STUDENT HETEROGENEITY AND ACHIEVEMENT: A STUDY ON POLICIES AT ARABIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF IAIN LHOKSEUMAWE

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Abstract
The aims of this study is investigating the policy of Arabic Education Department in responding the students’ heterogeneity to improve Arabic achievement. It is expected to be the solution for the problem of heterogeneity. To reveal the facts, the authors used interview, observation, questionnaire, and documentation. In analyzing the data, the authors used qualitative descriptive analysis method. The result of this study revealed that the Arabic Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty IAIN Lhokseumawe used teaching methods and objectives clearly to reach the successful and directed learning. But it was not enough, because all of the students did not come from the same background. Some of them came from MA, SMK, SMA and Pesantren. Certainly, those who came from Pesantren have higher Arabic achievement than those from other schools. The authors concluded that the policies can equalize and reduce differences in student achievement, though there were many obstacles and shortcomings in the implementation of the policy in language development.

Keywords: Student Heterogeneity, Arabic Language Education, Learning Achievement
pelaksanaan program kebijakan dalam pengembangan bahasa masih banyak hambatan dan kekurangan.

**Kata Kunci**: Heterogenitas Mahasiswa, Pendidikan Bahasa Arab, Prestasi Belajar

**INTRODUCTION**

Policy is a matter of choice with its certain consequence. The problem is whether all parties are aware of the consequence, and whether the policy is detrimental to one party or not. One of the policies made by the government is a regulation in the 1945 Constitution article 31 paragraph (1) stating: Every citizen has the right to be educated; Paragraph (2) The government strives and organizes a legal national teaching system. Through the explanation of this article, the government show that they are given the mandate to guarantee the citizens’ rights in obtaining education services. Moreover, they have to implement a national teaching system.

Realizing a policy is one of the efforts in implementing one of the pillars of educational development which becomes a reference to higher education system. It is the second pillar, which emphasizes improving quality, relevance, and competitiveness. In order to develop the education system, the higher education institutions must pay attention to the education quality that the graduates are ready to face the high level of competitiveness. Therefore, the implementation of the policy must investigate the educational objectives in each department of the institutions.

The beginning of implementation of the policy is by the time when the general objectives and targets have been listed in detail, action programs have been designed and a budgets have been allocated to realize these goals and objectives. These are basic requirements for the implementation of the policy taken by the one who issues a particular policy. Without those requirement, the policies are not categorized as a merely political rhetoric or political slogans. Theoretically, at this implementation stage, the policy formulation process can be taken over by the policy implementation process, in which the programs can be implemented. In fact, the difference between the policy formulation and the policy implementation is difficult to maintain, because the feedback from the implementation procedures allows certain changes in the determined objectives of the policy. The rules and guidelines need to be reviewed enabling a review process of policy determining, particularly related to its implementation.

The implementation of the policy in the Arabic Language Education Department IAIN Lhokseumawe regards the heterogeneity of graduate students coming from different backgrounds.

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The policies carried out by the Department of Arabic Language Education IAIN Lhokseumawe are centralized to achieve the more optimal educational goals.

According to the reality, Arabic Language Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty IAIN Lhokseumawe clearly uses methods and objectives in its teaching. The objective determines successful and directed learning. In fact, the various provenances of the students of Arabic Language Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty IAIN Lhokseumawe allow that the objective is not the only needed in the department. Some of the students came from MA (Islamic Senior High School), SMK (Vocational School), SMA (Senior High School) and Pesantren (Islamic Boarding School). Absolutely, those coming from Pesantren have higher achievement in Arabic than those coming from Islamic Senior High School, Vocational School, and Senior High School. Therefore, the Arabic Language Education Department of IAIN Lhokseumawe wants to equalize the student achievement to minimize the difference resulted from the differences background. The Department has the authority to determine the full policies in order to achieve learning objectives.

Based on the background above, this study attempts to investigate deeply the facts related to the policies of the Arabic Education Department in addressing the heterogeneity of the students in the Arabic Language Education Department at the Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty IAIN Lhokseumawe.

METHOD

This is a qualitative research using case study approach. This research is a detailed study that uses data to explain variables or research focus. The object of this research are: the Rector of IAIN Lhokseumawe, the Dean of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty, the Head of Arabic Language Education Department, the Arabic lecturers of Arabic Language Education Department of the Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty of IAIN Lhokseumawe, some students in Arabic Language Education Department of The Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty of IAIN Lhokseumawe. This research used observation and interview. The researcher observed how the Arabic education department's policy responds to the students’ heterogeneity. The process of analyzing the data is in accordance with the techniques of collecting the data. Data reduction is used to analyze the interview. Furthermore, the researcher observed the Arabic learning activities at IAIN Lhokseumawe, starting from the initial activities to the final activities of the Arabic Language Education Department Policy in addressing the heterogeneity of its students.
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A policy can be interpreted as management wisdom. In social science, this term is also interpreted as a basic concept to determine a step or action in achieving a goal. Related to the educational field, it can be concluded that educational policy is the basic concept used to determine the government’s actions to achieve an educational goal in the country.  

According to Wahab, policy is a relatively new science emerged in the mid-1960s as a prominent discipline within the scope of public administration and political science.  

Meanwhile, policy analysis have existed since the existence of human civilization. Since then, public policy has been inseparable part from human life in the form of individual (micro level) and social life (macro level).

Public policy regulates, directs and develops interaction within the community and between the community with its environment to obtain or achieve the virtue effectively. Various experts express different opinions about the notion of public policy, including: policy is "Everything that is done by the person who holds the power, the reasons why it is done, and the differences caused as a result". Meanwhile, Lasswell explained that "Public policy is a series of planned programs including goals, values, and practices". In this case the policy can be interpreted as a program.  

In contrast to those two opinions above, Ranney defined policy as "certain predetermined actions or statements of a will". In addition, Lester stated that policy is "The process or series of decisions or government activities designed to overcome the problem, whether it is real or planned (imagined)."

Nugroho defined policy as a series of actions proposed by a person, group, or government in a particular environment, along with the existing threats and opportunities. The proposed policy is intended to exploit the potential while overcome the existing obstacles to achieve the certain goals.

Sutapa concluded the various definitions of policy concepts into two public opinions. First, the opinion viewing that policy is identical to the actions taken by the power holders. This opinion

6 Nugroho, Public Policy (Jakarta : PT Elex Media Komputindo, 2011), 93

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assumes that all actions are relative policies. Second, the one focusing on policy implementation. The first opinion believes that policies are decisions made by the power holders who have specific goals or objectives, and the second opinion assumes that policies provide predicted or anticipated effects.

From the various opinions above, it can be concluded that policy is an implemented or planned program made by the government in a country that is intended to overcome all problems emerge in the society. Basically, the policy issued by the government to improve the society welfare. In determining the policy, the government must regard the society since the society is the object of the policy itself.

Since policies must be based on a problem, there are two things that underlie the determining of a policy including the first, the emergence of a new problem in educational field which immediately need solution. For example, the problem of students’ heterogeneity, which needs creative solutions to boost the students’ quality coming different school backgrounds; second, there is the higher expectation. Both of them are the initial foundation of an educational policy to support the development of the education quality in accordance with the emerging demands or problems.

In general, determining a policy is determining patterned actions. This can be conducted all the time depending on the emergence of problems or demands in educational development. There are three theories of determining policy which are frequently discussed in several State’s policy making, which include:

First, Comprehensive Rational Theory. The results of this decision are rational, which means that the decisions are able to achieve the most effective goals. Contextually, this comprehensive rational model is clearly uneasy to apply, caused by inadequate statistical information and data as well as inadequate ready-to-use theoretical devices for developing countries. Those devices covers cultural technology, in which the decision-making system does not support the operation system as the weak and unsupportive rational elements in the bureaucracy in developing countries.

Second, incremental theory, which are decisions made by the decision makers. The user of this incremental model tend to represent the interests of stronger and more established community besides the community having capability in organizing the basic interests of society. The interests

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of the weaker community, which are categorized as politically unable to organize their practical interests, will be ignored.

Third, the Integrated Observation Theory, states that an integrated observation model is essentially a compromising approach that combines the use of a comprehensive rational model and an incremental model in determining policy. In some cases, the use of an incremental model may be appropriate. On the other hand, the other cases need the use more comprehensive approach as in a comprehensive rational approach.9

**Arabic Learning Achievement**

Arabic learning achievement is the learning result achieved by students at a certain period in an educational institution which the results are expressed through assessments in the form of numbers or other symbols.10 In this study, the term of achievement does not only refer to the student achievement which scores processed in a report or learning outcomes in the form of score or numbers, but also the level of the students’ success in understanding Arabic appropriately and correctly.

There are four influential factors affecting the achievement or learning outcomes: first, the material that must be studied. Materials must be studied as a reference in determining teaching and learning strategies, such as the difference between learning skills and learning of problem solving. Too much or too long material will cause students’ boredom. The level of difficulty of the material and the students’ ability will affect the learning speed; second, environmental factors. External environmental factors can be in the form of the natural environment, physical environment, or social environment; third, instrumental input. Instrumental factors are input of the learning process. The kinds of the instrument depend on the teaching and learning strategy as well as the expected learning outcomes. It is in the form of hardware (buildings, equipment, etc.) and software (curriculum, programs and learning guidelines and others); fourth, the individually student's condition, which can be divided into two categories, namely: (a) Physiological conditions, meaning the state of the senses and health conditions. The most significant senses for learning among those five senses are the sense of sight and sense of hearing; (b) Psychological conditions covering attention, observation, response, fantasy, memory, thinking, integrity, talent and motives.

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Heterogeneity of the Arabic Education Department Students of IAIN Lhokseumawe

The learning outcomes in formal education are represented by grading. That grade is divided into excellent, good, average and bad. The classification of learning outcomes shows the students’ level of mastery toward the material through an assessment of the learning outcomes or learning achievement.

The students’ different abilities distinct the learning outcomes or learning achievements which are caused by internal and external factors. Internal factors are the ones which have been owned by the students since they were born, and called as psychological factors and physiological factors. Psychological factors cover talent, intelligence, interest and will. Each student has different psychological factor. Likewise, physiological factors comprise sex and the ability of the five senses. The five senses classify human into several types, including visual human, who is easy to understand things through his vision. Besides, there is auditive human, who is easy to understand something through hearing. Kinesthetic human is easy to understand something by doing something. In addition, there is a type of human who can easily understand something through vision and hearing and he is called as audio-visual human.

External factors involve those are outside of the students. They are environmental factors including social environment and physical environment. Social environment covers family environment, work environment, school environment and neighborhood. This such factor can be different for each of the student. The physical environment includes those who have complete learning facilities as well as those who don't, some who have enough time to study and some who don't because of their activities.

The final assessment of a course must meet those four components. If one of the components is missing, the student can not pass the course. The final score of a course is the result of a combination of the four components, as stated as follows: a) Class activity score (attendance) (H), taking 10% (a) Task score (T) taking 20% (b) Mid-term test score (M), taking 30%; and (c) Final term score (S), taking 40%

The level of a college student's achievement is represented by student’s grade point average (GPA). GPA is calculated at the end of each semester and ranged from 0.00 to 4.00. There are two types of GPA, namely: (a) The average of courses taken by students in the last semester, which is called as Semester GPA, and; (b) The average of several previous semesters, which is called as Cumulative GPA .This cumulative GPA is obtained by calculating all the credit scores that have been taken from the beginning of the study until the last semester.
A student will be able to study well in a university if he received a good education at his secondary school. As a learning is an attempt to connect the knowledge we have already had with new knowledge, the sensible responses emerge the understanding, then the insight shows that the learning process is successful. If something does not have relevance or conflict with someone’s knowledge, then he will be rarely meaningful. That is the reason why a person is very difficult to understand a problem that he learned.

Educational activities in state secondary schools are generally better than those are in private secondary schools. The state schools provide more qualified educational resources such as teaching qualifications, learning facilities and funding as they regularly receive financial support from the government. On the other hand, the private schools only provide low standardized educational resources and the education costs are borne by the students’ parents, whose management is controlled by a foundation. The management fund from the students’ parents is not enough to improve the education quality because of the imbalance between the high cost and the parents’ ability. As the result, there is decreasing interest of the society to enroll the school.

Learning Arabic education does not only require creating good products, but also prioritize better processes. The process evaluation can determine whether students really understand the material or get the good results because of their luck. This can be identified from the learning process itself. How do the students try to understand the material actively beside try to have the same understanding with the students considered as more capable in and outside the classroom? Creating the same level of understanding in a class is not easy. It depends on the awareness of the students themselves, the students’ concern to help each other. The models as well as methods used by Arabic Language lecturers should be able to facilitate those things.

The interviews with lecturers in Arabic Education Department at IAIN Lhokseumawe reveals that 80% of classes consist of students with heterogeneous abilities. The students who are considered to have more ability than half students in the class are only about 20%. This is an obstacle for 70% of the lecturers in the term of transferring information. Despite being aware of this, most lecturers rarely try to optimize the smart students’ abilities to deliberately teach their underprivileged colleagues. The form of cooperation proposed by Arabic Education Department is optimizing the intelligent students to assist their friends. However, the discussion and extra learning hours sometimes are inadequate to facilitate the slow students to understand. This problem is due to the limited time of the discussion. Those who have abilities in certain fields are bound to study at pesantren where they stay around the IAIN Lhokseumawe environment. The results of the
evaluation in Arabic Education Department of IAIN Lhokseumawe reveal that the classes separation can make significant changes. It can be proven by the student achievement which was a problem for Arabic Education Department lecturers. This separation eases the lecturers in the learning process (in delivering Arabic material). During the learning process, there are only 4 students among 55 students who are actively asked questions if they did not understand. The other students are passive. This is the result of the students’ difficulty in expressing misunderstanding to the lecturers, their confusion and discourage in delivering what they have not understood. The fact shows few lecturers try to use modern strategies and methods to make the Arabic Education Department students more active in learning process.

Data of the interviewing students were relatively similar to the interviewing lecturers. 65% of the students claimed that the class consisted of unequal students in the term of their abilities, and only 3 students stated that there are more than 50% of the students have better abilities. Among the 20 students interviewed, there were only 8 students were enthusiastic and motivated to learn in the classroom because the classroom learning process are less enjoyable for them. 60% of the students claimed that it was quite difficult to understand the explanation from the lecturer. However, the active students were not willing to ask questions for various reasons, such as, they felt uncomfortable with the lecturer who was sometimes assertive. It shows that the students need lecturers who can transfer material in simple and meaningful way as well as share the knowledge to the students. Therefore, most respondents mentioned that they prefer to study in groups or discussions with the suboptimal results.

According to those two interviews with the lecturers and students, it can be concluded that are differences in the students’ ability in a class are able to be an obstacle in achieving the learning objectives. Learning Arabic requires a learning model which is able to motivate and encourage the students in asking the material that have not been understood without awkward and afraid. The learning can be in the form of group work, although the intelligent students must be suggested to assist their friends in understanding the material. The other students must try to understand what has been explained by their friends and they are responsible to do their group and individual assignments.

Arabic Education Department Policies Dealing with Students Heterogeneity.

Most of the lecturers stated that it is a necessary to notice the students’ heterogeneity, and there is only one lecturer said it is not. After interviewing the lecturers, it appears that 95% of them
stated that the differences in student characteristics are significant in a learning process. This is a positive thing in improving the learning quality towards competency-based individual learning.

The lecturers of Arabic Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty IAIN Lhokseumawe stated that effective learning to accommodate the student heterogeneity can be viewed from several aspects such as the students’ role, learning methods, media, the lecturers’ role, student and lecturer relations, and evaluation. Lecturers' arguments on how effective a learning process by regarding those aspects are as stated follows: first, regarding the students’ role (a) Students need to be encouraged to be active, especially those who are less active to be motivated; (b) An active role of students is needed; (c) Students are provided the broadest opportunity to be active in the learning; (d) Adjusting student conditions; (e) the less active students should be sought to be active; (f) Students are grouped of 3-4 students and asked to discuss their task in the group.

Second, in the term of learning method (a) Group discussion, each group has intelligent and unintelligent students; (b) Group discussion are constructed and by noticing the students’ equality in mastering competences (b) Methods are appropriate with students characteristics; (c) Methods are suitable with the learning substance; (d) There is enrichment and additional material for the less intelligent students; (e) Provision of more complete modules; (f) Students work in groups, and the lecturer must check the discussion diligently; (g) The lecturer gives motivation and questions as feedback.

Third, in the term of media (a) There must be appropriate media to stimulate students activities such as modules, handouts, and others; (b) Creating media to stimulate students creativity in facilitating learning process; (c) Must be up to date media; (d) selecting easy and available media; (e) The media adapt the learning substance; (f) Providing more complete modules; (g) More attention without regarding the difference and discrimination; (h) the lecturer makes a textbook, then the students learn/ discuss the each chapter and the lecturer gives his comment.

Fourth, regarding the role of lecturers (a) Lecturers must act as facilitators and motivators to encourage the less active students to be active (a) Lecturers can act as facilitators, motivators and inspiration (b) Active and participative (c) Active lecturers encourage students to be active (d) lecturer should be creative and responsive to the learning situation (e) lecturer must master various teaching methods to ease him in choosing the appropriate method by regarding the students’ condition.

Fifth, in accordance with the relationship between lecturers and students (a) There must be fair communication (b) Creating a fair, transparent and accommodating relationship (c) Dialogical
(d) Maintaining relationships according to their respective positions (e) Relationships are within academic boundaries (not too fair and intensive) (f) Try to be more interactive and frequented  (g) Lecturer must be close to the students, as if the lecturer is fierce the students will be afraid to ask or answer questions.

Noticing the role of students, learning methods, media, the role of lecturers, student and lecturer relationships, and evaluation, there are several obstacles experienced by the lecturers in learning as stated as follows: (a) Encouraging students to be active (b) Students’ low enthusiasm in attending lectures (c) Student suboptimal enthusiasm (d) Easy to change students’ motivation (e) Students’ low interest in learning (f) Fighting power for getting success (g) Silence as a part of culture (good listeners) (h) Giving motivation (i) Students are provided with assignment and motivation in their activities continuously until they finish those assignment correctly.

According to the lecturers' views on effective Arabic learning above, Arabic Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty IAIN Lhokseumawe has issued several policies to address the students’ heterogeneity such as requiring students to follow Additional class programs are implemented by the Department on Saturdays and Sundays. The policy can be used by students to improve their Arabic language skills so that the class can compensate for students who are classified as capable.

CONCLUSION

According to results and analysis of the interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation, the authors can draw some conclusions that: the policy decided by Arabic Education Department Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty IAIN Lhokseumawe in addressing heterogeneity of students is in line with the comprehensive rational theory. The fact showed that a decision will be rational, if it is appropriately used to carry out the stated goals. The process of deciding the policy are as follows: In implementing Arabic learning in the Arabic education department of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty IAIN Lhokseumawe, there is no difference in the learning objectives among the heterogeneous students from high school, vocational and Islamic boarding schools because they have the same goal of being able to speak Arabic fluently. In minimizing the differences in Arabic achievement, Arabic education department of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty IAIN Lhokseumawe require the students to attend additional programs in the department on Saturday and Sunday. As the result, the authors conclude that the policies can
equalize and minimize differences in student achievement, which is one of the obstacles in the department.

REFERENCES


