

**EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES  
FACED BY ENGLISH EDUCATION GRADUATES IN  
PURSUING CAREER PATHS**

**THESIS**

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**FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN  
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**EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACED BY ENGLISH  
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**THESIS**

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By

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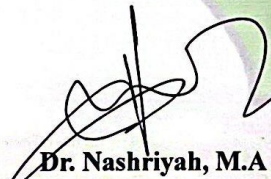
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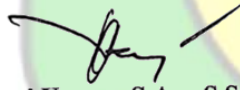
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Adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan di dalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikianlah surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

Banda Aceh, 10 April 2026

Saya yang membuat pernyataan



Nurul Alifah

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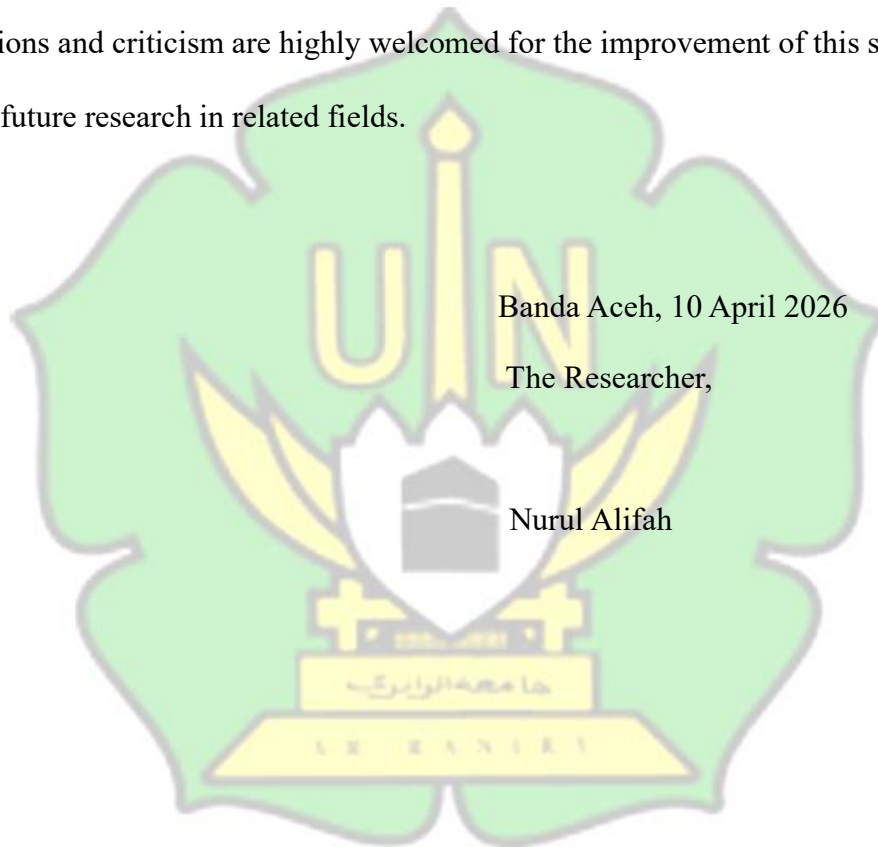
The researcher would like to express her deepest gratitude to her beloved parents and brother, Ayah Amiruddin Sufi, Bunda Herawati, and my brother Aziz, whose unconditional love, prayers, sacrifices, and continuous support have been the strongest foundation in every stage of her academic journey. Their encouragement, both moral and emotional, has given the researcher the strength to persevere through challenges and moments of doubt.

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The researcher realizes that this thesis is far from perfect and still has limitations in terms of content, analysis, and presentation. Therefore, constructive suggestions and criticism are highly welcomed for the improvement of this study and for future research in related fields.



## ABSTRACT

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Major : English Language Education Department

Thesis : Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities Faced by English Education Graduates in Pursuing Career Paths

Supervisor : Dr. Nashriyah, M.A

Keywords : English education graduates, career challenge, career opportunity

This study explores the challenges and opportunities faced by English Education graduates in pursuing their career paths. Employing a descriptive qualitative design with a phenomenological approach, the research involved semi-structured interviews with ten English Education graduates aged 22–25 years in Aceh. The findings reveal that graduates face multiple challenges, including competency mismatch, limited professional networks, inadequate practical experience, and psychological pressure during the transition from university to the workplace. Nevertheless, significant opportunities emerge in digital-based careers, non-formal education, and cross-sector employment where English proficiency functions as a strategic asset. The study concludes that adaptability, digital literacy, and proactive career strategies are crucial for graduates' employability

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

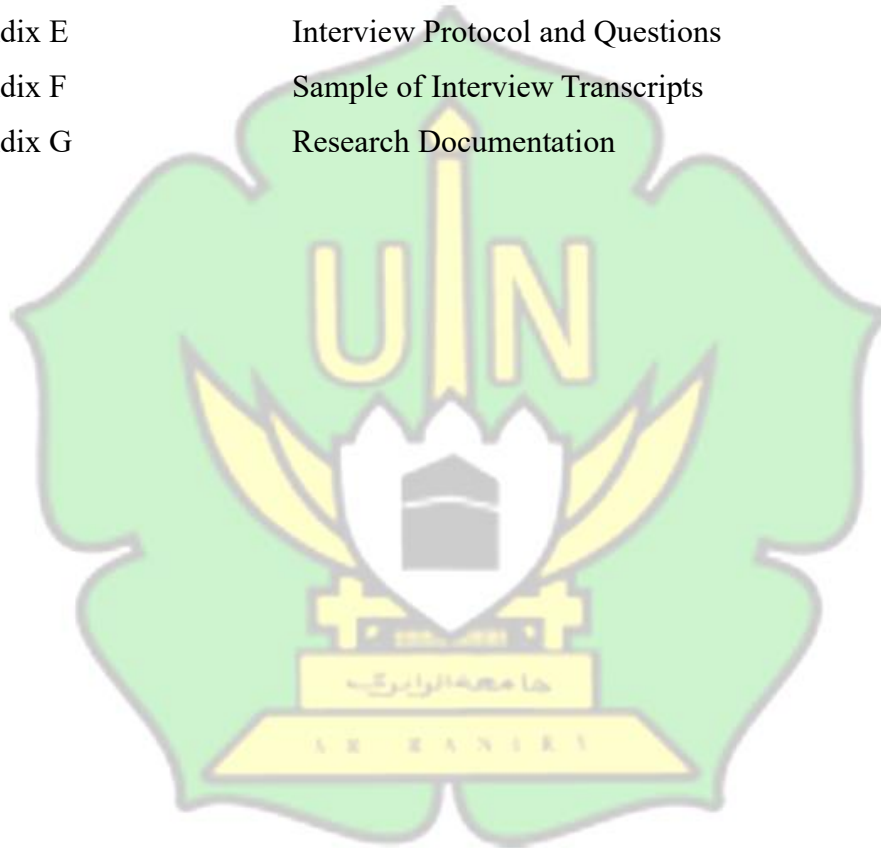
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>CHAPTER I</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
A. Background of the Study.....	1
B. Research Questions.....	4
C. Research Aims.....	5
D. Significance of the Study.....	5
E. Terminologies.....	6
<b>CHAPTER II</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>9</b>
A. Challenge and Opportunity.....	9
B. English Education Graduates: Profile and Competencies.....	10
C. Job Market Trends in the Education Sector.....	11
D. Challenges Faced by English Education Graduates.....	12
E. Opportunities Available for English Education Graduates.....	13
F. Previous Study.....	15
<b>CHAPTER III</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>19</b>
A. Research Design.....	19
B. Research Participants.....	20
C. Technique of Data Collection.....	21
D. Technique of Data Analysis.....	22
<b>CHAPTER IV</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS</b> .....	<b>24</b>
A. Research Findings.....	24

B. Discussion.....	50
<b>CHAPTER V .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....</b>	<b>54</b>
A. Conclusion.....	54
B. Recommendation.....	56
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>58</b>



## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix A	Appointment Letter of Supervisor
Appendix B	Recommendation Letter from Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan
Appendix C	Confirmation Letter of Conducting Research at the English Education Department
Appendix D	Informed Consent
Appendix E	Interview Protocol and Questions
Appendix F	Sample of Interview Transcripts
Appendix G	Research Documentation



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher explains five important sections: the background of the study, research questions, research aims, the significance of the study, and terminologies.

### **A. Background of the Study**

The rapid development of technology and the transformation of the job market in the digital era have significantly influenced career opportunities and professional demands for English Education graduates. Graduates are now expected not only to master pedagogical competencies but also to possess digital literacy, adaptability, and flexibility in pursuing diverse career paths. However, not all graduates are fully prepared to meet these changing demands, causing some of them to work in fields unrelated to language or education, while others experience prolonged unemployment. This suggests that the transition from higher education to the workforce still poses unresolved challenges.

In the current job market, basic language proficiency and pedagogical knowledge are no longer sufficient. Graduates are now expected to have additional skills such as digital competence, cross-cultural communication, and the ability to manage online content (Dewi, 2024). Without these abilities, English Education graduates are often left behind by those from other academic backgrounds who are more responsive to technological and industrial changes.

This lack of readiness is not only caused by limited technical training but also by the misalignment between university curricula and the demands of the job market. Many English Education programs are still rooted in conventional teaching methods and have not fully adopted the concept of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge, or TPACK. As stated by Ye and colleagues (2024), future educators must not only understand how to use technology but also be able to integrate it, along with teaching methods and content knowledge, in practical and contextual ways. This integration is essential for teachers in the twenty-first century.

The disconnect between academic preparation and industry expectations is referred to as a competency mismatch. This situation is exacerbated by the limited availability of internships or work-based field experiences. In reality, direct exposure to professional environments is essential in helping students understand real-world job situations. According to the data from Economist Impact (2024), only 30% of higher education institutions in Indonesia have active collaboration with the industry. This lack of partnership reflects a weak connection between what students learn and what the workforce needs. As a result, graduates are often unfamiliar with workplace realities and must relearn practical skills while competing with graduates from other disciplines who already possess solid work experience.

Furthermore, many English Education graduates find it difficult to become formal English teachers. As a result, some choose to pursue careers as online tutors, freelance translators, or content creators (Chuan et al., 2025). Data from Bond and colleagues (2024) supported this trend, showing that success in finding employment is more closely linked to digital adaptability than academic achievement. In today's economy, having a degree and a high-grade point average is no longer the main indicator of success. Instead, what matters more is the ability to embrace and apply new technologies in professional settings.

Although English proficiency remains an important skill, it is no longer a unique advantage. The modern workforce values a combination of language ability and technological fluency. Digital platforms such as Preply, Upwork, and Fiverr provide graduates with opportunities to offer tutoring services, proofreading, and content writing. Social media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram have also become new spaces for graduates to develop careers as educational content creators (Rianita, 2024).

In the private sector, the demand for English graduates with digital expertise continues to grow. Many education technology companies and startups now seek individuals who understand teaching principles and can design digital learning materials, provide online training, and create interactive instructional media. This

shows that English graduates have strong potential if they can combine their pedagogical knowledge with technological skills.

However, not all graduates can take full advantage of these opportunities. Studies show that many still lack digital literacy and entrepreneurial confidence. They are often reluctant to take the risks involved in freelancing or developing personal brands on social media (Asri et al., 2020). Additionally, many students have unrealistic expectations about job prospects. They assume that after graduation, they will automatically be hired as full-time teachers with a stable income. In reality, as Ekici (2021) noted, job competition is intense and teaching positions are limited.

This unpreparedness has direct consequences on the psychological and social well-being of graduates. Many experience stress, self-doubt, and pressure from family due to unclear career directions. They feel stuck in a major that is seen as less relevant in today's digital economy, even though the field itself has great potential when used strategically.

On the other hand, some graduates are finding success by building independent careers through their language skills. Many have adjusted by offering private classes on platforms like Zoom or Google Meet and by creating content on platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. These efforts reflect adaptability, resilience, and creativity, and they demonstrate that there is still space for English Education graduates in the evolving workforce.

To achieve success in this environment, students need to shift their mindset while still in university. They must see themselves as lifelong learners who continuously update their skills. In turn, educational institutions have a responsibility to support this transformation by offering more flexible curricula and practical learning experiences.

Unfortunately, as Bond and colleagues (2024) pointed out, most research so far has focused on the effectiveness of specific technologies in the classroom. Very little attention has been given to the actual experiences of graduates as they navigate

the changing job market. Similarly, most research in English Education still concentrates on classroom practices, language acquisition, and traditional instructional strategies (Sumarni, 2021), rather than the challenges and strategies involved in building a career in the digital world.

This research seeks to fill that gap by listening to the voices of English Education graduates and exploring how they experience and adapt to the demands of the digital workforce. It will examine how they perceive opportunities, redefine the meaning of career success, and respond to the pressures of a rapidly changing world. Interestingly, many graduates who are labelled as unsuccessful by traditional standards are doing well in informal or digital sectors.

This study will also identify successful practices used by graduates who have found their niche. Their stories can highlight the gap between ideal curriculum goals and actual workplace needs. These findings can be used by universities to improve their course content, design internship programs focused on digital work, and offer better career preparation for students.

As a student in the English Education Study Program, the motivation for this study comes from observing firsthand the anxiety and confusion many students face before and after graduation. Conversations inside and outside the classroom reveal that most students feel unprepared to compete in the professional world, even after completing their formal education. The job market today is more competitive than ever, and graduates need to be more creative, flexible, and proactive in exploring new opportunities. Studying this issue is important and relevant. It can serve as a valuable input for universities to develop more effective curricula and produce graduates who are better prepared, more adaptive, and empowered in an increasingly complex and competitive society.

## **B. Research Questions**

Graduates of the English Education Study Program face various challenges and opportunities in navigating their careers. Previous research has focused more on the technical aspects of teaching or the effectiveness of the use of learning media, but

has not sufficiently explored in depth the experiences of graduates in dealing with career selection issues after graduation. According to the background of the study, the research questions of this study were:

1. What are the main challenges faced by English Education graduates in navigating their careers?
2. What career opportunities are available for English Education graduates, both in the education sector and outside education?
3. How do graduates deal with the transition process from the academic world to the world of work, such as adaptation strategies and obstacles they experience?

### **C. Research Aims**

Based on the research questions, this study aims to provide an understanding of the career dynamics of English Education graduates amid social and technological changes. Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Identify various forms of challenges experienced by graduates of the English Education Study Program when entering the world of work, including technological unpreparedness, competency mismatches, and other challenges.
2. Analyse the job opportunities that arise for English Education graduates, both in the formal education sector, informal, and non-education sectors.
3. Exploring the adaptation strategies and transition experiences undertaken by graduates in building their careers, highlighting the role of higher education institutions, the influence of the social environment, and personal readiness in facing work challenges.

### **D. Significance of the Study**

This study will be useful for:

## **1. English Education Department**

The results of this study can provide empirical data on the real experiences of graduates after completing their studies. This information is a valuable input for the study program in evaluating and developing the curriculum, learning methods, and academic support system to be more relevant to the field conditions faced by graduates in navigating their career..

## **2. Students of the English Education Major**

This research provides factual insights into the challenges and opportunities faced after graduation. This information helps students to understand more realistically the direction and prospects of this major, so that they can undergo education with strong motivation, clear goals, and careful mental preparation.

## **3. English Education Graduates**

The results of this study can serve as a guide and reflection for graduates and final-year students in understanding the challenges and opportunities they may face. This research also helps them map their career paths, develop adaptation strategies, and raise awareness of the importance of career readiness and flexibility in the teaching profession and outside the teaching profession.

## **E. Terminologies**

To avoid confusion related to terms in this research, the researcher defines several terms for the general public to gain insight from this research in its complete state.

### **a. English Education Graduates**

English Education graduates are individuals who have completed their bachelor's degree (S1) in an English Education study program from an accredited public or private higher education institution. This program generally focuses on developing pedagogical competence, linguistics, and communication skills in English. Within the framework of Human Capital Theory, Becker (2020) asserted that education is an investment that increases

individual productivity while contributing to economic and social development. In other words, English Education graduates are seen as valuable assets who bring knowledge, pedagogical skills, and innovative capacities that can be used both in formal education and other sectors that require language and communication skills. In the context of this study, the term “graduates” refers specifically to those who have graduated in recent have been in the process of job search, career adaptation, or independent career development in various sectors, both formal and non-formal education. Emphasis is placed on graduates from Aceh and its surrounding areas to suit the institutional and geographical context of the study.

#### **b. Challenges**

According to the *Cambridge Dictionary* (n.d.), a challenge is defined as “something that needs great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully.” In this study, the term challenges includes both internal and external barriers experienced by English Language Education graduates when entering the workforce. These include skill mismatches, lack of practical experience during college, limited professional networks, and emotional states such as self-doubt and anxiety about their future careers. According to Yorke (2021), the main challenge for higher education graduates is the limitation of skills relevant to the job market, such as digital literacy, creativity, collaborative skills, and professional communication. This has become increasingly complex with the rapid development of technology and increasing global competition. These challenges are important to understand as they have a direct influence on graduates' success in navigating the world of work and building their professional identity.

#### **c. Career Opportunities**

Career opportunities refer to the potential job paths or professions that are available and relevant for English Education graduates to pursue. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary* (n.d.), opportunity is “An occasion or situation that

makes it possible to do something that you want to do or have to do, or the possibility of doing something.” According to the Planned Happenstance theory (Krumboltz, 2021), many career opportunities arise from unexpected events that can be exploited by individuals with adaptive skills, flexibility, and a willingness to take risks. In this context, opportunities are not limited only to professions as teachers in formal schools, but also include various other options, such as becoming private tutors, translators, content creators, pronunciation trainers, language training facilitators, and workers in the public service sector or international communications. Such opportunities can arise from the government, the private sector, or through language skills-based entrepreneurship initiatives. This research would explore how graduates recognize, utilize, or even create these opportunities within the framework of their lives.

#### **d. Career Path**

A career path refers to the professional trajectories or directions taken by graduates after completing their studies. Super's Career Development Theory emphasized that a career is a manifestation of a developing self-concept throughout the life cycle through five main stages: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement (Nauta, 2020). In the context of English Education graduates, they are generally in the exploration stage, where the search for professional identity and career direction is still ongoing. Then, in the context of this research, the term encompasses a variety of career options pursued by graduates, both within the field of education (such as teachers, lecturers, or tutors) and outside the educational sector (such as translators, content creators, or other professionals who apply their language and pedagogical competencies in different industries).

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### A. Challenge and Opportunity

A challenge is an obstacle, difficulty, or situation that requires specific adaptations and strategies to achieve a goal. Lazarus and Folkman (1984), in the theory of psychological stress appraisal, explained that challenges are a form of pressure that individuals respond to as an opportunity to develop despite emotional or cognitive distress. This means that challenges do not always have a negative connotation, but can be a trigger for personal and professional growth when managed properly. Challenges can be internal, such as a lack of motivation, self-doubt, or limited skills. They can also be external, such as intense competition in the job market, high social expectations, or structural changes driven by technological advancement.

In addition to challenges, individuals are also faced with opportunities that influence their ability to achieve goals and develop careers. Southworth and Brallier (2020), in their study entitled “The American Dream: Using Robert Merton's Strain Theory to understand the beliefs and coping responses of homeless individuals”, stated that opportunity refers to the accessibility of legitimate means for achieving societal goals. Individuals act based on the opportunity structures available to them within a given social environment. Drucker (1999), in his work *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, stated that opportunities generally arise as a result of changes in technology, industrial structure, consumption patterns, and social values.

Therefore, challenge and opportunity are closely related concepts because technological, social, and professional changes can create both obstacles and possibilities for individuals in achieving their goals. In the context of this study, challenge and opportunity become important aspects in understanding how English Education graduates respond to changing job market demands and develop strategies in their career pathways.

## **B. English Education Graduates: Profile and Competencies**

English Education Graduates generally refer to individuals who have completed an English education study program at the tertiary level. Graduates of the English Education study program are nationally prepared to master three main competencies: pedagogical competence, linguistic competence, and cross-cultural competence. These three aspects are the main foundation for professions as English teachers, translators, lecturers, and so on. However, the development of the 21st century demands more complex competencies.

Rahim and Mydin (2024) emphasized that in a changing global context, competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication should be part of the main competency map of education graduates. They highlighted that the success of an education graduate in today's world relies heavily on the ability to adapt and create innovative solutions in the teaching and learning process.

A holistic and flexible graduate profile is urgent, especially when education shifts from conventional approaches to technology-based and contextualized learning models. Bazimaziki (2022) pointed out that digital transformation requires graduates to have high flexibility in managing learning resources. He asserted that the use of online resources and educational applications can enrich the literacy process, but only if teachers have good digital pedagogical skills. Therefore, English education study programs are expected to not only produce graduates who are experts in language structures, but also be able to integrate technology in learning practices and global communication.

In relation to career development, Super's Career Development Theory explained that individuals go through several stages in developing their careers, namely growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. According to Super (2020), the exploration stage is the phase where individuals begin to explore career choices, identify personal interests and abilities, and develop career preferences based on their self-concept and environmental conditions. In the context of this study, this stage is closely related to English Education graduates who are transitioning from university life to the

professional world and are required to adapt to changing job market demands and various career possibilities.

### **C. Job Market Trends in the Education Sector**

Recent developments have brought notable changes to employment patterns within the education sector. In the past, the profession of English Education graduates was mostly focused on teaching positions in schools. But now, the education sector encompasses various new spaces, such as online platforms, private training centers, app-based course institutions, and the digital educational content industry. This transformation has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has encouraged educational institutions to adopt online learning methods. Rokeman et al. (2024) in their study highlighted that digital competency is now a key indicator of work readiness, especially in the education sector.

However, a study by Naim (2023) showed that many English lecturers, especially in ESL institutions, still face difficulties in developing and implementing pedagogical digital competence. Although some of them realize the importance of technology, change, and limited training are the main obstacles. On the other hand, Aziz and Soon (2022) conducted a systematic review of the online learning literature and found that the abrupt transition to an online teaching system poses new challenges. Many teachers lack the technical competence and psychological readiness to switch to online learning. This has an impact on learning effectiveness and students' perception of teaching quality. According to Zulfikar (2023), a large number of lecturers at Islamic universities have undergone shifts in their professional identity as a result of technological advancements and the need to adopt digital media-oriented teaching approaches.

In this context, the job market demands not only language mastery but also the ability to teach in various formats, sensitivity to diverse student needs, as well as basic digital skills such as online learning design, use of LMS (Learning Management System), and so on. These challenges indicate that curriculum strengthening and digital skills training should not just be an individual

initiative, but should be a systemic policy within higher education institutions. If not anticipated, the gap between education and industry expectations will continue to widen, and graduates will find it increasingly difficult to compete in the job market.

With new types of jobs and more flexible ways of working, such as online and freelance teaching, the expectations of graduates have also changed. Today's workforce values adaptability, innovation, and lifelong learning more than grades or diplomas.

#### **D. Challenges Faced by English Education Graduates**

One of the main challenges faced by English Education graduates is the gap between the competencies acquired in college and the skills needed in the real world of work. This skill mismatch phenomenon is the main cause of the low absorption of graduates by the job market, especially at job levels that are in their scientific fields (Surra, 2025). A common weakness is the lack of practical experience and exposure to the industrial world during college. Nadeem and Qamar (2025) pointed out that many students feel they lack sufficient information and experience about alternative fields of work beyond teaching. This causes them to lack flexibility in making career decisions after graduation. Despite their academic competence, English Education graduates still face a variety of structural and personal challenges. Challenges such as the oversupply of educators, especially in urban areas, also often make it difficult for many graduates to find formal employment in public and private schools.

Another problem that is no less important is the weakness in the career assistance system on campus. Syahreza and Sari (2023) criticized the effectiveness of career centers on Islamic campuses that have not been able to provide comprehensive job information services, both in the form of training, alumni tracking, and providing connections with the industrial world. This condition reflects weaknesses in the curriculum, which is too theoretical and does not provide enough space for professional practice. Limited work experiences, such as internships, field observations, and learning simulations, make it difficult for graduates to build a work portfolio. Osman et al. (2023)

reinforced these findings by pointing out that gaps in digital literacy and soft skills such as communication, adaptability, and teamwork are major barriers to graduates' work readiness.

Saud (2023), through his phenomenological study, showed that limited experience in using information and communication technology (ICT) is a barrier for English language teachers to adopt modern teaching methods. Many of them feel unprepared to integrate technology into the teaching and learning process due to the lack of training during college. Fauzi (2023) reinforced these findings by stating that the emergence of self-paced learning technologies such as Duolingo, ChatGPT, and AI-based tutoring systems has created its challenges. On the one hand, these technologies provide broad access to learning for students. But on the other hand, it shifts the role of human teachers and demands new competencies for teachers to remain relevant and competitive.

In addition to technical skills, psychosocial challenges are also significant. Graduates often experience career direction confusion, lack of self-confidence, and social pressure due to family or environmental expectations to immediately get a permanent job. The job market in the digital era demands multicultural competencies and professional flexibility that conventional higher education is not fully prepared for. Therefore, it is important to understand how graduates navigate these conditions and develop personalized strategies to overcome these obstacles (Donald et al., 2018).

#### **E. Opportunities Available for English Education Graduates**

Although faced with challenges, technological developments and changes in the lifestyle of the global community have opened up a wide range of new career opportunities for English Education graduates. One of the biggest opportunities is the development of the online language-based services sector. Now, a graduate can not only be a teacher in the classroom but also an online language instructor, content creator, or freelance translator.

Fitria (2024) noted that learning digital business in the context of ELT (English Language Teaching) can open up new horizons for students. They can design independent careers through digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Fiverr, and Upwork, which allow them to sell their language skills as products or services. Chanda et al. (2024) also pointed out that digital skills among university students are not only a necessity but also a business opportunity in itself. English Education graduates who have an understanding of digital literacy can open online training, language content consultants, or even international creative agencies that focus on multilingual communication. Muharlisiani et al. (2023) supported this view by showing that the process of digitizing lecturers and technology-based learning helps students in developing digital work competencies needed in the global market. However, they also emphasized the need for systemic support from the institution so that these initiatives do not rely solely on individual lecturers or students.

Career opportunities also exist in non-education sectors such as hospitality, tourism, international communications, bilingual customer service, and the creative industry. Unfortunately, many graduates do not realize the potential of this cross-sector because they still focus on the traditional expectations of becoming a teacher or civil servant. If you look into it, the opportunities for English education graduates are wide open. In this era, graduates are required not only to be experts in teaching but also to understand the context of the industries where they can contribute productively.

English Language Education graduates are still in high demand in the formal sector, especially in bilingual and international schools. With the increasing demands of globalization, English language skills are becoming a major asset in education. According to England (2023), the need for certified and internationally qualified English teachers continues to increase in many developing countries.

Overall, these new career opportunities show that graduates do not have to rely on traditional paths to succeed. However, to make the most of them, they

require guidance, relevant training, and early equipping so that graduates have an adaptive and innovation-based career vision. McDonald and Hite (2023) emphasized that communication skills, critical thinking, creativity, and mastery of technology are the main differentiators of successful graduates. Those who can integrate soft skills and digital literacy can compete in the creative industry sector, startups, and global companies seeking multilingual and adaptive talents. To maximize these opportunities, graduates also need self-confidence and strong social support from both the educational environment and the environment around them.

## **F. Previous Study**

### **1. Studies on Career Experiences and Career Transitions**

Several studies explore the career experiences and career transitions of English Education graduates in non-teaching careers, such as studies conducted by Nabilah et al. (2025), Le and Pham (2024), and Laher (2024).

The study by Nabilah et al. (2025), conducted in Samarinda, is one of the most relevant empirical references for this research. This study documents how English Education graduates build career paths outside the teaching profession, such as becoming content creators, social media managers, content editors, and corporate communications staff. The findings showed that the ability to adapt linguistic skills to non-educational professional contexts is key to success. The findings also showed that adaptability, creativity, and technological prowess were key determinants of successful career transitions.

Another study by Le and Pham (2024) highlighted the experiences of 67 Vietnamese English-major graduates who work in fields that do not match their academic background, such as information technology, business communication, digital marketing, and international project management. The study provided an in-depth look at how these graduates transferred their language skills to the non-education sector through a process of adaptation and contextualized learning in the workplace. An interesting finding of the study is that English language skills remain a strategic asset, especially in

the globalized world of work. However, graduates often experience difficulty transferring their knowledge to their current job path. Many of them feel that the campus curriculum is too theoretical and does not equip them with skills such as problem-solving, interdisciplinary teamwork, and the use of technology.

Furthermore, Laher (2024) evaluated the reasons education graduates choose non-teaching careers and their level of satisfaction in those jobs, focusing on reducing job mismatch through more effective school programs. Using sequential mixed methods, the study involved 12 alumni of Rizal Memorial Colleges Inc. through surveys and in-depth interviews. The results revealed that the main reasons graduates turned to non-teaching pathways were expectations of higher earnings, support for the development of personal interests, and a desire for greater job stability and satisfaction. Four key themes emerged from the data analysis, namely commitment, patience, satisfaction, and openness to change, suggesting that a career outside education is not just a temporary escape but often a conscious and adaptive choice. The study also emphasized the need to strengthen career guidance programs in higher education so that graduates are better prepared to make professional decisions, both within and outside of education.

## **2. Studies on Employability and Job Market Challenges**

There are several studies that discuss employability challenges and career opportunities faced by graduates in the modern workforce, such as studies conducted by Vargas-Madriral (2021), Tran (2017), and The Teachers Institute (2023).

Research by Vargas-Madriral (2021) in Costa Rica focused on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students' perceptions of the career paths available to English graduates. The results revealed that many students have high expectations of job prospects, but in reality, they face a lack of career information, a lack of exposure to the professional world, and limited practical skills relevant to industry needs. This created a discrepancy between expectations and reality that results in post-graduation career

confusion. Vargas-Madriral also highlighted the passive role of educational institutions in helping students design careers. As a result, many students choose a job path based on immediate needs, rather than a job that matches their study path.

Similarly, Tran (2017) examined the barriers faced by international graduates, including limited recognition of foreign skills, language barriers, and a lack of local professional networks. The findings suggested that personal strategies and social support play a crucial role in improving employment opportunities. Despite the Australian context, the relevance of this study is high, as many graduates from other regions also face intense job competition, limited networks, and the challenge of redefining careers in a disruptive digital economy.

Furthermore, The Teachers Institute (2023) outlined systemic issues in higher education, including the gap between curriculum and industry needs, and the weak reinforcement of soft skills such as creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork. While not based on empirical data, the article provided an important conceptual framework for understanding the structural crisis experienced by many higher education institutions.

### **3. Studies on English Competency and Educational Opportunities**

There are also studies that discuss inequalities in English education and the role of English competency in accessing wider career opportunities, such as studies conducted by Gray et al. (2020) and Yao and Garcia (2019).

In the book *Ability and Opportunity in English Education*, Gray et al. (2020) reflectively discussed the inequality of opportunities and capabilities among English language education institutions. They stated that the quality of educational management, geographical location, and access to resources and policy support affect educational outcomes. These disparities impact the quality of graduates and their career opportunities after graduation, especially in sectors that require a high command of English.

Similarly, Yao and Garcia (2019) highlighted the role of English as a means of academic mobility in higher education. Vietnamese students

studying in an English-speaking academic environment experience challenges such as limited academic vocabulary, academic cultural gaps, and high performative pressure. However, they also find opportunities to access global networks and expand professional connectivity. This study showed how English competency can be a bridge to global opportunities.

The literature review shows that most previous studies have addressed various aspects of the challenges, opportunities, and career transitions of English language education graduates. Among the previous studies discussed above, Nabilah et al. (2025) is the most closely related to this research, as it explored the lived experiences of English Education graduates in non-teaching careers. The study focused on how graduates adapt their linguistic skills to professional contexts outside education and highlighted adaptability, creativity, and technological skills as important factors in career transitions. However, the study mainly focused on graduates who had already pursued non-teaching careers, such as content creators, social media managers, and corporate communication staff.

Therefore, there is still limited discussion regarding how English Education graduates deal with broader career challenges and opportunities, especially in relation to career uncertainty, changing job market demands, and the strategies they use in pursuing various career paths after graduation. This research attempts to fill that gap by exploring the strategies used by English Education graduates in dealing with the challenges and opportunities in pursuing career paths in the digital era.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter discusses the research methodology, including the research design, research participants, techniques of data collection, and techniques of data analysis used by the researcher in conducting this study.

#### **A. Research Design**

This study used a descriptive qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach. This approach was chosen because it was considered the most suitable for exploring in depth the lived experiences of English Education graduates as they navigate their careers. The phenomenological approach aims to understand how individuals give meaning to their daily experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Thus, the main focus of this research is on the graduates' experiences and stories of struggle against the challenges and opportunities they experienced in building their careers.

In the descriptive phenomenological approach, the researcher seeks to remove prejudice (bracketing) to capture the meaning of participants' experiences authentically. As explained by Giorgi (2009), descriptive phenomenology is particularly suitable for exploring educational and professional experiences because this approach not only reveals “what” individuals experience, but also “how” they experience it. In other words, this approach is very relevant to answer research questions that are exploratory and contextual to the reality of English graduates in this competitive job market era.

The data in this study were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with English Education graduates who are currently working as teachers, non-education workers, freelancers, or language entrepreneurs. The interviews were designed to capture key moments in their career journeys, including decision-making processes, challenges faced, and survival or growth

strategies. The data were analysed using thematic analysis by following the steps of analysis outlined by Miles and Huberman's (2014) model.

Overall, this approach allows the researcher to truly “listen” to the voices of the participants, allowing room for deep meaning to their experiences, rather than simply describing surface events. This approach also aligns with the interpretive paradigm, which believes that social reality is shaped by individual interactions and experiences. Through the phenomenological approach, this research not only explains the objective factors that influence graduates' careers but also reveals how they interpret, respond to, and adapt to the dynamics of the current job market.

## **B. Research Participants**

The participants in this study consisted of ten graduates of the English Education Study Program. They were selected by purposive sampling based on specific criteria: (1) five male and five female graduates in English education. The selection of a balanced number aimed to obtain a fairer and more comprehensive overview, as the transition experiences from the academic world to the workplace and career decision-making may differ between males and females, (2) Emphasis is placed on graduates from Aceh and its surrounding areas to suit the institutional and geographical context of the study, and (3) The participants in this study were English Education graduates aged 22–25 years because, according to Donald (2020) in Super's Career Development Theory, this age range corresponds to the exploration stage, which is the initial phase of career search and adjustment after graduation. This approach enabled the researcher to select individuals who had relevant experiences related to the focus of the phenomenon under study.

The purposive sampling technique is very suitable for this qualitative research because it allows the selection of informants who have in-depth knowledge and experience of the issue being studied. According to Compee et al. (2025), purposive sampling is effectively used to explore contextual and

diverse insights from a small group of thematically relevant participants. This is reinforced by Abrouq (2024), who stated that in English education studies, this technique allows researchers to obtain participants with diverse social and career backgrounds, thus enriching perspectives in the analysis process.

To maintain a balanced representation, participants were recruited from graduates working in education and non-education sector. Their participation is voluntary to ensure research ethics. In addition, this approach also facilitates the selection of informants who can critically reflect on their life experiences and strategies in facing the challenges and opportunities of work in this era.

### **C. Technique of Data Collection**

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through semi-structured interviews, in line with the phenomenological approach used. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allowed the researcher to obtain in-depth narratives from English Education graduates regarding their experiences in establishing and pursuing career paths in a competitive and dynamic job market. This technique provides flexibility in exploring themes that arise spontaneously during the interview, while maintaining the structure of the main questions that lead to the research objectives (Mohammadi et al., 2025).

Interviews were conducted online and offline, depending on the availability and convenience of participants. Each interview session was recorded, transcribed, and analysed. Participants were asked to share their experiences since graduating from college, their job search process, challenges faced, and how they have taken advantage of career opportunities both within and outside the field of education. The interviews also explored their perceptions of the suitability of the curriculum to the needs of the workforce.

To answer the research questions, the researcher interviewed ten participants. The participants in this study were English education graduates in Aceh aged 22-25 years. The researcher asked eight questions to each participant. Because this study used descriptive qualitative methods and semi-

structured interviews for data collection, several follow-up questions were asked during the interviews. This is in line with Creswell (2012), who emphasized that qualitative interview instruments generally consist of “a small set of open-ended questions, typically ranging from 8 to 12, which guide the overall conversation while leaving space for probing and elaboration.” In other words, what matters most is the open and reflective nature of the questions, which are able to elicit rich and meaningful narratives from the participants. The interviews lasted 40 – 45 minutes for each participant.

To ensure the validity of the data, a member checking process was also conducted by asking the participants to verify the transcripts and summaries of the findings obtained from their interviews to avoid misinterpretation. In addition, the researcher used an audit trail and self-reflection during the analysis process to maintain transparency and data integrity.

This data collection process is designed to support the main objective of the research, which is to deeply understand the subjective experiences of graduates in meeting the challenges and seizing the opportunities available in today's world of work. This technique is also in line with current practice in qualitative research, which places participants at the centre of the data interpretation process (Lamaro et al., 2025).

#### **D. Technique of Data Analysis**

In this study, data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman (2014) model, which consisted of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. This model was chosen because it provides a systematic and flexible framework for understanding patterns, themes, and relationships between concepts in qualitative data.

The first stage involved data reduction, where raw data from transcribed interviews were filtered to identify information relevant to the research focus, specifically challenges, opportunities, and graduate adaptation strategies. This process involved initial coding, category grouping, and selection of meaningful data. Next, data presentation was organized by presenting the findings in narrative descriptions to identify relationships among themes.

The third step was conclusion drawing and verification, where the researcher identified key patterns and made generalizations based on the themes that emerged from the participants' experiences. This process is reinforced by member checking, which is confirming the interpretations with participants to increase the trustworthiness and validity of the findings. As emphasized by Price and Smith (2021), validation is key in ensuring accuracy in qualitative studies. However, as this approach is descriptive and in-depth, the main interpretation still relies on the researcher's contextual understanding of the meaning of the participants' experiences.

By consistently applying Miles and Huberman's analytical techniques, this study explores how English Language Education graduates navigate the realities of current career paths, including structural challenges, skill mismatches, and new opportunities in the digital age, and how they form adaptive strategies based on their experiences.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter covers the analysis of the findings, which is divided into two parts: research findings and discussion. The research findings section presents the results of interviews with participants. This section discusses matters related to the experiences of English education graduates in facing challenges in pursuing their careers, how they view the availability of opportunities, how they experience the transition from college to work, and how they interpret their careers as English education graduates. The discussion section interprets the research findings by relating them to existing theories, expert opinions, and insights.

#### A. Research Findings

Researchers analyzed the data based on the research questions mentioned in Chapter 1: (1) What are the main challenges faced by English Education graduates in navigating their careers? (2) What career opportunities are available for English Education graduates, both in the education sector and outside education? and (3) How do graduates deal with the transition process from the academic world to the world of work, such as adaptation strategies and obstacles they experience?

**Table 4.1**

*List of initial participants*

No	Initials of Participants	Age	Gender	Year of Graduation	Current Occupation/Activity
1	AD	22	Male	2024	Entrepreneur, Content Creator
2	RSP	23	Male	2024	Master Teacher Coach at English Academy Bintaro

3	AHJ	23	Male	2025	Football Referee
4	MS	24	Male	2023	Business Owner
5	MK	25	Male	2025	Applying for WHV in Australia
6	NA	22	Female	2025	Classroom Teacher
7	NAZ	23	Female	2024	English Teacher
8	BM	24	Female	2020	Private School Teacher
9	CRF	25	Female	2022	English Teacher
10	JSQ	25	Female	2025	English Teacher

The researchers collected data from ten participants, as mentions in Table 4.1. Then, based on this data, the researchers divided the analysis into three parts according to the research questions. It is explained in detail as follows;

**1) *What are the main challenges faced by English Education graduates in navigating their careers?***

**1. Challenges Encountered When Entering the Workplace**

Entering the job market after graduation becomes one of the most challenging phases for English Education graduates. This shows that the transition from the academic environment to the professional world does not always run smoothly, as numerous obstacles await English Education students once they complete their studies. The challenges they encounter are diverse, emerging in the form of gaps between academic competencies and the actual demands of the field, the need to adapt to new work environments, and the limited networks available to help them secure employment. In addition, the increasingly tight competition among graduates from both education and non-education backgrounds makes the process of entering the job market more competitive. At the same time, several participants face psychological pressure, higher qualification requirements, and

administrative obstacles when attempting to pursue job opportunities abroad.

Among the most frequently mentioned challenges are personal difficulties in meeting real teaching demands. Although they have undergone microteaching during their studies, real classroom situations require more mature communication skills, classroom management, and instructional competence. What happens in an actual class and what they learn during microteaching often still shows a gap. When graduates interact directly with real students, they must adjust to the rhythm of the new work environment. This issue was expressed by two out of ten participants.

JSQ stated that:

*“The challenges were more personal, especially related to my capability as an alumnus in terms of communication and implementing classroom instruction when my micro-teaching skills were tested.”*

NAZ also expressed that:

*“...one of the biggest challenges I faced when entering the job market was adjusting from academic life to real working environments. I also had to build my confidence in applying my knowledge and skills in actual teaching situations.”*

Another challenge involves limited professional networks, especially for participants who do not have connections within formal educational institutions. This issue was explained by two out of ten participants.

BM said that:

*“...because I don't have anyone who works in a public place or in a public school, it means I need to do more, to put in more effort in seeking a job...”*

NA also stated that:

*“.....the difficulty I face is seeking for students. Because for private class, we need specific students to teach. That's why looking for them is a little bit hard for me because I don't have any acquaintance or link to match with the students.”*

In a competitive context, some participants noted that today's job market in education is saturated with graduates from various backgrounds, including those who are not from education majors but are still able to secure teaching positions through certification programs or Pendidikan Profesi Guru (PPG).

CRF explained that:

*“The difficulty I felt as an education graduate at that time was the competition with non-Education graduates, where those who did not have an S.Pd degree could also become teachers just by joining PPG for one year. The problem is that in the field, Education graduates are already too many, and it becomes even more crowded with those from non-Education backgrounds. The opportunities are not that big, but the competition is getting tighter, and as a result, Education graduates struggle a lot and find it difficult to be absorbed into schools.”*

Based on the overall statements, it can be concluded that the challenges of entering the job market for English Education graduates do not only stem from professional skill limitations but also from networking issues, increasing competition, psychological pressure, and the dynamic nature of the job market. These findings emphasize that graduates' success in entering the workforce is heavily influenced by mental readiness, experience, and well-planned competitive strategies, rather than solely by academic achievements during their studies.

## **2. Challenge Related to Soft Skills, Technical Skills, and Digital Literacy**

The research findings show a difference of opinion among graduates regarding whether the study program provided the skills they needed upon graduation. In general, the program was considered to have provided a basic foundation in soft skills, technical skills, and digital literacy. However, some graduates felt that the learning was still too theoretical, lacked practical experience, and did not fully meet the competitive demands of today's job market. This indicates a gap between professional expectations and what students gained during their studies.

Some participants felt that the university had provided adequate skills for their work needs. Four out of ten participants stated that communication, teamwork, digital literacy, and logical reasoning were well developed during their studies. They also noted that certain workshops or trainings played a role in improving the skills needed in the workplace.

The following statements show these positive views.

NAZ said that:

*“...I believe the study program provided me with a good foundation of non-teaching skills such as communication, teamwork, and basic digital literacy.”*

BM stated that:

*“...what I have learned at the campus, everything works in my current job. In terms of soft skills, teaching skills, or non-teaching skills, everything is useful to me now.*

NA felt that:

*”.....I used to follow or participate in some workshop that held by the campus...they teach me a lot of soft skill like communication, how to communicate with your team, and also editing skill or making material that is interesting... So, I think campus teaches me a lot.”*

AHJ also noted:

*”...non-teaching skills were strongly applied and simulated during my studies in the English Education Department... My reasoning ability also improved because we took courses that trained logical thinking and helped us avoid reasoning errors such as logical fallacies.”*

These views show that for some graduates, the study program has provided sufficient preparation, especially for communication needs, collaborative work, and analytical thinking.

However, three out of ten participants felt that skills given during their studies were still limited. They argued that campus learning focused too much on theory, placed less emphasis on practice, and did not provide training relevant to real-world conditions. This group also highlighted the

lack of training in public speaking, argument delivery, and digital literacy. This is reflected in the statements of several participants:

JSQ stated that:

*“...the preparation I received was not yet fully adequate...most of the learning in class was still focused on theory, so the practical application was not maximized.”*

AD argued that:

*“...there are still many things that need improvement, especially in public speaking. Not everyone can speak well, not everyone can express their opinions properly, not everyone can present an argument well, and not everyone can deliver or transfer knowledge effectively...There are many things that need to be given as input to the study program regarding public speaking, how to argue, and how to transfer knowledge. Because we only learned how to teach, without learning how to express our opinions.”*

MS stated that:

*“.....the growth of our skills depends on where we spend time outside the campus.....”*

This group’s opinions emphasize that certain skills and soft skills have not been optimally facilitated by the study program, especially those related to communication and delivering ideas.

From these two groups, it can be concluded that the adequacy of both teaching and non-teaching skills provided by the study program is still perceived differently among graduates. These differences arise due to variations in learning experiences, levels of student participation in extracurricular activities, and diverse professional needs. These findings indicate that although the program has provided an important foundation, improvements in skills such as public speaking remain an urgent need to ensure graduates are better prepared for an increasingly competitive job market.

### 3. Challenge Related to Salary

The experiences of graduates regarding salary and career development are highly varied, mainly influenced by the employment sector they enter, their employment status, and their ability to utilize their English skills. In general, having a background as an English Education graduate should not be an obstacle to income or career growth. However, some participants experienced challenges due to the relatively low salary standards for teachers in Indonesia, especially for honorary teachers or those who are not yet certified.

In addition, some graduates experienced greater opportunities when they worked in the non-formal sector or took on additional jobs such as private courses, freelance work, or even jobs that are non-linear to their educational background. In this context, English proficiency provides significant advantages both as added value and as an entry point to jobs offering higher pay. About four out of ten graduates explained this.

JSQ stated that:

*“...Since I work at a private school, and Alhamdulillah, the salary I receive is also higher than the honorarium in public schools.”*

NA explained that:

*“As long as I teach English, because besides English, I get very little salary. But when I teach English, people pay me more, I think, because it's a private class, they pay more than at school.”*

AHJ stated that

*“.....my main income is fixed because I work in the sports field. However, I often receive additional pay when there are tasks that require advanced English skills. For example, during VAR training, many technical terms in football cannot be translated into Indonesian, so my English background becomes an advantage. As an English Education graduate, I am often trusted to bridge communication with external parties. This gives me extra income outside my regular salary.”*

MK emphasized that:

*“.....because we can communicate in English, we can apply for a job overseas, like Australia, like other countries than Indonesia, and we can get paid in dollars...So we can get a really better salary than what we can get in Indonesia.”*

However, the findings also show that access to better income does not depend solely on educational degrees but also on the individual's ability to seek opportunities, take on additional roles, and build professional networks.

Through these various experiences, it is clear that the impact of an English Education background on salary and career development is not singular. For those working in the formal education sector, salary is often influenced by government policies, employment status, and certification. On the other hand, graduates who utilize their English skills for additional jobs or non-linear sectors tend to have greater flexibility in creating income opportunities. Meanwhile, English proficiency has been proven to open access to international jobs or dollar-based jobs that offer far higher pay than domestic work.

**2) *What career opportunities are available for English Education graduates, both in the education sector and outside education?***

The findings of this study indicate that career opportunities for English Education graduates have expanded widely and are no longer limited to becoming teachers or lecturers. Although becoming a teacher or lecturer remains the primary career choice that English Education graduates are expected to pursue because it aligns with what they have studied, the current job market offers additional options for their career paths. The interview participants described the main strength of English Education graduates as their English proficiency, which can be applied across various sectors, both in education and non-education industries. In the digital era, this language

ability serves as an asset that opens access to flexible, modern, and internationally oriented careers.

In addition, participants emphasized that today's job market requires more than just a degree. Many careers demand portfolios, experience, licenses, or additional certificates, meaning that graduates who are professionally prepared have greater opportunities to compete. This description reinforces the idea that English Education graduates need to understand job market developments and maximize their English skills to take full advantage of the wide range of available opportunities.

## **1. Career Opportunities Within the Education Sector**

### **(a) Online English Tutor / Remote English Instructor**

In recent years, the digital education industry has grown rapidly, providing significant opportunities for English Education graduates to become online instructors. This career is considered highly flexible because it allows them to teach students from various regions without geographical limitations. Participants explained that many graduates now work remotely, either through online tutoring institutions or by offering private sessions.

Becoming an online instructor not only increases income but also provides opportunities to enhance pedagogical skills, expand international networks, and build a professional reputation. According to participants, this career is very popular because it does not require physical presence and can be pursued alongside other jobs.

BM stated that:

*“...They can become online tutors... Some of my friends even work fully remotely, teaching online for students from abroad. So the opportunities are actually very broad, not limited to teaching professions.”*

JSQ said that:

*“...What is very popular right now is those who work abroad using a WFH system, relying on their English skill, opportunities like these are very accessible.”*

MK stated that:

*“Remote jobs are now very common and easy to find... as long as you have good English skills.”*

### **(b) Course Developer / Content Writer**

Aside from teaching, many English Education graduates use their pedagogical skills to create and develop learning materials. The growth of edutech platforms in Indonesia and abroad has increased the demand for module writers, curriculum developers, educational video creators, and instructional designers. This career suits graduates with both academic ability and creativity. Moreover, this work is often done on a freelance basis, offering flexibility and additional income opportunities.

BM said that:

*“Nowadays, many also enter edutech... They can become online tutors, course developers...”*

CRF also stated that:

*“...Professions such as writer, copywriter, or content writer are also increasingly in demand, because the digital industry today requires people who can produce high-quality content in English.”*

### **(c) Educational Content Creator**

In the digital era, many English Education graduates produce educational content such as English tips, learning videos, and micro-teaching materials on social media. This career is popular because it can generate income, strengthen personal branding, and open additional opportunities such as educational endorsements, institutional collaborations, or even becoming a webinar host.

NAZ mentioned that:

*“Aside from teaching or lecturing, the most accessible and popular career paths for English Education graduates today include working as content creators...”*

BM stated that:

*“...there are also those who enter the digital world as influencers, content creators, MCs, or presenters because English proficiency increases their credibility in the media...”*

AD explained that:

*“Nowadays everything has changed, the world has become fully digitalized. So I suggest that everyone also shift toward the digital world and doesn't limit themselves. Whatever work you create, whatever skills you have, just share them through digital platforms. For example, becoming an influencer in the field of education is very possible...”*

## **2. Career Opportunities Outside the Education Sector**

### **(a) Translator / Interpreter**

Working as a translator or interpreter emerged as one of the strongest career paths in the non-education sector. This profession includes translating professional documents and serving as interpreters for international events. The demand for certified translators is also increasing, especially in regions with limited supply, such as Aceh. Participants emphasized that although English proficiency is essential, having a professional certificate or translator license adds significant value and increases the chances of securing larger projects.

CRF said that:

*“Many alumni of the English Department also work as translators or interpreters, either for professional documents or for international events....”*

BM mentioned that:

*“...Many alumni of English Departments become translators and interpreters, either as freelancers or working in companies....”*

AHJ explained that:

*“The demand for professional translation services is also increasing, such as Translator tersumpah. But in Aceh, there are almost none, if I’m not mistaken, only one near the Wali Nanggroe office. Even this week, several people contacted me for translator tersumpah services, but I don’t have the license, so I couldn’t take the job. This shows that the demand exists, but the supply does not. And such a gap actually becomes a major opportunity.”*

RSP stated that:

*“Translator or interpreter jobs are highly needed right now.”*

**(b) Tourism & Hospitality (Tour Guide, Front Office, Travel Agency, Event Host)**

The tourism sector is one of the industries open to English Education graduates because English proficiency is a primary requirement. Participants mentioned that many alumni work as tour guides, front office staff, customer relations officers, and travel consultants. English proficiency makes graduates more capable of interacting with foreign tourists and increases their value in the eyes of tourism companies. Additionally, hospitality sectors such as hotels or event organizers are highly accessible to graduates with strong communication skills and supporting certificates.

JSQ mentioned that:

*“...I think that nowadays there are many popular career paths for English Education graduates, such as becoming a tour guide, an event host...”*

BM said that:

*“...Many people eventually work in the tourism sector, because the industry truly needs individuals who can communicate in English, for example, as tour guides, front office staff, customer relations, or travel agency staff....”*

MS also mentioned that:

*“In my opinion, job opportunities for English Education graduates are also very promising in the tourism sector...”*

AHJ stated that,

*“...opportunities that are currently quite popular among English graduates include tour guiding and jobs in the hospitality sector,... However, all of these still require professional and well-structured English skills. So you cannot jump in without certification.”*

**(c) Working Abroad (WHV, Overseas Agencies, Remote Foreign Companies)**

Many participants emphasized that working abroad is a realistic and highly profitable opportunity. Graduates may work through the Working Holiday Visa (WHV) scheme. Although some jobs are physically demanding, the high income becomes a major attraction. English proficiency also increases the chances of being accepted in various sectors, whether as physical laborers, customer relations officers, or staff in international companies.

MS explained that:

*“There are many jobs in this field that require English proficiency, including opportunities to work abroad, such as in Australia through the Working Holiday Visa program. The jobs offered are usually physical labour, but the income is very high. Many Indonesians working in Australia as physical laborers can earn up to around sixty million rupiah per month....”*

JSQ said that:

*“What is very popular right now is those who work abroad using a WFH system, relying on their English skills without being tied to the S.Pd. degree they obtained.”*

MK mentioned that:

*“...There are even those who become virtual assistants for overseas companies or international clients...”*

#### **(d) Diplomatic (Embassy Staff)**

Opportunities to enter the diplomatic field were also mentioned as a possible career path for English Education graduates. Although not all graduates are aware of this option, positions such as diplomatic staff or officers in international institutions often require individuals with strong professional English skills. However, participants emphasized that this career requires English proficiency certificates, such as IELTS or TOEFL, as primary requirements.

NA explained that:

*“You can be a diplomat, because you master and learn English, right. But when you have very good English skills and also the proof that you have that kind of skill, you can apply for a diplomatic job. I used to see job vacancies that asked for any major, but you must have a good IELTS or TOEFL score. You need to communicate fully in English, which requires proficiency in writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Even with only a bachelor’s degree, you can still apply; you don’t need a master’s degree...”*

NA also added that:

*“...But you have to remember, this is not in the US or UK. This is in an embassy, an embassy where they don’t speak English. So they need someone who can speak English for them. I used to see diplomacy jobs in Thailand or Southeast Asian countries...”*

#### **(e) Entrepreneurship**

Some participants highlighted that business is an increasingly appealing career path. Although it is not directly related to a teaching background, English proficiency offers a competitive advantage in business development, marketing, and customer interaction. Participants viewed business as a flexible career path that can be adjusted to personal interests, capital, and current market potential. Entrepreneurship is not merely an alternative but a strategic and highly potential path for English Education graduates. Their communication skills, understanding of psychology, digital literacy, and use of English

as a global language give them a competitive edge in building businesses that can reach both local and international markets.

MS stated that:

*“...even though their academic background is different, English Education graduates can also enter the business world because many things in business can be learned through practice. Because in business practice makes perfect...”*

AD said that:

*“...Take advantage of digitalization to build personal branding and expand opportunities....”*

Participants emphasized that these broad career opportunities can only be optimally utilized if graduates possess proof of professional skills. Almost all respondents highlighted the importance of certificates, licenses, or portfolios as essential requirements to enter a more competitive job market. Certificates such as IELTS, TOEFL, translator licenses, or internship experiences are key factors in increasing competitiveness.

Besides certification, participants also highlighted the importance of building personal branding, digital adaptability, and being proactive in seeking opportunities. Efforts to develop oneself through practical experience, portfolios, and technological skills become the main keys for graduates to enter a job market that is increasingly competitive and globally connected. By combining English proficiency, supporting certifications, and the willingness to explore new sectors, English Education graduates can optimally benefit from the various career opportunities available today.

### **3. Recommendations for Students Preparing Their Future Careers**

Preparing for a career after graduation becomes an important step for English Education students. The rapid changes in the world of work, the high competition among graduates from various fields, and the increasingly complex skill demands require students to have a well-prepared strategy while they are still in college. Advice from graduates who have already entered the “life after graduate” stage becomes a very important and

valuable source of information. They have experienced the real dynamics after graduation, so their insights are able to illustrate the steps that need to be prepared by students to face the transition period into the professional world.

In general, the research findings show that the participants emphasize five important aspects that students need to prepare when starting their careers: (1) setting career goals early, (2) strengthening English proficiency, (3) developing additional skills beyond language ability, (4) seeking experiences to build portfolios and CVs, and (5) cultivating a professional mindset that is adaptive and willing to try new things. All of these recommendations are the result of the real experiences of the graduates when entering the workforce and facing various challenges in navigating their careers.

From the findings obtained, many participants believe that students need clarity regarding their career direction to make the process of self-development easier. Students who have earlier goals are considered more capable of mapping their careers. Five out of ten participants explained this. JSQ emphasized that:

*“Students should already know what they want to become after graduation, meaning they need to have a clear goal from the early semesters ... They also need to upgrade their knowledge and experience. Most importantly, they must actively seek out as much information as possible.”*

NA explained that:

*“... You have to make sure what you want before you graduate... if you like teaching, go for teaching. Because students need a teacher who really loves teaching and not only shares the knowledge, but also builds their character... if you don't like teaching, find something you really, really like. Because I found my friends, a lot of them, they're not really passionate about teaching, but they found something other jobs that they really love...”*

AHJ stressed that:

*“...you have to identify what you are good at and what you are really passionate about and enjoy. Don't limit yourself only to teaching careers, and don't trap yourself inside the campus environment...”*

MK emphasized that:

*“I think it is important to set a clear goal, for example, like short-term and long-term goals, and after that you start, you can start building your personal branding, and after that, you get in touch with people and trust the time, trust the process, and the job will find you. You can get a job that easily if you fit their requirements, right?”*

RSP added that:

*“Don't decide your future when you've finished, but immediately look for your direction and goals even before you finish studying, giving you some time to decide.”*

In addition, the participants emphasized that mastering English is not enough only at the academic level; students must truly master all aspects of the language to meet the expectations of society and the environment toward English Education graduates. Basic abilities such as speaking, writing, and communication skills become indicators of graduates' professionalism in the eyes of the industry. Three out of ten participants explained this.

CRF stated that:

*“...the most important advice for English Education students preparing for their career is to master their English skills thoroughly. When we graduate with a degree in English, society and companies automatically expect us to have strong abilities in speaking, writing, and overall communication. This expectation is the main reason why they are willing to recruit English graduates. After that, it is also essential to decide where and in what field you want to build your career, so it becomes easier to determine your next steps...”*

NAZ suggested that:

*“...I suggest that English Education students continue improving their teaching skills, because that foundation will always be useful no matter which career path they choose. From my personal experience, teaching skills are not only for the classroom but also help in various professional*

*situations, including public speaking, effective communication, and the ability to explain ideas clearly. However, I also recommend that students should not focus solely on teaching skills. The job market today is broad and changes rapidly, so English Education students need to keep developing other competencies as well... ”*

MS said that:

*“...first you have to better your English skills. Because I see my colleagues, who teach English, but their English is very bad. Mostly English graduates, they don't speak good English. I mean, I know it's hard, but I think at least just hit a minimum, don't be too bad ... My other advice is for those who can speak English: don't just focus on that skill. Because it's just a language, it's just a tool. If you can, learn other skills too. For example, business. If you can do business and speak English, we can add value...”*

Furthermore, this research also found that various additional skills, such as public speaking, technological proficiency, good communication, personal branding, and even business skills, become very important added value. The world of work today needs workers who not only master English but are also able to adapt to digital platforms and produce real work in the form of portfolios. Two out of ten participants explained this.

BM said that:

*“...if you have a good strength in speaking, writing, listening, or maybe reading, go ahead and develop those skills. Don't forget that public speaking is extremely important, and don't forget navigation skills too, you know, like public relations, because those will definitely open pathways for future jobs...”*

AD conveyed that:

*“We must learn to speak properly in front of others, because that skill will be useful wherever you work later. After that, also practice your selling skills, and start selling little by little from now. Selling ability is not only about money, but also about how we convince people, build relationships, and understand market needs...”*

Based on the overall findings, it can be concluded that the advice given by the graduates emphasizes the importance of preparation that begins before students complete their studies. A stable career does not rely solely

on academic degrees but is greatly determined by experience, soft skills, and clarity of career direction from an early stage. With a combination of experience, language proficiency, strong mentality, and additional competencies relevant to industry needs, English Education graduates have great opportunities to navigate their careers more confidently, both in the education and non-education sectors.

3) *How do graduates deal with the transition process from the academic world to the world of work, such as adaptation strategies and obstacles they experience?*

1. **Experiences During the Transition Phase from Academic Life to Working Life**

The transition from campus life to the working world is one of the most significant phases in the lives of English Education graduates. This change is not only about moving from the status of a student to that of a worker, but also about adapting to new rhythms, demands, responsibilities, and expectations that are often very different from academic life. At this stage, many graduates realize that the professional world requires a higher level of maturity, strong adaptability, and mental readiness to face professional realities that may not always align with the theories learned at university.

In general, the research findings show that graduates' transition experiences vary widely, depending on their work background, personal readiness, and the activities they engaged during their studies. Some graduates experience a relatively smooth transition, especially those who were already accustomed to working or had structured activities before completing their studies.

AHJ argued that:

*“...I have been doing what I am doing now even before I became a university student. So, the transition was not too heavy. You could say*

*the transition was relatively easy because my activity pattern had actually been formed long ago...*

However, many also feel that this transition is quite challenging due to the drastic shift from an academic environment to a professional one. The challenges they face include the demands of work commitment, pressure of responsibility, the need to adapt to a new environment, gaps between theory and practice, and social and economic pressures. About five out of ten graduates talked about these issues.

CRF also said that:

*“...understanding the theories learned during college is easier than implementing them directly in the field...”*

NA emphasized that:

*“...We were always excited at the first time and then, in the middle of it, I don't know. The challenge is commitment, myself is the problem not the environment.”*

JSQ stated that:

*“...when we are in university, we can control more about what we want, our rights, and our responsibilities. But in working life, sometimes things cannot go according to what we try to achieve, and we have to adapt more to an environment...”*

MS mentioned that:

*“The transition is hard... standing on your own feet, managing your responsibilities... suddenly everything is in your hands.”*

RSP said that:

*“...in working life, the situation is completely different; you really have to be able to collaborate, communicate, and rely on each other. If you can't keep up, you'll get left behind. The environment pushes you to be*

*more responsible and independent, and at the same time to build teamwork skills that maybe weren't too necessary during your student years. So the transition can feel challenging, but it's also where you learn how to survive and grow."*

Based on the overall findings, it can be concluded that the transition from academic life to the working world is a complex process influenced by mental readiness, experience, support, and the character of the job entered. Although some graduates experience a relatively smooth transition, the majority face challenges in adjusting to their commitment, dealing with professional pressure, bridging gaps between theory and practice, adapting to changes in routine, and meeting the demands of independence. This phase is not merely a status shift but a crucial moment in shaping professional identity and personal maturity, ultimately helping graduates better understand the realities of the working world.

## **2. Career Preparation and Development Strategies**

Entering "*life after graduate*" requires careful planning, especially for English Education graduates, who face competition not only from fellow education graduates but also from individuals with various academic backgrounds. In the digital era, industries are changing rapidly, so graduates are required to have more mature strategies, both in terms of experience, professional qualifications, and self-development. Therefore, understanding the strategies used by graduates who have already entered the workforce becomes very important as a guide for students and prospective graduates.

In general, the research findings show that graduates emphasize various strategies that can be pursued from the college period to post-graduation. These strategies can be grouped into five main focuses: (1) collecting experience, (2) strengthening legality and documentation of competence, (3) improving digital skills, (4) clarifying career direction through self-reflection, and (5) building communication skills and the courage to start.

All these strategies are the result of the real experiences of graduates when entering the workforce and facing various challenges at the beginning of their careers.

For some graduates, experience becomes the main foundation for being accepted in the workforce. Those who were involved early on in teaching activities through tutoring centers, private lessons, volunteering, or campus projects admitted that it was easier to receive job offers after graduation. JSQ emphasized that:

*“...PBI students really need to try various teaching experiences, whether in tutoring centers, volunteering, private lessons, etc. Because from my own experience, alhamdulillah, I received many offers because of the many experiences I went through...”*

Some participants emphasized the importance of formal legality, such as the educator certificate through PPG (Pendidikan Profesi Guru), as a requirement to work in public schools or be connected to the Dapodik (Data Pokok Pendidikan) system. This shows that, in addition to ability, professional status is also an important factor in careers in the education field.

CRF stated that:

*“...after completing your bachelor’s degree, you should not immediately start teaching at a school because you cannot be registered in Dapodik without a teaching certificate. So try to join the pre-service PPG first so that you can obtain this teaching certificate...”*

On the other hand, some participants stated that ability alone is not enough without concrete evidence. Portfolios, certificates, work outputs, and records of activities become very decisive elements when applying for jobs, both in education and non-education sectors.

NA highlighted that:

*“...if you are confident to say that I can do this, I can do that, you have to have a certificate, the proof. Because everywhere you apply for a job, people need your proof...”*

In addition, this research found that development strategies in the digital era are quite diverse. Some graduates emphasized the importance of digital skills, communication, and cross-field abilities so that English Education graduates have broader opportunities. About four out of ten graduates talked about this.

NAZ suggested that:

*”Graduates should improve their teaching skills, learn digital tools, and get practical experience. For non-education jobs, they can grow skills like communication and digital content because English is useful in many fields.”*

BM said that:

*“If you have good things in speaking skills, or writing, or listening, or maybe reading, I don't suggest you just focus on one skill... try to explore other skills.”*

MK highlighted that:

*“Trying to enrich your prior knowledge. So you can reach whomever you want as long as you know.....”*

RSP highlighted that:

*“In this era of technology, we are seeing a lot of problems with teachers and salary and I'm not blaming them. We can always depend on online jobs seeker or jobs seeker apps to find what suit us, and of course it's always good money....”*

Participants also highlighted that many graduates feel confused after graduating because they do not really know which career path they want to pursue. Therefore, establishing career goals from the beginning is considered a very important basic step.

AHJ stated that:

*“...the first thing we must do is truly identify what our main expertise is. After that, it should be developed as early as possible. Because throughout the process, we will definitely face failures, and the sooner we face those failures, the sooner we can grow. The sooner we fail, the faster the improvement process will be...”*

MS emphasized that:

*“...the most important first step is to determine career goals first. Many graduates feel confused because they do not truly know what they want to become, so every step feels like a mistake...”*

Based on the overall findings, it can be concluded that the career strategies of English Education graduates vary widely. Career success is not only determined by an academic degree, but is also greatly influenced by real experience, evidence of competence, the ability to adapt to industry needs, and the clarity of career direction from an early stage. By combining experience, soft skill development, technological mastery, and a strong portfolio, English Education graduates have greater opportunities to enter the workforce with more confidence, both in the education sector and in other relevant professional fields.

### **3. Strategies Employed to Adapt to Workplace Demands**

Entering the world of work requires English Education graduates to be able to adapt to skill demands that are different from academic life. At this transition stage, many graduates realize that their main capital does not only come from theoretical knowledge that they got from college years, but also from the ability to take active steps to overcome skill gaps and challenges

that arise in the workplace. Therefore, understanding the adaptation strategies used by the graduates becomes important to describe how they survive, grow, and are able to meet the demands of the professional world.

In general, the research findings show that the adaptation strategies of the graduates can be seen from four main tendencies. First, some participants took steps to continue improving their abilities through self-learning, professional training, or discussing with colleagues. Second, they used direct experience in the field to improve their working methods, especially in dealing with the challenges of teaching practice and classroom management. Third, some graduates emphasized the importance of mental health and maintaining personal boundaries as a form of strategy to survive in a demanding work environment. Fourth, male participants generally prioritized work flexibility, experience-based learning, and self-development that aligns with the continuously changing job opportunities. From the female side, the strategies they used were largely focused on increasing self-capacity and the ability to adapt.

JSQ stated that:

*“...as students who have graduated and will work in an institution, we must be able to adapt well. Then we also have to learn a lot...”*

CRF also said that:

*“The strategy that I use is learning again, such as joining the trainings available in Ruang Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan (GTK), which is a platform provided by the Ministry of Education to help teachers continuously improve their soft skills. Then after learning, I try to directly practice that knowledge in the classroom with the students, so it can be evaluated and improved again...”*

NA explained that:

*“I used to cry when I first taught... I think time. Time will heal you. Time will heal everything...”*

NAZ emphasized that:

*“I learned digital tools on my own and asked for feedback from senior teachers. I continued exploring various teaching platforms and applications so I could integrate them into my lessons more effectively...”*

BM argued that:

*“I prioritize my health and sanity... build good relationships... and create a comfortable working environment so we can go to work in a happy state.”*

AHJ explained that:

*“...the active steps that I took were mostly about adjusting my daily routines, looking for new meaningful activities, and developing myself professionally....”*

MS admitted that:

*“I learned everything by myself. It was all trial and error. When I first started the business, I tried many things. I learn from experience, from my mistakes, and that process gradually improves my skills. In business, we always try new ideas, test them, and see whether they work or whether the market actually wants them. That’s how I handled the skill gap...”*

MK said that:

*“...the strategy is never stop trying and always doing something that enriches your knowledge. Always exercise, always try to add more value to yourself...”*

AD expressed that:

*“...the steps I take are simpler and more toward maintaining my mental health. One of them is deleting or distancing myself from contacts that make my mind uncomfortable and are toxic...”*

RSP added that:

*“You need to convince yourself that you want and need these opportunities... with that conviction, you become braver and more focused.”*

Overall, these findings show that the adaptation strategies of English Education graduates are very diverse and influenced by the needs of each individual. The adaptation process not only requires skill improvement but also the ability to manage emotions, commitment to continuous learning, and mental readiness to face the realities of the working world. By combining formal learning, practical experience, mental health strategies, and consistent self-development, graduates have a greater chance of meeting job demands and growing within various professional contexts.

## **B. Discussion**

The main challenges faced by English Education graduates in navigating their careers in the world of work today can be seen from the difficulties they experience after graduation. The findings show that pursuing a career after graduation is challenging for English Education graduates. Graduates face difficulties such as bridging the gap between what they learned during college and professional demands, limited professional networks, high competition, and psychological pressure. These findings align with Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes that education, skills, and individual competencies serve as capital to enhance employability (Becker, 2020). In this case, the graduates' theoretical knowledge from micro-teaching and classroom instruction constitutes their human capital, but the lack of experience and networks limits its direct value in the job market.

The findings of this study also reveal differences in how male and female participants perceive career challenges. Male participants often explore non-linear career paths with their studies so far, whereas female participants experience relatively stable paths in the formal education sector. This difference shows that the environment and career goals influence how graduates perceive and handle challenges.

The findings also show that graduates have different views on how ready they are to face the workforce. Half of them feel fairly prepared, especially in communication, teamwork, and basic digital skills. However, the other half feel less prepared, particularly in public speaking, practical skills, and more complex

digital abilities. These findings support previous studies, which stated that many graduates still experience gaps between academic preparation and workplace demands, especially in terms of practical experience, soft skills, and digital literacy (Osman et al., 2023; Nadeem and Qamar, 2025). This also indicates that students' readiness is influenced not only by classroom learning but also by individual experiences, self-development, and exposure to practical activities during college.

From the perspective of Super's Career Development Theory (2020), the researcher selected participants aged 22–25, which, according to the theory, falls into the exploration stage. At this stage, graduates attempt to align their skills and interests with job market needs. Differences in perceptions of readiness indicate that the successful acquisition of skills depends on university support and active graduate participation in practical activities such as workshops, internships, or volunteering.

The findings also show that skill deficiencies can affect confidence and career choices. This emphasizes the importance of learning through experience and continuously improving skills. Eight out of ten graduates who actively developed themselves through training or professional activities reported that they could adjust more easily to working life because experience helped enhance their capabilities and compensate for previous skill gaps.

Career opportunities available for English Education graduates, both in the education sector and outside education, continue to expand along with changes in the world of work. The findings show that English Education graduates have access to various career opportunities beyond teaching roles. Within the education sector, graduates pursue roles as online tutors, course developers, and educational content creators, leveraging pedagogical knowledge and digital literacy. Outside the education sector, graduates engage in business as well as the sports industries. These findings align with Planned Happenstance Career Theory (Krumboltz, 2021), which emphasizes that career development is influenced by unplanned events and proactive exploration. Graduates who are

open to new opportunities and continue to refine their skills can capitalize on emerging chances.

English proficiency, complemented with certifications, licenses, and experience, serves as a key differentiator in accessing opportunities. The more skills and experience a person has, the greater their chances of success in the workforce. Graduates who actively hone their skills, build portfolios, and develop personal branding are better prepared to utilize available career opportunities.

The way graduates deal with the transition process from the academic world to the world of work can be seen through the adaptation strategies they apply and the obstacles they experience. The transition from campus to the professional world is complex, requiring adaptation to new environments, responsibilities, and expectations. All graduates applied various strategies, including gaining experience, strengthening digital competencies, maintaining mental health, and clarifying career goals.

Stress-Appraisal Theory by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) helps explain how graduates face the transition from academic life to the workforce. According to this theory, individuals perceive life changes and environmental demands as potential sources of stress depending on how they evaluate their ability to cope with them. In this study, graduates viewed post-graduation life as a challenging phase due to career uncertainty, social expectations, and changing job market demands. To manage these pressures, participants applied various coping strategies, such as learning new skills, building professional networks, and engaging in self-reflection, which helped them adapt more effectively to their new environment. The findings also showed differences in coping strategies between male and female participants. Male participants tended to emphasize practical experience and flexible learning, whereas female participants focused more on skill development and personal capacity enhancement.

This study also found that graduates who combine experience, mastery of skills, and professional portfolios can adapt more easily to the workforce. The findings indicate that higher education institutions should provide more

practical training and career guidance to help graduates navigate the transition more effectively and smoothly.

The study highlights that preparation must start early, in line with graduates' recommendations to set clear career goals. From the theories and research findings, it can be concluded that career success does not solely depend on academic achievement. Equally important factors are practical skills, active adaptability, and strategic utilization of experience and competencies in a constantly changing work environment.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part is the Conclusion, which summarizes this research. The second part consists of suggestions for this study.

#### **A. Conclusion**

This study aims to explore the experiences of English education graduates after completing their university years. This research focuses on identifying the challenges, opportunities, and career transition experiences encountered by English Education graduates in Aceh as they face an increasingly competitive and digitized job market. As discussed in the previous chapter, the findings indicate that the transition from the academic environment to the professional world is influenced by various factors, including competency readiness, experience, and the graduates' personal adaptability. Although English proficiency remains the main asset, this research emphasizes that such ability is not sufficient without the support of practical skills, experience, and well-directed career strategies.

The first conclusion relates to the main challenges faced by the graduates. Most participants highlighted the gap between the competencies learned on campus and the real demands in the field. Seven out of ten participants stated that skills such as classroom management, effective communication, confidence, and digital readiness were much more complex when applied in the work context compared to during microteaching or classroom learning. In addition, limited professional networks, high competition, especially with non-education graduates entering the teaching field through the PPG (Pendidikan Profesi Guru) route, and psychological pressures such as self-doubt also became significant obstacles. For participants applying abroad, such as through the WHV (Working Holiday Visa), administrative and regulatory barriers further complicated the process. These findings indicate that academic readiness needs to be strengthened with practical experience and mental preparedness. If

English education graduates want to “survive” in pursuing their careers, the suggestions offered by participants in this research are to strengthen themselves by obtaining more certificates or licenses, expanding networks, and broadening their experience. Do not bury yourself; start stepping out of your comfort zone, and do not hesitate to try anything.

The second conclusion shows that career opportunities for English Education graduates are now much wider and not limited to the teaching profession. Many new options are highly appealing for English Education graduates, such as online tutoring, educational content development, material writing, content creation, translation, interpretation, tourism and hospitality staff, remote work for foreign companies, and even entrepreneurship. The participants emphasized that certifications, portfolios, and proof of competence (such as TOEFL/IELTS, translation licenses, etc) are highly influential factors in determining competitiveness. Thus, opportunities are widely open, but can only be utilized by graduates who prepare themselves professionally and can identify and make use of available opportunities. The participants’ advice is that future English Education graduates should not close themselves off, but start opening up and seeking new things, as well as making use of the opportunities available. Opportunities are essentially abundant and appear unexpectedly, but only for those who are willing to keep learning and growing.

The third conclusion relates to the adaptation strategies and career transition approaches used by the graduates. Experience proved to be the most influential factor in easing the process of securing employment. Graduates who were involved in the workforce during their university years, such as tutoring, private teaching, educational volunteering, digital projects, or other activities, tended to obtain job offers more quickly. However, academic responsibilities should not be neglected due to being too busy working, because university learning remains important in shaping competent and competitive graduates. Besides experience, graduates emphasized the importance of documenting competencies, technological skills, public speaking, and the courage to take

small steps, even though the path is not always linear. Graduates who are more flexible and open to developing skills are better able to adapt and grow in their early professional stages.

Overall, this research concludes that the challenges faced by graduates arise from both internal and external factors. Internal factors include lack of confidence, limited practice, and confusion in determining career direction. External factors include a crowded job market, high qualification demands, rapid industrial development, and the nationally inadequate salary structure for teachers. However, the wide range of career opportunities shows that graduates still have great potential if they can adapt creatively and strategically.

## **B. Recommendation**

Based on the research findings regarding the challenges, opportunities, and career transition strategies of English Education graduates, several recommendations can be provided for the study program, students, future researchers, and other related stakeholders. This research found that graduates encounter various obstacles, ranging from skill gaps and limited experience to increasing competition and psychological pressures when entering the workforce. Therefore, strengthening a more practical and industry-responsive curriculum is essential to better prepare graduates to be competitive.

First, for the English Education Study Program, it is important to increase the portion of practical learning, especially in areas such as communication skills, public speaking, realistic classroom management practice, and digital literacy aligned with industry needs. The findings show that half of the participants still experience a gap between the theories taught on campus and the realities of the workplace. The study program is also encouraged to expand experiential learning activities such as more authentic microteaching, structured internships, ongoing workshops, and portfolio development to ensure that students possess evidence of competence before graduating. In addition, strengthening partnership networks with schools, the creative industry, and the hospitality sector can open broader career access for students.

Second, for students and prospective graduates, this study recommends building experience early through volunteering, working part-time as a course tutor, internships, or freelance projects. The findings in Chapter 4 reveal that graduates with practical experience enter the workforce more easily than those who rely solely on their degree. Furthermore, students are advised to begin preparing professional documents such as competency certificates (IELTS/TOEFL, PPG, or other professional licenses), portfolios, and personal branding to enhance their competitiveness. Strengthening cross-disciplinary skills such as digital content creation, copywriting, hospitality, or edutech can also open wider career opportunities beyond the education sector.

Third, for future researchers, it is recommended to expand the scope of research by involving a larger and more diverse number of participants. For example, comparing graduates who are already employed with those who are still developing their careers or searching for jobs. Additionally, further studies may explore other stages in Super's Career Development Theory in more depth, such as establishment, maintenance, and disengagement.

Finally, this research is expected to contribute to students, educational institutions, and policymakers in designing more precise strategies to improve the quality of English Education graduates. With the support of experience, digital skills, mental readiness, and strong portfolios, graduates will have greater opportunities to successfully enter the workforce, whether in the education sector or other relevant fields.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Appointment Letter of Supervisor



KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH  
NOMOR: 1434 TAHUN 2025

TENTANG:  
PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA  
DENGAN RAHMAT TUHAN YANG MAHA ESA

DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH

- Menimbang :
- bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh maka dipandang perlu menunjuk pembimbing skripsi;
  - bahwa yang namanya tersebut dalam Surat Keputusan ini dianggap cakap dan mampu untuk diangkat dalam jabatan sebagai pembimbing skripsi mahasiswa;
  - bahwa berdasarkan pertimbangan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam huruf a dan huruf b, perlu menetapkan Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.
- Mengingat :
- Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional;
  - Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen;
  - Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012 tentang Pendidikan Tinggi;
  - Peraturan Presiden Nomor 74 Tahun 2012 tentang perubahan atas peraturan pemerintah RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang pengelolaan keuangan Badan Layanan Umum;
  - Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014 tentang penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi;
  - Peraturan Presiden Nomor 64 Tahun 2013 tentang perubahan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
  - Peraturan Menteri Agama RI Nomor 44 Tahun 2022 tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
  - Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2022 tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
  - Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003 tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Depag RI;
  - Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/KmK.05/2011 tentang penetapan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai instansi pemerintah yang menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum;
  - Surat Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor 01 Tahun 2015 tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

#### MEMUTUSKAN

- Menetapkan :
- KESATU :
- Menunjuk Saudara  
**Dr. Nashriyah, M.A**  
Untuk membimbing Skripsi
- Nama : Nurul Alifah  
NIM : 220203003  
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
Judul Skripsi : Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities Faced by English Education Graduates in Pursuing Career Paths
- KEDUA : Kepada pembimbing yang tercantum namanya diatas diberikan honorarium sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku;
- KETIGA : Pembiayaan akibat keputusan ini dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor SP DIPA-025.04.2.423925/2025 Tanggal 02 Desember Tahun Anggaran 2025;
- KEEMPAT : Keputusan ini berlaku selama enam bulan sejak tanggal ditetapkan;
- KELIMA : Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan bahwa segala sesuatu akan dirubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya, apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam Surat Keputusan ini.

Ditetapkan di : Banda Aceh  
Pada tanggal : 16 Oktober 2025  
Dekan,

  
Saiful Muluk

#### Tembusan

- Seljen Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- Direjen Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- Direktur Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- Kantor Pelayanan Perbendaharaan Negara (KPPN), di Banda Aceh;
- Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
- Kepala Bagian Keuangan dan Akuntansi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
- Yang bersangkutan;
- Arsip.



## Appendix B

### *Recommendation Letter from the Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*



**KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH  
FAKULTAS TARBİYAH DAN KEGURUAN**

Jl. Syekh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh Telp/Fax. : 0651-752921

Nomor : B-8679/Un.08/FTK.1/TL.00/10/2025

Lamp : -

Hal : **Penelitian Ilmiah Mahasiswa**

Kepada Yth,

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry ; Alumni Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry dengan ini menerangkan bahwa:

NIM : 220203003

Nama : NURUL ALIFAH

Program Studi/Jurusan : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Alamat : Jeumpa puteh Silaturahmi Punge jurong

Saudara yang tersebut namanya diatas benar mahasiswa Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan bermaksud melakukan penelitian ilmiah di lembaga yang Bapak/Ibu pimpin dalam rangka penulisan Skripsi dengan judul **EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACED BY ENGLISH EDUCATION GRADUATES IN PURSUING CAREER PATHS**

Banda Aceh, 20 Oktober 2025

An. Dekan

Wakil Dekan Bidang Akademik dan Kelembagaan



Berlaku sampai : 28 November 2025

Prof. Dr. Buhori Muslim, M.Ag.

NIP. 197508152001121002

## Appendix C

### Confirmation Letter of Conducting Research



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY  
**FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN**  
**PRODI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS**  
Jln Syekh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh  
Email : [pbi.fik@ar-raniry.ac.id](mailto:pbi.fik@ar-raniry.ac.id). Website : <https://ar-raniry.ac.id>

#### **SURAT KETERANGAN**

Nomor: B-027/Un.08/PBI/Kp.01.2/1/2026

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Darussalam Banda Aceh menerangkan bahwa yang nama tersebut di bawah ini:

Nama : Nurul Alifah  
NIM : 220203003  
Prodi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
Alamat : Jl. Jeumpa Puteh No.18 Dusun Silaturrahmi

Benar telah melakukan pengumpulan data untuk penelitian pada Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh dalam rangka penyusunan Skripsi yang berjudul:

***"Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities Faced by English Education Graduates in Pursuing Career Paths"***

Demikianlah Surat Keterangan ini kami buat agar dapat dipergunakan seperlunya.

Banda Aceh, 12 Januari 2026  
Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris,

  
Syarifah Dahliana

## **Appendix D**

### *Informed Consent*

#### **Consent Form**

I hereby agree to participate in the research entitled:

**“Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities Faced by English Education Graduates in Pursuing Career Paths.”**

This research is conducted by:

**Research Name : Nurul Alifah**  
**Student ID : 220203003**  
**Department : English Education**  
**Institution : UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh**

I have been informed about the purpose and procedures of this research. I understand that:

1. My participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
2. I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without any consequences.
3. All information provided during the research will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes.
4. My identity will not be disclosed in any publication or report related to this study.

By signing this form, I indicate that I have read and understood the information above and voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

**Participant's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix E**

### *Interview Protocol and Questions*

#### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Research Title : Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities Faced  
by English Education Graduates in Pursuing  
Career Paths

Interviewer : Nurul Alifah

Name of the Interviewee :

Date of Interviewee :

Place of Interviewee :

This research focuses on the experiences and perceptions of English Education graduates in facing challenges and utilizing opportunities in building their careers after completing their studies in the English Education program. The purpose of this study is to explore how English Education alumni experience entering the workforce, to identify the various challenges they encounter, and to understand the opportunities and strategies they use.

The research data are collected through semi-structured interviews, which allow the researcher to obtain narratives about the graduates' experiences. This technique is chosen because it provides flexibility in exploring information while still referring to the research objectives. The interviews are conducted either face-to-face or online, depending on the participants' availability, and all conversations are recorded with the participants' consent for analysis purposes.

All data obtained are kept confidential and are used solely for research purposes in order to protect the participants' privacy. During the interviews, participants are asked to share their experiences since graduation, the process of job searching, the challenges they face, and how they utilize career opportunities both in the field of education and outside of it. Each interview is expected to last

approximately 40–45 minutes, with the possibility of follow-up questions to gain deeper insights into the participants' responses.

### **LIST OF QUESTIONS**

1. Could you please introduce yourself, mention the year you graduated from the English Education Department, and briefly describe your current activities as an English Education graduate?
2. Based on your experience, what were the biggest challenges you faced when first entering the job market or seeking a job after graduation?
3. Do you think your study program gave you enough non-teaching skills for your current job? If not, what skills do you think were missing?
4. Have you ever faced a problem with salary or career advancement because of your English Education background? Can you share your experience?
5. Aside from being a teacher or lecturer, what specific career paths do you think are most accessible or popular for English Education graduates today?
6. Based on your experience, what would you suggest to English Education students who want to build their future careers or explore jobs after they graduate? so they can be more ready to navigate their career paths after they graduate.
7. Can you tell me about your experience moving from university life to working life? Was it an easy transition
8. What strategies or active steps did you take to overcome the challenges or fill the skill gaps when you moved from university to the workplace?

## Appendix F

### *Sample of Interview Transcripts*

#### **Audio 1: NA**

Transcription of interview NA

Alifah	For the first question, could you please introduce yourself, mention the year you graduated from the English Education Department, and briefly describe your current activities as an English Education graduate?
NA	Okay, so my name is NA. You can call me N. I graduated from UIN Ar-Raniry in 2025. So this year, I am teaching as a classroom teacher at an elementary school in Lamjamee. Not a public school, but a private school.
Alifah	Okay, so you are a teacher in a private school. Is it part-time or full-time?
NA	This year, the first full-time.
Alifah	Okay, next Question, this is about the challenge you face. For the first question, based on your experience, what were the biggest challenges you faced when first entering the job market or seeking a job after graduation?
NA	I don't really face any challenges, I think, because I teach before I graduate. But specifically for English, because I'm not teaching English now at my school. I'm a homeroom teacher, I teach every lesson. But I also taught English for senior and junior high school, but as a course or private class. So, what the difficulty I face is seeking for students. Because for private class, we need specific students to teach. That's why looking for them is a little bit hard for me because I don't have any acquaintance or link to match with the students. So, I know some students and now they ask me, "Miss, can you teach us?" So, now I teach them. But the difficulty is maybe connection.
Alifah	Okay. I got it. Next question. Have you had any problems using your English education degree to find work outside the teaching field?
NA	As long as I teach English, because besides English, I got less, very less salary. But when I teach English, people paid me more.
Alifah	Next. In your opinion, what strategies or steps should English education graduates take to ensure their career path?
NA	It's hard to be an educational graduate nowadays because you don't know where to go. Except you have a very specific skill you really master since you are in the college and you have a certificate for that. The skill is not enough without certificate. So, if you are confident to say that I can do this, I can do that, you have to have certificate, the

	<p>proof. Because everywhere you apply for a job, people need your proof of your experience.</p> <p>What have you done when you are in the college? Where is the proof then? When you said you can do this, you can do that, where is the proof?. Even though we can show, we can write like, I used to take this subject and I learned this. I do this project with my lecturer. You have to cite. This is the project we did and this is the output. Like portfolio. Because everywhere, people will ask Where is the proof?</p>
Alifah	Really?
NA	Even though we can show, we can write like, I used to take this subject, and I learned this. I do this project with my lecturer. You have to cite. This is the project we did and this is the output. Like a portfolio.
Alifah	<p>Then we move to the next about career opportunities available for English education graduates.</p> <p>For the first question, aside from being a teacher or lecturer, what specific career paths do you think are most accessible or popular for English education graduates today?</p>
NA	Can I say something high?
Alifah	Yes, you can say everything here.
NA	You can be a diplomat, I think. Because you master and learn English, right? Not all people learn English. But when you have a very good English skill and also the proof that you have that kind of skill, you can apply for a diplomat job. I used to see a job vacancy, but you must have a good IELTS or TOEFL score. You need to communicate fully in English, you can write, read, listen, and speak. Even with only a bachelor's degree, you can still apply it. You don't need a master's degree. That's very interesting. But I don't have that kind of certificate, so I cannot apply.
Alifah	Even though we are only have bachelor degree? We don't need to have master degree or something?
NA	Yes, But you have to remember, this is not in the US or UK. This is in an embassy, an embassy where they don't speak English. So, they need someone who can speak English for them. I used to see diplomacy jobs in Thailand or Southeast Asian countries where they don't speak English.
Alifah	Wow, that's very interesting
NA	Yes
Alifah	<p>Okay, we move to the next question.</p> <p>Based on your experience, what would you suggest to English education students who want to build the future career or explore job after they graduate so they can be more so they can be more ready to navigate their career path after they graduate?</p>
NA	My suggestion, I think as your sister. My advice is from now, see what do you want. You have to be sure before you graduate. You have to make sure. Do you like teaching? If you like teaching, go for teaching.

	<p>Because students need a teacher who really loves teaching and not only share the knowledge, but also building their characters. Students really need that right now. And if you don't like teaching, find something you really really like. Because I found my friends, a lot of them, they're not really passionate in teaching, but they found something other jobs that they really really love. Like making content Or meeting people, any job that they can meet everyone in that job. They don't teach, but they do their best in their job. So find everything you like, find yourself. Even though you don't know what you want to be, you have to know what do you like. If you like teaching, go for that maybe you don't like teaching at school because we know, right? At school we are not appreciated. The salary is very low. We feel like we're tired of studying, and we're not appreciated anymore. Maybe you don't like teaching at school, you can teach private. If you like teaching, go for teaching everywhere you can teach.</p>
Alifah	Ah what a nice advice.
NA	Thank You
Alifah	This is the last part of my interviews about transition and adaptation process. Okay. For the first question, can you tell me about your experience moving from university life to working life? Was it an easy transition for you or you can share your experience?
NA	<p>For me, it is easy at the first time, but not as the time goes by. You have to be committed with yourself. You are not a student anymore. You are a teacher, so you have to go to school every day. You cannot like “miss I cannot come today because I am not feeling well”. You cannot say that anymore. Because we are the teacher. That kind of feeling is so hard.</p> <p>But when we first come to school, we're really, really excited, and we never have any reason not to attend the school. Because that our first time. But when we have taught for one, two, or three years, and then, oh, I feel bored. We always excited at the first time and then, in the middle of it, I don't know.</p>
Alifah	So, that's your challenge right now?
NA	Yeah, commitment.
Alifah	Maybe another challenge?
NA	Uh, I don't think any other. Myself is the challenge, not the environment.
Alifah	Okay, next question. What strategies or active steps did you take to overcome the challenge or fill the skill gaps when you move from university to the workplace?
NA	To be honest, I used to cry when I first taught. I think that's a normal thing. When I came to school and the students didn't listen to what I said in class, it was really difficult. In micro teaching classes at campus, it seemed so easy to manage students, basically because they were our own friends. But when it came to the real situation, it felt very different.

	And then, I think time helps. Time will heal you, time will heal everything. It's been two or three years, I think, and now I can handle students better than when I first started. I don't know what changed, or what is different between me now and before. I'm not sure. But now, they just listen to me.
Alifah	How did you manage your personal expectation like salary, work-life balance, and maybe your family expectation compared to the reality of your professional job?
NA	So, I expecting myself participate in PPG after graduating from university. But then, the PPG is closed. And also, now it's open again, but not for English teacher. My family expect me to have a good salary because I learn English, because they found English is precious. But then, in reality, teacher not pay that much, especially in Indonesia. It will be different if you teach abroad. They will pay you a lot.
Alifah	And maybe about work-life balance?
NA	To be honest, I'm an old soul. I'm part of Gen Z, but I have an old soul. I don't really find work-life balance that important, but health matters. As long as you're healthy and fit, that's what's important. So, don't work too much until you get sick.
Alifah	Last question from this interview. If you could go back to the moment you graduated, what is one key thing you would do differently to better prepare for your career?
NA	I would take more opportunities, and I would learn a lot of skills. I would also join a good community outside campus, and I would make more friends, because I didn't make many friends at school or on campus. I would want to make as many friends as possible.

## Audio 2: AHJ

Transcription of interview AHJ

Alifah	Today, I'm going to interview for my thesis title, 'Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities Faced by English Education Graduates and Those Pursuing Caterpillars.'  For the first question, could you please introduce yourself, mention the year you graduated from the English Education Department, and briefly describe your current activities as an English Education Graduate?
AHJ	Hello everyone, my name is AHJ. I graduated from PBI last February, and then my graduation ceremony was in May or something, I don't really remember. Currently, my activity is as a professional referee, I'm a football referee, and I'm the youngest national referee from Aceh this season 2025 and 2026.

Alifah	<p>Wow, nice to meet you.</p> <p>Maybe we can move to the main question. Based on your experience, what were the biggest challenges you faced when first entering the job market or seeking a job after graduation?</p>
AHJ	<p>Actually, my current job is not related to my expertise in English Education. I have been doing this job long before my university years. So, for this question, I want to explain it like this. For English Education students, if they have never tried or built skills in the field they want to pursue before entering the job market, they will need to start from the beginning. However, if they already have experience in a certain field and have mastered it before entering the job market, then having an English Education background can actually make things easier and even become an added value. If an English Education student enters the job market only with their degree and without any prior experience, they will have to start from zero. But if, before university, they were already involved in activities such as entrepreneurship, business, or other work experiences, and then they graduate as an English Education student, those experiences will still carry over. In that case, their entrepreneurial background can pull them into that field more easily.</p>
Alifah	<p>Ok, I got it. Next question, have you ever faced a problem with salary or career advancement because of your English education background? Can you share your experiences?</p>
AHJ	<p>In terms of salary, since I work in the field of entrepreneurship and sports, the income is basically the same. What makes it different is when there are tasks or positions that require more advanced English skills. In situations like that, I am usually prioritized and more frequently assigned because of my English proficiency. For example, during VAR (Video Assistant Referee) training, the use of English is very important because many technical terms cannot be translated into Indonesian. Terms such as offside, play on, advantage, and various other football language expressions. As an English Education graduate, this ability helps me a lot. People see that I graduated from English Education, so I am considered knowledgeable and able to serve as a bridge between external parties and Indonesians who need the program or my skills. That becomes added value. As for salary, my salary is fixed and does not change. However, when I receive additional jobs outside my main tasks</p>

	that require my English skills, I usually get extra pay. So it works like pocket money or extra income outside my regular salary.
Alifah	Oh, interesting, the power of our English skill makes us can be in various sectors
AHJ	Yes, you're right
Alifah	Next Question. In your opinion, what strategies or steps should an English education graduate take to ensure their career paths?
AHJ	In my opinion, as graduates of English Education, the first thing we must do is truly identify what our main expertise is. After that, it should be developed as early as possible. Because throughout the process, we will definitely face failures, and the sooner we face those failures, the sooner we can grow. The sooner we fail, the faster the improvement process will be. As an example, I personally have had a professional certificate since 2018. I had already been working in that profession long before I graduated from the English Education program. I continued working in that profession until I completed my degree. When I was already working professionally and my name started to become known in that profession, my identity as a PBI student became an added value for me. People saw me as a 'PBI student' who already had real experience. However, if someone enters the job market with only a PBI degree, then they will start everything from zero. They have to begin from the beginning again, and the process will be more difficult. For example, if they want to take the civil servant exam, PAPK, SIPS, the attorney office exam, or P3K. All of those must be learned from zero: SKD, TIU, National Insights, and they must compete with high school graduates up to master's or doctoral graduates. The only advantage lies in the status as an S1 PBI graduate, but that advantage cannot truly be used if it is not accompanied by experience and a continuous process. So they still have to start from the beginning together with the other participants.
Alifah	What a nice explanation.
AHJ	Yes, thank you for appreciating.
Alifah	Next. Aside from being a teacher or lecturer, what specific career paths do you think are most accessible or popular for English Education graduates today?

AHJ	<p>So, you can actually look for professional licenses that can give you added value in your career. For example, saving up to obtain a professional translator license. In HPI (Himpunan Pramuwisata Indonesia) English proficiency is also required, so English Education graduates have strong opportunities there. But you also need capital to take those certifications. Aside from translating jobs, opportunities that are currently quite popular among English graduates include tour guiding and jobs in the hospitality sector, such as MCs or flight attendants. However, all of these still require professional and well-structured English skills. So you cannot jump in without certification. If you only offer side services like translating without a professional license, that work cannot be scalable, it cannot grow or be upgraded as a business. The demand for professional translation services is also increasing, such as sworn translators. But in Aceh, there are almost none; if I'm not mistaken, only one near the Wali Nanggroe office. Even this week, several people contacted me for sworn translation services, but I don't have the license, so I couldn't take the job. This shows that there is a gap: the demand exists, but the supply does not. And such a gap actually becomes a major opportunity.</p>
Alifah	<p>Super interesting, but do you think that the future English graduate can pursue their career like you too, as a football referee?</p>
AHJ	<p>Yes, they can. But they have to ask themselves. I personally can build a career as a football referee. But again, everything has its requirements. For example, are you able to run 3 kilometers in 12 minutes? I can even reach 3.2 kilometers. Then, are you able to run nonstop for 90 minutes on the field? Are you able to maintain an ideal body weight? If your height is 160 cm, your weight cannot be 70 or 60 kilograms; it must be around 50 kilograms so that you are not overweight. So I focus more on physical readiness like that. The S.Pd degree does provide credibility, but it is technical ability that truly determines everything. People also often ask, "Where did you graduate from?" I answer, "I graduated from PBI at UIN Ar-Raniry." Then they ask about English proficiency, such as TOEFL scores. English is still an added value, but for the teaching profession, I personally do not recommend it. Teaching is a very noble job, but it is not for me. For me, teaching is only a part-time job. That is why I always encourage friends to look at other industries. Do not be fixated on only one option. There are many industries that you can enter. For example, the sports industry. The fields are diverse, badminton, football, futsal, and so on. But the context of the country also influences</p>

	<p>opportunities. In Indonesia, football is very popular. So it comes back to ourselves: where do we want to build a career, what do we want to do, and how do we map out that career direction. Teaching can still be a choice, but only as a second or third option.</p>
Alifah	<p>Ah, ok, I got it. Maybe we can move to the next question</p> <p>Based on your experience, what would you suggest to English Education students who want to build their future careers or explore jobs after they graduate? so they can be more ready to navigate their career paths after they graduate.</p>
AHJ	<p>First, you have to identify what you are good at and what you are really passionate about and enjoy. Don't limit yourself only to teaching careers, and don't trap yourself inside the campus environment. There are many things outside of campus that provide you, well, not "provide," but that actually exist and are open for you. You need to step out of that space. Because currently, I dare to say, briefly, that teaching is a part-time job right now. Teaching is not the main search for English graduates anymore. There are so many teachers out there who are unemployed. That's why you have to see teaching as a part-time option. But you also need a life, you need to live, you need to survive. So, you have to survive. By survive, I mean you have to work your ass off if I may say it bluntly. The point is do whatever you can do.</p>
Alifah	<p>Can you tell me about your experience moving from university life to working life. Was it an easy transition? Or did you face any challenges?</p>
AHJ	<p>Because maybe I already said before, I have been doing what I am doing now even before I became a university student. So, the transition was not too heavy. You could say the transition was relatively easy because my activity pattern had actually been formed since long ago. The difference is, in the past I woke up early to go to campus, now I wake up early to prepare for jogging as part of my routine training. I also need to prepare myself for the afternoon match, or even the match the following week. That's the only shift. After the match as well, if previously I might go back to campus for afternoon classes, now I focus on recovery run, doing warm-up and cool-down, and light exercises after competing. So, the change in activities is more about physical and schedule adjustments, not a truly drastic change. In my opinion, there is no significant challenge in this transition because I have started</p>

	<p>everything since before entering university. My current activities are simply a continuation of what I have been doing for years.</p>
Alifah	<p>How did you manage your personal expectations (e.g., salary, work-life balance) compared to the reality of your first professional job?</p>
AHJ	<p>When I moved from university to the workplace, I realized that I needed to take several active steps to adapt and fill the skill gaps. So, the active steps that I took were mostly about adjusting my daily routines, looking for new meaningful activities, and developing myself professionally. For example, since I had a lot of free time compared to when I was still going to campus every morning, I started to build new habits. I used my mornings not only for jogging but also for having coffee and managing my small business. That was one of the first things I did, using my free time to explore new responsibilities outside the academic environment. Another important step was continuing my education. I decided to take a Master's degree because, like I said earlier, teaching is a part-time job for me. So whenever there are opportunities that involve teaching or translation work, I will take them seriously. But at the same time, I understand that I need to keep improving academically and professionally to strengthen my qualifications. I also learned to balance my main income source with part-time teaching or translating. For example, when I had a tournament in Malang and had to stay there for 12 days, I couldn't teach offline because I needed full focus on the matches. To overcome that challenge, I switched to online jobs that I could still manage remotely, such as online translating or online teaching. Those kinds of jobs gave me flexibility and still allowed me to stay productive even when I was away.</p>
Alifah	<p>Last question. In your opinion, if you could go back to the moment you graduated, what is one key thing you would do differently to better prepare for your career?</p>
AHJ	<p>I would try to save money, and I would use that money to get other professional licenses as soon as possible. Even in the first or second semester, I would already take additional licenses, not just a referee license. I would want to take a certified translator license and also a hospitality license. For hospitality, I would focus more on areas related to cruise ships, because in Sabang, hospitality is a high-paying job. So, I would start searching for those opportunities earlier. I realized it too late, around the fourth or fifth semester, when I found out about hospitality courses. Ideally, I would start from the first semester, or even</p>

before entering university. That way, when opportunities come, I would already be prepared and ready to take them.

## Appendix G

### *Research Documentation*

