

## IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LANGUAGE CENTRES IN SALATIGA THROUGH GOOD RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS STANDARD

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**Abstract:** The focus of this study is improving the quality of recruitment and teaching standards at three language centres in Salatiga. The purposes of this study are helping the managers of language centres in Salatiga to find an appropriate way to recruit new teachers and helping teachers to be more effective in teaching. This research is qualitative descriptive interpretive and quantitative with a simple calculation. The data were collected by means of interview, questionnaire, and observation. The researcher suggests that researches on other samples and population on similar area need to be done so that the development of knowledge will improve sustainably.

**Keywords:** *quality, language centres, recruitment process, teaching effectiveness standard*

### INTRODUCTION

It is undoubtedly that the success of education lies on qualified teachers. A question might arise, that is what standards could be used to assess or measure teachers who are qualified or not. This question leads into another one which is "What it means to be qualified". Teachers graduating from different universities might have received different trainings and education; however, they normally claim to be qualified when they are interviewed to get a job at certain language centres.

Based on the writer's observation, in 2005, several language centres in Salatiga didn't have any criteria in recruiting their English teachers. The managers only relied on recommendations from other teachers to hire a new English teacher. This phenomenon is quite dangerous since it will influence the students' learning and performance. In addition, language

centres in Salatiga did not have permanent teachers. They hire new teachers as fast as possible because of the high demand for English courses. If they have many students waiting, they inevitably look for English teachers immediately.

As a result, the teachers cannot be assessed for their qualifications. It is a crucial issue since the brochures of three language centres in Salatiga state that they have qualified and competent teachers. In reality, it is difficult to identify whether those teachers are qualified or not. This has become the main concern for the writer to study further of how English teachers should be to produce qualified students in terms of reaching the objectives of the lesson.

It is totally different from one of the language centres in Jakarta in terms of standards used to recruit their new teachers. The head of the language centre in Jakarta gave three kinds of tests

to recruit a new teacher in 2005. They were interviewed, a writing test, and demo teaching. After the interview, the staff from the language centre conducted a class observation to see whether the candidate teacher was qualified or not. In this research, the writer sees whether there have been some improvements in recruiting new English teachers for language centres in Salatiga during a five-year period.

In correlation to this, McCloskey, Thornton, & Toubia (2007) proposed a set of standards that could be used to recruit new teachers and determine whether they are qualified or not. The first is what is called as Domain Check. This means there should be a clear standard to recruit new teachers at an educational institution. In other words, this institution should have a list of criteria to select teachers who are eligible or not to teach at their educational institutions.

Second is Construct Validity Check. This means that the educational institutions should look back at what they are trying to measure: what a newly qualified teacher should know and be able to do. We can conclude from this statement that class observation needs to be done on a regular basis to see whether those teachers who have already been hired, fulfill the list of criteria set by the educational institutions.

Third is Concurrent Validity Check. To check for concurrent validity, the educational institutions ask the teachers to list what were currently taught in the candidate teachers' faculties/universities. The checklist is then used to see whether everything that was taught is covered somewhere within the educational institutions' standard. If not, the educational institution is recommended to tell its teachers to fulfill the standard required.

Last is Clarity Check. To check whether the educational institutions standards would be clear and understandable to the pre-service teachers, faculty, and supervisors. The head of the educational institutions should allow the teachers to read the written criteria by themselves. It means new teachers could be shown the criteria needed to work at certain educational institutions so that they are aware and try to develop themselves professionally, and are in agreement with the educational institutions over the expected objectives.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Based on the background above, there are two main problems to be the main issues of this research. The first problem has correlation with recruitment process. The writer is going to see whether a standard has been set to recruit new English teachers. If there is already a standard used to recruit new teachers and determine whether the candidate teachers are qualified or not, the writer will analyze the standards set by language centres in Salatiga critically based on the standards proposed by McCloskey, Thornton, & Toubia (2007). In contrast, if they do not have any, the writer will propose a standard with some adjustments (if needed) so that they can be implemented in language centres in Salatiga.

The second problem is related to teaching effectiveness. Based on the writer's experience in teaching one of language centres in Salatiga, teachers were not assessed for their quality in teaching, and there was no class observation conducted on a regular basis by managers to see whether their teachers are able to teach English effectively in the classroom. If there is no

standard set yet, the writer is going to propose an evaluation measurement which is suitable to be implemented in language centres in Salatiga. On the other hand, if the language centres have their own standard in evaluating teaching effectiveness, the writer of this thesis will analyze it critically whether it somewhat matches the standard proposed by Brown. The writer chose the criteria proposed by Brown because it covers all the criteria needed to evaluate teaching effectiveness, for example, learning environment, individuals, teaching activity, teachers' preparation, teachers' presentation, teaching methods, personal characteristics, and teacher-student interaction.

### **Purposes of the Study**

The purposes of the study are to help managers of language centres in Salatiga to find appropriate ways to recruit or hire new teachers and to help teachers to be more effective in teaching. This study is significant for many parties. First, for the writer herself, it is important to learn more about teacher qualifications and give educational contributions in how a recruitment process and an effective teaching should be, for her own region, Salatiga. For the teachers themselves, this study could make them aware of how effective teachers should be. As a result, the teachers could develop themselves and be more qualified with the guidance proposed by Brown. Next is for the language centres themselves. They will be trustworthy if what is stated in the brochure, that they have qualified and competent teachers, is true. For long term effect, they don't need any big effort to promote their language centres if they are well-known for their qualified teachers. As a consequence, the

students will get the rights to be taught by qualified teachers and be more productive in learning English. Furthermore, the language centres will be able to keep its credibility, and could serve people in education at its best. In general, this study, which was conducted in a small town in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia could contribute towards the development of knowledge, especially in the recruitment process and teaching effectiveness evaluation for language centres, not only in Salatiga, but also in Indonesia.

This study has been limited to educational institutions, i.e. three language centres in Salatiga. They are chosen based on the age of the language centres (how long they have been established, which is above five years) and the number of students they have. Those three language centres will represent the real condition of teacher recruitment process that has been conducted up to the present moment.

In addition, the writer chose elementary level class in each language centre since there is a great possibility that elementary level class will be opened. In addition, elementary level is very important because it teaches students from the basic level. If the basic level has been taught properly, difficulties in learning English in Intermediate or Advanced level can be minimized. It will also make it easier for teachers of the next levels to teach students whose basic level is good already.

This part discusses theoretical framework underlying this research. It covers two areas: recruitment process and teaching effectiveness theories that will be used as a stepping stone in conducting this research.

### **Recruitment Process**

It has been mentioned in previous chapter that the writer of this research is going to use standards proposed by McCloskey, Thornton, & Toubia (2007) for recruitment process of new teachers. The writer is going to use four criteria; *Domain Check*, *Construct Validity Check*, *Concurrent Validity Check*, and *Clarity Check* which have been explained previously. The writer chose these four criteria since in 2005, based on the writer's personal observation, both teachers and managers did not pay a particular attention to these four criteria. As a result, each of them had their own perceptions in running their jobs. If these four criteria are implemented and understood by both parties, it is assumed that language centres in Salatiga will be more effective in giving educational services to students.

### **Teaching Principles**

Richards (1990) examines two approaches to the study of teaching from which theories of teaching as well as principles for teacher preparation programs can be developed. The first is a *micro approach*. It is an analytical approach that looks at teaching in terms of its directly observable characteristics. It involves looking at what a teacher does in the classroom. The second one is a *macro approach*. It is a holistic one which involves making generalizations and inferences that go beyond what can be observed directly in the way of quantifiable classroom processes. He adds that both approaches can be used to develop theories of effective teaching and to derive principles for teacher education.

In this research, the writer uses a *micro approach* as one of the ways in evaluating teaching effectiveness. The

writer has conducted a class observation to look directly at observable characteristics of teaching in the classroom. Besides, the teachers also need to assess themselves as Nunan (1990) indicates that it is crucial that teachers develop a range of social skills in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own professional activities. A range of social skills here mean that teachers should be able to develop themselves professionally and interact well with students. That is why, the writer uses a self-evaluation form for teachers, from Brown (1994), which is adapted from Christison & Bassano (1984 in Brown 1994) to be filled in by teachers of language centres in Salatiga after the teachers teach, to know whether they have developed a range of social skills discussed in Nunan (1990). If the teachers realize their own weaknesses, it is expected that they will perform better and be more effective in other teaching practices. The writer expects that teachers are aware over their own strengths and weaknesses in teaching English. Brandt (2007 in Coombe, Al-Hamly, Davidson & Troudi 2007) mentions that the definitions of *self-awareness* vary, but he explains that self-awareness relates to the notion of having knowledge, which can affect behavior. In this study, the writer expects that by knowing their own strengths and weaknesses, teachers can change their behavior by becoming more effective in teaching. Brandt (2007 in Coombe, Al-Hamly, Davidson & Troudi 2007) also mentions that a novice teacher is expected to monitor his or her performance in teaching practice. In addition, Brown (2001) mentions that when we speak, for example, the extent to which our intended message is received is a factor of both our

production and our listener's perception. It means that when teachers teach, they don't only make themselves clear but also they need to understand the students as a listener.

The writer feels that this self-evaluation sheet is necessary to be given to teachers after the teachers teach, at least twice during class observation, to remind them over some teaching principles they need to bear in mind, since it is a way of helping them to develop a range of social skills proposed by Nunan.

## METHOD

The writer uncovered the phenomenon of evaluating teaching effectiveness in three language centres in Salatiga. That is why, the data were analyzed qualitatively since according to Strauss & Corbin (1990), qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known. In this case, information about a recruitment process to have qualified teachers at three language centres in Salatiga will be analyzed deeper. In addition, according to Tayibnapis (2008), qualitative method can be used to make a narrative information, like an interview record, students' essay, a report sample, etc. In this study, the writer analyzed the data of evaluating teaching effectiveness narratively. In short, the data were analyzed qualitatively with an inductive approach, which analyzed from the phenomenon to come to a finding. Then, for evaluating teaching effectiveness, the data were analyzed quantitatively with a simple calculation.

In this research, the writer did not take sample, but used the whole population. This is so since there were only a small number of respondents, and the writer decided to use all of the

available population. This is supported by Sugiyono (2007) that when the population is "not proportional" in numbers, all of the available population should be taken as a sample. As a result, the writer would use Disproportionate Stratified Random Sampling.

This research involved three language centres in Salatiga. They were chosen based on how long they have been established, which is above five years, and the number of students, which is above fifty students, per month. The writer chose elementary level since there is a great possibility that elementary class will be opened, and elementary level is very important because it is the fundamental step in learning further levels. Language centre A has been established for about eight years. It has around four hundreds students every three months with four teachers. For the elementary level, they have more or less fifteen students in one classroom. Each session lasts for 90 minutes; one hour to have a lesson in the classroom, and thirty minutes to have a listening practice in the laboratory. However, for English for Kids, each session lasts for one hour; forty-five minutes for having lessons in class, and fifteen minutes for listening practice. In the brochure, this language centre proclaims to be well-known because of its good facilities and teaching methods that many students and workers feel satisfied with the result. Language Centre A has three levels for Beginner Level; Beginner I, Beginner II, and Beginner III.

In addition, Language centre B has been established for more than six years. It has around fifty students every month with seven to eight teachers. There are three to five students within one classroom. For one level, each

session lasts for 90 minutes. This language centre provides, as it is mentioned in the brochure, many facilities, such as air conditioner, TV, VCD, CD, and competent teachers. Language Centre B has 6 levels for Elementary Level. They call them General English I, General English II, General English III, General English IV, General English V, and General English VI.

The last one, language centre C has been established for about twenty years. At this present time, it has around 150 students with five teachers. Each session lasts for 60 minutes, and it takes three months to pass each level. As mentioned in the brochure, this language centre provides a perfect facility. It covers textbooks in the appropriate grading, additional materials from the tutors, mini laboratory for every class, and TV/CD/VCD when needed. Language Centre C has three levels for Elementary. Those are Lower Elementary, Elementary and Higher Elementary.

This research is qualitative in nature. To be able to uncover any phenomenon concerning the recruitment process and determine whether certain teachers are qualified or not, the following triangulation of data collection methods was used. Furthermore, the writer used primary sources, that is the data sources directly give the data to the writer, and not through any other medium like through other people, or through any other important documents (Sugiyono, 2007).

An interview was chosen as one of data collection methods since according to Sugiyono (2007), an interview could be used when a researcher wants to find out the answers for the research problems, and when the

numbers of the respondents are quite a few. A semi-structured interview was conducted face to face. This is because the interviewer didn't always stick to the questions, but had a follow up question as well in seeking the information. To help the writer to accommodate the answers, the writer used a tape recorder so that no significant information was missing. The interview was done to both the managers and teachers who teach Elementary Level. For Language Centre A, there were two teachers, who taught Elementary Level, being interviewed. For Language Centre B, there were three teachers who were interviewed. Finally, there were two teachers who were interviewed for Language Centre C. The interview is used to seek information on how recruitment process has been carried out. It is significant to interview both parties the managers and teachers to cross-check whether they have similar or different perceptions over an agreement set earlier, or at the recruitment process.

Hadi (1986) in Sugiyono (2007) states that observation is a complex process since it consists of biological and psychological process. Two which are important are observation and recall processes. Sugiyono (2007) also adds that observation technique is used when a researcher wants to know human behavior, working process, and when the respondents are not too big to be observed. In this study, the writer conducted class observations to see whether English teachers have been qualified or not based on the criteria set by Brown (1994).

This instrument is beneficial to identify the strengths of English teachers and areas need to improve. Then, the scores were rated 0-4 to see whether those teachers will be in that particular

level in teaching effectiveness. The scale is wider in scope compared to the scale for teachers' self-evaluation. This is so since an observer could assess beyond what can be seen by the teachers themselves, such as appropriate outfit, appropriate level of difficulty, etc. In this study, the writer conducted a non-participant observation, which means the writer was not get involved directly in activities of the respondents. It means that the writer functions as an independent observer (Sugiyono, 2007). In addition, the writer did not read the teachers' lesson plans since they didn't have it in a neat written form. The writer also used structured observation. It means that it is made clear starting at the beginning over what criteria needed to be observed, where and when an observation occurred, and what variables would be observed.

The class observation was conducted twice for each class, and for the first session, the class observation was not announced. Then, for the second times, teachers were informed that they would be observed. The teacher is aware that when an observer is present, the teachers and students act differently during teaching and learning process. That is why, an anticipated action needed to be done. The writer was really aware of the possibility of class observation paradox, i.e teachers would act differently and prepared the material well when an observer was present. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the writer would see whether the result of an evaluation is different for the first, and second evaluations.

The writer feels the need to have a questionnaire since it is an efficient way to know an expected variable from respondents. The questionnaire was used to measure the level of teaching

effectiveness in the classroom. The respondents were English teachers and the questionnaire was given in English. The writer assumed that they do understand English statements in the questionnaire because they are English teachers. The type of the questionnaire is a closed one since those English teachers were expected to circle one of the available choices. The English teachers were given a measurement proposed by Brown (1994) which is adapted from Christison & Bassano (1984) to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses in teaching effectively. The teachers needed to fill it in since it would make them aware of their own strengths to build their self-esteem. In addition, they also needed to know what areas of teaching they should improve since a change of behaviour in teachers will also reflect teaching effectiveness. It means that if teachers are aware of their own weaknesses, they are expected to improve that particular area and be more effective in other teaching practices. It is highly believed that by knowing both, the teachers will try to do better in other occasions. In addition, they also rated themselves to 0-3 to see whether they belonged to one particular rating.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bogdan (1982) in Sugiyono (2007) states that data Analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others.

In this study, the writer used interview transcripts, result of class observations, and questionnaire to answer research questions and problems. However, qualitative research has

analyzed the data before a researcher “come to the field.” (Sugiyono, 2007). The analysis has been done to the data in the background of the study to determine the focus of the research. In this context, the writer has analyzed the data in terms of the wrong way in the recruitment process, and teaching methods conducted in three language centres in Salatiga for five-year period, 2005-the beginning of 2011. These data are called secondary data, and the analysis went deeper after the writer “come to the field.” After collecting the data, the writer analyzed them in the following way:

*Data Reduction*

It means that the writer chose the most important up to the least important of the information got so far. For example, if some of the interview transcripts did not really match the research problems and questions, the writer omitted that irrelevant information. Data reduction means summarize, choose the most important part, and omit those unimportant data. In this way, it made it easier for the writer to get a clear picture over the expected information.

*Data Display*

After data reduction, the writer displayed the data in a narrative way. In this study, the writer analyzed the data inductively, which saw the data from

what has been going on in three language centres in Salatiga for five-year period, to come to a finding. In this research, the finding is a new measurement tool that could be applicable to be implemented at language centres in Salatiga, in particular, and in Indonesia for a wider scope.

*Conclusion Drawing/Verification*

For this step, the writer drew a conclusion after having data reduction and data display. The writer analyzed the data from three sources. The first datum was collected from an interview between the writer and the managers as well as the teachers of language centres in Salatiga to answer the first research question, which is recruitment process. Next is from questionnaires filled in by teachers to make them aware of their own strengths and weaknesses which were rated in the scale of 0-3. The last one was from the writer’s point of view. It means the writer was conducting class observations to assess teachers’ effectiveness based on the format proposed by Brown to be rated at the scale of 0-4. The last two data were used to answer the second research question, which is how effective English teachers at three language centres in Salatiga are.

The recruitment process of three language centres can be summarized below:

Table 1. *Summary of recruitment process*

Criteria	Language Centre A	Language Centre B	Language Centre C
Domain Check	-	-	-
Construct Validity Check	V	-	-
Concurrent Validity Check	-	-	-
Clarity Check	-	-	-



The table above shows that there is only one language centre, which is Language Centre A fulfills *Construct Validity Check*, and the rest do not fulfill any single criteria at all. From these data, we can conclude that the managers of language centres should improve the way they

recruit new teachers so that what have been stated in the brochure that they do have qualified teachers is true.

In addition, the summary of the result of the rating of teaching effectiveness of three language centres can be seen below:

Table 2. *Result of teachers' self evaluation*

	Rating	Level
Language Centre A	1.6	Needs Improvement
Language Centre B	1.9	Needs Improvement
Language Centre C	2.05	Good

Using the rating of 0 to 3, the range of teaching effectiveness is between 1.6 and 2.05, which is between *needs improvement* and *good* level.

Finally, the rating of teaching effectiveness from an observer's point of view can be summarized below:

Table 3. *The writer's Observation*

	Rating	Level
Language Centre A	2.8	Average Level
Language Centre B	2.8	Average Level
Language Centre C	2.8	Average Level

Using a rating scale from 0 to 4, the table shows that the range is around 2.8, which is on the *average level*.

Furthermore, for observation paradox, there is no significant difference in scores between the first and second evaluation. From this finding, it can be assumed that the teachers' way of teaching is the same whether an observation is announced or not.

To sum up, the three language centres in Salatiga do not have any appropriate standards in recruiting their teachers. If those language centres have set standards in recruitment process and qualified teachers identification, there is a great possibility that the scores for the teachers' self-evaluation and the writer's observation will increase. If there is a clear communication between managers

and teachers starting at the beginning (recruitment process), there will be the same perception between them in reaching up the language centres' objectives.

In addition, most of the teachers *need improvement* in teaching English because they are still in the level of 1.6 up to 2.05. This finding is compatible with the assessment from the writer whose point is 2.8 or on the *average level*. It means that the managerial staff should interfere and take a tangible action in improving the level of teaching effectiveness of their teachers. It could be done by conducting class observation on a regular basis to see whether they have implemented some criteria in teaching effectively used by the institutions, and see whether there is an increase in their

level of teaching effectiveness term by term.

Furthermore, to be able to reach this, the teachers should keep self-evaluation sheet by themselves so that they can always reflect to those criteria in teaching effectively most of the time after teaching. In short, if all of these recruitment processes, teacher self-evaluation, and an observer's observation are professionally conducted, at the end, hopefully, the students will get their rights to be taught by competent and qualified teachers.

## CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data from interview transcripts, questionnaires, and observations, the writer found the following results. There is no standard yet set to recruit English teachers. Determining qualified teachers also seems not to be the main concern for the managers in recruitment process. In addition, the teachers get different "treatments" in the recruitment process. It means that the questions asked at the recruitment process vary from one teacher to another. Most of the teachers themselves seem do not have any guidance or proper models in teaching English effectively. Most of them just came into the classroom, and delivered the materials without any appropriate lesson plan (based on the writer's observation).

There is no explicit communication between managers and teachers starting from the beginning (recruitment process) in terms of the objectives to achieve. Using the rating of 0 to 3 for teachers' self evaluation, the range of teaching effectiveness is between 1.6 and and 2.05, which is between *needs improvement* and *good* level. Using the rating of 0 to 4 for the writer's observation, the range of

teaching effectiveness is around 2.8, which is on the *average* level.

After analyzing the summary and implicational pedagogy above, the writer proposes the following: The managers of language centres in Salatiga should have a clear standard to recruit teachers. The managerial staff could have a meeting to discuss the four criteria explained previously to set their own fixed-standards to be able to get more qualified teachers. In this case, all of the candidate teachers will get similar "treatment" when they are interviewed, and both the managers and teachers will have the same perception over the language centres' objectives.

The writer has got her own point of view related to *Construct Validity Check* for Language Centre A. Even though the manager has fulfilled the criterion, the manager shouldn't force the candidate teachers to be able to teach like the manager's way of teaching since teachers have different styles in teaching English. What is recommended by the writer is that the candidate teachers should be allowed to observe classes with different teachers so that they get many ideas in terms of teaching English. In this way, the candidate teachers' creativity will not be restricted, and the teachers could get more freedom to be more creative in teaching English.

The managers of those language centres should facilitate teachers to have "teacher training program" so that the candidate teachers will have any idea of how to teach English at their institutions. Furthermore, there should be a strict rule for all teachers to participate in the program. There should be a clear communication over the language centre's objectives between the managers and teachers starting at the beginning (or the beginning of recruitment process), so

there will not be any misunderstanding in the future. In addition, the managers should have a clear standard, and fixed-questions to be asked to candidate teachers at the beginning of recruitment process.

The managers of the language centres in Salatiga are recommended to do a study tour to one of language centres in Jakarta whose recruitment process is quite close to the criteria proposed by McCloskey, Thornton, & Toubia above. As a result, the managers will broaden their horizon, and hopefully, they will be able to determine whether the candidate teachers are really qualified or not.

Class observation should be conducted on a regular basis; three times in one term. The first observation is conducted at the beginning of class program so that the managers will get a clear picture over areas need to improve and the good point of the candidate teachers. The second observation is conducted in the middle of the term. In this way, the managers could monitor the pace of the lesson from the beginning up to the middle of the term. In addition, the managers could also supervise the candidate teachers' mastery of the lesson. The last observation is conducted at the last session of the term, before the final tests. This is important since it will give important information for the managers of the whole domain of the lessons taught by the teachers. The managers will supervise it from the beginning, the middle, and the end of the term, and get a clear picture over what is going on in the whole term.

The writer also found the fact that all teachers were not really up to date with the latest research, articles, journals, and books in terms of language teaching and teacher education. Teachers should be

encouraged to be more independent in browsing the internet, and make themselves be more knowledgeable and the managers are highly recommended to facilitate their teachers as well in providing up to date researches, articles, books and journal in language teaching, and teacher education.

Seeing the fact that three language centres, which are considered "big" in Salatiga, Central Java don't have fixed-standards in recruiting new teachers, there is a great possibility that small language centres in Indonesia do not have appropriate standards to recruit their teachers. In this case, the government should interfere in setting up standards of recruitment process for all language centres in Indonesia. In this study, I am proposing Domain Check, Construct Validity Check, Concurrent Validity Check, and Clarity Check for the government to consider. It should be made clear starting from the beginning over some criteria needed to teach at language centres in Indonesia. In addition, the government should create a measurement tool, which is applicable, for language centres in Indonesia.

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