FACTORS SUPPORTING AND HINDERING THE USE OF ENGLISH
AT INTERNATIONAL CLASS PROGRAM (ICP)
FACULTY OF TARBIYAH, UIN MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG

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Abstract

This study investigates factors supporting and hindering the implementation or the use of English by the students of International Class Program (ICP) Faculty of Tarbiyah, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. The primary purpose of this study is to provide recommendations for the Faculty especially the program coordinator to acknowledge the problems that need to be solved. This study involved a number of students joining the program. To obtain the data, interviews and questionnaires were distributed to 30 students. After analyzing the data, factors supporting and hindering the use of English at ICP were identified. Factors supporting the program are: (1) the students' motivation, (2) the role of lecturers, and (3) the instructional materials. However, some factors hindering the program include: (1) not all students had an electronic English dictionary, (2) both the lecturers and the students were inconsistent to use English, (3) the poor students' English mastery sometimes also hindered the teaching process, (4) there was no language forums held in English, (5) there was no language lab, (6) the students had not been aware of the importance of practicing English, (7) the ICP students claimed that most of the materials they learned were written in Indonesian. The program coordinator acknowledges the students' interest in learning English. As has been stated before, most of the students have high motivation to learn English. Thus, the program coordinator (1) should notice this and be very sensitive with this situation, because the students' motivation is a very important thing in gaining more English development, needs to give extended role to the lecturers. They are required not only teaching the content materials but also some aspects of English entities, (3) needs to explain clearly that both lecturers and students need to make an agreement regarding the consistency of using English.

Key words: *factors supporting, factors hindering, International Class Program (ICP)*

Rationale

This study investigates some factors that support and hinder the implementation of English instruction in International Class Program (hereafter ICP), faculty of *Tarbiyah,* UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. To situate the context, it is important to present a brief overview of what ICP is about, which is then followed by formulating the problems being investigated in this present study.

ICP, which is established in 2009 in the faculty of *Tarbiyah*, has four main reasons: (1) to prepare its graduates to work at international Islamic primary/secondary schools; (2) to anticipate overseas students who are interested in joining this program; (3) to prepare the high demand of teachers teaching Islamic education in neighboring countries, such as Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, the Philippines, and Thailand; and (4) to prepare its graduates to continue their study in English speaking countries.

ICP has three study programs: (1) Islamic Education (PAI), (2) Social Science (IPS), and (3) Islamic Elementary Teacher Education (PGMI). Thus far, there have been two intakes: 2009 and 2010. The number of students from each intake is presented in Table 1.

As can be seen from Table 1, there is an increase in the number of the students from each of the study program, that is, five students. The total number of the students in 2009 is 60; while in 2010 there are 80 students. The increase in the number of the students is due to a high demand among the students to join this program.

The most significant difference between ICP and regular program in the faculty of *Tarbiyah* is the use of English as a medium of instruction. The implementation of English is of course a challenging and promising program and one step further at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in general, except for English department students in which the use of English is obligatory. It is considered challenging

because both the lecturers and the students are required to use English especially during the class activity; and it is promising because

at the end of the course the students will have a certain level of English proficiency.

Table 1: The number of the students

	2009	2010
PAI	2 classes, each consists of 15 students	2 classes, each consists of 20 students
IPS	1 class consisting of 15 students	1 class consisting of 20 students
PGMI	1 class consisting of 15 students	1 class consisting of 20 students

Yet, the investigation looking at factors supporting and hindering the implementation of English as a medium of instruction has not been done. Based on the above rationale, it is important that this study be undertaken. A common problem arising from a program utilizing English as a medium of instruction usually concerns the teachers' qualification. For example, there have been growing critics to discontinue International Standard School (SBI), which is now in high demand in Indonesia from the school perspective. One of the significant reasons, for example, is due to fact that schools fail to provide teachers with sufficient English qualification. Evidence is reported in Kompas.com cited in Tuesday 8 March 2011. Teachers in SBI program learn English in only five days and then they are asked to teach using English. Based on the preliminary information obtained from the ICP students, it is found that some of the lecturers' English proficiency is poor. The term 'poor' in this case needs to be clarified. For example, does the term 'poor' refer to ungrammatical use of English? Or does it mean that the students find difficulty to understand [some] of the lecturers' English? Or else? This can happen because the lecturers teaching at ICP have different background of English qualification. Some of them are lecturers from the faculty of *Tarbiyah* who do not have English certificate. In other words, neither do they graduate from English department nor study overseas. Some other lecturers are Masters and Doctor from English department who have English certificate, even one of them earns a PhD from an Australian University.

Research Method

This research employs case study design investigating factors supporting and hindering the use of English at ICP at Faculty of Tarbiyah Malang. A number of students were involved in giving their perceptions and feeling in regard to the use of English during the course. Questionnaires and direct observation were done to the students to obtain the data.

Factors supporting the use of English in International Class Program (ICP) Tarbiyah Faculty, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

The students' motivation

In general, the students had good motivation to learn English. As has been mentioned in earlier part of Chapter IV, the results of the questionnaire showed that 30% of the students like English very much, 65% of them like it, and 15% so and so. Half number of them had joined English course before. This is probably the reason why they enjoy learning English in the International Course Program (ICP). This number provides supportive condition for the rest of the students to get motivated to learn English in this program.

The role of lecturers

Teaching ESL students adds another component to the already difficult profession of teaching. Students entering a classroom with English as their second language also face a multitude of challenges in their everyday life; these challenges are often magnified in an academic environment because of their limited vocabularies. The role of the teacher in an ESL classroom is to work each day to help

the students not only learn English, but also give the knowledge and skills necessary to cope in their everyday lives.

Some of the students argue that the program has been supported with a number of instructional materials, such as electronic devices such as *alfalink*, LCD, laptop, computer lab, and the internet. Having these resources available will help meet the needs of the ICP students and to gain access to these resources will enable any classroom teacher to provide more effective instruction for ICP learners. These resources include instructional materials for use with students, the expertise of ESL specialist teacher, and the numerous publications providing research updates, methodological suggestions, curriculum outlines, or other information related to the teaching of English as a Second Language.

The students recommend having the following things available in the classroom:
1. dictionaries specifically designed for learners of English (this type of dictionary
2. provides pronunciation keys, simple explanations, and contextualized examples rather than the precise definitions and information about part of speech given in standard dictionaries)
3. bilingual dictionaries
4. picture and visual dictionaries
5. alphabet letters (print and cursive)
6. drawing, painting, and modeling supplies (e.g., plasticine)
7. catalogues, magazines, or other heavily illustrated reading material
8. games (including board games, card games, and computer games that require or focus on language use at an appropriate level)
9. manipulatives
10. realia

Factors hindering the implementation of English in International Class Program (ICP) Tarbiyah Faculty, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

There are a number of factors hindering the use of English in ICP, which include:
1. Not all students had an electronic English dictionary such as *alfalink*. As far as I am concerned, the students should not depend only on this instrument to learn English. They can find printed dictionary which commonly has more complete explanations on explaining terms, for example, Oxford dictionary or Collins Co-build English Dictionary. Thus, they should not feel inferior if they do not have *alfalink* dictionary. Learning sources were not used maximally. For example, the lecturers do not like using electronic instruments such as LCD connecting to video and tape that could actually be used for helping the students learned English.

2. A specific reason to understand why most of the ICP lecturers are still reluctant to use the electronic learning instrument has not been deeply explored in this study. One of the assumptions was perhaps the lecturers did not like complicatedness for their teaching preparation; in other words, they will be burdened with such difficult preparation if they want to use that kind of instruments for teaching and learning. Another possible reason was that they did not really know or understand how to operate those instruments.

3. Both the lecturers and the students were inconsistent to use English. Even, some of the lecturers' English quality was not in far different from that experienced by the students. This could happen because most of the lecturers were not English lecturers and never had a sort of special English courses before. If they used English, it is more likely that their English was below standard. This situation can, of course, hinder the students' English development. The lecturers' English should actually become a model for the students from whom they can learn and improve their English.

4. The poor students' English mastery sometimes also hindered the teaching process. It is true that the process of teaching and learning may be disturbed by the students' English insufficiency. As the name of the program refers to – International Class Program - should ideally be conducted by using English. There is a sort of dilemma for some lecturers in relation to the use English. In one sense they have to teach using English; in other sense, they are required to develop the students' understanding on the content of subject matters. For some lecturers whose educational background are English would find little difficulty, or perhaps not at all, with English. However, for

non – English lecturers, communication using English may be still problematic.

5. There was no language forums held in English. This is a valid point which is of importance for the program coordinator to establish. The language forum is necessary to build the academic atmosphere where English is used more and more frequently in the campus.

6. There was no language lab. The role of language lab is very important in helping the students develop their English proficiency. The absence of language lab at the moment in the faculty can be solved by working together with English department in which language lab is available there. The program coordinator should discuss this as soon as possible.

7. The students had not been aware of the importance of practicing English. Learning a foreign language needs practice because it is the only way to experience doing with and feeling the language. They should be encouraged and showed by the lecturers how to improve their English, for example: learn and practice derivatives to improve their English vocabulary.

8. The ICP students claimed that most of the materials they learned were written in Indonesian. The existing English books, magazines, newspapers are important in helping the students engage with English.

Concluding remarks

Teaching and learning English requires understanding the principles and the aims of language teaching and learning which finally extend to the discussion of the teacher, teacher training, teaching, syllabus, materials, methods, learner, and cultural awareness.

It was rather difficult to conclude whether the use of English in ICP was successful or not, because the objectives were not clearly specified in behavioral terms. The time for observation was also limited. Nevertheless, by personal interpretation, after analysing the results of interviews, and the observations as well as examining the students' completed questionnaires, it was possible to identify factors supporting and hindering the program. At least five factors supporting the program could be identified: (1) the students' motivation, (2) the role of lecturers, and (3) the instructional materials. However, some factors hindering the program include: (1) not all students had an electronic English dictionary, (2) both the lecturers and the students were inconsistent to use English, (3) the poor students' English

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