

# The Impact of the Zoning System on the Professional Development of English Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

Progress in a person's life can be seen based on the level of knowledge they have. Education is one way to help people reach their full potential both academically and non-academically so they can fulfill the essential functions and goals of national education. The study aimed to determine the impact of the zoning system on learning English and the challenges for English teachers when the zoning system was implemented at SMPN 1 Langsa. This study used a qualitative method using an ethnographic approach. This research was conducted at SMPN 1 Langsa with the subject of three English teachers. The data collection techniques used were observation and interviews. The results showed that: 1) The teaching and learning process is not conducive due to the lack of student discipline in learning. 2) The lack of politeness of students when talking to teachers in class. 3) The lack of student motivation to learn English. This research also showed that the challenges for English teachers during the implementation of this zoning system are that teachers must be more assertive in managing students, be extra in teaching students from the basics again in order to achieve learning objectives, and must conduct inclusive education training to deal with students with special needs.

**Keywords:** *Zoning System; Education; Professional Development; English Teacher; challenges.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is a process that begins from the time we are born until the end of our lives. The early stages of life are very important as they influence later processes. However, we cannot fully control it as children remain under the care of their families until they start school. Even if children study at school there are also many factors that can affect their education, such as friends inside and out of school. Schools can encourage bad conduct, knowledge can be misused badly, and learning can be bad, but education should be good. One's behavior is influenced by the kind of school they attend Bruner, (2009).

Durkheim asserted that education is the influence experienced by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life Durkheim, (1956). We can conclude that the main purpose of education is to help children develop intellectual skills and improve

their physical abilities. They should also be motivated at school to acquire good moral values. Another definition of education is the act, practice, or application of discipline to the intellect or a process of character training.

Progress in a person's life can be seen based on the level of knowledge they have. Education is one way to help people reach their full potential both academically and non-academically so they can fulfill the essential functions and goals of national education, which includes educating the people of the country. Education itself can be defined as an experience or life. The quality of life can be impacted by education, making it a very significant aspect of existence. Particularly because technology growth is advancing so quickly, everyone must be able to stay up if they do not want to fall behind Blossfeld & Von Maurice, (2019).

The government has introduced a new regulation, namely the implementation of a zoning system written in *Permendikbud* No. 14 of 2018. New Students' Admission which emphasizes the distance or radius between the student's residence. Therefore, it makes prospective students accepted no longer because of consideration of test scores but because the location of the house is close to the school. This allows people to access education more easily. Therefore, education equality in all aspects can be fulfilled.

Zoning systems for new student admission are implemented based on several factors, including non-discrimination, being objective, transparent, accountable, and fair. Through the concept of effectiveness, efforts to evaluate the zoning system's implementation process can be achieved Chozin et al., (2025). This concept is one of the criteria used to decide whether or not the concept and management of admissions for prospective students need to be significantly changed.

The zoning system is a system that has run since 2017, which is expected to eliminate the dichotomy of favorite and non-favorite schools. The fundamental objective of Indonesia's zoning system is to guarantee that all pupils receive an equitable education. The government's zoning system actually differs from the expectations the community has. This is because of a general desire among parents to send their kids to reputable institutions. Furthermore, the primary determinant of school preference is the school's favorite level. This shows the difference between the goals of the government and the expectations of the community in terms of school choice through the zoning system regulations.

Regardless of whether they get the finest academic results or not, the majority of parents want to enroll their kids in these popular schools that are highly regarded in society. Khairina, (2021) But on the other hand, this situation could reduce the quality of the schools that were initially listed as the favorite labeled schools. Variations in students' academic levels will lead to a decrease in school achievement. This is a consequence of the zoning system's priority for residential areas rather than academic excellence.

The difference between the zoning system of this year and 2017, the zoning system of this year applies to all schools organized by the regional administration. Meanwhile, the 2017 (New Students' Admission System) zoning system is still in the adaptive stage, so it is deeply practical, not all schools are implementing this system. According to

Andina, she asserted that many problems in implementing this zoning were caused by three things. Firstly, not enough outreach has been carried out to school principals and community leaders, but apparently not enough has been done to parents. Second, there are still technical problems, especially at the online selection stage for accepting new students. Lastly, there are still high disparities in quality between schools. Apriyanti & Trihantoyo, (2022).

In this new regulation according to Article 20 at point (1), zoning is determined at each level by the regional government in accordance with its authority, with the principle of bringing the domicile of students closer to the school Setiawan et al., (2022). It means that regional governments can have the authority to make school zoning that can consider the radius or distance between schools and the level of population density in their respective regions. This is because each region has different characteristics that are unequal in quality and access to education so that those who can identify these are the local governments themselves.

### **1. Zoning System**

The implementation of the admission of new students with a zoning system is carried out based on several principles, including:

#### **(1) Non-discrimination**

Non-discrimination means guaranteeing every child the opportunity to enjoy the right to education without discrimination based on disability, gender, ethnicity, religion, or parental background. The quality of education in this country must be equitable. The mindset and concept of favoritism or 'casteism' in education must be changed. So, despite this zoning system, it is hoped that all students can make friends without seeing differences.

#### **(2) Objective**

Assessing learners' learning outcomes is a teacher's duty that is inherent in learning. An assessment must be objective. An objective assessment can provide the right information regarding students' learning progress as material to diagnose learning difficulties and stimulate them to make corrective efforts. Teachers are expected to act objectively, assessing students according to their abilities, not the results of manipulation or engineering.

#### **(3) Transparent**

Transparency is something that has no hidden intentions, is accompanied by the availability of complete information needed for collaboration and cooperation, and is free, clear, and open. The term transparency in schools refers to a condition in which all people who are related to the interests of education can know the process and results of school decision-making and policies. Transparency must be clear and without any fabrication by the school. Schools should provide information that is true and trustworthy to the public.

#### **(4) Accountable**

The concept of educational accountability can be interpreted as the responsibility of educational institutions (schools or educational institutions) to achieve educational goals. Maryono, (2018) Educational accountability is a study of what has been done by

the school with the funds that have been used and the learning outcomes obtained. Education accountability can also be understood as accountability for the success of the teaching and learning process.

**(5) Fair**

The principle of fairness is one of the objectives of replacing the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation (Permendikbud) on the New Student Admission at every level of education Reviandi et al., (2024).

The zoning system policy's situation therefore creates advantages and disadvantages based on the acceptance of new students. The advantages of the zoning system in the admission of new students are:

- a. Every school has an equal percentage of excellent students.
- b. Allows private and public schools to fulfill the student registration quota.
- c. Can reduce the number of students who drop out of school, because of the ease of enrolling in the nearest school.
- d. The cost burden borne by parents is getting smaller because the school is located close to where they live.
- e. Parents can easily supervise their children during the teaching and learning process at schools close to their homes.

The disadvantages of the zoning system itself are:

- a. Students' motivation to learn is lacking because the chances of being accepted at a nearby school are greater and students no longer have a target to get into a top school;
- b. Students have limitations in registering to the school they want, as an example, students with low academic abilities will have difficulty following the learning, when schools that are near their homes are excellent schools.

Feberliantika et al., (2021).

The government has a target that equity is not only for access to education services, but also for the equal distribution of the quality of education. Muhamdijir Effendy also said that the zoning system is one of the strategies to accelerate equitable distribution of quality education. It is hoped that with the implementation of this zoning system, problems in the distribution of educational quality can be resolved.

In fact, with the implementation of New Students' Admission System, the favorite label of SMPN 1 (State Junior High School Number 1) could be in danger of being erased, if there is no improvement during this system. The zoning system at SMPN 1 Langsa has been implemented since 2021 until now. On the other hand, New Students' Admission System is a problem for teachers and students. In particular, English teachers at SMPN 1 Langsa who usually teach students with higher education, now have to teach students with various abilities and as well as new students who enter SMPN 1 which has long been called a favorite school.

Therefore, the teacher who is a communicator in the learning process in the classroom must be able to master the class. Teachers need professional development to develop themselves in terms of teaching and learning. Additionally, according to (Banks & Mayes, 2012), professional development enables teachers to maintain and improve

successful educational methods, be critically aware of educational policy, and advance their knowledge of societal developments, such as technological advancements. Avillanova & Kuswandono, (2019) Therefore, the teacher who is a communicator in the learning process in the classroom must be able to master the class. Teachers who used to teach students with high average abilities now have to teach students with low average scores and very diverse abilities.

## 2. Professional Development of English Teacher

Teachers are at the center of any educational endeavor. Teachers actively participate in their own professional development by designing pathways that are based on their preferences, beliefs and needs, and their perceived needs Díaz-Maggioli, (2004). The first advantage of this concept of professional development is that it appreciates the knowledge and competence of the teachers and their contributions to the institution. The changes that result from these experiences are profound and long-lasting and can be applied to broader contexts like the language classroom, students' quality of learning, and language teachers' personal lives. Second, the professional development experience arises from the teachers' interests, thus enabling the students to commit to them.

Twigg, (2003) The quality of learning is the level of learning success in achieving learning goals effectively and efficiently. Therefore, the quality of learning is the level of learning success in achieving learning goals. English is a second language that we should know now. This knowledge is needed everywhere: on vacation, at work, for personal purposes. Since English as an International language and it is spoken all over the world, English is also known as the global unifying language. English is one of the subjects taught to students from elementary to college. Rapidly developing technology in English-speaking countries has made British and American television programs, radio, films, records, and books available in all but the least developed countries. Half of the world's scholarly works are written in English. Therefore, English is often the only tool available for 20th-century learning.

As a second language, English is the language of mass media; newspapers, radio, and television are predominantly English-language media. English is also the language of official institutions—courts, local and central government, and education Owolabi & Nnaji, (2013). English is also the language of large commercial and industrial organizations. We can conclude, then, that a good command of English in a second language situation is a passport to social and economic advancement, and successful English users identify themselves as successful and integrated members of the language community. As a result, it is intended that all students in the school can learn English well. As we know, if we love the teacher who is teaching us, we also love the subject. Therefore, for teachers who teach must have the ability to make the classroom fun, so that students may receive lessons enthusiastically.

Based on this assumption, teachers should have more effort and innovation to be implemented in the learning process in order to obtain optimum learning outcomes especially in learning English subject. The Indonesian government needs to find out how to solve this to make the zoning system more effective. Based on the problems that have

been described above, this research is intended to examine "The Impact of The Zoning System on The Professional Development of English Teachers".

The researchers would like to find out what is the impact of the zoning system on learning English at SMPN 1 Langsa and the challenges for English teachers when the zoning system was implemented at SMPN 1 Langsa.

This research is expected to be used to provide our knowledge regarding the zoning system that has been implemented in every school in Indonesia. Moreover, it might add insight or knowledge for researchers as prospective English teachers to find out the impacts of the zoning system on the teaching and learning process.

## METHOD

This study used a qualitative method with an ethnography approach. A qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from people and behavior that can be observed Hasbalnikistan et al., (2020). Anjarwati, (2020) This study uses qualitative research methods with an ethnography approach. Ethnographic research often starts with choosing a field location. Ethnographic research can take place in many types of communities, including formal and informal organizations such as workplaces, urban communities, fan clubs, trade fares, shopping centers, and social media. Eriksson & Kovalainen, (2008).

This research was conducted at SMPN 1 Langsa, it is located in Langsa. The researchers chose this junior high school as the research location because SMPN 1 Langsa is one of the schools that apply this zoning system. A system that selects new students not from passing grades, but from the distance of the location of the student's home to the school. This school is also called the favorite school in Langsa, which could potentially be affected by the zoning system.

The research subjects are teachers of SMPN 1 Langsa. The sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling. The purposeful selection of a participant based on their personal characteristics is known as the "purposive sampling approach." It is a nonrandom approach that does not require underlying hypotheses or a certain quantity of participants. The researchers learn how to choose informants efficiently and wisely and to choose the level of analysis necessary to answer certain objectives. Tongco, (2007).

The instruments used in this research were observation and interview. The researchers visited a location to observe, analyze, and documented the things we observed. The researchers might have a better knowledge of how an activity is developing through observation. These techniques help researchers observed things that participants in an interview do not notice or mention. Moreover, it gave the researchers access to any information that participants might not have to discuss in an interview. The researchers observed in the class to find out the process of learning English. What to observe was being followed by the research questions.

Meanwhile interview is an activity of asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study. It involves asking one or more participants their opinions on a company or organization, a product, or a topic. The researchers obtained information

using this method that might not be available using other research methods. Interviews take various forms including: individual interviews, face-to-face interviews, and face-to-face group interviews. Who asked and answered questions can be stored via telephone or other electronic means. Interview can also be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. De Trigueros, (2024).

The interview is one of the techniques used by the researchers to collect data in which the researchers asked questions to research participants Arianti, (2022). The interview used by the researchers was a systematic interview, which is an interview conducted by first preparing a written guideline about what to ask the participants. Arikunto, (2006) A form of question and answer were directly asked to several English teachers who teach at SMPN 1 Langsa. The researchers interviewed three English teachers whose responses varied about the zoning system.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The research findings present and discuss the answers to the research problems. The findings were to determine the impact of the zoning system on learning English in SMPN 1 Langsa and the challenges faced by English teachers after the implementation of this zoning system in SMPN 1 Langsa. This presents data that have been obtained from the results of direct observation in the classroom during the learning process and interviews with English teachers to answer research questions.

### **a. The Result of Interview**

There were eight interview questions answered by three English teachers whom the researchers interviewed on December 11, 2023. The researchers used direct, structured interviews.

Through interviews with three English teachers, the researchers wanted to know how the English teacher's preparation in responding to the zoning system at SMPN 1 Langsa. Two teachers said that the thing that must be prepared is mental, because they realized that the students they would teach are not all achievers. They had to change their mindset that what they teach is from the basics now, different from before this zoning system applied. Meanwhile, another teacher said nothing was prepared in the process, and remained normal as usual.

In addition, the researchers also wanted to know whether according to the English teacher, this zoning system impacts student motivation when learning in class. From the answers of all interviewees, the researchers concluded that this zoning system is very influential on student motivation when learning in class. In fact, one of the teachers said that this zoning system almost 80% impacts students' motivation in learning, especially in English lessons.

The next question was, "How does student motivation differ in learning English before and after the zoning system was implemented?". Based on the answers from all interviewees, the researchers concluded that students' motivation to learn English before zoning was implemented and afterwards was very different. This is also supported by the statement of one of the interviewees, who said, "Because achievement is not too important when entering school, so many children lack of motivation when studying

because they can enter their favorite schools without having to achieve". Another statement from one of the interviewees also proves that this difference is very clear, where one of the interviewees said "The ability of students is now more heterogeneous or various, ranging from the highest, middle, to the lowest here. Whereas before zoning, the students who were selected started from the middle and upper levels, which were selected through tests."

The researchers also wanted to know if the English teachers at this school have ever had difficulties organizing the class since this system was implemented. Two teachers said that they certainly had difficulties managing the class both after and before the implementation of this system. The difference is that students are still lacking in terms of politeness. In contrast to the others, one of the teachers said, "No difficulty, just a little more extra than before.". From the answers of all teachers, the researchers concluded that, although the answers of three teachers have different difficulties in managing the class. The conclusion is only one: whether it was before the implementation of the zoning system or after, each teacher still has to be extra careful in managing the class to be conducive to learning.

The next question is "What is a significant difference in the atmosphere when you teach in class before and after zoning?". Based on the answers from all interviewees, the researchers concluded that there is a significant difference in the atmosphere when learning takes place. The average answer from the interviewees is that due to their lack of motivation to learn, they are not enthusiastic about learning and make noise in class, which makes the class not conducive. Learning achievements are also difficult to achieve.

The next question was whether there is anything new that they discover while teaching and implementing the zoning system. Two teachers gave almost the same answer, the existence of academic differences that have their respective levels. Some students must also be treated better, so the teaching and learning process must start with the basics again. One of the other two teachers said, "If this zoning system does not exist during my teaching." Based on the answers of the three teachers interviewed, the researchers concluded that there are differences in the experiences experienced by teachers at school, so that one of them did not find anything new.

The researchers also wanted to know what the challenges are that English teachers go through while teaching English in schools after the implementation of the zoning system. Two teachers have the same answer, such as having to better prepare for everything, especially dealing with students who must be taught again from the basics; even when taught from the basics, they still do not understand. In addition, the researchers also found a challenge for another English teacher, namely that schools must accept children with special needs, and teachers have also attended inclusive training. The teacher said, "That's where my challenge is when teaching students who do have deficiencies. I am an English teacher who teaches speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The student, however, has a speech impediment. But this child with special needs, I mean, it can still be overcome. They can; it just takes a long time to understand it compared to other students."

### **b. The Result of Observation**

Based on the results of observations on Wednesday, November 29, 2023, the students and the teachers began to be observed during the teaching and learning process from 11.30 a.m. to 12.40 p.m. in class IX.E. From the observations, the researchers found that students were less excited when learning English, and students also paid less attention to the teacher when explaining. Class IX.E. is given an exercise after previously being given an explanation. When working on exercises, only a few students focus on working. Class IX.E. The conditions were not conducive because of the noise, and the teacher also admonished students to be calm while doing the task. The researchers also find out the lack of enthusiasm of the students while learning English.

The next day, based on the results of observations on Thursday, November 30, 2023, students and teachers began to be observed during the teaching and learning process from 09.00 a.m. to 10.10 a.m. in class VIII.G. From these observations, the researchers found that students were less enthusiastic when the teacher started the lesson. Class VII.G., given an exercise after the previous day, was given an explanation of the material about sentence structure. While doing the task, there were noisy students, and the teacher gave orders to students to move places so as not to make noise anymore. The teachers applied the rules for Grade VIII.G; they had to speak English when they went to the bathroom. The researchers also found a lack of student response during the question-and-answer exercise process.

The research results above are adjusted based on the problems that have been determined. The research focused on the impact of the zoning system on learning English and the challenges that English teachers have gone through. The researchers presented this discussion descriptively.

#### **1. The Impact of The Zoning System on Learning English at SMPN 1 Langsa**

In Indonesia, the zoning system's primary objective is to guarantee that everybody can receive an equal education. To do this, it is believed that the zoning strategy could change their parents' beliefs that their "favorite schools" are the only "good" schools, thus avoiding the traditional split between public and private school choice. The results of the research show that the zoning system has an impact on English language learning.

First, due to a lack of discipline during the learning process, many students talked and made noise when the teacher explained the material, so the class becomes unconcerned. The behavior of a student should reflect discipline. Disciplined behavior enables the best possible learning outcomes. In this case, the role of the teacher is crucial in helping the pupils follow instructions and become more focused learners. This was in line with Hamidah Fitri et al., who state that discipline will run optimally if there is cooperation from various parties, such as the principal, teachers, other staff, and the students. Fitri et al., (2021).

Second, the students' attitudes toward the teacher were less polite when talking, and some of them even spoke louder than the teacher did. This situation could certainly disrupt student learning activities because the learning process cannot run optimally and will have an impact to other student in the class. According to Lina Rifda Naufalin et al., which state that good ethics will create a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere.

However, it cannot be denied that there are student's behaviors that diverge from ethics that should be taken into consideration. Rifda Naufalin et al., (2020).

Based on the results of interviews and observations conducted by the researchers in classes IX.E. and VIII.G., it appears that students are less enthusiastic and less motivated when learning English. According to three English teachers, who are the interviewees of this study, they said that this zoning system greatly affects the motivation of students to learn. This was line with Arina Hafadhotul et al. who state that motivation is one of the important things that affect students' attitude and achievement. Husna & Murtini, (2019).

## **2. The challenges for English teachers when the zoning system was implemented at SMPN 1 Langsa**

Based on the interviews with English teachers at SMPN 1 Langsa, the researchers found challenges that English teachers have gone through after the implementation of this zoning system. As a teacher, the first thing to prepare for this zoning system is mentally and changing the mindset that the students they teach are not all high achievers. Therefore, they must be firm in organizing the class, so that it remains conducive.

In addition, after the implementation of this zoning system, schools must accept all students starting from low and high levels and among them are also schools that must accept children with special needs. SMPN 1 Langsa teachers have also attended inclusive education training to make it easier for teachers to deal with students who have disabilities. This is a challenge for English teachers when teaching, while in English lessons there are 4 abilities that must be learned, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, because of the student's weakness, the English teacher who teaches must be even more extra so that the student is not left behind with his other friends. He also opened tutoring for students with special needs so that these students could achieve learning.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research findings and discussion through observations and interviews that have been discussed previously, the researchers conclude that:

1. This research found three impacts of the zoning system on learning English, namely: First, the teaching and learning process is not conducive due to the lack of student discipline in learning. Second, the lack of politeness of students when talking to teachers in class. Third, the lack of student motivation in learning English. Those are the impacts of the zoning system on English language learning that occurred at SMPN 1 Langsa.
2. The challenges that English teachers have gone through during the implementation of this zoning system are that teachers must be more assertive in managing students, the English teachers must be extra in teaching students from the basics again in order to achieve learning objectives, and teachers must conduct inclusive education training to deal with students with special needs.
- 3.

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