

## STUDENTS' VIEWS ON LEARNING ENGLISH AT SMAS ISEN MULANG PALANGKA RAYA

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### Abstract

English is the most commonly used international language in many parts of the world, including Indonesia. It is used in economic, social, political, artistic, scientific, and educational fields. The importance of English today is the reason why this foreign language must be taught at the school level from an early age. The government in Indonesia has also issued regulations to develop English, especially in the field of education. This study aims to find out students' views on English and the relevance of English for students' academic and career goals. The subjects of this study were 4 students from class XI of SMAS Isen Mulang Palangka Raya. Data were collected through observation and interview. The result of this study shows that students perceive that learning English is important and beneficial for them. In addition, this language also supports them in their future academic and their future careers goals.

**Keywords:** *Students' Views, English, SMAS Isen Mulang Palangka Raya*

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### Introduction

English is a foreign language that, in its significance, acts as the most commonly used international language in various parts of the world for economic, social, political, artistic, educational, and scientific purposes. With this language, people from different countries can communicate and understand each other (Getie, 2020;



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Bayar, 2021). According to Kosimov (2022) As the most dominant language in the world, English does not belong to one country alone, but to everyone who uses the language. The more the world is globalized, the role of English will increase. The ability to speak English is an urgency for everyone, since in this era, English is a means of communication on a global scale and can be a superior point in competing with others, moreover, in some countries English language skills are needed to get a job both in business and government (Isnaini & Aminatun, 2021; Kosimov, 2022). English, as an international language which is also seen as a lingua franca throughout the world is certainly a bridge that connects various people from all over the world so that they can exchange knowledge without language barriers (Kosimov, 2022; Hananuraga, 2022).

In Indonesia, English has a position as a foreign language and it is not a first or second language (Andika & Mardiana, 2023; Yulizar et al., 2023). In Indonesia, this language is widely used everywhere, both in the fields of socioeconomics, international politics, technology, to education, this proves that English in Indonesia is a must for every citizen (Rahayu, 2023; Hananuraga, 2022) As a global society that is now unhindered by distance and time, using English can be a door for Indonesians to interact with foreign countries in various parts of the world (Alfarisy, 2021).

The importance of English today is the reason why this foreign language must be taught at school level from an early age. The government in Indonesia also issued regulations to develop English especially in the field of education with the aim that all residents can have English language skills and ensure that this ability can improve their lives (Hananuraga, 2022). Although English is necessary to learn, there are various factors that become obstacles in learning this foreign language, such as the absence of English subjects in elementary schools due to the elimination of English subjects at the basic education level set by the government in the 2013 curriculum, limited access to technology and the internet in various regions in Indonesia, lack of English class hours in schools, and different economic backgrounds of each community. As a result, not everyone is able to join English tutoring programs.

In addition, Alfarisy (2020) also stated that the government in this country has a slogan to prioritize Indonesian, preserve regional languages, and master foreign languages. From this slogan, it can be concluded that the government requires all people to master English, but the absence of English subjects at the primary school level and the lack of hours for English subjects in schools certainly hinder the formation of Indonesian citizens as global citizens.

In the view of students, especially at the high school level, English is a language that plays an important role in their future. Dwinalida & Setiaji (2022) conducted a study about students' motivation and their achievement in learning English. Their subject were 100 students of senior high school. This study found that the majority of students wanted to learn English because they wanted to get a good grade in English subject, they will feel proud if they can speak English, and lastly, they wanted to understand movie, video, or program in English language. It can be concluded that student perceive English as a good subject to learn at their school. Even though English is a foreign language, students felt the urge to have the skill of English language. Students believed that English language skills will support them in some aspects of their lives, mainly in academic or future career purposes (Nolaputri et al., 2025).

SMAS Isen Mulang Palangka Raya is one of private schools in Palangka Raya. Majority of the students enrolled in this school come from the regions outside Palangka Raya, with their diverse background. The researchers believed that they have their own views on the importance of learning English. Based on this, the researchers conducted interviews with grade 11 students of SMAS Isen Mulang; thus, this research aims to find out their views of learning English.

Based on the description of the background, the researchers formulate the research problems as "What is the students' view toward learning English as a foreign language?" and "How do students perceive the relevance of learning English to their future academic or career goals?". From this study, there are several targets that the researchers want to achieve, such as knowing students' views on English and students' views on the relevance of learning English to their future academic or career goals.

## Research Methods

### *Design*

In this study, researchers used qualitative descriptive methods. Qualitative research not only explores but also understands social and humanitarian problems experienced by individuals or groups. Furthermore, Abdussamad (2021) stated that qualitative research is an approach to a phenomenon or symptom that is basic and naturalistic or in other words naturalistic. In this study, the researchers aim to find out students' views in depth about learning English based on their background, environment, and life experiences. In addition, this study also aims to find out how important English is for students for their future.

### ***Participants***

The participants in this study came from class 11 MIPA SMAS Isen Mulang Palangka Raya. This study involved 4 students to be interviewed who were selected through purposive sampling based on their active participation in class.

### ***Instrument***

The techniques to collect the data in this study include participant observation which was conducted for approximately 3 months while one of the researchers was teaching in the classroom, observations were made to find out the habits and behavior of students, students' participation and activity during learning English in class. In-depth interviews in the form of semi-structured interviews were conducted to find out students' views on English. In addition, thematic analysis was used to find out the pattern of students' responses to the questions given so that it made it easier for researchers to conclude the results of this study. Finally, data triangulation which all aim to provide an understanding of students' views on learning English. These methods were chosen so that the research could explore the students' views in depth.

### ***Data Collection***

The process of collecting data in qualitative research is tentative, because its use is determined by the context of the problem and the description of the data to be obtained (Syamsuddin et al., 2023). Collecting qualitative data is related to a systematic process for collecting non-numerical data related to a person's experience, behavior, and social context (Dinda et al., 2025). In this study, the researcher conducted classroom observations for approximately 3 months. The observations were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the students' traits, behaviors and interactions in the school environment. Student Observation helped to provide a holistic picture of the real conditions experienced by the students. In-depth interviews in this study used semi-structured interviews. There were 9 questions designed to find out the students' views in depth and specifically. The questions were related to the students' backgrounds and their opinions on the importance of English for their future. The interview sessions were conducted using Indonesian language to facilitate the students in answering the questions. The data analysis technique used to analyze the students' responses in this study is the Interactive model of analysis. Miles et al (2014) stated that the interactive model consists of four flows that occur simultaneously, namely data condensation, data display, drawing and verification. Thematic analysis was used to examine or test the data from the

interviews with the aim of finding out common themes or patterns from the students' responses. This helped to find out the specifics of students' views on learning English and the relevance of English for students' futures. Triangulation was used to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings. Through interviews, participant observation, thematic analysis, and data triangulation the research was able to portray diverse views of students based on their experiences in learning English.

### **Data analysis**

In this study, the researcher analyzed the data using Interactive model as suggested by Miles et al (2014). In data condensation, the data collected through interviews and observations were examined and reviewed carefully. After the data were obtained, the researchers identified the most relevant information to the formulation of the research problem, the data were displayed in the form of texts and tables. After that the conclusion were drawn based on the patterns identified using thematic analysis. Finally, the researchers would cross-check data from several sources (observation and interview) to ensure validity and reliability.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Results**

The findings of this study provide an in-depth perspective of the students regarding learning English. Through semi-structured interviews, the 4 students gave various views on English as a foreign language.

#### **1. Student's identity**

Based on the Interview, students stated that they came from regions outside Palangka Raya to continue their education in this city. Two students mentioned their home town and how long they have settled in Palangka Raya. One student said, *"I was born in Batu Puter, Gunung Mas. When I was in junior high school, I moved to Palangka Raya city and settled with my guardian, I have lived here for about 6 years."* Another student then expressed, *"I was born in Bejarum, Kota Besi. I have been living with my parents in Palangka Raya for almost a year."* Based on the responses, it demonstrates the great diversity seen in SMAS Isen Mulang which is the majority of the students enrolled in this school came from different regions and had a different background of their life.

#### **2. Students' educational background**

In this school, students all had a different educational background. All four students reported that they attended school in their hometown up until they graduated from elementary school, and they also explained why they

chose to continue their education in this school. One student mentioned, *"I began my education at Tumbang Masukih Kindergarten and continued at SD 2 Tumbang Masukih till I moved to Palangka Raya city and enrolled at SMP 3. I chose Isen Mulang Senior High School since my guardian recommended this school for me."* Another student then added, *"I attended kindergarten and elementary school in Gunung Mas before moving on to Palangka Raya's Pancasila Junior High School. I transferred from SMA Karya to SMAS Isen Mulang since my house is closer to this high school."*

Based on the participants' responses, it is known that students moved to Palangka raya during their junior high school years. After graduating from junior high, they chose this high school based on the recommendation of their guardians. Additionally, students chose this school because it is close to their house.

3. Are there any activities you do outside of school hours to improve your English?

To improve their English outside the school hours, students chose fun learning activity that is most suitable for them. When asked, students agreed that they love learning English through western media such as music, comics or fairy tales and western dramas. One student revealed, *"I like to learn grammar through listening songs in English."* Another student mentioned that they love learning English through reading an English book and social media, *"From reading comics and listening to foreigners' video conversations on Facebook."*

It can be concluded that students tend to learn by reading and listening from English media. They know that learning shouldn't burden them and instead should be something more enjoyable to do. By doing the fun activities they clearly love, student will improve their English without being pressured.

4. What do you think about the learning, facilities and resources at SMAS Isen Mulang?

Some of the factors to create a comfortable learning atmosphere for the students are the learning materials are easy to understand, a good resources of learning media and good facilities also support the success of learning in the classroom. All four students stated that the learning materials were good and easy to understand. One student revealed, *"I understand the material clearly."* Regarding the media and facilities in the school, two students said that it was good, while the other two students said that this still need to be improved. *"The media and facilities to support English learning still need to be improved."* said one student.



Based on the students' responses, it can be seen that they can understand the materials presented easily and without problems. In terms of media and facilities, although this part is already relatively good, there is still room for improvement to support the learning process to be even better.

5. What do you think is the purpose of learning English at school?

Students certainly have their own purposes that they want to achieve when learning English at school, knowing the goals that students want to achieve will certainly help teachers in the English learning process. Students' responses show that the reason they learn English is because they want to be able to communicate with foreigners and also increase their knowledge. As expressed by one student, *"To be able to speak foreign languages so that in the future, we can be friends with foreigners."* Meanwhile, two other students learnt English in order to broaden their knowledge and help them in their next level of education *"To increase my knowledge, it will help me in the university level."* As noted by another student.

Based on the findings above, students believed that learning English at school has the sole purpose of teaching them to be able to communicate with people from other countries, and they also believed that English provides new knowledge and will help them in their next level of education.

6. Why is English important to learn?

English is an important language to learn, and students agree with this. *"Learning other people's languages allows us to socialize with people from other countries and work with them."* As expressed by the one student. Another student then added, *"We will definitely use English in our job in the future."*

Based on the responses above, it is clear that all students agreed that English is important to learn. All of them believed that in the future, they can travel abroad which requires them to use English to communicate with foreigners. Furthermore, learning English will help student to find a job in the future since majority of jobs out there require this skill. Therefore, it can be concluded that English holds significant importance in both social and professional settings.

7. What do you think are the uses/benefits of English in everyday life?

In daily life, there are many benefits of English such as no language barrier when enjoying outside media. Students believed that learning English gives significant benefits. English provides new knowledge for students. It also allows students to consume media in many languages without worrying

about language barriers. One student mentioned, *"It helps me understand foreign films or songs."* Then another student added that English helps them to understand foreign media that they are interested in. *"It helps in understanding the vocabulary in the learning book, and when I listen to English song, I can understand the meaning of the lyrics."*

Students responded that English really helps them to enjoy and understand foreign media such as films, books and songs. They argued that English can't be separated from daily life because it is always everywhere near them.

#### 8. What efforts do you make to improve your English language skills?

In learning English, students have their own efforts in order to master this language with fun way without having to think about whether they are good enough or not. As said by one student who learnt English from writing activities, *"By writing and also memorizing vocabulary, it makes me more proficient in mastering English."* Another student then expressed that they learnt public speaking through watching an English film, *"I practiced public speaking from watching English film, also by reading English comics or fairy tales"*

Based from the answers above, students improve their English language skills through many different ways. They practiced through writing something in English then memorizing vocabulary from what they wrote. In addition, they also read comics with English translations, not only that, participants also practiced public speaking from watching the conversations in English films.

#### 9. How do you see the usefulness of English for your future?

English is very useful for students in their future, all the four students expressed their positive views toward English for their future. English will help student to expand their connections to people from all over the world, they will be able to communicate with people from different countries when they travel abroad. Moreover, English will also help students in their academic and future career, it will be very beneficial for students to have English skill. One student revealed that English played significant role to spread Indonesian culture, *"English will be useful for me to introduce the culture of my own country. I can expand my knowledge and insight about the other countries in various parts of the world."* Another student noted having English skill in the career field is important, *"English will be very useful for helping me in finding a job in the future."*

Based on the responses of the students, it can be concluded that English is very useful and important for their future. Students expressed that



English can help them share their own cultures to one country to another and it will also help them to expand their knowledge of other countries out there. In addition, they all also have dreams of going abroad. Furthermore, students realized that many jobs now require the worker to have English skill. As a results students viewed that English is worth learning, and they aimed to be able to communicate and socialize with foreigners in the future.

### ***Discussion***

The findings of this study depict a clear understanding in how students, particularly in SMAS Isen Mulang Palangka Raya view English as a foreign language that they need to learn. English learning is well received by students and this statement is supported by their positive responses and opinions regarding English learning they have received so far. In this section, the researchers will discuss the findings in more detail and explore a further information regarding students views on learning English.

The majority of the students who enrolled in the school came from the regions outside of Palangka Raya, making SMAS Isen Mulang different from the other schools because its unique diversity. Student mostly moved in Palangka Raya once they finished their Elementary school. They pursued their high school in here based on what their guardians recommended, though some of them also said that they choose this school because it is the closest one to their house. When asked about the English Learning process at their school, students expressed that it is already good and most of them are able to understand the material given clearly. As for the learning resources and facilities, some argue that it is still need some improvement to support the learning process.

In terms of learning English, students have various way to learn English in the most comfortable way. They learn English through western music, comics or fairy tales in English and even by watching western dramas. This actually proved that English are everywhere and used in many kinds of form, as emphasized by Getie (2020) that English plays a significant role in different areas worldwide, it is used in many kinds of book whether fiction or non-fiction and audio-visual cultural products such as film, television and music. By learning English student did not have to worry about language barriers when they encounter a western media. This align with what Kosimov (2022) argue in their research which stated that English is a bridge that connect various people over the world in order to exchange knowledge without having to worry about language barriers.

Furthermore, students also mentioned their purpose on learning English. Many of them agreed that the sole purpose of learning English is

being able to communicate with a people from other countries and further their knowledge for their next education in the future. This supported the research by Alfariy (2021) which claimed that English is a door that helped people to interact with people from foreign countries. Additionally, the research by Rahayu (2023) found out that English is widely used in education, which is why it is very important to learn English at school.

This study revealed the Importance of English for students. English holds a significant role in everyday life. Students believed that English is important since they wished to go to other countries someday in the future, by learning English they will surely able to socialize with foreigners. English also plays a great role in their career path as emphasized by Nolaputri et al (2025) students viewed English as a good subject to learn at their school. They felt the urge to have the skill of English language in order to support them in some aspects of their lives, mainly in academic or future career purposes. Besides, students also interacted with English anytime since it is everywhere near them, they will find it in songs, books, films or anything. That's why learning English is very important.

Students certainly always tried to improve their English skill. As mentioned before, students mostly learn through western media such as reading a comic book or listening to a song in English. Another method that they do is through writing English sentences while also memorizing the vocabulary. All of these methods will help students to enjoy their learning process and making them face less problem when learning English.

Lastly, students expressed that English is very useful to support their life, mainly in their academic aspect and career future. Every student stated that they viewed English as something very important in their life, it is a bridge and door to every opportunity to expand their knowledge and making their dream of travelling to other countries possible. English is also something that will light their future career parts as many jobs now required English skill, with their skill in English student will surely have their own good advantages in career field.

## Conclusion

Students' views on learning English indicated that all participants agreed that language is important and worth learning. There are many benefits of learning English such as being able to communicate with foreign nationals, enjoy media such as films, songs, comics and others in English. By learning this language, the possibility to go abroad is also wider. English will be very helpful in communicating and socializing with foreign citizens without language barriers. Furthermore, in this day many jobs require their prospective workers to have English skill, as a result, English is a very

superior skill. Hence why it will be very beneficial for students' academic and career goals. Therefore, it can be concluded from the students' views, learning English is very important to support their academic and helping them in their future job.

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