

## OUTCOME-BASED ENGLISH PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY COURSE: WHAT DO STUDENTS SAY?

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### ABSTRACT

This study attempts to report the evaluation of Outcome-based Education (OBE) syllabus application in English Phonetics and Phonology course based on students' perspectives. The data were collected through a questionnaire with a sample of 112 participants. The participants are the students enrolling English Phonetics and Phonology Course in the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Brawijaya University. Outcome-based Education Course Evaluation questionnaires were distributed at the end of the course. The obtained result showed students' positive response towards the implementation of the Outcome-based Education framework in the English Phonetics and Phonology course. The course evaluation questionnaire revealed students' acknowledgement of the course preparation by applying the OBE approach. The findings show 44% of 112 participants agree on the five statements asked on the course evaluation questionnaire. However, an issue on students' confidence in achieving the course outcome has risen with the findings indicating 20% of students who disagree, alluding it as the most disagreed item out of all the items in the questionnaire. Meanwhile, the questionnaire on students' self-evaluation showed encouraging responses regarding course assessments and activities with the three questions showing the highest score by an average of 23% of students choosing 'strongly agree'. This study should shed light on the impact of Outcome-based Learning for future educators and researchers.

**Keywords:** Outcome-based Education; Phonetics; Phonology; Syllabus

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini melaporkan evaluasi penerapan silabus Outcome-based Education (OBE) pada mata kuliah Fonetik dan Fonologi Bahasa Inggris berdasarkan perspektif mahasiswa. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui kuesioner dengan sampel sebanyak 112 mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Brawijaya University. Kuesioner mengenai evaluasi mata kuliah dengan penggunaan Outcome-based Education (OBE) dibagikan pada saat Mata Kuliah telah berakhir. Hasil yang diperoleh menunjukkan respon positif siswa terhadap implementasi kerangka OBE dalam mata kuliah Fonetik dan Fonologi Bahasa Inggris. Hasil kuesioner evaluasi mata kuliah mengungkapkan bahwa mahasiswa mengapresiasi kesiapan perkuliahan yang menerapkan pendekatan OBE. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa 44% dari 112 peserta memilih pilihan 'setuju' pada lima pernyataan dalam kuesioner evaluasi mata kuliah. Namun, isu kepercayaan diri pada para siswa dalam memenuhi capaian pembelajaran mata kuliah meningkat dengan temuan yang menunjukkan 20% siswa yang tidak setuju, menunjukkan bahwa item tersebut paling tidak disetujui dari semua item dalam kuesioner. tersebut. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari jumlah siswa yang memilih pilihan 'sangat tidak setuju' terbanyak dibandingkan pernyataan lain pada kuesioner dalam semua pernyataan pada kuesioner. Sementara itu, untuk angket evaluasi diri siswa menunjukkan respon yang konstruktif mengenai penilaian dan kegiatan mata pelajaran yang dicakup dalam tiga pertanyaan dengan skor tertinggi pada pilihan 'sangat setuju'. Studi ini dapat menjelaskan dampak Outcome-based Education bagi para calon pendidik dan peneliti di masa yang akan datang.

**Kata Kunci:** Fonetik; Fonologi; Outcome-based Education; Silabus

## INTRODUCTION

In the process of learning English, Indonesian EFL (English as Foreign Language) learners often meet the hardships of mastering the pronunciation of English words. This occurrence happens due to the distinct difference between Indonesian phoneme and English phoneme. One contrastive analysis study on English and Indonesian vowel phoneme concluded how the English language possesses several phonemes which Indonesian language does not (Ulfayanti & Jelimun, 2018). Another challenge for an English foreign language learner is to leave their mother tongue's domination while learning English. Brogan & Son (2015) proposed that in the process of acquiring a target language, EFL learners seem to depend more on their first language's structure, making the learning process a negative transfer (where the structure of the native language is far too different from the target language). This problem is not only faced by Indonesian EFL learners, but also teachers in many Indonesian schools. Rofiq (2014) stated that many teachers are still having difficulties in pronouncing Basic English words which are often used in daily conversations. It becomes a more serious issues when the educators are not capable of teaching the standardized English pronunciation, since the number one tool of communication would be a person's speaking skill. One study provides considerable insight on the relation of learners' ability in identifying English phoneme and their word processing skill. Rokhman et al. (2020) tested students' skill in blending and segmenting phonemes in an isolation task to find out their skill in identifying phonemes. He concluded that by acquiring the ability to recognize phonemes, students will be aided in understanding English vocabulary. Hence, the aforementioned arguments have led to the necessity of English Phonetics and Phonology course.

These days, the primary goal in education is centered around fulfilling students' needs for future life endeavors. Higher education institutes around the world have started applying Outcome-based Education (OBE) as it offers the substantial development in the educational institution. This Outcome-based Education syllabus focuses more on students' outcome rather than making sure to deliver all of the materials without considering students' full comprehension of the material.

Indonesia's Ministry of Research and Technology/National Research and Innovation Agency (Kemendiknas) decided to apply Outcome-based Education approach in higher education due to the shift in quality assurance which currently focuses on the outcome of the courses *OBE Kemendiknas* (n.d.). The broad concept of the Outcome-based Education is divided into the three main stakeholders, the lecturers, the study program, and the universities. The three stakeholders have their own specific outcomes to achieve that become the basic consideration for the study program to design the curriculum. In response to the OBE implementation, in pedagogical level the lecturers need to aid students in achieving the learning outcome, the study program needs to have graduates with skills that are relevant to the needs of real life, and the universities need to have high quality graduates equipped with suited

skill in their specified field. The Outcome-based Education approach in Indonesia utilizes the backward curriculum design. This is the opposite of the standard course planning which applies in the Input-Output Based Education. The backward curriculum design is more student-centered, it starts from planning the learning goals, setting the learning objectives, creating the assessments, and lastly, determining the learning activities (the materials, the lesson plans, and so on).

The implementation of Outcome-based Education approach in Brawijaya University started with picturing a clear goal of students' primary needs. Then, continued by designing the curriculum in ensuring the achievement of the Learning Outcomes (LO). With the new OBE approach, Brawijaya University developed a new method of assessment centering on students' interactive participation. Lecturers become the main facilitator of students' discussion and being the constant motivator of students in achieving their LO. Meanwhile, students are responsible of their own process of learning. They will not be assessed solely from remembering the contents of the material but also their full ability in mastering the skill of the course, maintaining the most fundamental principle of OBE.

English Language Education Program (ELEP) has started the implementation of the Outcome-based Education since 2018. English Phonetics and Phonology course is a compulsory course offered in the third semester with a total of three credits. With the implementation of Outcome-based Education in the English Phonetics and Phonology course, a modification in the learning outcome (LO) was carried out. The modification of the course learning outcome can be seen in Table 1 and 2. The syllabus was modified based on the OBE frameworks oriented in Expected Learning outcomes (as seen in table 3). Based on the Program Expected Learning Outcomes (PELO), English Phonetics and Phonology contributes to the achievement of PELO 5, Being able to dissect the theories of linguistics and literature in English language teaching practices. Based on PELO 5, the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILO) was formulated into 5 CILO as described in table 2.

Table 1. The course learning outcome prior to the implementation of OBE

Previous Course Outline
Course Objectives: <b>Students are able:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to understand the system of English sounds</li><li>• to understand the phonetic symbols</li><li>• to pronounce English sounds well and acceptable</li></ul>

The main differences between the prior syllabuses with the OBE based syllabus is that the prior syllabus was formulated based on topic or learning, while the OBE based syllabus was formulated based on Program Expected Learning Outcomes (PELO).

Table 2. The course learning outcome after the implementation of OBE

OBE Based Course Outline	
<b>Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)</b>	
Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:	
<b>CILO 1. Identify and articulate</b> the English sound system correctly.	
<b>CILO 2. Demonstrate</b> a clear understanding of the principles of English Phonetics and Phonology	
<b>CILO 3. Apply</b> principles of English Phonetics and Phonology in English Communication	
<b>CILO 4. Integrate</b> the theories of English Phonetics and Phonology in English Language Teaching	
<b>CILO 5. Demonstrate high level</b> of Good Conduct in English Communication	

The English Language Education Program (ELEP) has determined the primary goal of their graduates to be an English Language educator and an Entrepreneur in English Language Education Field. In reference to their graduate profiles, the program had determined Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) as seen in Table 3, which cover both of the values of the study program, which are inclusive education and intercultural communication competence. The PLOs consisted of 12 Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs) and divided into four categories, which are Attitude, Knowledge, Generic Skills, and Specific Skills.

The PLOs also emphasized the outcomes of English Phonetics and Phonology course in the ELO 5 and ELO 10, regarding the knowledge competency and specific skills of the course. As for the designing of the learning activities and assessments, the Bloom's Taxonomy played an essential role, particularly the cognitive domain which is composed of knowledge and intellectual skills. The development of the assessments was developed in accordance with each level in cognitive skills hierarchy. The order of the hierarchy is comprised of (1) knowledge, (2) comprehension, (3) application, (4) analysis, (5) synthesis, and (6) evaluation.

Table 3. Expected Learning Outcome of English Language Education Program (ELEP)

Attitude		
ELO 1	A1	Applying religious values
ELO 2	A2	Applying dynamic, innovative, and professional practices of ELT with respect to inclusive and intercultural values.
Knowledge		
ELO 3	K1	Being able to distinguish English vocabulary and grammatical rules in four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) with CEFR Level of minimum B2.

ELO 4	K2	Being able to apply TESOL and managerial principles in English language teaching context equipped with ICT-based supports.
ELO 5	K3	Being able to dissect the theories of linguistics and literature in English language teaching practices.
ELO 6	K4	Being able to apply research procedures to solve problems in ELT areas.
<b>Generic Skills</b>		
ELO 7	GS1	To produce high quality graduates with belief in the One Supreme God, with determination to continuously learning, have wide horizon, maintain discipline and work ethos, and are able to compete at the international level
ELO 8	GS2	To develop science, technology and arts, in order to support cultural development
ELO 9	GS3	To have capacity in empowering the community through problem solving concept development with the application of scientific methods
<b>Specific Skills</b>		
ELO 10	SS1	to master a good conduct of English for communication
ELO 11	SS2	to succeed ELT practices by designing, developing, utilizing various conventional and ICT-based instructional media to arrive at creative, effective, and student-centered learning
ELO 12	SS3	to conduct research to enhance the quality of ELT and present the results in any scientific forum

The OBE based Syllabus in English Phonetics and Phonology class has been implemented for 2 semesters, yet, no evaluation has been conducted. This paper aims at evaluating the implementation of OBE based syllabus in English Phonetics and Phonology Class through students' lens employing self-administered evaluation questionnaire that focus on measuring students' perspectives toward the OBE based syllabus from the outcomes design, materials and learning activities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### English Phonetics and Phonology Course

According to a former professor in University of Duisburg and Essen, he defined Phonetics as “the study of human sounds” and Phonology as “the classification of sounds in a language” (Hickey, n.d.). Procedure-wise, a language learner is supposed to master Phonetics first to further enhance their comprehension in Phonology. The problem with Indonesian EFL learners is the distinct difference of the unit sounds in English and Indonesian as mentioned in the introduction.

An eye-opening study investigating Indonesian EFL learners’ difficulties in English diphthongs pronunciation revealed that the most difficult diphthong to pronounce is [av] sound in words such as owl, growl, bounce, doubts, blouse, etc. (Donal, 2016). Furthermore, he also found factors influencing their difficulties in pronouncing English diphthongs and one of them is the words in Indonesian language which are borrowed from English words. This occur in the diphthong [aɪ] test where students were asked to pronounce the word ‘horizon’ and they pronounced it as [horizon] rather than [hə:raizn].

Another startling findings on a study done regarding Indonesian EFL learners’ difficulty in pronouncing ‘-s’ and ‘-es’ suffixes used in simple present tense verbs and in plural form of nouns came to a conclusion that this occurrence is caused by the deficiency in phonological knowledge (Saputra et al., 2020). Saputra further explained that the phonological rule which applies to the pronunciation of suffixes is the allomorph at the end of the morpheme. Without this comprehension, learners will not be able to pronounce the suffixes correctly.

When talking about pronunciation, it is impossible to leave accents out of the topic. Often times, EFL learners face a dilemma in which English accent they need to follow when trying to master English. Dharma & Rudianto (2013) discovered that students’ attitude towards American English and British English accents were deemed to be more preferable than other English accents. A study on Phonetics and Phonology elaborated that in English Phonetics and Phonology course, the standards of English language, International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and Received Pronunciation (RP), are introduced (Hamka, 2016). By being exposed to the English standard, Indonesian EFL learners will understand which English pronunciation to follow and not be swayed by other English-speaking countries’ accents.

To help students achieve the outcome of the course, teachers must delve into students’ preferences in towards the topic of the course. One study unfolded students’ most favored topic in English phonology is phonological process pattern concerning a sound errors used by growing infants to make speech easier whereas the least favored topic is segmental phonology concerning vowels and consonants (Utami & Lintangari, 2021). The English Phonetics and Phonology course equips learners with a knowledge on English Phonetics and Phonology that is expected to enhance their phonological awareness. One recent study shows without having phonological

awareness—a person’s ability in being acquainted with a language’s phonemic characteristics—many EFL learners will face difficulties in acquiring a foreign language (Savitri & Andrianto, 2021). Moreover, If Indonesian EFL learners are not equipped with the knowledge of Phonetics and Phonology, a hindrance in the process of communication will be inevitable. For these reasons, English Phonetics and Phonology course posits high value to the Indonesian EFL learners not only in achieving accurate pronunciation based on the standardized English language but also in enhancing their English speaking and listening skills.

### **Outcome-based Education (OBE)**

Spady (1994), the father of Outcome-based Education (OBE), explained in his book, the definition of OBE is to first have a better understanding of what students need the most in order for them to ultimately succeed by the end of the courses, before developing learning curriculum and assessments (p. 1). Spady also pointed out the two main purposes of OBE syllabus, which are 1) making sure when all students have finished their education, they will have acquired the proficiency to succeed and 2) managing schools’ operation in order to optimize all students’ outcomes (p. 9).

Universities in Hong Kong has already started implementing the Outcome-Based Learning (OBL) since 2008. The evaluation of OBL have shown a positive result by following their four main principles, which are 1) determining students’ most imperative outcomes to achieve by taking part in academic institutes; 2) making sure to evaluate students’ process in efficiently producing those outcomes; 3) upgrading and evaluating the institution from those results; and 4) constantly giving students encouragement to perform better each day (Lixun, 2013).

Another study on the use of Outcome-based Education was done in South Africa. South Africa’s historic revival put a change to its educational institution in 1994. Educators in South Africa felt the need to endorse students’ communicative competence in English to prepare them for the world after finishing school. At the same time as the historic rebirth of South Africa, the Outcome-based Education approach was presented and set-in motion in South Africa’s schools, particularly the less advantaged areas. Educators made the affirmation of South Africa’s alteration in its education institute which shows promising results from the OBE’s implementation (Schlebusch & Thobedi, 2015). This elaboration of Outcome-based Education syllabus should heighten our awareness on the significance of this syllabus.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

The method used in this study is a descriptive quantitative, utilizing the survey design, with a total of 112 English Language Education study program students in Brawijaya University as the respondents.

Table 1. Research Participants

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Second-year students	100	98.2%
Third-year students	12	10.7%
Male	26	23.3%
Female	86	76.8%

The instrument applied in this study is the two-part questionnaires adopted from Lixun (2013). The questionnaires were carried out to evaluate the implementation of OBE based syllabus in English Phonetics and Phonology class. To preserve the instruments' impartiality, this study went through a validity and reliability check with the 6th semester students in the same study program as the participants who also had English Phonetics and Phonology course. The first part of Lixun's questionnaires consisted of five questions concerning the evaluation of the Outcome-based Learning application in English Phonetics and Phonology class. The validity check of the five questions resulted in the  $r_{xy}$  value bigger than the  $r$  table, hence it is revealed to be valid. For the reliability check, the five questions were declared reliable based on the Cronbach's alpha value being bigger than the  $r$  table. The second part of the questionnaires regarding students' evaluation on their own outcome in taking English Phonetics and Phonology course with the Outcome-based learning approach were composed of 13 questions. The 13 questions indicated all of the  $r_{xy}$  score was bigger than the  $r$  value and the Cronbach's alpha score was also bigger than the  $r$  table. This denotes the validity and reliability of the questionnaires.

The questionnaires are all made up of 5 Likert scale with totally agree representing the highest score of 5 and strongly disagree representing the lowest score of 1. The data was then processed using SPSS (Statistical Program for Social Science) and analyzed using a descriptive approach.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

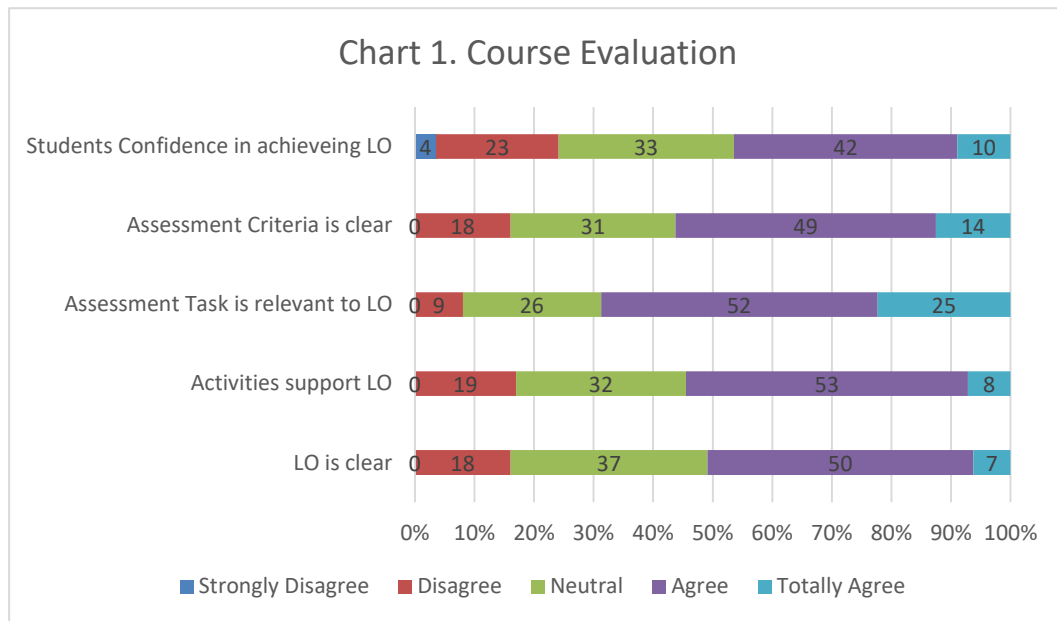
### Findings

#### A. Phonetics and Phonology Outcome-based learning: Students' Opinion

On part 1, the researcher wanted to focus on evaluating students' opinion on the learning outcome of the course, the activities to achieve the learning outcome, the relevance of the assessment's task with the learning outcome, the assessment's criteria, and their feelings toward achieving the course' learning outcome.



Figure 1. Course Evaluation Questionnaire Result

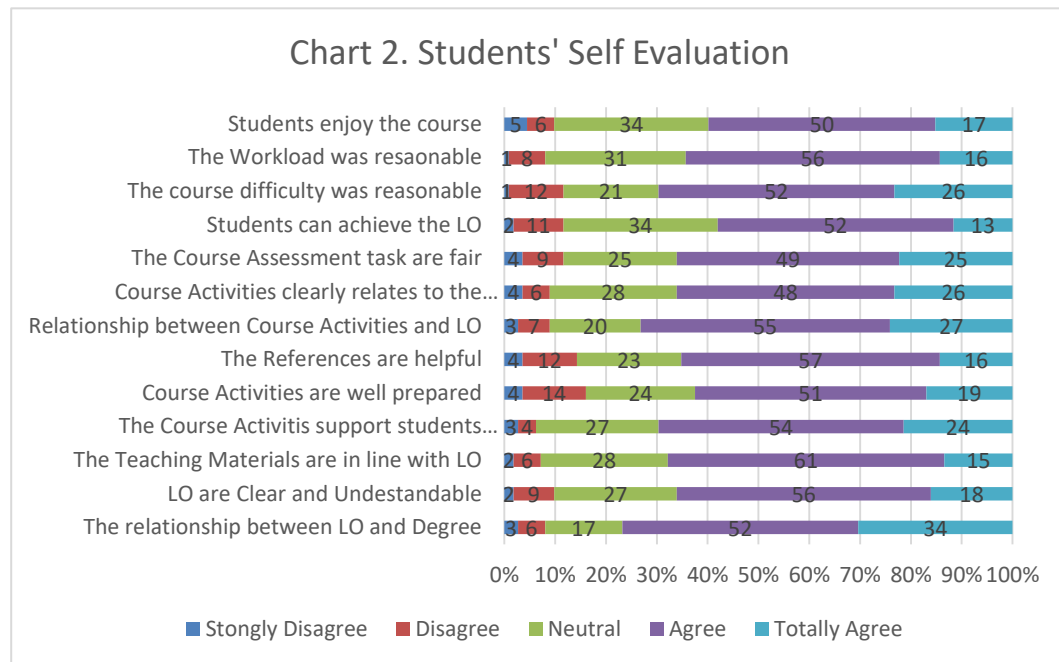


The chart in Figure 1 shows the evaluation of English Phonetics and Phonology course by 112 students of English Language Education study program. The result shows a constant agreement on the majority of students on each statement. Almost 50% of the students agree that the course’ learning outcomes (LO) are fairly comprehensible, shown on the first statement in the diagram. As for the second and third statements, although the percentage of the option ‘disagree’ has a gap of 10%, almost 50% of students agree on both statements regarding its correlation to the LO. Interestingly, while the second statement holds the second most disagreed item in the questionnaire, there is a spike on the option ‘totally agree’ on the third statement with a total of 20%, holding the most chosen option out of the five items in the questionnaire. This indicates that the assessment tasks are significantly more linear to the LO rather than the course activities. However, there is an increase by 6% in the number of students who disagree on the clearness of the assessment criteria. Regarding the last statement in the questionnaire on students’ level of confidence in achieving the LO, 20% of the students disagree and it is the only item with 3% of students choosing strongly disagree.

**B. Students’ self-evaluation based on Outcome-based learning**

On the second part, the researcher wanted to focus more on students’ insights on the outcome-based learning approach. There are five main factors in the 13 items. Item 1 and 2 concerns the expected outcome of the course, items 3 – 5 are the preparation of the course, items 6 – 8 represents the course activities, item 9 is the course assessment and items 10 – 13 is the practicality of the course (Lixun, 2013).

Figure 2. Students' Self-Evaluation Questionnaire Result



The chart in Figure 2 shows students' self-evaluation in English Phonetics and Phonology course. It can be seen that the students who answered the options 'strongly disagree' to 'totally agree' vary in its total. The option 'agree' holds the majority of students' answers while a quarter of the participants answered 'neutral'. Regarding the value of the relationship between the LO and the degree program, 30% of students chose the option 'totally agree', making it the highest percentage of 'totally agree' out of all of the statements. Then, 50% out of 112 students agreed on the LO comprehensibility. Moreover, on the statement about the teaching materials being in line with the LO, 54% of students chose the option 'agree' with 61 students to be exact, denoting the most chosen 'agree' option out of all the statements. However, there seems to be a surge in the number of students who disagree with the preparation of the course activities by 12% and it is the most disagreed statement out of the 13 statements. Other than that, there is also a fair number of students who didn't agree on the proper difficulty level of the course, specifically 10% of the students. Lastly, another significant finding from figure 2 is the last statement on students' enjoyment of the course, signifying a total of 4% of students who strongly disagree more than any other statements.

## Discussion

### a. Phonetics and Phonology Outcome-based learning: Students' Opinion

The findings align with Lixun (2013) study which discussed about the surge in the number of students who 'totally agree' on the assessment task lining up with the LO. Lixun also mentioned students' decrease in confidence upon achieving the LO. However, these two findings contradict with Lixun (2011) theory in his case

study on developing and implementing OBL in a linguistic course. If the students have high comprehensibility in the LO and understand the assessment criteria, they should have a strong chance in achieving the maximum standard in learning. With a fair probability in succeeding, students should gain greater confidence in accomplishing the LO. Yet, the theory does not line up with the findings showing positive answers in the other four questions of the course evaluation. An opposing study on students' attitudes towards English Phonetics learning found that the majority of Indonesian EFL learners have quite a high self-assurance in their ability in learning English Phonetics class (Istiqomah et al., 2021). This indicates that another factor is affecting students' confidence in English Phonetics and Phonology course and needs to be studied further.

Spady (1994) underlined in his book about the four main principles for the success of Outcome-based education implementation and one of those for notions is the learners' confidence in their highly expected achievement of the LO. If learners are experiencing a lack of confidence in facing the obstacles in the new learning approach, there is a high possibility in the failure of the Outcome-based syllabus implementation. One study came to a conclusion on the distinction of a teacher's part in enhancing students' confidence in succeeding throughout their learning process (Wijaya, 2020). Consequently, a teacher or a lecturer as a facilitator in a classroom should highly be recommended to wholeheartedly guide and supervise students in order to help them acquire valuable knowledge on their own, for their own benefits in life and work.

#### **b. Students' self-evaluation based on Outcome-based learning**

According to the result of the questionnaire showing students in average choosing the option 'agree', it implies a favorable response to the use of Outcome-based Learning in English Phonetics and Phonology course. Wijaya (2020) emphasized that learners' will to learn strongly correlates with teachers' ability in planning the best learning activity that sparks learners' determination. This implies that even though educators are provided by the OBE syllabus, if they do not execute the teaching and learning activities according to OBE principle, then the outcome will not be achieved. Fortunately, the two factors, course activities (items 7 – 8) and course assessment (item 9), acquired the most score on the option 'totally agree' by an average of 23% of students which hinted the clear correlation between the course activities and assessment with the LO. In her review on quality assurance on education, Tam (2014) pointed out the significance of aligning LO, teaching and learning activities, and assessments. By doing so, stability in the syllabus will be guaranteed where the course LO is consistent with the course activities and assessments. Furthermore, Lui & Shum (2012) suggested how a thorough and understandable assessment plays a pivotal role in constantly improving students learning achievements throughout the process of learning. Hence, the necessity of formulating an effective strategy in designing assessments is needed.

Significant implication which follows the previous discussion is for educators to better help students in being facilitators and improve the design of

learning activities and assessments in English Phonetics and Phonology course while implementing Outcome-based Education. By doing so, future students who will be taking the course will take benefit from the enhanced implementation of OBE in English Phonetics and Phonology course. Moreover, through this study's findings, future researchers will be aware of students' issues in the lack of confidence in achieving the learning outcome of the course and will be able to do a further study on it.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, this study was aimed to give an elaboration of students' perspectives on the use of Outcome-based Education (OBE) syllabus on English Phonetics and Phonology course. The students and educators of English Education Study Program in Brawijaya University have already shown positive response to OBE in English Phonetics and Phonology course. However, alongside the positive response, a number of problems have also risen. As OBE is bringing profound changes into the educational institute around the world, Indonesian educators must also fight through the challenges and make great use of OBE to prepare students for life after finishing school. Moreover, this study also allows future researchers to give more enlightenment on the utilization of outcome-based learning in Indonesian EFL learning field. For future studies, researchers should do a more thorough interview both from students' and educators' perspective in the use of Outcome-based Learning.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher would like to show her biggest gratitude to English Language Education Program (ELEP), Faculty of Cultural Studies in Brawijaya University for sponsoring this research under the research grants DPP SPP FIB UB number 1164/UN.10.F12/PN/2021.

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