



EFL Learners' Expectations and Perceived Instructional Fulfilment in a University-Based English Course: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Abstract

In the digital era, aligning instructional practices with learner expectations has become increasingly critical for the success of foreign language programs, particularly in non-formal educational contexts where learners voluntarily enroll with strong instrumental motivations. Despite the recognized importance of learner-centered pedagogy, a significant gap persists between what learners expect from language courses and what is actually delivered in the classroom. This study aims to explore English learners' expectations and examine the extent to which these expectations are perceived as fulfilled in a university-based English course. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods study design was employed, involving 22 English language learners at the Foreign Language Course (KBA). Quantitative data were collected using an opened ended in the beginning course and five-point Likert scale questionnaire administered after ten course meetings, while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 11 of the 22 respondents to explain and contextualize the numerical findings. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) and thematic analysis based on the Miles and Huberman interactive model were used to analyze the data. The findings reveal that learners hold multidimensional expectations, with speaking skills (77%) and a non-threatening learning environment (82%) being the highest priorities. Learners perceived high fulfillment of expectations regarding teacher competence (59-77% highly suitable), teacher attitudes (68-86% highly suitable), and learning environment (68-77% highly suitable). However, two notable gaps were identified: the use of interactive applications such as Quizizz and Kahoot (36.3% slightly suitable) and schedule flexibility (18.1% slightly suitable and 4.5% unsuitable). This study concludes that learners generally reported positive perceptions of teacher-related and classroom-environment dimensions, accompanied by lower ratings for interactive applications and scheduling. However, these findings represent perceived fulfillment rather than objective evidence of instructional quality or language learning outcomes. The results may serve as formative feedback for program planning rather than definitive evaluation, and future research should incorporate observational and achievement measures to complement self-report data.

Keywords: Learner expectations; Perceived fulfillment; English courses; Non-formal education

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INTRODUCTION

Foreign language proficiency has become an essential skill for university students, not only for academic advancement but also for professional mobility and cross-cultural communication (Gjikolli & Gashi-Berisha, 2023). English, the world's most widely used lingua franca, is spoken by approximately 1.5 billion people worldwide, of which only about 400 million are native speakers (Campbell & Grondona, 2008; Crystal, 2003) and learning English is inevitable in this present global scenario and also acts like a link

language (Marreddy, 2019). In Indonesia, the need for English proficiency continues to grow, especially in the education sector, especially in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). However, the success of language programs depends not only on technological advances but also on the alignment of teaching practices with student expectations (Lee, 2022; Кошарна et al., 2023) as it can influence adaptability, engagement, achievement, satisfaction and retention (A. Tomlinson et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding students' expectations about learning a foreign language is an important first step in designing effective language programs that are tailored to their needs (Sojoodizadeh et al., 2020).

Despite the recognized importance of adapting instruction to students' expectations, there is often a large gap between what students expect and what is actually taught in the classroom (B. Tomlinson, 2023). Learner expectations refer to the beliefs they hold about future events that shape perceptions, emotions, thoughts, and actions in different situations (Panitz et al., 2021; Ramachandran, 2012). Perceived satisfaction, in this context, describes students' subjective evaluation of whether their expectations were met by the instructional practices they experienced (Whitelock-Wainwright et al., 2021). Instructional congruence refers to the degree of congruence between students' expectations and what is actually delivered in the classroom (B. Tomlinson, 2023). These concepts are distinct from motivation, which drives students to take action, and engagement, which reflects active participation in learning activities (Neupane, 2023). This gap between expectations and teaching practices has been documented in a variety of educational contexts, including English language teaching programs (Muttaqin & Chuang, 2022) and secondary education curricula (Arta et al., 2023). When student expectations are not met, the consequences can include decreased motivation, disengagement, and poor learning outcomes (Neupane, 2023; Whitelock-Wainwright et al., 2021). Language programs face serious challenges in terms of student satisfaction and program quality if they fail to deliver what students want, especially in informal settings where students voluntarily enroll with strong instrumental motivation.

Previous studies have extensively examined students' expectations in formal higher education contexts (B. Tomlinson, 2023), online learning environments (Henry, 2020), and expectations regarding learning analytics services (Whitelock-Wainwright et al., 2021). However, very few studies have examined students' expectations in informal foreign language course contexts. Furthermore, existing research has focused primarily on students' general academic expectations of their university rather than their specific expectations regarding aspects of classroom language teaching, such as teacher competence, teaching methods, learning materials, classroom facilities, and institutional policies. For example, Neupane (2023) examined the expectations of first-year university-level English language learners, identifying themes including English for employability, internal and external business communication, academic achievement, self-improvement, social status, and professional skills. However, this study did not address informal language course settings where learners participate voluntarily and may have stronger instrumental motivation. Similarly, Casanova et al. (2023) examined how intentions and expectations influence teachers' ongoing professional development, but their study did not focus on language learners. The novelty of the current study lies in the context of the study.

Based on the identified gaps, the purpose of this study is to analyze learner expectations and examine the extent to which these expectations are perceived as fulfilled in a university-based English course in Indonesia. This study is grounded in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) theory, which emphasizes meaningful communication as the primary goal of language learning, and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories, including the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996), the

Affective Filter Hypothesis (Oller Jr, 1988), and the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990). These theoretical frameworks informed the development of the questionnaire items. CLT guided the inclusion of items on speaking skills and communicative activities, the Interaction Hypothesis informed items on feedback and teacher-learner interaction, the Affective Filter Hypothesis shaped items on learning environment and teacher attitudes, and the Noticing Hypothesis influenced items on input salience and materials design. Accordingly, this study examined learner expectations across eight instructional dimensions: reasons for learning English, expected language skills, instructor competence, instructor attitudes, learning support and feedback, learning media and materials, learning environment, and facilities and institutional policies. To address the identified gaps, this study was guided by two research questions: what are the expectations of English language learners at KBA UMM? and to what extent are these expectations perceived as fulfilled?

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods case study design to explore English learners' expectations and their perceived fulfillment in a non-formal university-based language course context. This design was selected because the quantitative questionnaire data were collected first, followed by semi-structured interviews intended to explain, elaborate, and contextualize the numerical findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The quantitative strand was given priority, as it provided the descriptive overview of learner expectations and fulfillment patterns across eight instructional dimensions, while the qualitative strand served to confirm and deepen understanding of the quantitative results through learners' voices. The integration of both data types occurred during the interpretation phase, where interview themes were used to explain specific questionnaire findings through methodological triangulation.

Research Participants

The study was carried out at the Foreign Language Course (Kursus Bahasa Asing / KBA), Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia, during the 2025 academic year. KBA UMM offers foreign language programs including English, Arabic, Japanese, German, French, Korean, and Mandarin, with both regular and private class options (Hartiningsih, 2020). English was selected as the focus of this study because it is the most popular and frequently enrolled language among learners, representing the largest cohort within the institution. The participants comprised all 22 English language learners actively enrolled and willing to participate in the study, selected using total sampling (census sampling) to ensure that every learner's voice was represented given the relatively small and manageable population size (Sugiyono, 2016). The participants ranged in age from 19 to 21 years.

Regarding demographic characteristics, the sample consisted of 18 female and 4 male learners, representing diverse academic majors from various faculties within the university, including Education, Business, Engineering, and Social Sciences. With respect to English proficiency, learners self-reported their levels as ranging from beginner (A1) to intermediate (B1) based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), with the majority identifying as high-beginner to low-intermediate. Most participants had prior English learning experience through formal schooling (6-12 years of English instruction) before enrolling in the course. Their enrolment motivations varied, including academic requirements (preparation for English proficiency tests), career preparation, and personal interest in intercultural communication. Attendance was recorded as consistent, with all participants having completed at least ten course meetings prior from 16 meetings to the questionnaire administration. Of the 22

participants, 11 volunteered to participate in follow-up semi-structured interviews, providing rich qualitative data to complement the quantitative results. It is acknowledged that these volunteers may represent a more engaged or satisfied subset of learners, and their selection could introduce self-selection bias, which is recognized as a limitation of the study.

Instruments and Data Collection

The data collection instruments comprised two types: an opened and a closed-ended questionnaire and also a semi-structured interview guide, all developed specifically for this research context by the research team. The questionnaire was designed to assess two main dimensions learner expectations across eight instructional components reasons for learning English, expected language skills, instructor competence, instructor attitudes, learning support and feedback, learning media and materials, learning environment, and facilities and institutional policies in the opened ended one and the perceived level of fulfillment of these expectations using closed ended questionnaire and interview. For expectation fulfillment, the questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, using options from 1 (unsuitable) to 5 (highly suitable)(Batterton & Hale, 2017), as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Five Point Likert Scale

No	Criterion	Scale
1.	Highly Suitable	5
2.	Suitable	4
3.	Fairly suitable	3
4.	Slightly suitable	2
5.	Unsuitable	1

The questionnaire was designed with separate sections for expectations and fulfillment to capture each construct independently. For the expectations section, learners mentioned and selected their preferred expectations from multiple-response items, allowing for categorical responses that could be tabulated by frequency. For the fulfillment section, learners rated their agreement with statements such as "The teacher explains material clearly" on the five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was developed based on a construct map derived from the theoretical frameworks of learner expectations in language learning contexts (Neupane, 2023; A. Tomlinson et al., 2023; Whitelock-Wainwright et al., 2021) and was informed by the principles of CLT and SLA theories as described in the introduction. Item sources included adaptation from validated instruments in previous studies and original items developed to capture aspects specific to the KBA UMM context. The questionnaire was pilot tested with five English learners not selected for the final sample to assess clarity, readability, and relevance of items. Based on pilot feedback, minor wording revisions were made to three ambiguous items, and one item regarding "use of interactive applications such as Quizizz or Kahoot" was added to the media section following pilot participant suggestion. However, it is acknowledged that a five-person pilot can identify confusing wording but cannot establish full psychometric quality.

The semi-structured interview guide was created to validate and elaborate on the quantitative results. The guide focused on three thematic areas which aspects of the learning process had met learner expectations, which aspects had not yet met expectations, and suggestions for improving teaching and learning quality. Interviews were conducted one-on-one, either in person or via video call according to participant availability, with each session lasting approximately 10-15 minutes. All interviews were conducted in Indonesian to allow participants to express themselves freely and

comfortably. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent, and recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. The use of audio recording enabled verbatim transcription, which was essential for the qualitative analysis process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded through several sequential stages. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequency counts and percentages, calculated using Microsoft Excel. For the expectations section, responses were tabulated to show the distribution of learner preferences for each instructional component, with percentages calculated based on the total number of respondents (N=22). For the fulfillment section, responses on the five-point Likert scale were tabulated as frequencies and percentages for each response category (Sugiyono, 2016). All percentages were calculated using a denominator of 22 to ensure consistency. While means and standard deviations were not computed due to the categorical nature of the expectations data and the exploratory focus of the study, future research should include such measures. No inferential statistical tests were applied, as the research aimed to describe rather than test causal relationships, and the sample size was insufficient for such analyses (Barroga et al., 2023; Lakens, 2021). The absence of matched expectation-fulfilments discrepancy scores is acknowledged as a limitation future research should calculate paired comparisons for each learner.

Qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis proposed by (Miles et al., 2014), which comprises three concurrent activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the data reduction phase, interview transcripts were read repeatedly, and relevant segments were coded into thematic categories aligned with the research questions, such as "fulfilled expectations," "unfulfilled expectations," and "suggestions for improvement." (Miles et al., 2014). A codebook was developed collaboratively by the research team to ensure coding consistency, with regular meetings to resolve disagreements. Coding was conducted by the two student assistants under the supervision of the lead researcher. All interview responses were kept in the original Indonesian language during coding to preserve contextual meaning, and only selected quotations were translated into English for reporting purposes. In the data display phase, coded data were organized into matrices and narrative summaries. In the conclusion drawing and verification phase, patterns were interpreted and cross-checked with the quantitative findings to ensure consistency. Methodological triangulation, combining quantitative and qualitative data, was used to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The integration of data types occurred during the interpretation phase, where qualitative themes were used to explain specific quantitative findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the findings of the study organized according to the two research questions: what are the expectations of English language learners at KBA UMM? and to what extent are these expectations fulfilled? Quantitative data from 22 questionnaire respondents are presented first, followed by qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews with 11 participants to provide deeper insight into learners' voices.

Quantitative Findings: Learners' Expectations

Reasons for Learning English

Table 2 presents the distribution of learners' reasons for choosing to study English at KBA UMM. The data reveal that the dominant motivation was a desire to master and deepen English proficiency, selected by 10 learners (46%). This was followed by communication purposes (6 learners, 27%), the perceived importance of English (3 learners, 14%), interest in the language (2 learners, 9%), and English as a stepping stone to learning German (1 learner, 4%). These findings indicate that most learners enroll in English courses with instrumental motivation oriented toward mastery and practical communication rather than merely fulfilling academic requirements.

Table 2. Reasons for Learning English

No	Reason	Frequency	%
1.	Want to master and deepen English	10	46
2.	Communication	6	27
3.	Importance of English	3	14
4.	Interesting	2	9
5.	Stepping stone to learning German	1	4
Total		22	100

Expected Language Skills

The findings showed that the speaking skill was the most highly expected competency among learners, with 17 respondents (77%) prioritizing speaking alone. An additional 3 respondents (13%) expected a combination of speaking and vocabulary, while 1 respondent (5%) expected speaking, reading, and writing, and another 1 respondent (5%) expected speaking, reading, and listening. The overwhelming dominance of speaking skills (either alone or in combination) across all 22 respondents confirms that learners view communicative oral proficiency as the primary indicator of successful language learning.

In addition, EFL learners' expectations for teachers refer to teachers who have good competences. The most frequently requested combination was clear explanation of material, use of interesting and creative methods, provision of relevant practical examples, independent assignments, and vocabulary enrichment, selected by 4 respondents. However, the single most dominant individual expectation was clear explanation of material alone, chosen by 8 respondents (the largest single category). When combined with other competencies, the ability to explain material clearly and easily understandably appeared as a component in 15 of 22 responses (68%), indicating that clarity of instruction is the most fundamental expectation of teacher competence.

Expected Teacher Attitudes

The findings demonstrate that learners highly value teachers who are friendly, patient, respectful, motivating, and open to feedback. The combination of all four attitudes (friendly/patient/respectful, motivating, open to feedback, punctual) was selected by 6 respondents. The combination of the first three attitudes without punctuality was also selected by 6 respondents. When analyzed individually, the attribute of being friendly, patient, and respectful appeared in 20 of 22 responses (91%), making it the most consistently expected teacher attitude. Motivation and confidence-building appeared in 19 responses (86%), and openness to feedback appeared in 14 responses (64%).

Expected Learning Support and Feedback

The findings indicate that learners strongly desire comprehensive learning support. The combination of giving feedback, providing assistance when encountering difficulties, and encouraging practice was selected by 13 respondents (59%). Feedback alone was

selected by 4 respondents (18%), encouragement to practice alone by 3 respondents (14%), and assistance alone by 2 respondents (9%). The dominance of the full combination suggests that learners view effective learning support as a holistic package rather than isolated actions.

Expected Learning Media

The findings show that learners expect a variety of media in their language learning. The combination of video, PowerPoint, and modules was the most preferred, selected by 9 respondents (41%). Video and PowerPoint together were selected by 6 respondents (27%), while video alone was selected by 4 respondents (18%). Video appeared in 21 of 22 responses (95%), making it the most universally expected medium, followed by PowerPoint in 17 responses (77%) and modules in 12 responses (55%).

Expected Learning Environment

Dealing with learning environment, the findings show that a non-threatening classroom atmosphere is the most critical environmental expectation. A combination of non-threatening atmosphere, encouragement of active speaking, and facilitation of questions was selected by 8 respondents (36%). The non-threatening atmosphere alone was selected by 6 respondents (27%), and encouragement of active speaking alone was selected by 4 respondents (18%). The attribute "non-threatening atmosphere" appeared in 18 of 22 responses (82%), indicating that psychological safety is the foundation of learners' ideal learning environment.

Expected Learning Materials

Dealing with learning materials, the findings demonstrate that learners expect materials to be relevant to their needs as the primary characteristic. Material that matches learner needs alone was selected by 7 respondents (32%). The combination of needs-based material, practical skill focus, and provision of examples and exercises was selected by 5 respondents (23%). The combination of needs-based material, practical skill focus, and examples/exercises together (without updated content) was selected by 4 respondents (18%). The attribute "materials that suit learner needs" appeared in 20 of 22 responses (91%), making it the most essential material characteristic.

Expected Facilities

The findings present learners' expectations regarding physical and technical facilities. Speaker was the most frequently mentioned facility (7 mentions), followed by television (4 mentions) and modules (4 mentions). PowerPoint was mentioned 3 times, and both projector and practical activities were mentioned twice. The diversity of facilities mentioned (10 different types) indicates that learners expect a technology-enabled and well-equipped learning environment. Dealing with educational policies, the data shows that learners expect policies related to placement testing (2 mentions), attendance aligned with campus classes (2 mentions), and various other policy adjustments. The diversity of policy expectations (9 different types) suggests that learners desire institutional flexibility, transparency, and responsiveness to their needs.

Quantitative Findings: Fulfillment of Learners' Expectations

The following findings present the extent to which learners perceived their expectations as fulfilled, measured on a five-point scale: 5=Highly Suitable, 4=Suitable, 3=Fairly Suitable, 2=Slightly Suitable, 1=Unsuitable. All percentages are calculated using denominator N=22.

Teacher Competence Fulfillment

The data of teachers competence fulfillment shows that learners perceived their expectations regarding teacher competence as highly fulfilled. For clear explanation of

material, 59.1% responded "highly suitable" and 40.9% "suitable". For use of interesting methods, 68.2% responded "highly suitable" and 31.8% "suitable". For providing relevant examples, 77.3% responded "highly suitable" and 22.7% "suitable". For time management, 68.2% responded "highly suitable" and 31.8% "suitable". For re-explaining material, 59.1% responded "highly suitable" and 40.9% "suitable". No respondents selected "fairly suitable," "slightly suitable," or "unsuitable" for any teacher competence item, indicating complete perceived fulfillment.

Teacher Attitudes Fulfillment

The data of teacher attitude demonstrates that learners' expectations regarding teacher attitudes were also highly fulfilled. For being friendly, patient, and respectful, 86.4% responded "highly suitable". For motivating and building confidence, 68.2% responded "highly suitable". For being open to feedback, 59.1% responded "highly suitable," 31.8% "suitable," and 9.1% "fairly suitable". For punctuality, 77.3% responded "highly suitable". For professionalism, 77.3% responded "highly suitable".

Learning Support and Feedback Fulfillment

The data of learning support and feedback fulfillment presents fulfillment of learning support expectations. For giving constructive feedback, 68.2% responded "highly suitable". For providing assistance with difficulties, 77.3% responded "highly suitable". For encouraging continued practice, 77.3% responded "highly suitable". For providing consultation, 40.9% responded "highly suitable" and 50.0% "suitable". For monitoring progress, 68.2% responded "highly suitable".

Learning Media Fulfillment

The data of learning media shows varying levels of media fulfillment. Video utilization was rated as 59.1% "highly suitable" and 40.9% "suitable". PowerPoint use was rated 77.3% "highly suitable," 13.6% "suitable," and 9.1% "fairly suitable". Audio/recordings for listening practice were rated 86.4% "highly suitable". However, the use of interactive applications (Quizizz/Kahoot/Google Classroom) showed lower fulfillment: only 9.1% "highly suitable," 27.3% "suitable," 27.3% "fairly suitable," and 36.3% "unsuitable".

Learning Environment Fulfillment

The data of learning environment demonstrates high fulfillment across all five learning environment indicators. Creating a non-threatening classroom was rated 68.2% "highly suitable". Encouraging active speaking was rated 77.3% "highly suitable". Facilitating questions was rated 59.1% "highly suitable". Creating positive interaction was rated 68.2% "highly suitable". Creating an inclusive environment was rated 68.2% "highly suitable".

Institutional Policies Fulfillment

The data of institutional policies present fulfillment of policy expectations. Flexible and relevant curriculum was rated 40.9% "highly suitable," 40.9% "suitable," and 18.2% "fairly suitable". Competency-based assessment was rated 68.2% "highly suitable". Small class size was rated 68.2% "highly suitable". Flexible scheduling showed the lowest fulfillment among all policies: 40.9% "highly suitable," 22.7% "suitable," 13.6% "fairly suitable," 18.1% "slightly suitable," and 4.5% "unsuitable". Feedback system was rated 40.9% "highly suitable," 31.8% "suitable," and 27.3% "fairly suitable".

Qualitative Findings: Learners' Voices

To complement and deepen the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 of the 22 questionnaire respondents. The qualitative data provided rich insights into three main areas aspects of learning that met learner

expectations, aspects that did not yet meet expectations, and suggestions for improvement.

Aspects That Met Learners' Expectations

The majority of interviewed learners expressed that their expectations had been comprehensively met. One respondent (S5) provided a detailed positive evaluation as *"Everything is already there, starting from the material, practice, text for exam, environment, supportive teacher, and a relaxed atmosphere, plus the small class size is very helpful."*

Other respondents similarly confirmed overall satisfaction. S1 stated "everything is already", S2 responded "suitable", S3 stated "everything already", and S4 explicitly confirmed "All parts of English learning match my expectations". These qualitative responses corroborate the quantitative findings that showed consistently high fulfillment percentages across most indicators, particularly for teacher competence, teacher attitudes, and learning environment. Respondents also highlighted specific aspects that met their expectations, particularly the opportunity to practice speaking. One respondent (S6) noted *"Being able to speak and present again in English in front of the class."* Another respondent emphasized the value of learning new vocabulary as *"Knowing many English vocabulary words, both formal and informal."* (S7)

Aspects That Did Not Meet Learners' Expectations

Despite generally high fulfillment, several gaps between expectations and reality were identified. The most frequently mentioned unfulfilled expectation was schedule flexibility. One respondent (S1) explicitly stated *"Weekend classes should be on weekdays."* Another respondent elaborated on the schedule issue, explaining how weekend classes as: *"Perhaps language course instructors could provide input to the campus, especially our department, to schedule language course registration on weekdays only, in between Monday-Thursday or Friday... because we only have one subject per day, so we could complete the language course on workdays, and then we could be totally free on weekends."* (S5)

Another unfulfilled expectation was the lack of interactive applications such as Quizizz or Kahoot. One respondent (S8) noted: *"There are no media such as Quizizz or Kahoot yet."* Facility issues, particularly problems with audio equipment, were also mentioned. One respondent (S9) stated: *"Please fix the sound speaker."*

Suggestions for Improvement

Based on the identified gaps, learners offered several suggestions for improving teaching and learning quality. Regarding scheduling, one respondent (S10) suggested: *"Be more flexible in arranging the schedule. It's okay to have two meetings per week, as long as one of them is online."* Regarding interactive media, a respondent suggested incorporating game-based learning platforms: *"Need media such as Quizizz or Kahoot."* (S7)

Regarding facilities, respondents consistently requested maintenance of audio equipment. One respondent (S6) suggested: *"More focus on facility maintenance, especially the audio that often crackles."* Regarding teaching methods, one respondent (S8) suggested making learning more enjoyable while maintaining practical focus: *"Hope to make it more enjoyable... There is feedback and direct practice, not just theory."* Finally, regarding course duration, one respondent (S9) suggested extending class time: *"Maybe the duration could be extended to 2 hours? so it lasts a little longer."*

Discussion

This study provides empirical evidence regarding the congruence between English language learners' expectations and their perceived fulfillment in a non-formal university-based English course in Indonesia. The findings reveal that learners hold multidimensional expectations, with speaking skills (77%) and a non-threatening learning environment (82%) emerging as the highest priorities. The overall results are

consistent with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, which emphasize meaningful communication as the primary goal of language learning (Richards, 2006). (Neupane, 2023; Richards, 2006) The prioritization of speaking skills is particularly noteworthy, as it reflects learners' instrumental communication goals in a voluntary, non-formal learning context. This finding extends previous research by Neupane (2023), who identified English for employability and business communication as key expectations, by specifying that learners in non-formal settings specifically prioritize oral production over other skills. The emphasis on a non-threatening learning environment (82%) aligns with the Affective Filter Hypothesis Oller Jr (1988), suggesting that learners implicitly recognize the importance of emotional safety for language acquisition.

The high levels of perceived fulfillment across teacher competence (59-77% highly suitable) and teacher attitudes (68-86% highly suitable) indicate that instructional practices at KBA UMM are generally well-aligned with learner expectations in these domains. This finding is consistent with the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996), which emphasizes the role of modified interaction, feedback, and negotiation in language learning. The high fulfillment of teacher attitudes particularly being friendly, patient, and respectful (86.4% highly suitable) aligns with research on teacher immediacy and its positive association with student motivation, engagement, and affective learning (Witt et al., 2004). In the Indonesian EFL context, where teacher-student rapport is culturally valued, this finding suggests that course instructors have successfully established the affective conditions conducive to productive language learning. However, it is important to note that these ratings represent perceived conditions rather than direct evidence of language acquisition. High satisfaction with teacher characteristics does not by itself confirm that learning occurred outcome measures would be needed for such claims.

The most significant gap identified was in the use of interactive applications such as Quizizz and Kahoot, with 36.3% of learners rating this aspect as "unsuitable" and none rating it as "highly suitable." This finding reflects broader trends in digital-era language learning, where learners increasingly expect technology-enhanced, gamified learning experiences (Lee, 2022; Kosharna et al., 2023). The gap is particularly noteworthy given that 95% of learners expected video-based learning and 77% expected PowerPoint use expectations that were highly fulfilled. The discrepancy between the fulfillment of traditional digital media (video, PPT) and interactive gamified platforms suggests that while the course has successfully integrated basic educational technology, it has not yet fully embraced the more interactive, learner-engaging technologies characteristic of contemporary language learning (Gjikko & Gashi-Berisha, 2023). This finding aligns with (Hikmah, 2019) observation that language teaching in the digital era requires not merely the presence of technology but strategic integration of interactive, student-centered digital tools that promote active engagement rather than passive consumption. However, it must be interpreted cautiously: learner demand for gamification does not automatically mean that platforms like Quizizz or Kahoot will improve language outcomes. Gamification may enhance engagement, but its effect on communicative competence requires empirical investigation.

Another significant gap was identified in schedule flexibility, where 18.1% of learners rated this aspect as "slightly suitable" and 4.5% as "unsuitable." This finding must be understood within the specific institutional context of KBA UMM, where many learners are concurrently enrolled in university degree programs with demanding course schedules. As one respondent explained, weekend classes conflict with students' academic and personal commitments, creating tension between language learning aspirations and other educational responsibilities. This finding aligns with research on learner expectations in non-formal education settings, where flexibility is often cited as a primary reason for choosing non-formal over formal education (Murphy, 2018).

Similarly found that institutional flexibility, including scheduling, is a key determinant of learner satisfaction in voluntary educational programs. The finding also reflects the broader post-pandemic shift in learner expectations, where students have become accustomed to the flexibility afforded by online and hybrid learning modalities (Henry, 2020). The qualitative data corroborated this quantitative finding, with multiple learners expressing a desire for hybrid scheduling options that combine online and face-to-face meetings.

The high fulfillment of learning environment expectations (68-77% highly suitable) provides empirical support for the Affective Filter Hypothesis. The finding that 68.2% of learners rated the non-threatening classroom atmosphere as "highly suitable" and 77.3% rated encouragement of active speaking as "highly suitable" suggests that KBA UMM instructors have successfully created the low-anxiety environment theorized to facilitate acquisition. This is consistent with Horwitz (2010) that foreign language classroom anxiety is negatively correlated with speaking performance and that supportive teacher behaviors can significantly reduce language anxiety. The qualitative data reinforced this finding, with one respondent specifically noting that the "relaxed atmosphere" and "supportive teacher" contributed to their positive learning experience.

The findings on learning materials (50-59% highly suitable) and focus on practical skills (50% highly suitable, 50% suitable) suggest that while learners generally perceive materials as aligned with their needs, there remains room for enhancing the practical, communicative orientation of materials. This aligns with task-based language teaching (TBLT) principles, which advocate for materials that engage learners in authentic, real-world tasks (Ellis, 2017). The fact that 91% of learners expected materials to suit their needs indicates that learner-centered materials design is a priority for this population. The moderate fulfillment levels suggest that while the course materials are adequate, they may not fully leverage opportunities for personalization and authentic task integration. This finding has practical implications for material development at KBA UMM, suggesting that future materials should incorporate more learner-generated content, authentic texts, and task-based activities that simulate real-world language use.

Comparing the findings of this study with previous research reveals both consistencies and unique contributions (Neupane, 2023; Tomlinson, 2023; Whitelock-Wainwright et al., 2021). Consistent with (Neupane, 2023) study of first-year university students in Nepal, learners in the present study demonstrated strong instrumental motivation, prioritizing English for practical communication and career advancement. However, the present study extends this finding by documenting the specific instructional components (teacher competence, attitudes, support, media, environment, materials, facilities, policies) that learners expect and evaluating the perceived degree of fulfillment for each. This comprehensive, component-based approach to expectations fulfillment is a novel contribution to the literature, as most previous studies have focused either on general academic expectations (Tomlinson et al., 2023) or on isolated aspects such as online learning expectations (Henry, 2020). Unlike Whitelock-Wainwright et al. (2021), who focused on expectations toward learning analytics services in higher education, the present study addresses a broader range of pedagogical and institutional expectations in a non-formal language course context, providing a more holistic picture of learner expectations.

The findings also contribute to the growing body of research on language teaching in the digital era (Koehler et al., 2013; Lee, 2022). While Lee (2022) systematically reviewed context-aware technology use in foreign language learning, the present study provides empirical data on what learners actually expect from technology integration. The finding that 95% of learners expected video and 77% expected PowerPoint, yet only 36.3% were satisfied with interactive applications, suggests that learners' technology

expectations are evolving beyond passive multimedia toward interactive, gamified, and socially connected learning experiences. This finding has important implications for teacher professional development, suggesting that language instructors may need training not only in basic technology use but specifically in the integration of interactive platforms that promote active learner engagement (Koehler et al., 2013). The study also contributes to the understanding of learner expectations in non-Western, non-formal EFL settings, which remain underrepresented in the international literature (Burns & Richards, 2018) (Nimmannit, 2020).

Several methodological considerations warrant attention when interpreting these findings. First, the small sample size (N=22) and single-site case study design limit the generalizability of the results. The findings should be interpreted as context-specific rather than broadly generalizable. The reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires and interviews may introduce social desirability bias, as current learners evaluated their own teachers and institution. The nearly universal positive ratings across many items suggest possible ceiling effects, where learners may have been reluctant to rate their teachers negatively. Third, the volunteer nature of the interview sample may have favored more engaged or satisfied learners, potentially skewing the qualitative findings toward more positive perceptions. Absence of observational data and objective achievement measures means that the findings represent perceived fulfillment rather than objective evidence of instructional quality or language development. Future research should address these limitations through larger, more diverse samples, observational methods, and achievement measures to triangulate self-report data.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that English language learners at KBA UMM hold multidimensional expectations predominantly oriented toward practical communicative competence, particularly speaking skills, delivered within a supportive, non-threatening learning environment. Learners perceived high fulfillment of expectations related to teacher competence (highly suitable), teacher attitudes (highly suitable), and learning environment (highly suitable), with the majority of respondents rating these aspects as "highly suitable" or "suitable." These findings suggest that instructional practices at KBA UMM are generally perceived as aligned with learner expectations in teacher-related and classroom-environment dimensions, consistent with theoretical frameworks such as Communicative Language Teaching and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. However, it is important to emphasize that these results represent perceived fulfillment rather than objective evidence of instructional quality or language development, and the near-universal positive ratings may reflect ceiling effects or social desirability bias, as current learners evaluated their own teachers and institution.

This study also identified two notable gaps between expectations and perceived fulfillment that require institutional attention. The use of interactive applications such as Quizizz and Kahoot received the lowest fulfillment ratings, with 36.3% of respondents rating this aspect as "slightly suitable," reflecting learners' evolving expectations for gamified, technology-enhanced learning experiences in the digital era. Similarly, schedule flexibility received the lowest fulfillment ratings across all policy indicators, with 18.1% rating it as "slightly suitable" and 4.5% as "unsuitable," with qualitative data revealing that weekend class schedules conflict with learners' university academic commitments. Based on these findings, it is recommended that KBA UMM prioritize the integration of interactive digital platforms and review scheduling policies to offer more flexible, hybrid options. Given the case study design and sample limitations, these findings are context-specific rather than broadly generalizable and should be interpreted as formative feedback for program planning rather than definitive evaluation. Future

research should replicate this study with larger, more diverse samples, incorporate observational and achievement measures, and calculate matched expectation-fulfillment discrepancy scores to provide a more comprehensive understanding of alignment between learner expectations and instructional practices.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations are proposed for future research and practice. Future research should replicate this study with larger and more diverse samples across multiple language course settings to test the generalizability of the findings and to examine causal relationships between expectation fulfillment and learning outcomes such as motivation, engagement, and language proficiency gains. Longitudinal research is needed to investigate how learner expectations evolve over the course of a language program and how expectation gaps at different stages of learning affect learner persistence and achievement. Experimental or quasi-experimental studies could be designed to evaluate the effectiveness of specific interventions, such as the integration of gamified platforms (Quizizz, Kahoot) or hybrid scheduling models, in addressing the expectation-fulfillment gaps identified in this study, while carefully measuring whether such interventions actually improve communicative competence rather than merely increasing engagement.

Comparative studies across different languages within the same institutional context could reveal whether expectation patterns are language-specific or universally applicable to foreign language learning. Regarding the barriers encountered in this research, the small sample size (N=22) and case study design significantly limit the generalizability of the findings, and the absence of inferential statistical tests means that the results should be interpreted as descriptive and context-specific rather than as evidence of statistically significant relationships. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires and interviews may introduce social desirability bias, and future research should consider incorporating observational data or objective measures of learning outcomes to complement subjective accounts. The cross-sectional nature of this study provides only a snapshot of learner expectations at a single point in time; future research should employ longitudinal designs to track changes in expectations and their fulfillment over the duration of a language course, thereby providing richer insights into the dynamic nature of learner expectations in non-formal EFL contexts.

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DECLARATION OF USING AI TOOLS

The authors declare that the used AI ChatGPT and Grammarly were for language editing, grammar checking, and improving clarity and organization. These tools were not used for developing ideas, collecting or analyzing data, interpreting findings or formulating academic arguments. All research content, interpretations, and conclusion are the authors' own, and the authors take full responsibility for accuracy, originality, and integrity of the manuscript.

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