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Context evaluation on implementation of English for Islamic studies program in IAIN Palu, Indonesia

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Article Info

Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Teaching of English for Islamic Studies (EIS) at IAIN Palu, Indonesia, from the context component. Evaluation of context component is one part of Stufflebeam's CIPP model program evaluation consisting of context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation, and product evaluation. It highlighted the need analysis and goal of the EIS program as well as supporting factors and constraints of the program. Ninety-seven second-semester students of five study programs, namely: Islamic Education Management, Arabic Language Education, Islamic Da'wah & Communication, Al-Qur'an Science & Tafsir, and Syariah Banking study program were chosen as a sample of the study through stratified random sampling. The questionnaires were used to seek the perceptions of students and lecturers. The data are also supported by a semi-structured interview with the heads of departments, program designer and the authorized official, class observation and examination of relevant written documents. The results of the study showed that the aspects of context evaluation in this study were effective in general. The findings reveal the goal and needs analysis become the stepping stone for the development of EIS for Indonesian learners.

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Introduction

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) in Indonesia today is faced with several demands, particularly in this digital and multimodal era, one of which is the need to improve student's skills on multiliteracies (Arifani & Suryanti, 2019; Kustini, Suherdi, & Musthafa, 20; Siregar & Ramadhan, 2018;). As a branch in English Language Teaching, ESP refers to applied linguistics with the pedagogical objective and content based on the learner's needs (Khatoon, Zaidi, & Nasim, 2019; Lavinia & Alina, 2017).

Evaluation of ESP programs has become a focus of pedagogical researchers on the aspects of the materials (Abudhahir, Mahdun, & Nor, 2015; Cañado & Esteban, 2015;

Duan & Chen, 2019), its impacts on learner's language development (Gaffas, 2019; Rahman, 2015) and the teaching and learning process (Amengual-Pizarro, 2018; Sarré & Whyte, 2016). In the Indonesian context, specifically, ESP evaluation focuses on the design of the materials (Rasyimah & Sari, 2018), and the challenges of teaching ESP (Adi & Khotimah, 2019; Marwan, 2017; Poedjiastutie, 2017). However, although these studies regard the evaluation of language teaching, only a few have assessed the aspects of goal and needs analysis comprehensively. This study aimed to give more detailed elaboration about the importance of context evaluation in evaluating a specific program or curriculum.

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching of EIS at IAIN (State Institute for Islamic Studies) Palu, Indonesia. The genesis of EIS is a demand for English teaching relating to the Islamic world. In EIS, the teaching material and learning goals are based on the needs of students of Islamic programs at Islamic

universities or Islamic education institutions. It aims at teaching the four language skills, which are integrated with learning material related to Islamic contexts, so that the learning goal will be more optimal.

The evaluation of the program employed Stufflebeam's CIPP model evaluation. This model evaluation covers context, input, process and product evaluation. However, in this study, the evaluation focuses only on context evaluation, which encompasses the goal and needs analysis of the program. This study is based on the assumption that a good design of the ESP program not only fulfils the learner's needs, but is also compatible with the university and the national goals. In addition, the implementation of the CIPP model evaluation is believed to present a better picture for the understanding of the ideal design of ESP.

Literature Review

English for Islamic Studies

In ESP teaching, some basic elements have to be taken into consideration, the most important of which are the learner needs, goals and motivation. Needs analysis has a crucial role in the process of designing and completing any language course, regardless of whether it be ESP or general English course, and its centrality has been recognized by several scholars and authors (Khalid, 2016). In the context of the EIS program, it aims to be a stepping stone to develop the syllabus which is appropriate to the students' needs as Islamic Higher Education students (Hendriani, 2017).

CIPP Evaluation Model

Evaluation is the process of deciding the connection between various program systems, the techniques, and hypothesis built by the people associated with a program, and the results which are utilized to show the value of a program (Kiely & Rea-Dickens, 2005). To evaluate an ESP program, several models can be used, including the CIPP model as an abbreviation of Context, Input, Process, and Product. Context evaluation is one of the four parts in the CIPP evaluation model submitted by Stufflebeam and Zhang (2017). This model is a dynamic work system having a holistic approach to provide a detailed picture of a program to make improvements during the program and can provide final information. It also has the potential to move on formative and summative evaluations (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

Methodology

Participants

The target population for the study was 2845 second semester students at IAIN Palu, Indonesia. They were from five study programs, namely: Islamic Education Management, Arabic Language Education, Islamic Da'wah & Communication, Al-Qur'an Science & Tafsir, and Syariah Banking. The sample involved 97 students chosen through a stratified random sampling technique.

Instruments

The primary instrument in the study was A CIPP- based evaluation questionnaire focusing on the context evaluation part. The questionnaire was used to elicit the students' perceptions about the goal and need analysis of EIS and to obtain the students' opinions regarding their competency in the four language skills. There were seven questions in the students' questionnaire. The questions were designed on a five-point Likert scale of frequency. Two competent lecturers; a professor specialized in curriculum development and a qualified English lecturer, checked content and face validity. The questionnaire was distributed to 17 EIS program students. The result of the reliability test after calculation using Cronbach's Alpha was 0.795.

To equip the data obtained from the questionnaire, an in-depth interview was conducted with an EIS program lecturer, head of the study program, a program designer and an authorized official. The interview was recorded by using a recording facility on a mobile phone, then transcribed and analyzed. In addition, class observation and document analysis were also conducted.

Procedure

This study was an evaluative study utilizing a mixed-method research design with the type of sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2014). The data elicited in this study were analyzed following the procedure of sequential explanatory design (Ali, 2010). The data gained from the questionnaire were analyzed by using descriptive statistics (quantitative) and then presented in the forms of figures, tables, and charts, whereas, the data obtained from the interview and class observation were analyzed qualitatively.

Results and Discussion

As demonstrated in Figure 1, the goal and benefits of the EIS program were suitable for the vision and mission of the institution (63.93%). EIS Program at IAIN Palu is adequate in enhancing the students' insight and knowledge of Islam (50%) and fulfils leaner's English needs (63.92%). This shows that from the aspect of program objectives, the position of the EIS program is adequate. Thus the objectives of the EIS program can be continued.

The purpose of ESP in Islamic tertiary institutions is to ensure that students are able to use English, both in writing and orally, in understanding English texts, specifically, on the majors in each faculty. This is corroborated by the informant of the program designer (N1), stating that the objective of applying an English course is to reach the target, which is the student's use of English as a medium to expand knowledge according to their department. The same statement was also conveyed by an authorized official (N2), stating that it refers to the development of skills in understanding material in English that is adapted to Islamic studies.

The goal and need analysis of
English for islamic studies (EIS)
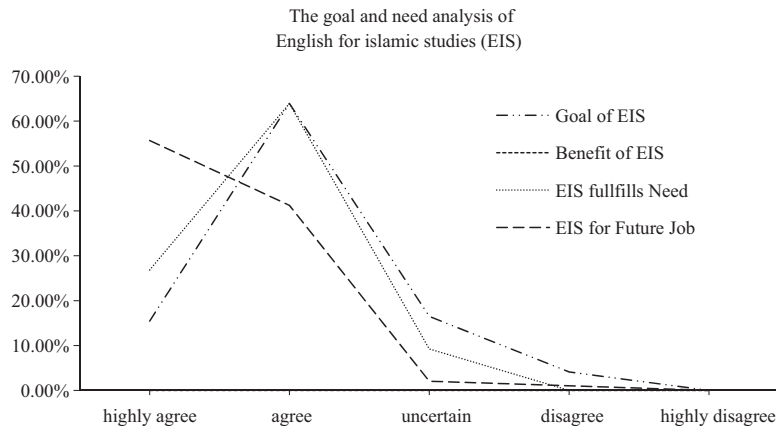
Figure 1   The goal and needs analysis of English for Islamic Studies

Specifically, the purpose of ESP teaching is that students are expected to have knowledge of English sentence structure, reading comprehension techniques of English texts, as well as being able to understand the vocabulary in the context of Islamic studies. In fact, studies of ESP in the Indonesian context show that reaching the complete improvement in the four language skills is not easy (Aeni, Jabu, Rahman, Ismail, & Bin-Tahir, 2018; Poedjiastuti, 2017; Yoestara, 2017). However, in this study, such an issue became one of the challenges to design a better construct of EIS.

In the application of a competency-based curriculum, curriculum developers need to recognize the philosophical foundation of the curriculum to be applied. In accordance with the statement of the program designer (N3) as the dynamic flow of information from various fields of life, the philosophical foundation of the application of English for Islamic Studies program is to answer the need to understand the growing flow of information so that it can be justified.

At the tertiary level, teaching English emphasizes the development of communication skills in certain fields of study. The informants of this study (N1, N2, and N3) agreed with this statement. Further, the difference lies not in the knowledge of the language, but in the knowledge of the material of the text. In practice, teaching English in non-English study programs for undergraduate students sometimes creates confusion; whether taught as general English (EGP) or English with special needs (ESP). Based on the Decree of the Minister of National Education No. 232/2000, English can be included as one of the personality development courses in the institution curriculum. Accordingly, courses in the institutional curriculum are prepared to take into account the situation, the needs around and also the characteristics of the institution (Solikhah, 2016).

The application of the English for Islamic Studies (EIS) program at religious tertiary institutions in general and at IAIN Palu, in particular, is a tangible manifestation of the application of a special purpose English program, which is more directed towards training and vocational training. As it aims to fulfil the

demands of the job market, revision of the curriculum must be routinely done every five years by considering the needs of the stakeholders (Latif, 2017; Rohmah, 2017)

The Indonesian National Qualification Framework (KKNI) is useful for assessing the equality of learning outcomes and qualifications of graduates, whether they are going to study or work in Indonesia or abroad. The implementation of the Indonesian Qualification Framework (IQF) in the development of the curriculum of Islamic Higher Education is a necessity. That way, the graduates are expected to meet the demands of the job market, the needs of stakeholders and can take part in social life and international relations by showing their character as Muslim professionals (Susilo, 2015). The graduates of Islamic universities can also be equated with other graduates both at national and international levels.

Regarding this issue, most of the heads of the study program stated that the objective of English for Islamic Studies agreed with the main goal of English teaching referring to KKNI. However, only 60 percent of the heads of the study program said that the needs analysis of the English for Islamic Studies was formulated clearly in the document of their study program. The English competency relating Islamic field would significantly impact global progress. Unfortunately, the job market for the graduates of Islamic study programs concerned with their English competency was not evaluated completely and inserted into the document of the study program. Only a few study programs implemented it, even though it was not stated explicitly. Also, the advantages and disadvantages of this program were not fully anticipated by all study programs at IAIN Palu.

Six heads of study programs stated that English for Islamic Studies contains the substance of Islamic Studies. In other words, the learning material containing a lot of Islamic materials, Islamic vocabulary and discussions regarding Islam could develop the study of Islam indirectly, which in turn would advance Islam in the global context. Moreover, all heads of study programs admitted that this EIS program is actually very effective in increasing the language competency

of students, but the implementation of the program is not supported with adequate facilities, such as there being a lack of books and absence of electronic equipment (in-focus projector) in the teaching-learning process. This is similar to the ESP program implemented in some other universities in Indonesia (Curtis, Robertson, & Mahony, 2019; Gufron, 2019; Mbau & Sugeng, 2019), while the inadequate support significantly affects learner's skills development (Timyam, 2008).

The EIS program fulfilled the learner's needs and is effective in enhancing the students' language competence, even though not fully yet. Hence, referring to the needs analysis, the majority of EIS lecturers said that the total credits of this program for each semester should be increased. In addition, listening and writing skills are the most difficult skills for the students. Reading as well as vocabulary development are the skills that must be prioritized in the class. These skills are considered crucial to develop further academic skills (Baetty & Thomas, 2020; Menggo, Suastra, Budiarsa, & Padmadewi, 2019).

Based on the data of class observation, the process of EIS often runs less optimally. One contributing factor is the lack of study plan so learning that takes place is not relevant to the field of science they are capable of. This has also become a challenge of ESP in other institutions in Indonesia (Adi & Khotimah, 2019; Rasyimah & Sari, 2018). For this reason, it is necessary to have a learning plan starting with analyzing the needs of students towards ESP learning. The importance of doing a needs analysis in ESP is to make the language taught really the language needed in the learners' field.

The results of the needs analysis will be used by lecturers of the Islamic university to develop a syllabus that suits the needs of students (such as language components, language skills, communication skills and Islamic values needed for their work), not the needs of lecturers. In the syllabus, all student data will be considered to set goals and activities and assignments to be carried out by students (Hendriani, 2017).

Based on this, the need for the application of the English for Islamic Studies program at IAIN Palu is to improve the four skills of students in English in the context of professional expertise. As stated by a head of the study program (N4), the application of the English for Islamic Studies program at IAIN Palu is to improve English language skills related to four skills.

Another informant as a program designer (N5) stated that the EIS Program refers to the curriculum in use, namely the decree of Mendiknas (national education minister) year 2002, which is competency-based. EIS program is considered to be important to comprehend Islamic studies in English from each study program. The target is the students study English as a medium to widen their horizons according to their department. EIS program is considered able to contribute to the growth of Islamic studies. The informant added that, in general, an indicator to know the goal achievement of the EIS program is the students who continued their studies; they are able to understand texts in international journals well. Another example is the alumni's ability in adapting to the language skills needed at the workplace in accordance with their field.

Nevertheless, it is known that in fulfilling the learner needs, there is still a discrepancy; the fulfilment of student needs related to the guidance of curriculum, syllabus or instruction scenario which supports the student's competence either practically or theoretically when they enter the working world or compete in a global context. However, these aspects are prominent in curriculum development (Hamalik, 2008; Olivia, 1992). In practice, the lecturers generally merely focus on cognitive skills for vocabulary enrichment. Besides that, opinions on the EIS program are still directed toward the students, who are generally considered as having a lack of confidence compared to other students from other universities. This information was obtained from the stakeholder at the time the students did field job practice.

Informant N5, as the authorized official, asserted that so far, it is still difficult to know the level of attainment of goal and objective of the EIS since there has been no effort made to analyze it. The attainment of the program is usually identified through the development of students' competence after they studied the Basic English Course, for example, speaking skills in which the students are able to engage in simple communication. Then, they could grasp the main idea contained in the text, however, it was still difficult to retain all basic ideas.

As many as 55.67 percent of students stated their high agreement that English for Islamic Studies (EIS) Program is really advantageous as preparation for future jobs. They realize that following the advance of science and technology, the use of English in the working field is an absolute requirement. Based on the interview sessions with the informants chosen randomly from five study programs, nearly 80 percent of students liked English and all students said that they were motivated by this program. Besides that, most of the students said that EIS was very useful for a job and their continuation of study, although the learner needs were not fulfilled optimally. This is because English is mainly used specifically for academic affairs (Setiadi & Piyakun, 2019).

For students, attending English courses is considered important and useful not only for graduation requirements with good grades but when they want to continue their studies to the next level or when trying to get a job after graduation. This is consistent with the statement of informant N6 as a student of Islamic Primary School Teacher Training Program: "English courses are important and useful not only for the requirement to get high scores during exams, but when they want to continue their studies to a higher level, and when looking for work later".

Conclusion and Recommendation

As part of ESP, the EIS program gives new colour in English learning with a specific purpose. Learning materials on the basis of student needs, which are designed to master four language skills, contribute significantly to the growth of English learning as well as the development of Islamic studies. By observing the response of respondents on goal and need analysis aspects showing positive perception toward English for Islamic Studies (EIS) Program, it can be concluded that the

planning of the EIS Program at IAIN Palu is adequate and could be continued. From the findings and discussion of this study, it could be inferred that the implementation of EIS at IAIN Palu according to context evaluation is effective in general. The results of this study might give a significant description to the ESP instructors, curriculum developers, and stakeholders in developing a more qualified ESP curriculum, especially English for Islamic Studies *(*EIS*)* curriculum.

There are some drawbacks in the context evaluation of this study. Some of them are*:* the needs analysis of EIS program was not fully formulated in the framework of each study program at IAIN Palu and there is a lack of understanding of the concept on the difference of General English and English for Islamic Studies on the part of students. Therefore, it is recommended for the EIS program designer, the heads of the study program and the stakeholder to anticipate the gap between the learners' needs with the actual condition of implementation of the program.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

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