Improvement of graduate competencies in line with job market demands of the English language education program

MARYATI SALMIAH[1*], IDRIS SADRI[2], ANDRI WARDANA[3], BUDIMAN BUDIMAN[4], AND KHAIRUL AZMI[5]

Abstract

This research aims to analyze the efforts to improve the competencies of graduates from the English Language Education Study Program (TBI) at FITK UIN Sumatera Utara. A qualitative phenomenological approach is used to gain an in-depth understanding of the program administrators' perspectives regarding these efforts. The research findings indicate that the program has undertaken various initiatives, such as formulating a vision, mission, and objectives that are relevant to job market needs, implementing student-centered learning, and developing a curriculum that meets competency standards. Additionally, the program actively collaborates with various institutions and strives to enhance the quality of its faculty and facilities. However, several challenges remain to be addressed, such as limited resources and the dynamic nature of job market requirements. This research provides recommendations for the study program to continue conducting periodic evaluations and improvements, as well as to strengthen collaboration with various stakeholders to enhance graduate quality. It is hoped that these efforts will create graduates who are not only academically competent but also able to adapt quickly to changes in the work environment and meet the increasingly complex expectations of the industry. Consequently, the enhancement of graduate competencies will positively impact not only individuals but also the development of society and industry around them.

How to Cite

[1*] Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia, Corresponding email: maryatisalmiah@uinsu.ac.id
[2,3,4,5] Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia.

Introduction

English language proficiency plays a central role in the competencies of graduates of English Education Study Programs (Farrell & Jacobs, 2020; Santosa, 2017). As future educators, students in this program not only need to have a good command of English, but also be able to teach the language effectively to their students. In this context, English language proficiency plays a role in various important aspects that shape the overall competence of graduates, including communication, mastery of subject matter, application of pedagogy, adaptation to technology, research, global work readiness, and self-development (Ratminingsih, 2015).

Santosa (2017) and Kusuma & Adnyani (2016) added that English communication skills are very important for graduates of English Education Study Programs. As educators, they must be able to speak and write clearly and accurately. Speaking skills include the ability to deliver learning materials, explain complex concepts, and interact effectively with students (Jono, 2016; Sinaga & Sembiring, 2023). Listening skills are also important, as educators must be able to understand students' questions and needs and provide appropriate responses. In addition, good writing skills are necessary for developing clear and informative teaching materials, assignments, and evaluations. With strong communication skills, graduates can create a positive and productive learning environment where students feel supported and motivated to learn (Saputra *et al.*, 2023).

A deep mastery of English is fundamental for every English language educator. Graduates must have a strong understanding of English grammar and structure, extensive vocabulary, and accurate pronunciation skills. In addition, they need to understand the literary and cultural aspects associated with English-speaking countries, as this provides a rich and deep context for students in learning the language (Kostikova *et al.*, 2018; McKay, 2004; Tran & Dang, 2014). This knowledge enables graduates to teach English holistically, covering linguistic and cultural aspects that are important for comprehensive understanding (Harumi, 2002).

Pedagogy, or the art and science of teaching, is a key component in the competency of English Education Program graduates. Graduates must be able to apply various effective teaching methods to meet the diverse learning needs of students (Santosa, 2017). The project-based learning approach, for example, allows students to learn through real projects that require research, collaboration, and problem solving. This approach helps students develop important critical and creative skills. Collaborative learning is another method that encourages cooperation and interaction among students, helping them learn from one another and develop important interpersonal skills. In addition, the use of visual aids and technology in teaching can make learning more interesting and interactive, helping students understand and remember the material better.

In today's digital age, the ability to utilize technology in teaching has become very important (Punar Özçelik *et al.,* 2022; Shin, 2015). Educational technology can improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by providing tools and resources that support the learning process. Learning Management Systems (LMS), for example, allow educators to manage classes online, upload learning materials, assign tasks, and interact with students. Language learning applications, such as Duolingo or Rosetta Stone, offer interactive exercises that can help students learn independently and enjoyably. The use of multimedia devices, such

as videos and animations, can also make learning materials more interesting and interactive. In addition, social media and online platforms can be used to support learning outside the classroom, providing opportunities for students to interact and share information (Jiang *et al.*, 2017; Jono, 2016; Sodiq *et al.*, 2021).

Strong English language proficiency is also essential for participation in research and scientific publication. Graduates must be able to conduct research in the field of English language education, understand English-language academic literature, and write scientific articles that meet international publication standards. This research not only enriches their knowledge and skills but also contributes to the development of English language education in general. In addition, the ability to present research results at international conferences allows graduates to share their findings with the global academic community and build extensive professional networks.

Proficiency in English further provides graduates with broader opportunities to pursue careers in the global job market (Abelha et al., 2020; Chetty, 2012; Okolie *et al.*, 2020). They can work in educational institutions abroad or in international organizations that require English communication skills. Student exchange programs and international collaborations also offer valuable experiences that enhance cultural understanding and professional competence. Moreover, participating in English-language international training and certification programs increases their credibility and competitiveness in the job market (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Osmani *et al.*, 2015).

Having strong command of English is equally important for personal growth and lifelong learning. The language provides access to vast sources of information and knowledge, including books, journals, online courses, and international seminars. This enables graduates to continuously develop their skills throughout their careers. Building professional networks with peers and experts in English language education worldwide also creates opportunities to share experiences and gain inspiration for ongoing professional development. Through mastery of English, graduates can participate in online courses, webinars, and training programs, ensuring they stay updated with the latest advancements in their field. English language proficiency is central to the competencies of graduates of the English Education Study Program (Astuti, 2019; Mortini *et al.*, 2023; Syahfutra & Wibowo, 2019; Utami, 2018). This includes not only effective communication skills, but also mastery of learning materials, application of appropriate pedagogy, adaptation to educational technology, involvement in research and publication, readiness for the global job market, and self-development (Fathurrahman & Farih, 2018; Saputra *et al.,* 2023; Sinaga & Sembiring, 2023). Therefore, improving English language proficiency must be a primary focus in the curriculum and learning process in English Education Study Programs to ensure that graduates are ready to face the challenges and opportunities in an increasingly global and competitive world of education. With strong English language skills, graduates will not only be able to become effective and innovative educators but also continue to learn and develop throughout their careers, making significant contributions to the field of English language education and society at large (Aqbar, 2021; Chetty, 2012; Kusuma & Adnyani, 2016; Ratminingsih, 2015).

This study aims to describe the efforts made by the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, State Islamic University of North Sumatra (Prodi PBI FITK UIN SU), to improve the quality of English teacher education. It also seeks to identify the strategies implemented to enhance students' language proficiency, teaching

competence, and professional development, as well as to explore the challenges faced in maintaining and developing these efforts.

Methodology

Research design, site, and participants

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological design to explore the experiences and perspectives of the administrators of the English Language Education Program (TBI) at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FITK), State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN SU) Medan. The phenomenological approach was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of the administrators' lived experiences in managing and improving graduate competencies in teaching. The research site is the English Language Education Program at FITK UIN SU Medan, an institution that plays a significant role in preparing future English teachers. The participants of this study consist of all administrators of the program, who were selected based on their involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of academic and professional development activities aimed at enhancing students' teaching competence and language proficiency.

Data collection and analysis

Data were collected through document analysis, which served as the main technique in this study. The researcher systematically gathered and examined a variety of institutional documents, including curricula, syllabi, activity reports, and planning materials related to efforts to improve graduate competencies. The document study method was used to obtain detailed and authentic information about the program's strategies, policies, and actions in developing students' professional abilities. The collected documents were carefully read, categorized, and interpreted to ensure that the data reflected the ongoing practices and initiatives of the English Language Education Program in enhancing the quality of its graduates.

The data analysis process in this study followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher identified, selected, and coded relevant information from the documents to generate key themes and categories. The reduced data were then organized and presented in descriptive narratives and tables to facilitate interpretation and thematic exploration. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the recurring themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis. Narrative analysis was also used to interpret the meaning behind the documented practices, allowing the researcher to understand how the administrators conceptualize and implement strategies for improving graduate competencies within the program.

Results

Academic efforts

Academic efforts by study programs to improve the quality of their graduates can be carried out through various approaches that focus on strengthening aspects of learning and

academic evaluation. Academically, the efforts made by the English Education Department of UIN SU Medan study program are:

Formulating the vision, mission, and objectives of the study program in accordance with graduate competencies

The formulation of the vision, mission, and objectives of the English Language Education Study Program (TBI) shows a strong alignment between the development direction of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU), the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FITK), and the study program itself. The TBI Study Program has a vision to become a leading study program that produces competent graduates based on Wahdatul 'Ulum with a transdisciplinary and professional approach in realizing an independent learning community by 2035. This vision shows a structured long-term direction and is oriented towards developing graduate competencies in accordance with the needs of the times and global demands.

From the results of this formulation, it appears that the TBI Study Program emphasizes the integration of scientific direction by making Islamic values the main foundation for the integration of knowledge (wahdatul 'ulum). The harmony between the vision of the university, faculty, and study program creates synergy that strengthens TBI's position as a center of science in the field of Islamic, innovative, and contextual English language education.

In addition, the focus on graduate competencies is an important outcome of this formulation process. TBI graduates are expected to have a character that is faithful, pious, noble, as well as competent and professional in their field. They are trained to be able to conduct research, develop new knowledge, and devote their knowledge to society based on the paradigm of wahdatul 'ulum-transdisciplinary. Thus, this study program not only produces competent educators but also academics who contribute to the development of scientific civilization.

Other results show the integration of education, research, and community service. Education is conducted using an Islamic approach combined with modern scientific-based English language learning. Research is directed towards producing new findings relevant to the development of Islamic education, while community service is focused on empowering independent and competitive learning communities.

In the formulation process, stakeholder involvement was an important aspect. Lecturers, students, alumni, and industry partners contributed their input to ensure that the vision, mission, and objectives formulated were in line with academic and workplace needs. This strengthened the relevance of the study program to industry demands and community development.

Finally, the English Education Study Program demonstrates its commitment to continuous evaluation and development. The vision, mission, and objectives are designed to be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant to changes in science, technology, and labor market needs. Overall, these findings confirm that the English Education Study Program has an integrative, sustainable educational direction that is oriented towards the development of a learning community and the advancement of science based on Islamic values.

Fulfillment of learning characteristics

The results of research on the fulfillment of learning characteristics in the English Language Education Study Program (TBI) show that learning management strategies have been implemented in accordance with the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) and are oriented towards interactive, holistic, integrative, scientific, contextual, thematic, effective, collaborative, and student-centered learning characteristics. This indicates that learning in the TBI Study Program not only focuses on delivering material, but also on developing critical thinking skills, collaboration, and the application of knowledge in the context of students' real lives.

The main findings of this study confirm that the learning process in the English Education Study Program is based on an interactive approach, in which students are encouraged to actively participate through discussions, presentations, and problem solving. Lecturers act as facilitators who guide students to develop independent thinking skills. A holistic approach is applied by directing students to explore information comprehensively, not only from cognitive aspects, but also social, pedagogical, and professional aspects. In addition, an integrative approach ensures the integration of Wahdatul 'Ulum values, English language, and education, so that learning produces prospective language educators with Islamic character and professionalism.

In applying the scientific approach, lecturers guide students to observe, question, reason, and communicate their learning outcomes scientifically, making them role models in the development of attitudes, skills, and knowledge. Learning is also contextual, as the material is directly related to real-life situations where English is used in everyday life, both in formal and informal settings. A thematic approach is used by selecting relevant and current themes, which encourage students to relate theory to the practical use of language in social and professional contexts.

The effectiveness of learning is also evident in the suitability of the materials, methods, and assessments designed in the RPS. The RPS is compiled each semester by the lecturer in charge based on the learning outcomes set by the study program and verified by the Quality Control Group (GKM). This ensures that each course has a clear direction and is in line with the vision and strategy of the study program. This process also guarantees the integration between academic objectives and the implementation of learning in the classroom.

In addition, the results of the study show that collaboration and student-centered learning are key features of the learning process. Students are encouraged to work together through group assignments, projects, and thematic discussions to develop collaborative and reflective thinking skills. Lecturers focus on the individual development of students each week, ensuring that learning is active, participatory, and competency-oriented.

From a technical standpoint, learning activities are conducted both face-to-face and online through the e-learning platform uinsu.ac.id and various other media such as Zoom, Google Meet, Edmodo, and Google Classroom. These platforms not only support interaction between lecturers and students, but also enable GKM and program administrators to monitor the suitability of learning methods with the RPS.

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Standardization of learning quality

Research findings on learning quality standardization in the English Language Education Study Program (TBI) show that the learning process has been designed and implemented with reference to consistent and measurable quality guidelines. The aim is to ensure equality, efficiency, and relevance in education in order to achieve graduate competencies in line with national and international standards. The TBI Study Program implements a standardization system through regulations that cover aspects of graduate competencies, curriculum, learning processes, assessment, lecturer qualifications, supporting facilities, and accreditation and continuous evaluation systems.

Based on the findings, standardization begins with the formulation of clear and measurable graduate competency standards and learning outcomes. Each course has learning outcomes that are tailored to industry needs, scientific developments, and the desired graduate profile. The curriculum is competency-based, ensuring that each course is interconnected and supports the achievement of the graduate profile. Through curriculum mapping, the TBI Study Program maintains continuity between courses and ensures a balance between theory, practice, and the values of Wahdatul 'Ulum, which is the identity of the study program.

The results of the study also show that the learning process standards in the English Education Study Program are implemented with uniform teaching guidelines, but still allow room for lecturer creativity. Learning takes place using various methods such as discussions, projects, problem-based learning, and other interactive approaches. This helps accommodate the diverse learning styles of students and ensures their active involvement in every learning process. In addition, each lecturer is required to prepare a course syllabus that is in line with the learning outcomes and verified by the Quality Control Group (GKM), so that the learning process has a clear direction and the same quality standards in every class.

In terms of assessment and evaluation, the TBI Study Program implements a competency-based assessment system. Assessment is carried out not only through written exams, but also through projects, presentations, practical reports, and active participation in class discussions. Formative and summative evaluations are carried out periodically to monitor student progress and ensure the achievement of learning outcomes. During each Midterm Exam (UTS) and Final Exam (UAS), the GKM checks the alignment between exam questions, learning materials, and the RPS to ensure fairness and accuracy in the evaluation process.

The next finding shows that the quality of lecturers and learning facilities are also an important part of quality standardization. Lecturers in the TBI Study Program have qualifications that are in line with their fields of expertise and are required to undergo regular professional training. The use of educational technology such as the Learning Management System (LMS) — e-learning.uinsu.ac.id — enables lecturers and students to interact effectively and facilitates the documentation of learning processes. Facilities such as classrooms, language laboratories, and access to up-to-date academic resources also support the teaching and learning process to be more contextual and relevant to the needs of students.

In addition, the process of monitoring and evaluating learning quality is carried out systematically by GKM and the Quality Assurance Unit (UPM). They ensure that the implementation, assessment, and learning outcomes are in accordance with the RPS, syllabus,

and the vision and mission of the study program. Evaluations are conducted every semester and followed by annual curriculum evaluations to ensure the sustainability and improvement of learning quality. Internal audits and compliance with national accreditation standards are also carried out to maintain consistent academic quality.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that the English Language Education Study Program has successfully developed a comprehensive and sustainable learning standardization system. Through the integration of graduate competencies, competency-based curriculum, active learning processes, and a rigorous evaluation and quality monitoring system, this study program is able to ensure that all students obtain a quality learning experience that is relevant to global needs. This implementation not only guarantees academic quality, but also strengthens the competitiveness of TBI graduates as educators and professionals who are excellent, have Islamic character, and are ready to face the challenges of the modern world of work.

Determining the research road map for study programs

Determining the research roadmap for a study program is a strategic step to direct research activities in line with the vision, mission, and objectives of the study program, as well as relevant to the needs of industry, society, and scientific developments. This roadmap serves as the main guideline in the management and implementation of research to be more focused, measurable, and have a real impact. In the context of the English Language Education Study Program (TBI), the roadmap is determined systematically by considering academic, institutional, and social aspects that are sustainable.

The first step in formulating a research roadmap is to analyze the vision, mission, and objectives of the study program. This analysis helps ensure that the direction of research supports scientific development and the achievement of the study program's objectives. The focus of research must reflect the values of wahdatul 'ulum, namely the integration of science, Islam, and humanity. The objectives of this roadmap are also aimed at improving the quality of education, strengthening research capacity, and expanding the contribution of research to society and the world of work.

Next, the main research focus areas are identified. This stage involves analyzing the competencies and expertise of lecturers, global trends in science, and the needs of industry and society. In this way, study programs can determine priority research areas that are relevant, applicable, and have high potential for development. For example, in the context of TBI, areas of focus may include research on English language pedagogy, the integration of technology in learning, and the development of an Islamic values-based curriculum. This identification also strengthens collaboration with external institutions to ensure that the results of the research are widely beneficial.

The next step is to prioritize research based on relevance, urgency, and resource availability. Priority is given to research that has a high social and academic impact, as well as opportunities to obtain funding support from national and international institutions. In addition, research that enables cross-university and industry collaboration is also prioritized to expand networks and improve the quality of scientific publications.

In the research roadmap, determining the time frame and achievement targets is also an important aspect. Targets are designed for the short term (1–2 years), medium term (3–5 years), and long term (more than 5 years). Each stage has clear objectives, such as the number

of scientific publications, research collaborations, student involvement in research, and innovation and patents. Periodic evaluations are conducted to ensure that targets are met and to adjust the direction of research in line with scientific trends and community needs.

The integration of research and education is a key element in this roadmap. Research is geared toward supporting the curriculum and becoming part of the student learning process. Students are involved in faculty research projects, research-based final assignments, or research internships. Thus, research activities not only strengthen the academic capacity of faculty members, but also enhance the research competence of students to prepare them for the professional and academic world.

In addition, the research roadmap also emphasizes the importance of identifying funding sources. Research funds can come from internal university sources, government agencies such as the Ministry of Education or LPDP, as well as international institutions and industry. Strategic partnerships with external parties are one of the main strategies in supporting research sustainability and expanding opportunities for the application of research results in the real world.

The next stage involves the publication and dissemination of research results. The study program sets targets for scientific publications in reputable national and international journals, and encourages the dissemination of research results through seminars, workshops, and community service activities. Innovative research results are also directed towards obtaining patents to increase commercial value and contribute to the development of science.

The research roadmap also encourages collaboration and networking with other universities, research institutions, and industry. This collaboration opens up opportunities for knowledge exchange, joint research, and improved quality of scientific publications. For example, cooperation between the TBI Study Program and international language education institutions can produce innovative research in the field of applied linguistics or technology-based language learning.

Finally, the research roadmap is complemented by an evaluation and impact measurement mechanism. Evaluations are conducted periodically using key performance indicators (KPIs), such as the number of publications, patents, collaborations, and innovations implemented. This process ensures that all research activities proceed according to plan and contribute to the institution's vision.

The research roadmap implemented by the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Islamic Teacher Training and Education, UIN Sultan Syarif Sulaiman is as follows: integration of technology in English language learning (2023–2024), development of English language teaching human resources (2024–2025), development of research capacity (2025–2026), as well as inclusive education and scientific development of English language education and management in Islamic boarding schools/IT schools. The entire roadmap is based on the 2017–2045 National Research Master Plan (RIRN) established by RISTEKDIKTI, the 2020–2024 National Research Priorities also established by RISTEKDIKTI, the National Religious Research Agenda (ARKAN) established by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2018–2028 period, as well as the UINSU research roadmap for 2020–2024.

Determining the road map for community service

The results of the study show that the Community Service (PKM) roadmap in the English Language Education Study Program (TBI) and the Study Program Management Unit (UPPS) has been systematically developed to guide all community service activities in line with the vision, mission, and objectives of the institution. This roadmap emphasizes the identification of priority PKM activities that are in line with community needs and educational developments, the formulation of measurable objectives, realistic implementation strategies, and sustainable evaluation and monitoring mechanisms.

In its implementation, the TBI Study Program focuses its PKM activities on information technology-based community service, community service in the new normal, and activities in formal, non-formal, and informal education. Community service activities are focused on the integration of technology in English language learning and the development of innovative educational artifacts. Various concrete programs have been carried out, such as training in the use of technology in English language learning, the creation of technology-based teaching materials, digital literacy training for teachers and students, and the development of hybrid and distance learning classes.

In addition, webinars, seminars, and educational sessions are regularly held to raise awareness and improve the competence of educators in applying educational technology. The study program also acts as a consultant for English teachers in developing more creative and contextual learning methods. Overall, the results of this study indicate that the TBI Study Program's PKM roadmap has been effective in combining elements of technology, innovation, and the needs of the educational community, while strengthening the study program's tangible contribution to the development of English education quality in the digital era.

Efforts to establish domestic and international cooperation

The TBI FITK UIN SU Medan study program strives to collaborate with several institutions, both domestic and foreign, as part of its efforts to improve the quality of its alumni.

International cooperation, this international collaboration can improve the quality of lecturers and students. The activities carried out include visiting lecturers, training, and student exchanges. This can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. *International cooperation*

No	Name of Institution/Partner	Form of Cooperation
1	World Learning	Lecturer Training
2	Politeknik Port Dickson	Student Exchange, Visiting Lecturer
3	The University of Newcastle	Visiting Lecturer
4	University of Kentucky, USA	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
5	Tanoto Foundation	Training for Lecturers and Students
6	USAID Prioritas	Training for Lecturers and Students

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7	Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, Brunei Darussalam	Visiting Lecturer
8	Universiti Sains Malaysia	Visiting Lecturer
9	Universiti Malaysia Serawak	Visiting Lecturer
10	Universiti Islam Pahang Sultan Ahmad Shah, Malaysia	Visiting Lecturer
11	Sekolah Thamvuttaya Mulniti (TVM)	Visiting Lecturer
12	Jamiah Islam Sheikh Daud Al Fathani (JISDA)	Visiting Lecturer
13	Al Madinah International University (MEDIU)	Visiting Lecturer
14	Universiti Malaya, Malaysia	Visiting Lecturer
15	Universiti Putra Malaysia	Visiting Lecturer
16	Open Learning	Lecturer Training
17	RELO	Lecturer Training
18	U.S. Embassy / Consulate General	Lecturer Training
19	National Geographic	Lecturer Training

Table 2. *National cooperation*

No	Name of Institution/Partner	Form of Cooperation
1	Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al-Washliyah	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
2	Universitas Bengkulu	Visiting Lecturer
3	IAIN Langsa	Visiting Lecturer
4	Fakultas Tarbiyah dan ilmu keguruan IAIN Batusangkar	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
5	Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan keguruan IAIN Metro	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
6	Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan keguruan IAIN Ponorogo	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
7	Jurusan Tarbiyah Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Sorong	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
8	Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif hidayatullah jakarta	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
9	Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Sultan Syarif kasim Riau	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
10	Yayasan Pembinaan Muallaf Al Muhajirin Bumi Asri Medan	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
11	Kementerian Agama Kabupaten Batubara	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
12	Muatan Lokal Agama Islam Sumatera Utara (MAISU)	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
13	Program Studi PAI Pascasarjana Institut Agama Islam Negeri Lhokseumawe	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
14	Observatorium Ilmu Falak UMSU	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
15	Pascasarjana Program Magister UIN Padangsidimpuan	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
16	Pascasarjana UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education

17	Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
18	Lembaga Komunikasi dan Informasi Dosen (LEMKOMINDO)	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
19	Pascasarjana Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
20	Program Studi Ilmu Pendidikan Agama Islam FPIPS UPI Bandung	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
21	Universitas Negeri Jakarta	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education
22	Palang Merah Indonesia	Improvement of the Three Pillars of Higher Education

The results of the study show that cooperation between study programs and external parties, both at the national and international levels, has a significant impact on improving academic quality, student development, and institutional reputation. Through this cooperation, the curriculum can be tailored to the needs of industry so that graduates are better prepared to enter the workforce. Internship and work experience programs resulting from collaboration with companies and external institutions also provide real-world experience for students while opening up opportunities for graduate employment.

In addition, academic cooperation with other universities and research institutions strengthens collaborative research activities, faculty and student exchanges, and enriches scientific publications and knowledge transfer. The impact is evident in the increased reputation of study programs through accreditation and international recognition, as well as the adoption of best practices from more advanced institutions. This collaboration also expands access to research resources, funding, and scholarships that support the academic and professional development of lecturers and students.

On the other hand, students benefit in the form of improved soft skills, professional networks, and multicultural experiences gained through seminars, exchanges, and global projects. International cooperation also helps students and lecturers compete at the global level through participation in competitions, dual degree programs, or international certification. Overall, these findings indicate that external cooperation is an important strategy for enhancing the global competitiveness of study programs, strengthening the quality of education, and expanding academic contributions at the national and international levels.

Improving facilities and infrastructure

The results of the study show that improvements in facilities and infrastructure in the English Language Education Study Program (TBI) at FITK UIN SU have a direct impact on improving graduate competence and the overall quality of the academic process. Modern learning facilities such as interactive classrooms, language laboratories, and stable internet connections have been proven to increase learning effectiveness and enable the application of innovative methods such as blended learning and flipped classrooms. Laboratories equipped with the latest technology also encourage students to conduct relevant research that is competitive at the national and international levels.

In addition to supporting learning, improved facilities also strengthen the competitiveness of graduates. Students gain access to simulation-based training, computer

laboratories with the latest software, and innovation and entrepreneurship centers that enable them to hone practical and creative skills in line with industry needs. Lecturers also benefit from more comfortable workspaces and access to technology that facilitates research and the development of teaching materials.

Supporting facilities such as auditoriums, organization rooms, sports facilities, and career centers contribute to the development of students' soft skills, such as leadership, communication, and teamwork. Inclusive facilities such as ramps for people with disabilities also reinforce the aspect of equality in the learning environment. In addition, integrated information system-based academic services make lecture administration more efficient and transparent.

Overall, these results confirm that improvements in facilities and infrastructure are not merely complementary, but rather strategic factors that determine the quality of learning, research productivity, academic community welfare, and program reputation. With adequate and internationally-standard facilities, the TBI study program can create a conducive, innovative, and competitive academic environment, thereby producing graduates who are excellent and adaptable to global challenges.

Improving the quality of lecturers and educational staff

The results of the study show that improving the quality of lecturers and educational staff in the English Language Education Study Program (TBI) FITK UIN North Sumatra has a real impact on the quality of education and professionalism of the institution. The data shows that ten lecturers have completed their doctoral studies (S3), three lecturers are currently pursuing their S3, and ten others hold master's degrees (S2). In terms of functional positions, there are three professors, five senior lecturers, nine lecturers, and three assistant experts. A total of 15 lecturers have obtained teaching certificates, while five others are still in the process of obtaining them.

Efforts to improve quality are carried out through various concrete strategies, such as providing administrative support for lecturers who continue their studies, assisting with functional promotions, and disseminating information on promotions through internal communication groups. The study program also actively recommends lecturers to participate in educator certification and professional training programs. In addition, the university provides training, workshops, and seminars for lecturers and educational staff to improve their pedagogical, research, academic management, and administrative skills.

The results can be seen in the increased academic and professional competence of lecturers, the strengthening of research activities, and the increasingly innovative quality of teaching through the application of modern learning technologies and methods such as blended learning and project-based learning. Educational staff have also shown improvements in the efficiency of academic services through training in management, information technology, and excellent service.

Institutionally, FITK UIN Sumatera Utara has a well-documented and structured human resource recruitment and development system, ensuring the quality of lecturers and educational staff relevant to the needs of the study program. The lecturer-to-student ratio (1:8.35) indicates an ideal proportion for effective learning. Overall, these findings confirm that the development of lecturers and educational staff at TBI FITK UIN SU has been

optimal, positively impacting academic quality, institutional performance, and the reputation of study programs at the national level.

Discussion

Improving the competence of college graduates, especially in the context of English Education study programs, is a crucial issue in responding to the challenges of an increasingly competitive job market. Various studies have been conducted to explore effective strategies for improving graduate competence, one of which is a case study of the English Education Study Program at UIN Sumatera Utara Medan.

This study identifies several important aspects that need to be considered in improving graduate competency. Formulating a relevant vision, mission, and objectives is a crucial initial step. The vision, mission, and objectives of the study program must align with job market needs. This ensures that the curriculum and learning activities designed can produce graduates with competencies that align with industry demands.

Supportive learning characteristics are also a crucial factor in improving graduate competency. Effective learning must consider student characteristics, both in terms of learning styles and interests. Furthermore, the use of varied and innovative learning methods is essential to increase student engagement in the learning process.

Furthermore, standardizing learning quality serves as a crucial benchmark for assessing the quality of the learning process. The implementation of clear and measurable quality standards encompasses various aspects such as lecturer competence, the availability of facilities and infrastructure, and a continuous learning evaluation system. With these standards, the learning process can be guaranteed to be consistent in producing quality graduates.

A continuously developed research roadmap also plays a significant role in encouraging lecturers and students to produce scientific work relevant to industry needs. This step not only improves the quality of graduates but also contributes to the development of scientific knowledge within the academic environment.

Furthermore, collaboration with other institutions, both nationally and internationally, is crucial for expanding networks and providing opportunities for students to gain broader and more applicable learning experiences. This collaboration can also enhance the study program's reputation on the global stage.

The next factor is improving facilities and infrastructure. The availability of adequate facilities, such as language laboratories equipped with the latest technology, significantly supports the effectiveness of the learning process. These facilities allow students to practice and improve their English skills in a more interactive and practical way.

Finally, improving the quality of lecturers is equally important. As the spearhead of the learning process, lecturers need to continuously improve their competencies through training, professional development, and incentives. These efforts aim to ensure that lecturers can provide relevant, innovative learning that aligns with developments in the educational world and industry needs.

Previous research on improving graduate competency indicates several aspects that require attention. Improving the quality of education is one key factor, which can be achieved through curriculum development, the implementation of innovative learning methods, and evaluations relevant to the needs of the workplace. These efforts aim to ensure that the

educational process focuses not only on knowledge transfer but also on developing holistic competencies for students.

Furthermore, developing soft skills also plays a crucial role in enhancing graduates' competitiveness. Soft skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving are highly sought-after skills in the modern workplace. Universities need to instill these skills through both academic and non-academic activities to better prepare graduates for professional development.

Another factor is collaboration with industry, which serves as a crucial bridge between education and the workplace. Strong partnerships with various industrial sectors enable universities to tailor their curricula to job market needs, ensuring graduates possess relevant and applicable competencies. This collaboration can take the form of internships, joint projects, or industry-based training.

Furthermore, improving facilities and infrastructure also plays a significant role in supporting an effective learning process. Adequate facilities, such as laboratories, interactive learning spaces, and access to modern technology, enable students and faculty to engage in academic activities more optimally. With the support of good facilities, the learning process can proceed productively and efficiently.

Overall, improving graduate competency is a complex endeavor that requires commitment from various parties. Combining the results of previous research and a case study of the English Language Education Study Program at UIN Sumatera Utara Medan, it can be concluded that improving graduate competency can be achieved through careful planning, measurable program implementation, and ongoing evaluation. This approach ensures that each development step is carried out systematically and oriented towards improving graduate quality.

In addition to the points mentioned above, there are several other important aspects that study programs must address to improve the quality of their graduates. Curating an industry-based curriculum is a key step, adapting the content and structure of the curriculum to meet the evolving needs of the workforce. Regular updates to teaching materials are necessary to align with the latest technological developments, innovations, and industry trends. This ensures that students acquire applicable knowledge that meets the demands of the times.

Furthermore, developing soft skills is an equally important aspect. Today's workforce demands graduates who excel not only in hard skills but also in communication, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork. Study programs can integrate the development of these soft skills into lectures, group projects, and extracurricular activities to ensure students have a balance between technical and interpersonal skills.

Furthermore, internship and work experience programs also play a significant role in enhancing students' readiness for the workforce. By collaborating with companies or related institutions, study programs can provide students with opportunities to gain hands-on experience in a professional environment. This experience not only enriches students' understanding of the working world but also helps them build valuable professional networks for the future.

Collaboration with industry and alumni also needs to be strengthened through activities such as guest lectures, workshops, and seminars involving practitioners or successful alumni in their fields. These activities broaden students' horizons regarding the application of knowledge in real-world contexts and motivate them to excel in their respective fields.

Furthermore, implementing a project-based learning system can be an effective strategy for training students in applying theory to practice. Through real-world projects, both individual and group, students can develop critical, collaborative, and creative thinking skills, which are essential in the modern workplace.

Study programs can also strengthen students' competencies through professional certification, which provides them with the opportunity to obtain industry-recognized professional certifications before graduation. This certification enhances graduates' added value and helps them compete more effectively in the job market.

In terms of facilities, improving supporting facilities such as laboratories and libraries, as well as access to the latest software and technology, is essential. Modern and adequate facilities will create a conducive learning environment and support optimal learning.

Study programs also need to focus on student career development. Through career guidance and mentoring services, students can plan their career paths early on. Activities such as CV training, interview simulations, and career counseling can help them thoroughly prepare for entering the workforce.

Furthermore, research activities and scientific publications should be encouraged. Students should be given the opportunity to participate in research and publish their findings. This can improve their academic abilities, broaden their scientific horizons, and build their confidence in the professional world.

Finally, developing an entrepreneurial spirit is becoming an increasingly important aspect of higher education. By offering entrepreneurship courses or programs, students can learn to create their own job opportunities and innovate in their fields. This approach not only produces work-ready graduates but also a creative, independent, and entrepreneurial generation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the data presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the efforts made by the English Language Education Study Program (TBI) FITK UIN North Sumatra Medan are very varied and cover various important aspects in developing the quality of education.

First, academic endeavors are carried out through the development of a clear vision, mission, and objectives for study programs that are relevant to the needs of higher education and the evolving world of work. Furthermore, study programs strive to meet learning characteristics that align with established quality standards, implement learning quality standardization, and develop a research and community service roadmap as a strategic guide for developing academic activities.

Second, the TBI study program at the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology (FITK) of UIN North Sumatra Medan is also actively collaborating with various institutions, both nationally and internationally. This collaboration aims to expand academic networks, increase opportunities for research collaboration, and provide broader experiences and insights for both faculty and students.

Third, the study program is committed to improving educational facilities and infrastructure to support effective and high-quality learning. Adequate facilities are a crucial factor in creating a conducive and innovative academic environment.

Fourth, the study program also continuously strives to improve the quality of its lecturers, both in terms of educational level, functional position, and teacher certification. This effort is undertaken to ensure that teaching staff possess the appropriate academic and professional competencies, enabling them to optimally contribute to improving the quality of study program graduates.

This research utilizes only one website. It would be beneficial to expand this research by adding other websites. These other websites can serve as comparisons to identify similarities or differences in the efforts undertaken between the sites. This can also enrich the public's knowledge of what preparations are needed to improve graduate competency. Furthermore, the comparison websites should be from overseas to provide a more diverse range of information.

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