

THE IMPACT OF NATIONAL EXAMINATION ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM AT ENGLISH CLASS IN MATARAM MUNICIPALITY YEAR 2016

Mustajib¹

English Post-Graduate Student, University of Mataram, mustajibsukud@gmail.com¹

Abstract

This study aims at identifying whether or not the new national examination policy (NNEP) which operated in 2015 and is strikingly featured with “non-qualification-determination” impacts on the students’ motivation and teachers’ professionalism at junior high schools in Mataram Municipality year 2016. To obtain data needed, this quantitative study used two questionnaires. One questionnaire consisting of 37 was distributed to 60 students in ten junior high schools (JHS) for assessing the students’ motivation. The other one consisting of 67 main items was distributed to the 20 English teachers from the selected schools. The data were tabulated and then presented in Average Format. It was found that as whole both students’ motivation and the teachers’ professionalism were slightly influenced. Upon these findings, it is suggested that both the students and the teachers not be impacted on by the imposition of the NNEP. Motivation and professionalism should retain because learning is not just for national examination.

Key words: *impact, national examination, motivation, professionalism*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memastikan apakah kebijakan ujian nasional terbaru (KUNT/NNEP) Tahun 2015 yang “tidak menentukan kelulusan” secara empiris berdampak terhadap motivasi siswa dan profesionalisme guru di Kota Mataram Tahun 2016. Dalam penelitian kuantitatif ini data diperoleh melalui kuesioner siswa dan kuesioner guru. Kuesioner siswa yang berisi 36 butir pernyataan disebar kepada 60 orang siswa dari 10 SMP (Sekolah Menengah Pertama) untuk menilai motivasi mereka. Sementara kuesioner guru yang memuat 67 butir pernyataan disebar kepada 20 orang guru bahasa Inggris dari 10 sekolah yang terpilih untuk menilai profesionalisme mereka. Data yang diperoleh selanjutnya ditabulasikan dan disajikan dalam Format Rerata. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa secara umum baik motivasi siswa maupun profesionalisme “sedikit terpengaruh” oleh pemberlakuan KUNT. Berdasarkan temuan ini, disarankan siswa dan guru tidak terpengaruh. Motivasi dan profesionalisme hendaknya tetap terjaga karena belajar bukan semata-mata untuk menepuh ujian nasional.

Kata Kunci : *dampak, ujian nasional, motivasi, profesionalisme*

INTRODUCTION

National Examination (NE) or *Ujian Nasional* (UN) has been an integral part of teachers' and students' lives. At the end of school periods, year three students especially of junior high schools are ready to take it. This practice has been going on since 1950 (see Law No. 4 Year 1950; in Fatchiati, 2015).

In this study the NE refers to the traditional pencil and paper written test which is nationally administered at the end of academic year at the levels of elementary and secondary and which is intended as quality control and the accountability of educational institution (Chen, 2011: 1; Indonesian Education Law No. 20 Year 2003 in Wikipedia, 2015).

The NE can be categorized into Old NE Policy/ONEP (periods 1950 - 2014) and New NE Policy/NNEP (periods 2015 onwards) (see Akbarwati, 2014). The former determines whether or not a student graduates from or passes his/her study in a certain school level. The latter, in contrast, does not (see *Peraturan Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan/Regulation of Body on National Standard of Education No. 31 Year 2015*, in Hasibuan, 2015).

Some NE issues within the last two years are worth being presented. The first issue deals with my 24-year-teaching experiences which show that with the

ONEP the students were relatively well-motivated to learn. In term of teachers' professionalism, Padmi, a vice principal on Human Relations of SMAN 3 Mataram, observed that when the ONEP operated, the teachers were very enthusiastic in teaching, including in preparing the student to take the NE (informal discussion, October 27th, 2016,).

The second issue deals with test scores. The average score of NE at the national level of junior high school significantly decreased from 62,18 in 2015 to 58,57 in 2016 (Medistiara, 2016). For the English itself, it decreased 2,84 (Indriani, 2016). This trend did not happen in the ONEP period which mostly increased from year to year (Fajar, 2013). In terms of the teachers' professionalism, the average scores of *Uji Kompetensi Guru /UKG* or Teacher Competence Test/TCT of teachers in NTB is still low, below the average of national score (*Suara NTB*, November 25, 2016 : 10).

The third or last issue is related to a statements made by Effendy and Hidayati. Effendy (2016), Minister of Education and Culture of Republic Indonesia, asserts that up to now the professionalism of Indonesian teachers has not met the government or societal expectation yet. With regard to the learning motivation, Hidayati, a student of senior high school in Mataram

Municipality, West Nusa Tenggara Province, stated, “When national examination determined our graduation, we had strong motivation to pass so that we studied harder” (*Lombok Post*, 11/04/2015 : 22).

By accounting for the data above and focusing attention on the junior high school level in Mataram Municipality year 2016, this present study aims at empirically validating the following research questions :

- (1) Does the New National Examination Policy (NNEP) impact on the students’ motivation to learn English?
- (2) Does the New National Examination Policy (NNEP) impact on the teachers’ professionalism in teaching English?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In his book *Testing for Language Teachers*, Hughes (2004) presents theory on backwash. Backwash refers to the effect of testing on teaching and learning. The theory on backwash or washback of testing (Taylor, 2005) justifies that the national examination (NE) likely impacts on teachers’ professionalism and the students’ motivation especially in English language teaching and learning (ELTL).

English is in fact not only an international language but also a language

of the galaxy (Gimenez, 2001). This overtly indicates the importance of English in the world. English has been used for various purposes (Nunan, 2003), among others as the foreign language (Kachru, 1985 in Harmer, 2007). In Indonesia, English serves as a foreign language. It has been taught as a compulsory subject especially in junior high schools (Jazadi, 2004 in Cahyono and Widiati, 2004 :2).

Due to the importance of English, the Indonesian government is strongly committed to the success of the ELTL. Achieving this success depends partly on learner’s motivation (Li & Pan, 2009). For this reason, student’s motivation should be well accounted for, continuously encouraged and/or retained.

Motivation in this study refers to an inner state of cognitive and emotional arousal which vigorously drives someone to consciously embark on intellectual and physical effort to attain a previously set goal (Kauchak 1994 in Kong, 2009; Harmer, 2007)

The motivation is of two types; intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Deci and Ryan, 1985, in Lin and Pan, 2009). The former refers to motivation from outside whereas the latter from inside or within the individual (Harmer, 2007). The NE thus belongs to the extrinsic motivation. To a certain extent, the extrinsic motivation is

more powerful than the intrinsic one (Harmer, 2007).

Taylor (2005) convinces that testing and/or any test type, including the NE, can have some impacts, consequences or effects beyond just the classroom. The impacts can be both negative and positive.

As it has been previously stated that in the history of national examination in Indonesia, the NE is classified into the ONEP and the NNEP. The striking difference between the two lies on the way that the former determines the student's graduation whereas the latter does not. The latter, the NNEP, is likely assumed to give negative impacts on students' motivation.

The negative impacts of the NNEP can be partly inferred from Hidayati's statement, "*Dulu saat UN menentukan kelulusan, kami memiliki motivasi tinggi untuk lulus, sehingga belajar dengan giat* [When national examination determined our graduation, we had strong motivation to pass so that we studied harder" (*Lombok Post*, 11/04/2015: 22). The statement implies that the NNEP decreases the students' motivation to study or learn.

The impact of the NNEP on the students' motivation implies that the NNEP also impacts on the teachers' professionalism. The teachers' professionalism in this study refers to the teachers' "commitment to the occupational

organization and dedication to being knowledge master and skillful provider of service stemming from the knowledge upon which the occupation is based" (Jarvis, 1992, in Narie, 2010 : 3).

To justify the impact of the NNEP on the teachers' professionalism, it is worth presenting Taylor's (2005) argument. Taylor argues that the teacher will be influenced by the knowledge that their students are planning to take a certain test. Bloom (in Farihi, 2011: 3) affirms that the student's behavior in learning is influenced by what s/he thinks of what is to be tested.

For judging English teachers' professionalism, there must be an overt and precise set of parameter. The parameter applied in this present study is based on the Regulation of Minister of National Education [*Permen Diknas*] No. 35 Year 2010.

The teachers' professionalism is assessed on the basis of four competencies: Pedagogical, Personal, Social and Professional Competencies (Madya, 2003).

Pedagogically professional teacher, quoting Brown (2001), is strikingly featured among others firstly with the sense of "informed approach", that is the possession of as much relevant and updated knowledge as possible and secondly with competency in making instructional decisions. Ryan and Cooper (1998, in

Luciana, 2004) identify four areas of competencies for effective instructional decision makers: (1) attitude that foster learning; (2) knowledge of subject matter; (3) theoretical knowledge about learning and human behavior; and (4) repertoire of teaching skills.

Another crucial feature of pedagogically professional teachers as Luciana (2004) suggests is that they should be effective teachers. An effective teacher should possess among others the sense of being “tune-on-task” which refers to time during a lesson in which learners are actively engaged in instructional tasks (Good and Beckerman, 1978; Berliner, 1985).

Any personally professional teachers are those who possess, among others, some kind of commitment to preserve morality and natural calling for the profession. (see Law of Teachers and Lecturers No. 14 Year 2005).

Socially professional teachers are those who possess, among others, some kind of commitment to preserve collaboration and a power sharing with other stakeholders (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; in Yuwono and Harbon, 2010).

From the perspective of professional competence, the teachers should have good masteries on conceptual structure of the subject matters and any construct of

knowledge which supports the subjects being taught. In addition, they should also develop their profession through a wide range of reflective activities.

To sum up, for judging English teachers’ professionalism especially in Indonesian context, the parameters applied should refer to the Regulation of Minister of National Education [*Permen Diknas*] No. 35 Year 2010. This can be found in Appendix I. As far as my analysis is concerned, this parameter best incorporates the above mentioned characteristics of a professional teacher.

To identify empirically the students’ motivation, this present study employs Gardner’s (1985) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) which was adapted by Wong (2017).

The general aspects of the AMTB can be orderly arranged as follows. The first is the Students’ Preferences (SP). The second is the Students’ Needs (SN). The third is the Attitude toward English speaking people/integration orientation (IntO). The fourth up to the seventh aspects are the Interests in English (IE), the Instrument Orientation (IO), the English Class Anxiety (ECA) and the Learning Strategies (LS), respectively.

With reference to the focus of this study and the aspects of the motivation

above, a question may arise: Where is the NNEP interconnected to?

The NNEP is connected to one of the components of the second aspect. That is, the students learn English to obtain excellent score or grade. It is so because “the results of the test [NE] have significant impact on the career or life chances of individual test takers” (Taylor, 2005: 154). That is, as Taylor explains, they are used for the access of educational opportunities in the further successive school levels.

It is impossible for the student to get such opportunities unless s/he passes the examination. This is the key reason that once the ONEP played such a vital role. It sparked such a tremendous impact on the students’ motivation. It strongly motivated the students to learn. As the NNEP does not determine whether or not the students pass the examination or graduate from a certain school level, the NNEP is assumed to impact on the students’ motivation. It results in a low motivation on the part of the students.

This assumption needs what Gardner and Tremblay (1994) propose as “motivational renaissance”, in the sense, “what is needed is empirical research” on the issue.

The assumption that the NNEP impacts on the students’ motivation and the teachers’ professionalism is primarily based

on Bloom’s (in Farihi, 2011) and Taylor’s research findings that the student’s behavior in learning is influenced by what s/he thinks of what is to be tested and that the teacher will be influenced by the knowledge that their students are planning to take a certain test..

METHOD, SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE

This present study affirms to use quantitative approach for two reasons. First, a quantitative study starts from a “fully packed problem”, a very clear problem (Sugiyono, 2008 : 50) which means the problem itself will not expand in the course of the progress of the study. Second, this study makes use of a set of figures in describing the results of data collection and in interpreting the data obtained.

The data were gathered by applying one questionnaire for the teachers and the other one for the students. The former is for collecting data of the teachers’ professionalism and the latter for data of the students’ motivation.

There were 60 students serving as the subjects of the study, consisting of 30 males and 30 females. They were taken from 10 state and private senior high schools in Mataram Municipality (among others, SMPN 2 Mataram and SMPK Kesuma Mataram). In term of the teachers, there are

20 of them, consisting of 10 pairs (males and female) in which each pair was taken from each of the selected schools.

The schools are chosen on the bases of factors influencing the process [and motivations] of second [and foreign] language acquisition as proposed by Feng and Chen (2009: 97). The teachers are selected on the basis of “professionally certified English teachers”. The subjects were assigned by applying non-probability “quota sampling” for the main reason that selection criteria should be easily accessible, easily obtained, and already available (Newman, 2016).

The data obtained were then tabulated and presented in Normal and Average Format. To describe the impact of the NNEP on the students’ motivation and teachers’ professionalism, the following parameter was employed.

NORMAL AVERAGE	IMPACT STATUS	IDEAL AVERAGE
4.01 - 5.00	<i>Not Influenced significantly</i>	0.01 - 2.33 (X)
3.01 - 4.00	<i>Slightly Influenced</i>	2.34 - 2.67 (X)
2.01 - 3.00	<i>Sufficiently Influenced</i>	2.68 - 3.00 (X)
1.01 - 2.00	<i>Greatly Influenced</i>	3.01 - 3.33 (X)
0.01 - 1.00	<i>Severely Influenced</i>	3.34 - 5.00 (X)

To guarantee validity, reliability and trustworthiness, the research instruments were presented in *Bahasa Indonesia* (*Indonesian*) being consulted to supervisors

and being tried-out to a group of 35 students.

This study took about six months to complete: from August 2016 up to January 2017.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The first research question of the present study deals with whether or not the New National Examination Policy (NNEP) impact on the students’ motivation to learn English. The question essentially requires the answer in the form of the degree of the impact.

It has been stated previously that the NNEP does not determine the students’ graduation. This means the NNEP exerts no psychological pressure especially on the part of the students. Because it does not exert any pressure, logically it promotes achievement. Cook (2009) argues that no pressure promotes success. As it does not exhibit any psychologically destructive pressure which in turn affects low achievement, ideally the NNEP does not impact on the students’ motivation at all.

The relevant research results data do not indeed display the students’ decrease in achievement. Rather, they show that NNEP impacts on the students’ motivations.

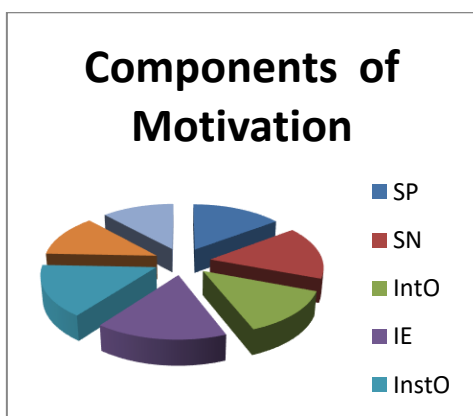
This present study does not aim at discretely specifying the aspects or components of the students’ motivations

which are impacted on by the NNEP. If at last each of aspect is referred to, however, it is absolutely used to emphasize the impacts of the NNEP on each component.

Based on the available data, the collective average of the students' motivation is 3.65. The collective averages on SP, SN, IntO, IE, InstO, ECA, and LS are 4.11, 4.39, 3.70, 4.51, 4.26, 3.47 and 3.28, respectively.

The data can be interpreted as follows. The collective average of the students' motivation "3.65" means that the students' motivation is *slightly influenced* by the imposition of the NNEP. The imposition of the NNEP does *slightly influence* the InstO, ECA and LS as shown by the collective averages of the components of the motivation 3.70, 3.47 and 3.28, respectively. With the collective averages 4.11, 4.51 and 4.26, the SP, the SN, the IE and the InstO are *not influenced significantly*.

The impact of the NNEP on each component of the students' motivation can be visually displayed as follows:



The second research question deals with whether or not the NNEP impact on the teachers' professionalism in teaching English. This question also essentially requires the answer in the form of the degree of the impact.

The data obtained from the responses of twenty selected English teachers confirm the imposition of the NNEP does impact the teachers' professionalism. The whole mean of four competencies is 2,41.

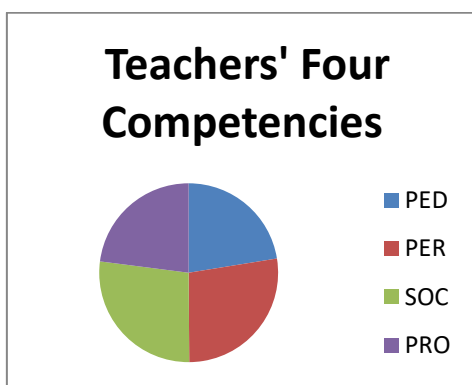
This fact is in contrast with the true requirement of a true professional teacher with the ideal average of 0,00 which means they are not impacted at all. The truly professional teachers should have the fullest degree of commitment in performing their professional duties (see Jarvis, 1992). In the context of this present study, this requirement implies that whatever the system of assessment applies, the teachers' strong commitment in performing their professional duties should not decrease at all cost.

As Madya (2008) points out any professional English teacher in Indonesia should meet four competencies: pedagogical competency (PED), personal competency (PER), social competency (SOC) and professional competence (PRO).

When looking at the individual components of the teachers' professionalism, the PED and the PRO are

not influenced significantly as shown by the ideal average 2.16 and 2.21. The other two components, the PER and the SOC, are slightly influenced by the imposition of the NNEP.

The degree of impact of the NNEP on those four components of the teachers' professionalism can be observed in the following figure.



Looking at the findings above, it is obvious that the imposition of the NNEP impacts on both students' motivation and teachers' professionalism upon the subjects under analysis. In term of the impacts on the students' motivations, the collective average is '3,65' which means that the NNEP "slightly influenced" the students' motivations. This finding confirms the stance made by this present study.

The aspect of the students' motivation which is greatly affected is the students' learning strategies (with the mean "3,28"). This is in accordance with my daily teaching experiences.

In regard to the second research question ("Does the New National

Examination Policy (NNEP) impact on the teachers' professionalism in teaching English?"), the collective average of four teacher's competencies (2,41) can be interpreted as follows. Firstly, the average indicates the NNEP impacts on the teachers' professionalism. More specifically, the average signifies that the NNEP slightly impacts on the teachers' professionalism. This fact differs from what was predicted before that it sufficiently impacts on the teachers' professionalism.

Looking at the ideal averages of four teacher's competencies: 2,16; 2, 64; 2,61 and 2,21 for PED, PER, SOC and PRO, respectively, and interpreting them against the previously set parameter, there might be nothing to worry, at least no single average indicates the "worrying" impact of the NNEP under the analysis. For a truly professional teacher, the imposition of any NE policy should not impact at all his or her teaching and learning professionalism.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The objective of this present study is to identify whether or not the new national examination policy (NNEP) empirically impacts on the student's motivation and teacher's professionalism in English teaching and learning at Junior High School level in Mataram Municipality year 2016.

As far as the research results data of this research are concerned, the research findings reveal that the NNEP impacts on both the students' motivation and the teachers' professionalism in a different degree. Both students' motivation and the teacher's professionalism were, in general, *slightly influenced*.

It is worth noting here that the most greatly impacted component of the students' motivation is the students' learning strategies. It is, however, not the focus of this study to find out why it happens in that way. This quantitative study only identifies the general description of the impact based the empirical research data.

Knowing that the NNEP impacts on the students' motivation, any professional teacher especially in Mataram Municipality year 2016 should strongly struggle for making the students' motivation not influenced at all. In the case it is slightly impacted, s/he should improve it gradually at least till reaching the impact status "*not influenced significantly*".

The teachers' efforts to improve the students' motivation should equate their own efforts to improve their own professionalism in terms of their pedagogical, personal, social and professional competencies. Whatever the

evaluation system applies, they should not be influenced at any cost.

This study may serve as a preliminary research. There should be further *thorough* research(es) on the topic under analysis. The research results data available offer a great range of subtopics to be researched. One of them, for instance, is "Does the New National Examination Policy differently impact the motivations of the students from rich families and from the relatively poor ones?"

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Appendix 1

Samples of Questionnaires for Students and Teachers

For Students

NO	PERYATAAN	RESPON				
		1	2	3	4	5
I	Students' Preference					
2	Saya tetap suka bahasa Inggris walaupun UN tidak menentukan kelulusan.					
-					

For Teachers

NO	PERYATAAN	RESPON				
		1	2	3	4	5
I	Kompetensi Pedagogik					
2	Status UN Terbaru cukup mempengaruhi komitmen saya untuk mengidentifikasi karakteristik belajar setiap peserta didik di kelas.					
-					
VII	Kompetensi Profesial					
73	Status UN Terbaru sebagian besar mempengaruhi komitmen saya untuk melakukan					

	evaluasi diri secara spesifik, lengkap, dan langsung didukung oleh pengalaman diri sendiri.					
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