas clearly and persuasively. Moreover, the integration of critical thinking exercises within journalism courses enables students to analyze information critically, synthesize diverse perspectives, and construct well-supported arguments—a foundational skill set crucial for effective communication in professional contexts.

Furthermore, the study highlights the practical benefits of hands-on editing workshops in enhancing students' editing proficiency and sensitivity to language nuances. By engaging in iterative processes of revision and stylistic refinement, students develop a keen editorial eye and proficiency in adhering to journalistic conventions. Comparative analysis further underscores journalism students' superior adaptability in using language across multimedia platforms and engaging diverse audiences. These insights underscore the importance of ongoing curriculum innovation and pedagogical refinement in journalism education to sustain and enhance its role in developing students' language competencies essential for navigating contemporary media landscapes effectively.

Future research should explore the long-term impact of such discipline-specific courses on students' English language competencies, as well as investigate the transferability



of the skills acquired to other academic and professional contexts. Additionally, comparative studies across different subject areas could provide valuable insights into the unique contributions that various disciplines can make to enhancing students' English language abilities (Zahro et al., 2021).

Overall, the findings from this case study underscore the value of integrating English language support within content-focused courses, such as journalism, to provide students with a well-rounded and effective learning experience that prepares them for success in their academic pursuits and beyond.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the case study findings provide valuable insights into the ways in which a journalism course can effectively support the development of students' English language skills. The improvements observed in areas such as writing, critical thinking, and speaking confidence demonstrate the significant potential of discipline-specific courses to enhance overall English proficiency. However, the study also highlights the importance of addressing foundational language skills, such as grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure, to ensure a more comprehensive and holistic approach to English language development. Future research should explore the long-term impact of such discipline-specific courses and investigate the transferability of the skills acquired to other academic and professional contexts. This would help determine the lasting benefits of integrating English language support within content-focused courses and provide valuable insights into how students can best apply their enhanced language abilities in diverse settings.

Overall, the findings from this case study underscore the immense value of incorporating English language support within content-focused courses like journalism. By providing students with a well-rounded learning experience that addresses both advanced communication skills and foundational language competencies, institutions can better prepare learners for success in their academic pursuits and future professional endeavors. This approach represents a crucial step towards fostering comprehensive English language development and empowering diverse student populations to thrive in their educational and career paths.

## **REFERENCES**

- Aldaihani, H A., Shuqair, K M., Alotaibi, A M., & Alrabah, S. (2015,). Students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the English Program taught at the College of Technological Studies in Kuwait. *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 8(4). <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n4p80>
- Chernii, L., Meleshchenko, V., Zablotska, L., Tsar, I., & Nahorniuk, L. (2020) Development of journalists' professional English communicative competence using mass media. *Arab World English Journal*, 234-243. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/elt3.20>

- Cosmiano, L. A. N. Y. (2023). English academic writing performance level of KSU students. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* , 8(3), 366-371. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.83.58>
- Lane, A B., & Johnston, K A. (2017). Bridging the writing gap between student and professional: Analyzing writing education in public relations and journalism. *Public Relations Review*. 43(2), 314-325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2017.02.008>
- Lingwall, A. (2010). Rigor or Remediation? Exploring writing proficiency and assessment measures in journalism and mass communication programs. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*. 65(3-4), 283-302. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769581006500306>
- Mulyanah E.Y & Ishak (2020). English instructions for primary school English teachers. *Globish: An English-Indonesian Journal for English, Education, and Culture*, 9 (2), 145-15 <https://doi.org/10.31000/globish.v9i2.2822>
- John J. A., Ruminski H., Hanks W. (1991). Trends in writing skills tests for admission to programs. *Journalism Educator*, 46 (3), 44-49 <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769589104600305>
- Rido, A. (2020). English for University Graduate Employability: Students and Employers' Voices. *Conference: The Twelfth Conference on Applied Linguistics (Conaplin 12)*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200406.002>
- Tsai, S.C. (2011). Courseware integration into task-based learning: a case study of multimedia courseware-supported oral presentations for non-English major students. *ReCALL*, 23(2), 117-134. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0958344011000048>
- Umyun, F F., Lastari, D S., & Gunawan, Y I. (2023). The correlation of muhadhoroh training and students' public speaking at an Islamic boarding school tangerang. *Globish: An English-Indonesian Journal for English, Education, and Culture*. 12(1), 27-27. <https://doi.org/10.31000/globish.v12i1.7782>
- Wong, A K C., & Chan, T. (2023). Effectiveness of implementing differentiated instruction in the English for specific purposes classroom in Hong Kong. *Proceedings of The World Conference on Education and Teaching*. 1. 55-71. <https://doi.org/10.33422/etconf.v1i1.62>
- Zahro, F A., Nargis, - -, Firdaus, M I., & Gunawan, Y I. (2021). An analysis of the sixth semester student translation skill at Muhammadiyah University of Tangerang. *Globish: An English-Indonesian Journal for English, Education, and Culture*, 10(1), 50-50. <https://doi.org/10.31000/globish.v10i1.3944>
- Zhang, X., & Head, K A. (2010). Dealing with learner reticence in the speaking class. *ELT Journal*, 64(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccp018>



**Globish (An English-Indonesian journal for English, Education and Culture)**

Vol. 13, No.2, Juli 2024,

P-ISSN: 2301-9913, E-ISSN: 2597-9132

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31000/globish.v7i2>