

## A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF STUDENTS' SCHOOL ENGLISH FINAL EXAM SCORES

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### Abstract

This study was a descriptive study about the students' school final exam scores. To see the students' scores, this study used documentation techniques which was schools' archives of the students' scores in three academic years, 2011/2012, 2012/2013, and 2013/2014. There were five areas taken as samples. They were Palembang, Ogan Komering Ilir, Ogan Ilir, Musi Banyuasin, and Banyuasin. In each area, the writer took five schools as samples and five scores in every academic year. Then, the scores from each school were calculated into average and put into categories of scores. The categories were worst, bad, moderate, good, and very good. It was found that there were only 76% schools implemented English as the local content subjects and the other 24% implemented cooking class or arts class as local content subject. The students' school final exam scores of English were mainly categorized as in good category. And, there was one school categorized as in very good category. The highest average score was 8,14 and the lowest average score was 7,04.

Keywords: Descriptive Study, Documentation, and English Scores

### 1. Introduction

Language plays an important role in human's life. It is used as a media of expressing ideas, opinions, and communicating. However, the communication would be harmful enough when the speakers are limited to certain linguistics background. For instance, an American tourist gets lost after asking an Indonesian 'how to get a post office on foot?', it is due to Indonesian inability to give proper direction when she/he uses English as the tool of communication. This above example, actually, will not exist if the two parties – speaker and listener – are able to show their linguistic competencies in the same language. Therefore, some languages are used as world's language where different linguistic background speakers can communicate well, namely *Lingua Franca*. As Holmes (1996: 86) stated that "the term *lingua franca* describes a language serving as a regular means of communication between different linguistic groups in a multilingual speech community".

World-wide used *lingua franca* is English. People, globally, do businesses, schools, and meetings in written and spoken English. Therefore, Indonesians are demanded to be able to use world-wide used *lingua franca* when they want to be credited globally. To support this objective, the government of Indonesia had been fully attentive toward the English teaching process at schools. The government believed that the earlier someone learns language, the better results will be. So, they obliged all schools to have English as an additional lesson for primary schools and as a main lesson for secondary schools. In addition, university students will have their English lesson for at least two credits during their study. Not only government but also learners' parents are working hard to mediate their children to have better knowledge in English. The parents enroll their children to some English courses in order to have enough "practice time" with their teachers and friends. They also encourage their children by giving them DVDs and CDs of English songs and films. However, the learner themselves, sometimes, are motivated to have more practice for their English so that they enroll themselves in English clubs at schools or universities.

Teachers are also giving more advantages to their students if they can share their knowledge properly. Unfortunately, I found, in my previous study (2014), that there were 32% of English teachers at primary schools in South Sumatera were not graduated from English Study Program as their Bachelor background. And, there were only 68% of English teachers at primary schools in South Sumatera were graduated from English Study Program as their education background.

Seeing this phenomenon of teachers education background to public primary schools, I feel encouraged to see the students' scores for their English lesson in their final examination and probably some reasons behind the future results gotten.

### 7. Methods

#### 1.1. Place of Study

This study was done in South Sumatera where Palembang is its capital city. This study took five areas in South Sumatera as samples, i.e. two cities and three districts. They were *Palembang*, *Ogan Ilir*, *Ogan Komering Ilir*, *Musi Banyuasin*, and *Banyuasin*. In each area, it had many public



and private primary schools. As data taken from Education Department of South Sumatera, it was recorded that those five areas had 2313 schools (1903 public primary schools and 410 private primary schools). The detail information can be seen as this table below:

Table 1. Primary Schools Distribution in South Sumatera

No	Area	Primary Schools		Total
		Public	Private	
1	Kota <sup>^</sup> Palembang	271	189	460
2	Kota <sup>^</sup> Ogan Ilir	258	28	286
3	Kabupaten <sup>^^</sup> Banyuasin	480	65	545
4	Kabupaten <sup>^^</sup> Musi Banyuasin	432	56	488
5	Kabupaten <sup>^^</sup> Ogan Komering Ilir	462	72	534
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1903</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>2313</b>

Taken from: Education Department of South Sumatera

<sup>^</sup>: city and <sup>^^</sup>: district

This study only focused on public primary schools. This is because private schools have better finance to hire English teachers. Meanwhile, public primary schools have limited access to use their finance since it has already some posts based on government rules.

### 1.2. Sampling

Not all areas and schools were taken as samples due to my time and financial limit. However, I tried to have representative data from applying limitation of sampling techniques. They were (1) the samples area taken were the one which was closely located to the capital city of Palembang, (2) the samples area taken were the one which had mostly similar facility, and (3) the samples area taken were the one which might apply English as their local content subject at schools.

To meet those three limitations, I used purposive sampling technique. As (Freankel & Wallen: 1991, 139) stated that "purposive sampling was a technique to take samples from population based on researcher's purposes" and then, to determine the schools, I randomly selected the schools which can be used as samples. I just took five public schools in each area. Therefore, there were twenty five public schools in total, as samples, for this study. In each school, I took five students' scores randomly started from 2011/2012 academic year up to 2013/2014 academic year.

### 1.3. Data Collection and Analysis

This study majorly used documentation technique to collect the data. I came to schools to copy the students' final scores at schools. After obtaining the data in each academic year, I calculated the average scores.

Table 2. English Scores Classification

No	Average Scores	Category
1	8,1 – 10	Very Good
2	6,1 – 8,0	Good
3	4,1 – 6,0	Moderate
4	2,1 – 4,0	Bad
5	0 – 2,0	Worst

Then, the average scores were classified into some categories worst, bad, moderate, good, and very good. The scores classification can be seen in Table 2.

## 8. Results and Discussion

### 1.4. English at Schools

It was found that there only nineteen schools out of twenty five schools as samples which implemented English as their local content subjects. Meanwhile, the other six schools implemented cooking class, fishing class, and art class as their local content subjects.

All primary schools in Palembang, Sekayu, and Banyuasin implemented English as their local content subjects. Two out of five schools in Ogan Komering Ilir did not have English and four out of five in Ogan Ilir did not have English too.



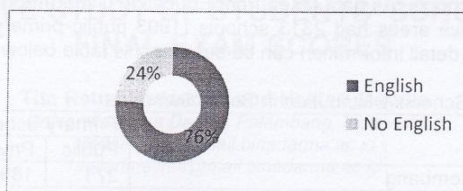


Figure 1. English at schools in South Sumatera

These findings can be represented into percentage as seventy six percent (76%) public primary schools in South Sumatera have English as their local content subjects and twenty four percent (24%) public primary schools did not have English as their local content subject. It can be seen in Figure 1., the detail of the percentage different.

### 1.5. Students' English Scores

Students' English scores were taken from nineteen schools which implemented English as their local content subjects. Each academic year contributed five scores; this study took scores from three academic years. Therefore, every school contributed fifteen scores to be counted its average scores. The detail average scores could be seen on this Figure 2.

Primary schools in Palembang were classified into (a). SDN 128 Palembang, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as as good (7,43), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as as good (7,18), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as as good (7,08). (b). SDN 43 Palembang, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as as good (7,40), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as as very good (8,30), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as as good (7,75). (c). SDN 96 Palembang, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as as very good (8,24), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as as good (7,86), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as as good (8,08). (d). SDN 95 Palembang, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as as good (7,58), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as as good (7,52), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as as very good (8,26). (e). SDN 78 Palembang, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as as good (7,94), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as as good (6,46), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as as good (7,8).

Students' average scores in Banyuasin were (a). SDN 28 Banyuasin, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,47), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (7,23), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as good (7,35). (b). SDN 11 Banyuasin, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,28), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (7,76), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as good (6,74). (c). SDN 39 Banyuasin, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,28), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (7,02), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as good (6,82). (d). SDN 14 Talang Kelapa, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as very good (8,31), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as very good (8,31), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as good (6,90). (e). SDN 6 Talang Kelapa, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,08), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (7,09), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as good (7,25).

Students' average scores in Musi Banyuasin were (a). SDN 6 Sekayu, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,05), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (6,34), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as very good (8,60). (b). SDN 7 Sekayu, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,33), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (6,92), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as good (7,26). (c). SDN 2 Sekayu, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,16), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (7,61), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as good (7,62). (d). SDN 1 Sekayu, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,17), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (7,29), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as good (7,61). (e). SDN 11 Sekayu, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,18), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (7,30), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as very good (8,93).

Students' average scores in Ogan Komering Ilir were (a). SDN 3 Kayuagung, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,46), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (7,24), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as good (7,76). (b). SDN 14 Kayuagung, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (8,00), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as very good (8,22), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as very good (8,20). (c). SDN 22 Kayuagung,



academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,83), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (7,68), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as good (7,88).

Students' average scores in Ogan Ilir were (a). SDN 2 Indralaya Utara, academic year 2011/2012 categorized as good (7,27), academic year 2012/2013 categorized as good (7,52), academic year 2013/2014 categorized as good (7,31).

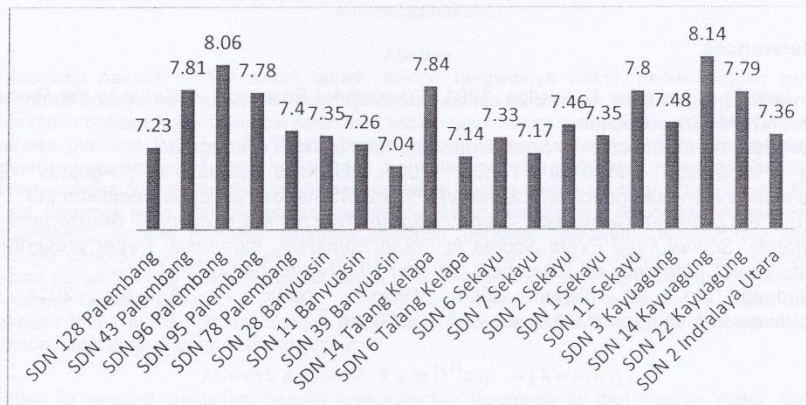


Figure 2. Average Scores of English

The above Figure 2 shows the total averages of scores obtained. The highest average score was 8,14 (SDN 14 Kayuagung) and the lowest score was 7,04 (SDN 39 Banyuasin). In general, all students' scores were classified into good and very good categories.

#### 1.6. Interpretation

From the data obtained, it was found that there were only 76% schools in South Sumatera implemented English. This was not school mistake since the Government of Indonesia had controlled this through its policy in UU No. 20 Year 2003 about National Education System, and subsidized by PP No. 19 Year 2005 about National Education Standard.

By seeing the policy, local government has an authority for their regional education program. In relation to English as local content subject, local government has their own choices, based on their needs, to select what kind of subject implemented for their schools. Usually, local government would have local content subject which would contribute to the regional economic and tourism development. For example, in Ogan Ilir, most of schools have cooking class and art class as their local content subjects. It was in line with their local government purposes which is boosting their tourism aspects through its culinary and handicraft product. The government thinks that for this time being they do not really focus on English yet since learning English can be done at English course outside the schools. And, their targets are still domestic visitors.

Seeing the students' English scores is a surprising one. It seems the students have no problems with their English. They were mostly classified into good category. However, these scores could not become the only one indicator that English in South Sumatera has no problems at all. I still found there were some students struggling with their English when they have an English class with me in university. I myself wonder whether the scores obtained were purely from their ability or to fill the standard scores from government.

Therefore, I think this study could not be ended up to this point only. There should be further research to see what reasons behind the findings. However, the only reason gotten, from brief interview with the students, was they also enrolled themselves into English course.

#### 9. Conclusion

It can be concluded that Regional Education Department does not oblige their primary schools to implement English as their local content subject and give schools choices to fulfill regional needs. There was 76% schools in South Sumatera implemented English as local content subject and 24% schools had no English at their schools. In general, students' scores final examinations in South Sumatera were categorized as in good level.

**10. Acknowledgement**

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