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PROCEEDINGS

The 1st Sriwijaya University Learning and
Education International Conference (SULE-IC) 2014
held by FKIP Unsri in Collaboration
with Communication Forum for Indonesian
State FKIP Deans

Improving the Quality of Education to Strengthen the Global Competitiveness: A Response to the Current Curriculum

Presented by :



Palembang, May 16-18, 2014

Chief Editor: Hartono

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Sriwijaya University
South Sumatra - Indonesia

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**FACTS AND HOPES ABOUT THE STUDENTS' ENGLISH MASTERY
AT MATHEMATICS AND NATURAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT,
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION, SRIWIJAYA
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Abstrak

This research is aimed at finding out the facts and hopes about the students' English mastery from two perspectives, that is (1) the institutional perspective – the required English mastery level of Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department students, and (2) the students' perspective - the students' hopes in relation to learning English. The research instruments are the documentation and the questionnaire distributed to 168 of Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University. The findings show that the facts about the available English Course implementation and the target set by the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University and the current students' English mastery are not the same as what the students' hopes are. Therefore, the facts – the current Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department students' English mastery, and the implementation of English Course as well as the target of students' English mastery set by the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University do not match with the students' hopes towards learning English at their department.

Key words: English Course, English Mastery, TOEFL-like score

INTRODUCTION

Sriwijaya University was established in 1960 (Unsri, 2013) as one of public universities in Indonesia located in Palembang, South Sumatra Province. This university has ten faculties, that is Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Faculty of Computer Sciences, and Faculty of Public Health Sciences. All these faculties run undergraduate programs and some of them run postgraduate programs.

In 2008, Rector of Sriwijaya University declared that Sriwijaya University to be a research and world class university. Consequently, Sriwijaya university should improve many aspects institutionally in line with reaching and coping with this status of university. One of them is English requirement for all students of Sriwijaya University, that is they have to have certain levels of English mastery before they complete their studies at Sriwijaya University. Institutionally, these levels of English mastery were formalized by the Rector's decree of Sriwijaya University number

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042/H9/DT.Keo/2009 dated June 10, 2009 (Unsri, 2013). In this decree, levels of Sriwijaya University students' English mastery range from 375 to 525 of TOEFL-like Score.

The different levels of English mastery among Sriwijaya University students as stated in the Rector's decree can be seen as the required needs for each faculty, particularly the needs for each study program under the faculties. It means that each study program independently and institutionally views the relevance or needs of English for its own students. The following table shows the implications of TOEFL-like scores suggested by Jahya (2004). Having looked at this table, we generally know that the required English mastery of Sriwijaya University students on the basis of the Rector's decree is not really demanded in line with, particularly, Sriwijaya University as a world class university.

Table 1: TOEFL-like Scores Implications

Scores	Implications
≥ 600	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Able to participate effectively in informal or formal conversation about social and professional topic.✓ Able to use English language clearly and naturally✓ Understandable to the native speakers
550 - 599	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Able to communicate well and effectively about certain interested topic.✓ Able to communicate confidently with no difficulty and participate mostly in every formal and informal situation.✓ Able to use ineffective language that may sometimes happen.
500 - 549	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Able to communicate effectively in interesting topic only✓ Able to communicate confidently, but may lose the ability in a depressed situation.
450 - 499	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Able to initiate and maintain direct communication on anticipated topics.✓ Have limited language competency, but able to communicate more than the expected emergencies.
400 - 449	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Able to talk about the topic that he or she is familiar with✓ Have limited English capability and competency✓ Repeat a lot while communicating
350 - 399	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ May only use memorized phrases in emergencies✓ Can only make questions and short statements✓ Have limited communication ability and often repeat.
≤ 349	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Very poor English

Source: Jahja, 2004

For the students of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, particularly for the students of Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department, the required TOEFL-like score is 400 (Unsri, 2013) as shown in Table 2 below. This score means that the students of Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department are required to be able to talk about the topic that he or she is familiar with, to have limited English capability and competency, and to repeat a lot while communicating. This level of English mastery can be classified to be pre-elementary level English mastery (SULI, 2009) as shown in Table 3.



Table 2: Minimum Target of TOEFL-like Score of Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department Students of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University

Study Program	Score
Mathematics Education	400
Chemistry Education	400
Biology Education	400
Physics Education	400

Source: Unsri, 2013:29

Table 3: Levels of TOEFL Score

SCORES	LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY
300 – 350	REAL BEGINNER
351 – 400	PRE-ELEMENTARY
401 – 425	ELEMENTARY
426 – 450	PRE-INTERMEDIATE
451 – 475	INTERMEDIATE
476 – 500	PRE-ADVANCED
501 – 525	ADVANCED
526 – Over	POST-ADVANCED

Source: SULI, 2009

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Organizationally, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education has four departments and eighteen study programs (FKIP Unsri, 2013). The four departments are Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department, Social Sciences Education Department, Language and Arts Education Department, and Education Sciences Department. The eighteen study programs, (a) the study programs running the undergraduate programs – popularly recognized as ‘Program Sarjana’ - are Mathematics Education, Chemistry Education, Biology Education, Physics Education, Indonesian and Literature Education, English Education, History Education, Economics Education, Civics Education, Physical and Health Education, Mechanical Engineering Education, Councelling and Guidance, Primary School Teacher Education, Early Childhood Education, and Non-formal Education; and (b) the study programs running the postgraduate programs, master degree program, – popularly named in Indonesia as ‘Program Magister’ – are Mathematics Education, Language Education, and Technology of Education. The Undergraduate Mathematics and Natural Sciences Department consists of Mathematics Education Study Program, Chemistry Education Study Program, Biology Education Study Program, and Physics Education Study Program.

Nowdays, all study programs under the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department run the 2011 Curricula (FKIP Unsri, 2013). One of the courses in these curricula is English Course weighing 2 credit points. It means that English Course is taught in one semester (the first semester) and carried out between 16 and 18 meetings. Each meeting has 100 minutes.



Institutionally, having done the two-credit point English Course as one of the courses in their undergraduate programs, the students are expected to have 400 TOEFL-like score or they are able to talk about the topic that he or she is familiar with, to have limited English capability and competency, and to repeat a lot while communicating. In other words, institutionally, the department provides its students with the two-credit point English Course during their undergraduate studies and the students are expected to master English at the level of pre-elementary, that is they have limited English capability and competency so that they can talk about the topic that they are familiar with and they repeat a lot while communicating.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this small scale research is descriptive method. It means that the researcher only describes and illustrates what the variable is, that is to know the levels and hopes of the students' English mastery at Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department. It means that the researcher wants to know the students' English mastery from two perspectives, that is (1) the institutional perspective – the required English mastery level of Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department students, and (2) the students' perspective - as students of this department, what the students' hopes in relation to learning English. The research use two instruments in collecting the research data, namely documentation – the data related to the current English mastery of respondents, and questionnaire – the data related to the respondents' English needs. The respondents of this research are all Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department students enrolled in 2013. They are 41 Students of Mathematics Education Study Program, 40 students of Chemistry Education Study Program, 44 students of Biology Education Study Program, and 43 students of Physics Education Study Program. The total respondents of this research are 168 students. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the respondents and collected the document in February 2014.

FINDINGS AND AND INTERPRETATIONS

Table 4 below shows the current students' English mastery in the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Department. Most of the students (81.14%) have lower English mastery in line with the expected English mastery set by their department, specifically by their study programs, and only 18.86% of the students have reached the expected English mastery. It means only 18.86% of the students have limited English capability and competency and therefore they can talk about the topic that they are familiar with and they repeat a lot while communicating as required by their study programs, and most of them (81.14%) have lower level of English mastery, They are only able to use memorized phrases in emergencies, make questions and short statements, and have limited communication ability and often repeat, and even have very poor English. It means that most of the students are at the levels of early pre-elementary and real beginners.



Tabel 4: Summary of TOEFL-like Scores of Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University, Indralaya Campus, Year of Enrollment 2013/2014

NO	Study Program	Year 2013				
		Score Range		Average	Σ Score ≥ 400	
		Highest	Lowest			
1	Maths Education	517	323	387	15	
2	Biology Education	443	307	366	4	2.
3	Chemistry Education	470	293	370	6	3.
4	Physics Education	447	327	374	8	4.
Average		105	71	85		
Total					33	
Percentage					18.86	
General Score Range		517 - 293				

The results of the data analysis on the basis of the distributed questionnaire reveal that most of the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department students (94.64%) need to learn English in order that they can understand when they read course textbooks written in English, they can support their academic activities during their studies (96.43%), and they can support their careers in the future (98.81%). It means that most of the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department students, having done the two-credit point English Course at their department hope that not only for the purpose reading their course textbooks written in English and supporting their academic activities during their studies but also for the purpose of supporting their future careers as teachers.

All these findings show us that the English related curriculum implementation and target set by the institution, that is providing the two-credit point English Course and requiring the 400 TOEFL-like score meaning that the students have limited English capability and competency and they can talk about the topic that they are familiar with and they repeat alot while communicating. This institutional condition may not necessarily relevant to the students' hopes about learning English, that is reading the course textbooks written in English, supporting the academic activities, and supporting the future careers as teachers. In other words, the facts about the available English Course implementation and the target set by the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education and the current students' English mastery are not the same as what the students' hopes are.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion:

This paper has been presented at Sriwijaya University Learning and Education-International Conference 2014. Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University, Palembang, May 16 – 18, 2014.



In this short and small scale research paper, the researcher may conclude that the facts – the current Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department students' English mastery, and the implementation of English Course as well as the target of students' English mastery set by the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University do not match with the students' hopes towards learning English at their department.

Suggestion:

The suggestion offered in this short and small scale research paper may be the English Course implementation, the institutional English target, the students' current English mastery, and the students' hopes towards learning English should be balanced so that it can be beneficial not only for the institution but also for the students.

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