FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF THE ENGLISH STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT CURRICULUM AT TEACHER TRAINING FACULTY, THE STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY (UIN) AR-RANIRY, BANDA ACEH-INDONESIA

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Abstract
The research is conducted to analyse (1) the feasibility of goal of the existing language structure of English curriculum, (2) the actual teaching-learning process for this curriculum, (3) English lecturers and students' satisfactions with this curriculum. It is focused on the sixth semester level of English students and how this curriculum is being implemented. It aims at providing suggestions and recommendation to curriculum developers and English teachers in particular and to all other interested audiences in general to assist them in diagnosing different aspects of the objects of the evaluation which needs further improvement and revisions. The data were mainly collected through document analysis, teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire. The findings of the study reveal that the existing language structure of English department curriculum is feasible for English department students' future profession. The current curriculum is good and well organized. The course is informative and the content of the course is useful but not successful in implementation in some ways because of the factors affecting the implementation itself. The English language structure syllabus does not emphasize much on the TOEFL test items making students unable to have high scores on the structure expression parts of the test. English teachers are convinced that the current English language structure curriculum is good because it is arranged with high consideration for students' ability level, but students indicate that it is still difficult for them.

Keywords: *Formative evaluation, English language structure curriculum.*

INTRODUCTION

This study is provided for English students of the sixth semester of Teacher Training Faculty (TTF) of the State Islamic University (UIN) Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. It is intended to provide the English students with adequate knowledge of both learning and teaching strategies to enable them to teach English effectively and to prepare them for their future studies. English students of TTF should have 470 above TOEFL score as one of the requirements to be graduated from this faculty. Getting this range of score for English department students is still difficult for most of them. Some students even think that they will never be able to obtain a satisfactory score. In reality, the small number of any good students is good enough to achieve and acceptable TOEFL score with the suitable preparation.

Of the four sections in TOEFL test, structure and written expression part is the most difficult for most of English department students of TTF. In this section of the test, the students are not only hoped to solve the language structure problems by analysing the sentence structure but also they

have to understand the meaning of the test item as well. In other words, the students should analyse the sentence in term of syntax and semantic.

This problem, of course, is closely related to the teaching-learning process in the classroom. The weaknesses in teaching-learning process turn the students still into trouble in mastering the structure and written expression part of the TOEFL and in the whole part of it in general. Those inflicted upon the students, the lecturers, and the situation.

The number of the students was certainly the main source of the problem. Ideally, for the class where practical work is of highly priority, the size of 40 students was not advisable. It must be reduced by dividing into two parallel classes with about 20 students in each. The group could have classes as different times. This would provide more opportunities to students to practice and discuss for individual improvement. The smaller the group, the more effective it would be link to literature on learner-centred education and effective (English) language learning (Bhae, 1998).

The type of learning is inappropriate in some ways in term of process. The students were merely asked to use and find out by themselves how effective the techniques they used. This approach to learn the structure part of the TOEFL might conflict with the students' types of learning. It is, therefore, important to conduct a formative evaluation in order to serve the purpose of identifying the needed changes to be more instructional so that it may better accomplish its intended outcomes. Formative evaluation in this research is on how to improve the structure part of the English curriculum, or in other words, how to minimize the weaknesses in the students' skills especially in the structure part of the TOEFL because this test is frequently used in making admission decision about international students.

METHODS

In the execution of this study, three data sources have been used: English lecturer, English students, and documents. The data were mainly collected through document analysis, teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire. The purpose of evaluation is to improve the effectiveness of English program. The evaluator may learn a great deal more by focusing in depth on understanding, thinking, and feeling of the English teachers and English students toward the course. In the choice of treatment involving in teaching-learning of English language structure at TTF, the evaluator intentionally chooses a particular English class and certain English teachers instead of choosing randomly. In addition, CIPP (Context, Input, Process, and Product) evaluation model (Stufflebeam, 1971, 1985) has been preferably used because the characteristics and components of the model are intended to promote improvement. Context in case is no longer used because the evaluators have already familiar with the context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Input Evaluation

Nearly all of the English students agree that the goal of the existing English language structure of English curriculum is feasible for their future profession as English teachers at MAN or MTsN. According to English teachers' opinion, 3 (out of 6) English teachers also agree that the existing English language structure of English curriculum is feasible for the students' future profession as English teachers at MAN or MTsN. It is related to their reasons that the given materials are suitable for them for their future profession as English teachers at MAN or MTsN. According to English teachers, the current English language structure of English curriculum is good because it is arranged as good as possible with a high consideration of the level of English students' capability. The existing curriculum is feasible as well as relevant to prepare English students for their future profession.

Based on English teachers and English students' opinion, it can be concluded that the existing English language structure of English curriculum is practical. Practical does not necessarily mean easy (Fullan, 1991). The current curriculum can be applied at their place. Nieveen (1997) formulated that the best meaning about practicality as "the degree to which the product is functional for the target groups". This means that the existing English language structure curriculum is a product that is functional for English teachers and English students. Most English teachers (4 out of 6) say that the existing English language structure of English curriculum is relevant with English students for teaching practice. In the context of the existing English language structure of English curriculum, based on document analysis, English students and English teachers' opinion, it can be concluded that

the existing English language structure of English curriculum is feasible for students' future profession.

Process Evaluation

English students do not have many opportunities to ask question when the teaching learning process take place. Nineteen (out of 30) of them had sometimes opportunity to ask questions when the English teachers implemented the existing language structure of English curriculum and the other 4 of them only rarely had opportunity for asking questions. Also, English teachers did not show English students on how to do the grammar problems in most lessons. Very rarely, they called English students to get their response to be discussed.

Error analysis of the sentences is done by English teachers in most lessons. Practicing mini test for the grammar item was not held in most lessons. Practicing mini test for grammar items in particular and discussing, practicing, and analysing each section of the test in general are important to be held in every lesson in order that English students become more familiar with all grammar items in the language structure and the other parts of TOEFL test. About the problem affecting implementation of the existing curriculum, twenty four (out of 30) English students say that quality of teaching aid in the classroom. Seventeen (out of 30) of English students say that limited time for discussion on the given topics.

In addition, classroom condition is not conducive, there are too few teaching aids, and the English literatures in the library are not supportive enough. In this case, the English teachers also faced problems with the implementation of existing English language structure of English curriculum. Four (out of 6) English teachers said that there were too many English students in the classroom. While, the other two (out of 6) said that some students need more time on developing their English proficiency. These are the problems that affect students understanding based English teachers and English students' opinion on the implementation of the existing English language structure curriculum.

In addition, English students still feel reluctant to ask the English teachers when they have difficulties in most lessons about the language structure. English teachers did not ask students to participate into a discussion of why it is correct or wrong. The English teachers argue that because of so many English students in the classroom and they are still slow to understand the given materials while the provided time given for them is limited and English teachers have to teach many English classes in one day because they are not enough. Moreover, the information on the requirement about assignment and homework or class work is lacking that may support students' success in English language structure.

The change of approaches are needed for improvement in teaching the structure and written part of the TOEFL in order that English students can receive enough instructions for better understanding on the given materials. Most powerful and lasting learning experiences come from an active, collaborative interactive between teachers and students. Student-teacher interaction is viewed as one of the most effective forms of education. Interactive learning provides students with a model of way experts work together to learn and understand (Brown, *et al.,* 1991). An alternative to the lecture format, interactive learning provides learners with situations that push the boundaries of their abilities and actively engage them in tasks. It also gives students an opportunity to be learners as they come to master a task and, once they have achieved mastery, to be teachers of those who are still learning. Vygotsky (1978) stated that collaborative help to make progress through their zone of proximal development by the joint activity in which teacher and student are engaged.

Product Evaluation

All English students have learned the given topics in structure one, two, three. All of English students do, however, want to learn more in depth on given topics. 20 (out of 30) English students got problem with the general guideline for article usage. 17 (out of 30) got problem with preposition combination and idiomatic expressions. There are still many sub topics of English language structure that are considered difficult of English students, such as definite article. The definite article "the" is difficult for English students because article "the" can be used in many ways and also there are many exceptions in using them. Seventeen (out of 30) of the English students have problems with their preposition combination with adjectives and adverbs because the use of English preposition is very

complex although there are fewer than one hundred English prepositions. In addition, although prepositions do not take endings and the structure of most prepositional phrases is simple, they are difficult because of the complexity of using it. This is not surprising because prepositions have more than one meaning. Many prepositions can be used as adverbs, prepositions are used than one hundreds of idioms, many adjectives, nouns, and adverbs must usually be followed by certain prepositions and there are hundreds of phrasal verbs formed from combinations of verbs and adverbs and prepositions.

English students often make mistakes in understanding the meaning of idiomatic expressions. This is also not surprising because they are grouped according to the meanings; the various grammatical forms are lumped together. In this case, English students have to learn by heart the meaning of them. Besides that most English student have problems with the given topics, they also have dissatisfaction toward the conditions; such as, not good explanations, lack of needed facilities and time for discussion. They are also not so satisfied with the actual instructional process of the existing English language structure of English curriculum especially the factors that influenced them when the implementation take place; such as, the quality of teaching aids, limited time for discussion, inappropriateness of the difficulty of the course level, limited availability of resources.

These results indicate that most of English students are not satisfied with the existing English language structure of English curriculum when it was implemented in the classroom because there are factors affecting it. Fullan (1991) derives critical factors within three domains that interactively affect the implementation process. There are characteristics of change, local characteristic and external factors. This first factor portrays the features of the change itself; it includes the factors *need, clarity, complexity, quality and practicality*. With regard to product evaluation, the last thing which is more dominant in effecting the implementation of the existing English language structure of English curriculum is *quality and practicality*.

The English teachers' opinion is that English students are not satisfied with regard to the existing English language structure of English curriculum because there are many problems affecting English students' understanding. The syllabus does not emphasize much on what items that often emerge in the language structure TOEFL test (e.g., preposition phase, parallel, appositive, clauses, complex sentences, prepositions, article usage, word order, word forms, subject verb agreement idiomatic English . causative, subjunctive etc.) in particular and in four sections of TOEFL test (listening, reading, structure and writing).

The reaction of the English students and English teachers toward the existing English language structure curriculum is positive. Nevertheless, there are factors that influence the existing English language structure of English curriculum, such as lack of resources of references, time for discussion, and so forth. The existing English language structure curriculum has been good and well organized and feasible for English students' future profession. However, a number of English students' opinion and a half of English teachers' opinion stated that the existing English language structure of English curriculum are not feasible to be applied at their work place. Because there are some appearing factors with the existing English language structure of English curriculum that makes the implementation of the current curriculum not so successful to be applied. The preparation of teachers is very crucial because teachers are keys to quality in schools (Boyer, 1983). What have to be improved for English teachers as a product evaluation is a *teacher guide* that is clearly written and easily to be understood by English students? Because the quality of the availability of materials is low, so it needs a high quality teacher guide for English teacher in teaching English language structure. According to Voogt (1993) and refer to Akker (1988), a teacher guide is very helpful for teachers. The teacher guides, containing procedural specification, but vulnerable elements of the innovation could always be part of the learning materials.

CONCLUSION

The existing language structure of English curriculum is feasible for English department students' future profession. The current curriculum is good and well organized. The course is informative and the content of the course is useful but not successful in implementation in some ways because of the factors affecting the implementation itself, such as; *quality of teaching aids, the availability of resources, limited time for discussion, class size, English teachers' competence etc.* These are considered as the difficulties that hamper the successful on the actual teaching learning process for

the existing English language structure of English curriculum. English students are not satisfied with regard to the existing English language structure curriculum of English curriculum because English teachers found from the result of TOEFL test held by Language Development Center that they are still in trouble mastering the given topics. The improvements were needed on the *process* and *product. The improvements for process and product are viewed as the general conclusion of this evaluation study.*

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