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## Mapping the English Proficiency of Junior High School English Teachers Across Riau Province

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims at getting a solid map of standard English Proficiency possessed and used by Junior High School English teachers throughout Riau Province, which covers Listening, Structure, Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension. The indicators of the standard English Proficiency are scores (high, moderate, and low) obtained by English teachers in TOEFL test. The subjects of the research are all Junior High School English teachers throughout Riau Province (613 teachers), all of whom become the research samples. The research instrument is TOEFL Equivalent intended to get a solid map of standard English Proficiency of the teachers. Research data were comprehensively analyzed to describe the English Proficiency of the teachers based on seven factors; gender, employment status, level of education, University alma mater, length of teaching period, attended trainings, and ethnics. By and large, data analysis results in the followings: a) English Proficiency of male English teachers is better than that of female ones, each of whose average scores are 407,8 – 391,4, b) English Proficiency of Non Civil Servant teachers is a bit higher than that of those Civil Servant ones, each of whose average scores are 392,16 and 393,9, c) The higher the level of education of the teachers, the higher or the better their English Proficiency, d) English Proficiency of teachers graduated from State University is better than that of those from Private University, whose average scores are 399,1 and 378,6, e) English Proficiency of the teachers teaching between the periods 1 up to 10 years is the highest (average score 401.7), followed by the teachers whose teaching period is between 11 and 20 years, then 21 up to 30 years and the last or the worst are those whose teaching period is above or longer than 31 years, f) English Proficiency of the teachers who have ever attended training on English is better than that of those who have not, each of whose average scores are 396.3 and 380.9, g) English Proficiency of Javanese English teachers is the best among the other ethnics, whose average score is 421.7, and then Malay English teachers, whose average score is 392.6, and then followed by Batak English teachers whose average score is 369.6, and the last is the English teachers from Minang ethnic, whose average score is 329.8. It can be inferred that the English Proficiency of Junior High School English teachers throughout Riau Province is generally below the expected target for their average score is still less than 450.

**Keywords:** *English Proficiency and TOEFL Equivalent.*

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### Introduction

English is a language most students are interested in today. However, teachers teaching it still has so many weaknesses, especially those concerning both the ways they teach and the mastery of the materials, which makes students uninterested in learning it most of the time.

In one hand, students are expected to be active and effective in learning how to learn English by themselves and teachers are required to be able to facilitate them. Unfortunately, English teachers, especially those with in adequate experience, often dominate and monopolize the learning activities. In this case, if the teachers know and apply teaching language principles,

their everyday classroom teaching will be better.

Another problem deals with the use of basic or everyday English, which is surrounded with mistakes. The researcher observed and found out such mistakes in training and education program for junior high school English teachers in the year 2013 and 2014. The teachers still misused such basic expressions as: *please you stand up, please you write, different with*, etc. They didn't even realise these silly linguistic mistakes in the use of standard and acceptable English.

Also, the teachers are often found to have problem concerning appropriate choice of words in context. For instant, *he is making homework*, instead of *he is doing homework*, and *she is looking for money*, instead of *she is earning money*.

Besides, the teachers' intonation, which is 'rising intonation' in Indonesian language especially in questions, is mostly used in English for similar purpose, while English uses 2 3 3 4 intonation whose ending is 'falling intonation'. For these reasons, the researcher would like to conduct a research entitled "Mapping the English Proficiency of Junior High School English Teachers through Riau Province".

## A. Literature Review

### 2.1. State of the Art

A number of related studies were collected and grouped into two categories, namely things related to 'receptive skills' (listening, reading, structure and vocabulary) and 'productive skills' (speaking and writing).

#### 2.1.1. Receptive Skills

##### 2.1.1.1 Listening

Akilandeeswar, K (2011) in his research concludes that the process of listening for

developing a concept, intended to facilitate teachers to be good at English proficiency and ready for academic purposes, they must have actual knowledge to enable them to catch and understand the information and the contextual meanings both in an oral or written communication. He adds that to reach this end, teachers should be consistently prepared to get a success academically.

Fakhri Ras (2012) also points out in his research that listening ability might be able to be improved by the following strategies; 1) a listener or a student is required to observe the speaker's utterances in terms of vocabulary and to listen to them thoroughly, 2) a listener or a student tries to enrich the obtained vocabulary, and practices them with the native speakers of the language, as well as any conversations in English, and 3) a listener or a student attends and follow listening class actively.

##### 2.1.1.2 Reading

Yousif Alshumaimeri (2011), in his research, formulates a process of reading which is better resulted from trainings rather than merely from instructional information or through learning methods used to communicate meanings implicitly contained in written symbols of texts. Mohammad Bagher Shabani (2013) states that an individual or personal reading strategy in comprehending main ideas of a text, in activating relevant schemata, in focusing attention to important ideas, in making assessment, and in making conclusions, seems to have bigger possibility for better and effective readers.

Fakhri Ras (2012) makes an inference dealing with reading strategies; 1) make reading any texts a routine activity as long as they are in English, such as newspapers, comics, magazines, novels and other

sources, and answer the questions in the texts; 2) read any novels or articles written in English to improve the ability of reading with low frequency vocabulary, and 3) read any English texts much more anywhere, anytime, not only at school but also outside and try to comprehend their content again and again.

#### 2.1.1.3 Structure

According to Jianyun Zhang (2009) English structure is better learned by making analyses than any other learning styles. But when the learner's purpose is to use English accurately and fluently, then he needs to accept the linguistic rules. Abdu Mohammed Al-Mekhlafi (2011) puts forward his research findings to be implemented; 1) EFL curriculum and the teaching materials should be based on the learners background knowledge and teachers difficulties, in order that the guidance given to them is proportionally and sufficiently helpful in making lesson plans for classroom teaching and learning activities. It is a solution in overcoming such teaching and learning hindrances as mentioned above; 2) Morelli (2003: 33-34) states that English learners should be provided with the structure knowledge of the language by using various methods and approaches in accordance with their individual learning styles. In other words, teachers should also consider attitudes and perception before making a decision about how to teach the learners the topic of structure; 3) EFL teachers have to teach with well-prepared instructional plan in terms of classroom activities and management in an attempt to solve the learners problems and, 4) teachers have to be able to serve their learners in such a way that they become interested not only to study by themselves the content materials

but also the ways to cope with their learning difficulties.

#### 2.1.1.4 Vocabulary

Ghazali Bin Mustapha (2011) states that vocabulary is also an important aspect of language. Meanwhile, learners usually have a lack of it that might also contribute. In his research about 'vocabulary', Ghazali (2011) further notes that vocabulary is, in fact, one of challenging aspects to which English teachers should pay more attention in their everyday classroom teaching process. Another relevant research, Jihyun Nam (2010) summarizes four strategies effective to teach vocabulary; 1) teaching English by using visual media such as pictures can not only enrich the number of the vocabulary of the learners but also make them stay longer in the learners memory; 2) Translating the learners first language (L1), as seen in the pictures can also promote their second language vocabulary, 3) Involving learners in developing or promoting vocabulary contributes very much. The learner's involvement can be in the forms of composition writing, storytelling and, 4) assigning learners to do other vocabulary-focused tasks through various activities can also promote their vocabulary. Similar to the research finding of Jihyun Nam (2010), mentioned above, Fakhri Ras (2012) describes several strategies to develop learners' vocabulary mastery; 1) translate words in the reading texts, find difficult words along with their equivalences, study and memorize many more new vocabulary; 2) read any English texts from various resources; and 3) study the new words found in the texts frequently.

### 2.1.2. Production skills

#### 2.1.2.1 Speaking

FakhriRas (2012) found three strategies for speaking ability development; 1) speak English with friends, family members, or with anyone else, who speaks English, practice a lot and, ask for better pronunciation; 2) communicate in English with friends, English teachers, family members and if possible with native speakers of the language; 3) use only English in the moments of discussion, and 4) make an approach to English teachers who speak English fluently to practice English with.

#### 2.1.2.2 Writing

Nurchasanah&Widodo (1993), define writing as a process of expressing information, ideas and feeling in written form based on certain linguistic aspects in accordance with those used by speakers. In addition, BudySetyono (2014), describes three concepts for writing ability development: 1) writing is following certain rhetorical styles, 2) writing reflects accurate structure and grammar, and 3) writing is an organized activity. FakhriRas (2012) states that writing ability might be able to be develop or improved by the following strategies; 1) write daily note book in English, take a part in English composition competition, and writereports or stories in English; 2) read English texts from various sources, 3) write English sentences using culturally polite words and study kinds of genres as well.

### 2.2. First-Stage Study and Its Proceedings

What has been carried out in the first stage study was data collection from junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province, the participants of PLPG (Professional Training) in 2013 and 2014, concerning English proficiency, especially on 'listening' and 'structure or

grammar'. The results were as follows: 1) 'listening' and 'structure or grammar' ability of most junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province was still very far behind standard, especially in advanced level; 2) the majority of English teachers throughout Riau Province still made silly mistakes in constructing simple sentences, not to mention compound and complex sentences; and 3) the majority of English teachers throughout Riau Province translated Indonesian into English using the structure of Indonesian language or mother tongue. In other words, the teachers were more impressed by their own language rules, structures and vocabulary. For instant "as we know", instead of "it is known that", 'where is your address' instead of 'what is your address?', 'I want to be success' instead of 'I want to be successful' (FakhriRas, 2014).

## Methodology

### 3.1. Research Location

The research was conducted in junior high schools throughout Riau Province.

### 3.2. Research Subjects

The subjects of the research were all junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province, as many as 613 teachers, The Office of Riau Province Educational Services (2015), all of whom were becoming the sample of the research

### 3.3. Research Instrument

- 3.3.1. TOEFL Equivalent test. It was used to get the map of English proficiency of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau. (first-stage study)

- 3.3.2. Recorded English speaking activities in classroom of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province, intended to use for mapping the speaking ability of the English teachers (second-stage study)
- 3.3.3. Short story writing or simple text writing. It is intended to use for mapping the writing ability of the English teachers of junior high school throughout Riau Province. (third-stage study)

## Results and Discussion

### 1.1. Results

As a whole, the result of data analysis informs the English Proficiency of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province based on 7 factors: gender, employment status, level of education, university alma mater, length of teaching period, attended trainings and ethnics. By and large, the data profile is as follows:

**Table. 4.1. Data description on English Proficiency Based on Gender**

gender		total	average		Rate
M	F		M	F	
<b>71</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>407,8</b>	<b>391,4</b>	<b>399,6</b>

Table above shows points related to: the number of male English teachers of junior high schools is much fewer than that of female ones (71 – 542). Male English teachers have better English Proficiency, whose average score is 407,8 – 391,4. So,

in average, the English Proficiency of the English teachers of Junior high school in Riau Province is 399,6. This means that their English Proficiency (listening, Structure and Reading Comprehension) still needs to be improved.

**Table I. 4.2. Data Description on English Proficiency Based on Employment Status**

Employment Status		Total	Average		Rate
PNS	Non PNS		PNS	Non PNS	
<b>386</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>392,16</b>	<b>393,9</b>	<b>392,5</b>

Table above indicates that the number of civil servant English teachers is bigger than that of those private ones. The number of civil servant English teachers is 386 and the private ones is 227. In terms of their English Proficiency, private teachers is better than the civil servants, whose

average score is 392,16 and 393,9. In other words, the English proficiency of English teachers (both Public civil and private servants) of Junior high school in Riau Province is still below the expected standard and needs to be improved in many ways in the future.

**Table. 4.3. Data Description on English Proficiency Based on Level of Education**

Level of Education				total	average				Rate
D2	D3	S1	S2		D2	D3	S1	S2	
<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>374,7</b>	<b>392,86</b>	<b>407,5</b>	<b>386,77</b>

Referring to the table above, it is known that the number of English teachers of junior high school throughout Riau Province, in relation to their level of education, is as follows: D2 = 6, D3 = 9, S1 = 554 and S2 = 44 persons. It means that the number of teachers of S1 level is much

bigger than those of any other levels. The English Proficiency of the teachers seems to be linear related with their level of education. In other words, the higher their level of education, the better the English Proficiency of the teachers.

**Table. 4.4. Data Description on English Proficiency Based on Alma Mater University**

Alma Mater University		total	Average		Rate
PTN	PTS		PTN	PTS	
<b>441</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>399,1</b>	<b>378,6</b>	<b>388,85</b>

Table above indicates that the number of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province, graduated from state university is bigger than those from private one, 441 persons and 172 persons. The English Proficiency of teachers graduated from state university is better than those from private university, whose

average score is 399,1 and 378,6. This indicates that English Proficiency of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province graduated from both state and private university also needs to be improved for it is still below expected standard.

**Table. 4.5. Data Description on English Proficiency Based on Length of Teaching Period**

Teaching Period				total	Average				Rate
1 up to 10 years	11 up to 20 years	21 up to 30 years	Above 31 years		1 up to 10 years	11 up to 20 years	21 up to 30 years	Above 31 years	
<b>167</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>401,7</b>	<b>393,2</b>	<b>388,3</b>	<b>373,7</b>	<b>389,25</b>

Table above shows that the number of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province, who have been teaching for 1 up to 10 years is 167 persons, for 11 up to 20 years is 272 persons, for 21 up to 30 years is 129 persons and for 30 years or more is 45 persons. In fact, the majority of the teachers have been teaching English for 21 years up to 30 years. When connected with English Proficiency, it is known that teachers teaching for 1 up to 10 years is the best,

whose average score is 401.7, followed by those teaching for 11 up to 20 years, then those from 21 up to 30 years and the last are those teaching from 31 years or more. So, based on the length of teaching period, the English proficiency of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province, is 389.25, which means below standard and still needs to be improved.

**Table. 4.6. Data Description on English Proficiency Based on Attended Trainings**

Attended Trainings		Total	Average		Rate
Ever	Never		Ever	Never	
<b>123</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>396,3</b>	<b>380,9</b>	<b>388,6</b>

Table above shows that the number of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province who have ever attended trainings is much fewer (123 teachers) than that of those who have never yet (490). Besides, it is also known that teachers who have attended trainings have better proficiency than those who have never. Their average score is 396.3

and 380.9. So, the English Proficiency of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province, based on whether or not they have ever attended trainings, the teachers who have ever attended trainings, in general, have better proficiency than those who have never, whose average score is 388.6.

**Table. 4.7. Data Description on English Proficiency Based on Ethnic**

Ethnics				total	Average				Rate
Malay	Jawa	Minang	Batak		Malay	Jawa	Minang	Batak	
<b>279</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>392,6</b>	<b>421,7</b>	<b>329,8</b>	<b>369,6</b>	<b>378,43</b>

Table above indicates that the majority of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province is Malay ethnic (279 teachers), followed by Minang ethnic (210 teachers) Batak ethnic and Javanese each of which the score is 62 teachers. The

finding is that the English Proficiency of teachers from Java is the best, their average score is 421.7, then followed by Malay ethnic, whose average score is 392.6, then Batak ethnic, 369.6 and the last one is Minang ethnic, whose average score is

329.8. By and large, however, the score of English proficiency of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province is 378.43. This means the teachers' English proficiency still does not achieve the expected standard.

## 1.2. Discussion

Referring to the research findings, the researcher makes a number suggestions. They are as follows:

1. Junior high school English teachers are suggested not to be satisfied with the existing knowledge and experience, particularly those who have been in the status of employment, to improve the qualification to higher level of education, to participate in any offered trainings, and so forth.
2. The related parties, such as the office of culture and education service are also suggested to be cooperative with the Education Quality Supervision Institution (LPMP) as an institution supervising the quality of education, to keep encouraging or motivating Junior high school English teachers to take a part in any relevant trainings in an attempt to improve their English Proficiency.

## Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the researchers draw out conclusions: (1) The English Proficiency of junior high school English teachers throughout Riau Province is generally under the expected target. The average score is below 450. However, the English Proficiency of Private Civil Servant teachers (Non PNS) is a little bit better than that of those Civil Servant ones (PNS). (2) Only few of English teachers taking a part in English trainings; (3) The higher the

education level of the teachers, the better is their English Proficiency; (4) The longer the teaching period of the teachers, the lower is their English Proficiency ability. All of these findings can become an input, particularly for English teachers, in order that they keep learning and practising English enthusiastically all of the time, as an attempt to better their English Proficiency.

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