



**International Journal of Education, Social Studies,
And Management (IJESSM)**

e-ISSN : 2775-4154

Volume 3, Issue 2, June 2023

The International Journal of Education, Social Studies, and Management (IJESSM) is published 3 times a year (**February, June, November**).

Focus : Education, Social, Economy, Management, And Culture.

LINK : <http://lppipublishing.com/index.php/ijessm>

Exploring English Teachers' Views on the Compulsory English Subject for Non-English Major Students: A Case Study at an Indonesian University

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the perspectives of English teachers regarding the factors influencing the teaching and learning of English as a compulsory subject, specifically the English conversation course (Matakuliah Institusi), for non-English major students at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University in Baubau. The study employed semi-structured interviews with six English teachers affiliated with the English study program at the university. By examining both positive and negative aspects, the research aimed to identify the factors that impact the quality of instruction and learning in the English conversation course. The findings highlight several factors, including the syllabus, availability of resources and equipment, students' attitudes and motivation towards learning English, participation in extracurricular activities, class size, institutional support, and teachers' enthusiasm. These factors were identified by the teachers as having both positive and negative influences on the course. Furthermore, the English teachers were given the opportunity to provide suggestions for program improvement, such as emphasizing the importance of support and commitment from the heads of each study program.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received

05 July 2023

Revised

20 August 2023


Accepted

17 September 2023

Keywords

Doi

Corresponding

Author 

Compulsory Subject, Perspective, Non-English Major Students, University

[10.52121/ijessm.v3i2.173](https://doi.org/10.52121/ijessm.v3i2.173)

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of Globalization, English has become an essential part as it refers to as "The International Language". English is used in various contexts, either in the workplace, universities, schools, government institutions, and many more. Indonesia, as the ASEAN's growing powerhouse, is placing a strong emphasis on building up regional economic and political ties. This made English as a foreign language in many universities in Indonesia enjoys significant priority. Thus, many higher institutions in Indonesia have

recognized the growing need for English for their graduates so that in the future they will have greater opportunities to acquire jobs, fast promotions, and brighter careers in the workplace. According to Crystal (1997), Mastering the English language means opportunities, higher education, and get brighter career.

In Indonesia, graduates with English competence have become one of the quality indicators of what is called a "Good University". The knowledge of the English language is an influential employment skill crucially contributing to the student's success after graduation (Mainardes, Ferreira, & Tontini, 2011). In order to achieve this competence, many Universities in Indonesia offer their non-English major students English as a mandatory subject. It is generally named mata kuliah umum Bahasa Inggris. However, the English subject offered in many universities in Indonesia is programmed by the students only once during their study and it is regarded as a mandatory subject.

Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University has a different version of English subject offered for its students. The university names it English institutional subject which means Mata Kuliah Institusi-Bahasa Inggris and Bahasa Inggris Lanjutan (MKI). The MKI was first introduced in 2019 and initiated by the rector of the University. The purpose of the program is to equip all the non-English major students at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University with English skills, especially conversation skills. In MKI Bahasa Inggris and Bahasa Inggris lanjutan, the students are obligated to enroll in the subject and must pass the courses as the requirements to complete their studies. In MKI, the students from non-English backgrounds are expected to be able to master not only their own background knowledge but also English skills although the basic ones as in the form of speaking skills as an effort to produce competitive graduates for their future career. It means that Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University expects that all the graduates will be more prepared and ready to compete with other graduates from other Universities in and outside the country of Indonesia.

In addition, through the support of the government of Indonesia in arranging several policies and initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in the Indonesian education system, convinced leaders at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University to support the policy to equip all the non-English majored students with a more focused English program in order to improve the EFL teaching and learning quality in Unidayan as acknowledged by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. These efforts are undertaken to focus not only on students' academic achievements in English but also on the quality of instruction during the EFL teaching and learning process such as using more students-centered activities,

communication-oriented learning, as well as a course syllabus and curriculum that has been made to attain the intended learning objectives.

However, as teachers play an important role in the process of English Institution Course MKI implementation, it cannot be denied that there are still several challenges and issues encountered by EFL teachers. This leads to the fact that the benefits of teaching and learning EFL for non-English major students at Universities in Indonesia is still a debatable issue. As a result, this paper aims to address factors that hinder effective classroom teaching and learning for the non-English students at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University Baubau based on English Teachers' Perspectives. This paper will explore both negative and positive factors that affect the EFL teaching quality at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University.

Teacher's Beliefs in Language Teaching and Learning

Teachers' beliefs are the ones that contribute to determining whether the language teaching and learning process is effective or not. Teachers who have a deep-rooted belief about their ability to teach will cover the weakness of a good curriculum, appropriate materials, and learning resources for their teaching (Richards, 2001: 209). The beliefs of EFL teachers on English language teaching and learning have been explored in many aspects and it has been shown that teachers' beliefs will influence their teaching practices in the classroom (Chen & Goh, 2011). In addition, teachers' firm beliefs about how a language is learned will influence their teaching style in the classroom more than any other methodologies, approaches, and coursebooks they are told to adopt and follow (Chen & Goh, 2011). The role of teachers in teaching a language in the classroom will function effectively when they believe themselves to be strong in mastering language skills. English language teachers serve as quality facilitators who take control of the quality of Education, and their beliefs have a considerable influence on their practice of teaching (Chen & Goh, 2011).

Teachers are the ones that finally contribute to determining whether the program is successful or not. Good teachers are frequently able to cover the weaknesses of a good curriculum, appropriate materials, and learning resources for their teaching (Richards, 2001, p. 209). The role of the teacher will function efficiently when they are given sufficient support by the institution. They must be chosen according to their skills and qualifications and given opportunities for developing their potential in order to attain a highly qualified teaching practice.

Teachers' Attitude in ELT (English Language Teaching)

Several issues associated with teachers' attitudes have been explored and discussed by scholars and educators. There are some factors that contribute to

teachers' attitudes in English language teaching, and recognizing the challenges encountered by English teachers in their teaching is significant. One of the challenges that the teachers encounter is a lack of support from university leaders. For example; the educational goals are not clearly stated, the teaching program is not well planned and organized, there is no learning commitment, and less expectation that students will perform effectively. The programs of the school should be regularly reviewed and progress regarding their aims should be evaluated (Richards, 2001: 201). The effectiveness of the learning process in the classroom is also inhibited by students' lack of enthusiasm for class participation due to their commitment to learning (Chen & Goh, 2011). In addition, according to Chen & Goh (2011), a lack of sufficient time for learning English subjects makes it complicated for teachers to achieve their teaching goals, particularly in improving the skills of the students in speaking and listening. English Institutional Course or Mata Kuliah Institusi Bahasa Inggris as a compulsory subject is only offered from the first semester and ends in the fourth semester. Moreover, other difficulties that contribute to teachers' attitudes are a lack of students' motivation to learn English, poor equipment and facilities, and a poor English-speaking environment (Chen & Goh, 2011).

Factor of Teaching

Indeed, some principles reflected in the teaching activities, methodologies, materials, strategies, techniques, and even assessments should go along with a good teaching process. This means that a good quality of teaching will never happen when there is no effort from the teachers and the institution should facilitate this (Richards, 2001: 217-218). According to Li (2012), effective language teaching consists of nine standards, they are; 1). The expectation to implement the challenging curriculum should be high, 2). An accessible designed standard academic content, 3). Relevant instruction should be both culturally and explicitly offered by teachers, 4). Learning strategies and metacognitive strategies should be supported, 5). Teachers should use students' first language purposefully with challenging concepts, 6). Vocabulary should be taught by teachers within various contexts, 7). Building reading comprehension ability, 8). Teachers should give great oral and written language models for students to follow, and 9). Teachers should integrate the four skills in English (speaking, writing, reading, and listening). These last factors encourage students to be explored by the English teachers in the process of learning as learning doesn't look the same as teaching. The extent to which teaching attains its aims will depend on how the teachers have been successfully applying these components in the process of planning and delivery of their teaching in the classroom.

Institutional Factor

An institution should fulfill eight points of quality indicators in order to be effective. 1) The educational goals have to be clearly stated; 2). The program should be well organized, planned, and balanced in order to meet students' needs; 3). The process should exist in an identifiable and systematic way to determine the school's educational needs and place them in priority; 4). The existence of learning commitment, and expectation that students will perform effectively; 5). Staff should be involved greatly in developing aims and creating decisions; 6). Motivating and unifying teaching force should exist with great team spirit; 7). Administrators should pay attention to teachers' skill development and build opportunities to utilize their skills and experience; 8). The programs of the school should be regularly reviewed and progress regarding their aims should be evaluated (Richards, 2001: 201). He further explains that clear vision, mission, and strategic plans should be owned by education institutions in order to attain their institutional aims, appropriate curriculum, good quality assurance mechanism, flexible structural organization, smooth internal communication, improving staff's competence, providing adequate opportunity for its staff for developing their potentials, and providing a conducive learning environment. (Richards, 2001: 202-207). The role of teachers in teaching English at a university will function efficiently when they are given sufficient support by the institution. Also, they must be chosen according to their skills and qualifications and given opportunities for developing their potential in order to attain a highly qualified teaching practice. Thus, teachers are the ones that finally contribute to determining whether English learning in a University is successful or not. Good teachers are frequently able to cover the weaknesses of a good curriculum, appropriate materials, and learning resources for their teaching (Richards, 2001: 209).

In general, there have been several issues relating to English as a foreign language teaching explored and discussed, however, very limited research undertaken that focuses merely on the Indonesian higher education context. Therefore, this paper seeks to provide insight into Teachers' perception of the efficacy of teaching the English language as a compulsory subject at one of the Universities in South East Sulawesi Province, Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

Study design

The study is a qualitative research that was conducted using semi-structured interviews, and non-participant observations as the technique of data collection. This study focuses on investigating English Teachers'

perspectives on factors that affect English teaching and learning as a compulsory subject for non-English major students at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University Baubau. To achieve this, the study will use the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews.

Participants

The participants recruited in the study were EFL teachers at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University. The researcher used purposive sampling where the inclusion criteria are EFL teachers who actively teach non-English-major students at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University Baubau. There were 6 EFL teachers in this study aged from 32 years old to 45 years old. These EFL teachers have varying experience in English teaching from 7 to 20 years, and they hold both master's and doctoral degrees in the area of English education and English Linguistics.

Data Collection Procedure

Invitation letters for joining the study were sent to the EFL teachers of Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University Baubau. Each participant was interviewed face to-face for approximately 40 minutes and recorded with the permission of the participants. Then the researcher entirely transcribed all the conversations in order to confirm the validity and the meanings of the data. The questions of the interviews were related to the research question: English Teachers' Perspectives on factors that affect EFL teaching and learning as a compulsory subject for non-English major students at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University Baubau.

Data Analysis

The EFL teachers of Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University are coded in Table 1 below

Table 1.
Coding for Interview Participants

English Teachers	Identification	Interview Dates
Participant A	P.A	12 July 2023
Participant B	P.B	12 July 2023
Participant C	P.C	13 July 2023
Participant D	P.D	13 July 2023
Participant E	P.E	13 July 2023
Participant F	P.F	14 July 2023

In this study, the researcher used the qualitative data analysis instruction introduced by Creswell (2009) in analyzing the data. The researcher read all the transcripts that were recorded during the interview with the EFL teachers to identify the main theme and described all the transcribed interviews into some

sub-themes. Then the transcribed answers were coded as; P.A.14.7.23 which means that this quote was extracted from Participant A, on 14 July 2023.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The positive and negative aspects of English Teaching and Learning as an Institutional Course

During the process of interviewing the teachers, every important aspect associated with teaching and learning English as Mata Kuliah Institusi or Institutional Course for the non-English major students at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin Univeristy was explored. The teachers were open to sharing and discussing both the positive and negative sides of teaching and learning English Institutional Courses for non-English major students. The teachers mentioned some aspects of teaching MKI to the non-English major students at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University such as the syllabus, support from the Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University leaders, teaching facilities, students' attitudes and motivations, and institution support.

Teachers Educational Background

All the teachers' educational backgrounds involved in this study were specialized in English education and linguistics studies. All of them had Bachelor's degrees in English education from one of the best local universities in the region. The teachers had various master's and doctoral qualifications, 3 of them had master's degrees specializing in English education, 2 of them in Applied Linguistics, and 1 Doctoral with specialization in English studies. The majority of the teachers interviewed said that they continued their master's degrees at some best Universities in Indonesia that have already had international reputations in the field of education, especially English education.

Syllabus

In terms of the syllabus, all teachers stated that they made no complaint about the syllabus as it had been designed by them and other English teachers at the University. There is a coordinator (a senior English lecturer at the University) and other teachers who are responsible for designing the syllabus to meet the student's needs. All the things like the syllabus and 'guidebook' are discussed together. The syllabus was designed in 2019. All the lessons and topics in the syllabus were arranged specifically and systematically with a focus on conversational skills.

Generally, the teachers mentioned that every syllabus had its own positives and negatives and they had no problem with the English institutional course syllabus used at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University. The teachers mentioned that some small things were merely how the teachers could make

full use of the syllabus and adjust it to appropriate levels, classrooms, and contexts as the students come from different faculties and study programs. Teacher B said:

I think the material provided in the syllabus is a bit harder for some students to follow such as in the listening session, there are some parts that do not meet the student's level. Moreover, when students enroll in the MKI Bahasa Inggris lanjutan in the next semester, I combine it with English for specific purposes and materials for the lesson in order to make the students more focused on English which is commonly used in their field of study. For example, when I teach English to law students, I will insert some common English for Law vocabulary for my students. (Interview excerpt P.B.12.07.23).

Another thing that became an issue in the syllabus was it does not cover the students' levels of English abilities. The syllabus should be divided and presented over the semesters as the non-English major students enrolled MKI two times namely dasar-dasar percakapan bahasa Inggris (English basic conversations) in the first semester and Bahasa Inggris lanjutan (advanced English) in the second semester. Teacher C stated:

It was a bit harder for me when it comes to teaching the non-English-major students at Unidayan in the next semester, whether I should use the same topics as I teach in the previous semester. As the students were getting better, I had to make a new syllabus that covered the students' current level of English and avoided the repetition of my material for my students. (Interview excerpt P.C.13.07.23).

Facilities and Equipment

Most teachers interviewed stated that they were pretty satisfied with the teaching facilities and equipment provided at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University. The classrooms were better-equipped with a data projector and air conditioner. The chairs, whiteboard, and table were all in good condition. Especially the air conditioner, as the teachings were all conducted in the midday, the air conditioner was very helpful. It made the lesson getting comfortable and enjoyable. Teacher F Said:

A classroom with comfortable chairs, whiteboard, as well as a data projector and air conditioner installed were very useful for my teaching. I got 2 classes and both of them were at 13.00 P.M. I found that it was still comfortable for me and the students felt the same even on a sunny day. The data projector also helped a lot as I sometimes showed the students some video clips about English conversations and asked them to demonstrate in front of the class. (Interview Excerpt P.F.14.07.23).

However, even though the teaching facility provided by the University was appreciated by the teachers, some other teachers explained that it was still not enough. Some teachers were struggling to get speakers to support their

teaching in the classroom especially when it comes to teaching listening. The teacher needs speakers to correct the students' pronunciations. Teacher B said:

It was sometimes hard for me to get speakers to support my teaching because I needed it. I think all the study programs should provide audio for English teachers because it is essential when teaching listening and correcting students' pronunciations. Frequently, I have to use my own voice to pronounce the words correctly and ask the students to copy or repeat after me. In order to make the teaching more effective, I wished that all the study programs at the University should provide their own speakers in the classroom for the English teachers. (Interview Excerpt P.B.12.07.23).

Students Attitude and Motivation to Learn English

During the interview with the teachers, it appeared that most of the teachers complained about the non-English major students' attitude and motivation to learn English in the classroom. Even though the teachers explained that there were still some students who were already interested in learning English, there were some others who had less motivation to learn English. Teacher D said:

As we know the students came from non-English study programs which led to less both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn English. They enrolled in the program just to fulfill the requirement of being a graduate, not to seriously learn English. So in this case, it was a challenge for me to motivate the students and make sure that they could follow my instruction well. It pushed me to create an interesting and interactive teaching method and learning environment to make them interested in English. They were eventually motivated and encouraged to learn English. (Interview Excerpt P.A.12.07.23).

Moreover, four out of six teachers stated that students' attitudes toward English will depend on which study program or department that the students come from. It means that students from different study programs would have different attitudes towards English. Generally, students from management, such as public administration, management, law, and public health were more eager to English and learn better than the students from the faculty of engineering such as mechanical, civil, informatics, and mining engineering. Teacher E said:

Some teachers here randomly teach students from various backgrounds of studies every semester. For example, in the next semester, I teach English in civil engineering, and in the next odd semester, I will teach public health students. I found that students from different backgrounds would have different characteristics. For example, based on my experience, students who were from management, public administration, management, and law seemed to have a more positive attitude and were more eager to study English. They did all the assignments and scored better on all the tests that I gave. Meanwhile,

most students from the faculty of engineering had less motivation and interest to learn English. (Interview Excerpt P.E.13.07.23)

No Rooms For English Activities Outside Class time

Discussing the support from Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University leaders, four out of six English teachers complained that the students still had no extra activities to develop and improve their English ability except the regular English schedule. Some teachers said that students needed to have extra hours like English clubs, organizations, and groups that focus on conversational skills or other skills in English. Teacher C claimed:

Extra activities outside the regular English meeting in the classroom should be held. The university leaders should have effective outside class time activities to support students' needs in developing their English abilities. In other words, the institution should provide a support system for non-English major students to practice their English outside the classrooms. Things like English clubs and English organizations should exist. It would help them to make friends from different study programs at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University and share ways to develop their English ability so that these students can actively practice their English after class, and discuss and share what they have learned. (Interview Excerpt P.C.13.07.23).

Some teachers also suggested the university leaders conduct English competitions for the non-English major students from all study programs at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University in order to push their interests and motivations in studying English. One of the reasons why students had poor motivation to learn English was they had no place to show and perform their English. Teacher D said:

University leaders should conduct an English competition for these non-English major students. I think the English department can conduct an English competition for all study programs, such as speaking contests, debate competitions, public speaking, and so on. The university can provide a prize so that the students are motivated to participate in the event and as a result, they will struggle to improve their English. There were some students who had the potential to participate and someday they could be one of the non-English majored students who can go internationally to represent the University in the global event. This would make the university leader's expectations become reality. (Interview Excerpt P.D.13.07.23)

Various Class Sizes in Each Study Program

All teachers interviewed reported that the number of students in the classroom varied and it depended on which study programs the students come from. Based on the interview, the teachers had to deal with a huge class and a small class. However, all teachers became very critical when it comes to

working with big class sizes. Normally, they found that the number of students in their classroom was 40 to 50 students.

Institution's Support in Providing Schedule for English Teaching

All teachers interviewed agreed that the institution had arranged the schedule well so that it would not disturb teachers' timetables when teaching in their English study program. All English teachers' schedule in teaching the non-English major students was held on Friday and Saturday. This would have been acceptable if the students were scheduled to learn English on Friday or Saturday because they would have more spare time to focus on English. All teachers said that the students had studied many subjects from their own study programs from Monday to Thursday so they would have more concentration in learning English.

Institution's Support in Giving Adequate Salary for English Teachers

All English teachers interviewed agreed that the salary had been paid enough by the institutions and the payment was always on time every semester break. The salary that the teachers earn is paid every semester because the teachers already become permanent employees at the university and they also have monthly salaries from the institutions. In addition, based on the interview, the teachers stated that the salary earned was positive and it gave them more motivation to contribute to improving the non-English major students' English at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University.

Teachers Enthusiasm in Teaching the Non-English Majored Students

Teachers' role in teaching non-English major students was crucial and vital. They were responsible for creating an interesting and fascinating atmosphere in the classroom. Even though teachers sometimes were tired due to the busy schedule teaching in their own study program, their enthusiasm, activeness, and excitement played an important role in making English teaching effective. They should come up with good preparation, and readiness to teach English to the non-English major students at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University. Teacher A said:

As a teacher, we should always be motivated to teach the students, because when the teachers are motivated the students will have a positive attitude to learn English. On the contrary, when teachers cannot manage the classroom well and have no motivation to teach, the students will do the same. This was a very important principle and fundamental. So, it all depended on us as a teacher to be always motivated and excited in teaching English. As a consequence, it would become a good way to drive those who have less motivation to learn English and would in the end become a motivated English learner. (Interview Excerpt P.A.12.07.23)

English Teachers' Expectations and Suggestions for the English basic conversation program to become better at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University

In the interview, the English teachers were also asked to give suggestions and express their expectations in order for the MKI program to become better. Interestingly, five out of six teachers revealed it is important for all the heads of the study program at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin to convince and inform the students about the importance of English for their future careers. All the heads of study programs are responsible for the student's attitude toward English, if they convince the students to study well during the lesson, the student's attitude and motivation to learn English will be getting high. Teacher D shared his ideas: *Sometimes, we found some students who had less motivation to participate during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. It was not only because of the students' intrinsic motivation but also extrinsic motivation. Thus, all the deans and study program leaders should inform the students of the importance of this English for them so that the students do not take it for granted. Their perception of English will motivate the students to focus on improving their English ability and learn seriously during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. (Interview Excerpt P.D.14.07.23).*

Discussion

The results of the study reveal that overall the facilities and equipment at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University has been well equipped and acceptable, particularly for the teaching and learning activity of English institution subject. This is because the Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University leaders have made great efforts in facilitating their best equipment to support the teaching-learning process and gradually develop to become one of the best universities in the region of southeast Sulawesi province, Indonesia. Thus, when teachers were asked about facilities and equipment at Unidayan, all teachers came to agree that they were all satisfied. Despite the fact that Unidayan is a university under the control of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University is not institutionally funded by the government and is financially independent in controlling expenses. The leaders at Unidayan is financially free to determine their own decisions in both investment and management. As a result, this makes Unidayan currently one of the best private universities in the region.

The results of this study also lead us to reveal English teachers' perspectives on factors that affect the quality of English teaching and learning for non-English major students at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University. Since English as an institution program was introduced in 2019, it is impossible to make all the students motivated and enthusiastic to learn English. Due to some factors like students' various characters depending on which departments or

study programs the students are from, the teachers are unable to control all the students to follow the instruction given and only manage to create an interesting and interactive teaching method in order to increase their participation in the classroom. As stated by Ajzen (2005), English was some kind of disposition to either someone or something like it or not. In addition, the results confirm the previous study that found that students from business-related study programs have better attitudes toward the English language than students from Engineering-related study programs (Byun, et al, 2010). It is stated that students from business-related study programs tend to perform better and help their careers in the future. Meanwhile engineering students do not necessarily think that English is important for their major and career in the future.

The findings of this study also support the previous study that found that a lack of extra activities outside the classroom will decrease students' desire to practice and learn on their own (Dierking, 2017) and emphasize the importance of extra activities such as English clubs for accommodating and giving space for students in developing their interest and talent (Virgiyanti, 2013). Therefore, it is important for universities to provide extracurriculars such as English clubs, organizations, and group activities that focus on some English skills for students in order to give them more space and room to explore and develop their English skills.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that overall teachers have positive views on the status of the English basic conversation program known as matakuliah institusi for the non-English major students at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University. The majority of teachers expressed their satisfaction with the basic English conversation program while there are only a few teachers shared their thoughts about some aspects that need to be improved. Besides some positive aspects and negative aspects of English teaching and learning, the teachers also expressed their expectations and suggestions for the program to improve at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank all the parties involved in this research.

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