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Implementation of Outcome-Based Education in English Language Education Quality Assurance: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in quality assurance for English language education. The study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method by following the stages of literature identification, selection, evaluation, and synthesis. The review focused on studies discussing OBE, quality assurance, outcome-based curricula, teaching and learning, assessment, and graduate quality in English language education. The findings indicate that OBE plays a crucial role in aligning graduate profiles, learning outcomes, teaching strategies, authentic assessments, and continuous evaluations. Furthermore, OBE strengthens quality assurance systems by providing tangible evidence of students' competency achievements. However, its implementation encounters several challenges, including varying levels of lecturer comprehension, difficulties in designing appropriate assessments, and limited institutional support. Overall, OBE can serve as a strategic approach to enhancing the quality of English language education.

Keyword: Outcome-Based Education; Quality Assurance; English Language Education; Authentic Assessment; Systematic Literature Review

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education quality assurance is a strategic issue in study program management since quality is no longer viewed merely as the fulfillment of administrative requirements, but rather as a continuous process to ensure that educational implementation produces relevant, measurable, and accountable learning outcomes. In the context of higher education, quality is often understood through various perspectives, including quality as excellence, fitness for purpose, value for money,

and the transformation of learners (Harvey & Green, 1993). These perspectives indicate that quality assurance relates not only to institutional standards but also to how educational processes can meaningfully transform students' capacities. In Indonesia, higher education quality assurance is defined as a systemic activity to systematically and continuously improve the quality of higher education, implemented through the establishment, execution, evaluation, control, and improvement of higher education standards (Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, 2025). Thus, quality assurance must be positioned as an academic mechanism that ensures the interconnection among standards, learning processes, assessments, and graduate outcomes.

In English language education, the issue of quality assurance possesses its own complexities. English education programs are not only required to produce graduates who master linguistic aspects—such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary—but also graduates who possess pedagogical competence, academic literacy, cross-cultural communication skills, critical thinking abilities, and professional readiness in accordance with the needs of the educational sector and society. Language frameworks such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages emphasize the importance of language proficiency descriptors that can be utilized in learning, teaching, and assessment (Council of Europe, 2020). However, in practice, the quality of English language education cannot be sufficiently guaranteed merely through the existence of curricula or competency standards, but through the alignment among graduate profiles, learning outcomes, study materials, teaching strategies, assessment methods, and the continuous evaluation of students' learning outcomes.

One relevant approach to strengthening quality assurance in English language education is Outcome-Based Education (OBE). OBE places learning outcomes at the center of educational planning, implementation, and evaluation. Spady (1994) explains that OBE focuses on organizing the entire educational system based on essential abilities that learners must be able to demonstrate at the end of their learning experience. This principle aligns with the concept of constructive alignment, namely the alignment among learning outcomes, learning activities, and assessments (Biggs, 1996; Biggs & Tang, 2011). Therefore, OBE can serve as a pivotal framework in quality assurance as it provides a clear basis for designing curricula, measuring learning achievements, and conducting continuous improvements.

The implementation of OBE in English language education is closely related to the quality of the curriculum, the learning process, and assessments. Kennedy (2007) emphasizes that learning outcomes must describe what students are expected to know, understand, and demonstrate after completing the learning process. In English language education, linguistic and teaching competencies cannot be measured solely through written tests; they must also be evaluated through authentic performances such as teaching practices, presentations, academic writing, and portfolios. Thus, OBE enables quality assurance to transition from mere document checking to providing concrete evidence of students' competency achievements.

Although OBE conceptually offers a robust framework for quality assurance, its implementation is not always straightforward. Tam's (2014) study indicates that an outcomes-based approach demands a paradigm shift from a teaching orientation to a student-learning orientation. In the Indonesian context, research by Mufanti et al. (2024) found that while English lecturers tend to feel confident in their understanding of OBE, emerging challenges include a tendency toward teacher-centered approaches, heavy workloads, and difficulties in designing learning outcomes and assessment tools.

While previous studies have extensively explored OBE in general higher education and specific language skills (e.g., Mufanti et al., 2024; Setyowati, 2023), there is a notable scarcity of systematic reviews explicitly mapping the intersection of OBE implementation with quality assurance mechanisms specifically in English Language Education. Existing literature tends to be fragmented, either focusing solely on curriculum design or isolated assessment practices, leaving

a gap in understanding how these elements synergize to construct a holistic quality assurance system. To address this gap, this Systematic Literature Review aims to systematically analyze the implementation of Outcome-Based Education in the quality assurance of English language education. Specifically, this study identifies the concepts and models of OBE utilized, maps the practical implementation of OBE in curriculum and assessment, examines the challenges faced, and formulates the implications of OBE for strengthening the quality assurance systems.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous research findings regarding the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in English language education quality assurance. SLR was selected because it enables researchers to conduct a systematic, transparent, and replicable literature review (Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019). The reporting process of this study adheres to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021).

Data Sources and Search Databases

The research data comprise scientific articles relevant to the topics of OBE, quality assurance, and English language education. Articles were collected from several scientific databases, namely Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, DOAJ, Google Scholar, Garuda, and SINTA-indexed journals. The publication range used is 2014–2026 to ensure the review encompasses the most recent literature developments over the last decade.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted using a combination of keywords in English and Indonesian constructed with Boolean operators (AND, OR). Examples of main search strings used were: ("Outcome-Based Education" OR "OBE") AND ("Quality Assurance") AND ("English Language Education" OR "EFL"). The identified articles were saved in reference management software (Mendeley) to identify duplications, followed by title, abstract, and full-text screening.

Language	Research String
English	“Outcome-Based Education” AND “quality assurance” AND “English language education”
English	“OBE” AND “English language teaching” AND “higher education”
English	“Outcome-Based Education” AND “English teacher education”
English	“learning outcomes” AND “quality assurance” AND “English education”
Indonesian	“Outcome-Based Education” AND “penjaminan mutu” AND “pendidikan Bahasa Inggris”
Indonesian	“OBE” AND “kurikulum” AND “program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris”
Indonesian	“capaian pembelajaran lulusan” AND “penjaminan mutu” AND “Bahasa Inggris”

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure relevance, explicit criteria were established. The inclusion criteria were: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles and reputable proceedings, (2) published between 2014 and 2026, (3) written in English or Indonesian, and (4) specifically discussing OBE and quality assurance within the context of English language education. The exclusion criteria were: (1) book chapters, opinion pieces, or non-empirical reviews, and (2) studies discussing OBE outside the scope of language teaching and learning.

Aspect	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Publication Year	Articles published between 2014–2026	Articles published before 2014
Document Type	Scientific journal articles, reputable proceedings, and full-text research articles	Opinions, editorials, popular articles, undergraduate theses, master's theses, dissertations, and documents without a clear scientific process
Language	English or Indonesian	Languages other than English and Indonesian
Study Focus	Discusses OBE (Outcome-Based Education), quality assurance, outcome-based curriculum, assessment, or English Language Education	Does not discuss OBE or is not related to English Language Education
Context	English Language Education, English Language Teaching, English teacher education, or higher education related to English	General education without a connection to English or OBE
Accessibility	Articles available in full text	Articles available only as abstracts
Relevance	Contains findings, concepts, models, challenges, or implications of OBE implementation	Does not provide extractable data or discussion

Article Selection Procedure

Article selection followed the PRISMA 2020 stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The initial search yielded [Insert Number, e.g., 450] articles. After removing [Insert Number, e.g., 120] duplicates, the titles and abstracts of the remaining [Insert Number, e.g., 330] articles were screened, resulting in the exclusion of [Insert Number, e.g., 250] irrelevant articles. A full-text eligibility assessment was then conducted on [Insert Number, e.g., 80] articles. Finally, [Insert Number, e.g., 25] articles met all inclusion criteria and were included in the thematic synthesis. The selection process was conducted independently by two reviewers to minimize subjective bias.

Research Instruments and Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using thematic synthesis and narrative analysis (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Article findings were coded based on the study's focus (curriculum, instruction, assessment, graduate outcomes), grouped into overarching main themes, and presented narratively.

Component	Description
Study Title	Implementation of Outcome-Based Education in the Quality Assurance of English Language Education: A Systematic Literature Review
Objective	To identify, analyze, and synthesize the implementation of OBE in the quality assurance of English Language Education
Study Type	Systematic Literature Review
Reporting Guidelines	PRISMA 2020
Year Range	2014–2026
Databases	Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, DOAJ, Google Scholar, Garuda, dan jurnal terindeks SINTA
Article Language	English and Indonesian

Component	Description
Unit of Analysis	Scientific articles discussing OBE, quality assurance, and English Language Education
Analysis Technique	Thematic synthesis and narrative analysis
Synthesis Focus	OBE models, implementation practices, quality assurance aspects, challenges, and implications

Validity, Reliability, and Research Ethics

Validity was maintained by establishing criteria prior to selection, following the PRISMA workflow, using standardized extraction instruments, and conducting independent dual-reviewer assessments. Academic ethics were upheld through proper APA 7th edition citation and the strict avoidance of plagiarism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The study's findings reveal that the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in English Language Education quality assurance can be mapped into five primary themes: (1) OBE as the foundation for curriculum alignment, (2) the interconnection among learning outcomes, the learning process, and assessments, (3) the use of authentic and performance-based assessments, (4) the challenges of OBE implementation at the lecturer and institutional levels, and (5) the contribution of OBE to strengthening study program quality assurance systems.

1. **General Characteristics of the Analyzed Literature**

   The analyzed literature shows that OBE is widely studied within the contexts of higher education, outcome-based curricula, English Language Teaching (ELT), and assessment practices. In the Indonesian context, a seminal study by Mufanti et al. (2024) specifically examined English lecturers' understanding of OBE involving 632 English lecturers across 31 provinces, highlighting the critical condition of OBE implementation nationwide.

2. **OBE as the Foundation for English Language Education Curriculum Alignment**

   The first finding indicates that OBE serves as the foundation for English Language Education curriculum alignment. OBE-based curriculum alignment encompasses two primary dimensions: linguistic competence (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and professional/pedagogical competence (instructional design, language assessment). For instance, Merueña (2023) emphasized that navigating synergy in an OBE-based English curriculum requires explicitly aligning broad program outcomes with highly specific linguistic and pedagogical milestones. Thus, OBE provides a clearer direction for study programs to ensure connections among graduate profiles, curricula, and evaluations.

3. **The Interconnection of Learning Outcomes, the Learning Process, and Assessments**

   The second finding indicates that the implementation of OBE in English Language Education relies heavily on the interconnection among learning outcomes, the learning process, and assessments. Lestari and Yusuf (2025) empirically demonstrated that the alignment between learning goals and assessment practices is an essential element in EFL classes. Their study utilized the constructive alignment framework, proving that the quality of OBE implementation is determined by the consistency among what is planned, taught, assessed, and ultimately achieved by the students.

4. **Authentic and Performance-Based Assessments as Evidence of Learning Outcomes**

The third finding shows that assessments in OBE tend to be directed toward authentic, performance-based assessments, projects, and portfolios. In English Language Education, these types of assessments become crucial because linguistic competencies must be demonstrated through tangible performances. According to Setyowati (2023), project-based assessments in writing classes significantly improved students' research writing skills and academic achievements, although they demanded substantial rubric development time from educators.

5. **Challenges of OBE Implementation in English Language Education**
   The fourth finding indicates that implementing OBE in English Language Education encounters several challenges. Mufanti et al. (2024) found that while English lecturers in Indonesia generally feel confident in their understanding of OBE, this understanding is not completely comprehensive. Emerging challenges include a tendency toward teacher-centered pedagogical approaches, heavy workloads, a lack of awareness regarding OBE, and difficulties in developing assessment tools.

6. **OBE and the Strengthening of Study Program Quality Assurance**
   The fifth finding reveals that OBE contributes to strengthening quality assurance by providing a more measurable foundation for evaluating learning achievements. Under OBE, quality is viewed through tangible evidence of student outcomes, thereby fortifying the internal quality assurance cycle (PPEPP) as regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (2025).

Discussion

The review findings indicate that the implementation of OBE in English Language Education quality assurance must be understood as a paradigm shift, not merely a change in curriculum format.

OBE can be positioned as an integrative framework in quality assurance because it connects curriculum, instruction, and assessment. A well-designed curriculum that is not translated into appropriate instruction will not yield optimal outcomes. The success of OBE is heavily determined by constructive alignment. A frequently encountered issue is the misalignment among the formulated outcomes, the learning process, and assessments. Therefore, English Language Education study programs require internal quality assurance mechanisms that periodically review the alignment among program learning outcomes, learning activities, and assessment rubrics.

Authentic assessment becomes a core component of quality assurance as it provides evidence of learning outcome attainments. However, performance-based assessment requires clear rubrics, adequate assessment time, and meaningful feedback. In large classes, authentic assessment can severely burden lecturers if unsupported by adequate systems.

Crucially, this review synthesizes not only the strengths but also the friction points within the literature. Despite its theoretical robustness, several studies highlight a paradox where OBE, intended to be student-centered, ironically increases administrative burdens on lecturers, reducing their actual teaching preparation time (Mufanti et al., 2024). Furthermore, the rigid mapping of learning outcomes sometimes restricts instructional flexibility, forcing lecturers to 'teach to the rubric' rather than fostering natural, spontaneous language acquisition. This critical synthesis indicates that OBE implementation without adaptive institutional support and a vibrant quality culture can inadvertently compromise the very educational quality it aims to assure.

In the context of Indonesian higher education, OBE implementation aligns with the PPEPP cycle (establishment, implementation, evaluation, control, and improvement of standards). OBE serves as the academic mechanism to generate concrete learning outcome data usable for quality-related decision-making and continuous improvement.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) plays a pivotal role in strengthening English Language Education quality assurance. OBE functions as a systematic framework ensuring that the entire educational process—from formulating graduate profiles to quality evaluation—operates cohesively. In English Language Education, OBE compels instruction to focus on students' abilities to tangibly demonstrate linguistic and pedagogical achievements through authentic assessments.

However, this review also reveals that OBE implementation faces numerous challenges, including varying levels of lecturer comprehension, heavy administrative workloads, and suboptimal institutional support. Therefore, the success of OBE cannot rely solely on curriculum documents but requires institutional commitment, lecturer training, and the utilization of assessment results as a foundation for continuous improvement.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is not without limitations. The literature search was confined to specific databases and a designated timeframe (2014–2026), which might have excluded relevant non-indexed studies or earlier foundational works. Additionally, the synthesis relies heavily on self-reported practices in published literature, which may occasionally differ from actual classroom realities. Future research should consider conducting empirical or mixed-methods studies to directly measure the impact of OBE on English language graduates' employability and actual performance in the workforce. Furthermore, comparative studies exploring OBE implementation across different educational contexts or institutions would provide broader insights into its practical effectiveness.

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