



THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST SCORE, GENDER, AND STUDY PROGRAMS FOR HIGHER STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between students' English proficiency test scores, gender, and academic study programs in higher education. A quantitative approach with a correlational research design was employed. The sample comprised 104 students, including 64 students from the Mathematics Education program and 42 students from the Management study program, selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered using questionnaires and documentation, and analyzed using two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the assistance of statistical software. The findings reveal that there is no significant interaction between students' study programs and gender in influencing English proficiency test scores. The originality of this research lies in its examination of the interrelationship among English proficiency, gender, and field of study within a higher education context. In the future, the results are expected to contribute empirical evidence to the discourse on English language proficiency in Indonesian higher education settings.

Keywords: *Correlation, English Proficiency Test, Gender, Higher Students, Study Programs*

1. INTRODUCTION

English language skills are one of the important competencies in higher education, especially in the face of globalization and international academic demands (Darmi & Albion, 2017; Destyana et al., 2026). One way to measure English language skills is through English Proficiency Test (EPT) (Aldarmahi et al., 2024). EPT is generally measured through English Proficiency scores (Coleman, 2018; Ghenghesh, 2020). The test is used to map basic skills before participating in further learning (Nguyen, 2021; Escala et al., 2025). This score is an important early indicator in determining learning readiness and appropriate learning strategies (Barkaoui, 2025; Ruegg et al., 2024).

Several studies show that English language skills are related to various factors, such as learning strategies, motivation, and academic achievement (Awalia, 2024; Zhang, 2022; Zhao, 2021). For example, research by Fatima et al. (2025) showed a positive correlation between English language skills and student learning outcomes, which confirms that early language skills can affect later academic achievement. This shows the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to variations in English initial test scores (Devi, 2023; Isma et al., 2024; Nonoy & Neman, 2024).

One of the factors that is often studied is gender (gender). In the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), gender is

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believed to play a role in determining the learning process and outcomes (Wahyuni et al., 2025; Warman, 2023). Research by Rianto (2021) found that there were differences in learning strategies between male and female students, although it was not always followed by significant differences in English language skills. Meanwhile, other research shows that gender can affect English learning achievements, either directly or through mediating variables such as personality and learning strategies (Karolina et al., 2023; Nurhanipah & Karmina, 2024).

In addition to gender, the study program is also an important factor that can affect students' English language skills (Darmi & Albion, 2017; Ningsih & Susilawati, 2023). Students from language or social-based study programs generally have higher exposure to English compared to students from science or engineering study programs (Destyana et al., 2026). This difference could potentially lead to variations in the initial English test scores (Nguyen, 2021; Ghenghesh, 2020). However, studies that simultaneously examine the relationship between English initial test scores and study programs are still relatively limited (Devi, 2023; Isma et al., 2024).

Other research shows that the relationship between English language skills and other variables, such as learning strategies and learning beliefs, provides mixed results—ranging from significant to insignificant relationships (Nonoy & Neman, 2024; Rianto, 2021). This shows that English language skills are a complex phenomenon that is influenced by various multidimensional factors (Ghenghesh, 2020; Nguyen, 2021).

Karolina et al (2023) conducted a study entitled *Gender Analysis on Student Self-Regulation in English Learning* with the findings that there are significant differences based on gender in English language learning. Agus (2022) with a study entitled *The Influence of Gender Differences on Students' English Learning Achievement* with the finding that there is a significant influence of gender on students' English test scores ($\text{Sig} = 0.033$).

The scores of female students tend to be higher than men.

Pribadi et al (2023) with a study entitled *Analysis of the Relationship between English Language Skills and Student Science Literacy* with the results of the study, there is a relationship between English language skills and other academic abilities (science literacy) and English language skills are important indicators in supporting the academic performance of students across fields of study.

Based on studies from previous researchers, research gaps were found that most studies only examined the influence of gender on English language skills, but not many specifically related it to initial test scores (placement test) (Rianto, 2021; Wahyuni et al., 2025). Previous research results have shown inconsistent findings regarding the influence of gender on English language skills, so further research is needed to clarify the relationship (Warman, 2023; Ghenghesh, 2020). Studies that integrate gender and study programs simultaneously in analyzing initial English scores are still rare (Isma et al., 2024; Devi, 2023).

The formulation of the problem in this study is: First, is there a relationship between the English Proficiency Test score and the gender of the student? Second, is there a relationship between the English Proficiency Test score and the student study program? Third, is there a difference in English Proficiency Test scores based on gender and student study program?

There are 3 objectives of this study including: First, to analyze the relationship between the initial English test score and the student's gender. Second, analyze the relationship between the initial English test score and the student's study program. Third, find out the difference in the initial English test score based on the student's gender and study program.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 English Language Proficiency in Higher Education

English language proficiency is an important competency in higher education because many learning resources use English as the primary language (Darmi & Albion, 2017; Coleman, 2018). Students with good English skills tend to understand academic literature more easily and follow the learning process effectively (Zhao, 2021; Zhang, 2022).

In addition, English language skills also serve as a tool to access global knowledge and improve the quality of learning in higher education (Isma et al., 2024; Darmi & Albion, 2017). Several studies show that English language skills play a significant role in supporting students' academic success (Waluyo & Panmei, 2021; Nguyen, 2021; Ghenghesh, 2020).

English language skills are an important competency that students must have in facing the demands of globalization and academics (Darmi & Albion, 2017; Destyana et al., 2026). These skills include reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills that are usually measured through a placement test (Aldarmahi et al., 2024; Ghenghesh, 2020). Initial test scores are used to determine the level of readiness of students to participate in English learning at the higher education level (Nguyen, 2021; Escala et al., 2025).

Research by Ningsih and Susilawati (2023) shows that students' English language skills are in the category of sufficient to good and are an important factor in supporting students' readiness to face the world of work and digital entrepreneurship. In addition, Zahra et al. (2024) stated that students' English language skills are influenced by psychological factors such as fear and learning habits, which have a direct impact on improving language competence.

Thus, the initial English test score can be seen as an early indicator that reflects the student's basic ability in English.

2.2 Skor English Proficiency Test dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris

English language proficiency tests, such as the English Proficiency Test (EPT), TOEFL, and IELTS, are used to measure students' language skills, both for selection purposes and class placement (Aldarmahi et al., 2024; Sudihartinih et al., 2024). This test generally includes several main components, such as listening, reading, and structure (Zhang, 2022; Zhao, 2021).

Research shows that English proficiency test scores can be used as a predictor of students' academic success. A study by Aldarmahi et al. (2024) found that EPT scores have a significant positive correlation with a student's GPA, so it can be used as an early indicator of academic success.

In addition, other research also shows that English test scores, both from standardized tests and university internal tests, have predictive abilities on students' academic achievement (Ruegg et al., 2024).

EPT is an evaluation instrument used to measure students' initial abilities before participating in learning (Aldarmahi et al., 2024; Sudihartinih et al., 2024). This test aims to group students according to their ability level so that the learning process becomes more effective (Nguyen, 2021; Escala et al., 2025).

According to Sudihartinih et al. (2024), students' English language skills, especially in the context of tests such as TOEFL, are greatly influenced by the academic background and learning strategies used. This shows that initial test scores not only reflect an individual's abilities, but are also influenced by previous learning experiences.

Furthermore, Awalia (2024) found that there is a relationship between learning

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motivation and students' English learning outcomes, which shows that English test scores can be influenced by students' internal factors. Thus, the initial English test score is an important variable that is influenced by various factors, both internal and external.

2.3 English Study Programs and Abilities

Study programs are an academic factor that can affect students' English skills (Darmi & Albion, 2017; Ningsih & Susilawati, 2023). Students from certain courses, such as language or social, tend to have higher exposure to English compared to students from exact courses.

Research by Destyana et al. (2026) shows that English language skills have an important role in improving students' communication competence, especially in language-based study programs. This suggests that the academic environment and the characteristics of the study program can affect the level of English proficiency of students.

In addition, the difference in the background of the study program is also related to the need to use English in learning (Darmi & Albion, 2017; Destyana et al., 2026). Students of non-language study programs tend to use English as an aid, while students of language study programs use it as the main competency (Ningsih & Susilawati, 2023). Thus, the study program has the potential to make a difference to students' initial English test scores.

2.4 The Relationship of English Initial Test Scores with Gender and Study Programs

Based on theoretical studies and previous research results, it can be concluded that the initial English test scores are influenced by various factors, including gender and the course of study. Gender contributes through psychological aspects such as self-regulation and learning attitudes (Karolina et al., 2023; Wahyuni et al., 2025), while study programs are influenced through the academic

environment and the intensity of English use (Darmi & Albion, 2017; Ningsih & Susilawati, 2023).

However, studies that simultaneously examined the relationship between English initial test scores and gender and course of study are still limited (Isma et al., 2024; Devi, 2023). Therefore, this research is important to provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors that affect students' initial English skills.

Gender is one of the demographic variables that is often studied in educational research, including in English language learning. Gender differences can affect students' learning styles, motivation, and learning outcomes (Wahyuni et al., 2025; Warman, 2023).

Research by Karolina et al. (2023) shows that there is a significant difference in self-regulation between male and female students in English language learning, where female students have higher levels of self-regulation. This self-regulation contributes to learning success, including in the achievement of English language skills.

In addition, other studies have shown that students' attitudes towards English also play a role in learning success. Taslim et al. (2026) found that most college students have a positive attitude towards the use of English, which can support the improvement of language skills.

Thus, gender can play an indirect role in the initial English test score through psychological variables such as motivation, attitude, and self-regulation.

3. METHODS

Present the materials, methods, survey, questionnaire etc used for the study. Author should explain whether this study is experimental, or review study, or simulation based or survey based (Pinoa, 2024; Siroj et al., 2024). Discuss software, hardware's used

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during study with their brand names. Mention all research conditions, assumptions, theories followed (Daruhadi & Sopiati, 2024). This section should be easy enough for any reader to repeat the study under similar conditions (Iting et al., 2024; Rangkuti & Albina, 2025).

3.1 Types and Research Approaches

This study uses a quantitative approach with a type of correlational research. The quantitative approach is used because this study involves statistically analyzed numerical data to test the relationships between variables. Quantitative research allows researchers to objectively examine phenomena through measurement and analysis of structured data (Pinoa, 2024; Siroj et al., 2024).

The type of correlational research was chosen because it aims to find out the relationship between the initial English test score and the student's gender and study program without manipulating variables. Correlation research serves to identify the level of relationships between variables and provide an overview of relationships that occur empirically in the context of education (Iting et al., 2024; Rangkuti & Albina, 2025).

3.2. Research Subject and Location

The population in this study is all students at the State University of Surabaya 5 Campus in the 2025/2026 academic year amounting to 2.827 higher students. The research sample was determined using the purposive sampling technique, which is a sampling technique based on certain criteria that are relevant to the research objectives (Pinoa, 2024; Daruhadi & Sopiati, 2024).

This technique allows researchers to select subjects that have characteristics according to research needs so that the data obtained is more accurate and relevant (Pinoa, 2024). The sample criteria in this study were the students who have taken the initial English Proficiency Test.

The number of samples in the study amounted to 104 higher students from

Management and Mathematics Education Study Programs as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Sample Based

Study Programs	Gender		Quantity
	Male	Female	
Management	12	28	40
Mathematics Education	11	54	64
Total	23	81	104

Score English Language Proficiency Test described in Table 2.

Table 2. Score English Proficiency Test

Score of English Proficiency							
383	363	343	327	393	430	403	397
383	430	383	337	367	360	350	357
393	380	357	400	330	360	373	347
353	373	383	400	363	373	463	410
333	250	383	473	357	363	350	367
327	323	383	347	340	400	410	387
450	367	383	400	407	333	380	397
373	333	393	400	350	377	377	367
350	373	373	400	420	400	353	417
373	310	390	343	393	380	393	410
310	370	390	353	340	403	410	410
393	423	370	340	360	393	443	393
373	407	350	443	380	387	367	433

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques in this study use documentation in the form of student EPT scores obtained through official institutional documents (e.g. placement test results or internal TOEFL tests) and questionnaires filled out by students about EPT scores, gender, and student study programs

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis techniques used in this study include two-way ANOVA tests are used to determine the difference in initial English test scores based on the study program and gender. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a statistical technique used to test the average

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differences between groups and is widely used in educational research to compare learning outcomes based on certain categories (Azzahra et al., 2026).

If the study tests two gender-free variables and the study program simultaneously, then two-way ANOVA (Two-Way ANOVA) is used. Before conducting a hypothesis test, a prerequisite test was carried out including a normality test and a homogeneity test. This aims to ensure that the data meets the assumptions of parametric statistical analysis (Patimah et al., 2024).

3.5 Research Procedure

The steps of this research include: 1) identifying problems and formulating research hypotheses; 2) collect UK EPT score data and student demographic data; 3) conduct prerequisite test analysis; 4) analyze the data using correlation tests and ANOVA; 5) Draw conclusions based on the results of the analysis (Siroj et al., 2024; Daruhadi & Sopiati, 2024)

3.6 Data collection techniques

The data collection technique in this study is questionnaire, which is collecting data from available sources, such as: English Proficiency Test score data and Student GPA data (Daruhadi & Sopiati, 2024; Pinoa, 2024).

The selection of documentation techniques is carried out because the required data is already available in the academic system and has a high level of accuracy. Proper data collection techniques are essential to ensure the validity and reliability of research results (Daruhadi & Sopiati, 2024).

Significance tests are performed to find out whether the relationship between variables is statistically significant with conditions such as Table 3.

Table 3. Table of Significance

Significance Value	Interpretation
$p < 0,05$	significant
$p > 0,05$	insignificant

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**4.1 Result**

Based on the results of a descriptive analysis of students' EPT test scores, it was found that the average score (mean) was in the medium category. The distribution of data shows that there is a significant variation in English language skills between students, with a score range from low to high categories. This indicates that students' initial English skills are still heterogeneous in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistical Results

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable:	English Proficiency Score			
Study Program		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Mathematics Education	Female	380,80	30,101	55
	Male	387,82	19,651	11
	Total	381,97	28,620	66
Management	Female	377,58	38,200	26
	Male	353,00	45,011	12
	Total	369,82	41,501	38
Total	Female	379,77	32,709	81
	Male	369,65	38,792	23
	Total	377,53	34,208	104

Table 4 describes that based on gender, female students have a higher average score of 379.77 compared to male students of 369.65. Meanwhile, based on the study program, students from the Mathematics Education Study Program are 381.97 higher than students from the Management Study Program.

Furthermore, before conducting the ANOVA test, it is necessary to carry out a normality test as shown in Table 5

Table 5. Normality Test Results

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Standardized Residual for Score	,065	104	,200 [*]	,987	104	,384

***. This is a lower bound of the true significance.**

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

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Table 5 shows that Sig. value of $0.384 > 0.005$ is the normal standard residual value, which means that the data is distributed normally. Furthermore, the output of study program variables and gender is in Table 6.

Table 6. Variable Output

Between-Subjects Factors			
		Value Label	N
Study Program	1	Mathematics	66
	2	Management	38
Gender	1	Female	81
	2	Male	23

Table 6 shows that there are 2 types of study program variables for students and 2 categories for gender variables. Langkah selanjutnya peneliti melakukan uji homogenitas seperti Tabel 7.

Table 8. The result of two-way ANOVA

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable:	English Proficiency Score				
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	8973.131 ^a	3	2991,044	2,681	,051
Intercept	9734622,695	1	9734622,695	8726,159	,000
Program	6267,763	1	6267,763	5,618	,020
Gender	1335,333	1	1335,333	1,197	,277
Program * Gender	4323,569	1	4323,569	3,876	,052
Error	111556,783	100	1115,568		
Total	14943445,000	104			
Corrected Total	120529,913	103			

a. R Squared = .074 (Adjusted R Squared = .047)

Table 8 shows that the Sig. score data is $0.020 < 0.05$ so that it can be concluded that there is a difference in students' English proficiency test scores based on the study program. The Sig. score is $0.277 < 0.05$ so that it can be concluded that there is no difference in students' English proficiency test scores based on the student's gender. The Sig. value is $0.052 < 0.05$ so that it can be concluded that there is no interaction between the study program and the type of depth in determining students' English proficiency scores

Table 7. Homogeneity Test Results

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances ^a			
Dependent Variable:	English Proficiency Score		
F	df1	df2	Sig.
1,742	3	100	,163

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.
a. Design: Intercept + Program + Gender + Program * Gender

Table 7 describe the SPSS output, a Sig value of 0.163 was obtained. Because the Sig value is $0.163 > 0.05$, it can be concluded that the variable variant of the English Proficiency score results is homogeneous. So that the homogeneity assumption in the two-way ANOVA test is fulfilled. The result of two-way ANOVA in Table 8.

4.2 Discussion

The results of the study showed that students' EPT scores were in the medium category with quite high variation. The study program influence EPT score. In line with previous research show that gender has the potential to affect early English language skills, including early test scores, through psychological aspects such as self-regulated learning (Karolina et al., 2023) and the support of study program variables, because it shows that English language skills are different according to the student's scientific context

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(Darmi & Albion, 2017; Ningsih & Susilawati, 2023).

However, this is contrary to the findings of previous researchers who showed that gender differences correlated with the achievement of English scores, making it relevant to be analyzed in the initial test score (Agus, 2022).

This previous research is not in line with the findings of the research because previous researchers states that students' EPT are influenced by educational backgrounds, learning experiences, and psychological factors such as motivation and confidence (Awalia, 2024; Zahra et al., 2024).

The finding that female students score higher than men indicates that there are differences by gender. This can be explained through aspects of self-regulation and learning strategies that are generally better in female students, as found in the research of Karolina et al. (2023). However, the relationship found in this study is relatively weak, so gender is not a dominant factor in determining English language skills.

Furthermore, significant differences based on study programs show that the academic environment has a stronger influence on students' English language skills. Students from study programs who use English more often in learning have a greater chance of improving their EPT. This is in line with the findings of Destyana et al. (2026) who stated that language exposure in an academic context contributes to improving students' communication competence.

The absence of an interaction between gender and study program suggests that the two variables do not reinforce or weaken each other's influence on the initial English test score. This means that the influence of the study program applies in general without depending on gender differences.

This research reinforces the theory that English language skills are influenced by multidimensional factors, including demographic and academic factors (Ghenghesh, 2020, Nguyen, 2021). In addition, this research contributes to enriching the study of the relationship between EPT and gender and the study program. In the future educational

institutions can use the results of the initial test as a basis for designing a more adaptive English learning program, there is a need for an English language strengthening program for students from non-language study programs, and lecturers can develop learning strategies that consider differences in characteristics Students (Darmi & Albion, 2017; Destyana et al., 2026).

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that students' English Proficiency Test (EPT) scores are generally in the moderate category with relatively high variation among participants. Study program is found to significantly influence EPT scores, indicating that students' academic background plays an important role in shaping English language proficiency. Meanwhile, gender shows a difference in EPT scores, with female students tending to achieve slightly higher results; however, this relationship is relatively weak and not a dominant determinant of English proficiency. Furthermore, no interaction effect was found between gender and study program, suggesting that both variables operate independently in influencing EPT scores. Overall, English proficiency is shaped by multidimensional factors, particularly academic exposure and learning context.

The findings imply that higher education institutions should consider strengthening English learning environments, especially for students from non-language study programs who may have less exposure to English in their academic activities. Curriculum designers and lecturers are encouraged to develop more adaptive and context-sensitive English instruction that aligns with students' field of study. In addition, although gender differences exist, they should not be overemphasized in instructional design, as they do not significantly determine learning outcomes. Instead, focus should be directed toward improving learning strategies, increasing language exposure, and fostering self-regulated learning skills across all students. The results also provide practical input for universities to utilize EPT results as an initial

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diagnostic tool for designing targeted English language support programs.

Future studies are recommended to explore additional variables that may influence English proficiency, such as motivation, learning strategies, digital literacy, and socio-economic background. Expanding the sample size and involving students from more diverse academic disciplines and institutions would also enhance the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, longitudinal research designs could be employed to examine how English proficiency develops over time in relation to academic exposure and learning interventions. Further qualitative or mixed-method studies are also suggested to gain deeper insights into how students perceive and experience English learning across different study programs.

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