

# The Profile of Elementary School English Teachers' Competence in Surabaya

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## ABSTRACT

Teaching English to young learners is different from teaching English to adults. Due to young learners' characteristics, elementary or primary school English teachers should be very creative in implementing joyful learning for their students so that students will be able to acquire and learn the target language (i.e. English) subconsciously. In line with this, elementary school English teachers should provide themselves with knowledge of English and how to teach it to their students. Therefore, a study investigating elementary school English teachers' competence needs to be conducted. This study aims to describe the elementary school English teachers' competence in Surabaya in terms of their professional competence development, such as their employment status, certification status, and educational background. Besides, this study also aims to describe their pedagogical competence development, particularly their knowledge and understanding on 2013 National Curriculum employed in elementary school and its components such as Basic Competencies, English syllabus, lesson plan, teaching techniques/methods, learning media and materials, and assessment. The results of this study show that most of elementary school English teachers in Surabaya (of the 284 teachers who became the research respondents of this study) are still non-civil servant (*non-PNS*) although they have long devoted themselves to teaching in state elementary schools. Referring to the age, almost half of the total number of those teachers is between 30-40 years old, and the rest are over 40 years of age, only a small number are under 30 years old. In relation to the status of teacher's certification (*sertifikasi guru*), few teachers have joined teachers training and got their certificates. While related to educational background, almost all of those teachers have an educational background of S1 (Bachelor of Education), and the rest have Master level education (Masters). Dealing with the teachers' knowledge and understanding on 2013 National Curriculum employed in elementary school and its components, it can be concluded that they lack of that knowledge. Using the previous curriculum (2006 Curriculum) and less workshops or socialization on 2013 National Curriculum employed in elementary school are the main reasons that cause them lack of knowledge and understanding on 2013 National Curriculum and its components. Therefore, such workshops, trainings and socializations are much needed.

**Keywords:** *Elementary school English teachers, Competence, Young learners, 2013 National curriculum*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English has been taught for a long time in Elementary Schools in Indonesia. As stated in the National Education System number 2/1989, English has been included as one of the local content subjects in elementary schools. But, in the 2013 Curriculum-curriculum which is currently being applied in the education system in Indonesia, English as a local content subject in elementary school has been abolished with the assumption that elementary school students are psychologically and age maturity not ready yet to learn English. Besides, some communities think that *Bahasa Indonesia* is more important to be taught at elementary school than English as a foreign language. This becomes polemic issue since English is known as the global

language that is learned by most people in the world. A previous study even stated that English is important to be learned by the students since they are in the elementary school, since it will help them in learning English easier on the next school levels. Besides, English is widely used in their daily life. Most of aspects in their life use English that need their understanding. So, it is important to include English as one of the subjects in Elementary school curriculum with several considerations related to the material and students' need [9].

In 2017 some revisions were made, one of them is the government does not prohibit teaching English in elementary schools as long as there is a readiness from the school human resources, i.e. English teachers who will be able to introduce and teach English to young

learners. Teacher is the main key in determining the success or failure of the learning process. Further, teachers are professional educators who are responsible for educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in either primary or secondary education level [7]. For this reason, teacher professionalism is required to be developed in accordance with the development of science and technology, and also the society' needs. In relation to learning English in elementary schools, English teachers should become the appropriate model for their students. They are not only required to be able to speak English, but they must also be able to introduce and teach English in the context of children as the young learners.

Therefore, based on the background above, it is necessary to conduct a study on the profile of elementary school English teachers' competence in Surabaya. This is so important due to the teacher's readiness in introducing and teaching English to young learners. This study further describes in detail (1) the profile of elementary school English teachers in Surabaya in terms of their employment status, class, certification status, school identity status, and educational background and (2) the competence profile of elementary school English teachers in Surabaya related to their understanding on the 2013 Curriculum and its components such as basic competences, syllabus, lesson plan, teaching techniques/methods, learning media and materials, and assessment.

### ***1.1. Related Work***

As stated in the Government Regulation no.74 of 2008, teachers are professional educators who educate, teach, guide, direct, train, assess, and evaluate students in either primary or secondary education level. In carrying out their professional tasks, teachers are required to develop and increase their competencies in accordance with the demands of the present curriculum and the development of science, technology, art, culture and/or sports.

Related to English teaching and learning process in elementary school, elementary school English teachers are expected to be more creative and enthusiastic in arousing their students' attention and interest. Besides, they should also be innovative in creating a joyful learning for their students. [10] said that ideal elementary school English teachers are those who have basic knowledge and skills in English. In addition, they should comprehend and master the various teaching techniques and strategies for teaching English to young learners as

well. [2] identifies three characteristics that must be possessed by elementary school English teachers, those are having sufficient English knowledge, skills, and good personality; respecting others; and professional.

Teaching English to young learners is different from teaching English to adults. It needs certain teaching techniques that can make the classroom atmosphere enjoyable. One of them is game. Game is a fun and effective activity that can create a communicative situation and avoid boredom. Through games, children (i.e. young learners) will be more active in the learning process since they are directly involved in it. This is in line with what is stated by [3], "In all games, students' active participation is very needed in every activity. This students' engagement finally can drive them to achieve the determined learning objectives".

For young learners, game is the most effective way to learn a foreign language since in this age they are still in the play stage. Through game, they can learn English in a pleasant situation. Like their first language acquisition, they will not feel frustrated and they will not even realize that they have learned a new language, namely English. Besides, they also have a great energy to carry out various activities. They are only able to sit still within ten minutes, and after that, they will start moving [8]. If the teachers pay attention to this condition and can take advantage from this situation, the children (i.e. young learners) will be able to communicate in English as well as their first and/or second languages (Indonesian and regional languages). In implementing the game, there are several important points that should be taken into account, those are the type of the game, the ways of playing it, and the ways of ending it. Chinese whisper, Simon says and Bingo are some of the games that can be applied for teaching English to young learners.

## **2. METHOD**

This study is a descriptive research since it describes (1) the profile of elementary school English teachers in Surabaya in terms of their employment status, class, certification status, school identity status, and educational background and (2) the competence profile of elementary school English teachers in Surabaya related to their understanding on the 2013 Curriculum and its components such as basic competences, syllabus, lesson plan, teaching techniques/methods, learning media and materials, and assessment. [11] states that descriptive research is research that describes the state of a phenomenon within a certain period of time. The

subjects of this study were 284 elementary school English teachers who are from five areas of Surabaya subdivisions, namely west, east, north, south and central Surabaya. While the data in this study were the accurate information related to those elementary school English teachers' identity, gender, their employment status (*PNS/Non-PNS*), class, certification status, school identity status (public or private), and educational background. In addition, information related to their understanding on the 2013 Curriculum and its components were also needed in this study. To assist the process of data collection, the researchers used questionnaires as the research instrument in this study. After the data were collected, the researcher then classified those data, analyzed, interpreted the data, and reported and described the research finding based on the data analysis.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. The Profile of Elementary School English Teachers in Surabaya

In this part the profile of elementary school English teachers in Surabaya in terms of their employment status, class, certification status, school identity status, and educational background are described further.

##### 3.1.1. Employment Status

**Table 1.** Employment status

Employment Status	The number	Percentage
Civil servant ( <i>PNS</i> )	28	10%
Non-civil servant ( <i>non-PNS</i> )	256	90%
Total number	284	100%

Table 1 shows that there are two types of employment status: civil servant and non-civil servant. Among 284 elementary school English teachers who became the research respondents of this study, only a small number of them have *PNS* status (i.e. 28 teachers/10%), while the others (i.e. 256 teachers/90%) are still non-civil servant (*non-PNS*) even though they have long devoted themselves to teaching in state elementary schools. In line with the employment status,

those 28 teachers are in the third group of civil servant group (*Golongan III*). While referring to the age, almost half of the respondents is between 30-40 years, and the rest are over 40 years old, only a small number of them are under 30 years old.

##### 3.1.2. Certification Status

In relation to teacher's certification (*sertifikasi guru*), as stated in the Government Regulation no. 74 of 2008, teachers will be regarded as professional teachers if they have followed a series of teacher training on certification and got their certificates. Unfortunately, only few teachers have joined the training and got their certificates. The following table is the research finding on elementary school English teachers' certification status.

**Table 2.** Certification status

Cerification Status	The number	Percentage
Certified Teachers	28	10%
Not certified Teachers	256	90%
Total number	284	100%

From Table 2 above, it was clearly shown that only 28 teachers (10%) have been certified, while the rest (256 teachers/90%) have not certified yet. It can be concluded that the process of elementary school English teachers' certification in Surabaya runs slowly. This condition should be considered by the government, especially the government of Surabaya, where career recognition as a professional teacher is very needed by those elementary school English teachers.

##### 3.1.3. School Identity Status

Table 3 below shows that all 284 teachers teach English at state elementary schools in Surabaya. By referring to Table 1 (Employment Status) and Table 2 (Certification Status), it was basically an irony for the elementary school English teachers, in the sense that only 28 teachers (10%) were civil servant and certified. While the rest (256 teachers) were non-civil servant (*non-PNS*) and not certified, whereas those 256 teachers have been teaching English for a long time at state elementary schools in five areas of Surabaya. This

condition is again should be taken into account by the government of Surabaya.

**Table 3.** School identity status

Areas of Surabaya	School Identity Status	
	State Elementary Schools	Private Elementary Schools
Central Surabaya	68	0
North Surabaya	46	0
East Surabaya	62	0
West Surabaya	57	0
South Surabaya	51	0
The Number	284	0
Percentage	100.0%	0.0%
Total Number	284	

**3.1.4. Educational Background**

Basically, the elementary school English teachers at least have an educational background of S1 (Bachelor of Education). The following table describes the research finding on elementary school English teachers' educational background.

**Table 4.** Educational background

Areas of Surabaya	Educational Background				
	D1	D2	D3	S1	S2
Central Surabaya	0	1	1	63	3
North Surabaya	0	0	0	46	0
East Surabaya	0	0	1	60	1
West Surabaya	0	0	0	57	0
South Surabaya	0	0	0	48	3
The Number	0	1	2	274	7
Percentage	0.0%	0.4%	0.7%	96.5%	2.5%
Total Number	284				

From the table above, it was shown that almost all elementary school English teachers in Surabaya (274 teachers/96,5%) have an educational background of S1 (Bachelor of Education). It means that those teachers have fulfilled the minimum requirement of educational background that elementary school English teacher should have. Even, 7 teachers (2,5%) have Master degree. From this condition, the government should take an action by upgrading their employment and certification status in order to be professional teacher.

**3.2. The Elementary School English Teachers' Competence in Understanding the 2013 Curriculum and Its Components**

From the results or research findings, it was said that mostly the elementary school English teachers in Surabaya lack of knowledge and understanding on the 2013 Curriculum and its components such as basic competences, syllabus, lesson plan, teaching techniques/methods, learning media and materials, and assessment. It was proven by the large number of elementary school English teachers in Surabaya (i.e. 214 teachers/77, 5%) who still used *KTSP* (2006 Curriculum) in the teaching-learning process. Besides,

the lack of socialization and training on the 2013 National Curriculum also make them lack of understanding on the 2013 National Curriculum. In addition, there is no obligation from the government to employ the 2013 National Curriculum in the process of teaching and learning English in elementary schools. As a consequence, they cannot develop lesson plan which is based on 2013 Curriculum. Further, they cannot formulate the indicators and learning objectives from the basic competences they have chosen.

Related to teaching techniques or teaching methods, based on the research finding, the majority of the elementary school English teachers in Surabaya applied less varied and monotonous teaching techniques or teaching methods, such as role play, listen and repeat, dictation, group discussion, and storytelling. Besides, there were some teachers who did not know the name of the teaching technique or methods they were applying at the time. Other than that, they also rarely applied techniques or methods of creative learning such as Cooperative learning, Total Physical Response, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), games, songs, etc.

Like the teaching techniques or teaching methods, in developing the learning materials, the elementary school English teachers in Surabaya were also still not "brave and creative" in varying the learning materials they have developed. Most of them used the learning materials from printed instructional materials (books/modules/BSE) and delivered them based on the 2006 Curriculum. While for the assessment, they still have difficulties in implementing authentic assessment, particularly in employing informal process assessment. In addition, they still have difficulties in developing the rubric for product assessment.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the research finding and the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that in general, the elementary school English teachers in Surabaya have fulfilled the minimum requirement of educational background that elementary school English teacher should have, that is having an educational background of S1 (Bachelor of Education). Unfortunately, many of them were non-civil servant (*non-PNS*) and not certified, whereas those teachers have been teaching English for a long time at state elementary schools in five areas of Surabaya. Seeing this condition, the government should take an action by upgrading their employment and certification status in order to be

professional teacher. In addition, workshops, teacher trainings and socializations on 2013 National Curriculum should be given to them in order to have better knowledge and understanding on the 2013 National Curriculum and its components.

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