



Exploring the Challenges Faced by Sundanese Study Program Students in Meeting PTESOL as a Graduation Requirement

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-04-07 Revised: 2026-05-19 Accepted: 2026-09-21 Keywords: Challenges, Graduation Requirement, PTESOL, Sundanese Study Program Students DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.12251 Corresponding Author: Muhammad Handi Gunawan handi_gunawan@upi.edu Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Jawa Barat	<i>English proficiency tests are a standard for measuring an individual's English language communication skills and are also designed as one of the graduation requirements for certain educational institutions. As a result, several majors are affected because students must take the test, which is considered an additional obstacle. Since previous studies have discussed a general study program regarding the difficulties in taking the English proficiency test, which found students who experiencing anxiety during the test due to lack of vocabulary, limited preparation, and unprepared basic skills, this study aims to qualitatively explore the challenges faced by a specific students from regional-language of Sundanese study program in meeting PTESOL as a graduation requirement by unpacking the factors and their perspectives toward this condition. This study used a qualitative approach and a single-case study design and involved three students from the Sundanese language education degree who have direct experience facing PTESOL. Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis was used to present the data in depth. The findings display the elements of the struggle faced by participants before, during, and after taking the test, i.e limited preparation before the test; vocabulary, listening, concentration, and testing-facility problems during the test; and uncertainty about the result of the test, in tandem with their perspective that tends to handicap them. These factors mainly stem from their individual backgrounds, inadequate institutional support, and their perception that the current requirement should be reconsidered or better adapted to students from different</i>

disciplinary backgrounds, reflecting the relevance for all majors.

1. Introduction

English proficiency tests have become the standard for measuring students' English-language communication skills. According to Brown (2004), English proficiency tests assess an individual's English language skills. One of the English proficiency tests developed by a certain Indonesian higher education institution is PTESOL, which measures the test taker's listening, reading, and grammar skills. There are no restrictions on which academic majors may take these tests. Therefore, some higher education institutions design English proficiency tests for specific purposes, such as a graduation requirement. Based on the Circular Letter from Kementrian Riset, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan Tinggi No. 33 of 2024 of one of the public universities in Bandung, all undergraduate students, both language and non-language majors, must meet the minimum English proficiency score from recognised tests, such as PTESOL, which developed by a certain Indonesian higher education institution to increase students' language skills, one of the graduation requirements, and develop the competitiveness of the academic community in Indonesia or internationally.

Because students must meet the minimum score, the English proficiency test becomes high-stakes. The test is considered an important factor that determines students' graduation from the university. According to Kilickaya (2016), high-stakes testing often noticeably affects students' academic paths. A similar study by Romios, Ashadi, & Purbani (2020) also states that high-stakes tests can influence students' mindsets regarding the essence of English proficiency tests as a graduation requirement, which tends to focus only on achieving the required score rather than learning English as the main focus. Therefore, the English proficiency test used as a graduation requirement at the university has a significant impact because it is high-stakes.

Thus, implementing this high-stakes requirement as a university policy has several washbacks that affect each student, especially those in non-English study programs, in their academic experiences. This aligns with Charubusp, Wangsombat, Sriwichai, and Phongnapharuk (2025), who noted that the institution's test, developed as a university policy, may affect academic life, including the need for students to complete coursework and the English proficiency test in order to obtain the certificate. Moreover, the main objective of learning English has undoubtedly shifted from being able to use English to merely fulfilling the graduation requirement (Rohman, Budiana, & Hartini, 2019). This aligns with Santos et al. (2022), as cited by Hasbi (2024): this type of university requirement is no longer optional but has become a structural urgency, and this "compulsion" may risk the main objective of learning English. With this shift in the focus of learning English,

several situations should be considered through appropriate preparation and institutional support systems that can assist all students, particularly those without an English language background.

In fact, previous studies have shown that students in non-English study programs face several challenges in meeting the requirements through the English Proficiency Tests. Based on Mahmud (2013) as cited by Kholidi, Sujana, I, Susanti, NI, Wayan, Damio, Siti, and Ashfiya (2025), lack of motivation, unprepared basic skills, and differences in students' backgrounds are the causes of the challenges that are experienced by the students in taking the proficiency test. In addition, Hafid, Purnawarman, and Sukyadi (2021) found that the challenges include a lack of vocabulary, which makes it hard for them to understand the passage during the test's reading comprehension section. Moreover, the listening section is difficult because they hear unfamiliar pronunciation in the audio and must also concentrate on answering the questions (Gunantar & Rosaria, 2023). They also note that test preparation time should be adequate.

Additionally, students in the Sundanese study program are considered to use Bahasa and Sundanese as their first Language (L1). This mother tongue plays a significant role in learning the foreign language, in this case, English (L2). As Gass and Selinker (2008) stated, the mother tongue has influenced learners' understanding of the interlanguage system. Besides that, another crucial factor that influences L1 transfer to the L2 system is sociolinguistic factors, which can be influenced by the context of the conversations and the topic of certain discussions that embody family, work, and association (Holmes, 2013; Fasya & Sari, 2021; Trianto, Dian Dia-An Muniroh, Gunawan, Isnendes, & Wirza, 2025). Even so, these challenges are particularly associated with limited prior knowledge of English, insufficient institutional support systems in the curriculum, and individual differences in resilience, fundamental awareness, and urgency in taking this type of English proficiency test. Although their disciplines differ from English, their L1 does not fully cause their difficulties.

While previous studies have explored the challenges faced by non-English study program students in taking the English proficiency test, which narrowly documented individuals' English communication skills related to low vocabulary, lack of grammar, and English skills anxiety, few have specifically examined the lived experiences of Sundanese study program students in meeting the EPT as a graduation requirement that turns into a high-stakes test with different treatment, disciplines, and preparation. Examining this context may offer more than an additional participant group; it can reveal how Sundanese Study Program students' experiences before, during, and after meeting PTESOL can be shaped by alignment or misalignment with the uniform disciplinary curriculum background and graduation policy. Moreover, the novelty of this study lies in the exploration across three stages, including before, during, and after PTESOL within a regional-language education program subject to an English exit requirement.

Based on the research background of this study, the purpose of this study is to answer the following research questions:

1. What challenges do Sundanese Study Program Students face before, during, and after the PTESOL test?
2. What factors contribute to these challenges?

Therefore, this study aims to explore the major challenges Sundanese students face before, during, and after taking the PTESOL test as a graduation requirement. Furthermore, after identifying the research gap in the previous paragraph, this study seeks to address the gap by providing an in-depth understanding of students' experiences through a single case study.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative single-case study design to provide in-depth data on the experiences of Sundanese study program students who encountered challenges directly before, during, and after taking the PTESOL test. According to Yin (2018), a single-case study is one in which the common and critical case is chosen because it is potentially important to examine, and the single case can only be examined in terms of the responsiveness of a single unit, which in this context is the Sundanese study program. In this study, the phenomenon among Sundanese study program students is a typical example of the challenges they face. Moreover, a single case study investigates a case in depth. Stake (1995) stated that a case study focuses on understanding a unique phenomenon, noting that a case can be sufficient if examined in depth.

The primary sites and participants for this study are managed through several systematic stages, because Miles and Huberman (1994) as cited by Creswell and Creswell (2022) suggest the ideal ways to select the research sites and participants, should evolving four aspects, which are, the actor or participants (Sundanese students who has taken the PTESOL test with passed the minimum score of 475), sites (will take a place in one of the public universities in Bandung), the event (what will the participant and observer doing?) and process (the evolving nature events undertaken the participants in settings). Building on this claim, this study focuses on a small number of participants to obtain in-depth data, prioritizing participants' experiences (Tajik, Noor, & Golzar, 2024). Therefore, the detailed context derived from participants' experiences can be explored in greater depth, leading to a deeper understanding.

Since Sundanese study program students can communicate in two languages, Bahasa and Sundanese, and focus on exploring the local culture of Sundanese society, limited time and materials for learning English become a crucial obstacle, especially when they also have to meet graduation requirements. Therefore, this study explores a unique phenomenon experienced by students with a regional language as their academic background, especially Sundanese degree students.

Additionally, this study employs participants with direct experience in taking the PTESOL test. This is motivated by the research objective to explore students'

experiences in the Sundanese study program in depth, rather than generalizing regarding the challenges they face in taking language proficiency tests. This is supported by purposive sampling, which ensures that the participants do not represent a generalization of a particular group but rather reflect the participants themselves (Patton, 2002). Table 1.1 presents information about participants' backgrounds. Moreover, the participant selection procedure involved several considerations. Each participant was chosen through purposive sampling, which included questions about first-hand experience with PTESOL and availability for further interviews if they met the criteria, such as having already taken PTESOL and obtained a certificate. So, they were selected because they met the predetermined criteria and could provide rich data reflecting their willingness to share their experience directly before, during, and after taking PTESOL.

Table 1.1 Information on Participant Background

Participant	Age Range	Semester	PTESOL attempts	PTESOL Status	PTESOL Score
P1	21 Years Old	6th Semester	Once	Not passed	367 (Still hesitant and anxious)
P2	22 Years Old	8th Semester	Once	Passed	483 (Relief)
P3	23 Years Old	Alumni	Once	Passed	493 (Relief)

After selecting the participants, this study considered ethical principles. This study upholds ethical considerations, recognizing the responsibility to respect participants' rights, values, and needs (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Therefore, approval was obtained through consent forms, in which participants voluntarily give their consent. The informant's consent to participate underscores the need to protect the participant's identity. Protections will be employed to protect the informant's right, such as informing the aim of the study to the participants in verbal and written form, informing written consent form to proceed the study as delivered will be received by the participant informing all the data collection steps to the participants, the written form of reports of the interpretations will be available for the participants, and the final approval of the anonymity will be fully

handed to the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

This study will ensure that participants provide voluntary informed consent as part of the data collection process. Using informed consent is important for managing participants' willingness to participate by protecting their rights and informing them of the study's research goal (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, ensuring participants' confidentiality and security is the second necessity to consider in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Moreover, this study respected participants' privacy by utilizing anonymity. Protecting the participants' identity and privacy by using a participant code should be considered when collecting, analyzing, and reporting the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

Besides that, this study employs several data collection techniques, including open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews with a set of questions, followed by sample guiding questions. These steps ensure the data can be analyzed in depth, thereby producing a valid and reliable conclusion for this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

a. Open-Ended Questionnaires

An open-ended questionnaire was used with selected participants who met the predetermined criteria to gather supplementary qualitative data on their struggles, perceptions, and experiences, since they have direct experience before, during, and after taking PTESOL. This questionnaire was administered after participants were informed about the study and had given their consent to participate. Each participant was given three days to answer six questions about their experiences and difficulties before, during, and after taking PTESOL, followed by their opinion regarding EPT as a graduation requirement. The questionnaires supported the interview process by clarifying, detailing, and comparing participants' accounts. As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2013), open-ended questions elicited in-depth responses that allowed participants to discuss their important experiences. Table 1.2 provides an example of the open-ended questionnaire used.

Table 1.2 Stimulus Questions of Open-Ended Questionnaire

Stages	Focus of Question	Example of Question
Before PTESOL	Preparation, psychological stance, and initial perception.	<i>Could you describe your experience briefly before taking PTESOL?</i>
During PTESOL	Experience, difficulties, and psychological stance.	<i>Could you describe your experience briefly while taking PTESOL?</i>
After PTESOL	Consequences, results, and psychological stance.	<i>Could you describe your experience briefly after taking PTESOL?</i>

b. Semi-Structured Interviews and Sample Guiding Questions

A set of structured and follow-up probe questions will be used in approximately every interview. The interview lasted 30 minutes, was conducted in Bahasa, and was recorded through the Zoom Meeting application; also, the transcription procedure was automatically available after the recording finished, with substantial adjustment required without the participant checking the transcripts or interpretations. This semi-structured interview will be conducted one-on-one with the participant, using a small number of open-ended questions (Creswell & Báez, 2021). Moreover, Creswell & Báez (2021) note that one-on-one interviews are suitable when the study requires participants' personal experiences and perspectives; participants are more willing to share them in one-on-one interviews. Using semi-structured interviews as a data collection technique requires a guiding question aligned with the topic to obtain the data. The sample questions will focus on how participants approach and solve challenges before, during, and after taking the test. By using an open-ended sample of the guide questions for the semi-structured interviews, the study will focus on an individual's development in dealing with the PTESOL test (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The collected data will be analyzed through thematic analysis to generate a detailed meaning. According to Braun and Clarke (2008), thematic analysis is important to learn because it is a foundational method that provides useful skills for conducting qualitative research. Therefore, to provide contextual and meaningful findings, this study uses thematic analysis to maximize the final result.

To apply thematic analysis, several systematic steps must be followed to achieve the study's expected results. Braun and Clarke (2008) state that employing thematic analysis requires several key steps: the first is *familiarization with the dataset*; the second is *coding*; the third is *generating initial themes*; the fourth is *developing and reviewing themes*; the fifth is *refining, naming, and defining themes*; and the last is *writing the theme*. Therefore, thematic analysis is an appropriate supporting model to develop the adjustment of the identification, providing a rich and detailed but intricate explanation of the data (Clarke & Braun, 2006, as cited by Zairul, 2025). For example, the excerpt of quotation "*Because I'm learning self-taught (P2)*" and quotation "*there are no English courses (P1)*" were initially coded as "self-learning" and "no English course," followed by generating a subtheme by naming "factors that affect the occurrence of difficulties," and finally defining "the difficulties experienced before taking PTESOL" as a theme.

Using the interview as the primary source supported by an open-ended questionnaire as a supplementary source to add contextual information, this study focused on data collected through these main techniques, where questionnaire data did not immediately replace or substitute for interview responses. The data identified contradictory evidence between the questionnaire and the interview as contextual variation in participants' experiences or a possible change in emphasis. These reported differences were presented transparently, without forcing the data

rigidly into a single consistent interpretation.

3. Result

The results are primarily organized using thematic analysis, which generated several themes from interviews and open-ended questionnaires. This chapter presents the difficulties and challenges Sundanese study program students face before, during, and after taking PTESOL, as well as their perspective of PTESOL as a graduation requirement.

The Challenges Faced by Sundanese Study Program Students Before Meeting PTESOL

In the first theme, the Sundanese study program students face difficulties during their preparation and reveal several factors they experienced. The first is their psychological condition before taking the test. P3 noted that he felt nervous upon realizing he would take the test, which he had never faced in his daily academic activities. The data excerpt showing students who struggle in preparing for the test is included.

"I'm nervous because in my batch there are no general subjects related to the English language." (P3, interview)

Besides that, another participant particularly experienced a similar psychological situation while realizing that PTESOL should be taken to graduate from the university. P1 said that when he learned PTESOL was a graduation requirement, he was surprised.

"I was surprised, and of course it is a challenge for me." (P1, interview)

Similarly, P2 reported that he needed to meet the minimum score on the first test so he would not have to retake it.

"I'm afraid because I have to conduct the same test if my score does not meet the minimum score." (P2, interview)

The data excerpts indicate that inappropriate preparation and fear of not meeting the minimum score can lead to adverse mental conditions. These quotations reflect participants' negative responses to test preparation or their experience before meeting PTESOL. Although these responses' wording differed, all participants' stance is the same: fear, hesitation, and anxiety, generating their responses into one subtheme, which is Psychological state before taking PTESOL.

Furthermore, the lack of direct access to an English course hindered their preparation for PTESOL. Two participants suggested that appropriate preparation for meeting PTESOL became their difficulties in fulfilling the required regulations.

The participants' statements of this kind of challenge are presented.

"In my batch, there are no general subjects related to the English language." (P3, interview)

"In the first semester, there are no English courses that make it difficult for me to prepare for PTESOL" (P2, interview)

Building upon the findings, reflects that not only mental conditions are factors of difficulty that they experienced in stepping into the requirement, but also the curriculum they get from the policymaker does not assist them in having preferable preparation in achieving the standard of graduating from university. These participants' quotations reveal a significant pattern, such as no relatable support arrangement to take PTESOL. Thus, based on the interpretation of the data collected, those subthemes are categorized into the main theme, which is the difficulties faced before taking PTESOL. Therefore, mental preparedness and an adequate course will have a significant impact on the test-takers' performance.

The Challenges Faced by Sundanese Study Program Students During PTESOL

The second theme discussed is how Sundanese study program students encounter challenges while taking PTESOL and express the reasons behind that. P2 said it is inappropriate to do the test if the conditions and the devices do not support their concentration and focus, although the test was conducted without charging any fees. The reason is proven through the excerpt presented.

"For the listening section, since the test is free, it was administered simultaneously in an auditorium where all participants listened to the audio through a single sound source, which made the sound unclear." (P2, interview)

P3 also mentions that institutional facilitation conditions may influence the test-taker's performance even if the facilitation is inadequate, creating a worse scenario for them.

"The recorded sound is unclear because the device is inadequate during the listening section" (P3, interview)

The data indicates that the factor of institutional facilitation is one of the influencers that becomes an obstacle they have to face. Based on these findings, one identical pattern (unclear sounds) refers to the same code that is generated for one subtheme (inappropriate devices) belonging to the difficulties faced during taking the PTESOL as the theme.

Moreover, individual factors such as limited vocabulary, difficulty listening

to long conversations, and lack of English listening skills impact how they answer the test.

"I have to be careful because sometimes I cannot differentiate the pronunciation of 'life and ' live ' ; it makes me struggle." (P2, interview)

"The use of words made me confused" (P3, interview)

"Especially the sound cannot be repeated, so my focus is blank" (P1, interview)

The following data show that individual abilities are one of the shortcomings while taking the test. All participants are in the same situation while working on the test and refer to one subtheme, which is individual abilities, also generating the main theme, which is the difficulties faced during taking PTESOL. These two factors - external factors such as inadequate institutional testing devices or an uncondusive condition to focus during the test, and internal factors such as limitations of individual capabilities-can hinder their performance in completing and maximizing their score.

The Challenges Faced by Sundanese Study Program Students After Meeting PTESOL

The next theme comes from reflecting on how Sundanese study program students cope with the challenges they face after taking the PTESOL test. They believe that even though they have faced the test, a sense of hesitation and doubt remains.

"I'm still feeling hesitant about my result; it makes me not confident." (P1, interview)

The following data indicate that psychological states, such as being hesitant and insecure, become one of the problems that stay after finishing PTESOL. This is reflected in the way P1 receives their test results. Based on what P2 shares, the feeling of hesitation remains and influences his mental condition, which creates insecurity. However, unbeknownst to them, the difficulties experienced lie in their mental condition, as well as what they experience in the preparation and while answering the test. Therefore, the feeling of hesitation and lack of confidence is depicted as code that generates the main theme, which is the challenges experienced after taking PTESOL.

The Sundanese Study Program Students' Perception of PTESOL as a Graduation Requirement

The last theme will examine participants' perspectives toward PTESOL as a

graduation requirement based on their major background. P2 suggests that, although in general PTESOL has become the graduation requirement for all majors, which can be beneficial as new knowledge and experience, another available form of test could be a better choice that is suitable for their educational background. This consideration is stated by the following participant.

“It is actually beneficial for one’s knowledge and experience of learning English. Perhaps, I find it a greater pity that the PTESOL has become compulsory.” (P2, interview)

Unlike before, the last finding of the data created a dynamic point of view, in which the positive side of facing the English proficiency test, especially PTESOL, is argued after one of the participants shares a different perspective. Thus, throughout this quotation, a new experience is added to a code that refers to one subtheme, which is the benefit of PTESOL. Although the participant shares their difficulties before, during, and after taking the test, the participant remains convinced that, by fulfilling this graduation requirement, beneficial impacts, such as new experiences and new knowledge, can be gained, and viewed as an ambivalent perception in a quotation from that very participant regarding this requirement. However, although the participants believe that sitting in the PTESOL can be beneficial, this view is directly contradicted by a quotation from that very participant regarding this requirement. He suggests that since PTESOL is compulsory, the fairness of the test compared to students from the English major should be considered.

Besides that, P3 shares his perspective towards PTESOL, and he believes the minimum score is too high to be achieved, as they are from a Sundanese major.

“The minimum score is probably too high for non-English study programs, especially for Sundanese study program student who do not learn English in their academic learning.” (P3, interview)

This excerpt indicates the concern of the participants who considered this requirement to be hindering their academic processes in the university. Through P2’s suggestions, he describes that if this requirement is to remain in place, the minimum score should be lowered, as he views it as too high to achieve. From his shared point of view, the points mentioned are considered as code that was added to a subtheme of fairness, generating the main subtheme of the Sundanese study programs’ perception of the PTESOL test. In addition, to substantially address clearer findings, Table 1.3 summarizes all the findings from the collected data.

Table 1.3 Summary of the Findings

Stage	Main Challenge	Contributing Factors
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Before PTESOL	Anxiety and limited readiness	Limited English preparation; no English course
During PTESOL	Listening/vocabulary difficulties	Limited vocabulary; pronunciation discrimination; concentration
During PTESOL	Testing-condition problems	Audio quality; auditorium setting
After PTESOL	Uncertainty about performance	Concern about results and minimum score
Overall perception	Ambivalent view of PTESOL	Value of English vs. perceived relevance/fairness

4. Discussion

The implementation of PTESOL apparently creates difficulties faced by Sundanese study program students. Not only do individual factors cause the challenges, but external factors such as the condition of institutional facilities, the consequences of PTESOL as a graduation requirement, and the curriculum system also have a significant influence. Likewise, the difficulties occur not only in real time while the test takers are working on the test; they are also experienced before and after taking the test. This chapter discusses the findings of this study, synthesizing the interpretation of the data into crucial matters of the existing results in the Sundanese study program context.

4.1 Difficulties Before PTESOL

The participant indicates that the difficulties do not merely lie in the lack of readiness to meet the test, but also in the system that they implemented in their study program not being able to provide suitable preparation, and the label of PTESOL as a high-stakes test indeed shaped the participant's anxiety and lack of confidence. This is correlated with Dornyei (2005), as cited by Mutmainnatussafiyah, Sakkir and Sally (2025), who stated that the test-taker could experience low confidence, despite the key factor of optimal performance requiring strong confidence. Similarly, Truong (2026) stated that even though the policymaker intended this type of requirement for all students in general, the occurrences of considerable anxiety may disadvantage specific students. In addition, Dawadi (2021) revealed the cause of why language testing may affect test-takers' psychological states: feelings of anxiety are basically caused by a lack of confidence in their performance and test scores.

Besides psychological conditions, other factors, such as their study program not providing fundamental courses, such as an English course, were introduced as a provision to meet the English proficiency test. Instead, test preparation should be practiced because it can raise the test-taker's performance. As suggested by Nguyen (2007), as cited by Hai (2021), appropriate preparation provides impactful

support for enhancing the execution of the test. Likewise, Li and Zhang (2021) stated that the limitations of language assessment for non-English majors can be divided into three; one of them is that non-English majors receive less guidance for taking the English proficiency test.

Through these findings, this study extends the understanding that the curriculum terms may have an impact, which intensified participants' mental conditions and influenced their graduation processes, since PTESOL particularly affects a negative washback. In the Sundanese study program context, this phenomenon narrowly implies that disciplinary or first-language background is not automatically labeled as the main factor in the difficulties; instead, it aligns with PTESOL's essence, individual English exposure, and the support needed from the curriculum. Reflecting on the findings, earlier and more thorough preparation should be provided before they approach the PTESOL test.

4.2 Difficulties During PTESOL

The second discussion is how Sundanese study program students encounter challenges while taking PTESOL and express the reasons behind that. They said it is inappropriate to do the test if the conditions and the devices do not support their concentration and focus, although the test was conducted without charging any fees. Along with audio and the testing environment as irrelevant factors, based on their answer, related difficulties such as English vocabulary and listening ability are also indicated as their shortcomings during the test. These two factors can hinder their performance in completing and maximizing their score since PTESOL was recognized as a high-stakes test, and completing the test reinforces graduation; difficulties experienced are understandable. There is a correlation between the data and Mayette (2014), who believes that hearing other test-takers' noise while trying to concentrate on one's own progress is disturbing. It cannot be denied that the focus while taking the high-stakes test should be managed appropriately for the best results of the tests. Likewise, this is aligned with Kristiyanti (2018) as cited by Fadilah (2021), who stated that the inability to understand several grammar areas and common difficulties such as lack of comprehension of nouns, tenses, and the use of articles are the major challenges faced by EFL students while taking the English proficiency test.

Besides that, Setiawati, Farahsani, and Febrindasari (2024) claim that the majority of the limitations experienced by non-English major students are a lack of vocabulary proficiency. From these claims, in general, the difficulty that non-English major students faced, especially in this paper, the subject discussed is the Sundanese study program students, would likely be on the scale of lack of understanding and lack of grammar acquisition. Furthermore, Akbari (2016), as cited by Nga, Lan, Lien, and Muoi (2023), argued that the weaknesses of EFL students in learning English are caused by a failure to understand its importance in their lives. These findings indicate that test-takers' performance cannot be determined by their individual abilities in English. The quality of facilities and the

atmosphere are also taken as significant factors in the process of answering the test questions.

Therefore, fair implementation of PTESOL requires not only a clear scoring system, but also adequate devices, clear mechanical test items, and sufficient preparation support. In the context of the Sundanese study program, the distinctive connection lies not only in where they come from, but also, in contrast, in what they perceive as remaining important, which carries important consequences, affecting their exit processes from the university. Thus, these difficulties experienced during PTESOL may be considered as misalignment between a uniform English-proficiency requirement, students' prior English exposure, and the essence of why non-English students are required to follow this specification.

4.3 Difficulties After PTESOL

The next discussion comes from reflecting on how Sundanese study program students cope with the challenges they face after taking the PTESOL test. They believe that even though they have faced the test, a sense of hesitation and doubt remains. The following data indicate that psychological states, such as being hesitant and insecure, become one of the problems that remain after finishing PTESOL; instead, the result of the test shaped how participants perceived their academic future, especially their graduation processes. The data excerpt is correlated with Elkhafaifi (2005) as cited by Pearson (2023), who argued that the result or score after taking the standardized test leads to many psychological conditions of the test-taker depending on whether they pass the test or should retake the test, including illness and unsatisfactory results after failing to achieve the minimum score. This is reflected in the way the test-taker receives their test results. Similarly, as revealed by Gkonou (2020), who wrote that the test-taker who failed on the first attempt of the test can be anxious, consciously or unconsciously. Therefore, the emotional effect of PTESOL was connected to the institutional aim in implementing the test, directing participants, especially the Sundanese study program, to experience the consequences, not only caused by their individual responses.

In the Sundanese study program context, this finding relates to their perception regarding the limitations of PTESOL-oriented instruction, as they have to complete the administered requirement. Thus, the students who did not achieve the minimum score on the test possibly repeated the experience from the beginning. Considering this situation, the institution should provide better support such as clearer procedures and provisions, more detailed information on how the remedial test should be taken, and academic guidance for better preparation for non-English study programs in meeting the administered requirement.

4.4 Perception of PTESOL

The last discussion will examine participants' perspectives toward PTESOL as a graduation requirement within dynamic responses. P2 reveals that PTESOL brings a positive impact by creating slight motivation for the Sundanese study

program, such as generating new knowledge and experience for those without an English background. However, P2, on the other hand, directly denies that PTESOL's effect cannot only be viewed on the positive side, but also considers the main essence of the test in terms of their disciplinary background. Previous studies have shown the positive impact of implementing the EPT as a graduation requirement. As suggested by Trisnawati and Netta (2020), they found that preparing for and learning to face the English proficiency test may bring useful experience. This claim, along with the data gained in this paper, suggests that although trying to understand what non-English major students do not have to go through, favor may be received. Similarly, it turns out that Alek, Farhan, Nurlia, and Haucsa (2019) also found that the students in one of the universities in Jakarta mostly agree that the English proficiency test should be a requirement, considering the necessity for developing their English proficiency.

Nevertheless, reflecting P2's beliefs that this provision should have a more suitable format considering the related disciplinary background, a previous study conducted by Nguyen (2023) found that the differentiation of each student's needs should be considered and appreciated, rather than generating a "one-size-fits-all" model, which cannot be applied to certain students with specific educational backgrounds. Nguyen (2023) also discussed that the minimum score for every study program should be fair by examining those particular students from each study program, as some majors that rarely use English in their daily academic activities and in their professional work may set a different minimum score than the students who commonly or even have to use English before and after graduating from university.

The present study extends this discussion by indicating that perceived fairness in implementing the EPT is an important consideration in a non-English disciplinary context. In the Sundanese study program context, their concern cannot be interpreted as evidence that they are less capable of learning English. Instead, their perception reflects a possible misalignment between English proficiency tests as a uniform measure of high-stakes, available English support in their curriculum, and academic demand. This matter is connected because the perceived unfairness may influence their motivation since the test is particularly viewed as an additional administrative barrier rather than a meaningful opportunity and experience. Therefore, the provision of a minimum score should be fairer considering their perception towards these issues.

4. Conclusion

This study explores the challenges faced by non-English students, specifically those enrolled in the Sundanese language education study program, when taking an English-language proficiency test at an educational institution in Indonesia as a graduation requirement. In general, the findings of this research are depicted through thematic analysis, in which the data are systematically elaborated upon

with the relevant previous studies that stand as supportive elements to strengthen the validity of the interpretation of the data. Accordingly, the results of this paper show that the challenges faced by the Sundanese study program are categorized into three main themes, including the difficulties faced before, during, and after taking the PTESOL tests, and are shaped by both educational background and the implementation of the test. Those factors indicate that psychological state and individual capabilities are two of the most common difficulties experienced by the Sundanese study program students. Among those, the way the test is conducted by the institution, which requires adequate administration and facilitation, is also considered by the participants. Therefore, through revealed findings, certain parties should create more manageable requirements for a specific community.

Moreover, the findings related to the students' perception indicate that PTESOL as a graduation requirement should be reviewed, considering that the essence of the test should be perceived as specific to a degree. The aim is to ensure that all degree programs with a language focus can use a test that is more aligned with what they are studying. Besides that, if the recent requirement is still implemented, they argue that the minimum score set should be adjusted, in view of the struggle they faced, so that it can be minimized. Alongside, the previous study also provides several similar phenomena that a TOEFL-like test as a graduation requirement has a strong possibility to be reviewed in terms of fairness for other language-focused majors. Therefore, the case study of this research suggests that existing graduation requirements can be more practical as a standard if the current form and scoring placement are not a disproportionate obstacle for Sundanese study program students by serving a suitable curricular system that can push and assist students, institutional devices and services that support students, and realistic expectations that are determined by policymakers.

Even if this research could bring important movement by offering a worthwhile concept through the occurrences of valuable phenomena, several weaknesses of this study should be considered. Thus, several research limitations include that only three Sundanese study program students were included, which limits generalisability to other majors because of differences in graduation policies and should be viewed as an in-depth explanation of one educational group case rather than a representative picture of all distinct experiences. Besides that, self-report data that is taken through interviews and open-ended questionnaires as guiding questions may rely only on their memories or desirability bias. In addition, this research was conducted only on students' perspectives, as no data were collected from certain administrators or experts such as lecturers, which may lead to only students' reasoning being captured.

Regarding the limitation of this research, further studies are recommended to involve a larger number of participants to obtain a greater variety of patterns that enable researchers to explore the difficulty experienced by students who rely on another degree. Still, by reflecting on the limitations of this study, further research could investigate other perspectives, such as test administrators or educators, as it

is important to look at the systematic determination of the scoring system. Additionally, the longitudinal design may be more effective to conduct, avoiding bias from the memorization of the participants.

In conclusion, the implementation of PTESOL as a graduation requirement can raise several factors for the test-taker, reflecting on the viewpoint from psychological factors, educational background, and also institutional readiness. Allocating the causes behind the issues by viewing from the Sundanese study program student's experience before, during, and after facing the PTESOL, including their perspective, can enhance awareness to set development for preferable implementation.

Acknowledgement

The completion of this study was made possible by several parties who sincerely supported the process from start to finish. Certainly, genuine gratitude is presented to the lovely family who helped mentally and gave a noetic booster so this study finished flawlessly. Besides that, the deepest gratitude is dedicated to the academic supervisor and corresponding author who allowed this study to be completed through their insightful feedback and guidance. In addition, gratefulness is presented to the helpful partner for supporting and believing that this paper can meet the objective. Lastly, huge thanks to all the participants who eagerly set aside the energy and time for the continuity of this research.

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