

INSTITUTIONAL, SOCIETAL, AND TEACHER FACTORS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ENGLISH COURSE IN GARUT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Unreached agreement on the educational goals often arises among stakeholders due to the fact that most of the program goals were designed intuitively by either the instructors or institution without taking into account the learners' needs and the larger context in which the program takes place. This study intends to analyse the three situational factors: institutional, societal and teacher factors that may affect the implementation of one of the English courses in Garut. To this end, the present study employed case study design and used observation and semi-structured interview to collect the data. The findings indicated that the institutional factors such as facilities and supportive learning environment play an important role on the attainment of the teaching and learning goals. The society has expectation on the course to produce students with good communication skill. Meanwhile, the instructors were found to have different beliefs on what was perceived to be the best teaching practices (Genre Based Approach, Oral Approach and Fluency Activity Approach). More comprehensive aspects of the factor are recommended to be explored in further research.

Keywords: societal, institutional, situation analysis

INTRODUCTION

Literatures have shown that situation analysis, along with need analysis, is an important task to carry out at the beginning stage of the curriculum development in most educational context because it provides a basis for creating the goals and objectives of the program (Brown, 1995; Gass, 2012; Print, 1993; Richards, 2001; Sihong, 2007). However, there are still many courses that set the goals and objectives of learning without taking into account the voices of the stakeholders and participants involved on the program.

The finding from the preliminary study conducted in Southern part of Garut generated evidence justifying the issue. The result from the interviews conducted to a number of EFL instructors indicated that most of the program goals and objectives developed in the courses were prescribed intuitively by the instructors or the institution without taking into account the learners' needs and the larger context in which the instruction will take place. As the result, parents, instructors, and students could not reach an agreement on what the goal of the teaching and learning should be, or what to be included in the program.

Moreover, another effect of such inconsiderate decision on formulating the objectives is confirmed by Sihong (2007). He argues that the absence of situation analysis and need analysis generates a systemical problem. The objectives designed only by the experienced teachers may be in conflict with the learners' needs and also their parents as



society. This mismatch situation may inevitably become a cause for learners' demotivation in learning English and mistrust of parents toward the program. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conduct a study investigating the situational factors that may affect the implementation of the program. The outcome may serve as an important ground to the formulation of the programs' goals which comply to the needs of the learners and society.

With respect to the curriculum or program development, accommodating the needs of the key participants such students and society is crucial. Therefore, finding out information on the actual needs from the context in which the program is going to be implemented is required (Ndawi & Peasuh, 2007). It is to determine the procedural development of the program and identify some of the implications and consequences to assist the program developers in making the required value judgments. In other words, it can be noted that comprehending the factors within or outside the institutional context may provide sound rationale for decision making in relation to planning and designing a curriculum or a program.

In practice, the situational factors that may affect the effectiveness of the program can be categorized into both internal and external factors. Richards (2001) and Print (1993) outline those factors into political, societal, educational, institutional, teacher, student, and etc. These factors certainly can't be separated and examined one by one since their fluid interplay may provide the true complexity and richness (Fotheringham, Strickland, & Aitchison, 2012). If the analysis relies heavily on one of the factors, no matter how pivotal it may seem, the risk of reaching skewed conclusion is unavoidable. This statement, however, doesn't suggest the curriculum or program developers to collect and analyse all the factors exist, rather they have to analyse those factors relevant with the need of the participants (Print, 1993). By this in mind, the present study attempts to analyse the societal, institutional, and teacher factors that may potentially facilitate or hinder the success of the program, in this case, an English course in Garut.

In reference to the process of conducting situation analysis, some studies that investigated the situational factors during the planning and developing stage of a program were reviewed. The first study was conducted by Al Mudhaffar (2012) conducting situational analysis of the language needs at the BP language Center in Basra, Iraq. The study which was conducted within the context of a license contract among three major oil companies found that there was a critical need for the conversational skills of the students. Students are expected to gain the confidence necessary to engage in both formal and informal business discussions as well as in collaborative decision making. Moreover, the stakeholders need the employees/students and TESL professionals who are specific to this working environment and have a great quality for every distinct type of work.

The second study was conducted by Gass (2012) investigating the needs analysis and situational analysis for designing an ESP curriculum for Thai nurses. The findings showed that the nurses have an urgent need for English in their service such as in the process of explaining the procedure. Moreover, the study found that cultural differences, different background knowledge and lack of confidence were some of the factors that prevent the nurses from interacting with the foreign patients.

Considering the absence of the situation analysis in the stage of formulating the course goals and objectives in the research site and also some research conducting the same type of analysis but with different context and focus, this study intends to analyse the three situational factors that may affect the implementation of the English course in Garut. The factors are the course facilities and learning environment (the representative of



institutional factors), the parents' expectations (societal factors) of the course and the beliefs of the instructors (teachers' factors) in teaching English. This study is expected to become additional information to the literature of curriculum development.

Situation analysis

In order to develop a good quality of curricula, curriculum developers must have valid information in regard to the context in which their curriculum decisions will be made (Grier, 2005). One of the most valuable tools that provide curriculum developers with this information is situation analysis. Situational analysis, as it is emphasized by Print (1993), is an obvious point of departure for the development of a curriculum. It can provide a clear vision of the curriculum context as well as a systematic database that may provide more reliable and valid resource for later curriculum decision (See also Nation & Macalister (2010, p. 14).

Situation analysis, sometimes regarded as “contextual analysis” (Brown, 1995) or “environment analysis” (Nation & Macalister, 2010), is defined as a process of examining the factors in the context for which a curriculum is to be developed in order to assess their potential impact on the projects (Richards, 2001). These factors may be political, social, economic, or institutional. Richards (2001, p. 91) further elaborates that situation analysis complements the information gathered during need analysis; therefore, it is sometimes considered as a dimension of need analysis. It can be concluded that situation analysis refers to a detailed description and analysis of context in which a particular project is to be implemented.

Situational factors

The importance of taking the situational or contextual factors into consideration during the program/curriculum implementation has been emphasized by some experts. Richards (2001) argues that the success of the program implementation is very much determined by a careful formulation of the program objectives which are derived from the context and relevant needs of the students. Similar idea is given by Adagale (2015) stating that the very first process in the formulation or revision of curriculum or any program is the need analysis of the stakeholders. The information from these different sources may generate potentially good program innovation (Măță, 2012).

There are number of situational factors that may determine the quality of the curriculum or program. Posner (1992, p.188) labels the factors as “frame factor” and categorises those influential factors into seven categories. Those are temporal (time available, quality), personal (background, abilities, parents), physical (material, equipment), political (mandates, policy), organizational (administrative, environment), economic (costs, benefits) and cultural (values and beliefs of the community).

Meanwhile, Richards (2001) outlines six kinds of situational factors; societal factors, institutional factors, educational factors, teacher factors, learner factors and adoption factors. As they are relevant to the objectives of the study, the three situational factors proposed by Richards; societal, institutional and teacher factors are further elaborated in these following points.

a. Societal factors

Societal factor is one of the most important factors that influence a program



implementation. It is in line with Print (1993) who states that the voice of the society within which a program taking place may provide impact toward the process of the program implementation. Richards (2001) categorizes the societal factors into policy makers, government officials, educators, employers, business community, politicians, tertiary education specialists, educational organization, parents, citizens and students. Print (1993) specializes that the aspects of societal factor that can be analysed are educators' view, parents' expectation, belief and etc. Considering this societal factor, according to Mățã (2012), is beneficial in the developing the program that fits with the needs of community.

b. Institutional factors

Another aspect that is influential toward the development of a program is institutional factor. Posner (1992) views institutional or organizational factor as a unit that determines the extent to which a new program will flourish or wither. Print (1993) classifies factors of institution that can be investigated into school ethos/ institution environment, material resources, teaching and learning facilities and etc. These institutional factors such as school climate or ethos and facilities play mediating roles in achieving good quality of academic achievements (Uline & Moran, 2008). Besides, Wongvanakit (n.d) states that facilities and materials for teachers and students play significant roles in conducting meaningful activities. Students seem to learn the most when they feel the environment is conducive and supportive.

c. Teachers factors

Last but not least is the teacher factors. Richards (2001) argues that teachers are considered as one of the key factors in the successful implementation of curriculum change. The aspects that may be investigated from the teacher factors are skills, experience, teaching style, value and special strength and weakness of the teachers. With respect to the teacher factors, Posner (1992, p. 193) specifically emphasizes that teacher' beliefs on their role in the class and how the subject matter taught in the class determine the degree of the program objectives that fits in a particular teacher's classroom. In conclusion, teachers' beliefs are important for the success of the program implementation.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to analyse the three situational factors; societal, institutional and teachers factors in order to gain the valid information for the success of the course implementation. Specifically, this present study investigates the role of course facilities and learning environment (the representative of institutional factors) in the teaching and learning process, and explores parents' expectation (societal factors) toward the course as well as the beliefs of the instructors (teachers' factors) in teaching. To achieve the objectives, the present study was conducted under the frame of qualitative research in which, according to Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun (2012, p. 426), the rich and holistic description on particular activity, situation, attitudes and behaviour of people were explored. Specifically, as the focus of investigation is to analyse situational factors in one of the English courses in Garut, this study applied a case study in attempt to present complete



description of those factors within its context (Bassey, 1999).

This study was conducted in one of the well-known English courses in Garut. It has been established for more than 7 years, and in each session (approximately 3 months) it has more than 60 students registering to the different programs offered. The course has three major programs classified into general English class, conversation class embedded with ESP class, and TOEFL class. The students enrolling to the course come from different background. They are different in age, level of proficiency, experience, need, belief and etc.

In regard to the participants, this study included one female and two male English instructors with the teaching experiences ranging from 4 years up to 10 years as the participants. The instructors who were purposively chosen have experiences of teaching different levels of students in many different contexts. Moreover, this study also included three parents of students who were taking different programs in the investigated course. The parents chosen based on their willingness and interest in joining the research have different educational background. The highest educational degrees achieved by the two parents are senior high school and bachelor degree.

In collecting the data, this study employed two different instruments. The first instrument used was observation. It was conducted to investigate the institutional factors in the site. The observation which was lasted for about 3 hours was conducted to observe the facilities available, and the course or learning environment. The relevant information happened during the observation was noted in the self-constructed observation sheet.

The second instrument employed was semi-structured interview. This type of interview was employed due to its flexibility which, according to Berg (2001, p. 71), allows the interviewers to probe far beyond their prepared questions. The interviews which were done to both instructors and parents were conducted from February 6th to 7th. The interview of the instructors was carried out immediately after the completion of the observation, while that of the parents were done in the next day. Each instructor was first asked about their experiences and difficulties in teaching. Then, the questions continued to explore their beliefs in teaching English and how they exactly implemented the beliefs in the real practice. Meanwhile, the parents were first asked about their view on English and the followed by the question related to their expectation on their children learning. The average time for both interviews which were done through video conferencing application was 12 minutes, ranging from 9 to 18 minutes. Both of the instructor and parent interviews were noted and recorded with the participants' prior permission and also transcribed to get the clear information.

Moreover, the relevant data obtained were analysed through the use of Patton's dimension of analysing qualitative data developed by Best and Kahn (2006). The dimensions were data organisation, description, and interpretation. In the data organisation, the process involved organizing or sorting the data based on the predetermined categories such as beliefs of teachers, parents' expectations and institution environment. Then, in the next two steps, after the data have been organized based on the categories, the data were analysed descriptively and presented in narrative forms. The presented data were then interpreted in the light of the previous studies and relevant theories

FINDING & DISCUSSION

This part focuses on presenting and interpreting the data that have been collected through the use of specific procedures discussed in the previous session. The first to be discussed was the findings from the observation regarding the facilities and learning environment in the research site. The second part presented the findings obtained from the semi-structured



interview. The findings intended to serve the answer to the predetermined research objective.

1. The course facilities and learning environment.

The finding showed that there are some helpful facilities provided by the institution for both students and the instructors. The facilities available are computer devices, free Wi-Fi, mini-library, textbooks, projectors, printer, instructor meeting room, and other learning aids (scrabble-game board, flashcard, etc). These facilities support both instructors and students in some ways. Instructors were able to browse supporting materials, interactive games and etc. The students were also able to use the computer devices or other learning aids in their learning. Simply, these facilities appear to help the teachers and students in keeping the learning process interactive and interesting.

This finding supports the finding of Uline and Moran (2008) indicating the positive correlation between school facilities and student's learning engagement. It is confirmed that adequate facilities enable to sharpen the academic achievement and it makes the learning to be interactive and not elderly and serious. Besides, it is also in line with Wongvanakit (n.d) who states that facilities and materials for teachers and students play an important role in the learning. Students seem to learn the most when they feel the environment is conducive and supportive.

In reference to the learning environment, the observation result indicated that there was supporting teaching and learning environment. The instructors generated the teaching and learning in an interactive way, and they were also able to establish positive rapport with the students. An instance was represented in the conversation class guided by a male instructor. He seemed to liberate his students to freely express their curiosity and what they have in mind. He positioned himself as his students' speaking partner. This liberation seems to increase students' motivation in learning, encouraging them to be active learners. Besides, the positive rapport was also identified. The instructors recognized the students quite well. They addressed their students with interesting nickname. The instructors also listened to the students when they explained their view point on particular tasks. This suggested that positive and supportive learning environment has been established which allows students to be enthusiastically involved in the learning.

This findings are in accordance with the theory from Harmer (2007) highlighting the benefits of democratic teaching in which it encourages students to become autonomous learners who learn by themselves and are responsible for their own learning. With respect to the establishment of good rapport, Harmer (2007) also confirms that positive and useful rapport contributes to the creation of effective and positive classroom environment. Moreover, it also affirmed by Fowler and Şaraplı (2010) stating that positive rapport enables students to feel safe and valued which likely lead students to express their ideas and feeling freely and comfortably.

In short, the findings from the observation which highlighted the existence of the adequate course facilities, and supportive learning environment confirmed that those two things assist and support the key participants of the course; instructors and students, in achieving their goals of teaching and learning. In addition, the availability of the facilities indicated that the institution was likely ready to establish



the program. It was justified by the existence of tools or media that helps the process of achieving the goal of the programs.

1. Parents' expectation and instructors' beliefs

The interview conducted to the 3 participants bears some information. The finding showed that parents didn't have any beliefs or understanding regarding what English is, what to be taught first, or how it should be taught. However, in general, parents view English as a necessary subject for their children to learn. Besides, the interview result also indicated that in spite of the program that their children take, all of the parents expect that their children acquire communication skill. This finding is illustrated in the following comments given by each respondent. (P stands for parent as the respondent)

#P1: *"I enrol my child to the English course because I think English is very important.*

It is necessary to join the course because it helps my child in the school"

"I don't know what to be taught first or how it should be taught. I just want the teachers do their best so that my child can speak English well"

#P2: *"I think English is useful for my child. It helps them increase their score in the school.*

"I have no idea about any of that. I mean I just trust the course to teach my child to speak English"

#P3: *"I enrol my students to the course, specifically to General English program. I have hope that she can speak English well. My husband says that she should be in a course until she can speak and communicate in English fluently".*

"I have no idea. But I think the most important thing to master is speaking"

These findings provided insight into what the parents expect from the program and this expectation certainly influenced how the instructors led the learning. The instructor adjusted their program in order to facilitate the students to practice their English. This finding goes with the theory from Richards (2001) emphasizing that society's view and expectation, in this case parents, provide significant impact toward the program at large. It may significantly change the way the instructor conduct and organize the learning activities. In short, considering this societal factor is beneficial in the developing the program that fits with the need of the society.

In regard to the instructor's belief on English teaching, the interview also lays out the some findings. First, all of the instructors have different beliefs in teaching, but in its deeper sense, all those beliefs project one objective that is to create fun, interactive and engaging teaching and learning activities. The first instructor believes that in order to create meaningful learning that enables the students to produce the language, the teaching and learning should be conducted through the use of genre-based approach in which the activities involved the use of functional texts. She firmly states that this approach not only enables students to produce effective written text but also enhance students' oral production. This is illustrated



in this following comment: (I stands for instructor as the respondent)

#I1= *“I am a firm believer of GBA, because it enables students to learn many aspects*

of language such as vocabulary and grammar which are learnt integrated in the text and also use language based on the context. For example, when I teach passive voice, I didn't teach only the formula but I teach it through the text so that they will know the actual use of formula in the text. Simply, they will not only know the linguistic features and generic structure, but also how to produce text as a whole effectively.

Meanwhile, the second instructor perceives that English should be taught in friendly learning situation. He believes that in the class there should be an involvement of multimedia and also other fluency activities such as role plays, songs, games and discussion activities. This is represented by his following comments:

#I2: *“English should be taught in a friendly and fun way but at the same time the students do not lose respect for the learning. I mean we have fun but the respect for learning remains there. And, I think we need to employ variety of methods: games, movies, songs, role plays in order to keep our students upbeat not bored”.*

The third instructor believes that in order to make the students engage in the learning activity, the English teaching should be delivered naturally in a way the child acquires their mother tongue. In other words, this instructor believes that communication and interaction that occur in the class should be done in the target language so that the student will get the extensive exposure (Oral approach). This is reflected in this following comment:

#I3: *“Here is what I found, we should teach English naturally. We have to let our students acquire English naturally like a direct use of English in the classroom. They will have exposure. We have to teach English in a way that the native speaker teaches their kids to speak”.*

The findings presented above indicated that each instructor has different beliefs of teaching English. These differences give impacts toward the process of achieving the course objectives. This result is in accordance with Posner (1992) who explains that the teacher' beliefs on their role in the class as well as how the subject should be taught in the class will likely determine the degree of the program objectives that fit in a particular classroom. Moreover, it is also in line with Xu (2012) explaining that teachers' beliefs are important for understanding and improving the educational process. The beliefs drive the teachers to adopt the teaching strategies for coping with their teaching challenges which may influence their general well-being. The condition of the teachers, in turn, may shape the learners' learning environment, their motivation and their language achievement and ability.

CONCLUSION



This study's main objective is to figure out the role of course facilities and learning environment (institutional factors) in teaching and learning process, the parents' expectation (societal factors) as well as the belief of the instructors (teachers' factors) in teaching. The findings showed that the institution supports the process of teaching and learning by providing course facilities, and establishing supportive learning environment. In the context in which the program takes place, it was found that the society (parents) didn't have any beliefs or understanding about English teaching, but they mainly expect the program to help their children to acquire fluent communication skill. Moreover, the instructors were founded to have different beliefs in teaching (GBA, Oral Approach and fluency activity approach). Those findings led to the conclusions that the institution appeared to be ready to establish the program by the creating supportive learning environment with adequate facilities. The society also has high expectation on the course in which they expect, despite the lack of belief and understanding about English teaching, the students to have better communication skill. The instructors also have different approaches in teaching which sometimes generate tension among them.

Based on the findings, this present study offers some recommendations that may be useful for the stakeholders in the course. First, it is suggested that the course developers develop a program which accommodates the expectation of the society that is producing students who can speak and communicate in English. They have to consider the objectives of the course, the materials, and the activities that meet the expectation of the society. Second, to solve the tension, the teachers have to be open-minded in viewing the approaches of teaching. They were recommended to develop strategy that may be relevant to the specified need of the community. Third, this recommendation goes to the researchers who are interested in conducting situation analysis focusing on both external and internal factors. The focus of the study may expand into many different factors within the scope of situational analysis in order to provide more comprehensive information that may help the program development become more effective.

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