



ELEJ

English Language Education Journal

E-ISSN: 2828-5077

<https://jurnal.unikastpaulus.ac.id/index.php/elej>

Vol. 4, No. 1, April 2025, Pp. 45-54

MIDWIFERY STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract: This study aims to explore midwifery students' perceptions of learning English in the context of health education. This research applied a descriptive qualitative design involving five midwifery students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using observation, documentation and semi-structured interviews. In conducting interview. There were five open-ended questions used for interview related to the importance of English, learning difficulties, learning methods, and students' feelings. The study revealed that students generally have positive perceptions of learning English, as it helps them access medical information, understand international journals, and improve professional competence. However, students also face several challenges, such as limited vocabulary, especially medical terms, pronunciation difficulties, lack of confidence, and limited opportunities for practice. In addition, students use various strategies such as practicing speaking, reading medical texts, using digital applications, and watching educational videos to improve their English skills.

Keywords: perception, learning English, ESP, Midwifery

INTRODUCTION

English is widely recognized as an international language used in various fields such as education, science, technology, and healthcare. In academic contexts, English has a crucial role, as most scientific books, journals, and research articles are published in English. Therefore, English proficiency is an essential skill for students who aim to access global knowledge and information (Sismiati & Latief, 2012).

In the healthcare field, English is widely used in medical communication, research publications, and clinical guidelines (Daar & Beratha, 2024). Healthcare professionals are required to understand English to access up-to-date medical information and improve the quality of healthcare services. Therefore, English plays a significant role in supporting students in health-related programs, including midwifery students (Jooneghani, 2012).

Midwifery students are future healthcare professionals who need to develop effective communication skills and the ability to understand medical information. English enables them to read international journals, understand medical terminology, and communicate effectively with healthcare professionals from different countries. As a result, learning English becomes an important part of their academic preparation (Harmer, 2007).

However, learning English is not always easy for students, especially for those whose main field of study is not language. Students often face challenges such as limited vocabulary, difficulties in pronunciation, and a lack of confidence in speaking English. These challenges can affect their motivation and participation in the learning process (Nugroho et al., 2021).

Several previous studies have examined students' perceptions and challenges in learning English in specific contexts. First, a study by (Dwi et al., 2021) on The Students' Perception Of English Courses (The Nutritionist Study Program Faculty Of Health Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Nusa Tenggara Barat). The study revealed that students have a positive perception and awareness of the importance of English in their daily lives, as well as the objectives of learning English developed by Nutritionist Study Program UNU. Similarly, (Saad, 2025) conducted a study on Perception of Healthcare Professionals on the Importance of English

Training in Medical Contexts. This study provides valuable insights into the role of English in the medical field and stresses the need for evidence-based curriculum design that accommodates the unique needs of healthcare professionals. Moreover, (Suramto et al., 2021) studied Nursing Students' Perception To The Necessity Of English For Specific Purposes (ESP) Course. The study showed that concluded that both listening and speaking skills are influential necessity for nursing students.

Students' perceptions are important factors influencing the success of language learning. Perception refers to how students think, feel, and respond to learning English. Positive perceptions can enhance motivation and engagement, while negative perceptions may decrease interest and participation.

Despite these studies, an exploration of Midwifery students' perceptions in learning English is limited, particularly from the students in rural area. Thus, this study aims to explore midwifery students' perception of learning English at Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng. Understanding students' perceptions is essential for improving English teaching strategies. By identifying students' needs and experiences, teachers can design more effective learning methods that facilitate successful language learning.

METHOD

Research Design and Participants

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research design to explore students' perceptions of learning English. Qualitative research focuses on understanding participants' experiences and perspectives in a natural context. The descriptive approach allows the researcher to present detailed explanations of students' perceptions and identify patterns in their responses. This method is suitable for analyzing students' attitudes, experiences, and opinions related to English learning.

The participants of this study are five midwifery students who are currently learning English in their study program. The participants were determined purposively. They were chosen because they have direct experience related to learning English in a health education context, which makes their responses relevant to the focus of this research. Their

experiences provide valuable insights into how English is perceived and used in their academic and professional preparation. By using this approach, the researcher ensures that the data collected are relevant to the research objectives and can support a deeper understanding of the topic being studied.

Instruments and Data Collection

The instrument used in this study is a semi-structured interview consisting of five questions that explore several important aspects of learning English among midwife students. These aspects include the importance of English, the difficulties faced during the learning process, the effectiveness of different learning methods, and students' feelings about learning English. The interviews were conducted to allow participants to express their opinions freely and provide detailed information about their learning experiences. This approach enables the researcher to gain deeper insights into students' perceptions. The interview questions include (1) Why midwife students need to learn English; (2) What difficulties they face in learning English; (3) How important English is for their future career as midwife; (4) What methods help them learn English effectively; (5) and how they feel about learning English in their study program.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method involves organizing, coding, and categorizing the data into meaningful patterns or themes. The researcher carefully reviewed the interview transcripts to identify key ideas and repeated responses related to students' experiences in learning English.

After the initial coding process, the data were grouped into several main themes, including the importance of English, learning difficulties, learning methods, and students' feelings. These themes were then analyzed in depth to provide a clear and systematic interpretation of the data, allowing the researcher to better understand students' perceptions of learning English in the context of health education.

RESULTS

The need for learning English

The interview results indicate that midwife students consider English an essential tool for accessing knowledge and improving their professional competence. Most participants explained that English is commonly used in medical books, journals, and clinical guidelines. Therefore, mastering English enables them to obtain up-to-date information related to maternal and child health, which is important for providing high-quality healthcare services.

One student stated that *“midwife students need to learn English because many medical books, journals, and guidelines are written in English, so it helps us access the latest information and improve healthcare services” (MPJ)*. Furthermore, students emphasized that English plays a significant role in global communication. By having English proficiency, they are able to interact and collaborate with international healthcare professionals. This ability not only broadens their knowledge but also helps them adapt to global healthcare developments and improve the quality of care they provide to patients. *“English allows us to communicate with foreign patients and collaborate with healthcare professionals from other countries” (YM)*.

Difficulties in learning English

The findings reveal that students experience several challenges in learning English, particularly in understanding medical vocabulary. Many participants reported that they often struggle to comprehend the meaning of sentences, especially when encountering unfamiliar terms in medical contexts. This difficulty affects their ability to fully understand academic materials written in English. One participant stated *“I find it difficult to understand English, especially medical vocabulary, and sometimes I cannot understand the meaning of sentences” (YKM)*. In addition, students also face problems in speaking skills and confidence. They mentioned feeling hesitant and lacking confidence when trying to communicate in English. *“I have difficulty with pronunciation and feel unsure when interacting in English” (MYS)*. Limited opportunities to practice further contribute to this issue, making it harder for them to develop fluency and become

comfortable using the language in both academic and professional settings.

The Importance of Learning English

Based on the interview data, All participants agreed that English plays a crucial role in their future careers as midwives. They highlighted that English helps them understand medical terminology and access the latest medical information, which is essential in providing safe and effective healthcare services. This shows that English is closely related to their professional development. One student stated *“English is very important because it helps me understand medical terms and improve my professional skills” MYJ).*

Moreover, students believe that English proficiency can enhance their career opportunities. It allows them to work with international healthcare teams, communicate with patients from different backgrounds, and even pursue career opportunities abroad. *“English can help me work abroad and communicate easily with foreign patients.”* As a result, English is seen as a key factor in improving both their professional skills and career prospects. This indicated that students recognize the importance of learning English for their future career as medium for interaction.

Method for learning English effectively.

The results indicate that students use simple and practical methods to learn English. Most participants mentioned practicing speaking and reading simple English books as their primary learning strategies. These methods help them gradually build their vocabulary and improve their understanding of the language. One student said *“I learn English by practicing speaking and reading simple English books.”*

Additionally, students reported that practicing English with their peers and using digital tools are very helpful. By engaging in conversations with friends or using online resources such as applications and videos, they are able to practice in a more flexible and relaxed environment. *“I use the internet and AI tools to learn English, and it helps me understand the material better.”* This approach not only improves their language skills but also increases their confidence in using English in daily and academic

contexts.

How the students Feel about Learning English

The interview results show that students have mixed feelings about learning English in their study program. On one hand, they find it challenging because they need to balance language learning with other academic responsibilities. The difficulty of understanding English materials can sometimes make the learning process feel demanding. One participant stated *“learning English is not easy because we also have many other subjects to study.”* On the other hand, students also expressed positive attitudes toward learning English. They believe that it is very beneficial for their personal and professional development. Another participant stated *“learning English is very useful because it increases my confidence and helps prepare me for my future career.”* Learning English helps them build confidence, expand their knowledge, and better prepare for their future career as midwives.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that midwifery students have positive perceptions of learning English, especially in accessing academic and medical information. This supports previous studies which emphasize that English is essential in higher education and for accessing global scientific knowledge (Daar & Beratha, 2024); (Suramto et al., 2021). In the context of healthcare education, English competence enables students to understand updated medical resources and improve their academic performance.

Furthermore, English is also perceived as important for professional communication. Students highlighted that English allows them to interact with foreign patients and collaborate with healthcare professionals from different countries. This finding is in line with previous research showing that English plays a significant role in global communication and intercultural collaboration (Saud, 2025); (Lu, 2018).

Despite these positive perceptions, students face challenges, particularly in mastering vocabulary. Medical terminology is often complex, making it difficult for students to understand English texts. This supports (Nation, 2001), who states that vocabulary knowledge is a key component in language learning. Similarly, (Indrasari, 2016) found that students in health-related fields struggle with technical vocabulary.

In addition, students reported difficulties in speaking and confidence. Many of them feel hesitant when using English due to fear of making mistakes. This is consistent with the concept of language anxiety, where learners feel nervous in communication (Yasin, 2024). Such conditions may limit students' participation in the learning process.

The study also shows that students are aware of the importance of English for their future careers. They believe that English proficiency can improve their professional competence and open opportunities to work abroad. Moreover, students use various strategies to improve their English skills, such as practicing speaking, reading texts, and using digital tools. This aligns with (Harmer, 2007), who emphasizes the importance of practice in language learning. Additionally, the integration of technology can enhance learning effectiveness and flexibility.

Students' feelings toward learning English are both positive and negative. They feel challenged due to difficulties and academic workload, but they also recognize the benefits of learning English. This reflects the idea that learners' perceptions influence their motivation and learning outcomes (Saud, 2025). The findings suggest that students' perceptions play an important role in language learning success. Therefore, teachers should design learning strategies that are relevant, engaging, and suited to students' needs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study shows that midwifery students have generally positive perceptions of learning English and recognize its importance in academic and professional contexts. English helps them access medical information, understand international journals, and improve communication skills in healthcare settings. However, students also face several challenges, including limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, lack of confidence, and limited opportunities for practice. These challenges can affect their learning process and need to be addressed.

Despite these difficulties, students actively use various strategies such as practicing speaking, reading, and using digital tools to improve their English skills. Their awareness of the importance of English for their future careers becomes a strong motivation in learning.

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