

**Investigating the Challenges Faced by the English Education
Study Program Students in Doing SULIET**

A THESIS

By

Oktalyana Syafitri

06011281621034

English Education Study Program



FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

INDRALAYA

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Oktalyana Syafitri

Student Number: 06011281621034

English Education Study Program

Language and Arts Education Department

FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

2021

Approved by,

Advisor 1,



Machdalena Vlanty, M.Ed., M.Pd., Ed.D.
NIP. 197411242000122001

Advisor 2,



Dr. Ismail Petrus, M.A.
NIP. 196211151989031002

Certified by,

**Head of Language and Arts
Department**



Dr. Didi Suhendi, S.Pd., M. Hum.
NIP. 196910221994031001

**Coordinator of English Education
Study Program,**



Hariswan Putra Jaya, S.Pd., M. Pd.
NIP. 197408022002121003



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EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS IN DOING *SULIET***

Oktalyana Syafitri

NIM: 06011281621034

This thesis was defended by the writer in the final program examination and was approved by the examination committee on:

Day : Saturday

Date : 31st July, 2021

Approved by,

Advisor 1



Machdalena Vianty, M.Ed., M.Pd., Ed.D.
NIP. 197411242000122001

Advisor 2



Dr. Ismail Petrus, M.A.
NIP. 196211151989031002

Certified by,

Head of English Education Study Program



Hariswan Putra Jaya, S.Pd., M.Pd.
NIP. 19740802200212100

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

Name : Oktalyana Syafitri

Place, date of birth : Palembang, October 19th, 1997

Student's Number : 06011281621034

Study Program : English Education

Certify that thesis entitled “Investigating the Challenges Faced by the English Education Study Program Students in Doing *SULIET*” is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or in appropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserved to face the court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, 18 August 2021



Oktalyana Syafitri

06011281621034

DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to:

- To my beloved parents, Mama and Papa who have been the source of my inspiration, motivation and strength, also my brothers, Kak Putra and Jimmy for the endless love and support.
- My supportive best friends, Luay Ma'mun Assabiq, Adelin Dwi Ramadhini, Ferend Dias Zetira, Ferima Melati, Siti Arwinda Kasrianti, and Yunita Linanda. Thank you for being my loyal support system. Thanks for the help, calls, and reminder. Your little things does matter for me.

“Work hard in silence, let your success be your noise”

(Frank Ocean)

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INVESTIGATING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS IN DOING *SULIET*

ABSTRACT

Sriwijaya University Language Institute English Test (*SULIET*) was a proficiency test regulated as one of the graduation requirements for the students at Sriwijaya University. This study aimed to find out the challenges faced by the English Education Study Program students in doing *SULIET*, and the solutions to overcome the challenges. The site of this study was the Faculty of Teachers Training and Education focused on the English Education study program. The participants were six English Education Study Program students, and the data were collected through document review (*SULIET* certificate), followed by an interview with the students who were purposely selected based on the result of the review of the document. Firstly, the finding showed that 4.18%, or nine out of 215 students English Education Study Program students had taken *SULIET* more than five times with the average score of entire participants is 417. Secondly, the finding based on the interview revealed that the challenges in doing *SULIET* are related to: (1) students' English mastery, (2) students' psychological and physical aspects, and (3) place and test's condition. Thirdly, the *Reading* part of the *SULIET* was reported by the participants as the most challenging language skill. Lastly, having (1) preparation before doing *SULIET*, (2) practice the English skills, (3) maintain the health condition, and (4) the environmental factors were cited by the participants as the solution to the challenges.

Keywords: SULIET, English Proficiency Test, EFL Students, challenges and solutions in doing SULIET

A Thesis by an English Education Study Program Student, Faculty of Teacher Training Education, Sriwijaya University.

Name : Oktalyana Syafitri

NIM : 06011281621034

Approved by,

Advisor 1,



Machdalena Vianty, M.Ed., M.Pd., Ed.D.
NIP: 197411242000122001

Advisor 2,



Dr. Ismail Petrus, M.A.
NIP: 196211151989031002

Certified by,

Coordinator of English Education Study Program,



Hariswan Putra Jaya, S.Pd., M. Pd.
NIP 197408022002121003

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of study, the problem of study, the objective of study, significance of study, and limitation of study.

1.1 Background of Study

English has become internationalized since the post-world War II era, where the domination of British colonialism spread overseas and raise the term of “inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle” (Ng & Deng, 2017). The inner circle is the traditional native English-speaking nations. Former British colonies such as India, Pakistan, and Nigeria are called an outer circle, and expanding circle is for countries with no historical government roles of English, but it plays the predominant foreign language for some purposes (Ng & Deng, 2017). According to British Council (2013, p.2), “By the year 2020, two billion people will be using or learning English worldwide.” This statement has proven as English now becomes a language choice for many of the world’s most prestigious institutions, such as The World Bank, United Nations, and World Health Organization, to avoid spending more budget on translation services (Sherden, 2011, p.77). Nowadays, English spreads worldwide consciously or unconsciously in daily life, whether by entertainment, international trading, or academics. Thus, the need to mastering English is more essential in this modern era for many purposes, especially in getting a job and overseas study.

People may not find it difficult to get a job if they have expertise in the field. In addition, having good communication skills is also important. According to Lotto and Barrington (2006), oral and written communication is one of the five most fundamental applied skills in the 21st-century workplace, as reported by employee respondents. As the international language uses by the worldwide organization, English is a core language to master if someone wants to compete in the 21st-century era.

Communicating in English is a fair offer for a company competing in the global economy to employ someone. Excellent English performance is a valuable asset for the company because it means their employees can communicate with

universal clients and reach the international market. That is shown by many firms in Indonesia; especially, the state-owned company asks the aspirant workers to attach their English proficiency certificate to perceive the candidates' English language mastery. As stated in the Announcement of the Selection for Civil Servant Candidates in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019), one of the specific requirements is;

Able to understand English (spoken and written) as proven by a TOEFL or TOEFL prediction certificate with a minimum score of 550 or IELTS of at least 6.5 or for applicants who master other foreign languages (Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, German, Japanese, and Korean) proven by the foreign language certificate with a minimum score equal to TOEFL 550.

The purpose of pursuing study overseas is another reason why mastering English is essential. Overseas universities or scholarship agencies usually request the candidates' to enclose their English proficiency certificate as one of the requirements. Almost all United States universities require either TOEFL or IELTS (types of English proficiency test) as a condition of application (AMINEF, 2020). Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP), a fellowship program to support Indonesia's development in human resource growth from Indonesian Ministry of Finance for all Indonesian citizens also obligate the same provision as it writes in their website, "possesses an official certificate of English language skills that are still valid and issued by ETS (www.ets.org) or IELTS (www.ielts.org) or Arabic language institution (specifically TOAFL) (LPDP, 2020)." The ability to understand and speak English for international students is needed not only for the study utilities but also for the students' provision for living in a foreign country.

Having English language skills is beneficial not only for the opportunity in a job and scholarship purposes. Understanding and speaking English means students can communicate with others who also speak English, sharing the thought and experience; speaking English can drive students to have more information than those who do not understand English. Widiati & Cahyono (2006) commented, in the past, Indonesians studied English only for academic purposes at the university level, but today they need it in order to communicate with

other people from other countries at the international level. In harmony with this, Sindkhedkar (2012) stated that English is not only a compulsory subject at school, college and university but is also the medium of instruction to the large extent, and has functioned as “the language of science and technology”.

The function of English proficiency has been explained from the side of job recruitment and study abroad. Thus, the language ability of someone can be measure with the help of an English proficiency test. According to Huges (2003), “Proficiency test refers to a form to measure someone’s ability in a language”. Proficiency test is commonly used to fill job recruitment or career promotion, overseas scholarship programs, and graduation requirements. The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), The International English Language Testing System (IELTS), and TOEFL (The Test of English as a Foreign Language) are the example of English proficiency test which accepted internationally. Hence, as stated in the Decree No. 232 of the Indonesian Ministry of National Education (2002), “Many institutions or universities in Indonesia administer their English proficiency test to see their students’ competence in English, since it is one of the subjects for developing students’ character or quality at an institutional level”.

Sriwijaya University is an example of tertiary education that administers an English proficiency test to its students. The test was referred to Sriwijaya University Language Institutes English Test or SULIET, and now it is referred to USEPT (University Sriwijaya English Proficiency Test). The focus of this present study was to find out the challenges of the English Education study program students in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Sriwijaya University in doing SULIET, and the solutions to overcome the challenges. The test was independently held by the technical implementation unit of Sriwijaya University to check students’ English competencies, and the test served as one of the graduation requirements. That regulation made every student of Sriwijaya University could not avoid doing the test. Each study program within Faculties at Sriwijaya University had a different passing grade for its students.

According to Zhengdong (2009), the higher the test’s stakes, the stronger the urge to involve in specific test preparation practices. The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education for example, has 400 as a minimum score of SULIET for all its study programs, except for English Education Study Program. In the English

education study program, students have to reach SULIET score not less than 500, which is the highest score for Bachelor's Degree within Sriwijaya University.

However, according to the writer's observation, several friends of her ever get their study hampered, due to have not meet the standard score of SULIET. These facts motivate the writer to investigate the challenges faced by the English education study program's students in doing SULIET and the possible solutions to overcome the challenges.

1.2 The Problems of Study

The problem of this study was formulated in the following research questions:

- a. What were the challenges faced by the English Education Study Program students in doing SULIET?
- b. What were the possible solutions to the challenges faced by the English Education Study Program students in doing SULIET?

1.3 The Objectives of Study

- a. To find out the challenges faced by the English Education Study Program students in doing SULIET.
- b. To figure out the possible solutions to the challenges faced by the English Education Study Program students in doing SULIET.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Passing Sriwijaya University Language Institute English Test (SULIET) with a particular score for each faculty was crucial for every student as one of the requirements to graduate. Knowing the test's challenges and managing it was essentials for Sriwijaya University's students, especially for students of the English Education Study Program. This research might help the students find ways to evaluate and improve their performance in doing SULIET. The information and data findings may also contribute as valuable references for future research that investigating the university's English proficiency test.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

This study focused on finding out the English education study program students' challenges in SULIET, and the solutions to eliminate the challenges. This study had some limitations or weaknesses due to the pandemic Covid-19 situation.

Firstly, all activities or interactions between the writer-participants and the participants-writer in this research take advantage of the internet to prevent transmitting Covid-19's virus. Thus, to collect data, the writer chose to use Google Form to collect the students' SULIET score, and the interview was held through WhatsApp.

Secondly, the references in this research were from English proficiency tests such as TOEFL and IELTS since SULIET itself was only available in Sriwijaya University. In other words, there was no direct reference about SULIET that could be added to support this research.

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