

**Junior High School Student's Strategies in the Preparation for English  
National Examination**

*A Skripsi*

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## **Abstract**

There are two kinds of assessment which are formative assessment and summative assessment. This study only focuses on summative assessment that is national examination in one of junior high school in Yogyakarta. Therefore, the researcher was very interested in doing the research on what strategies used by junior high school students to prepare national examination. This research aims to explore how the students implement the strategies to prepare the English national examination. To achieve the goals of this research, the researcher adopted qualitative approach as research design. This research was conducted in junior high school in Yogyakarta and the researcher also selected three students who would face the English national examination as the participants. The researcher chose those three students because they were able to provide much information about strategies to prepare for the national exam in English and they were also able to provide the information about the implementation of the strategies used. The researcher also had three categories in determining the participants for this study. The categories are excellent, good, and poor student. The three students were chosen based on their report card grades. In collecting the data, interview was used in this study as the instrument of the research. The finding showed that there are three strategies used by students when facing national examination. Those are joining an English private course, learning English with audio visual media, practicing exam questions.

*Keyword* : Assessment, National Examination, Students Strategies.

## **Background of the Study**

Assessment is one of the things that always exist in a language teaching process. According to Brown (2003), assessment in language teaching is an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain. On the other hand, National Examination or in Indonesia it is called *Ujian Nasional (UN)* is still debatable. According to Sugianto (2016), in the point of view of people generally, they said that it is not fair for certain students and schools in remote areas if National Examination is used for educational decision whether students pass or fail. National Examination is the exam to measure students' ability in study during three years. According to Febriarhm (2012), national exam is a test to determine whether students can pass and continue to higher education. In other words, the exam is held to know the students' ability.

Related to the researcher's experience. When she was in junior high school, she found that the students' score of English national examination is always less than the standard of national examination. For example, at that time the minimum score was 6 but the student only got five or four. In addition, during the English national examination, students must achieve graduation standards. They must not get a low score or not reach the target because it will affect the next level. When students want to continue to high school, the student's national examination score must meet the school standard or at least they are able to achieve graduation score. Since 2014/2015 academic year until 2017/2018 academic year, the average score cannot reach the graduation target. One of junior high schools only got 5.0 and it did not reach the average score, although the national examination score from 2014-2017 was 5.5. It can be concluded that the junior high school cannot reach the passing grade.

Based on the researcher's experience, it could be seen that the students prepare many things to pass national examination for English subjects. They also must think about how they can achieve the standardized score to be able to continue to the next level. Therefore, the

researcher was very interested in doing the research on what strategies used by junior high school students to prepare national examination. So, the purpose of this study is to explore how the students implement the strategies to prepare the English national examination.

## **Methodology**

To achieve the goals of this research, the researcher adopted qualitative approach as research design. This research was conducted in junior high school in Yogyakarta and the researcher also selected three students who would face the English national examination as the participants. The researcher chose those three students because they were able to provide much information about strategies to prepare for the national exam in English and they were also able to provide the information about the implementation of the strategies used. The researcher also had three categories in determining the participants for this study. The categories are excellent, good, and poor student. The three students were chosen based on their report card grades. In collecting the data, interview was used in this study as the instrument of the research.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Strategies to Prepare English National Examination.**

**Joining a private English course.** Private course is a place that accommodate additional lessons for students outside the lessons in their school. Private course usually closer to the students so they know what are the difficulties that the students have. Usually joining a private course was an activity normally carried out by students who would face an exam. Joining a private course was also one of the strategies carried out by the first and the second participants named Tulip and Mawar. This can help students to increase their knowledge other than what they usually get in the school environment. Relating to that fact,

joining a private English course was proved by two participants. Tulip mentioned, “I’m joining private course at one of the place for tutoring”. It was also mentioned by Mawar. Mawar said, “I am joining English course that near from my home have English lesson”. This finding is supported by University of Sheffield (2015) who mentioned that taking classes outside of school hours can help students improve the results of the subjects being tested. Attending additional classes outside of school hours can also help improve students' abilities. Both in terms of improving classroom understanding or increasing the ability to express ideas in written assignments, having great language skills will empower students to do their best. Both of these participants also explained the time they spent on private lessons. Tulip mentioned that “I usually take English lessons twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays, usually when Tuesday is taught many vocabularies with the tutor. On Thursday I usually discuss as many questions as I can with my tutor”. While, Mawar said that “when for English lessons I usually do one to two times a week, if I do a lot of activities at school until the afternoon I usually only tutored on Saturdays in the afternoon. When I study, usually my tutor and I discuss more examples of English language exercises.” So it can be said that they usually get these tutoring lessons twice a week or even just once a week. First, they increased the English vocabulary. Secondly, they more often discuss the practice of speaking English.

**Learning English with audio visual media.** Besides getting new knowledge when joining English private course, there are other strategies to face national exams in terms of improving student vocabulary. Audio and visual media in education are usually in the form of learning videos and also sound recordings that used to learn new vocabulary. Not only used to learn new vocabulary but also can provide moral values and life for students. The second and third participants revealed that listen to English songs, watching English films and speak English can help them improve their vocabulary. Mawar said, “to be more understanding, listen to English songs while looking at the lyrics”. Listening to English music while looking

at the lyrics can help the second participant to understand the meaning of the song and also get a new vocabulary from the song being listened to. In addition, Nona mentioned, "I often listen to English music, because later on in the National Examination there is a listening section, and I also practice it because if it is not reproduced I often forget". Nona added that "I sometimes forget the vocabulary that I hear from the music I like, so sometimes I make small notes and I stick them on the wall of my room or I make notes on my cell phone". From the statements above, it can be seen that listening to English songs can also train listening skills, because on the national exam they will get a listening sheet. Related to those statements Ardhila (2015) also mentioned that in the activity of listening to a song, students will not only be able to focus on the essence of vocabulary, grammar, and other specific information from the song being heard, but also make listening activities more enjoyable, effective, and can also achieve the desired learning goals.

In addition, watching English movies is also effective in adding vocabularies and listening skills. Mawar mentioned, "I sometimes watch English films with their meanings". Mawar also added that, "I know that watching an English-language film will help me even a little, finding interesting vocabulary in my opinion is something fun, I sometimes write it down in the paper when I watch or in my note book". Watching English films will help students understand the meaning of the film itself and the meaning of difficult words they find. In this fact Safranji (2015) said that using movies is proven to increase vocabulary for students and this is one effective way to practice listening skills.

**Practicing previous exam questions.** Another strategy that is very common for students who will take part in the national exam is to practice the previous year exam questions. Usually, students are given the previous year exam questions because it can ease students to see examples of questions that will come out or students can also guess what questions will come out on their exams later. They usually get these questions from school because the

school sometimes stores questions that were tested in the previous year. These exam questions are also easy for students to get, such as from exam preparation books or the internet. This strategy was mentioned by all participants. Tulip mentioned, “practice on exam questions just it”. In addition, Tulip also said, “the questions that I got from tutoring, I studied at home, I wrote the vocabulary in a small book”. Thus, it can be concluded that Tulip did not only study the exam questions given but Tulip also recorded it and recalled the new vocabulary obtained from the exam questions that were done.

## **Conclusion**

National Examination is the exam to measure students’ ability in study during three years. According to Febriarhm (2012), national exam is a test to determine whether students can pass and continue to higher education. In other words, the exam is held to know the students’ ability. Because the national exam to measure the ability of students, so students must have several strategies to face the national exam.

This research concluded that there are three strategies to face English National Examination. The first strategy is joining English private course. Joining English private course can help students increase their vocabulary. Private course is a place to study which is outside the school that normally helps students to achieve good national exam scores. Usually these tutoring place does not only help students to achieve good grades on the exam but it also helps in daily learning and shares tips and tricks in answering exam questions.

Second strategy is learning English with audio visual media. Learning with audio visual media has good benefits for students who will take the national exam. Student can add their vocabulary with listening or new stories they watch. Furthermore, in addition to a number of these things students are also able to translate their vocabulary by listening to songs, playing movies, and speaking English in their daily lives.

Third strategy is practicing exam questions. This strategy is very common for students who will take part in the national exam are to practice the previous year exam questions. Usually, students are given the previous year exam questions because it can ease students to see examples of questions that will come out or students can also guess what questions will come out on their exams later. They usually get these questions from school because the school sometimes stores questions that were tested in the previous year.

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