

**CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN AN ISLAMIC
UNIVERSITY IN INDONESIA: ADDRESSING
GOVERNMENT POLICY (UPA) AND GRADUATE
EMPLOYABILITY**

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ABSTRACT

The endorsement of UUPA (*Undang-Undang Pemerintah Aceh*) on August 1st, 2006 in Aceh province, Indonesia has enabled local government throughout the province to develop and manage its own governmental policies and systems, including re-considering its educational and school curricula conceptions. The enactment of this legislation has inspired the researcher to examine how Islamic higher education curricula could be designed and developed systematically.

The overarching objective of this study is to contribute to the understanding of developing the English Education Department's curriculum at UIN Ar-Raniry, previously IAIN Ar-Raniry (an Islamic higher education institution in Aceh, Indonesia), by considering Islamic values, local context, and graduate employment prospects. As such, to attain this goal, three groups of research participants (consisting of 112 people)—the government policymaking authority, institutional academic community, and community graduate employers—were approached to seek their perspectives regarding an ideal curriculum for the Department. Data collection was conducted over five months from February–June 2011.

A set of interview, focus group discussion, and survey questions was prepared to answer the main research question: “What is required to comprehensively develop the English Education Department's existing curriculum attending to UUPA, local context, and concerns for graduate employability”? The following questions were also asked to explore this main question:

1. What are the values and expectations underpinning the existing curricula?
2. What are the stakeholders' curriculum outcome expectations? (Leaders, lecturers, students, teachers)
3. What graduate attributes should be accommodated in developing curricula to prepare English language teachers and English language professionals as well as good Islamic citizens?

This study employed an interpretive qualitative research approach to answer the questions. Twenty-six participants were interviewed, 86 students were surveyed, and

seven important government policies/regulations were analysed. The objective of applying this interpretive research approach was to capture the perceptions of key stakeholders regarding the English Education Department's curriculum.

In a social context, the implementation of interpretive research can be an appropriate approach for locating numerous assumptions that a variety of interested parties believes (Denzin, 2001). In this context, the diverse interested parties are the three above-mentioned research participant groups. Thematic data analysis using the open coding method was applied because the research employed a qualitative approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Monette et al., 2005; Richards, 2005). A basic statistics software program (SPSS) (Field, 2013) was used to analyse the survey results.

The research findings reveal the need to provide a space in the curriculum to address students' diverse learning objectives and to introduce subjects that prepare them to engage in more than classroom teaching. Students need to be prepared to become technologically literate as befits a modern world leader and scholar. Ultimately, the findings reveal that the English Education Department's curriculum needs to be designed and developed to meet specific professional requirements as well as general graduate capabilities to assist students to transfer their experiences and skills into wide employment arenas, not limited to teaching sectors. This means that the achievement of students' educational objectives must have the potential to assist them to attain their goals in work and life.

GLOSSARY

- Akhlak : An Islamic term which is used in Indonesian and Acehese language to refer to ethical morals
- Amanah : An Islamic term which is used in Indonesian and Acehese language that means fulfilling and upholding trust
- D1 : Diploma Satu, a one-year non-degree program
- D2 : Diploma Dua, a two-year non-degree program
- D3 : Diploma Tiga, a three-year non-degree program
- D4 : Diploma Empat, a four-year non-degree program
- Fardhu kifayah : A religious obligation charged to a group of the Islamic community. If this Islamic community performs the obligation, all the community will be free of religious indictment
- GAM : Gerakan Aceh Merdeka. Free Aceh movement. A group of Acehese people who fought with the Indonesian National Army to free Aceh from Indonesia to have an independent nation
- Guru : Teachers who teach at school
- Hadits* : The Prophet Muhammad's sayings, activities, and decisions
- IAIN Ar-Raniry: Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry. State Islamic Institute Ar-Raniry. An Islamic higher education institution in Banda Aceh
- Iman : Religious faith that designates the Muslim's faith in the supernatural aspects of Islam
- Taqwa : The state of god-consciousness; to fear God in terms of protecting oneself from displeasing God
- Jahiliyah : An Islamic term that refers to the concept of "ignorance of divine

guidance" or "the state of ignorance of guidance from God"

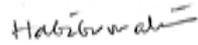
Khutbah	: Commonly refers to <i>khutbat al-jum'a</i> that means the preaching or sermon normally delivered in a mosque at weekly Friday prayers
MA	: Madrasah Aliyah, Islamic senior high school
MI	: Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Islamic elementary school
MKDK	: Mata Kuliah Dasar Keahlian, basic skills course/topic juxtaposition
MKK	: Mata Kuliah Keahlian, specialised skills course/topic juxtaposition
MKU	: Mata Kuliah Umum, general course/topic juxtaposition
MoNE	: Ministry of National Education
MoRA	: Ministry of Religious Affairs
MTs	: Madrasah Tsanawiyah, Islamic junior high school
Musalla	: A small mosque for regular prayer
Pesantren	: Islamic boarding school
Qanun	: An Islamic term used in Aceh to refer to a locally endorsed regulation (Act)
<i>Quran</i>	: Islamic holy book or central religious text in Islam
Ramadhan	: The ninth month of the Islamic calendar, in which Muslims perform fasting from morning twilight (Fajr Prayer) to evening twilight (Maghreb Prayer)
Riba	: An Islamic term that means usury or money interest
RPJM	: Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah, Medium-term development plan
Sekolah Tinggi	: Higher education

- SPMB : Seleksi Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru, State university admission exam
- Syaria law : Islamic law
- UIN Ar-Raniry : Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry. State Islamic University Ar-Raniry, an Islamic higher education Institution in Banda Aceh, previously IAIN Ar-Raniry
- UUPA : Undang Undang Pemerintah Aceh, Law on the Governance of Aceh
- Zakat : Islamic term that refers to the obligation that an individual has to donate a certain proportion of wealth each year to charitable causes

DECLARATION OF CANDIDATE

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed,



Habiburrahim

30th May 2014

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“The very notion of curriculum development is fundamentally embedded in a modernist commitment to progress and reform: development implies change, and in modern times, education implies development” (Ladwig, 2010, p. 374).

1. Focus of this study

This thesis begins with a commitment to progress and curriculum reform, and following that, educational quality in Aceh in general and at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry in particular. Of particular importance is that the curriculum reform meets the required provision of Islamic values. This is the challenge of this thesis. The thesis will examine the concept of, and practice surrounding, curriculum and curriculum development in an Islamic university (UIN Ar-Raniry) in Aceh, Indonesia. It will do this through a case study, namely that of an English-teacher education program, and will examine its stakeholders' perceptions and needs, and the capacity of current practices to address government intentions, market forces and needs, and espoused educational outcomes.

2. Background to the study

Long-term armed conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka - GAM*) and the government of Indonesia (GoI), and the unspeakable impact of the tsunami have impoverished all sectors in Aceh, a region at the very northern tip of Sumatra Island. During the early rounds of the conflict from 1986 to early 1998, violence against civilians was very high; public facilities were burned out, people were kidnapped and killed, and most schooling activities in the sub-districts were non-existent (Amnesty International, 1993; Aspinal, 2008; Kingsbury, 2005; Sinitchkina, 2005). These two tragedies took lives and ruined much needed public and private facilities and institutions, including schools, houses, health centres, shopping centres, and government offices (Anderson, 2007). During this period, the education sector of Aceh experienced an era of headlong downturn.

The conflict officially ended when the GAM and the GoI signed a peace accord in August 2005 in Helsinki, known as the ‘Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding’ (Helsinki MoU) (Aspinal, 2008; Liesinen & Lahdensuo, 2008; The World Bank, 2005). GAM’s acceptance of expanded autonomy for Aceh within Indonesia was at the heart of this agreement (Aspinal, 2008). The MoU gave Aceh a mandate for self-government at the local level to develop and manage its own policies. The MoU includes provisions concerning political issues, human rights, rule of law, education systems, and economic matters (Aspinal, 2005). These provisions were officially verified in ‘National Regulation No. 11, 2006’, literally known as ‘UUPA’ (*Undang-undang Pemerintah Aceh – Law on the Governance of Aceh*).

The peace process in Aceh has been lauded as a great success. Considerable reconstruction and rehabilitation have been accomplished. Educational development, as one of the first priorities, had educational curriculum development as a central focus to define formal and informal education (Jeffs & Smith, 1996). As a result, there is an ongoing agenda for comprehensive educational curriculum reform in Aceh. This reform is occurring in a post-conflict and disaster context, with development guided by UUPA. Higher education institutions (HEi) in Aceh are required to refer to UUPA and the Ministry of National Education Decrees number 232/U/2000 and 045/U/2002 regarding curriculum development policy and core curriculum content nationwide (Furchan, Muhaimin, & Maimun, 2005). These regulations and decrees were significantly influential in the construction of this study.

Referring to curriculum development approaches, Barnett (2000) and Clark (1983) assert that to comprehensively develop curricula, curriculum developers should incorporate three key elements: government policy; graduate users’ orientation; and academic provision. These three elements guided the exploration of curriculum development at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, which meets the requirements of UUPA and its department mission as follows:

The mission of the English Education Department is to train and educate the senior high school graduates to be qualified English education scholars who have the following qualifications: (1) true belief in Allah, committed in worshipping Allah and helping others, and having good *akhlak* (ethical morals); (2) skills in implementing obtained knowledge into practical aspects; (3) independent, able to compete, and able to actualize themselves to pursue further study and work, and able

to contribute to national development based on the skills and expertise they have obtained (Nurdin, Aswar, Yahya, Zain, & Nur, 2010, p. 66).

Schramm (2002) also provides this study with a further construct of curriculum development. Schramm claims that successful curriculum development should involve all stakeholders, including students because they are central to the teaching and learning process. The value of comprehensive curriculum development involving diverse stakeholders has been reported widely (Barnett, 2000; Clark, 1983; Coate, 2009; Drake & Burns, 2004; Elisha-Primo, Sandler, Goldfrad, Ferenz, & Perpignan, 2010; Schramm, 2002).

The following chart developed by the researcher illustrates the English Education Department’s current curriculum management model, in which curriculum is developed through the involvement of three influential groups of people: the government policymaking authority; the institutional academic community; and community graduate employers (graduate users). It is expected that the involvement of these three key stakeholder groups may enable the Department to produce a curriculum that meets various stakeholders’ needs.

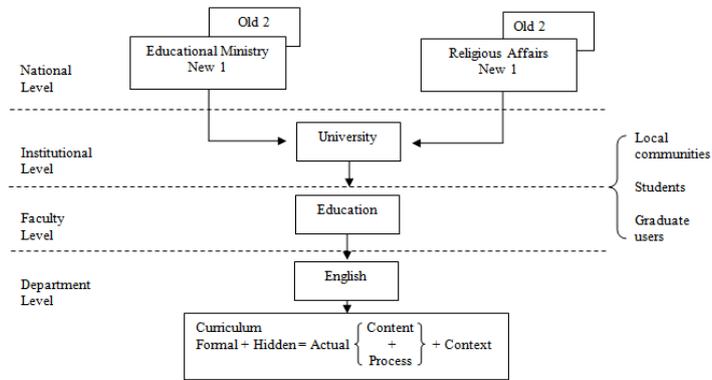


Figure 1: Curriculum model developed by the researcher

3. The aim of the study

The primary aim of this study is to analyse what is needed to improve the curriculum at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, an Islamic higher education

institution in Aceh province in Indonesia, so that it will comply with new government directions and meet the perceived needs of the key stakeholders. The research focuses on UUPA and some other principal government regulations and policies regarding educational development, particularly at the Aceh province level.

The research also seeks to analyse the perceptions and descriptions of the three pivotal stakeholder groups about an ideal curriculum for the English Education Department. The analysis of UUPA, particular government regulations and policies about educational development, and perceptions and descriptions of the above-mentioned three stakeholder groups about an ideal curriculum serve as the primary foundation for generating a new curriculum in the Department.

4. Significance of the study

This study is designed to contribute towards the empowerment of education at UIN Ar-Raniry in general, and in the English Education Department in particular. It will contribute to the Department by conceptualising an ideal approach for developing an appropriate curriculum in line with the UUPA concept, and one that meets current educational development and stakeholder expectations. Hopefully, the findings will offer a new approach for the Acehnese Education Department to improve educational quality in this province through aligning curricula with stakeholder needs. The outcomes of this study will encourage the English Education Department to look at new and diverse dimensions when developing a curriculum to meet the current educational development needs and paradigm.

To the best of this researcher's knowledge, the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry has never involved its stakeholders, particularly community graduate employers and students, in developing the Department's curriculum. Furthermore, there has been a paucity of studies that address what Islamic values and educational expectations should be accommodated in new educational curricula, particularly for higher education institutions in this region. This paucity of research about higher education curriculum development pertaining to stakeholders' needs in this region presented a unique opportunity to conduct this research. Seeking academics', students', government policymakers', and community graduate employers' opinions has provided a first-time opportunity to ensure that stakeholders' needs and values

are taken into account.

In addition, this study makes a significant contribution to Islamic education and national education departments at the provincial level in terms of forming curriculum development policy. The results of this study could serve as the research evidences for the provincial government and UIN Ar-Raniry in designing curriculum. The fact that this research is the first study conducted on curriculum development at a higher education institution in Aceh, particularly post-conflict Aceh and UUPA implementation, gives it the potential to make a great contribution to all education faculties of higher education institutions in Aceh province. Its contribution lies in its potential to assist them to adjust and redevelop their curricula to meet the UUPA, address their various local contexts, and enhance graduate employability. Finally, the findings may lead to recommendations for the way in which the Education Department in Aceh prepares new regulations regarding the implementation of curriculum development policy, particularly at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry.

5. Research questions

In general, this study aims to identify what is needed to develop the English Education Department's curriculum at UIN Ar-Raniry in light of the UUPA, local context, and concerns for graduate employability. As such, the study is designed to answer the following primary research question: "What is required to comprehensively develop the existing English Education Department's curriculum attending to UUPA, local context, and concerns for graduate employability"? The following questions were also asked to explore this question:

1. What are the values and expectations underpinning the existing curricula?
2. What are the curriculum outcome expectations of the stakeholders? (Leaders, lecturers, students, teachers)
3. What graduate attributes should be accommodated in developing curricula to prepare English language teachers and English language professionals as well as good Islamic citizens?

6. Structure of the study

This thesis is presented in nine chapters as following:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This introductory chapter begins by providing a brief description of the study's focus. It has outlined the study's background, aims, significance, and research questions.

Chapter 2: General background of the Aceh setting

This chapter presents an analysis of background information regarding the study context. The chapter initially discusses the geographic and demographic aspects of Aceh province, the education system and its characteristics, including the Islamic education genre, commonly-used languages, and government bureaucracy. In order to capture a clear picture of the research site, significant information is provided about UIN Ar-Raniry and its institutional vision and mission, as well as a brief overview of the English Education Department. This chapter is followed by a short discussion about the study context in relation to the research questions. The chapter concludes by outlining the curriculum development challenge.

Chapter 3: Literature review part one

Chapter Three reviews literature of relevance to this thesis. It synthesises significant theories and research that inform conceptions of curriculum development. As such, it reviews information on curriculum theory, curriculum development processes, and factors driving curriculum reform. In addition, as the focus of this research is on the Islamic higher education context, the literature review seeks to scrutinise the interplay of education and religion in the Islamic context, including Islam and education, the significance of education in Islam, and the objectives of Islamic education. The chapter also reviews current curriculum approaches, encompassing disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary curricula.

Chapter 4: Literature review part two: Achieving specific curriculum objectives

The main aim of Chapter Four is to provide a brief overview of the curriculum in the English Education Department context, demonstrating that the Department's mandate is to train students to be English teachers who may teach at both Islamic and general schools. Curriculum approaches such as language learning, teaching English as a foreign language, professional and general learning, and Islamic learning values are reviewed. This chapter also reviews the issues of curriculum change and its challenges.

Chapter 5: Research design and methods

This chapter describes the theoretical approach to the research, sources of data, information about significant research matters (including the research participants and data collection methods), information about data analysis and validity, ethical issues, and research limitations and their implications for the study.

Chapter 6: Results part one: Document analysis

This chapter analyses significant regulations and government policies regarding the development of education in Aceh province. The regulations and government policies are comprised of UUPA, Qanun No. 23, 2002, Qanun No. 5, 2008, National Regulation No. 20, 2003, the Decree of Ministry of Religious Affairs No. 353, 2004, and National Regulation No. 55, 2007. In the last section, the chapter discusses the English Education Department's objectives.

Chapter 7: Results part two: The views of stakeholders about the English Education Department's curriculum

This chapter reports the research findings from the stakeholder survey and interviews. It presents significant information on how the stakeholders view the Department's current curriculum, what aspects of the curriculum they think should be improved, and what the majority of students say about the current curriculum and their recommendations for future development.

Chapter 8: Discussion

This chapter presents a discussion of the research findings, encompassing the challenge of designing and developing the Department's curriculum to address students' diverse study needs and meet specific professional requirements, including generic capabilities and technological mastery. The challenges of improving quality instruction to improve learning outcomes and of integrating Islamic education with general discipline education are also discussed.

Chapter 9: Conclusion and recommendations

This last chapter concludes the thesis with discussion and reflection about the research outcomes in relation to the issues discussed in the previous chapter. Recommendations are suggested for further curriculum development at the English Education Department, for future research at UIN Ar-Raniry, especially in relation to

new approaches to curriculum design and development at the English Education Department.

7. Concluding remarks

This chapter has given an introductory overview of the study, describing its background, aims, significance, research questions, and thesis structure. Two significant factors have driven the idea of conducting this research: the social status of Aceh province as a post-conflict and disaster region; and the implementation of UUPA in Aceh. These two factors have profoundly changed the educational direction and approach in Aceh, including curriculum conception throughout this region. As such, this study attempts to analyse the concept and practice of a curriculum that could be implemented at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry in particular, and at Islamic higher education institutions throughout Aceh province in general.

The next chapter provides more information on the general background of the study setting, including descriptions of Aceh's geographic and demographic characteristics, overall education system, higher education system, educational characteristics, language, government bureaucracy, and education in the Islamic context, in particular at UIN Ar-Raniry.

CHAPTER TWO

GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE ACEH SETTING

1. Introduction

Discussing the concept of school curricula development in Aceh without fully understanding its historical dimensions is to tell an incomplete story. Thus, the objective of this chapter is to provide significant information about Aceh province and its attributes, including the “Special province” status this region possesses, to ensure the full story is told. The chapter elaborates the following information:

- Geographic and demographic characteristics
- Education system
- Higher education
- Educational characteristics
- Language
- Government bureaucracy
- Education in the Islamic context

Specific information is provided about UIN Ar-Raniry, including a description of this Islamic higher education institution’s vision and mission, and a brief synopsis of the English Education Department course components.

2. Geographic and demographic characteristics

Aceh province, located at the north western tip of Sumatra Island, covers a total land area of 55,390 square kilometres (Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force (GCF): Knowledge database, 2014). It is surrounded by the Indian Ocean on the west and south west, and the Malacca Strait on the north and north east. A current map of the province is provided in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Current map of Aceh

Historically, the strength of Islamic religious practices in daily Acehese life has resulted in the “foreboding reputation the region often receives” (Smith, 1997, p. xi). Nationwide, Aceh is famous for its militant resistance to colonialism, and its commitment to maintaining or regaining the republic’s sovereignty (remain united in Republic of Indonesia) before the central government in Jakarta granted the region “Special province” status. Aceh is also famous for its natural wealth, as Smith (1997, p. xi) has claimed: “originally a main source of pepper and gold for South-East Asia, Aceh is blessed with a variety of other spices and aromatics, precious metals, oils, and timbers”.

The population census conducted in 2010 found that the total Acehese population at that time was 4,494,410 (2,248,952 males and 2,245,458 females). North Aceh, with 529,751 inhabitants, is the most populous area of the 23 regencies/cities. The least

populous area is Sabang, which has 30,653 inhabitants. The census also indicated that the population density in Aceh varies among the regencies and cities. The densest region is Banda Aceh, which has 3,642 people/km², followed by Lhokseumawe, occupied by 668 people/km², and Kota Langsa with 568 people/km² (Statistics Indonesia, 2010). One of the significant factors that has stimulated population density in those regions is accessibility to numerous pivotal facilities and infrastructure, including public service facilities and quality education, public and private hospitals, and public transportation, especially air transportation (RPJM, 2012).

3. Education system

The education system in Aceh is integrated with the national education system, which is managed by the central government in Jakarta. Generally, the Indonesian education system is divided into two formal mainstream systems; Islamic and secular education. Islamic education is controlled and administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA), and secular education is managed and supervised by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) (Soejatminah, 2009). Both systems provide education from pre-school up to university and are supported by public funds (Husin, 2009). Although a different department and ministry control these two educational mainstreams, the concept of education, including learning hours and the core course subjects to be studied by students nationwide are much the same. Most of the Islamic education institutions implement education concepts based on policies developed by MoNE, which is the single education department entity for developing education throughout the nation.

Formal education commences nationally at the age of seven. Learners undertake compulsory basic education for nine years (*Wajib belajar 9 Tahun*), including six years in elementary school and three years in junior high school. According to the Ministry of Education Decree No. 60, 1993, the national basic education curriculum includes religious education, civic education, Indonesian language, mathematics, introduction to science and technology, and English language. The decree also confirms that the primary education curriculum consists of the above study fields with the addition of local content. Local governments and local education stakeholders decide on local content to accommodate subjects particularly suited to

their educational concepts. For example, all elementary school curricula in Aceh accommodate *Quranic* studies, in which students learn to understand the *Holy Quran* and its teachings. In addition, elementary schools include particular local languages in their curricula to preserve them. This provision applies to other schools throughout the nation. Each province has its own special characteristics that can be integrated into school curricula to accommodate local content (National regulation No. 20, 2003). The following figure illustrates the Indonesian education system administered by both MoRA and MoNE.

Schooling age	Higher Education	Islamic education	Secular education				
		Doctorate studies	Doctorate studies				
19 - 22		Islamic education	Secular education				
		Master's studies	Master's studies				
	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	A-4 year non degree Program (D4)	A-3 year non degree Program (D3)	A-2 year non degree Program (D2)	A-1 year non degree program (D1)	
16 - 18	Secondary Education	Islamic senior high school (MA)	Senior general school (SMU)			Senior vocational school (SMK)	
13 - 15	Basic Education	Islamic junior high school (MTS)	Junior general school (SMP)				
7 - 12		Islamic elementary school (MI)	General elementary school (SD)				
5 - 6	Pre-school	Islamic pre-school	General pre-school/ kindergarten				

Figure 3: Schooling age in Indonesia

Source: National Higher Education Department (DIKTI), 2010

Secondary education is the continuation of basic education. It prepares learners to expand their knowledge, improve their skills, and gain further education. In general, the secondary education curriculum resembles that of basic education, but most of the subjects are developed to an advanced level to develop students' capacity to learn to think in more complex ways. Senior high school students study the courses they had at junior high school, including civic education, religious education, Indonesian

language, English language, and other related fields of study, such as Mathematics, Physics, Biology, and Chemistry.

4. Higher Education

In the Indonesian higher education setting, both the public and private systems are divided into two categories: (1) educational higher degree, focusing on educational mastery; and (2) vocational studies, preparing graduates to apply life skills in practice. They include institutions with the titles 'University', 'Institute', 'Polytechnic', 'Academy', and 'Advanced school' (*Sekolah Tinggi*) (National regulation No. 20, 2003).

The national higher education Department sets out the academic capacity and boundaries of each higher education institution to enable the institutions to fulfil their goals. University, as one of the higher education institutions, should have at least four different faculties offering training and research in various fields of study. Institute consists of a number of faculties providing studies and research in a specific field of study. *Sekolah Tinggi* offers training in one particular knowledge discipline and Academy offers non-degree professional training in a single field of study. According to Buchori and Malik (2004), University, Institute, and *Sekolah Tinggi* offer a full range of degrees from Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral degree programs to non-degree programs. Conversely, Academy and Polytechnic offer only two, three or four-year non-degree programs.

The main objective of the national education system, based on National Regulation No.20, 2003, is to “inculcate in young minds the respect for human rights, for cultural pluralism and learning to live together, promote morals and character building as well as unity in diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*) in the spirit of brotherhood and solidarity” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2011, p. 3).

In terms of curriculum, many departments at Indonesian universities and colleges (both under the management of MoRA and MoNE) adopt an American curriculum model. At baccalaureate level, undergraduate programs require students to study between 144–160 credit hours, of which around 40 per cent are national-based content and 60 per cent accommodate local content (Mason, Arnove, & Sutton, 2001;

Nurdin, et al., 2010). Students usually spend a minimum of eight and a maximum of 14 semesters, equal to four to seven years, to obtain a bachelor's degree.

Students' participation rate in higher education in Aceh is low. It continues to encounter two major hurdles, namely financial issues and post-schooling employment prospects. Data from the Aceh provincial statistics agency shows that in the 2010 academic year, students' participation rate was only 24 per cent (Statistics Indonesia, 2010). While there is no specific data to indicate the main reason for this, financial issues may have been an underlying factor because higher education institutions are not subsidised. According to government policy, a subsidy is only provided for basic education to enable the whole Indonesian community to obtain this level of education. Another factor identified as contributing to the low participation rate at higher education institutions is "...the difficulty of finding jobs commensurate with graduates' qualifications" (UNDP, 2010, p. 36). The problem of finding postgraduate employment is an emerging concern for all graduates in Aceh. The general expectation is that a degree will qualify students to obtain a position as a civil servant (*Pegawai Negeri Sipil*). However, this expectation has become a serious problem since 2009 when the government declared a moratorium on the employment of civil servants.

5. Educational characteristics

The character of Aceh's education system reflects its strong religious heritage in which the majority of Acehnese people are devoted to Islam (Statistics Indonesia, 2010). In Aceh province, the number of Acehnese who embrace the Islamic faith is 98.51 per cent (Statistics Indonesia, 2010). This highlights that the Acehnese have been devoted to Islam for thousands of years; it was their way of life long before Aceh was granted a "Special province" status.

According to Siegel (1969), there is a general agreement that Aceh is an Islamic society, even though individual Acehnese have different conceptions of the nature of both Islam and Aceh. Islamic values have long been rooted in all areas of life in the Aceh community. Davies (2006) acknowledged this, noting that Aceh was understood to have a strong Islamic presence barely a few centuries after the Prophet Muhammad's death. Thereafter, Islam has profoundly influenced the Acehnese

population in two ways: "... firstly, as a morals foundation (*Aqidah-morals in Islamic term*), and secondly as a distinct Islamic culture with inherited local political aspects" (Davies, 2006, p. 22). The strong practice of Islamic faith in Aceh resulted in the province becoming an autonomous area within Indonesia in 1959, subject to its own laws (Alfian, 2005). Since then, within the context of its autonomy, Aceh has had the opportunity to manage its own religious practices and issues in accordance with local conditions.

In 1999, the central government again endorsed Regulation No. 44 to strengthen the position of Aceh in managing its own education system in line with the context of Acehese culture and values. This regulation confirms that Aceh is one of the autonomous provinces in Indonesia. The endorsement of this regulation indicated that the central government aimed to delegate its authority to the provincial government to manage three significant political domains independently: religion; education; and implementation of *Syaria* law. Following Regulation No. 44, 1999, in 2006 the central government endorsed a new regulation, UUPA - *Law on the Governance of Aceh*, providing Aceh with a greater opportunity and power to govern, regulate, and meet the needs of its community. This new regulation includes the capacity to implement specific locally-driven educational approaches in this region. The essence of this regulation will be described more fully in Chapter Six.

Given a wide opportunity to manage its own education system, the Aceh government affirms that the educational characteristics of this province are referred to as *Quran* and *Hadits* (UUPA, 2006). These two divine resources serve as the guiding principles in developing the education system throughout the region. Therefore, Islamic values always function as the basis for educational development in both Islamic and secular education institutions; they are regarded as one of the critical conduits for strengthening learners' faith to enable them to practice and implement Islamic righteous values throughout their life. A central goal of this approach is to ensure that learners enhance their morals and ideological foundations.

The educational degrees offered by Islamic and secular education institutions range from basic to higher education. A main difference between the two types of institutions is that at Islamic education institutions, students are taught more Islamic courses compared to the secular education institutions. Courses include knowledge

about worshiping God (*ibadah kepada Allah*), Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), faith and morality (*akidah akhlak*), Islamic history, and Arabic (Parker & Raihani, 2011). It is expected that students, by mastering Islamic religious courses, may potentially increase the glory of their divine consciousness (*derajat ketaqwaan*), believed to be the most honoured achievement of a man or a woman in God's sight (Husin, 2009). In an effort to achieve this goal, it is common for Acehese parents to send their children to study at *Madrasah* or other secular schools during the day and to *Pesantren* (*Islamic boarding school*) in the evening because they consider *Pesantren* is where students will receive their main religious education (Kull, 2009). Parents also send their children to study at both Islamic schools and *Pesantren* to have them trained in Islamic moral values and norms (Daun & Arjmand, 2005).

The strong influence of Islamic values in teaching and learning has also been a feature of most secular schools throughout the Aceh province. As such, secular education institutions frequently host various Islamic events and activities. The involvement of students, teachers, school committees, and other school authorities in a variety of Islamic events at secular education institutions encourages secular school students to seek to understand more Islamic teachings and practices. *Pesantren kilat* (a specific program on Islamic teaching which is normally held during *Ramadhan* [fasting] month) is one of the faith-enlightening programs the government has recommended be run continuously. In the light of faith enrichment, this *Pesantren kilat* program has been recognised nationwide and implemented in most schools (both Islamic and secular). The following table (Table 1) elucidates the percentage of the Aceh population in relation to faith and regency.

Table 1: Percentage of Aceh population by region and regency/city

No	Regency/City	Islam	Protestantism	Catholicism	Hinduism	Buddhism	Total
1	Simeulue	99,92	0,06	-	0,01	-	100,00
2	Aceh Singkil	94,55	5,08	0,36	-	0,01	100,00
3	Aceh Selatan	99,96	0,02	0,02	-	-	100,00
4	Aceh Tenggara	77,25	21,23	1,52	-	-	100,00
5	Aceh Timur	99,95	0,01	0,03	0,01	-	100,00
6	Aceh Tengah	99,61	0,13	0,11	0,01	0,14	100,00
7	Aceh Barat	99,74	0,05	0,04	-	0,17	100,00
8	Aceh Besar	99,88	0,01	0,10	-	0,01	100,00
9	Pidie	99,95	0,01	-	-	0,04	100,00

10	Bireun	99,80	0,05	0,01	0,08	0,06	100,00
11	Aceh Utara	99,85	0,01	0,04	-	0,10	100,00
12	Aceh Barat Daya	99,83	0,03	-	0,07	0,07	100,00
13	Gayo Lues	99,97	0,03	-	-	-	100,00
14	Aceh Tamiang	99,44	0,13	0,03	-	0,40	100,00
15	Nagan Raya	99,96	0,02	-	0,01	0,01	100,00
16	Aceh Jaya	99,96	0,04	-	-	-	100,00
17	Bener Meriah	99,97	0,02	-	-	-	100,00
18	Banda Aceh	97,73	0,70	0,19	0,01	1,37	100,00
19	Sabang	95,68	1,55	0,20	-	2,57	100,00
20	Langsa	99,53	0,25	-	0,01	0,21	100,00
21	Lhokseumawe	99,26	0,28	-	0,02	0,44	100,00
Aceh province		98,51	1,19	0,11	0,01	0,17	100,00

Source: Ministry of Religious Affairs Department of Aceh province, 2010

6. Language

Bahasa, as the Indonesian national language, is used as the formal means of communication to unite all communities as one nation, although 600 languages or dialects are still spoken across the archipelago (Welch, 2012). *Bahasa* is used as the single language in formal communication at schools, government offices, and during formal occasions. Cumming and Kasenda (1989, p. 144) argue that "...from their inception, the Indonesian education institutions were determined to carry out their education and prepare their research in the nationally recognised language of *Bahasa Indonesia*". Besides using *Bahasa* as the formal communication language, Acehnese also use local languages as a daily communication medium. Nevertheless, the local language is used more frequently in informal situations such as at home and traditional markets, and during traditional ceremonies and events.

According to the Cultural and Tourism Department of Aceh Province (Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Aceh [Cultural and Tourism Department of Aceh], 2012), the community actively uses around 23 local languages in their daily informal communication. However, among the 23 local languages, Acehnese language (*Bahasa Aceh*) is used most commonly and is widespread across all regencies throughout Aceh province. In some rural areas in certain districts, *Bahasa Aceh* is still the main means of communication in formal teaching and learning, especially at elementary school levels, because it is the community's mother tongue; elementary school students speak only Acehnese.

In addition, as a province implementing *Syaria* law, Aceh has introduced Arabic (regarded as the *Quranic* language) into Islamic elementary schools, and junior and senior Islamic school curricula throughout the province. The introduction of Arabic into elementary school curricula functions to familiarise students with it, and to ease them into reading and understanding the *Holy Quran* (written in Arabic). It is very common in the Aceh region to find students who use Arabic to talk among themselves, especially at Islamic boarding schools. On certain occasions, they tend to use Arabic rather than *Bahasa* or Acehnese language when they communicate with their peers and colleagues.

Like Arabic, English has been introduced into Aceh schools' curricula, ranging from junior and senior high school to University level. Furthermore, in the last ten years, English has been introduced into the elementary school curricula, especially in schools in particular regencies such as Banda Aceh, East Aceh, and North Aceh. The main objective of this program is to introduce English to the elementary school students because, according to the national curriculum policy, English is to be studied as the second language after *Bahasa*. Students are strongly encouraged to study English to gain a competitive advantage, especially for those who graduate from colleges and universities. In Aceh, students are also urged to study English and Arabic simultaneously to strengthen their academic capacity, and to develop Aceh province as well as Islamic religious tenets. Accordingly, English has become increasingly important and an integral part of research and teaching, particularly at higher education institutions in this region (Altbach & Umakoshi, 2004).

There has been a profound desire to learn English at schools throughout Aceh province, particularly in the aftermath of the tsunami that struck this region in December 2004. The arrival of massive international organisations, their staff, and volunteers who were not proficient in Indonesia's national and local languages forced the local community to understand English so they could communicate and interact with these foreigners. This has undeniably boosted the Acehnese motivation to study English more seriously. Although the international communities and organisations left this region after the reconstruction and rehabilitation process was completed, the number of Acehnese people studying English language remains high. Tangible reasons for this include the objectives of working at an international

organisation and/or undertaking further studies overseas (both master's and doctoral degrees) (Nordquist, 2003).

7. Government bureaucracy

After 32 years of an authoritarian and highly centralised government system (1966–1998), in 1999 the Indonesian government adopted a decentralised bureaucracy, ensuring that all provinces throughout the nation could develop themselves based on their potential and historical characteristics (Fealy & Aspinall, 2003). As a result, the central government granted autonomous privileges to provincial governments throughout Indonesia. Aceh was no exception. Extending greater autonomy and decision-making power to provincial governments, as stipulated in Regulation No. 22, 1999 on regional government, enabled local governments to be more innovative, creative, and responsive in the process of empowering their communities (Min, 2004). However, government bureaucracy remains hierarchical. The main power remains in the hands of the national government in Jakarta (controlled by related Ministers), from where it is then delegated to provincial governments (managed by a Governor), to regency level (ruled by regency head - *Bupati*), to sub-district level (reigned by *Camat*), and to village level (ruled by a village head - *Kepala Desa*).

This decentralised government system has enabled provincial governments throughout the nation to develop their own potential in accordance with the nature of the region and other socio-cultural characteristics. “Speciality of the education system” is a privilege Aceh province can develop in line with the context of Acehnese culture. This paradigm supplants the strictly centralised bureaucratic practice that had previously precluded creativity, innovation, and risk-taking at, and by, the education institutions in this region (Idrus, 1999). As a consequence, there has been a surge of community and government eagerness to develop educational concepts attached to the nature of Acehnese local heritage.

The decentralised government system has cut off the bureaucratic conduit that might have accelerated the level of decision-making in the local government system, for example deciding on ways to shape appropriate educational approaches that suit a certain higher education institution's mission and vision in Aceh. However,

academics and other authorised stakeholders can be more creative and innovative at education institutions; they can develop any educational programs in response to current educational development and labour market orientations.

It is expected that the autonomy given to Aceh by the central government will be utilised maximally to reform the education system to provide quality education at UIN Ar-Raniry in particular, and all over Aceh in general. Reflecting on the essence of educational innovation through a decentralised education approach, there are hopes to continually improve the quality of education in this region to keep up with other regions and nationwide.

8. Education in an Islamic context

There is worldwide recognition of the importance of education. Many international organisations and communities have acknowledged the importance of education in the process of human development (e.g. cognitive, psychological, morals, or spiritual/religious beliefs and practices) (Burke et al., 1999). In the Islamic context, various Islamic religious principles and declarations, including the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam in 1990, have emphasised the importance of education.

Article 9(a) of the declaration states that:

The quest for knowledge is an obligation and the provision of education is a duty for society and the State. The State shall ensure the availability of ways and means to acquire education and shall guarantee educational diversity in the interest of society so as to enable man to be acquainted with the religion of Islam and the facts of the Universe for the benefit of mankind (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 1990).

The declaration emphasises that every Muslim, male and female, deserves wide access to education, and that it is the government's responsibility to provide various educational disciplines to meet community needs. This argument highlights that education in Islam functions not only to illuminate its followers' spiritual essence, particularly about Islamic teachings, but also to develop their competence in general education. This means that Islam persistently urges its followers to pursue not only Islamic-related education, but also other general, social, and scientific knowledge that might benefit the community and the nation.

9. UIN Ar-Raniry: An Islamic Higher Education institution

9.1 Introduction

This section describes key issues related to UIN Ar-Raniry and its English Education Department, as the central point of the research site, which are important to understanding the research context. UIN Ar-Raniry's vision and mission, and the composition of its course components are analysed to understand the institutional objectives and the rationale for attaining them. The UIN Ar-Raniry manual/handbook published in 2010 has been used as the primary source when discussing issues related to either the institution or the Department.

9.1.1 UIN Ar-Raniry

UIN Ar-Raniry, a state-owned Islamic university, was founded on October 5th, 1963 (Nurdin, et al., 2010). Its foundation was, in part, a response to fulfilling Islamic higher education needs throughout the Aceh province in particular, and across the nation in general (Maha, 1978). This Islamic university has carried out its mandate as an Islamic teaching and learning institution for almost fifty years. It was established to transmit knowledge that continually supports the process of nation-building and improving social welfare in the Aceh region. It is believed that as the only state-owned Islamic university in Banda Aceh, UIN Ar-Raniry occupies a unique and strategic position in nurturing scholars who have both a general and an Islamic education. This Islamic higher education institution has a long historical background in disseminating Islamic teachings in the Aceh region (Nazar, 2008).

The objective of Islamic higher education in Indonesia, from a social point of view, is to prepare citizens to have an integrated understanding of general and religious knowledge (MoRA Decree No. 353 on Islamic higher educational Curriculum Design and Development, 2004). UIN Ar-Raniry is striving to increase its role in fulfilling the requirements of MoRA Decree No. 353, 2004, including the process of improving educational quality in Aceh province. This quality improvement can be attained through various approaches, including the development of a new curriculum aligned with current educational and technological advancement. The idea of strengthening UIN Ar-Raniry in promoting Islamic knowledge values, which lies at the heart of this curriculum development, is illuminated in the institution's

organisational vision and mission. Understanding the vision and mission is a critical factor in this thesis.

9.1.2 Vision

The core vision of UIN Ar-Raniry, as stipulated in its manual/handbook, is to excel in developing multidisciplinary Islamic knowledge. This vision is aligned with the university's status as the only Islamic Higher education institution in the Aceh region. Just because the institution's vision focuses on Islamic knowledge does not mean that UIN Ar-Raniry neglects the necessity of developing general knowledge disciplines. Each faculty offers both general and religious knowledge concurrently to meet the needs of UIN Ar-Raniry's students. However, as an Islamic institution, the educational process for developing disciplinary and general knowledge, as well as teaching and learning approaches, is highly focused on the Islamic teaching concept, namely to produce a good Islamic citizen who has mastery of both Islamic and general knowledge (Al-Attas, 1993). As such, students studying general knowledge are also required to study particular Islamic subjects.

9.1.3 Mission

In regard to the objective of fulfilling its role as an Islamic higher education institution, the UIN Ar-Raniry manual/handbook states its mission as consisting of three central strategic goals:

- Administering Islamic education that has national and international competitiveness
- Conducting research about Islamic education that corresponds to community needs
- Promoting Islamic values in community empowerment.

The primary mission of UIN Ar-Raniry is to consistently produce Islamic scholars who possess a good understanding of Islamic teachings as well as discipline-specific and general knowledge. This institution has expanded its teaching concept to accomplish this mission. It does not concentrate only on Islamic-related courses but has moved to a more general-oriented study focus, including social and economic studies, with the intention of integrating these studies with Islamic teaching. In response to the need for social studies, for example, UIN Ar-Raniry has founded a

research centre that focuses on women's studies, which functions to empower women in this province and provide legal advice to meet their needs.

The university also offers studies in economics to students who are interested in becoming Islamic economists. For example, in banking-related studies, the institution addresses issues relevant to the Islamic banking system and empowerment, including how to do business in accordance with Islamic religious values. This includes how to deal with interest and usury (*riba*) received from money deposited in a bank.

In striving to achieve its strategic goals, UIN Ar-Raniry is taking steps to empower its human resources, increase their quality, and gradually reform its teaching and learning approaches, including redeveloping the curriculum to reflect current global advances in education.

9.2 Faculties

In an effort to meet the goals of its vision and mission, UIN Ar-Raniry has attempted to develop various study disciplines through its five faculties:

- Islamic Law Faculty (*Fakultas Syariah*)
- Islamic Education Faculty (*Fakultas Tarbiyah*)
- Islamic Theology Faculty (*Fakultas Ushuluddin*)
- Islamic Communication Faculty (*Fakultas Dakwah*)
- Islamic Art Faculty (*Fakultas Adab*).

Each faculty has its own study discipline focusing on its core objectives. However, the focus of this thesis is on the Education Faculty, whose specific goal is to educate and prepare students to be teachers at both Islamic and general education institutions. The faculty also aims to prepare students to have the capacity for developing and disseminating Islamic education at various education institutions and levels, in keeping with the main institution's core objective. The Education Faculty also offers ten distinctive general study programs, including Arabic, English, Mathematics, Physics, Biology, and Chemistry. In this thesis, the focus is on the English language program only.

It is interesting to note that the Education Faculty applies a silo curriculum in which

the teaching and learning paradigm is carried out independently; it is not integrated. Each pedagogy is taught separately from Islamic studies; there is no collaboration. This is despite some educational theorists repeatedly emphasising that collaborating across subjects, disciplines, and study fields can undoubtedly enrich teaching and learning outcomes by assimilating expertise, knowledge, and training from diverse standpoints (Campbell, Heriot, & Finney, 2006; Miller, Jones, Graves, & Sievert, 2010).

9.3 The English Education Department

The objectives of the English Education Department are to (1) educate and prepare students to be professional individuals in English education, and (2) educate and prepare students to be professional English teachers. In achieving these objectives, the Department offers 67 study subjects with a weighting of 152 credit hours. The composition of the study subjects is divided into three broader learning areas: MKU (*Mata Kuliah Umum* - general course subjects); MKDK (*Mata Kuliah Dasar Keahlian* - basic skills course subjects); and MKK (*Mata Kuliah Keahlian* - specialised course subjects). These are elaborated in the following table.

Table 2: Course components of the English Education Department

Unit	Aims	Weighing
MKU	To develop students' understanding of Islamic religious values	45 credit hours
MKDK	To assist students in developing their pedagogical knowledge and skills	24 credit hours
MKK	To develop students' competence in English language	89 credit hours

9.4 Discussion

In implementing its educational objectives, UIN Ar-Raniry refers to the curriculum developed on the basis of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree No. 383, 1997 (Nurdin, et al., 2010). The decree acknowledges that the composition of the undergraduate program curriculum should be 40 per cent or 57 credit hours of national content and 60 per cent or 87 credit hours of local content. The decree also

classifies the course components into three domains; *MKU*, *MKDK*, and *MKK*. This composition has provided a wide opportunity for UIN Ar-Raniry to develop a curriculum that suits global educational advancement and labour market orientations, and particularly educational development and labour market trends throughout Aceh province. Given an adequate percentage of local content, UIN Ar-Raniry should be able to design its institution-wide curriculum to best meet its stakeholders' expectations, including expectations about career development. However, in analysing its current curriculum, which is provided in the institutional manual/handbook published in 2010, several concerns have emerged. The following questions have arisen from examination of the study context outlined in this chapter.

Does the current curriculum align with graduate users' orientations?

Upon closer analysis of the current curriculum, it appears that lack of alignment with the needs of the current labour market has occasionally made it difficult for graduates from this institution to find a suitable job that reflects their educational background (UNDP, 2010). This may become worse if the curriculum does not accommodate life skills or other generic skills that graduates can transfer to related careers, such as creating their own business.

This is a dilemma, because while students have English skills as a competitive advantage, they fail to obtain employment at certain institutions where English is a prerequisite. This is because they do not master other supporting skills such as computer skills, and lack competence in educational leadership and management (Grace, 1995; Knight & Yorke, 2004).

Does the current curriculum address the diversity of students' needs and expectations?

Having said that the main objective of UIN Ar-Raniry is to prepare students to be Islamic scholars who are knowledgeable in both general and Islamic knowledge disciplines, some *MKU* subjects focus on Islamic teaching and some focus on social studies, including national proposed courses such as *Pancasila* (National philosophy) and civic education. All students studying at this institution have to study those *MKU* subjects regardless of their study focus in order to fulfil the national and institutional objectives for educating students at higher education institutions. According to the UIN Ar-Raniry manual/handbook, the English Education Department *MKU* subjects

include Arabic, Indonesian language, basic Islamic courses, and a few social studies-related subjects.

Does the current curriculum prepare students for expectations of leadership?

In terms of Islamic-related courses, the English Education Department offers seven subjects exploring diverse Islamic law and teachings. One subject elucidates Islamic civilisation and history, and one subject focuses on ethical morals (*akhlak*) issues (Nurdin, et al., 2010). Looking at the composition of the Islamic courses offered by this department, it seems that the Department concentrates mostly on Islamic law values, including *Ilmu Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *Ilmu Tafsir* (*Quranic* interpretation), and *Ilmu Hadits* (Prophet Muhammad's sayings and deeds). Subjects dealing with the development of good Islamic character and morals, including developing Islamic leadership as an asset for graduates to become leaders at schools or other institutions, are limited.

As an Islamic education institution, UIN Ar-Raniry is responsible for nurturing ideal Islamic scholars who are competent in either Islamic or general discipline knowledge, and who behave accordingly (Nurdin, et al., 2010). Bangwayo-Skeete, Rahim and Zikhali (2011) ascertain that schools are responsible not only for imparting skills but also for imparting an image of the ideal student in terms of characteristics and behaviour. Students should be role models for the surrounding community in which they should behave appropriately, do the right thing, and stay away from any immoral or evil actions. Bangwayo-Skeete and colleagues highlight that education institutions are places where individuals are trained not only to acquire particular skills they may utilise to have a better life, but also to prepare them to behave in accordance with the philosophies of their life, culture, and religious convictions. The expectation is that students should become Islamic leaders in the community, however, the current curriculum does not educate them for this.

Does the current curriculum accommodate comprehensive pedagogical skills?

In terms of achieving the target of producing English teachers, the Department has allocated seven pedagogical-related subjects to prepare students to attain sufficient skills in teaching. These are integrated into the domain of *MKDK* course components. Among the subjects offered are educational psychology, educational management, educational statistics, educational philosophy, micro teaching

(introduction to teaching practice), and teaching practice (pre-service teaching internship program). These *MKDK* courses offer some beneficial subjects to students in developing their expertise to become future teachers. However, there are no subjects listed in the *MKDK* course components that relate to administrative skills to enable students to deal with administrative issues, including how to design lesson plans and syllabi.

Should English be taught as immersion or be taught in *Bahasa*?

It is also interesting to note that the teaching and learning processes at the Department still use *Bahasa* as the communication language. On the one hand, teaching English by using *Bahasa* can assist lecturers to transfer their knowledge and experiences to students. It is also agreed that by using *Bahasa*, students may easily understand what their lecturers are talking about. However, on the other hand, if lecturers always use *Bahasa* to deliver all English subjects, this may potentially reduce opportunities for acceleration of the English language acquisition process because students do not have sufficient time to practice it.

Theory versus practice: are there enough opportunities for practice?

The department offers 39 compulsory English-related subjects (approximately 89 credits hours) in the *MKK* course component. In general, the composition of those subjects is classified into five major English language skills: listening; reading; speaking; writing; and grammar. Interestingly, from such a large number of English-related subjects, there are scant subjects that may enrich students' skills in applied English. The teaching and learning approach is seemingly focused on technical aspects of language rather than grounded in how students might utilise the knowledge they have obtained to empower their life by becoming a quality leader or teacher, or even to apply knowledge and skills in a diversity of career choices. For example, in the English literature subject, students are taught to read certain literature, learning about plot, narrative, antagonist and protagonist roles, climax and other technical literary terms. This is in contrast to what students expected from the English literature subject, which was to learn its theoretical protocols to produce a drama, short movie or other theatrical creation (Survey result, 2012).

It is agreed that reading global literature can broaden individuals' insights. Global literature allows today's readers to travel the globe vicariously, sometimes seeing

themselves in the books they read, and often learning more about places they would love to visit and individuals they may like to meet (Ward et al., 2010). Furthermore, Ward and colleagues (p. 43) say that "...through global literature, individuals can come to realise that there are general perspectives on issues". However, the focus of study in the English Department is more on theoretical aspects; there seems to be an absence of attention to the practical application of knowledge.

This circumstance also applies to some other subjects, including English translation. In the English translation course, students are taught about translation theories and techniques. Yet they have a limited understanding of the application of such theory in practice (Nurdin, et al., 2010). As a result, students fail to enhance their interpretation and translation skills as part of the life skills they may use to find jobs in the translation or interpretation market sectors. Several linguists have harshly criticised this language teaching approach by confirming that "English language work should be embedded in specific disciplines" (Baik & Richardson, 2012, p. 63).

Are greater efficiencies needed in the curriculum due to repetition and overlap?

Referring to the *MKK*-listed subject classifications, it is evident that some subjects are overlapping and inconsistent. For example, after studying three English speaking subjects (Speaking 1, 2, and 3), students also have to study speech. This also applies to the English writing subject in which, after studying English Writing 1 and 2, students must study English Academic Writing. Sometimes integration among the subjects is vague, with some subjects replicated through labelling them with different names, even though their content is similar. This overlap can be found, for example, in both the English Writing and the English Academic Writing subjects, in which the objective is to enable students to write in English (Nurdin, et al., 2010).

Is there adequate curriculum space to help students achieve technological mastery?

The focus on technological mastery to enhance students' technological competence, including computer skills, seems inadequate in the three course codifications (*MKU*, *MKDK*, and *MKK*). Reference to the UIN Ar-Raniry manual/handbook regarding course compositions reveals that under the *MKK* course component, Laboratory and Computer Practice is the only subject the Department offers to develop students' computer skills. However, instead of focusing on applied computer skills, this

subject focuses on technical issues such as how to operate a computer, how to maintain a computer laboratory, and how to deal with computer trouble shooting (Nurdin, et al., 2010). While it could be argued that this course is very useful for students because they are training to be teachers and may be requested to use a computer laboratory to teach English-related skills, such as listening, more applied computer skills would be beneficial. It is not possible to achieve technological mastery in the time allocated for this subject.

Additionally, students studying at UIN Ar-Raniry come from middle economic social status and relatively rural areas across Aceh province (Statistics Indonesia, 2010). This means that computer literacy is still an emerging issue for some of those studying in the English Education Department. Therefore, providing overarching introductory computer courses up to advanced computer skills may assist these students to master these skills adequately.

10. Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided significant information regarding the general background of the research setting. It has described the geographic, demographic, and educational characteristics of the research site, as well as its educational objectives and systems.

The above description, exploration, and analysis of the current curriculum content have raised a number of questions that this research will explore further. In addition, reforming the current curriculum to answer all the above questions and to move away from the existing situation is a challenging and daunting task. Commitment of all involved parties at the Department, faculty, and university level to collegially accept change will profoundly determine the success of this reformation. In addition, in the context of curriculum development at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, a novel aspect of the current change is the requirement for education institutions in this region to address the new education mission mandated by UUPA to synergise their teaching and learning with local needs and the realities of life.

Curriculum change should, indeed, describe an educational process that is designated to produce graduates mastering both Islamic education and general disciplinary knowledge, and to efficiently prepare them for their future roles in society.

Therefore, the above reformation challenges need to be taken into serious account as a significant move in empowering education at this institution, in particular to afford a better education for the next generation living in this region.

Finally, this background review has elucidated that one of the primary objectives of curriculum development in higher education is to adjust institutional visions and missions, and incorporate pertinent educational values as addressed by institution stakeholders. It is possible to develop the Islamic higher education curriculum in accordance with the obligation to respect the Islamic educational perception and objective of providing a whole process of empowering humans to attain well-being in this world and in the hereafter (Hassan, 2010). Therefore, the Islamic higher education curriculum objective needs to find a balance between preparing individuals to master adequate religious understandings, and to attain general worldly education and knowledge.

The next chapter provides information about the theoretical background of the research context. It reviews the research literature about curriculum, and discusses and synthesises theoretical issues related to curriculum meaning and theory, curriculum development driving factors, education in the Islamic context, and curriculum interpretation and integration.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW PART ONE

1. Introduction

The previous chapter has underlined the significance of this study's aim, which emphasises curriculum development attuned to the religious values of the local context, and graduate employability as part of the English Education Department's educational contribution to its students. In this chapter, the researcher synthesises various theories and research relevant to the study that will help to locate it in both the field of curriculum development and its Islamic context. To this end, the following themes are discussed:

- A. Curriculum meaning and theory
 - 1. Curriculum definition and objectives
 - 2. Formal and informal curriculum
 - 3. Curriculum development process.

- B. Curriculum development driving factors
 - 1. Government imperatives
 - 2. Market approach and employability
 - 3. Cultural approach.

- C. Curriculum interpretation and integration
 - 1. Disciplinary curriculum
 - 2. Multidisciplinary curriculum
 - 3. Interdisciplinary curriculum.

- D. Curriculum change and its influencing factors
 - 1. Government and university policy
 - 2. Adapting to labour market or industry orientation.

- E. Challenges of curriculum change.

2. Curriculum meaning and theory

Three significant attributes dealing with curriculum development are discussed in this section. The three attributes are curriculum definition and objectives, formal and informal curriculum, and curriculum development process.

2.1 Curriculum definition and objectives

The term “curriculum” is distinctively defined by curriculum theorists. Ornstein and Hunkins (2004, p. 10) define curriculum as “a plan for action or written document that includes strategies for achieving desired goals or ends”. Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis (1981), cited in Orenstein and Hunkins (2004), describe curriculum as a systematic plan for providing sets of learning opportunities for everyone who wants to be educated, while Robinson, Ross, and White (1985, p. 3) define curriculum as “the total set of stimuli deliberately brought to bear during a designated time period, with the intention of nurturing or producing student learning”. These concepts depict curriculum as an intentional managed plan or process for the provision of an educational program or experience. Most studies identify curriculum as the means through which educational outcomes are formulated.

Davies and Edwards (2001) acknowledge that the primary objective of education is to help individuals learn particular skills to enable them to find their identity, to live peacefully, and to solve any life problems they encounter. “Education should be helping young people acquire the dispositions, skills, understandings and values that will enable them to live their lives intelligently, meaningfully, constructively and cooperatively in the midst of the complexity, uncertainty and instability they will increasingly encounter” (p. 105). Finding learners’ identity through religious education has also been acknowledged by Lovat and Clement (2008), noting that the inclusion of religious values in educational curricula is one of the ways to develop students’ ethical-morals dispositions. Similarly, Lovat and Clement (p. 7) assert that “teacher attitudes and practices, curriculum both explicit and embedded, the school environment, and parental and community support were focussed on the betterment of student learning and achievement, understood in academic, affective, morals and spiritual terms”. Lovat and Clement’s ideas indicate that students’ knowledge and morals development are influenced by various factors; curriculum content and its instruction are no exception. It is argued that a better-developed curriculum could

produce better learning outcomes in preparing students to become better citizens.

If higher education fails to nurture these attributes in preparing students to become better citizens, its institutions will be regarded in wider society as unable to meet their mission to empower the community. Should this occur, higher education risks losing local community support, which may cause a decrease in the number of students enrolling at university. Therefore, Crosling and colleagues (2009) strongly urge curriculum developers to incorporate not only academic but also social learning into school curricula: “Curriculum plays a critical role in engaging students both academically and socially, and in building institutional commitment and belonging” (Crosling, et al., 2009, p. 12). In addition, Kraince (2007) argues that the role of higher education institutions is to affect social cohesion, and contribute to resolving social issues and turmoil. Hence, higher education should engage more in developing students’ morals judgement (Hostetter, 2007). Hostetter also urges higher education institutions to be more engaged with their potentially rich contribution to society in terms of the knowledge, truth, values, services, and objectives they have disseminated over the centuries.

By contrast, curriculum is also conceptualised as an art of managing education, in which it evolves in accordance with new educational developments and policy.

Moreno (2007, p. 16) defines curriculum as:

A socio-historical construction which is expressed through general systems of knowledge characterization and hierarchy; these systems are in turn translated and transformed into administrative and legislative regulations, academic achievement standards, textbooks and teaching aids, and the practice of teaching and learning in classrooms and schools.

The definitions and objectives of curriculum that are the focus of this study encompass all the above definitions. Curriculum in this study is conceptualised as a detailed explicit plan to establish a learning environment, and teaching and learning practices, in which students acquire knowledge and develop skills, capabilities, and ethical-morals dispositions so that they graduate as competent and responsible Islamic citizens in an Islamic society. Other curriculum definitions and objectives are not excluded, however they are not central to this study.

2.2 Formal and informal curriculum

Studies found that there are two curriculum realms at play in everyday practice; a written and an unwritten document, or a planned and an unplanned curriculum. The planned and official curriculum focuses on publicly explicit goals, objectives, course components or subject matters, course and organisation instruction, and evaluation systems (Lovat & Smith, 2003; Margolis, Soldatenko, Acker, & Gair, 2001; Print, 1987). In contrast, an unplanned or informal curriculum normally comprises unwritten information and tacit intentions that may differ considerably from the formal curriculum. This aspect of curriculum is recognised as the “hidden curriculum” (Margolis, et al., 2001).

Margolis and colleagues (2001) argue that the hidden curriculum deals with *life in classrooms* as it occurs, in which social-psychological interaction among students and teachers, among students, and between students and academic staff transforms the ways teachers behave, such as the way they express their feelings, attitudes, communication styles, behaviours, and ways they interact with students. Stephenson (2010) similarly tells us that learning is not an instant process that is separate from individuals’ daily activities and experiences; it occurs mostly by acting, thinking, analysing, contemplating, reflecting, and discussing with others. The hidden curriculum may transmit specific, yet often tacit, messages to students; learning to wait, learning to be punctual, learning to be loyal to both teachers and students (Margolis, et al., 2001). These values are not written in the formal curriculum but are conveyed to students indirectly through the ways teachers and students interact and behave.

Higher education curricula are hidden to some extent, being lived rather than stated. Hidden curricula in higher education “...takes on certain patterns, values and relationships, but those patterns and relations will be hidden from all concerned, and often unconsciously experienced by students” (Barnett, 2000, p. 260). The higher education hidden curriculum may also be shaped naturally by the ways students interact with others, guided by the intrinsic organisational, structural, and cultural influences of the training the students undertake (Bell, Wideroff, & Gaufberg, 2010). As such, this informal hidden curriculum is not officially developed in a formal way; it evolves naturally in accordance with the institutions’ and students’ cultural

practices and values. This is an important feature of the curriculum discussed in this study, which encompasses education in the Islamic cultural values to which the community aspires. However, little educational research or theoretical literature has been found to guide its practice.

In general, traditional curriculum development involves four sequential processes: (1) formulating objectives; (2) grouping them into particular ideals and activities; (3) chunking the objectives and content to be taught into semester units of learning; and (4) determining the methods of instruction and assessment to determine achievement (Ewing, 2010; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004; Print, 1987). Keogh and colleagues (2010) add that in a traditional approach, school authorities tend to develop curriculum without consulting the stakeholders who will utilise it. This is conceptualised as “imposed curriculum” (Keogh, et al., 2010).

By contrast, an alternative current curriculum development approach emphasises collaborative agreement with targeted stakeholders as part of its development process (Keogh, et al., 2010). The involvement of various stakeholders helps curriculum developers not only learn more about the stakeholders’ expectations and views about the offered programs, but also identify specific areas for program development (Fjellstrom, 2007). In relation to this, Klein (1990) reminds us that curriculum is important to our students, society, the process of education, and the development of study fields.

Klein also agrees that curriculum development is a values-laden process; it is never values-free. Therefore, the most dominant and generally accepted theoretical approach to the development of a curriculum is the one with which we are familiar, and the one that is applicable to our institutions and learners. A sophisticated and comprehensive curriculum that is workable for one particular education setting probably cannot be applied to other education settings. Eventually, the curriculum depends on the disciplinary study of the educational experience and must be accepted by multiple stakeholders (Pinar, 2004).

2.3 Curriculum development processes and objectives

Despite having a slightly different terminology and meaning, the curriculum design and curriculum development processes are interrelated. “Curriculum design and

curriculum development are tandem terms” (Print, 1987, p. 15); curriculum cannot be developed without being designed. In essence, the art of developing the curriculum deals with some critical aspects of the teaching and learning components, including: aims, goals, and objectives; subject matter; learning activities; assessment; and evaluation (Hunkins & Ornstein, 1988; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). These five components are interdependent. However, the emphasis of each component varies depending on the preferences for, and target of, the curriculum design. Print (1987) acknowledges that curriculum design is concerned with planning and organising the ultimate nature of the whole curriculum. Like Print, Hunkins and Ornstein (1988), Armstrong (2003, p. 167) agree that “curriculum design functions as a basic program organizer”. In general, curriculum design starts from formulating the objectives to simplify the learning targets and finding a format that addresses how to achieve the learning.

Warwick (1975) ascertains that curriculum design is the overall educational blueprint that will be applied to a certain education setting in a certain place. He suggests that this design should have guiding principles: “a curricular design against which progress can be monitored and from which perspective and direction can be constantly obtained” (p. 52). Warwick notes that to satisfy this need, curriculum design should always be underpinned by three curriculum aspects: direction or purpose; areas or divisions; and levels or stages. Curriculum mapping can be an excellent vehicle for meeting carefully defined needs and comprehensively accommodating all three components (Jacobs, 2004). It is believed that curriculum mapping can be a guideline in formulating a teaching and learning concept, and the output to be achieved. Lachowicz (2004) has acknowledged this advantage of curriculum mapping, noting “...curriculum mapping contributes to effective staff development, and assists educators in creating meaningful lessons and experiences” (Lachowicz, 2004, p. 97). This curriculum mapping process is enhanced if the designers have some insight into the expectations and educational vision of the community and learners.

Curriculum development, on the other hand, has specific objectives and the focus is on the process of planning, implementing, and analysing learning opportunities that are intended to produce specific changes in learners (Print, 1987). It is significant for

the curriculum developers to have a clear idea, through a comprehensive planning process, of what they expect students to learn (Brandt & Tyler, 2003). Problems may arise without appropriate planning due to constraints in implementing curriculum programs and activities. A visual comparison of curriculum design and curriculum development is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Curriculum design and development

	Traditional approach		Stakeholder-based approach
Curriculum design	Involved parties: Educational experts Government Schools/institutions	→	Consultation with stakeholders: Graduate users Students Communities
Curriculum development	Assessment Testing students	→	Evaluation and enhancement Curriculum review Consultation with stakeholders

Source: Elaborated from Fisher and Frey (2001)

In developing a stakeholder approach to designing a curriculum, curriculum developers should identify stakeholders' expectations of students' performance in knowledge, capabilities, and human and social values (Fisher & Frey, 2001). After assessing stakeholders' needs, curriculum developers select and arrange the curricular components by drawing on their expertise of how to nurture students' learning (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). These curriculum specialists also say that to develop curriculum, curriculum developers should first consider what is to be done, what subjects are to be included, and what instructional strategies, resources, and activities should be employed. Another pivotal component is to consider the methods and instruments to be used in the process of assessing the learning and evaluating the impact of the curriculum in the light of its primary intentions and objectives.

Brady and Kennedy (2010) claim that Tyler's (1949) model is the most common model of curriculum development. Known as the "objectives model" or "rational model", it constitutes four principal questions:

- (1) What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
- (2) What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
- (3) How can these experiences be effectively organised?
- (4) How can we determine

whether these purposes are being attained? (Brady & Kennedy, 2010, p. 162).

Hence, Tyler (1949) concludes that curriculum development is constructed on four main bases: objectives; content; method; and evaluation. This curriculum development model contributes sufficient critical stages but the value of one critical component in developing higher education curricula is missing; the stakeholders' voices.

At baseline, one of the purposes of developing curricula at academic level is to support the institution's mission and vision. In this sense, academics need to become familiar with the institution's mission and vision, and to understand the educational values of the community in which the institution resides. Hence, the academic community should ensure that curriculum development accommodates appropriate values generated from the institution's mission and vision, the state mission, students' needs, and employers' needs. In fulfilling these education stakeholders' needs, the development of teaching and learning approaches could meet diverse students' learning objectives (Lovat & Clement, 2008). Lovat and Clement say that "...learning needs to be comprised of a range of pedagogies suitable to the students in question, so providing for students with diverse needs" (p. 275)

To this end, Barnett (1994) vigorously urged academics to contemplate a curriculum driven by generating learners' need to not only increase their declarative knowledge (knowing-that), but also to have operational competence and conditional knowledge (knowing-how). This enables them not only just to know things, but also to do things with that knowledge in new and diverse circumstances. The application of these approaches into curriculum development places a new emphasis on the inclusion of complex skills and competencies, as well as experiential and problem-based learning, in the curriculum objectives (Nicholls, 1995).

3. Curriculum development driving factors

According to Taba (1962), curriculum development is a complex task that involves much consideration and decision-making. Decisions Taba mentions include the general goals that education settings are to pursue, and the more specific objectives of instruction. Thus, Taba claims that appropriate decisions need to be made to formulate an assessment tool to evaluate what students are learning and the

effectiveness of the curriculum in obtaining the formulated ends. Like Taba, Keogh and colleagues (2010) believe that developing a curriculum is a daunting task. This task becomes more complex as curriculum development attempts to integrate academic considerations, internal and external constraints, and the power of these forces into subject matter (Coate, 2009). Trump and Miller (1968, 1973) contend that four common issues play a significant role in influencing curriculum reformation. These are political, social, economic, and cultural forces outside the education setting. In relation to curriculum development at higher education institutions, Clark (1983) has noted three forces that may drive curriculum changes: state authority; market trends; and academic requisition. These three factors may underpin higher education's reformulation of its curriculum to attract students and provide them with adequate "skills" to become citizens capable of participating in, and actively shaping, a democratic and civil society (Coate, 2009).

In general, Barnett (2000) classifies educational curricula into three different schemas: curricula shaped by national bodies; curricula shaped by power of the market; and curricula shaped by the interests of the academic community. In this regard, in developing the curriculum, curriculum practitioners should obtain adequate information from the above-mentioned bodies and attend to it in both curriculum design and development. In order to satisfy the market, for example, it is necessary to involve external stakeholders to identify needs and expectations, and to "reassure stakeholders in higher education of quality and standards, including students, prospective students, families, and employers" (Taylor, 2009, p. 234).

Employers of higher education graduates may focus on different curriculum dimensions to meet their needs; those that will ensure graduates are able to work in a certain work environment. Jackson (1999) argues that market mechanisms work more efficiently than state planning in directing higher education. This is highly plausible because the market progresses very rapidly compared to the government, which needs considerable time to work on a new policy before they can act. In response to this situation, the higher education curriculum should be assessed gradually to meet current educational development expectations as well as labour market expectations.

3.1 Government imperatives

It can be argued that all governments have curriculum standards, and standard ways of developing curricula to meet national educational objectives (Browder, Flowers, Ahlgrim-Delzell, & Karvonen, 2004). Guthrie (1986) also reminds us that the purpose of curriculum development in developing countries, including Indonesia, is to educate citizens to meet national needs. Thus, government authorities may emphasise several core components that higher education should incorporate in their curriculum content to meet these needs. However, in adopting a contemporary view, the common educational goal set up by the government is to ensure that education equips students to make wise decisions in a complex global society by providing higher education with greater flexibility to tailor programs that meet students' needs (Holden, 2004). The flexibility in higher education in terms of basic and common knowledge skills has been viewed as a contemporary concept in educational development to assist students adapt to rapidly changing work structures (Rampal, 2010).

Setting institutional, state, or national educational goals is a key factor in developing curricula. Tyler (1949) has acknowledged this key factor, noting that, "If an educational program is to be planned and if efforts for continued improvement are to be made, it is very necessary to have some conception of the goals that are being aimed at" (p. 52).

In the Aceh context, where 99 per cent of the population is Muslim, the Acehnese government view education from an Islamic perspective in which education is a form of worship (Qanun No. 23, 2002). Education, according to the Islamic viewpoint, means "...a lifelong process of preparing individuals to actualize their role as a *Khalifah* (vicegerent) of Allah on earth and thereby contribute fully to the reconstruction and development of their society in order to achieve well-being in this world and hereafter" (Hashim & Langgulong, 2008, p. 1). As a result, the guiding principle for developing education curricula in Aceh is derived from the Islamic values based on the *Holy Quran* and *Hadits*.

Research into Islamic curriculum development also highlights the urgency of formulating objectives, content, methods of teaching, and methods of evaluating curriculum development (Hashim & Langgulong, 2008). Hashim and Langgulong

believe that doing so will offer an opportunity to innovate and develop curricula to meet learners' needs, interests, expectations, and aspirations. In meeting all those expectations and targets, curriculum developers should first identify the priorities to be achieved, and then set clear goals (Moore, 2002).

The Indonesian government has adopted the national curriculum based on the principle of *Pancasila* (Indonesian national philosophy) for the sake of uniformity of standards, and of national identity in the distinct archipelago. This principle emphasises belief in one God, human rights, national unity, democracy, and social justice (Kopong, 1995). It is through these principles that the national education paradigms are constructed and curriculum policies are developed.

It is interesting to note that even though Indonesia is not attached to a certain religious conviction, education and religion are integrated within school curricula. As such, there is no segregation between education and the state. Both the state (the government) and schools work inextricably to ensure that students obtain adequate religious education irrespective of their study discipline focus. This approach seems slightly different from some other Islamic secular countries, for instance the Turkish Republic. According to Guven (2005), the Turkish government splits religious units from education, thereby leaving religious teaching to families.

In the last few decades, there has been a tendency for government initiatives worldwide to develop discipline-based curricula (Drake & Burns, 2004). According to Drake and Burns, the discipline-based curriculum approach allows students to focus their study on particular knowledge disciplines, enabling them to master specific knowledge in greater depth. The discipline-based curriculum has also been applied in the Indonesian higher education context, in which students are given a wide opportunity to pursue a specific knowledge discipline that best meets their interests. In this regard, higher education institutions in Indonesia have the authority to develop a study discipline that suits local needs. However, each study discipline has to be assessed by the National Accreditation Board to ensure it meets the national educational standards (National Regulation No. 20, 2003). The accreditation system is stipulated in Chapter XVI of the 'National Regulation on Evaluation, Accreditation, and Certification'. Article 60, page 25 of the regulation confirms that:

(1) accreditation shall be undertaken to determine the feasibility of programs and education units for formal education and non-formal education at every level and type of education, (2) accreditation of a program and education unit shall be the responsibility of government and/or independent authorities as a form of public accountability.

3.2 Market approach and employability

Studies of comprehensive curriculum development within higher education institutions, particularly for specific fields of study, have been difficult to find despite claims that curriculum development remains one of the most critical products higher education institutions offer to their customers (Barnett, Parry, & Coate, 2001). Curriculum development is central to higher education reform associated with new developments, including learners' needs. It is pivotal to successful education outcomes to periodically assess and re-develop curricula to meet current advances in education (Barnard, Nash, & O' Brien, 2005; Kırkgöz, 2009; Orlosky & Smith, 1978), including adequately assessing the needs of students. Constant updating may enhance learners' potential to be actively involved in new marketplaces. This issue is being explored currently in the field of higher education within rubrics of graduate qualities, attributes, and capabilities, particularly in response to calls for university accountability (Barrie, 2005).

In addition, amid workforce competitiveness, students are challenged to master sufficient skills to survive in diverse-skilled workforce arenas. In response to this demand, universities, as part of the public good, should be able to facilitate this requirement by nurturing students beyond knowledge acquisition or skills development to gain lucrative employment positions (Coate, 2009).

Universities are adopting comprehensive approaches to respond to urgent calls by students and labour markets to yield "work ready", qualified graduates as well as equipping them to be responsible citizens. Barrie (2004), and Chalmers and Partridge (2013) admit that Australian statements of generic graduate attributes are defined distinctively, depending very much upon their contexts. Yet Barrie explicitly emphasises:

...the relevance of these graduate outcomes to both the world of work (employability) and other aspects of life. In particular, the role of such qualities in equipping graduates as global citizens and effective members of modern society who can act as agents of social good. (p. 262)

Additionally, Chalmers and Partridge (2013) ascertain that graduate attributes generally refer to “the skills, knowledge, abilities and attitudes that students are expected to have developed as a result of their study for a university degree” (p. 57). In almost a similar way, Chan (2010) asserts that generic attributes refer to certain skills and personalities graduates master beyond their academic transferable skills in order to become a capable citizen. Chan also argues that generic skills could be achieved through a learning process, including learning taking place at a higher education institution.

Therefore, fostering skilful and employable graduates is closely aligned with universities’ role in producing qualified graduates (Barrie, Andrews, Dean, & Heimanis, 2010). Barrie and colleagues acknowledge that the concept of employability in relation to curricula can be approached from a variety of angles. It can be moved toward the perspective of career development skills or the outcomes of specific pedagogical and curriculum initiatives, including work-integrated learning or personal development planning.

Knight and Yorke (2004) argue that the concept of employability and its relationship with the curriculum objectives in higher education is muddled. The term employability is described as “a set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be useful in their chosen occupation” (Yorke & Knight, 2004, p. 4). Moreover, Knight and Yorke (2004) advise that higher education cannot simply apply the label “skills” toward whatever employers say they want. The concept of employability itself can be a complex issue; it can present curriculum development specialists with considerable problems and constraints.

In Australia, the ‘generic graduate attributes’ have been more generally perceived “...as being the skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, which are applicable in a range of contexts and are acquired as a result of completing any undergraduate degree” (Barrie, 2006, p. 217). Other studies reveal that the employment world presumes that the disciplinary understanding and skills developed by graduates will make potential positive contributions to enhancing their employment prospects. However, there is an indication that what the university labels “generic skills” may contradict what

employers presume: "...the employment world has been less happy with the development of what have been termed 'generic skills,' such as communication, team work and time-management" (Knight & Yorke, 2004, p. 2). Meanwhile, Pearce (2002) defines generic skills as "...the abilities, capacities and knowledge one requires to function as a sophisticated professional in an information rich society" (p. 7). In the current global economic world, those skills are seen as contributing to leaders' effective performances (Scarinci & Pearce, 2012). Regardless of different terminology, 'generic skills' are conceived as additional competencies that students may possess in order to succeed in their future endeavours, both in becoming a better citizen and pursuing a career.

As such, in the last few years, the inclusion of generic skills, qualities, and attributes in official curricula has been debated by higher education practitioners and government institutions (Down, Martin, Hager, & Bricknell, 1999). There is a current debate regarding accommodating particular generic skills into higher education curricula (James, Lefoe, & Hadi, 2004). Proponents of this concept insist that ethical practice, integrity, and tolerance should be included in curriculum content (Bath, Smith, Stein, & Swann, 2004).

Gow and McDonald (2000), in offering a prominent solution regarding generic skills, suggest that among the skills graduates should master are (a) cross-cultural awareness and understanding, and (b) entrepreneurial skills. For example, cross-cultural understanding plays a critical role in managing multinational companies in which staff and company resources are embedded in various cultural values. Therefore, there is no doubt that cross-cultural competence will become a prerequisite for managing overseas operations or negotiating joint ventures with foreigners (Gow & McDonald, 2000).

In addition, due to increasing technological advancement, the demands of the workforce differ in two ways from ten years ago. Employers have begun to realise the need for versatile workers (Zainal, Hassan, & Alias, 2012) and may purposively seek workers who have specific qualifications. Knight and Yorke (2004) have identified the top attributes employers seek from graduates if they are to gain employment. Among these attributes are interpersonal skills, IT skills, appropriate work experience, type of degree, foreign language, and a degree studied away from

home. These attributes are generally known as ‘communication literacy’, ‘technological literacy’, and ‘ethical-morals literacy’. It is desirable for higher education graduates to master those capabilities in order to contribute to professional organisations and engage fully in professional life. Providing computer and information literacy education to students is no longer an option. That skill is now indispensable because students will be entering a rapidly changing, technology-related world (Saylor, Alexander, & Lewis, 1981).

According to Zainal, Hassan, and Alias (2012), in Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, the curriculum in higher education should have a design incorporating generic skills, including “thinking skills, problem solving and decision-making, interpersonal and communication skills; skills in information technology, multimedia and information management skills, leadership skills, and entrepreneurship skills” (p. 559). Zainal and colleagues claim that often graduates’ failure to obtain jobs is because they do not possess the generic skills needed by employers.

In response to the generic skills prerequisite above, it is imperative that higher education conceptualises the additional skills students must master to enable them to engage in diverse community lives and fiercely competitive employment markets to obtain work. On the one hand, students need to focus on their core study disciplines to gain academic qualifications and master particular skills. On the other hand, students also need to master general practical skills, which are regarded as added value, to enable them to carry out an effective role when they begin their journey in the world of work. Consequently, graduates who fulfil these criteria will have an advantage in getting a job (Rahman, Mokhtar, & Hamzah, 2011). It is also implied that to be employed, students should develop not only their disciplinary and technical skills, but also generic skills (Rodzalan & Saat, 2012).

4. Cultural approach

In the quest for curriculum development based on a cultural approach, educational research literature reveals that curriculum and cultural beliefs and values are closely interrelated (Rissanen, 2012; Taba, 1962; Yazzie-Mintz, 2007). Rissanen notes that “educational theorists increasingly perceive the curriculum as a social construction

that is shaped by historical and cultural factors” (Rissanen, 2012, p. 740). Supporting Rissanen’s idea about cultural factors interweaving with curriculum development, Taba (1962) argues that to be acquainted with a theory of curriculum development and a method of thinking about it, curriculum designers and developers should question the demands and requirements of culture and society: “Curriculum is, after all, a way of preparing young people to participate as productive members of our culture” (Taba, 1962, p. 10). Different cultures perceive knowledge in different dimensions. Taba says that learners come from different educational backgrounds, and therefore they are heterogeneous. For example, students who come from a rural village will have different views from those who come from a city or metropolitan region. Therefore, Taba reminds us that the curriculum content and processes should be determined by objectives that are achievable under local conditions and values. It is also significant that curriculum content and its development process should provide a wide range of learning opportunities, ensuring that success is possible for everyone and every student, not only for a certain group of people or students.

Furthermore, Taba (1962) argues that “school is created by a society for the purpose of reproducing in the learner the knowledge, attitudes, values, and techniques that have cultural relevancy or currency” (p. 17). Indeed, this concept has succinctly reflected most of the Acehnese communities’ expectations regarding educational objectives. Most Acehnese send their children to schools, including higher education institutions, so they will become individuals inducted into the attitudes, values, and skills needed to live effectively and responsibly in their communities; attributes mentioned by Taba. Parents become upset when they realise that their children do not possess such attributes after obtaining a degree from a higher education institution. As such, higher education is responsible for nurturing students to create graduates who are attuned to society’s expectations, both local and global.

Hill (2001) proposes that to successfully develop a culture and community-based curriculum framework, a curriculum developer must understand the particular communities’ views and their relationship to successful education. If one of the purposes of education is to meet human needs, the learning of one’s world view and cultural values is essential to meeting some of those needs. Supporting Hill’s views about developing a culture-related curriculum, Tarajean (1999) notes that research

into curriculum and culture has long advocated adopting a culturally appropriate curriculum to preserve and strengthen the education of native youth. Such an approach accommodates teaching and learning materials that link traditional or cultural knowledge originating in native home life and the community to the school's curriculum. Moreover, Tarajean claims that deeply embedded cultural values drive curriculum development and implementation, and help determine which subject matter and skills will receive the most classroom attention. Thus, it is believed that curriculum is always a contested process and product.

Strengthening the cultural values that are embedded in school curricula poses a dilemma, according to Wadham and colleagues (2007). It depends very much upon the people who perceive such values. Different players may perceive different cultural dimensions they think should be accommodated in the curriculum. However, Wadham and colleagues agree that those players should come to an agreement to decide what counts as knowledge, what roles schools ought to play in a 'good society', and indeed, what constitutes that good society. Barnhardt (1981) has a different opinion, perceiving that culture evolves in schools. He says that schools are agents of the dominant society, and, as such, they reflect the underlying cultural patterns of that society. Barnhardt, furthermore, acknowledges that as long as the cultural patterns reflect the structure and social organisation of the dominant society, they can be expected to maintain its values, attitudes, and behaviour patterns within an implicit framework of integration. Following this logic, in the case of Aceh, having established that the cultural practices of the Acehnese community are grounded in Islamic teachings, the cultural values to be accommodated in the school curricula would be in accordance with Islamic religious values. In Aceh, Islam is the dominant culture to which Barnhardt refers.

5. Curriculum interpretation and integration

A growing emphasis on curriculum integration is reflected in the increasing amount of research conducted in this subject area. One stream of research addresses the objective of curriculum integration as ensuring students have an opportunity to learn other disciplines' rules, beliefs, and ethical principles. Another stream characterises the ways in which curriculum integration is constructed. Indeed, at the heart of this curriculum integration lies the intention of organising common learning experiences

or life skills deemed indispensable for all citizens in a democracy (Vars & Beane, 2000). Therefore, curriculum could be organised around “...real-life problems and issues significant to both young people and adults, applying pertinent content and skills from many subject areas or disciplines” (Vars & Beane, p. 1).

In the search for curriculum integration models, Wraga (2009) suggests that the curriculum should be integrated with educational experiences around general personal and social problems. Wraga further acknowledges that the integrative curriculum paradigm provides an extensive opportunity for students to collaborate with their peers, teachers, and others with whom they can employ and integrate knowledge to deeply analyse common personal and social problems. Some researchers even identify the concept of integration as fundamental at the level of particular activities (Drake & Burns, 2004; Lam, Alviar-Martin, Adler, & Sim, 2013; Lonning, DeFranco, & Weinland, 1998; Wraga, 2009).

According to Lonning (1998), the term ‘curriculum integration’ is used to refer to the nature of interplay between two or more disciplines that are accordingly included in an interdisciplinary unit. Similarly, Drake and Burns (2004) emphasise that curriculum integration refers to multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary curriculum design. Drake and Burns refer to Klein’s (2002) seminal work to argue that both educators and proponents of outcomes-based education intentionally use integrated learning approaches because they believe that, to some extent, students cannot attain learning at higher levels in a separate-subject approach.

In the Islamic context, the integration of Islamic education and values with general education has been proposed by numerous Islamic scholars (Hassan, 2010; Salleh, 2009). Those scholars believe that the integration of Islamic and general education enables students to enrich their understanding of Islamic teachings on the one hand, and to develop skills and understanding in a particular knowledge discipline of their choice on the other hand. This knowledge integration may significantly develop every aspect of a Muslim’s potential and produce a well-balanced Muslim community; namely, those who have a better life on earth and in the hereafter (Yaacob & Embong, 2008).

5.1 Disciplinary curriculum

In the search for the meaning of disciplinary learning, Dressel and Marcus (1982) describe disciplines as systematic ways of organising and studying phenomena. Disciplinary-based learning theorists claim that practitioners of given disciplines “see” the world through the nature and constellations of particular knowledge disciplines (Lattuca, 2002). As disciplinarians, the disciplinary-based practitioners have an inclination to conceptualise a particular knowledge development based on the lenses of an appropriate knowledge discipline. In other words, knowledge is linked to discipline: “the discipline is clearly a specialised form of organisation in that it knits together chemists and chemists, psychologists and psychologists, historians and historians, it is specialised by subject, that is, by knowledge domain” (Clark, 1983, p. 29).

Lattuca (2001) further reports that discipline-based knowledge flourished in the USA until the last quarter of the 20th century. The report identifies that during that time, students were introduced to disciplines from elementary school to college, and were taught to learn and recognise a particular knowledge value through disciplinary-based learning inquiry. Subsequent studies on disciplinary models of learning reveal that high schools are structured in four big disciplines: science; technology; engineering; and mathematics – STEM (Beberman-Shalev, Sabbagh, Resh, & Kramarski, 2011; Tchudi & Lafer, 1996).

In a more recent view of disciplinary education and curricula, educational theorists perceive that professional and vocational education could be a promising educational terrain for students to enter in either a higher learning degree or in a suitable job (Tran, 2013; Valles, 2012). This argument has been supported by another disciplinary educational practitioner (Holley, 2009), who argues that the disciplines might provide opportunities for scholars to advance specific bodies of knowledge, resulting in the mastery of such knowledge in much greater depth.

According to Anderson (2009), the main purpose of professional and vocational education is to train individuals to master particular skills so they are able to participate in the development of their nation. Anderson describes the objectives of professional and vocational education as follows:

(1) Promote economic growth by developing the human resources required by industry to increase productivity and profit (training for growth); and (2) produce graduates with skills and competencies for work in order to increase their economic output and employability (skills for work). (p. 42)

It is also interesting to note that the development of disciplinary education in the USA alone is considered not only as a quest towards an academic effort in contributing to the advancement of science, but as a result of the belief that citizenry can be trained in a specialised academic discipline in order to continually participate in the country's development, including in economic life (Chettiparamb, 2007). In relation to this, Karseth (2004) argues that a discipline should be an apprenticeship into powerful ways of knowing, in which mastery of conceptual structures and modes of argument is emphasised. As such, the purpose of education through the disciplinary lens is to prepare everyone to become a knowledgeable professional, trained in the core content of the particular academic discipline (Karseth, 2004).

The effort to understand the contribution of disciplines has been portrayed in some significant literature. Turner (2000), for example, argues that disciplinary education has the potential to train people in a specific way to master a specific skill at a greater depth. He contends that "disciplines are collectives defined in part by some common interests, but they are also internal divisions of labour in a teaching enterprise oriented to the production of persons trained in a specific way" (p. 55). In addition, he asserts that the "advantage of disciplines is to provide a standardised training in which the demands of the market become demands placed on students" (p. 52). In response to Turner's viewpoints, Henkel (1999) professes that engagement with the core values of disciplines enables learners to develop their particular skills for both community development and career self-empowerment. He claims that:

...engagement with the main principles, concepts, theories and debates of a discipline made it possible to develop knowledge, skills and values that were needed by individuals and their society as well as by the economy. It could, however, also be an excellent preparation for the labour market. Many academics believed that they could best fulfil their responsibility to their students in this way. (p. 256)

Despite the advantages of disciplines, arguments against disciplinary learning have emerged. Opponents of this learning approach argue that "disciplines have a tendency to lose sight of the amount of knowledge not accessible to it by the very limitation of its boundaries" (Chettiparamb, 2007, p. 9). Others contend that to see

the real world, everyone should see it from different angles, not from one designated dimension (Becher, 1989).

5.2 Multidisciplinary curriculum

The term 'multidisciplinary' has been defined in different ways depending on the research focus and interest. Hammer and Soderqvist (2001), for example, state that multidisciplinary generally "refers to when people bring separate theories, skills, data, and ideas to bear on a common problem" (p. 2). Meanwhile, Chettiparamb (2007) simply defines multidisciplinary as "a juxtaposition of various disciplines, sometimes with no apparent connection between them, e.g. music + mathematics + history" (p. 19). The two different meanings indicate that the term 'multidisciplinary' can be seen from the perspective of designing and carrying out research employing various approaches to observe or analyse one particular issue; or from the perspective of focusing on fostering relationships among study disciplines (those that have connection with each other and those that have not). Newhouse and Spring (2010, p. 309) provide a close understanding of a multidisciplinary curriculum, concluding that "multidisciplinarity represents the basic efforts of multiple disciplines working together to solve a problem without challenging disciplinary boundaries".

In further research, Davies and Devlin (2007) argue that a multidisciplinary curriculum acknowledges that there are many discrete and autonomous disciplines. As such, they suggest that in higher education, while undergraduate students normally focus on a particular discipline, they can study some other courses that promote their intellectual development. Davies and Devlin recommend that a student who studies a particular discipline should also study subjects from other related disciplines. For example, an accounting student could study some subjects in Finance in addition to accounting-related subjects, and may also study Economics. Davies and Devlin add that students may also study subjects in unrelated disciplines, such as History or Music (see Figure 4). This multidisciplinary concept suggests that students studying a particular discipline can study other subjects at the same time that meet their study interests.

Research into the strength of multidisciplinary learning has been published continuously. Charlton (2006), without neglecting the advantages of other learning

approaches, acknowledges that multidisciplinary study implicitly aims to develop students' cognitive skills to master multi-learning competencies and experiences. The objective of multidisciplinary study is to "...develop flexibility of cognitive styles, preparing students for a wide range of potential later specializations either in the workplace or at postgraduate level" (Charlton, p. 451). Having undergone close scrutiny, adopting a multidisciplinary learning approach is deemed a legitimate way for higher education students to learn more information and skills while focusing on one specific study discipline.

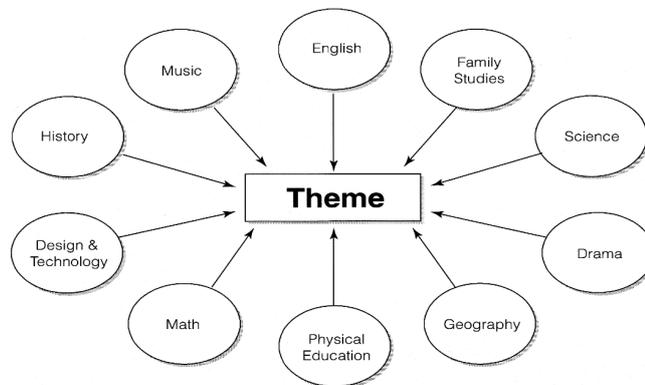


Figure 4: Multidisciplinary approach

Adopted from Drake and Burns (2004, p. 9)

Figure 4 shows the relationship between different subjects linked to a common theme. The figure indicates that multidisciplinary approaches focus primarily on disciplines. According to Drake and Burns (2004), multidisciplinary learning enables students to understand the interplay between the different sub-disciplines and their relationship to the real world. Drake and Burns also believe that teachers may integrate students' skill, knowledge, and attitudes through a multidisciplinary approach.

5.3 Interdisciplinary approach

An initial investigation into the meaning of 'interdisciplinary' revealed that the term refers to the application of a few approaches to studying one specific issue. Jacobs (1998) defines the term more academically as "a knowledge view and curriculum

approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic, or experience” (p. 8). Similar meanings have been proposed by interdisciplinary practitioners, including Chettiparamb and Newell. Chettiparamb (2007) defines interdisciplinary as “an adjective describing the interaction among two or more different disciplines” (p. 19), arguing that interaction within interdisciplinary studies occurs in various distinctive ways, ranging from a common ground technical framework to the ways education is managed and developed:

The interaction among those disciplines might take place from simple communication of ideas to the mutual integration of organising concepts, methodologies, procedures, epistemologies, terminologies, and data, leading to an organisation of research and education in a fairly large field. (Chettiparamb, 2007, p. 19)

According to Newell (2001), interdisciplinary means drawing knowledge from relevant disciplines, and incorporating it into a more universal understanding. As such, “...interdisciplinary study draws on more than one discipline’s perspective to synthesise a more comprehensive understanding” (Newell, p. 3). In other literature, Newell and Klein (1996) argue that interdisciplinary study is another approach to studying a particular topic that seems impossible to be studied using a single knowledge discipline approach. Newell (2001) concludes that interdisciplinary is “a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline or profession” (p. 13). In an almost similar vein, Hammer and Soderqvist (2001) assert that ‘interdisciplinary’ encompasses intertwining together individuals and ideas from diverse disciplines to mutually frame a resolution towards a problem. Supporting Hammer and Soderqvist’s definition, Newhouse and Spring (2010) define ‘interdisciplinary’ as a rational connection between disciplines fostering reciprocal interactions that unite disciplinary boundaries to generate common methods, knowledge, or perspectives.

Regarding the interdisciplinary curriculum approach, Klein (1990) is in agreement with Hammer (2001), emphasising that “...interdisciplinary activities are rooted in the ideas of unity and synthesis, evoking a common epistemology of convergence” (p. 11). Therefore, interdisciplinary studies integrate knowledge and ways of thinking

from more than one discipline. As a result, this integration enables learners to advance their understanding, including analysing phenomena, raise further questions, and find appropriate solutions to a problem (Mansila & Gardner, 2003).

The advantage of integration in interdisciplinarity has been acknowledged by numerous interdisciplinary theorists who argue that “subjects and disciplines are no longer isolated or self-justified; they become tools for a new purpose” (Klein, 2002, p. 9). Integration is also regarded as a core concept in the interdisciplinary process (Lattuca, 2001), in which it combines discipline-based knowledge and ways of thinking to generate a better understanding of the objects being studied (Mansila & Gardner, 2003). Similarly, Golding (2009) asserts that in an interdisciplinary subject, “...students explore and integrate multiple perspectives from different disciplines, sub-disciplines and areas of expertise” (p. 3). Interdisciplinarity shifts the learning process from “subject matter and acquisition of facts to process and skills” (Newell & Klein, 1996, p. 164).

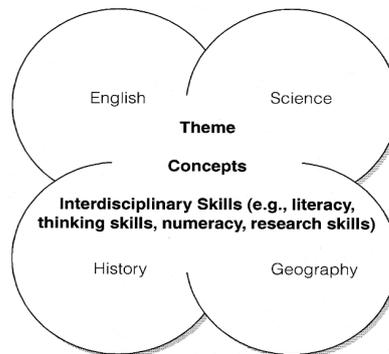


Figure 5: Interdisciplinary approach

Adopted from Drake and Burns (2004, p. 12)

In addition, in the interdisciplinary approach, teachers prepare the curriculum about common learning across disciplines, which may assist students to develop their critical thinking. Drake and Burns (2004) illustrate how interdisciplinary learning works, giving examples of students who constructed handmade kites made from paper, straws, aluminium foil, skewers, and string. Students worked together closely

and, to engage their imagination, they read a story about kites, including a topic on electromagnetism. Reading electromagnetism might have enabled students to develop their understanding of the principles of ratio and proportion, which played a significant role in constructing the kite. Drake and Burns argue that beyond this interdisciplinary approach, students have learned significant generic attributes related to cooperation and working together, conducting research, design, and construction. In the context of UIN Ar-Raniry, an Islamic higher education institution, this interdisciplinary approach could be implemented by integrating Islamic religious values into its curriculum and offering courses or topics that contribute their particular disciplinary knowledge on a common subject, for example women's studies (Garkovich, 1982). In this topic, students could study the role of women in Islam from the perspectives of the *Quran* and general law, such as human rights law.

6. Curriculum change and its influencing factors

The literature on curricular reform records that changes normally take place to improve and enhance the production and application of academic knowledge (Barnett, et al., 2001). Curriculum reform in higher education is seen as a sustainable effort to provide better educational quality (Ladwig, 2010). Ladwig notes that “the very notion of curriculum development is fundamentally embedded in a modernist commitment to progress and reform: development implies change, and in modern times, education implies development” (p. 374). What Ladwig has said signals that curriculum reform, including at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, aims to intuitively and positively impact the future of students.

Higher education institutions, with their standardised curriculum and instruction, have the potential to produce graduates with the knowledge and skills to attain a better social and economic life, as noted by Orrell and Higgs (2012), who indicated that:

[universities hold] potential sources of remedies for economic and social needs and challenges, such as producing an appropriately educated and skilled workforce, reducing inequality and unemployment, and as sources of new knowledge leading to enhancement of economic endeavours and social wellbeing. (p. 41)

Therefore, at the heart of curriculum change lies the foremost priority, which is that the Department must place the highest importance on providing students with the

opportunity to study to achieve social and economic success.

Changing the curriculum at a university may substantially improve the quality of education, as well as its teaching and learning agenda. Ramsden (2003) says that the initial step in promoting changes is to understand what such changes are for. What kinds of changes do we wish to see happen? Clark (1983) suggests the answers to these questions lie in critically analysing significant curriculum change driving factors, encompassing university and government policy, and labour market or industry trends.

6.1 Government and university policy

Government policy and political change have played a significant role in reforming university curricula. According to Brennan (2011), globalising economic trends affecting technology, media, and people movement may have forced most nations to adapt to such a globalised world. In response, governments throughout the world have endorsed certain educational policies related to human capital to increase national economic productivity (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). In the Aceh context, the implementation of Islamic law supported by the endorsement of UUPA has automatically affected the curriculum of UIN Ar-Raniry as a whole. The policy has shifted the focus of the faculty objectives to be more specific in preparing each department's graduates to be more oriented to the empowerment of the Acehnese community by mastering general disciplinary knowledge while concurrently mastering Islamic religious teachings. The local government, through the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in collaboration with the Islamic Law Department, has designed a framework of educational concepts to be implemented across the Aceh province. Additionally, the framework is to be adjusted and implemented by each institution without ignoring its core teaching values.

The English Education Department, as a department under the management of an Islamic institution, perceives this policy as an opportunity to positively reform its curriculum to provide a better education for future Acehnese generations. The reform may significantly invigorate the Department's goal of producing graduates qualified in English skills to be English teachers and English language professionals. This intention has instigated the Department to adapt to change.

6.2 Adapting to the labour market or industry orientation

For more than a decade, there has been an increasing move towards the inclusion of integrating university curricula into the real world, responding to today's workplace visions (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Down, et al., 1999; Gruba, Moffat, Sondergaard, & Zobel, 2004; Hess, 2010). According to Darling-Hammond (2010), in the USA as well as in other corners of the globe, the need to prepare future citizens and workers who are able to deal with complexity, utilise technologies, and work cooperatively to resolve any problems has influenced academics to rethink educational objectives and curriculum orientations. In addition, issues about generic graduate attributes have emerged as a central point in some university curricula, including in Australia and the UK, confirming that possessing particular disciplinary understanding and skills will make a potential contribution to enhancing graduates' employment prospects (Gibbs, 2012; Knight & Yorke, 2004). As such, curricula need to be linked with the needs of the real-world market to increase graduates' employment opportunities. Similarly, it is critical that the English Education Department conceptualises its curriculum with links to market inclinations in order to enhance its graduates' employment prospects.

Curriculum change at department level is regarded as a starting point in the process of empowering education to meet particular stakeholders' needs. In turn, this will assist graduates to develop wide-ranging employment opportunities, both as teacher educators and other professional workers. Since English skills are regarded as an additional competence when applying for a job at most government institutions and private enterprises in Indonesia (UNDP, 2010), students at the English Education Department are strongly urged to master not only English but also other general skills that meet market requirements.

7. Challenges of curriculum change

Relevant studies about the challenges of curriculum reform reveal that implementation of new curricula may lead to potential conflict (Burgess, 2004; Little, 1993; Zembylas, 2010). According to Zembylas (2010), research on teacher educators shows that reform in schools often causes a number of problems; conflict, resistance, unpredictability, and some loss of self-image. Resistance to change is regarded as one of the biggest challenges in a university context (Harpe & Thomas,

2009). According to Arnold and Civian (1997), resistance might come from senior academics in powerful and prestigious positions. It is also understood that change normally involves loss, anxiety, and struggle (Fullan, 2001).

Voices supporting and complaining about reform are two common issues that accompany the whole process of curriculum development (Qun & Wanjin, 2007). Other researchers also ascertain that education institutions face significant challenges when attempting to engage in curriculum reform. According to Wormley (2004), among the most prevalent challenges faced by institutions in stepping into the reform stage are time, commitment, cooperation, infrastructure readiness, and other supporting elements, including the availability of human resources as the agents of change. However, most reformists argue that the common factor for successfully managing change is to understand the change process and foster a strong relationship with relevant people (Fullan, 1997; Harpe & Thomas, 2009). Fullan (2007) suggests that leaders must build relationships with diverse people and groups, especially those who perceive change from a negative perspective, to anticipate any resistance to change. Fullan also suggests that curriculum developers need to consider both major and minor curriculum change scales (the small and the big pictures) to minimise any potential conflict in designing and developing a new curriculum. A major curriculum change commonly involves reform at the university level, while a minor curriculum change can only occur at department or faculty level.

In the context of curriculum development at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, a novel aspect of the current change is the requirement for education institutions in this region to include the new educational mission and objectives mandated by UUPA. This change should, indeed, describe an educational process designed to produce graduates with mastery of both general and Islamic knowledge.

Having said that, whatever the reform is, it often leads to a series of potential challenges (Oliver & Hyun, 2011; Wormley, 2004). As such, there is no doubt that in developing its new curriculum, the English Education Department may face tangible challenges, especially in dealing with infrastructure, human resources, cooperation, and teamwork. These three elements are among the obvious hurdles the Department may face. Nevertheless, the reform is needed to evolve the Department's capacity to disseminate quality education for all current learners and prospective students who

come here to pursue knowledge.

8. Concluding remarks

This chapter has outlined a broad understanding and knowledge of curriculum theory and curriculum development. Some aspects of curriculum meaning, curriculum models, curriculum integration, and curriculum change have been reviewed. These are the inclusion of formal and informal curriculum, disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum, curriculum development, and curriculum change driving factors.

The review indicates that there are some critical forces that need to be considered when developing a higher education curriculum. These are government policy, labour market orientation, and the cultural values within which the educational objectives are conceptualised. These three elements have a significant influence on formulating the educational objectives through curriculum content and instruction.

In relation to the review of curriculum change, it has been identified that university curricula have the potential to occasionally face significant changes in order to adapt to new settings, including government political reform, new trends in global education, and other unpredictable agendas. Often, curriculum reform at university level faces significant challenges, including the objection of some academics, especially those who conceive the change as a process that might hamper their academic status and position. This hurdle could be minimised, if not avoided, by fostering strong relationships among the people involved in the reform process, especially those who oppose the change.

Reforming the current curriculum to move away from the existing situation is a challenging and daunting task. Commitment of all involved parties at department, faculty, and university level to accept the change collegially will have a profound impact on the success of the reform. Additionally, in the context of curriculum development at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, a novel aspect of the current change is the requirement for education institutions in this region to address the new educational mission mandated by UUPA, which involves synergising the curriculum with local needs and the realities of life outside the higher education institution.

To this end, the spirit of curriculum change could, indeed, describe an educational process that is designated to produce graduates with mastery in both Islamic and English discipline knowledge, and to efficiently prepare them for their future roles in society. Therefore, the above reform challenges must be seriously considered as a significant move in empowering education at this institution, and in particular affording a better education for the next generation living in the Aceh region.

Thus far, this review has generated the following questions to explore and answer:

- What are the clear purposes of the English Education Department's curriculum?
 - To meet the needs of the institution?
 - To meet the needs of the stakeholders?
 - Students?
 - Teachers?
 - Lecturers?
 - Leaders?
- Does their design and development process engage with the needs of stakeholders?
- How does, or might, the curriculum enable integration of disciplinary knowledge, expertise generic knowledge, and expertise Islamic values?

The next chapter provides a brief overview of a curriculum in the higher education context, particularly in Islamic higher education institutions. Curricula for language learning, teaching English as a foreign language, professional and general learning, and attuned to Islamic values are described thoroughly.

CHAPTER FOUR

LITERATURE REVIEW PART TWO

ACHIEVING SPECIFIC CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

1. Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to provide an overview of specific curriculum objectives in relation to the context and focus of this study. Even though UIN Ar-Raniry and the English Education Department are under the management of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA), the Department also trains students to become English teachers who might teach at general schools, which are under the management of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Students who graduate from the English Education Department program are expected to master not only general discipline knowledge of English, but also pedagogy, religious-focused education, and generic employability capabilities. Educational research has generated a body of knowledge to underpin each of these spheres of the curriculum.

A specific curriculum framework in a higher education context is discussed. The framework encompasses a language learning curriculum, teaching English as a foreign language curriculum, professional learning curriculum, general learning curriculum, Islamic values' curriculum, and a lifelong learning curriculum. The primary goal of discussing these curricula is to highlight the significance of each curriculum context that suits particular teaching and learning objectives, particularly those which suit the English Education Department. For example, the theories of language learning curriculum and teaching English as a foreign language curriculum have different approaches and concepts. An important factor in a language learning curriculum is to consider its general learning purpose. Students may study English for a qualification or an English degree. In contrast, the curriculum for teaching English as a foreign language is designed specifically to prepare and train students to become English elementary and secondary school teachers. Hence, most programs deal with pedagogical issues such as teaching methodology, course design and development, and leadership in teaching, as well as assessment.

This chapter attempts to provide a significant overview of the different curriculum approaches to meet different students' learning objectives. All of the curriculum concepts in the English Education Department are interrelated. Each curriculum is developed to assist students in the pursuit of their distinct study objectives. It is believed that students' objectives in pursuing education at the Department vary. Some may want to be English teachers; some may want to pursue Islamic education; some may also want to study English to obtain a qualification to pursue higher education and apply for jobs in non-education sectors; and others may have different reasons for studying in the program. Meeting different students' learning objectives is a profound challenge when developing the Department's curriculum.

2. Language learning curriculum

This part of the literature review relates to how the curriculum may be adjusted to meet students' language learning objectives. The motives for learning a foreign language vary among people; some may study it for academic purposes and others may learn it for career-oriented considerations. Development of language learning curriculum must consider the factors that inspire someone to study a foreign language. Those factors are regarded as a significant platform to guide curriculum developers in constructing a curriculum that meets its constituents' learning objectives.

The significant literature in the area of language learning has a clear message; beliefs and motivations play a critical role in learning a language (Aragao, 2011; Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Mohebi & Khodadady, 2011; Oakes, 2013; Purdie & Oliver, 1999; Wong, 2010). Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) note that perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and expectations are significant influences in driving language learners to succeed in learning English as a foreign language.

In a similar vein, Wong (2010) notes that language learners having strong self-efficacy and motivation to succeed in learning are more likely to put more effort into successfully accomplishing their learning objectives, even when the shadow of failure hangs over them. In contrast, learners who are less motivated, or who are doubtful in perceiving their ability to succeed, are more likely to put less effort into learning, and often tend to give up easily when they encounter a learning challenge.

Wong argues that “...successful learners develop insightful beliefs about the language learning process, their own abilities, and the use of effective learning strategies which have enhanced their performance in language acquisition” (p. 124). She adds that learners may also have misconceptions or negative beliefs about learning a foreign language, resulting in a demotivated attitude towards a learning objective. For example, a student who believes someone should not speak English if they cannot speak well will not practice it. In contrast, a student who does not have any negative beliefs about English will start practicing and repeating it a lot, resulting in acceleration of language acquisition.

According to Aragao (2011), self-confidence or self-esteem may always contribute to the students’ willingness to practice English with their teachers, peers, and surrounding community. Aragao notes that:

Emotions like shyness, embarrassment, pride, self-esteem, inhibition can be related to beliefs one has about oneself and the surrounding environment, such as the fear of feeling embarrassed when speaking in class may be due to a belief that a classmate will criticize or laugh at the student’s performance. Self-conscious emotions come with experience and with the emergence of certain beliefs about one’s relationship to the foreign language classroom. (p. 304)

There is also a common agreement that intrinsic and extrinsic factors may influence individuals to study a foreign language. According to Oakes (2013), intrinsically-oriented learners are normally interested in learning a language because of an internal factor, including “satisfaction of curiosity, intellectual stimulation, thirst for knowledge, and sense of accomplishment”, while extrinsically-oriented learners are keen to study a language because of external factors, including “parental pressure and a requirement for a career” (p. 179).

Research into *Beliefs about language learning for Malaysian pre-service teachers* carried out in Malaysia reveals that the primary objective of learning English as a foreign language is its utility value, namely to better understand English and to find a better career opportunity (Wong, 2010). Wong concludes that learners’ beliefs in learning a foreign language are situational and dynamic, depending very much upon their interest in learning a foreign language, especially English. To this end, she suggests that educators should pay particular attention to students’ awareness and beliefs about language learning. This language learning objective seems applicable to

other Asian countries, and Indonesia is no exception. In Aceh, most students tend to study English so they can communicate well in it and get a better job at multinational companies and other bona fide national enterprises (UNDP, 2010).

Since motivation, attitudes, beliefs, and expectations about language learning have been identified as affecting learning and outcomes, the language learning curriculum and its instruction can be developed to clearly address diverse students' particular study needs. In the context of an Islamic higher education institution, particularly in Aceh with its majority Muslim population, English language learning can also be associated with the knowledge seeking orientation (to search for Islamic-related information written in English) and to seek better job opportunities. The Department's curriculum could accommodate students' interest in learning English to enrich their understanding of Islamic scholarship. According to Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005), students will engage more in the teaching and learning process when teaching and learning meet their study objectives. Therefore, they argue that successfully identifying learners' motivations for, and expectations when, learning English might assist curriculum and syllabus designers to construct a more appropriate curriculum.

3. Teaching English as a foreign language

This part of the literature review describes how the curriculum may be adjusted so that students can master the knowledge, attitudes, and pedagogical skills to function in teaching English as a second language after they have finished their study at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry. The Department's primary objective is to teach and prepare students to be English teachers. It is expected that after students have graduated from this department, they will have sufficient English and pedagogical skills to teach at elementary or secondary schools. This expectation has been documented in the 2010 UIN Ar-Raniry manual/handbook, and addressed in the research question in this thesis regarding the values and expectations underpinning the Department's curriculum.

It has long been agreed that many factors may profoundly influence second language acquisition. According to Whyte (2011), factors include the frequency of language exposure that learners experience, the volume of their interaction and engagement

with the targeted language, and the quality or frequency of constructive feedback they receive from their teachers or tutors. Whyte, therefore, suggests that to accelerate the second language acquisition process, the language curriculum and syllabus could be developed to enable learners to access rich language input, participate in active group discussions, and receive individualised instruction. She also strongly urges teachers and tutors to get involved actively in mentoring their students through using the targeted language as often as possible.

However, according to Oxford (2002), applying the above approaches might not guarantee that students will easily succeed in foreign language learning because successful language learning is also influenced by students' individual learning styles and strategies. Oxford argues that "...successful learners often use *metacognitive* strategies such as organizing, evaluating, and planning their learning" (p. 125). Brown, Bransford, Ferrara, and Campione (1983), cited in Oxford (2002), say that "...use of those *metacognitive* behaviours – along with *cognitive* strategies such as analysing, reasoning, transferring information, taking notes, and summarising – might be considered part of any definition of truly effective learning" (p. 125).

In addition to Whyte and Oxford's ideas regarding factors that may stimulate language acquisition, research has also documented that language immersion programs play a critical role in accelerating English language skills mastery (Baus, Costa, & Carreiras, 2013; Gebauer, Zaunbauer, & Moller, 2013; Lee, 2009; Tang, 2011). According to Gebauer et al. (2013), there is a positive correlation between language development and foreign language immersion. He concludes that adequate language exposure, or having authentic language learning opportunities, increases students' motivation to study English, and at the same time quicken its acquisition.

In the search for an English language curriculum, White (1988, cited in Hadley, 1998) says that an ESL curriculum or syllabus is commonly classified into two categories; type "A" and type "B". The type "A" syllabus focuses on what students should learn in classrooms, with an emphasis on subject and content. The teaching and learning is centred on teachers, and the teachers have supreme authority over how the class and course are managed. The type "B" syllabus, in contrast, focuses on how ESL should be learned. The emphasis of this type of syllabus is on the teaching and learning process, in which learning objectives are formulated based on students'

needs. The objective of providing language courses more relevant to learners' needs has also been proposed by Richards (2001). As a result, teachers and students work to design a study and testing format, in which the focus of study can accommodate students' learning objectives and expectations.

In the last ten years, research has revealed that content-based instruction and project work have been used extensively to promote students' engagement in language learning (Boud & Costley, 2007; Iakovos, Iosif, & Areti, 2011; Stoller, 1997, 2002), suggesting that content-based instruction could lead students to develop language skills and become more knowledgeable individuals. Stoller (2002) states that "...by integrating project work into content-based classrooms, educators create vibrant learning environments that require active student involvement, stimulate higher-level thinking skills, and give students responsibility for their own learning" (Stoller, 2002, p. 107). The outcome of project-based learning (PBL) might also provide an opportunity to develop and build students' multiple skills, which will be useful for their future career and social life (Boud, 2012; Erben, Ban, & Castaneda, 2008). Thus, integrating the development of wider curriculum objectives is a common process. Erben and colleagues (2008) have undoubtedly elucidated the advantages of the project-based learning approach as follows:

By its very nature, PBL platforms drafting, editing and redrafting stages of any given piece of students work thereby allowing teachers to assess students' learning during process of the project as well as the product of the project. It also facilitates collaboration, mediation, and student interaction. This gives ELLs occasion to acquire collaborative skills, such as group problem-solving and decision-making, relying on peers, integrating teacher or peer feedback, practicing interaction skills, and working as student researchers. (p. 62)

Similarly, Boud and Costley (2007) argue that at the heart of project work designed for undergraduate students lies the potential to develop their abilities towards "employability or "graduateness", and develop their transferable skills to foster independent learners able to apply knowledge and become professional practitioners" (p. 121). Boud and Costley add that the type of projects to be applied to undergraduate courses vary in name, for example they may be an "extended assignment, major report, mini-thesis, critical summary, long essay, and so on" (Boud & Costley, 2007, p. 120). Indeed, this language learning concept indicates that content-based language instruction and project work encourage students to study

more deeply because they engage in the learning content, resulting in a deep approach to learning. It is argued that it is what learning should be; it should promote a deep level of understanding that results in conceptual change (Biggs, 1999).

It is equally important to note that according to Stoller (1997), cited in Iakovos (2011), a strength of the content-based curriculum or syllabus is that “it lends itself to the natural teaching of the four language skills” (Iakovos, et al., 2011, p. 115). For example, according to Iakovos, within the content-based instruction context students are urged to read original reading materials to interpret, comprehend, analyse, and understand any information provided so they can respond either orally or in writing. Undoubtedly, such a learning approach normally involves writing, followed by listening and reading. When students apply these four language skills in reading a text in the formal learning context, it is possible to master four significant English language skills.

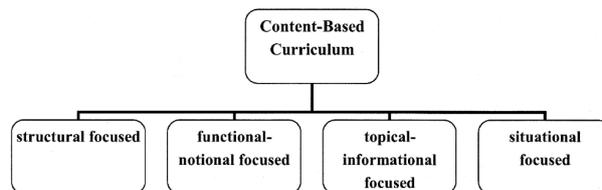


Figure 6: Content-based curriculum model

Adopted from Tang (2011) modified by Hadley (1988).

According to Tang (2011), the four language teaching skills model above (Figure 6) emphasises a different focus. The traditional structural focused model divides English into several elements. As such, the intention of mastering the language is to study its particular elements, such as phonological aspects, lexical concepts, and grammatical context, and its operational system. As a result, courses are commonly developed based on a structural orientation encompassing the four English language skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

Tang notes that the functional national focused model regards English as a means of functional expression, in which English is regarded as a language of communication. English learning in this learning mode emphasises the semantic and communicative

domains rather than grammatical aspects. Therefore, a course is designed to meet the national objectives, via the use of English, in academic, cultural, and social contexts.

Tang (2011) goes on to say that in adopting a topic informational focused model, the emphasis is on teaching of a particular topic or information to students. The focus of this learning is on the subject of the study, not on the language. In short, it focuses more on the cognitive dimension. In the world of language learning, this topic focused curriculum is well described as the 'Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach' (CALLA), which was introduced by Chamot and O'Malley (1987, 1994). Tang (2011) acknowledges that a situational-focused curriculum purposely designs a teaching and learning context in which the language is used for a particular situated learning purpose. Tang cites Haruko, Cook, Hijirida, and Tahara (1997), and Slaughter (1997), to illustrate how this curriculum concept has been practiced in tourism-related Japanese language teaching. Language elements are learnt in several situations, such as dining, shopping, traveling, and many other life situations. This situational-focused language curriculum could be implemented in learning English, with students focusing their learning on the contexts in which they are most interested.

4. Professional learning

This section of the literature review relates to how the curriculum may be adjusted so that students can master the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to function in the workplace upon completion of their study at this department. The English Education Department is mandated to train students to be professional English teachers. It has a responsibility to ensure that students have mastered adequate skills to become professional teachers and that they are able to perform their tasks professionally.

Education based on the concept of teaching as a profession has been promoted over the last twenty years (Darling-Hammond, 2010). According to Darling-Hammond, teachers must be able to assist students to learn in such a way as to develop their higher-order thinking and performance skills. She notes that several efforts have been made to reach this professional learning (PL) objective. Similarly, several programs have been implemented successfully, including fostering a strong relationship with schools and other learning institutions. In preparing students to

learn more professionally, Darling-Hammond (2010) states that students should be active in understanding the pedagogical aspects, and curriculum should encourage students to engage deeply in the learning process.

Indeed, Darling-Hammond's ideas have influenced our understanding of the ongoing curriculum development process that is attuned to the concept of professional teaching. Accordingly, it is commonly agreed that in teacher education programs, curriculum should focus on students' development as novice professionals. In relation to this, Thomas and Beauchamp (2007) argue that the focus of a student educator curriculum could embody "...what students need to know, and what they need to know how to do. This effort usually centres around highly specific information such as how to plan a lesson, how to manage a class, or how to encourage learning" (p. 231). Almost twenty years earlier, Calderhead and Robson (1991) noted that one of the significant objectives of teacher education is to nurture student educators to develop their knowledge and competence in subject matter, to develop their understanding about children, teaching and learning strategies, and school curricula, and to guide them to apply those skills in teaching practice.

In Australia, three domains of attributes and standards have been formulated for teacher educators. They are: (1) professional knowledge; (2) professional practice; and (3) professional engagement (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2013). Each domain covers significant knowledge and skills that teacher educators must master. Under the professional knowledge domain, for example, teacher educators must be able to identify their students and their learning approach, and must master the teaching materials and know how to teach. The foci of teaching in this area cover differentiating teaching to meet students' diverse learning needs, content selection and organisation, and curriculum evaluation and reporting. Under the professional practice domain, in addition, the foci of student educators' development are on planning and implementing effective teaching and learning, creating and maintaining supportive and safe learning environments, and assessing and reporting students' learning progress. Meanwhile, the professional engagement domain emphasises engagement in professional learning and self-dedication towards the teaching tasks, including engaging professionally with colleagues, parents/carers, and the surrounding community. Graduates must reach the initial (Graduate Teacher)

level across all domains at graduation.

In another study, Hammerness and Darling-Hammond (2007) argue that there are three significant approaches to educating students to become professional teachers: the apprenticeship of observation; the problem of enactment; and the problem of complexity. The apprenticeship of observation refers to the learning that occurs and experiences that students have during their study time. Those experiences have the potential to affect the preconceptions about teaching and learning that they bring to being professional teachers. The problem of enactment is associated with multi-task performances. Hammerness and Darling-Hammond ascertain that teachers not only need to understand something, but also do a wide variety of things that may happen concurrently. The last component, the problem of complexity, refers to metacognitive habits, in which teacher educators can make wise decisions in support of continual teaching and learning improvement.

The ability to develop a lesson plan, manage a classroom, motivate students to learn, develop a network of relationships among students, reflect on why they are teaching, understand the purpose of learning, and share experiences with each other is a basic requirement for teacher educators to develop their early professional practice (Gravani, Hadjileontiadou, Nikolaidou, & Hadjileontiadis, 2007). Hoban (2002, cited in Gravani et al. 2007), advocates that there are four common professional learning models: (1) the traditional learning model (TTM); (2) learning communities (LCs); (3) workplace learning (WL); and (4) professional learning system (PLS).

In TTM, teaching is seen as a “craft” in the process of acquiring particular skills and competencies. As such, teacher learning is regarded as “...the attendance of workshops to gain knowledge and skills to accrue those already existing” (Gravani, et al., 2007, p. 236). In LCs, Gravani and colleagues say that teachers have a sense of managing their own growth. The central ideas are “interaction” and “interdependence”. At the heart of LCs is the teacher’s intention to share their different views with others—with the community—and to listen to other people to improve their progress.

In the WL model, learning is associated with working; “...the learning that occurs at work” (Gravani et al., 2007). Teachers perceive that learning takes place by

participating in activities; learning is not personal but social in nature. In the PLS model, however, Gravani and colleagues argue that teaching and learning penetrate every personal, social, and contextual dimension. This learning approach, which views reality as a dynamic, not a static or one-dimensional, element, evolves beyond the context of formal study. From a similar perspective, Boud and Falchikov (2006) argue that PLS suits the higher education context, where students have to construct themselves as active subjects to determine what to learn, how to learn, and how to assess whether they have learned in order to enter the lucrative professional world:

Higher education has an important role to play in the preparation of students for what is to follow because it is becoming the final systematic stage of education for the majority of the population, and the key stage for all those proceeding to professional work. (Boud & Falchikov, 2006, p. 404)

Later, the effort to understand the professional learning curriculum reveals that continuing professional development for teacher educators is required because knowledge grows continuously, resulting in ongoing changes in the education sector (Knight, 2002). In responding to Knight's arguments, Danaher, Tyler, and Arden (2007) ascertain that future education and training (FET) provides distinctive challenges and opportunities in terms of performing practice and constructing new learning concepts that meet all stakeholders' needs, including students and government authorities. Danaher and colleagues argue that from the government perspective, there is significant demand to provide an opportunity for students to study at higher post-compulsory education levels. The extensive influence of the current skills shortage in most Western countries has also had a significant influence on developing professional learning and education.

In the pedagogical sphere, educating students to be teacher educators may be achieved through empowering teaching and learning strategies that engage students in experiencing the real teaching life (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2007). Thomas and Beauchamp, citing Sach (2005, p.15), note that:

Teacher professional identity then stands at the core of the teaching profession. It provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of "how to be," "how to act" and how to understand" their work and their place in society. Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience.

The above quotation indicates the need for professional or qualified teachers to

possess qualifications that enable them to interact with students as well as with the community to manage their teaching and learning activities. Teaching and learning, and its instruction at a university, should be developed to achieve such requirements.

The review above has highlighted some significant concepts in developing a curriculum that meets student needs in developing their professional learning. In order to be professional teachers, student educators must undoubtedly possess broad knowledge and skills in their study field. It is believed that the knowledge and skills they must master relate not only to teaching and learning, but also to dealing with social issues and morals responsibility in performing their tasks as teachers. Therefore, the curriculum must be developed in a way that will enable student educators to master the skills and qualifications needed to successfully teach, and interact with, their prospective students, colleagues, and communities.

5. Generic graduate capabilities

This section of the literature review relates to how the curriculum may be adjusted to facilitate students' mastery of the general knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to function in the workplace upon completion of their study at this department. Generic graduate capabilities are the complementary knowledge, skills, and experiences students can master besides the core knowledge discipline.

Generic capabilities—regarded as significant competences that undergraduate students can master after completing their degree—have become an increasing focus of numerous higher education institutions throughout the world. In the context of the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, generic graduate capabilities are viewed as the general skills students can master to synergise with local and national academic and workforce requirements. The current research sought to identify what these skills and attributes should be when developing curricula to prepare English language teachers and English language professionals at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry.

Concepts of education that prepare students for success in the world of work and as members of community have been proposed in various research. Siefert (2012) argues that, to enhance students' success, education should emphasise knowledge as transferable skills and abilities, such as the ability to communicate effectively, and

think critically and creatively, as well as to access, assess, and utilise information to achieve a specific goal. Others argue that providing significant generic skills might assist students to survive in today's highly competitive job market (Barrie, 2006; Hess, 2010; Karseth, 2004; Laird & Garver, 2010; Oliver, 2010). The term 'generic outcomes' refers to graduate attributes, graduate employability, core or key skills, and generic skills (Barrie, 2007).

In Australia, generic graduate attributes are conceived as being the skills, knowledge, abilities, and competences of university graduates, which could be applied in various contexts and conditions, and are achieved as a result of accomplishing any undergraduate degree. (See for example, Barrie, 2007). In addition, in an Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) fellowship report, the term 'graduate employability' is defined as more than the attainment of employment. It goes beyond "...a set of skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy" (Oliver, 2010, p. 354).

Students, irrespective of their discipline or field of study, are strongly urged to possess such generic skills in order to have a better life and become a better citizen. Barrie (2005) also cited Bowden et al. (2000) in acknowledging that the generic skills a university offers include, and go beyond, the disciplinary knowledge, expertise, or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed core courses, encompassing the qualities that prepare graduates to become competent citizens in an unknown future. According to Barnett (2004), learning for the unknown future focuses not only on particular skills, but also on empowering human dispositions. "Learning for an unknown future has to be a learning understood neither in terms of knowledge or skills but of human qualities and dispositions" (Barnett, 2004, p. 247).

Supporting Barrie's ideas, Hess (2010) emphasises that education has two paramount objectives at the fundamental level; a "private" objective and a "public" purpose. As a private purpose, education serves as a private good in which every individual benefits from the skills and training offered by the education process. As a public good, in addition, education trains and prepares every individual in particular skills, dispositions, or values to become a better citizen and neighbour. As a result, these

dual education functions require higher education institutions to better equip students to develop the basic capacity to gain employment and become a better community member. This aspiration for educational development reflects the foundations of the English Education Department of the Islamic higher education institution UIN Ar-Raniry, and the expectation that it will produce graduates who have mastered both English skills and Islamic generic attributes (Nurdin, et al., 2010).

Academics, after close scrutiny of generic graduate attributes, have a different understanding of such outcomes (Barrie, 2005, 2006, 2007). Barrie (2007) notes that:

...generic attributes go beyond the conception to encompass university learned, general functional abilities and personal skills that can usefully complement the discipline-specific learning outcomes of a university education. Other academics understand generic attributes to be more than useful additional general skills. Rather, they are specialised variants of such general skills that are essential in the application of discipline knowledge and the translation of university learning to unfamiliar settings, thus usefully transforming the products of university learning. (p. 440)

This implies that graduate attributes are still debateable issues in academia. However, the most common agreed generic skills to be mastered by university graduates encompass additional skills and competences that enable individuals to apply studied knowledge in their real life, both at workplaces and in the community (Gow & McDonald, 2000). Gow and McDonald cited the Mayer Committee (1992) in elaborating seven key competence domains that constitute significant graduate attributes: "...collecting, analysing, and organising information; communicating ideas and information; planning and organising activities; working with others and in teams; using mathematical ideas and techniques; problem solving; and using technology" (p. 378).

Gow and McDonald (2000) also suggest that with insecure and scarce employment, entrepreneurial ability could be seen as a promising additional graduate skill worth mastering. Graduates possessing entrepreneurial ability have the potential to know how to create new business opportunities (Defillippi & Arthur, 2006; Gow & Wood, 1996).

A central issue in the fulfilment of graduate attributes in higher education is that both teacher educators and faculty members are responsible for assigned tasks. Teacher educators understand, and are responsible for, teaching particular core courses that

include additional generic skills. Curriculum developers at the faculty level must ensure that the developed curriculum accommodates the faculty's required generic skills. Gow and Wood (2000) conclude that it is equally essential for accreditation boards to ensure that the stated program learning objectives are met.

In summary, generic graduate capabilities have been viewed as the skills that students should have mastered once completing their undergraduate education. Those skills and competences include the capacity to manage general issues in a workplace, which involves planning, analysing, problem solving, using technology, and communicating ideas to support the growth of the institution where they work. In the context of social life, generic attributes may also encompass the skills to enable socialising with neighbours or the community, and the capacity to value others and abide by the law. Understanding these social values may lead students to become better citizens.

6. Islamic values

This aspect of the literature review relates to how the curriculum may be adjusted to facilitate students' mastery of the Islamic values and teachings they need to function in their daily life in the Islamic community. UIN Ar-Raniry, as an Islamic university, plays a significant role in preparing students to individually master sufficient Islamic teachings for them to function as good community citizens. All faculties and departments in this university play this role collectively; the English Education Department is not excluded. Even though the Department's primary objective is to train students to be English teachers at elementary and secondary schools, it is responsible for providing them with basic Islamic education. Therefore, when developing its curriculum, the Department must ensure the curriculum enables students to learn not only English language skills but also Islamic education values. This section addresses the research question regarding the values and expectations underpinning the English Education Department's curriculum.

In developing an Islamic education, there is a balanced growth between the intellectual and spiritual domains. Islam emphasises intellectual and spiritual development. Spiritual development that focuses on *akhlak* is regarded as the core process in purifying humans' ethical morals. Having a better *akhlak* as a soft skill

might enable people to possess social intelligence that affects the way they act during social interactions and on other formal professional occasions, including in the workplace.

Islam seeks a balance between the urgency of pursuing general and Islamic-related education. As a result, education has the potential to develop a student's personality and prepare them for every aspect of life, including meeting their spiritual and material needs (Salleh, 2009). Research into Islamic educational values has indicated that Islamic education's key focus is on strengthening students' ethical morals. As such, in the context of the English Education Department's curriculum development, curriculum developers need to ensure that this objective is attainable. Curriculum and its instruction need to be developed to meet the students' needs in the area of enriching their religious values and understanding.

7. Lifelong learning

This section of the literature review relates to how the curriculum may be adjusted to equip students to participate in lifelong learning upon completion of their study at the Department. Hammerness and Darling-Hammond (2007) contend that lifelong learning plays a significant role in successfully preparing effective teacher educators. They argue, that having a limited time to prepare student educators, a university cannot equip them with everything they need. Therefore, perennial decisions must be made to consider reasonable content and strategies to prepare them (student educators) to learn from their own contexts and practices, as well as from their teachers.

In the last few decades, lifelong learning or lifelong education has received significant attention in higher education. Studies have focused on how lifelong learning is conceptualised and practiced in social life. Lifelong learning is also regarded as important because it enables individuals to develop their education without time and place restrictions; learning can take place anytime and anywhere.

Lifelong learning is literally defined as learning that embraces a set of principles enabling the educational process to take place throughout the lifespan (Jarvis, 2004; Knapper & Cropley, 2000). Leone (2013) defines the concept of lifelong learning as "all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving

knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective” (p. 1). She adds that, looking through the lens of lifelong learning, individuals, as the active citizens, serve as a key knowledge resource. Their knowledge develops gradually to meet their needs, and is then shared with the community through a network of citizens. Leone (2013, p. 10) says that old and new knowledge and its attributes unite and develop through this process, “...filtered by the key skill of learning to learn and of acquiring knowledge and know-how which can be exploited in various contexts”. This argument suggests that lifelong education occurs by any means of interaction with others and an environment, without time and place boundaries. It sometimes happens while we actively interact and engage with the surrounding community. In preparing students to be teacher educators, education faculties can promote lifelong learners by integrating particular learning experiences into their curriculum (Knapper & Cropley, 2000).

Knapper and Cropley (2000) define lifelong learning as follows:

The single crucial element in the notion of lifelong education is to be found in the word ‘lifelong’: it embraces a set of guidelines for developing educational practice (education) in order to foster learning throughout life (lifelong). Lifelong education thus defines a set of organisational, administrative, methodological and procedural measures which accept the importance of promoting lifelong learning. (p. 9)

Knapper and Cropley (2000) acknowledge that through a certain standardised process, lifelong learning contributes to the building of skills and knowledge throughout an individual’s life. Lifelong learning is believed not only to enhance social inclusion but also to stimulate a sense of community awareness. As such, according to Laal and Salamati (2012), lifelong learning should be a process of conscious progressive learning that continues throughout life toward the fulfilment of individual education needs and the needs of the surrounding communities.

In a similar tone, Gow and McDonald (2000) claim that lifelong learning is critical to enabling everyone to participate in rapidly changing work environments. They believe that attributes such as being able to see change as opportunity, to learn and perform multiple tasks, and to demonstrate tolerance in any circumstances as a result of organisational change are regarded as a positive attitude to change and future career pathways.

The aspiration of lifelong learning has been recognised through a number of developments, including at the higher education level (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). The role of higher education in promoting lifelong learning can be manifested in various ways, including a focus on learning outcomes, the use of graduate attributes, the promotion of key skills and employability attributes, and the development of capability. Boud and Falchikov say that empowering those attributes enables students to learn beyond the academy's boundaries, where formal teachers, and formal courses and assessment no longer exist. They also state that lifelong learners are required not only to be able to work independently but they should also be able to systematically evaluate their own learning performance and progress. Other theorists say that to strengthen their capacity to promote lifelong education, universities might consider several critical approaches, including:

1. Student-centred learning;
2. A focus on learning so as to equip students with the attitudes and skills to learn for themselves both in formal education and long after they have graduated;
3. Recognising that learning occurs in a wide variety of contexts both in the university's academic and non-academic settings, and beyond, in the community, the work place and the family (Kiley & Cannon, 2000, p. 2).

Kiley and Cannon regard lifelong learning as a broad educational goal rather than a learning process. To this end, they agree that this learning model should be student-oriented. Students could be given broad opportunities to develop their intellectual capacity, encompassing opportunities to pursue courses that best suit their future expectations. Some lifelong education theorists support the idea of giving students a broad scope to decide their study direction (Boud & Falchikov, 2006; Gluga, Kay, & Lever, 2010).

In short, to ensure the lifelong learning process can occur at a university, course designers might formulate how the offered courses fit the curriculum (Gluga, et al., 2010). Trier and Peschar (1995) note that accommodating generic cross-curricula skills and competences, such as problem solving, critical thinking, communication (both oral and writing), civics, and self-related cognitions, may provide a powerful framework for lifelong learners' development.

8. Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided knowledge and understanding about some curriculum practices, including language learning curriculum, practical concepts of English language learning, curriculum for teaching English as a second language, generic graduate capabilities, a curriculum attuned to religious values, and approaches to a lifelong learning curriculum.

The review of literature regarding the teaching of English as a foreign language identified factors affecting students' acquisition of a foreign language. First and foremost is the student's objective and motivation for learning English, which may affect their level of engagement in learning, and result in increased language articulation, exposure, and practice. Besides this internal factor, other external aspects, such as learning strategies and approaches, input and feedback from supervisors, were also identified as playing a significant role in accelerating the language acquisition process.

Regarding the education and development of teachers, the review has shown that education must be able to develop students' competences in teaching and, accordingly, ways to teach (strategies). As such, student educators not only have to know the pedagogical aspects of their subject, but they must also be able to understand their students' characteristics, to interact with students and parents as well as the community, and make quick and wise decisions in overseeing innovations to improve education quality.

Reviewing the goal of education to engender wider generic skills and abilities, such as lifelong learning, has demonstrated that students are encouraged to master general transferable skills and competences in order to engage in the competitive labour market and to actively participate in community development by means of being better, more useful citizens. As such, education must provide students with the skills and experiences they need to support their community life at large, regardless of their study disciplines.

Within the Aceh context, the integration of Islamic values and general learning into a curriculum that has other professional and general education goals is imperative because, in the Islamic context, education plays a powerful role in developing

humans' capacity to attain a successful life in this world and the hereafter. Islam does not segregate worldly and Islamic education; both educational purviews support each other to ensure the Islamic community has balanced knowledge. Religious education is regarded as the pathway to purifying humans' *akhlak*, and general education is conceived as the vehicle for understanding worldly issues. It is understood that by mastering general education, members of the Islamic community have the capacity to become critical Islamic thinkers, with the ability to interpret, analyse, and weigh information to make prudent decisions. Hence, the integration of these two educational spheres will allow the Islamic community to obtain both Islamic and general education at the same time.

The next chapter highlights theoretical approaches and methods employed in conducting this research. Descriptions of the theoretical research approach, research site, significant processes, steps in choosing the sample and collecting the required data, and data analysis methods are presented.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

1. Introduction

The endorsement of UUPA in Aceh province, which has enabled the provincial government to develop and manage its own governmental policies and systems, including re-consideration of its higher education and school curricula, challenged the researcher to consider the most appropriate methodological approach for examining how Islamic higher education curricula could be designed and developed systematically in the specific case of developing the English Education Department's curriculum at UIN Ar-Raniry, previously IAIN Ar-Raniry (an Islamic higher education institution in Aceh, Indonesia). This would be achieved by considering Islamic values, the local context, and graduate employment prospects.

This chapter describes the research design and methods used to achieve the study's main objective. It describes the selected theoretical approach, data generation methods, sources of data, research site, research participants, participant recruitment, and data analysis methods, and discusses establishing validity of the data and ethical issues that had to be addressed.

2. Theoretical approach to the research

The researcher adopted an interpretive research approach because the focus of interpretive research is on the meanings humans hold regarding complex social phenomena (Greenwood, 1994). The goal of interpretive research activities is to create a concept that generates conceptualised interpretations and understandings (Denzin, 2002). The "...interpretation lays the groundwork for understanding, which is the process of interpreting, knowing, and comprehending the meaning of an experience" (Denzin, 2002, p. 360). Also, in a social context, an interpretive approach assists researchers to analyse different problem definitions regarding the program being evaluated (Denzin, 2001). Denzin adds that:

...through interpretive approaches, researchers are enabled to locate various assumptions that are held by a variety of interested parties—policymakers, clients,

welfare workers, online professionals—assumptions that are often believed by the facts of experience, and show them to be correct or incorrect. (p. 2)

Denzin (2001) also asserts that by utilising an interpretive research approach, researchers may identify particular strategic points of intervention that may revamp social situations. This enables the researcher to assess and improve organisations' services and programs. Crotty (1998), like Denzin (2002), claims that the foundation of interpretive research lies in culturally-derived and historically-situated interpretations of the social life-world. If a researcher offers a particular concept that a community can take into their life, he/she should be able to interpret, understand, and comprehend that community's life values. Following this rationale, this interpretive research attempts to seek specific information regarding the concept of Islamic education in the future that will meet the community's expectations.

Interpretive practice, considered from both a grounded and a practical perspective, can engage "both the *hows* and the *whats* of social reality; it is centred both in how people methodologically construct their experiences and their worlds, and in the configurations of meaning and institutional life that inform and shape their reality-constituting activity" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000, p. 488). It is to this end that this study endeavours to interpret significant stakeholders' expectations and experiences of the English Education curriculum in Aceh in relation to the educational framework that underpins the essential intentions of the UUPA. This interpretation occurs in the local culture that upholds Islamic values, which constitute the rich heritage of this community and region. This research, as a descriptive analysis, intends to describe local concepts and government rulings of future education in this region taking these core values into account. It does not attempt to invent a new theory of curriculum development. What is new, however, is that a new approach to curriculum development in an Islamic context will draw upon existing theory to suggest how to best meet this new curriculum challenge for higher education in Aceh province.

3. Qualitative approach

This study adopts qualitative research procedures and practices in which the researcher seeks to understand a phenomenon by focusing on a total picture of people's expectations about a specific object (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). The

purpose of this type of research is to understand how people describe meanings, definitions, and descriptions of particular events (Berg, 2008). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), qualitative research primarily involves the “studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials-case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives” (p.5).

The focus of this research is on understanding the expectations and experiences of stakeholders in relation to the curriculum of the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, with a view to understanding ways to best re-develop it. The opinions, thoughts, and expectations of the educational stakeholders, including lecturers, teachers, and educational practitioners as well as students are uncovered and explained within a framework grounded in higher education curriculum concepts. In particular, the researcher attempts to discover specific information to contribute to the concept of curriculum development and enhancement in light of the government’s UUPA framework, local Islamic values, and concerns for graduate employment prospects.

The value of qualitative research is that it “seeks to probe deeply into the research setting in order to obtain understandings about the way things are, *why* they are that way, and *how* the participants in the context perceive them” (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p. 16). Silverman (2006) also contends that “the main strength of qualitative research is its ability to study phenomena which are simply unavailable elsewhere” (p. 43).

Qualitative research enables the researcher to study phenomena that stress the socially-constructed nature of reality, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Furthermore, the researcher can immerse him/herself within, explore, and understand the meaning that individuals or groups derive from social or human problems (Creswell, 2009).

4. Data generation

In the study’s context, the researcher sought input from the employers and various education stakeholders about their expectations regarding the future of Aceh education, looking through the lens of a particular program in a particular institution.

A case study research design was selected to obtain complete and concise information (Schostak, 2006; Yin, 1994). Case study is “a product of the interaction between respondents, site, and researcher which is constructed based on the person, character, experience, context, and philosophy of the constructor” (Lincoln & Guba, 2002, p. 270). In accordance with the general features of the case study approach in qualitative research, respondents’ opinions serve as the central data. Creswell (1998) explains that when the natural research setting functions as the primary data, the participant’s perspective in perceiving an object becomes a main research focus. Case study is flexible in as much as one case can be studied in detail using whatever methods seem appropriate (Punch, 2005). Yet, Stake (2000) opines that case study is not a matter of methodological choice; it is a choice of what is to be studied. Stake (2000) believes that studying a case may provide new insight and solutions for future potential cases. New information and knowledge obtained from studying a single case may be useful when conducting a similar study in a different place.

In the context of curriculum development and educational change in Aceh province, the outcomes of this case study may generate guiding principles not only for the province’s Islamic higher education institutions to follow in developing their school curricula, but also for the Ministry of Religious Affairs Department in endorsing further higher education curriculum policies.

5. Sources of data

Four data collection methods were used to obtain valid information to ensure that the case being studied was well understood (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Interviews, focus group discussions, a survey, and document analysis underpinned the data collection process. Employment of these four data collection methods was expected to generate a holistic depiction of how Islamic higher education curricula, particularly the English Education Department’s curriculum at UIN Ar-Raniry, may be systematically developed. Figure 7 (next page) provides a curriculum map, which describes curriculum development resources and outcomes.

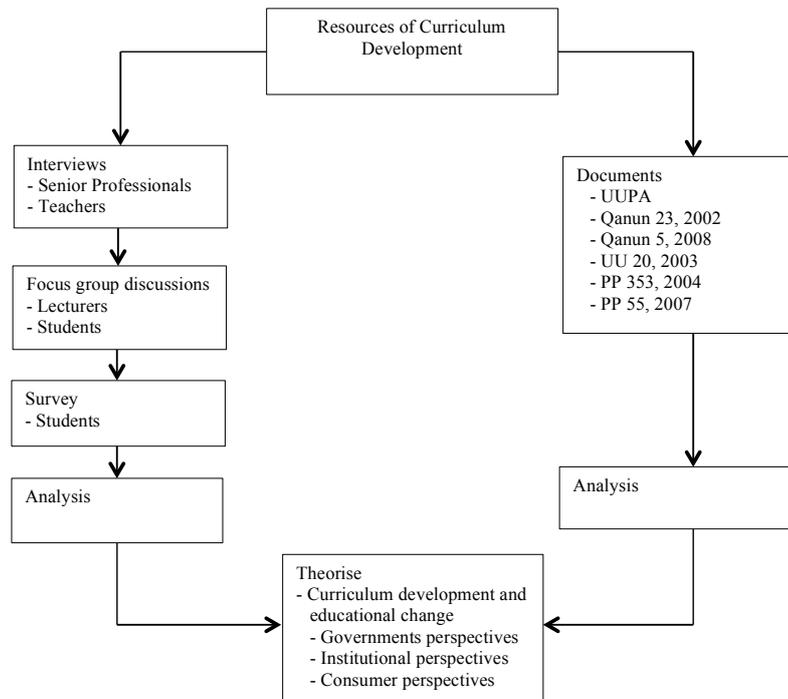


Figure 7: Curriculum development resources

5.1 Interviews

Interviewing is a basic mode of inquiry that assists researchers in gathering comprehensive information from research participants (Miller & Glassner, 1997; Seidman, 1991). According to Oishi (2003), one of the purposes of qualitative interviewing is to describe and interpret experience; it is not to describe the proportion of a community who embraces a certain belief.

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews using broad opening questions were used in this study to seek more appropriate information about the research question (Creswell, 2009; Fontana & Frey, 2000). Basit (2010) claims that the beauty of semi-structured interviews is that, unlike a questionnaire or structured interview, there is

no need for equivalence or asking the same questions of all participants. Hence, critical constructs and supplementary questions were prepared in which all questions related to, and sought to address, the research question.

Silverman (2006) ascertains that interview data "...give access to facts about the world and that, even though these facts include not only biographical information but also statements of belief, they are nevertheless treated as accounts whose sense derives from their correspondence to a factual reality" (p. 119). Interviewing people allows the researcher comprehensive access to their behaviour, and the opportunity to listen to their words. It provides the researcher a better way to understand the meaning of those words, behaviours, and the participants' social worlds (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003; Seidman, 1991). Other strengths of interviewing are "to motivate people to take part, listen, and respond freely, openly, and accurately, to examine personal backgrounds, actions, and experiences that reveal beliefs and attitudes and evoke emotions" (Stewart & Cash Jr, 2000, p. 9).

In this research, another reason for choosing a semi-structured interview protocol was to reduce the effect of bias. Gugu and Rodriguez-Campos (2007) note that a semi-structured interview protocol is applied in qualitative research to:

...standardize data collection and reduce the tendency of premature closure of data collection (reaching a decision on the basis of incomplete data), anchoring (focusing too heavily on specific information), primacy and recency effects (recalling the first and last items of information, respectively, with greater frequency), or confirmatory (searching for information, interpreting new and existing information, or avoiding contradictory information to confirm one's preconceptions) biases (pp. 339-340).

Longhurst (2010) has argued that the advantage of using semi-structured interviews in qualitative research is that research participants have a greater opportunity to explore issues they regard as important for sharing with the researchers. Like Longhurst, Grindsted (2005) agrees that a semi-structured research interview protocol is commonly used in the social sciences to verify people's opinions, beliefs, thoughts, and values. Furthermore, Grindsted contends that one of the strengths of semi-structured interviews is that they offer interviewees the freedom to share their insights; how they attribute meaning to their world through social interaction. The application of a semi-structured research interview approach also enables researchers to explore the subject in greater depth from many angles. An interview guide is

developed in general terms without fixed wording or systematic questions. The interview content focuses on issues central to the research questions (Minichiello, Aroni, & Hays, 2008). Beginning by asking key opening questions, researchers allow the interviews to then flow according to participants' responses.

Individual semi-structured interviews using broad opening questions were applied when interviewing participants in the current research. Each interview ran for approximately 30–60 minutes. These semi-structured interviews allowed adequate time for participants to think about, and elaborate, their perceptions of an appropriate curriculum model that would correspond to the particular situation of Aceh province, and any attributes attached to this region. It was hoped that the semi-structured interviews would broaden the opportunity for participants to openly propose their ideas for content of the English Education Department's projected curriculum to meet the requirements of UUPA and graduates' current employment prospects. This approach was considered to provide, from a cultural perspective, the best opportunity for the stakeholders to share their experiences, ideas, and thoughts regarding a concept of education that would meet the requirement of a new regulation, and the expectations of the academic community and other related stakeholders. Stakeholders would feel respected and valued by being asked to take part in this educational development process.

Education leaders include the government policymakers, Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, the Department Head, and Faculty Dean were asked three main questions: (1) what is the implication of restructuring the English Education Department's curriculum under the requirements of UUPA? (2) what advice would you give in addressing this opportunity? and (3) how will the new graduates benefit schools, community, and Aceh province? School principals were also asked three main questions: (1) what are the current graduate skills expected to be taught to English Education Department students? (2) how do they compare to graduates from other institutions? and (3) what curriculum changes could occur in the English Education Department to meet your school's needs?

5.2 Focus group discussions

The purpose of focus group discussions is to ask research participants specific questions regarding a topic or an issue in a group setting (Wong, 2008). Focus group

discussions are regarded as an effective way of obtaining people's knowledge and perspectives about particular issues, and seeking in-depth explanations in a way that would be improbable with responses to direct individual questions (Kitzinger, 1995; Krueger & Casey, 2000). In this study, two focus group discussions were conducted, each consisting of 10 students and eight lecturers from the English Education Department.

A review of relevant research methodology literature indicates that focus group discussions are viewed as an effective way of accessing participants' knowledge and perspectives about a particular issue, which is not possible using direct questions, other interview formats, and other interview settings (Kitzinger, 1995; Krueger & Casey, 2000). In this research, focus group discussions with the English Education Department students and lecturers aimed to seek their collective views and understandings about an appropriate curriculum for the Department. Like the primary objective of the interviews, the goal of conducting the focus groups with both lecturers and students was to obtain an understanding of significant values that would drive the curriculum development, to explore important graduate attributes to be accommodated into a new curriculum, and to readjust study courses to best meet students' needs and current employment prospects. It was expected that having focus group discussions with both lecturers and students would enable a balance of significant information for consideration in the development of the English Education Department's curriculum.

The primary objective of discussions with lecturers was to explore significant information about: training, pedagogical, and other related programs the Department offers. Four main questions were asked in the focus group discussions with lecturers to explore these issues: (1) please describe the current programs the English Education Department offers; (2) what are the expectations of UUPA and how do they impact on the current training program?; (3) what should a graduate of the English Education Department look like as a result of UUPA?; and (4) what changes do we need to implement to produce new graduates?

The discussions with students were designed to obtain more information about (1) their experiences in studying at the Department, focusing on content, values, and outcomes; (2) their expectations of training, focusing on English language skills

(grammar, listening, reading, speaking, and writing), Islamic values, and generic skills; and (3) applied skills, including integration of skills and their transferability. Students' voices, as Schramm (2002, p. 3) points out, "are a key factor in the process of developing and implementing integrated curriculum as students increasingly get responsibility and become involved in their own learning". The involvement of students in this process may result in a positive contribution to the process of empowering educational quality at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, particularly in terms of curriculum enrichment.

5.3 Document analysis

According to Jupp (1996), official documents provide valuable data for the analysis of official definitions and preferred solutions. A study of the literature about document analysis reveals that in social studies, document analysis plays a significant role in data triangulation (Fitzgerald, 2007; Gidley, 2004). It also strengthens the argument proposed by the research participants. Atkinson and Coffey (1997) argue that without referring to official documents and textual materials, research questions and the research setting cannot be investigated adequately. To this end, critical government-policy documents related to current concerns for curriculum development and educational change were analysed to support this study's findings. The followings documents were analysed:

- UUPA
- Qanun No. 23, 2002
- Qanun No. 5, 2008
- National Regulation No. 20, 2003
- Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree No. 353, 2004
- National Regulation No. 55, 2007
- The English Education Department policies.

These documents were carefully scrutinised in their entirety to find valuable information regarding curriculum development. Information sought included what courses should be included in curricula; how many credit hours students should study in a particular subject; and how many credit hours students should study religious-related subjects and what those subjects are. The objective of analysing the UUPA

was to clarify specific information regarding the primary educational concept to be developed in the region of Aceh in accordance with Islamic law. While the UUPA does not provide comprehensive information about how education should be developed, its analysis can provide useful guidelines, especially for the researcher in developing an Islamic higher education curriculum that meets the expectations of the local community and other related education stakeholders, including students, lecturers, and graduate users.

Having established that the UUPA serves as the guiding principle for designing educational concepts in the Aceh region, the rest of the documents elaborate it. Qanun, Ministry Decrees, and other national regulations function as the legal acts that explain the concept of education to be applied in Aceh in further detail. For example, Qanun No. 23, 2002 and Qanun No. 5, 2008 were endorsed by parliament to provide more specific information on what UUPA has initially indicated regarding the concept of education to be applied in this region. Even though these legal acts are stipulated by different authorities, their legal status and strength remain the same. Qanun is the regulation normally referred to because it is endorsed by the Aceh government at the local level, while Ministry Decrees and other national regulations are endorsed by the central government in Jakarta at the national level. Although Aceh has its own government system and regulations (UUPA), it should follow the main regulations produced by the central government in specific circumstances. The following table describes the analysed documents and their significance.

Table 4: Documents analysed as data sources

Documents	Significance
UUPA	<p>The endorsement of Regulation No. 11, 2006 (UUPA) by the central government in Jakarta has strengthened the bargaining point of Aceh government in managing its government system and other governance issues. The regulation also affirms the essence of <i>Syaria</i> (Islamic law) implementation, financial and natural resources management, and the education system in Aceh.</p> <p>Politically, this regulation offers the right to the local government to manage its own government and other issues that have been proposed to the central government in Jakarta. Hence, this regulation serves as the guiding principle for the government and parliament members in endorsing other derivative laws and policies.</p>

Qanun 23, 2002	<i>Qanun</i> (<i>Syariah</i> edicts) is an Arabic term used in Aceh to refer to regulations or laws. This qanun is the derivative law of UUPA, elaborating significant information on educational concepts and approaches to be applied throughout Aceh. If the UUPA clarifies the general guidelines for the education system, this qanun elaborates it in greater depth.
Qanun 5, 2008	This qanun is the complementary qanun of the previous qanun; qanun 5, 2002. It provides a comprehensive guideline for education departments, institutions, authorities, and practitioners in developing educational concepts and systems in Aceh.
National Regulation No. 20, 2003	This regulation underlines the national education system. The regulation illuminates educational empowerment in Indonesia, including the function and objectives of education nationwide, national education standards, curricula, infrastructure, and supervision. Although Aceh has its own regulation governing education, this regulation also serves as the main reference for education institutions, especially non-Islamic institutions under the management of MoNE (Ministry of National Education), for developing their education system and policy.
Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree No. 353, 2004	This Ministry Decree functions as the guiding principle for Islamic education institutions in developing their core educational concepts. The decree provides an opportunity for all Islamic institutions throughout the nation to unite the education concept. The decree, in addition, provides significant information on the development of Islamic institutions only.
National Regulation No. 55, 2007	This regulation elaborates principle guidelines for education departments and their authorities in accommodating religious education into their curriculum. This regulation differs from the Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree, 353, 2004. While Decree No. 353, 2004 underlines critical educational principles for Islamic education institutions only, Regulation No. 55, 2007 highlights the primary concept of education institutions accommodating all religious faiths.
English Education Department Policy	This policy underlines significant information about the objectives of the Department, and its core teaching and learning missions and objectives. As such, the Department's educational development should synergise those missions and objectives.

5.4 Survey

One of the objectives of employing a survey in this research was to obtain maximum information from a large and diverse number of students (Ryan, Gannon-Slater, & Culbertson, 2012). The survey was intended to encompass information about students' objectives for studying at the Department, curriculum content, and

evaluation of the impact of the current curriculum. The survey had 45 questions, consisting of 36 closed-ended questions using a 5-point *Likert* scale ranging from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree, and nine open-ended questions (see Appendix 6). The reason for providing some open-ended questions was to provide opportunities for students to answer the question based on their preferences and ideas. The researcher believed there may be information that was not addressed in the closed-ended questions and therefore, students needed the opportunity to add information. Specific comment boxes were provided in the survey so that students had the opportunity to freely express ideas they wanted to add to enhance the survey's quality.

It was also expected that students would use the survey to elaborate their opinions and experiences about the learning and teaching process at the Department without fear of any consequences; the survey was conducted online, with all respondents unidentifiable. Students were free to express their study experiences and any problems they may have encountered during and after particular courses, whether core courses or electives.

6. Research site and participants

This research was conducted at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam–Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Three groups of people (n=112) consisting of leaders, teachers, lecturers, and students were approached to take part in the study. The data collection timeline is elucidated in Figure 8 in section 6.3.2.

6.1 Rationale for selecting the research site

The main purpose of the study was to investigate how to develop the English Education Department's curriculum. Therefore, the study was conducted primarily at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, Darussalam–Banda Aceh, Indonesia. There are three main reasons for selecting the English Education Department as the research site. Firstly, this department is one of the most preferred departments of UIN Ar-Raniry, based on enrolments. In 2010, 2,000 candidates from a total of 5,034 senior higher school graduates who enrolled at UIN Ar-Raniry selected the English Education Department as their first choice (Nurdin, et al., 2010). Also, the Department only provided 120 seats for new students from 2000 candidates

who joined *SPMB (Seleksi Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru Nasional* – National new students' admission examination). Hence, the motivation to study English at the Department is very high among students graduating from senior high school. In keeping with students' high motivation, the Department is strongly urged to provide quality education.

The second reason for selecting the research site was the Department's need to adopt dual education approaches. While the English Education Department is the university department that focuses on English language in preparing students to be English teachers at elementary schools, and at junior and senior high schools, it should also provide adequate Islamic teaching knowledge for its students. The interplay of these two knowledge approaches, to some extent, provides an interesting aspect for analysis because the Department has two significant roles to play in providing quality education for its students. As such, the Department requires extra work to both prepare students to master sufficient English language skills and to equip them with rich knowledge of Islamic tenets. This educational approach meets the requirements of Islamic codification protocol, stating that the education of this province should be based on Islamic values and a noble morals code (*Qanun Nomor 5 Tentang penyelenggaraan pendidikan* [Provincial regulation on educational management], 2008).

The third reason for selecting the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry Islamic University was the researcher's desire to find out more grounded information regarding the students' experiences and the expectations of other important stakeholders towards the development of the Department's curriculum in the future. Also, the researcher would like to generate more information about what qualifications the local community wants its department graduates to study, master, and possess.

6.2 Research participants

The total number of research participants was 112 people, ranging from those possessing policymaking authority to members of the academic community (including lecturers and students who will become graduates of the Department) and those who will employ the graduates. The composition of the research participants is elucidated in Table 5.

Table 5: Research study participants

Focus	Participant	No. of participants
Government policymaking authority	Islamic Law Department Head	1
	Provincial Ministry of Religious Affairs Department Head	1
Institutional academic community	English Education Department lecturers	6
	English Education Department students	97
	English Education Department Head	1
	Vice Rector of Academic Affairs	1
	Education Faculty Dean	1
Community graduate employer	School Principals/teachers	4

The composition of focus groups with lecturers was diverse, consisting of junior and senior lecturers. This provided both constituents the opportunity to share their ideas, thoughts, and experiences to empower education at this institution. It was hoped the involvement of these two lecturer groups might also enrich the data regarding the Department's future curriculum development framework. Different ideas regarding contemporary education and curriculum concepts were expected from junior lecturers who had generally graduated from overseas universities. In contrast, the contribution of senior lecturers with long-standing tenure at the Department might unveil the complexities underpinning the current teaching and learning programs, which have ensured the courses suited both local and national contexts.

In the second data collection phase, 86 English Education Department students were asked to answer an online survey about their purposes and experiences of studying at the Department, purposes of the Department's curriculum, and evaluation of the impact of the current curriculum. Students surveyed had been studying at the Department for at least three and half years. The reason for selecting those students was that they had adequate experience in studying at the Department, had undertaken most of the subject courses offered by the Department, and had had adequate time to experience and evaluate how the teaching and learning processes were executed, and the extent to which they met their expectations.

All of the research participants had sufficient experience, knowledge, and information about the issues being investigated, and their different roles provided different perspectives of the curriculum content and the educational values of Aceh province. In addition, it was expected that the information derived from this heterogeneous group of people would inform curriculum development to meet the needs of the province and the stakeholders, and at the same time contribute to an alignment of the expectations of the intentions of the UUPA and the needs of the local context.

In addition to the above considerations, the range of participants in this study plays different roles in Aceh's community structure. For example, Aceh province applies *Syariah* Law (Islamic law), therefore the Islamic Law Department Head is responsible for determining any regulation to be imposed in whole government systems and other areas of community life, including the Islamic education system that matches this regional context. The Religious Department Head has the authority to manage the Islamic education system from the elementary level to the tertiary level. The Education Department, in contrast, is responsible for managing and monitoring the general education system throughout the province. The Vice Rector of Academic Affairs and English Education Department Head are responsible for directing the future of the institution's educational vision. The reason for involving those participants in the research was that they had direct access to the information sought by the researcher.

A specific interest for the researcher in involving the above-mentioned key stakeholders as participants was that they may share their knowledge, understanding, experiences, hopes, and ideas regarding the curriculum for the English Education Department. In addition, the researcher believed that if students, teachers, lecturers, school principals, government authorities, and policymaking authorities were involved in this process and worked collaboratively in sharing their insights, educational reform towards better quality education in this region would be more likely. It is believed that the possibility of any reform having a significant impact is unlikely without sharing ideas, knowledge, and experiences (Levine & Marcus, 2007).

6.3 Research participant selection method

Purposive sampling was applied when selecting research participants because the researcher considered that it fitted best with the case study approach selected for this research: “Purposive sampling demands that we think critically about the parameters of the population we are studying and choose our sample case carefully on this basis” (Silverman, 2005, p. 129). The research participants were recruited purposively to represent the three curriculum development key players; government/policymakers, members of the academic community, and community graduate employers (graduate users). However, in the initial phase of the research, random sampling was used to recruit students for the focus group discussions, as explained in section 6.2.

6.3.1 Government/policymakers

The intention of interviewing the government policymaking authorities in this research was to seek their viewpoints in designing and developing this Islamic higher education institution (UIN Ar-Raniry) curriculum. The two policymakers, the Provincial Islamic Law Department Head and the Provincial Religious Affairs Department Head, were purposively recruited. In order to have an appropriate time and date to meet those policymakers, an introduction letter (see Appendix 2) regarding this research was sent to their office. The researcher also visited their offices and had a short discussion with their secretary/staff regarding this research objective. The interview sessions, dates, and places were arranged by the staff of those government institutions based on mutual agreement between the researcher and the Department Head.

6.3.2 Academic community members

The interview with the English Education Department Head was carried out at her office. Before the interview commenced, the research information letter (see Appendix 1) was submitted to the Department informing them about this research objective and proposing to interview the Department Head. The interview was conducted after the Department Head and the researcher mutually agreed on the interview schedule.

The interview process with each of the Vice Rector and Faculty Dean was conducted in a similar way. Initially, an introduction letter regarding this research objective was

sent to the staff of each potential research participant informing them about this research goal. The interview with the Vice Rector and Faculty Dean was conducted according to the mutually agreed schedule.

The focus group discussion with the English Education Department lecturers was conducted at the Department meeting room. The invitation letter to attend this focus group discussion with the Department lecturers was posted on the Department notice board (see Appendix 3). An information letter regarding this research goal was sent to each department lecturer to ensure they knew about the research (see Appendix 1).

Student recruitment, unlike recruitment of government/policymakers, other academic community members and graduate employers, involved two selection methods. In the initial phase of the research, students were randomly selected for the focus group discussions, whereas in the second phase, students were purposively selected for the survey.

Random stratified sampling was applied to select students for the focus group discussions. Only first and eighth semester students were selected on the basis of two grade point average (GPA) ranges: 2.00 – 2.99 = 6 students; 3.00 – 4.00 = 5 students. UIN Ar-Raniry applies a GPA scale of 1 – 4 in its academic grading system. At the time of this study, there were no students in the GPA range of 1 – 1.99. The rationale for recruiting this random sample of students was to ensure inclusion of representatives from all GPA ranges to reflect different experiences of academic life, different environments, and different study expectations. This should provide adequate insight into the students' expectations and lived experiences of studying at the English Education Department.

The first semester students were asked for their opinions about skills, courses, and experiences they hoped to achieve by studying at this department. The eighth semester students were questioned about their experiences and opinions after four years (eight semesters) of studying at the Department; whether they perceived that their expectations had been met, or if they had some grievances or had encountered some problems during their time there.

The second phase of data collection involved a student survey. Purposive sampling was applied in this phase, with only the third and fourth year students of the English

Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry selected to participate. The rationale for this survey was to obtain more information about the students' experiences in relation to the quality of the current curriculum. Participants were recruited through placing an announcement on the students' information board at the English Education Department, which asked for students who were interested in answering the online survey to volunteer. The announcement provided significant information about the survey: who could take part; when the survey started; how to answer the questions; and who to contact for further information. A temporary research assistant was recruited to facilitate the communication flow between the researcher and students (as the research participants). The research assistant was responsible for bridging any basic communication gaps among the participants. The researcher only communicated with the research assistant to provide guidance when there were any queries.

6.3.3 Graduate employers

Four school principals from four schools (two junior and two senior high schools) located in areas surrounding UIN Ar-Raniry were selected to participate in this study. The rationale for recruiting those schools was twofold: (1) each semester, the English Education Department assigns its students to undertake teaching practice at those schools; and (2) most English Education Department graduates become English language teachers at senior and junior high schools. In reference to these significant points, the researcher believed that the principals of the four schools selected may have a broad understanding of the academic and professional performances of students from the Department, as well as of English teachers recruited from the Department.

7. Data collection timeline and activities

Figure 8 represents the timeline and activities for data collection after the participants had been recruited.

Data collection timeline: February 2011 - June 2011

Activities	February				March				April				May				June			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Interview with government policymakers	█	█	█	█																
Interview/focus group discussions with academic community members					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█								
Interview with graduate employers													█	█	█	█				
Document Analysis																	█	█	█	█

Figure 8: Data collection timeline

8. Stages in the interviews and focus groups

Official stages and procedures were followed to make sure the interview and focus group discussion activities met the research ethical standards. Initial contact and correspondence with prospective participants were monitored, including distribution of the introduction letter from Flinders University regarding the study. The researcher also actively approached people who were eligible to participate in the data collection process. Their willingness to share ideas, thoughts, opinions, and experiences for the sake of educational development in this region were mapped and documented.

The interviews with government policymakers, Vice Rector, English Education Department Head, Faculty Dean, and graduate employers were conducted in their offices at their request. Focus group discussions with both lecturers and students were conducted at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, as mutually requested by both groups of participants. They preferred to run the focus groups at the Department because it would save time and make it easy meet each other.

There were two stages in the interview and focus group discussion processes: (1) interview and focus group preparation; and (2) introductory period. The following diagram (Figure 9) depicts the interview and focus group approaches.

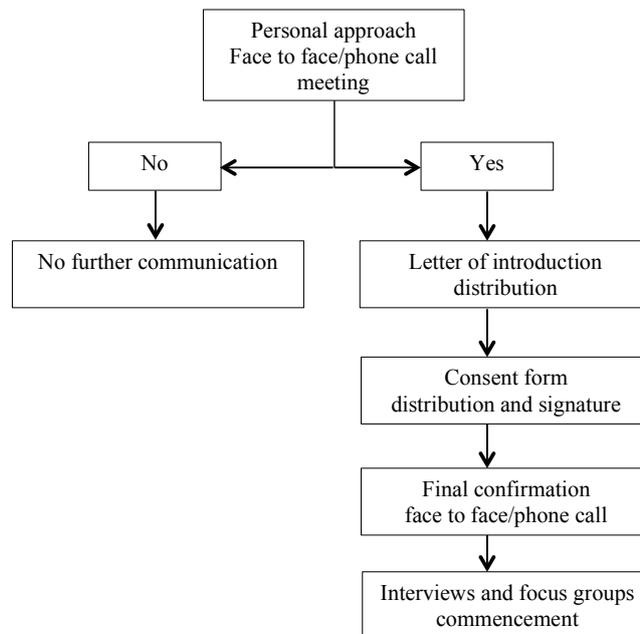


Figure 9: Interview and focus group process

8.1 Interview and focus group preparation

Prospective respondents were approached to obtain more information regarding their interest and availability to participate in the interviews and focus group discussions. Names and contact details of those who wanted to take part were recorded. Regular telephone communication was maintained with those groups until the interviews and focus group discussions commenced. Important paperwork to legalise this research process was signed. The introduction letter from Flinders University regarding the purpose of the research was sent to participants prior to starting the interviews and focus group discussions. A research permit to ensure that focus group discussions with the English Education Department students could be conducted was also obtained from the Head of the Department.

One day prior to the commencement of interviews and focus group discussions, the

respondents were notified to make sure they were fully informed and available to participate. Consent form documents (see Appendix 4) were duplicated to ensure there were enough forms for all participants to sign. Interviews and focus group discussions were to be audio-taped, so tape recorder was tested to ensure its functioning. All significant supporting documents, including research questions, consent forms, and other paperwork were put in a file ready to distribute to the participants on the interview and focus group discussion days.

8.2 Introductory period

The interviews and focus group discussions were held in a relaxed environment, in which the participants could answer questions and express their opinions without any negative consequences. They were also aware that they could skip any question they considered irrelevant to them. The researcher was confident that this strategy would be effective in encouraging the participants to speak freely, based on their understanding and experiences regarding the issues discussed.

In the initial step of the interviews and focus group discussions, participants were informed about the implementation of UUPA in Aceh since 2006. The participants were also given a summary of UUPA to read regarding its concept for education in this region. The researcher briefed the participants a second time regarding the core points of UUPA to make sure they had adequate knowledge and information about the education system mentioned therein. This stage was regarded as significant because it ensured that all research participants understood the essence of UUPA as it applied in this province, especially issues about educational policy. This approach provided participants a better understanding of the issues being discussed. It was also expected that this strategy would help participants provide rich information during the interviews and focus group discussions.

After giving participants the opportunity to read and understand the concept of education stipulated in UUPA, a light discussion followed about the essence of UUPA in general, and the possibility of educational change in Aceh in synergy with current educational development, employment competitiveness, and the possibility of empowering the English Education Department students.

Participants were then provided with basic information about the interview and

discussion group content. The discussion expanded based on the questions in the interview and focus group discussion guidelines. This enabled the researcher to find out specific core information. Even though the interviews and focus group discussions were carried out in a relaxed atmosphere, the researcher adhered to the interview and focus group guides to ensure that all required information was sought without putting any pressure on the research participants.

9. Data analysis methods

All data for this research were collected from the individual interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, and survey. The interview and focus group discussion data were partially transcribed to find relevant data that corresponded to the research questions. Irrelevant data were left in the audio-recordings. During the transcribing process, selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting more appropriate information, comments, and suggestion were done carefully (Monette, Sullivan, & DeJong, 2005). The data were coded after transcribing, based on common emerging themes from both the interviews and focus groups. The researcher also used the coded data to produce a conceptual framework, which included classifying the data into specific group categories (Monette, et al., 2005; Richards, 2005).

The data were analysed using open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The researcher initially identified the common emerging themes from the interview and focus group results. All central themes and information were broken down and simplified into groups of categories. The researcher classified sub-categories within each category to synthesise the interview and focus group results.

The initial open coding enabled the researcher to obtain similar and different information from the raw data. Irrelevant data that did not correspond to the research questions were dropped out as part of the data reduction process (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Monette, et al., 2005). The researcher believed that by retaining the relevant data and dropping out the irrelevant data, the analysis of data could be focused for the purposes of drawing conclusions and verification of the data themselves. This process should enrich the report of the findings.

After carrying out open coding and data reduction, the data were assembled and

displayed in a matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Richards, 2005). This data display enabled the researcher to picture specific conclusions and consequent actions. The researcher used the data display to understand the concept of curriculum proposed by the stakeholders. He also referred to the data display throughout data analysis to validate any conclusions. The data display enabled the researcher to identify the interview and focus group results, and collate them into each category. The researcher finalised the identified themes and sub-themes generated from the interviews and focus group discussions as indicated in the following table.

Table 6: Data analysis themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Personal values	- Good Islamic citizen - Good Acehnese citizen - Good educator
Generic graduate outcomes	- Employability - Entrepreneurship - Technological literacy
Content knowledge and skills	- English language - Applied English use - Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) - Pedagogical competencies
Professional capabilities	- Administrative capabilities - Leadership and communication skills

In addition, document analysis was conducted of all information about concepts, approaches, and other legal considerations from the documents listed in section 5.3 to obtain specific information about the guiding principles in developing the curriculum in Aceh. The researcher employed a content analysis approach, in which specific information regarding the objectives of education in this region, its conceptual framework, and religious values embedded in the development of education became the central point of the research. As such, the data gathered from interviews, focus group discussions, and the survey enhance and enrich the initial concept of education stipulated in UUPA and other supporting regulations.

10. Data validity

In the last few decades, the issue of data validity of research or evaluation findings in social research has emerged as a significant concern for some research theorists (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). It has been suggested that researchers include more than one data source and more than one participant, and triangulate their data sources to enhance the validity of their findings (Mathison, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this research, the researcher has involved diverse stakeholders from various groups of participants, as well as using documentation to increase the validity of the data. Thus, the information obtained regarding the curriculum development framework at the English Education Department meets data validity standards.

In addition, the level of trustworthiness of data in this research has been verified by multi-level member-checking. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the most important part of qualitative data analysis is to ensure that the data is systematically collected, and is robust and valid. Validating the data in this research involved transcribing and translating interview and focus group data, and showing all data to all research participants for their feedback and clarification. The data were cross-checked to make sure that the researcher had authentically transcribed and translated what the research participants wanted to say. All recorded statements made by the research participants were presented to them so they could check statements they had made previously. Any information and/or statements the respondents did not wish to be written down and mentioned in this research report were deleted. Furthermore, the veracity and validity of information generated and reported in this thesis, including statements and comments, was verified by the research participants.

11. Ethical issues

Researchers must be aware of the potential for ethical problems in terms of threat to research participants. The researcher fully appreciates the complexities of ethical dilemmas (Kimmel, 2007) and was satisfied that this research posed no threat to the participants. Trust and integrity (Ali & Kelly, 2004; Kimmel, 2007) between the researcher and researched were strictly maintained by protecting participants' *privacy* and *confidentiality*, and obtaining their *informed consent* (Ali & Kelly, 2004).

Research ethics standards for this research were met in different ways, and approval to undertake the research was obtained from the relevant institutions (see Appendix 5). Firstly, ethics approval was obtained from the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC) of Flinders University, South Australia. Secondly, in every interview, focus group discussion, and survey process, consent forms were given to, and signed by, research participants prior to their participation. This process aimed to ensure that research participants clearly understood the focus of the research, any risk that might occur, and their interest in taking part (Ali & Kelly, 2004). Participants were asked to read and understand the translated versions of the consent forms. The researcher allowed ample time for this, and to ask questions about anything they did not understand, or any concerns they might have. The researcher briefed them clearly until they knew the exact information provided in the consent forms. Finally, the names of participants were omitted due to sensitive cultural issues. None of the research participants' names have been mentioned in this thesis.

It is also important to note that although the research was conducted at the department where the researcher is employed, he has no official or personal relationships with the participants because he has been on study leave since December 2009. In addition, the researcher normally teaches particular topics to the third and fourth year students. As stated in Section 6, data collection took place between February 2011 and June 2011. In relation to the students interviewed, all were in their first and eighth semester (there are two semesters per year). Thus, the researcher had no direct communication with students participating in either the interviews or the survey (other than to administer these data collection strategies). This timeframe minimised the possibility of researcher bias.

Similarly, in relation to participating staff and institution leaders, the researcher had no personal connection with them at the time of the study. However, because the relationship between the researcher as an employee, other staff and the institution, particularly within the English Education Department, is built on the professional bond developed between people who work at the same institution, trust, mutual respect, a sense of belonging, and other professional ties underlie every decision made by the institution and its employees. This professional relationship can make a

significant contribution to the development of UIN Ar-Raniry in general, and the English Education Department in particular. It enabled the researcher to conduct this research and collect the required data professionally and without bias.

12. Generalizability

Some theorists have addressed the significant critiques of qualitative research that focus on its generally small sample sizes, which limit generalizability of its conclusions (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993; Myers, 2000). Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin note that qualitative research has its own features that make it highly valuable in the education community. This value is acknowledged by Kemmis (1980), who elucidates that the scholarship produced by qualitative research has unique and authentic features in its own right. While the current research was conducted in one department in the context of the UIN Ar-Raniry, some general features have been examined in light of the theoretical body of literature regarding curriculum. Some of the findings and recommendations of this research should be transferable to curriculum design and development in other Islamic universities in Aceh in particular in response to the UUPA, and in Indonesia in general.

13. Research process summary

The process of this research was conducted as follows:

- Recruitment of participants for the first phase of data gathering, namely, interviews and focus groups.
- Distribution of essential paperwork (letters of introduction, information sheets, consent forms) to meet the ethical requirements of the research process
- Conduct of participant interviews, and focus groups
- Transcription of interviews, focus group discussions
- Validation of transcriptions with the participants
- Reporting descriptions and analysis to participants
- Recruitment of participants for completing the open-ended survey questions
- Distribution of essential paperwork (letters of introduction, information sheets, consent forms) to meet the ethical requirements of the research process

- Analysis and reporting of all gathered data.

14. Concluding remarks

This chapter has outlined the theoretical approach to the research, data generation and sources, research site and participants, data analysis approach, data validity, research ethical issues, and generalizability. It has described the qualitative interpretive approach used to understand both grounded and practical assumptions held by a number of community groups, including education developers (Denzin, 2001). More specifically, the interpretive research approach has been used to seek the comprehensive expectations and experiences of the English Education Department curriculum's stakeholders, encompassing government policymaking authorities, members of the institutional academic community (including students and lecturers), and community graduate employers (including school principals and teachers).

Data were generated through interviews, focus group discussions, analysing official government policies and regulations, and an online survey. One hundred and twelve people were involved in this research. They have made a significant contribution to this research, based on their professional and academic roles, by responding to the research questions. Any ethical issues regarding this research were minimised and avoided by applying a standardised ethical research procedure, which included obtaining research ethics approval from both Flinders University and UIN Ar-Raniry prior to conducting the research.

The next chapter gives a brief overview the substantial government documents that serve as a focal point of this study.

CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS: PART ONE

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

This chapter reports the basic educational principles of Aceh province mandated by national constitutions, and local regulations and policies. The report analyses the contents of particular regulations and policies that conceptualise the educational foundation in this province. Regulations and policies examined here are UUPA, Qanun No. 23, 2002, Qanun No. 5, 2008, National Regulation No. 20, 2003, Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree No. 353, 2004, National Regulation No. 55, 2007, the English Education Department mission, and the English Education Department objectives.

The above-mentioned regulations and policies function as the central guidelines for education institutions, particularly for the English Education Department, in managing their educational concepts and approaches. The national government, in this case the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, develops some of these regulations and policies, and education authorities at provincial and district levels throughout Indonesia must refer to these when developing their educational concepts and strategies.

Aceh is a “Special province” (*Daerah Istimewa*) in terms of education, religion, and cultural practices. It may manage its own government and education systems to best suit its socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions. However, Aceh also refers to the national regulations endorsed by the central government in Jakarta in relation to its approach to education because it believes in a united concept and goals of education within Indonesia as a whole.

The next section presents an analysis of the documentation on the concept of education to be implemented in Aceh based on the UUPA and associated government documents. It then looks at internal UIN Ar-Raniry documents and

policies directly relevant to the English Education Department.

2. UUPA

UUPA (*Undang – Undang Pemerintah Aceh*) is a specific regulation endorsed by the central government in 2006 to grant special authority to the Aceh province government to control its own government systems. UUPA is also known as the replacement of UU No. 18, 2001 (*Undang-undang otonomi khusus - specific autonomy regulation*), which has been applied in Aceh province since 2001. UUPA consists of 40 chapters and 273 articles elaborating the main guidelines for Aceh government systems, investment, profit sharing between Aceh and the central government, and other political issues. In relation to the education system, the regulation only affirms the basic concept of education to be applied in this region. Thus, more government regulations were needed to justify the basic principles of education stipulated in UUPA. The UUPA discusses the primary concepts of education implemented in Aceh in chapter 30, articles 215-216.

Article 215, Point 1, verifies that the education system in Aceh is an integral part of the Indonesian national education system. However, as an autonomous province, Aceh has the privilege of managing its approach to government and education: “The education implemented in Aceh is integrated with the national education system. It is, however, adjusted with the local context, potential, and the needs of the local community” (UUPA, 2006). This implies that no specific education approach applies, except the general provision to synergise Aceh’s concept of education with the national education system, and to meet the potential and needs of the local community. Therefore, this regulation offered a positive opportunity for Aceh’s local government to best formulate an education system to meet the region’s needs.

Given the opportunity to develop its own education system, the province’s members of parliament and education practitioners have chosen to develop an educational concept based on Islamic values, which represent the heritage of local culture and traditions. Some education institutions under the management of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) and the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) used this opportunity to develop their education platforms to suit their missions and visions.

Article 216, Point 1, confirms that education in Aceh was to be developed in

accordance with current technological and educational advances. The regulation stipulates that technology—the key skills students should master to succeed in future life—is a critical element in educational development. In the context of Islamic teachings, technology serves as a means for developing knowledge and science to attain God’s acceptance. This regulation acknowledges the critical role of technology in empowering Acehnese human resources. As such, Acehnese students as well as the general Acehnese population must master adequate technological competencies to empower themselves in seeking a better life in this world and the hereafter: “Every Aceh community deserves to have a quality and an Islamic education in accordance with the advancement of knowledge and technology” (UUPA, 2006).

Point 2 of article 216 signifies the importance of an education system in Aceh that honours human dignity, includes human rights and provides quality education, as well as emphasising acculturation of the local culture that is embedded in Islamic principles. In the national context, Point 2 of the article also indicates that the educational approach in Aceh needs to consider the heterogeneous community living in this region. Some members of the community are non-Muslim, as indicated in the following statement: “The education mentioned in article 216 Point 1 is implemented based on the democratic principles and welfare by highly honouring the human rights, Islamic values, culture, and the pluralistic nation” (UUPA, 2006).

3. Qanun No. 23, 2002

The Aceh provincial parliament members endorsed *Qanun* (an Islamic term used in Aceh to refer to ‘regulation’) No. 23, 2002 as the educational guideline to be used by government in formulating every educational policy in the province. The guideline also serves as the justice principle for Islamic and general education institutions in managing their education concepts.

Qanun No. 23, 2002 briefly discusses important information about educational implementation in Aceh, ranging from basic education principles and objectives, to higher education concepts, to education curricula. Historically, the Acehnese community is known to have a strong devotion towards Islam as their way of life. Islamic teachings have been promoted as the foundation of this region’s educational concepts since long before Indonesia gained independence from Dutch colonisation.

Education has been regarded as one of Aceh's special rights (*Hak Istimewa*), granted by the central government in Jakarta in 1959. The central government's intention to endorse *Regulation No. 18, 2001* regarding Aceh's special autonomy strengthened it even further. This increased jurisdictional support provided Aceh with the regulatory foundation to design its own education systems.

Aceh's special autonomy status has enabled it to empower Islamic education and implement *Syaria* law, and develop its human resources in accordance with Islamic philosophy. Therefore, the concept of education in this region has two bases. The first is the *Quranic* and *Hadits* values that facilitate the formation of an Acehese community in which people have good ethical morals (*akhlakul karimah*), are pious, and submit to *Allah's* commandments. The second is synergy with the national education philosophy and Acehese culture, as illustrated in the following regulation statement: "The Aceh province education is based on Holy Quran and Hadist (Prophet Muhammad's Sayings), national ideology, national regulation 1945, and Acehese culture" (*Qanun No. 23, 2002*).

Similarly, Article 3 of this *Qanun* clarifies the objective of education in Aceh province as potentially strengthening the community's *Iman* (*iman* is the Arabic term used in Aceh to refer to religious faith) to *Allah*, and develop human resources (good Islamic citizens) in the process of enhancing human dignity and capacity in accordance with the requirements of Islamic teachings:

The education in Aceh province functions to strengthen Iman and God-fearing to Allah almighty and also to develop human resources as one of the fundamental processes of increasing the quality of human life and dignity appealed by the Islamic teachings (*Qanun No. 23, 2002*).

Referring to the two articles of the *Qanun* above, it is evident that the core initial objective of education in Aceh is to empower the Acehese in mastering strong Islamic teachings and values. After achieving this initial aim, the focus of education is to develop human resources in multi-knowledge disciplines; that is, to develop synergy between empowerment of both the intellectual and spiritual domains.

Like Article 2 and 3, Article 4 also mentions that the objective of education in Aceh is to develop the Acehese to be the strong Muslim citizens, faithful to Allah, knowledgeable, and having good ethical morals. However, Article 4 adds another

objective; to develop citizens who are responsible towards their community and nation. This last objective is the point of difference in this article:

The Aceh province education aims at developing personality of Muslim as its disposition; namely the personality having strong faith towards Allah, having akhlakul karimah (noble morals), are democratic, honour human values & rights, knowledgeable, skilful, and responsible towards Allah, community, and nation (*Qanun* No. 23, 2002).

Another significant point concerning the educational approach in Aceh is illustrated in Article 5 of this *Qanun*. Part “c” of Article 5 explains that the principles of education in this region are constructed holistically on the basis of “integration, transparency, and a focus on the learners’ empowerment based on their interest, talent, and intelligence” (*Qanun* No. 23, 2002).

4. Qanun No. 5, 2008

The local government in Aceh endorsed *Qanun* No. 5 in 2008 to provide a comprehensive guideline for education departments and institutions to use in implementing education throughout the province. This *Qanun* also serves as the interpretation of the education section of the UUPA, ensuring the implementation of the Islamic education system in Aceh is carried out accordingly, and that the graduates of education institutions can compete at local, national, and regional workforce levels. Finally, this *Qanun* was endorsed as the aspiration to better develop the economic, social and political aspects of future Acehnese community life.

Chapter Two, Article 2 of this *Qanun* lays down twelve significant points that the educational principles in Aceh must encompass: (a) Islamic; (b) truth; (c) expedience; (d) aegis; (e) humanity; (f) nationality; (g) kinship; (h) embed to local culture; (i) universality; (j) sustainability and justice; (k) non-discrimination; (l) professionalism.

The first point highlights that the education principles in Aceh deal with Islamic religious values; education should be developed based on Islamic principles. Point 2, ‘truth’, refers to education, developed in accordance with Islamic principles, producing people who are truthful or *Amanah*. *Amanah*, in the Islamic context, has a specific meaning that deals with ethics, morals and attitudes. When people are

Amanah, they have a tendency to follow all of God's commandments and stay away from any of his prohibitions. This is the ideal outcome expected of education in this region as stipulated in this regulation.

Point "d" suggests that the principles of education developed in this region should meet local cultural needs. This is significant because the aim of education is to prepare graduates to become leaders for this region and leaders in their community. Therefore, incorporation of Islamic culture, into the education system will help fulfil this aim. It will assist students to develop a good understanding of Islamic values and thus become good people, with the morals, ethics and attitudes to lead their communities.

Professionalism (Point l) in the context of Article 2 refers to providing space for educational practitioners to develop education concepts in this region in a professional manner, in line with the development of current educational and technological advancements. A professional approach to education concept development considers the needs of education stakeholders, in this case both students and graduate users.

Article 3 of *Qanun* No. 5, 2008 states that the purpose of education in the context of community development is to empower the Acehese community to have better education in order to increase their living standards and thus have better lives. The objective states that, "The function of education implementation in Aceh, as the effort of developing all learners' personality aspects, is to embody the Acehese community having good civilization and self-dignity". This objective, from a political perspective, reflects the condition of Aceh during the conflict of the last decade, when the Acehese experienced extreme hardship. Human rights and dignity were not recognised in this region due to the implementation of tough martial law. Hence, now that the conflict has ended, it is time for this province to empower its population to reclaim their human rights.

Chapter 3, Article 5 of this *Qanun* points out that the educational principles are in accordance with the current development of education and technology in respect of human rights, cultural, democratic, and justice values. This *Qanun* repeatedly mentions the alignment of education and technology to ensure that the empowerment

of human resources in this region focuses not only on the Islamic context and local culture but also on technological mastery. This alignment has the potential to enable Islamic education institutions to integrate the required technology into their educational concept. Previously, Islamic education institutions' core mission was to study only Islamic teachings (Nurdin, et al., 2010). They often seemed to segregate technology from their educational concepts (Nurdin, et al., 2010); students attending Islamic institutions should only study Islamic-related courses, while technological knowledge, including information technology skills, were not a focus. Teaching technological skills to students thus became the focus of non-Islamic institutions. This can be seen from the lack of technological-oriented courses offered in Islamic education institutions' curricula, including at UIN Ar-Raniry.

5. National Regulation No. 20, 2003

National Regulation No. 20, 2003, known as the national education system, discusses significant information on educational empowerment in Indonesia, including the functions and objectives of education nationwide, national education standards, education curricula, educational infrastructure, and education supervision. This regulation was endorsed to replace Regulation No. 2, 1989, regarding the national education system.

Chapter 2, Article 3 of this regulation (National Regulation No. 20, 2003) states that national education aims to develop learners to become citizens with a strong faith in “God and noble morals, who are healthy, skilful, smart, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible” (National Regulation No. 20, 2003). Religious values are always integrated into Indonesia's education system due to the country's religious affiliation. Religion is not segregated from education and the state; religion and education, and state and religion sit side-by-side. Therefore, when education is developed, its aims are always in synergy with religious values. One of the primary education objectives is to prepare learners to be religious people who behave according to religious paradigms.

In National Regulation No. 20, 2003, being a good person means comprehensively understanding religious teachings and, as a result, having good ethical morals. These two domains—being faithful toward *Allah* or God and having good *akhlak* or noble

morals—are found consistently in the basic objectives of educational development both in Aceh in particular and throughout Indonesia in general.

Education curricula are developed to enhance learners' faith and *akhlak* to accomplish the above mission, according to Chapter 10, Article 36 of this national education system regulation. The regulation also affirms that curricula are developed in accordance with current technological advancements. Use of these two bases of education curricula is intended to enable Indonesia to develop human resources with the following qualities: good *Iman dan Taqwa* (religious people), and good *Iman dan Teknologi* (religious people mastering technology), as testified in the following regulation excerpt:

Curriculum is developed based on the principles of: (a) the enhancement of faith, (b) the enhancement of *akhlak*, (c) the enhancement of potential, intelligence, and talent of the learners, (d) diversity of region and environment potential, (e) demand of national and local development, (f) demand of labour market, (g) development of science, technology, and art, (h) religion, (i) global development dynamic, (j) national unity and values (National Regulation No. 20, 2003).

The regulation offers a privilege to every education institution to develop its own curriculum to meet its specific needs. However, the developed curriculum must meet the national education system standard. The regulation states that, "...higher education curriculum is developed by the higher education institutions themselves by referring to the national education system standard". This enables the UIN Ar-Raniry and other higher education institutions throughout Indonesia to develop curricula that best meet their missions and visions without neglecting current education development and labour market orientations.

6. Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree No. 353, 2004

This regulation provides significant information about Islamic education institutions' curriculum development. In 2004, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) issued Decree No. 353 to guide religious education institutions in developing their core education concepts. It aimed to unite religious education concepts across Indonesia. Having said previously that there is no segregation between education and religion, there is no denying that the fundamental objective of Islamic higher education is to prepare learners to become people who are submissive to God's commandments and to who have good ethical morals. However, this decree emphasises that Islamic

education must be developed to empower the Muslim community in technological mastery so they can interact with all kinds of global and local communities, as the following points testify:

(1) The primary objective of Islamic HE is to produce graduates who are faithful, have good morals, have integrated understanding between sciences and religious knowledge, and have good academic skills/professionalism that enable them to develop and implement science and technology. (2) Islamic HE is directed to develop the Muslim attitudes and personality, to focus on the knowledge acquisition based on the understanding and the implementation of Islamic knowledge in order to be able to interact with modern and plural community. (Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree No. 353, Article 2, Points 1-2)

The decree clearly mentions that the objective of Islamic higher education is to educate the Islamic community to enhance both their spiritual and intellectual competence. In terms of spiritual competence, according to the decree, Islamic higher education is responsible for producing Muslim graduates who master a sufficient understanding of Islamic values to enable them to behave as ideal Muslim citizens. In terms of intellectual competence, the decree suggests that Islamic higher education needs to integrate religious teachings, science, and technology into its educational approach.

This decree has a potential role in the process of transforming Islamic higher education in terms of integrating religious values and sciences. It is interesting to note that in earlier times, Islamic higher education only provided Islamic teaching to the surrounding community. Traditionally, the focus of Islamic higher education in Aceh was to teach students particular Islamic courses. As such, sciences, including maths and technological aspects such as computer and Internet skills, were often excluded from Islamic higher education curricula. However, science and technology are inseparable aspects that every student needs to master. The decree was introduced in response to the urgency of rectifying this situation and has been widely accepted by Islamic higher education institutions. It is regarded as an educational breakthrough in integrating religious-related studies, technology, and science.

7. National Regulation No. 55, 2007

This regulation elaborates the guiding principles for education departments and their authorities in managing religious education. It differs from the Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree No. 353, 2004 in that it highlights the primary concept of education

for all religions that have evolved throughout Indonesia. Conversely, the Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree No. 353, 2004 underlines critical education principles to be carried out by Islamic education institutions only.

Like previous regulations governing religious education, this regulation conveys the same message about religious education objectives. Chapter 2, Article 2 states that (1) Religious education functions to shape Indonesian people to have strong faith to God, have noble morals (*akhlak*), and live peacefully among the multi-religious believers; and (2) Religious education functions to enhance learners' understanding of religious values that integrate the mastery of science, technology, and art.

This regulation supports numerous regulations endorsed by the government in perceiving religious education objectives. As mentioned earlier, Indonesia affiliates with religions, and the objective of religious education to enrich students' understanding of religious values always becomes the first priority. After fulfilling this first priority, the second priority may be to empower students' life skills, including practical skills to enable them to achieve better future career and employment prospects.

Given the priority of developing students' spiritual competence, the regulation urges religious education institutions to develop their curricula to attend to this. Words used to describe the output of religious education—*honest, sincere, responsible, good morals ethic, and good people*—are commonly found in government documents. The following religious education objectives are typical: “(1) Religious education curriculum is developed in accordance with the national education standard, (5) Religious education is to develop learners' mental and attitude to be responsible, honest, sincere, disciplined, hardworking, independent, and cooperative” (National Regulation No. 55, 2007, Article 5, Point 1 and 5).

In almost the same vein, the function of religious education is briefly explored in the following regulation excerpt:

- (1) Religious education functions to prepare learners to be the community members who understand and practice their religious values, and to be the religious scholars,
- (2) Religious education is aimed at (a) shaping learners who understand and practice their religious values, and/or (b) shaping learners to be religious scholars who are broad-minded, critical, creative, innovative, and dynamic in the process of educating the intellectual life of the nation that is faithful, devoted, and having noble morals

(National Regulation No. 55, 2007, Article 8, Point 1-2).

Interestingly, neither of the two articles of the regulation discussed above describes the development of students' potential other than development of their mental and spiritual attributes. Consequently, this may be deleterious for Islamic higher education institutions if, when developing curricula, they refer only to this regulation.

8. English Education Department Mission

The English Education Department is under the control of the Education Faculty of the UIN Ar-Raniry. The Department's main focus is to train students who have graduated from senior high schools and *Pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) to be English teachers as well as people who are proficient in English language at a professional level. At the same time, the English Education Department has a commitment to fulfil the universal institutional core mission of preparing learners to master a high degree of Islamic religious values. Refining this objective, the Department attempts to synergise the institution's mission with its own mission. Hence, besides preparing students to be capable in English skills, it must ensure its students master religious knowledge to become faithful people, as implied in the following mission statement:

The mission of the English Education Department is to train and educate the senior high school graduates to be qualified English education scholars who have the following qualifications: (1) truly believes in Allah, committed in worshipping Allah and helping others, and are having good morals, (2) having skills in implementing the obtained knowledge into practical aspects, (3) independent, able to compete, and able to actualize themselves to pursue further study and to work, and able to contribute into the national development based on the skills and expertise they obtained (Nurdin, et al., 2010, p. 66).

Such a mission could have long-term consequences for improving human resources quality in the Aceh region due to the Department's dual significant functions of preparing students in English language competence and educating students to be skilled in Islamic -oriented knowledge. It is often stated that the success of this institution in transforming its role in producing graduates who master both Islamic knowledge and general education relies on its curriculum content and educational strategies (Nazar, 2008). Therefore, the Department is required to adjust its curriculum approach to achieve the above-stated mission.

Point 2 of the mission construes that the Department's students need to have adequate practical skills to apply the knowledge they have acquired. In addition, Point 3 proposes that the students should be able to compete with other graduates for particular employment opportunities. However, those expectations may remain unchanged until the Department provides a clear pathway in achieving them. If the Department fails to put these aspirations into practice, they will be seen as political jargon, with no real substance. Professional training is required for students to master all the stipulated skills. Appropriate internship programs at particular organisations may be one solution the Department may consider.

9. English Education Department objectives

This Department was established to addressing the need to produce adequate English teachers for elementary, junior, and senior high schools, particularly throughout the Aceh province. At baseline, the Department's development has two core objectives: (1) to educate students to be professional in English language, and (2) to educate students to be professional in teaching English at schools and other higher education institutions. These objectives serve as the imperative mainstay for the Department in developing education concepts and policies.

Educating students to be professional in English language as the first objective requires the Department to provide students better English skills and other supporting competencies to enable them to use English to enhance their academic and career prospects. It is imperative that the Department has adequate resources, both human and infrastructure, to fulfil this objective. The Department also needs to periodically assess its education concepts in accordance with current education developments to enable it to produce the type of graduates sought by current education and workforce institutions. Such students need to master not only four key English language skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking), but also supplementary skills that may enhance their professional competence. In response to this, it has been suggested that the Department readjust its education policies to empower students to have better skills in both English language and other important areas.

Referring to the second objective, the Department intentionally prepares students to become professional English teachers. It is critical to note that even though one of

the English Education Department objectives is to prepare students to become teaching staff at higher education institutions, this needs further clarification because the new enacted regulation states that bachelor's degree students (undergraduate students) cannot teach in undergraduate programs. It is undeniable that being a professional English teacher also requires teaching-related skills, including pedagogical proficiencies and technological mastery. To this end, the Department must focus not only on preparing students to have satisfactory English skills, but also on preparing them to have sufficient pedagogical competence in order to teach professionally.

The relationship between the Department's first and second objectives signifies its dual interests in providing English for students. On one hand, the Department aims to prepare students to be capable in teaching English, meaning the Department has an obligation to prepare students to be teachers who will teach in schools. This necessitates students' mastery of both English language and pedagogical skills. On the other hand, the Department aims to prepare students to become English language professionals. This involves not only teaching students to become teachers, but also teaching them to master sufficient English skills to find other prospective careers that best meet their innate talents. Thus, the Department must provide adequate opportunities for students who want to be English language professionals or English teachers.

In relation to the Islamic values, the Department mentions these in its mission. The Department objectives provide no further clarification of the essence of the Islamic values the Department intends to offer or that it expects the students to master. As stated earlier, the Department is affiliated with the Islamic institution and therefore Islamic values are part of the Department, embedded in its Department policies and systems.

10. Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided information on six government regulations/policies regarding education concepts in Aceh, Indonesia. Three local and three national regulations, and the English Education Department mission and objectives have been analysed. Both local and national regulations highlight basic education foundational

principles as a guide to developing education concepts in Aceh. National regulations underline key issues in developing education concepts that meet the national standards and philosophy. Local regulations provide brief information for developing an education system that suits the local context.

10.1 Key questions arising from the document analysis

Key questions were posed in Chapter Two regarding the appropriateness of the existing English Education Department's curriculum. The analysis of the educational regulation and policy documentation, and the UIN Ar-Raniry and English Education Department mission and objectives further support the need for this a research to address them. The questions raised in Chapter Two in summary were:

1. Does the current curriculum align with the labour market orientation?
2. Does the current curriculum address the diversity of students' needs and expectations?
3. Does the current curriculum prepare students for expectations of leadership?
4. Does the current curriculum accommodate comprehensive pedagogical skills?
5. Should English be taught as immersion or be taught in Bahasa?
6. Theory versus practice: are there enough opportunities for practice?
7. Are greater efficiencies needed in the curriculum due to repetition and overlap?
8. Is there adequate curriculum space to help students achieve technological mastery?

The next chapter discusses the findings from the results of the interview, focus group discussions and a survey and attempts to address these questions.

CHAPTER SEVEN
RESULTS: PART TWO
STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS ABOUT THE ENGLISH
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S CURRICULUM

1. Introduction

This second findings chapter presents critical questions related to curriculum reform in the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Islamic University in Aceh province, Indonesia, arising from the earlier (Chapter 6) analysis of regulations, policies, and university and departmental documentation informing the university and department mission and objectives as stated in the UIN Ar-Raniry Manual/Handbook (2010). The chapter also presents the results of the interviews, focus group discussions and online survey regarding the values underpinning the English Education Department's curriculum. These results are used to generate a framework for change in the concept of education at the UIN Ar-Raniry and in particular in the English Education Department.

2. Structure of this chapter

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section one discusses the results of interviews and focus group discussions regarding the values underpinning the English Education Department's curriculum. Section two reports the online survey results, which involved only the students of the English Education Department.

Section 1: Interview and focus group discussion results

This section examines stakeholders' views about the English Education Department's curriculum as they have experienced it. It is important to understand the stakeholders' perspectives in order to recognise the potential challenges and opportunities in establishing new ways of thinking about the English Education Department's curriculum and its reform in Aceh. The participating stakeholders were senior leaders, lecturers, junior and senior high school teachers and principals, and students. The results are based on analysis of tape-recorded interviews and focus

group discussions with the stakeholders.

The following data were gathered to understand the range of views of people who are influential in developing and delivering the English Education Department's curriculum as well as those who have a stake in its outcomes, namely the students and future employers. There is a need for change in the current curriculum due to the introduction of the UUPA, a new regulation in the Aceh region. However, successful changes in curriculum design require canvassing the views of stakeholders. These views will play a significant role in developing the new curriculum. Adjusting the curriculum to meet current educational development and employers' expectations of graduates is best guided by a grounded understanding of the stakeholders.

3. Explanation of the themes

The following themes of curriculum expectations emerged from, and are grounded in, the interview and focus group discussions. The issues discussed are those reported by stakeholders to be most critical when reforming the English Education Department's curriculum to meet education leaders', teachers' and students' current educational aspirations, and potential employers' expectations. The following table explains the themes identified from the transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions. These themes and sub-themes are used to structure the reporting of these findings in this chapter.

Table 7: Themes and sub-themes identified from transcripts

Themes	Sub-themes
<p>Personal values This theme refers to statements about the personal values identified in the elaboration of the key stakeholders' views in recognising the goals of education in this region. Under the personal values section, the nature of Islamic values to be accommodated in the development of the English Education Department's curriculum to prepare students to be good Islamic citizens and good Acehnese citizens is also reported.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Islamic citizens • Good Acehnese citizens
<p>Generic graduate outcomes This theme refers to the learning outcomes that are not directly related to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability • Entrepreneurship • Technological literacy

the teaching of English. They include three important key curriculum aspirations.	
<p>Content knowledge and skills This theme explores more information on core competencies that students should attain after studying at the Department. Under this section, the discussion of four main competencies–English language, applied English use, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), and pedagogical competency–will be explored in greater depth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language • Applied English use • Pedagogical competencies
<p>Professional capabilities This theme explores the learning outcomes that relate to additional skills students need to master in order to better handle the teaching and learning process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative capabilities • Leadership and communication skills

4. Stakeholders’ beliefs about the English Education Department’s curriculum purposes and processes

It is important to note that Aceh province applies *Syaria* law (Islamic law) as the legal regulation for all Muslim citizens in performing their daily activities. It is also important to acknowledge that the *Syaria* law is only applicable for all Muslim citizens living in this area. Acehese societies are expected to adhere to religious guidelines to lead a way of life based on Islamic doctrine and behaviour principles. It is also imperative to note that there is no obligation for non-Muslim citizens living in Aceh to follow this *Syaria* law. Non-Muslim people living in Aceh should follow the national regulations applied throughout Indonesia.

Despite non-Muslims having the freedom of not following *Syaria* law, the Aceh government is expected to refer to *Syaria* law in implementing every government policy. The implementation of this new regulation has affected education institutions, which must now redesign their educational concepts to meet the requirements of *Syaria* law.

It is imperative that school curricula, under the new regulations, accommodate *Syaria* values as part of the teaching and learning guidelines. Not surprisingly, therefore, the results of interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders reveal that *good Islamic*

citizens should be the core value underpinning the development of the English Education Department's curriculum.

5. Personal religious values

5.1 Leaders' views regarding the concept of education and curriculum development aspired to in Aceh

This section details leaders' views regarding the concept of education and curriculum development aspired to in Aceh, a region with a 99 per cent Muslim community. The senior leaders who shared their views were the Vice Rector of UIN Ar-Raniry, the Dean of the Education Faculty of UIN Ar-Raniry, the curriculum affairs head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Banda Aceh Province, the Islamic Law Department head, and the English Education Department head.

5.1.1 Good Islamic citizens

Leaders' voices: The Acehnese regards education as one of the most effective means of empowering people to become good citizens. Education can reform people's attitude from the level of *Jahiliyah* (ignorance) towards the truth to the level of being civilised. However, empowering people to be good Islamic citizens in the Aceh context has a tendency to place more pressure on Islamic education institutions because there is a common belief that they accommodate more Islamic religious studies in their core courses than other general education institutions. This fact influenced participants' belief that the concept of curriculum should be developed in accordance with the Islamic way of life to produce graduates with Islamic attributes, namely people who have good morals ethics, who are law-abiding, and do not perform any actions against *Syaria* law. The participant shared his opinion as noted below:

If we are able to develop a curriculum and educate our students in the real context of Islamic way of life, the quality of the Aceh human resources will be much better, especially in terms of morals. We will have people who have good akhlak. We will have a law-abiding citizen who will perform their work wisely, will not do any corrupt practices or other intolerable actions. (L.5:9)

The participants also believed that in order to educate students to have good *akhlak* (an Islamic term used in Aceh to refer to 'morals'), the school curriculum should be developed in line with the concepts of Islamic teachings. They regarded *akhlak* as playing a significant role in empowering students to be good citizens, namely law-

abiding citizens. The participants also claimed that *akhlak* controls people's behaviour and attitudes. When people have good *akhlak*, they will do only good deeds and stay away from evil or illegal actions.

The Acehese community's perspective of good Islamic citizens is also people who have both general and Islamic knowledge, and who share this knowledge to empower other people in their community. The leaders expected graduates to have the potential to become the source of community empowerment. This view was linked to the fact that because the Department's students are trained to be teachers, they often serve as the *guru ngaji* (a teacher who teaches holy *Quran*) at a *Musalla* or mosque in their community in the evenings after serving as the English teachers in schools during the day. This 'added value' results in the surrounding community highly valuing the Department's graduates, as the following comment shows:

After we educate our students, they will be people who will dedicate their knowledge at schools, at the places where they inhabit, or wherever they are. They are outstanding because they have good understanding on religious knowledge and they also have good skills in English. (L.1:8)

5.1.2 Good Acehese citizens

UIN Ar-Raniry is the only Islamic higher education institution in Banda Aceh. As such, it is expected to play a significant role in empowering the younger generation of Acehese to be good people who have good Islamic and general knowledge. Leader 1 (L.1) raised a serious concern during his discussion with the researcher. He noted that although the English Education Department focused on training students to be English language teachers, it was also responsible for producing graduates who have a strong understanding of Islamic values and noble *akhlak*. He then raised his concern that if the Department failed to produce graduates who were good people, the community would neglect them, as the following excerpt from interview L.1:8 illustrates: "We can see how our graduates are well accepted by society. But, if they lose their identity (behaving against the Islamic way of life), they will be ignored" (L.1:8).

Good people, good citizens, or people having noble *akhlak* were a common theme to emerge in the discussions with leaders. The leaders regarded it as imperative that these core values be accommodated in the curriculum. Interestingly, when asked

about a detailed concept of Islamic education and curricula, the participants suggested the researcher refer to the concept of *Syaria* law implemented in Aceh. Therefore, the leaders suggested that the essence and content of the new curriculum should not contradict Islamic religious values, which underpinned the identity of Acehnese people:

Now in Aceh we agree to implement the Islamic law. This law should become the principal guidance in constructing any knowledge frameworks that students will pursue. In fact, students may study nuclear science, mining technology, forestry, marine science, Fiqh (Islamic law), Tafsir (Quranic interpretation), etc. But that knowledge should remain in the concept of Aqidah or Islamic morals. In this regard, our community has to study all sciences, but after pursuing those sciences, their morals should remain strong. The identity of the Acehnese is attached to the Islamic morals; the identity which is demanded by UUPA. Ultimately, when they are becoming scientists, they should not forget about the identity of themselves as Muslim scientists. (L.4:4-5)

Another leader suggested that integration of science and Islamic religious studies was critical. He believed that students should study general knowledge and Islamic knowledge at the same time in an integrated curriculum. The success of this integration would produce good Islamic scientists; those who, while mastering particular sciences, have a strong Islamic knowledge. This leader suggested that the Education Faculty should integrate science (in a broader sense) and Islamic knowledge because he believed that integration of these two knowledge disciplines may make a significant contribution to developing Aceh province as well as its human resources: "Education Faculty must integrate science and Islamic education. This knowledge integration will produce quality scientists who master good Islamic teachings and transform Aceh towards a better region" (L.5:4). Leader 3 (L.3) made a similar suggestion, saying that the comprehensive integration of religious studies and sciences would enrich the value of English Education Department graduates. Under this plan, graduates would have a twofold function; serving as English teachers and being role models in terms of being good Islamic citizens.

Unfortunately, when asked about the formulation of an ideal Islamic education and an ideal curriculum attending to the requirements of *Syaria* law or UUPA, the leaders gave no definitive answer. However, their main concern in curriculum development was that it must meet the required provision of Islamic values. No specific concept has been formulated to date. This is the challenge of this thesis. As such, the

participants strongly urged scholars to develop a feasible Islamic education concept to be implemented in Aceh. “The most critical thing is that we should be able to formulate the concept of Islamic education to be studied by our society, students, and children” (L.4:16).

Leader 4 (L.4), in his discussion with the researcher, suggested inviting more scholars to discuss, share ideas, and develop higher education institution curricula that meet the particular *Syaria* law context of Aceh province to best formulate an ideal curriculum concept corresponding to Islamic teachings as mandated by UUPA. He suggested that the concept of Islamic education should be analysed in greater depth to find a rational framework to accommodate it, together with the advancement of global education and technology:

How to break down the concept of Islamic education? We need to work more on it. Probably you may refer to Qanun (Local regulation) 2008. In such regulation, Islamic education has been repeatedly mentioned. So we need to have more educational experts in transforming the Islamic education mentioned in Qanun 2008. You will be one of the experts who will formulate the real concept of Islamic education. (L.4.1)

Finally, leader 1 (L.1) suggested that if the English Education Department’s curriculum is to be redesigned, there should be a balance between English language course components and Islamic-oriented studies. He also recommended that the English Education Department should not exclude Islamic studies courses when developing a new curriculum:

If we want to redevelop the English Education Department’s curriculum, we need to balance between the composition of English language skill components and Islamic-oriented studies. This needs to be taken into account as the mission of our university is specifically attached to Islamic studies (L.1:8).

In relation to the significance of retaining Islamic knowledge in the English Education Department, Leader 1 said that Islamic religious teachings were inseparable from the values of the Acehnese community: “Islamic studies should not be omitted from the English Education Department’s curriculum, because we (Acehnese societies) believe that Islamic values are part of our life” (L.1:6).

5.2 Lecturers' beliefs about the purposes of the English Education Department's curriculum in terms of Islamic content

This sub-section reports the views of English Education Department lecturers regarding significant values underpinning the development of the English Education Department's curriculum.

The lecturers identified that Acehese communities have very high expectations of UIN Ar-Raniry graduates. Communities expect the graduates to be able to adopt a leadership role in telling other people about the Islamic values they have learned. Graduates should also be role models for the surrounding community. Having the ability to lead prayers five times each day and to deliver Friday prayer preaching are some of the values and capabilities the graduates of UIN Ar-Raniry are expected to acquire:

Acehnese communities expect that all UIN Ar-Raniry graduates including the English Education Department alumni are able to be a role model for others; they must be able to be good Imam (People who lead prayers) and credible khatib (Islamic preachers). (Le.6:19)

The following comment noted during the interviews and discussions with the lecturers also depicted that department graduates need to possess sufficient knowledge in community empowerment, especially in terms of mastering Islamic teachings, as elucidated in the following comment: "The English Education Department graduates must be a role model among the Acehese community. They must be able to deliver quality *khutbah* and must be able to be the leaders for communities". (Le.6:11)

The lecturers also argued that once the credit hours for studying English-related subjects were fulfilled, specific religious studies should be added. They suggested the need to consider more Islamic studies that focus on developing ethical morals reasoning. The lecturers suggested that studies in *akhlak* and *Islamic studies* are two of the more appropriate courses that should be added to the new curriculum. This was clearly stated as: "If we are already good at accommodating English subjects in our core curriculum, what we need to do now is to add more religious-related subjects such as *Akhlak Tasawuf* and Islamic studies methodology" (Le.6:13).

5.3 Teachers' views on the current English Education Department's curriculum and the role of Islamic content

The following narratives are the voices of teachers who shared their ideas during the interviews and focus group discussions. The teachers who were involved in this research are graduates of the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry and thus have a good insight into the curriculum as it is currently practiced.

Teachers' voices: These teachers noticed that one of the reasons students chose to study in the English Education Department was its added religious values. The teachers asserted that besides studying disciplinary knowledge, namely English language, students also study Islamic religious knowledge: "I am sure that people decide to study at the English Education Department because of its added values; English skills and religious studies" (T.11.4:6). The unique feature of the Department, its core mission, is that students are not only taught to master English but also to prepare to become better Islamic citizens. The Department provides several optional religious courses for students. Islamic courses are provided to enhance students' understanding of Islamic teachings.

One teacher acknowledged that the integration of English language skills and Islamic knowledge had increased students' motivation to pursue their undergraduate degrees in this Department. The teacher declared that students at the English Education Department were "very lucky" because they have an opportunity to study both English language and Islamic-related subjects in the one package: "So, it is lucky enough to study here at the English Education Department because students learn one study package; English language and religious studies" (T.11.4:6).

The integration of English language and Islamic studies in this Department drew praise from some of the teachers. They believed that this dual focus has produced graduates who had mastered both English language skills and Islamic religious values: "The English Education Department alumni are outstanding because besides mastering good English skills, they also have good religious understanding" (T.11.2:6).

During discussion, Teacher 2 (T.11.2) identified that students should have a strong understanding of Islamic values if they are to become leaders in the Acehese

community. Again, Islamic values were stressed as the foundation for community leadership, and therefore what makes the Department's graduates accepted by the community: "Many students graduated from the English Education Department become community leaders. Undoubtedly, they must have good understanding about Islamic values, Islamic teachings, and Islamic way of life" (T.11.2:2).

The discussions with teachers also revealed that to be able to understand core Islamic values, and to behave holistically in accordance with the Islamic way of life, students must be able to read and understand the *Quran*. Teachers also claimed that reading and understanding the *Quran* is not enough. They strongly urged education institutions to make sure that their graduates can implement the Islamic religious values they have learnt into their daily life. This signifies that understanding important knowledge and skills is not enough; it will not bring any significant change to the knowledge owner or to other communities until they implement it in their life. The teachers also suggested that students need to study more Islamic courses related to the formulation of good behaviour and morals. This may acquaint them with the concepts and practices of the righteous deeds of being a good Muslim citizen. They shared their opinions as noted in the following statement:

Students need to be taught sufficient religious knowledge, they must be able to recite and understand the Quran and its meanings. And then the essence of these noble Quranic teachings must be able to be implemented in the community daily life.
(T.11.6:6)

5.4 Students' beliefs about the English Education Department's curriculum and the role of Islamic content

This part of the report presents the students' voices regarding their experiences while studying at the English Education Department, UIN Ar-Raniry. Their experiences of the values underpinning the Department's curriculum are the core issues raised during discussion. When asked about their experiences of being students at the Department, some said that they were fortunate because they can learn English language as the main objective and also study Islamic religious courses to deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings. The students affirmed that the manifestation of understanding Islamic values can result in forging better morals: "Every student studying at the English Education Department is taught not only to master English language skills but also master religious knowledge to have good Islamic morals"

(S.7:7).

Having raised issues about the current Islamic courses offered by the Department, one student said that the Department had not provided adequate or appropriate Islamic courses to increase their awareness of Islamic values, including ways they can develop morals qualities. This student believed that the Department's students do not obtain Islamic values that are significant enough to increase their sense of being good Muslim citizens. Indeed, in the interviews, one student claimed that he got more knowledge and lessons about Islamic teachings from his friends than from his teachers or lecturers at the Department:

I think the religious values, which are taught in our department, are still weak for morals betterment. I, myself, usually get more information of Islamic values as well as Islamic teachings and Islamic understanding from friends and books I read.
(S.7:10)

This comment, together with the issues raised by another student, conveys a valuable message to the Department about concerns over morals issues. Both students assumed that they had enrolled to study at this Department in order to enrich their English language skills while deepening their understanding of Islamic values, including the significant attributes attached to Islamic teachings.

The results of the discussions with students also indicate that students' experiences are not grounded in the process of teaching and learning Islamic courses. This can be explained by the way in which teachers or lecturers handle Islamic courses. Students regard the applied teaching methodology and content of religious courses as unsuitable for current educational development:

Students are not embedded in learning process, so they do not get the essence of such the learning. To this end, we need to reform the teaching methodology, and we need to synergize the content of religious knowledge in accordance with the current world and educational advancement. (S.7:22)

5.5 Concluding remarks on religious values in a redeveloped curriculum

This section has reported the significant values underpinning the English Education Department's curriculum development. The leaders suggested that the Department should holistically integrate Islamic teachings and science or general knowledge into its new curriculum. They added that Islamic education is powerful in producing good

Islamic citizens. Therefore, they expected that designing a curriculum that corresponds to Islamic teachings would enable the development of Islamic human resources in this area. The leaders discussed how empowerment through Islamic education would provide Aceh with people who have good *akhlak*, are law-abiding, perform their work wisely, and do not participate in any corrupt practices.

Like leaders, the lecturers also propose that the Department's curriculum integrates general education and Islamic education. This curriculum integration may produce graduates who have skills not only in general knowledge, especially in English language, but also in Islamic teaching aspects. The lecturers argued that the graduates of the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry should be leaders for the local community wherever those graduates reside. They should also be able to lead five times prayer and to deliver *khutbah* at Friday prayers. To this end, the lecturers recommend that the Department's curriculum be assessed periodically to synergise with students' needs and current educational development.

The teachers acknowledged that many students who graduate from the Department become respected community leaders. Therefore, they should have a good understanding of Islamic values and teachings, as well as leadership skills. Furthermore, teachers said that students should be able to read and understand the *Holy Quran* to gain an understanding of the core Islamic values. In addition, the leaders said that students need to implement its teachings comprehensively in their daily life. Teachers suggested that the Department could achieve this by conceptualising an ideal Islamic education applicable to Aceh. However, reconceptualising this ideal Islamic education framework may affect all education systems in the Department as well as the faculty. The Department could holistically reform the curriculum to meet the requirements of Islamic educational concepts and practice.

Student interviews, in contrast to those of the teachers and leaders, reflect some deep concerns regarding core features of the curriculum. Students questioned the adequacy of the Islamic courses in the current curriculum. They also argued that the Department's failure to prepare better Islamic citizens may be due to inappropriate selection of teaching and learning materials, or the way lecturers executed the teaching and learning process. The students also suggested that the ways lecturers

handle classes and courses may affect students' interest in enrolling in particular Islamic courses. Hence, the students strongly urged the Department to reform its teaching and learning approach, and to synchronise the content of Islamic courses with current world and educational development.

6. Generic graduate outcomes in a redesigned curriculum

This sub-section reports the above mentioned key stakeholders' views regarding the generic graduate outcomes of the English Education Department. The sub-themes of employability, entrepreneurship and technological literacy skills are discussed in terms of their significance in developing the English Education Department's curriculum.

6.1 Employability

The following sub-section reports the stakeholders' viewpoints regarding embedding employability and work ready graduates in the Department's curriculum outcomes.

6.1.1 Leaders' voices

The objective of the English Education Department is to train students to have adequate English language skills to be junior and senior high school teachers. Having mastered English language skills, in conjunction with other skills, the graduates may also potentially have opportunities to work in the areas of business, banking, defence, diplomacy, education, journalism, law, tourism, and arts. Nowadays, the alumni of this Department can be found as staff members at various United Nations' institutions, banking institutions, and other corporate companies, including in mining industries. Some can be found in provincial and national level parliaments. Leader 1 (L.1) and Leader 4 (L.4) both asserted this benefit, as indicated in the following interview excerpts:

Actually, the Education Faculty is aimed at training students to be elementary teachers and also junior and senior high school teachers, but because of their capabilities (including capability in English skills) and of opportunities, they might work at various employment sectors. We can see how the English Education Department alumni become army, police, law makers, lawyer, parliament members, and bankers. And at the same time they can be a good Imam (people who lead Prayers) or public speakers. (L.1:4)

Leader 4 (L.4) also believes that apart from obtaining a job at a series of government

and non-government institutions, Department alumni have a great opportunity to undertake postgraduate studies in overseas universities:

I notice that the employment opportunity of the English Education Department graduates is widely open. As they have good English skills, they can work both at government and non-governmental organisations (NGO), and also at educational institutions. They may also have a great opportunity to pursue their further studies overseas. (L.4:10)

Leader 2 (L.2) agreed with this comment, saying that the employment prospects for alumni of this Department are positive. He had no doubt that by mastering English language skills, the graduates are qualified to work at either government institutions or non-government organisations: “The most important thing to note is that the English Education Department alumni, with capabilities and skills they have, may find suitable jobs either at government offices or at non-governmental organisations” (L.2:8).

Another interesting comment noted during the interviews and discussions came from Leader 2 (L.2). This leader forecast the advancement of future employment opportunities, asserting that in the future, higher education graduates in this province will be challenged to expand their career opportunities not only at a local level, but also at the regional level. He envisaged a future in which the Department’s graduates would be invited to serve as teachers and lecturers at Malaysian universities, something that was rare at the time of the study. While most Acehnese scholars still face significant barriers to regional and global employment, especially in terms of English language and technological mastery, Leader 2 suggested that a new curriculum which comprehensively integrated technological aspects into its education system would pave the way for Acehnese scholars to gain employment anywhere in the world: “In the future, our alumni must be able to compete both locally and globally. To this end, Islamic education must be developed by integrating the development of current science and technological advancement” (L.2:4).

6.1.2 Students’ voices

Students asserted that in their current educational advancement toward employment, English Education Department graduates need to learn more than one discipline’s knowledge and skills. They argued that while English language skill is an additional competency they can “sell” when applying for a particular job, other critical skills

are “a must”. This expectation can be understood from the following quote: “Being “smart” in English is not enough to get a job. We need to have other competencies such as leadership and management, communication, and computer skills” (S.3:5).

According to students, graduates of this institution have to master broader skills, including life skills, to survive in the competitive employment arena in the future. It is worthwhile noting that when asked for further details about what they meant by “life skills”, students seemed to illustrate skills that would enable them to work in particular sectors, such as being traders and working at car workshops.

During the focus group discussion sessions, students often agreed with what had been said by the first student to make a comment. When they were asked for more information and ideas, they tended to say, “I agree with him or her”. This situation limited the information gathered from students.

6.1.3 Teachers’ voices

Teachers acknowledged that due to knowledge advancement, English Education Department graduates are challenged to master not only English but also other critical skills that could potentially assist them in pursuing their intended careers. Teachers always mentioned the need for students to master computer-related skills. This is reflected in the following comment: “Students must be clever in projecting what skills and qualifications that employers need in recruiting their staff. Besides considering a particular degree and qualification, often time employers consider those who are English and computer literate to become their staff” (T.3:7)

Another teacher asserted that the English Education Department’s curriculum should consider the inability of the Department’s graduates to continue their study at a higher level, such as to pursue a Master’s Degree. The teacher said the Department’s curriculum needed to focus more on preparing its graduates to master life skills. He expressed this viewpoint as follows: “Since most students do not pursue their postgraduate qualifications—rather than to find a job, the curriculum needs to focus on teaching students to master life skills” (T.1:9).

6.2 Entrepreneurship

6.2.1 Teachers' voices

Participants raised the issue of accommodating entrepreneurship skills rather than English language skills during the interviews and focus group discussions. The participants perceived that some students were not really interested in working in the education sector. Therefore, they suggested that other skills to support these students' employment prospects should be introduced. Students should be assisted in developing their particular interests, for example the incorporation of life skills into the Department's curriculum may be a solution in anticipating unemployment problems that students may worry about:

Students who do not want to be teachers should be directed to study more subjects of their interest. They have to be equipped with other skills and they should be assisted to attain a specific training from BLK (Work Training Center). This will more likely assist them in attending to job opportunities. (T.11.4:14)

Some teachers saw educational development from a financial perspective, saying that some students are unable to afford to pursue studies at higher education institutions. Therefore, the curriculum should accommodate entrepreneurship skills to assist those slightly disadvantaged students to gain access to particular employment opportunities:

Due to financial constraint, some of our students are unable to pursue their studies at higher education institutions. Therefore, education curriculum should consider these vulnerable and slightly disadvantaged students. In this regard, education that is directed to life skills enrichment will be one of the promising solutions for them. (T.9.2:2)

6.2.2 Students' voices

Like teachers, students also suggested the Department accommodate particular life skills-oriented courses in its curriculum. Those skills may help students enhance their employment prospects in non-teaching-related work: "I think the English Education Department should incorporate life skills into its curriculum. This may help students who do not want to be involved in teaching-related work find another job that meets their suitable work interest" (S.7:24). The biggest point that students mentioned was that they were not necessarily studying to be teachers and wanted the curriculum to help them develop broader capabilities so they could find employment outside of the teaching sector.

6.3 Technological literacy

Information communication and technology was one of the most common themes to appear in the interviews and focus group discussions regarding the core graduate attributes that should be accommodated by the English Education Department in developing a new curriculum.

6.3.1 Leaders' voices

Leaders claimed that in the advanced world, information and communication technology (ICT) is no longer new. Technology is now a global means of knowledge and information sharing. The leaders, acknowledging this reality, recommended the development of, and support for, (ICT) literacy in the new curriculum. This would broaden students' skills and employment opportunities: "There is no doubt that students have to master adequate knowledge and skills to get a job, additional skills such as IT and the Internet literacy are among the critical added knowledge that employers are seeking nowadays" (L.5:6).

In the context of Islamic teaching, Leader 2 (L.2:6) suggested that English language and ICT mastery are inseparable parts of knowledge. Therefore, this leader strongly urged students to master English and ICT: "Apart from good English skills, ICT is also important. Understanding ICT is also part of Islamic teachings. So students should know not only international languages but also technology in order not to be left behind" (L.2:6).

Similarly, Leader 5 (L.5) claimed that the intention of the English Education Department and UIN Ar-Raniry to utilise technology, including computer skills, to enhance students' competence in technological mastery must be supported. He stated that information technology plays a significant role in enriching students' thoughts, especially in interacting with the world to research and learn about current educational and technological development, as the following comment illustrates:

If students do not master IT and the Internet skills, they will not be able to find out information regarding the current technological and educational development worldwide. This may eventually contribute to the students' inability to develop their mind and thoughts. Therefore, every intention and program that aims at developing ICT/IT and science must be supported. (L.5:6)

Like leader 2 and Leader 5, Leader 4 (L.4) mentioned the same point regarding

students' need for technological proficiency. He claimed that empowering Acehnese students to become the future bright generation cannot be separated from technological and scientific development at UIN Ar-Raniry. Technology and science are recognised as the two principal aspects that need to be considered in the process of empowering students in the Aceh region. Leader 4 shared his comments, stating: "We need to seriously work to empower our students to be clever generations who professionally master modern technology and science, but their behaviour and mindset remain in the framework of Islamic *Syaria* and identity" (L.4:16).

6.3.2 Teachers' voices

When discussing the graduate attributes underpinning the Department's potentially new curriculum, teachers expressed a close relationship between English language and information and technological mastery. They also suggested that English language, information technology, and other technical knowledge concurrent with religious studies would play significant roles in assisting students manage their future life: "Students need to study not only English but also other skills like IT, religious studies, and technical knowledge that may help them survive in the future" (T.11.4:8). Another teacher contended that regardless of their study disciplines, students must master IT and computer skills. He mentioned that nowadays most information is available online and students must be able to utilise this information to enrich their knowledge: "Most information can now be widely accessed through the Internet. If they (students) do not master such skills they will not be able to find out information and are unable to develop their mind and thoughts" (T.6.1:2).

6.3.3 Students' voices

Students have repeatedly reported the limitedness of computer-related skills offered to them by the English Education Department (Nurdin, et al., 2010). They suggested that the Department's curriculum needed to allocate more time and effort to preparing its graduates to master adequate skills in computer technology, as described in this excerpt: "It is better that the English Education Department cares about computer skills for its students" (S.5:5). The significance of strengthening students' ITC skills in the Department's curriculum was also reported in the survey results (see tables 9 and 10).

7. Content knowledge and skills

This section reports participants' beliefs regarding English language, applied English use, and pedagogical competencies as core curriculum components under the content knowledge and skills theme.

7.1 English language

The primary objective of the English Education Department is to provide English language skills for its students. This sub-section presents teachers' suggestions about the content knowledge and skills that students should master after they have graduated.

7.1.1 Teachers' voices

The teachers believed that having studied at the Department, students should have professionally mastered four English language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing:

We always encourage our students to master four English skills; listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The school also expects that students must obtain high English language final examination score. But we have to ensure that when students get a high score in particular language skill components such as the English reading comprehension, they must prove that they have good English reading skills, they must be able to understand and interpret the whole reading texts or materials written in English language. (T.10.3:6)

It seems that among the four English skills, students have a tendency to master only the most popular: the speaking skills. Ability to master speaking skills gives students the capability to communicate orally in English correctly and fluently. This was reported by Teacher 1 (T.8.1:2). He stated that in the Aceh context, someone will be acknowledged as having mastered English language if he or she can speak English correctly and fluently. In Aceh, the government has endorsed English as the second language studied by some students at elementary schools, and all students at junior and senior secondary high schools. This teacher also implied that it does not mean that grammar is not important in studying English, but being able to master a productive oral language skill and apply it in daily life is seen as better than mastering a receptive language skill. He suggested that English teachers at schools should master sufficient teaching methodology to enable them to teach English conversation or an English speaking class. This teacher shared his opinion as

depicted below:

Mostly the main reason for students to study English language is to be able to speak English fluently and correctly. As such, English teachers should know how to teach their students effectively. It is well understood that English grammar is essential, but passive English - meaning that students cannot communicate in English – is not what we want. (T.8.1:2)

A recommendation on ways to increase students' motivation to study English language was proposed by one teacher at the beginning of the discussion. This teacher argued that the target language (English) should be employed to increase students' eagerness to study it. Apart from employing the target language, the English teacher should also be creative in using language teaching facilities, including the English language laboratory:

If English teachers always use English as the communication language in everyday teaching and learning process, I am sure that students will be motivated to learn more. But in reality they do not. There is also an indication that many, if not all, English teachers at school do not fully utilise the existence of language laboratory. Teachers, indeed, should have their own ideas to manage English laboratory. We acknowledge that although our English laboratory is not perfect enough, teachers should modify it, so that a good English teaching and learning process may run well. (T.11.4:4)

The suggestion to use the target language in teaching English was also reported by Teacher 1 (T.8.1). This teacher noticed that some teachers still use *Bahasa* or Indonesian language when teaching English. He stated that to teach English professionally, teachers need to use English maximally as the communication language. Both teachers and students should be immersed in the target language to get a feel for it in the process of language acquisition: "What I notice here at our school is that the English teachers do not use the target language in teaching English, they tend to use *Bahasa* (Indonesian language) instead" (T.8.1:2).

The participants also believed that by speaking English actively in the teaching and learning process, students would be more confident of using English and practicing it at school. This strategy can create an environment that is conducive to learning English, in which students actively practice English with their teachers and their friends. This teacher claimed that this process may eventually accelerate the process of English language acquisition targeted by the government and schools: "The main point I want to emphasise is that teachers should find ways to encourage students to

always use English as the communication language at school, teachers should be able to make students brave to speak English” (T.8.1:2).

In almost the same tone, another teacher implied that English language should be applied as the primary means of communication in teaching English to accelerate the process of acquisition of English speaking skills: “Well, as I see it, there are teachers who are very creative but they are not good at speaking. Teachers should communicate in English with students in order that they are motivated and getting used to English” (T.11.4:2).

7.1.2 Students’ voices

The students of the English Education Department participating in this study had varied opinions regarding the focus of the four English language skills they should master. Some said that productive or active language skills are more important than receptive skills. According to students, mastering those productive skills yields fruitful advantages; they can create multi-employment prospects on their own. Writing papers to submit to journals and news companies is part of the work they can undertake: “We must be able to deliver ideas either by writing or speaking. English writing and speaking skills are very critical for the English Education Department students to master” (S.7:30); “Over the four skills offered by the English Education Department, I hope to master well writing skills to write article, journal, poem etc” (S.7:28).

7.2 Applied English use

In terms of English use, the results of the interviews and focus group discussions reveal that reasons why students study English include getting a better career pathway and being able to study at overseas universities.

7.2.1 Teachers’ voices

Teachers suggested that English learning should not be grade-oriented. It should focus on empowering students’ competence in mastering English and their ability to utilise it as part of their academic and career achievements:

The purpose of learning English is not only to make students able to answer the final examination questions. Learning English must go further beyond that, students should be able to use the English skills they have mastered as a vehicle to pursue further knowledge and achieve a better career opportunity. (T.8.1:5)

Teachers also recommend the English Education Department objectively detect the most salient skills that students want to focus on during their study program. The department can then assist them to focus more on the skills they have chosen. Teachers also suggested that the Department offer students productive internship programs to facilitate practical English use. In this regard, the Department should access active partnerships with a network of leading institutions that provide services aligned to students' educational background and academic competence:

Students who do not want to be teachers should be able to identify their best talents and interests. If they are good at English translation, for instance, they should focus more on this subject. To accommodate these students' needs, in addition, the English Education Department should foster a strong relationship with various institutions that offer translation services. Mutual benefit internship programs are part of enrichment programs that the English Education Department should initiate. (T.9.2:4)

7.2.2 Lecturers' voices

During the lecturers' conversation, they argued that the Department should develop students' multi-talents. This would involve assisting students to empower the salient talents they express during their studies at the Department. The development of students' most dominant language skills can be integrated with various internship programs that best meet their needs. As a result, this may help students expand their job opportunities in the non-academic sector:

If students want to be the professional English translators, we should facilitate it. The English Education Department should provide them an internship program to answer student needs. Like English translation subject, English literature subject should also be designed to enhance students' art creativity and innovation. Students should be urged and directed to put their skills into practice, for instance after completing English literature course, students should be able to write poems, dramas or minor movie series, etc. (Le.6:6)

7.2.3 Students' voices

In almost a similar vein, students shared the same expectation as lecturers. Students said that to learn English is to express their ideas and works in English, and to put it in written and spoken language. As such, the desire to master the ability to write in English inspired students to learn more applied English skills, including how to write a short story, poem, or paper to share with others. This aspiration was expressed in the following words: "Over the four skills offered by the English Education Department, I hope to master a good skill in writing, namely skill to write a short

story, poetry, or short paper” (S.5:6).

7.3 Pedagogical competencies

7.3.1 Teachers’ voices

The teachers believed that students undertaking the pre-service program at the English Education Department should master sufficient pedagogical skills because the Department’s primary objective is to train students to be junior and senior high school teachers. Some participants stated that pedagogical skills are “...the art of teaching”. They are important because by mastering adequate teaching skills, students will be able to teach professionally. In addition, having mastered sufficient pedagogical skills will lead students to use their intelligence proficiently to detect a teaching method that suits diverse student backgrounds. Teaching methodology, syllabus development competence, and assessment skills are among the pedagogical skills students should master, as the following comments testify:

Teachers need to be able to identify our students’ weaknesses; teachers must be able to use appropriate teaching methodology in transferring knowledge, scholarship, and experience to students. Teachers have also to know certain applicable teaching methods that suit students’ academic competence. (T.8.1:2)

Every teacher must have good skills in designing quality teaching and lesson plans. This can be proved through teaching materials development and classroom management. So, teachers must be able to design teaching and learning process based on a certain school context. (T.9.2:4)

In the discussions with junior high school teachers, a concern emerged regarding the assessment process. Teachers suggested that English Education Department students need to master sufficient assessment and evaluation skills. These skills are important so students have a good understanding of how to assess their future students’ language mastery: “Probably the evaluation should be focused on the level of language mastery process. Evaluation should be periodically conducted to assess students’ competence in mastering a particular topic and teaching materials” (T.10.3:2).

Owing to the English teaching methodologies used at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, teachers expected the alumni of the Department to master adequate English teaching methodology. This includes being innovative in developing teaching and learning materials, for example the use of visual aids in

teaching process. In short, students must master adequate teaching methodologies to make English an interesting subject. The teachers also suggested that students studying at the Department should utilise technology as part of their innovative language teaching approaches:

We hope that the English Education Department graduates should be able to apply new and innovative teaching approaches (not traditional approach) when they teach English in the future. They can create a live teaching environment; learning not only takes place in a classroom (indoor), teaching and learning can be conducted in open areas. Moreover, teaching language can be more interesting if it is integrated with the application of current teaching technology. (T.9.2:8)

7.3.2 Students' voices

Students in the interviews and focus group failed to discuss the matter of pedagogical competence. However, they were not without opinion in this regard. Their viewpoints about the pedagogical skills that need to be accommodated in the newly developed curriculum were expressed and are elaborated in the forthcoming survey results (see Table 10).

8. Professional capabilities

Under the professional capabilities theme, respondents' voices regarding administrative capabilities, and leadership and communication skills to be accommodated in the curriculum are reported.

8.1 Administrative capabilities

Junior secondary high school teachers reported a lack of administrative skills mastered by students after completing their studies at the English Education Department. The teachers claimed that the students from this Department remained weak in certain administrative skills, particularly skills in developing lesson plans. Various administrative skills that deal directly with the teaching and learning process emerged as participants' concerns. The junior secondary high school teachers urged students to strengthen their skills by analysing schools' strengths and weaknesses, including resources. They also noticed students' inability to design course outlines or syllabus and lesson plans to fit certain school standards. The teachers shared their comments, as indicated in the following interview excerpts:

We suggest the English Education Department alumni to strengthen their

administrative skills. They should be able to design a learning system and develop learning resources in accordance with school needs. It is not a general learning system, but a specific one that really suits the provision of a certain school. (T.9.2:2)

Academic supervisor(s) also noted students' weaknesses in administrative competence during the pre-teaching service program. They claimed that some of the English Education Department students were still unable to design specific teaching plans to meet their school requirement, as testified in the following comment:

I can see when they are undertaking PPL (pre-teaching service) at our school, the English Education Department students or Education Faculty students face significant problems with administrative issues. They are not good enough at designing lesson plans that comply with our school standards. (T.9.2:6)

8.2 Leadership and communication skills

In the discussion with the students regarding graduate attributes they would like to have after graduation, some said that leadership and communication skills would be beneficial. Students asserted that having those skills might increase the opportunity to find jobs at organisations matching their educational qualifications: "We do need to have skills in interacting with others in a different environment. This may help us find better opportunities to work in various organisations that fit our educational background and experiences" (S.7:24).

Students acknowledged both communication and leadership skills as additional proficiencies to master after graduating from the English Education Department. They asserted that those skills might develop their competence in building potential relationships with others: "Besides having good English skills, I hope to have good interpersonal and communication skills, including ways to make friends. I also want to have good leadership skills" (S.7:27).

9. Concluding remarks

This section has reported significant stakeholders' views regarding the four major critical domains underpinning the development of the English Education Department's curriculum:

1. Personal values
2. Generic graduate outcomes
3. Content knowledge and skills

4. Professional capabilities.

The value placed on Islamic teachings to ensure a curriculum that prepares students to become good Islamic citizens and good Acehese citizens, ready to take on leadership roles in their local communities, has been emphasised in the leaders' discussion. The need to ensure students have a curriculum that prepares them for life in the wider world; a curriculum that is up-to-date with the latest education and technological developments has also been emphasised. Finding a balance between these two key foundations for student education at the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry, and accommodating both in a reformed curriculum has been shown as a crucial issue for ensuring the Department can meet its stated educational objectives.

9.1 Increased students' input

The stakeholders' opinions concerning graduate employability, entrepreneurship skills, technological literacy, English language mastery, applied English use, and pedagogical competencies have been described. Participants' views regarding the administrative capabilities and leadership and communication skills that need to be integrated into the English Education Department's curriculum have been elucidated.

This report of interviews and focus groups has more extensively reflected the opinion of leaders. Largely, they were less confronted by the interview context and more confident in expressing their personal views. Hesitancy to express personal opinions was obvious among the students. While, students raised significant basic issues regarding the Department's curriculum during the interviews and focus group discussions, it became obvious that further attempts were needed to gain an insight into students' experiences about the existing curriculum and opinions about what needs to change. Addressing the silence of the students' voices in this study required further investigation. This resulted in the researcher employing an online student survey to gather data from a much larger sample of students about:

1. The purposes for their engagement in the English education course.
2. Their lived experience of the course.
3. Their opinions of strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum.

The survey was conducted over two months from September 10th 2012 to November 17th 2012. The next section provides an understanding of students' views of the English Education Department's curriculum. The rationale for conducting the survey was to seek to understand the extent to which the views expressed in the interviews and focus groups represent those of the general student body, and to further understand information provided by students during the interviews and focus group discussions.

Section 2: Student survey results

The purpose of this section is to verify the previous data collected using interview and focus group discussion approaches. The survey was designed to further investigate a number of issues raised by students, namely:

1. Students' overall purposes in enrolling at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam – Banda Aceh.
2. Their experiences of the current curriculum.
3. Their recommendations for curriculum development in the future.

Students were asked four sets of questions to find out more holistic information about the issues above. The first set of questions focused on students' purposes in choosing to study at the English Education Department, and their views regarding the purposes of the curriculum. The second set of questions asked students to provide their expectations of, and ideas about the curriculum. The third set of questions sought to understand the impacts and lived experiences of the course itself. The fourth set of questions asked students' opinions regarding the curriculum strengths and weaknesses, and how the curriculum might be improved (see Appendix 6).

The results of this survey have the potential to serve as a comprehensive guide to recommendations for the Department and its authority in reforming the curriculum to meet students' needs and current local and national education development needs.

10. Sample and methods

The sample consisted of 86 English Education Department students at UIN Ar-Raniry, with 44 students enrolled in year 3 and 42 students enrolled in year 4. The number of students taking part in this survey met the gender equity fairness

requirement (Taylor, 1994), with 45 of the 86 respondents being female. The students who participated in the survey had undertaken either all, or at least 75 per cent of the subjects offered by the Department.

Each student completed an anonymous questionnaire developed and designed online, consisting of a 37-item *Likert* scale and nine open-ended questions. The electronic link for the questionnaire was distributed to students' emails, and the survey was open from September 10th, 2012 to November 17th, 2012. Anonymity was ensured to protect participants from possible risk or threat, and to encourage freedom of expression (Cook, 2001). Any information that could identify the respondents was excluded. Therefore, respondents' names, addresses, and contact numbers were not requested.

11. Analysis and findings

The collected data were analysed using a basic SPSS software program (Field, 2013) to ensure their accuracy. Manual coding was employed to analyse additional comments in the survey. Findings are reported based on the questions used in the survey. This has ensured presentation of all gathered information.

1. Why did students choose to study English Education at the English Education Department?

This first question was asked to understand why students chose to study English at the English Education Department. All answers are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Students' objectives in studying English at the English Education Department

Objectives	n= 86	% of respondents agreed
1. To master English language to gain a qualification		86
2. To gain an employment possibly in a non-education sector		69
3. To receive instruction in Islamic studies		62
4. To become a teacher of English as a foreign language		56

Note. Because each respondent was able to choose a combination of options, the sum of percentages in all tables in this section is greater than 100 per cent.

The survey results confirm that a majority of students (86%) claimed that their main

purpose for enrolling at the Department was to master English language to gain a qualification. The second highest rank (69%) was to gain an employment possibly in a non-education sector. Receiving instruction in Islamic studies was the motivation for 62 per cent of students. Interestingly, even though the main objective of the Department is to train students to become English teachers, only 48 students or 56 per cent stated this as their purpose for studying at the Department.

Reflecting on the main answer that students studied English to master the English language to gain a qualification, students qualified their responses by saying they wanted the option of pursuing further graduate study overseas or simply to travel around the world. They believed that mastering English provided opportunities to get scholarships to study abroad, which they perceived as being easily available. These claims are reflected in the following additional comments: “By mastering the international language (English), I would like to achieve the scholarship for continuing my destination of study and to travel around the world”; or, “Instead of becoming a teacher, I always dream about going abroad. That is why I enrolled at the English Education Department”; or, “By becoming a Master in English as a foreign language, I can study law education in the Netherlands”.

Another student also said that he/she studied English because he/she loved it, and English was beneficial for his/her future. However, the respondent did not elaborate on how English would benefit their future. Nevertheless, this student’s interest in studying English is valuable information for the Department to further investigate a suitable curriculum framework to accommodate all stakeholders’ education needs.

In the last few decades, English has become one of the most popular languages in East Asia (Lazaro & Medalla, 2004) and Aceh is no exception. Students, regardless of their study focus (e.g. medical studies, economics, engineering etc), commonly allocate a certain amount of time to studying English either at a private English education training centre, or a formal school or college. At the English Education Department, it is very easy to find students who study at two faculties at different universities. It is often the case that students studying at the Medical, Economics, and Engineering Faculty of Syiah Kuala University in Aceh are studying at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry at the same time (Interview with the English Education Department Head, March 22nd, 2011).

The motivations students reported for studying English are varied. Some want to develop their academic careers further in academia by pursuing a higher degree overseas, others want to study English simply to master the language to deepen their chosen study disciplines; they want to master English so they can read books and other written English language materials. This is in line with what one student was seeking by studying English at the Department:

For me, learning English is not only for becoming a teacher but also to balance everything that relates to the use of English in daily life. Moreover, by understanding English, I can find a lot of information and knowledge which is hardly found in the books or articles which are written in Bahasa. Such as the books which are related to natural science and computers.

In Indonesia in general and in Aceh in particular, English competency serves as a critical medium in seeking employment and pursuing higher education. English proficiency is required not only when people want to pursue a Master's degree overseas or at national universities, but also when they want to be a government employee. Pursuing a Master's degree in Indonesia requires its candidate to have a certain TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score. Even some top ranking national universities such as the University of Indonesia (UI), Universitas Gajah Mada (UGM), Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), and other preferred universities require Master's student candidates to have 400 - 500 ITP TOEFL scores (*Tanya jawab SIMAK UI - Question and answer on how to study at University of Indonesia, 2013*). Similarly, to be a civil servant at a government institution, one must undergo several recruitment and selection stages, including undertaking an English language test.

The third highest ranked option of students studying English at the Department (to receive instruction in Islamic studies) reflects their intention to find out more about Islamic-related issues written in English. Mastering English skills enables students to read more articles, papers, books, and other reading materials on Islamic contemporary issues written by international Islamic experts and theorists. It is also commonly believed that most Islamic-related knowledge and information is written most frequently in either English or Arabic, and rarely in *Bahasa*. As such, those who want to focus on being Islamic scholars with great expertise in Islamic education intend to study English to broaden their global perspectives (Hassim &

Cole-Adams, 2010).

The last option students claimed to be their reason for studying English in the Department (to become a teacher of English as a foreign language) was not surprising. At UIN Ar-Raniry, it is commonly believed that students tend to study English in the Department simply to be proficient in the language. They will then seek employment in other promising sectors, including working at international organisations, banking institutions, police departments and other private companies, including oil companies. According to the Head of Department, a number of students who have graduated from the Department have served in police institutions, banking, and international companies (Interview with the English Education Department Head, March 22nd, 2011). The Department Head also asserted that if students fail to get employment in the above-mentioned sectors, they will change their mind and become teachers.

This reveals an inclination among students studying at the Department to find a non-teaching-related job first, but if that fails they will try to be a teacher, even though they might not really desire this profession. They choose to be a teacher because they have no other options.

2. What are the purposes of the curriculum?

This question was asked to discover the goals of the Department's curriculum in nurturing students not only to become English teachers but also to have a general understanding of Islamic knowledge, which is the core mission of UIN Ar-Raniry as an Islamic higher education institution. The students' answers are documented in Table 9.

Table 9: Purposes of the English Education Department's curriculum

Purposes	n = 86	% of respondents agreed
1. To provide appropriate Islamic core subjects to prepare students to be a good Islamic teacher, citizen, and leader		76
2. To prepare students to be a teacher of English as a foreign language		73
3. To provide students ICT skills to teach English as a foreign language		71
4. To educate students so that they can gain employment in teaching		67

The survey results indicate that 76 per cent of the sample stated that the Department's curriculum needs to cover particular Islamic core subjects to prepare students to be a good Islamic teacher, citizen, and leader. Students agreed that to achieve this goal, the Department needed to offer particular Islamic core subjects to prepare students to become English teachers who have a good understanding of Islamic knowledge.

In the cultural context of UIN Ar-Raniry, the Acehnese regard a leader as someone who has good Islamic knowledge. He or she should be able to recite the *Quran* and understand its meanings. As such, most graduates of UIN Ar-Raniry are generally regarded as having such a qualification. Referring to this attribute, students agreed that the Department's curriculum should be able to address this cultural aspect by preparing them to have a good understanding of Islamic teachings as well as preparing them to become a generation of graduates with skills in English.

The second most mentioned curriculum purpose was to prepare students to become a teacher of English as a foreign language (73%). Students expect the Department's curriculum to provide them with comprehensive English language competence, including appropriate pedagogical skills, because one of its objectives is to prepare students to become English teachers. Students (71%) also ascertained that ICT skills should be part of the Department's curriculum. They claimed that one of the Department's curriculum purposes is to provide computer skills that students can apply in teaching English. The inclusion of ICT skills, including computer skills, in the Department's curriculum, corresponds not only to the students' needs but also to UUPA regulations. The UUPA, while not clearly elaborating a holistic concept of computer skills to be accommodated in the Department's curriculum, requests that technological mastery encompassing computer skills should be part of courses offered by education institutions.

The survey results also signify that 67 per cent of the sample agreed that the purpose of the Department's curriculum was to prepare students to gain employment in teaching. This purpose demonstrates that the Department's curriculum should be able

to prepare students to find employment in the teaching sector. This area requires a sharper understanding of the relationships among pedagogy, teaching skills, and a competent teacher.

The last purpose of the Department’s curriculum according to the respondents was to educate students to gain employment in areas other than teaching (63%). The number of students suggesting that the Department’s curriculum should assist its students gain employment in areas other than teaching is high. Having mentioned in the previous section that most students wanted to study English at the Department to gain a qualification in English to enable them to gain employment in non-teaching sector, this percentage is not an unexpected result. Students seem to take advantage of learning English at the Department to become English language professionals, however, as stated previously, if they are unable to gain a job in the non-teaching sector, becoming a teacher remains a better option.

3. What opportunities should be included in the Department’s curriculum?

This question was asked to capture significant attributes to be accommodated in the Department’s curriculum; attributes that are considered important in assisting students develop their skills to enhance their employment opportunities. Table 10 presents respondents’ data related to this question.

Table 10: Opportunities that should be included into the Department’s curriculum

Opportunities	n = 86	% of respondents agreed
1. Communication skills		95
2. Pedagogical knowledge		93
3. English language fluency		92
4. Competence in using ICT		89
5. Understanding of the Quran and Islamic values		81
6. Leadership skills		72
7. Entrepreneurship skills		69

Table 10 suggests that communication skills, teaching skills, and language competence are among the skills students want to master after graduating from the Department. Those skills are viewed as part of the key competencies needed to succeed in their future careers. Communication skills and language competence, for example, are needed to communicate, express themselves, get their ideas across, and connect with the person to whom they are speaking (Rose, 2013). Students also expressed the necessity for accommodating communication skills in the Department's curriculum as follows: "Communication skill is important because in performing any work, we need to be able to communicate with others"; or "Communication skill is the most important skill; many students are learning English in order to be able to communicate, and to succeed in international world"; or "Communication is an important skill for a teacher. I think most of English Department graduates don't have powerful communication skill".

In relation to leadership skills, 62 students (72%) agreed that these should be included in the Department's curriculum. Leadership skills play a significant role in shaping students to be successful future leaders. Moreover, leadership skills are required so that students can successfully manage their school and teaching and learning processes, including dealing with subordinates when they become headmasters/headmistresses.

A high percentage (69%) of respondents also thought that entrepreneurship skills should be included in the Department's curriculum. Entrepreneurship skills are claimed to have potential in assisting students to create self-employment. As a result, students' intention to get a formal academic degree to become a government employee can be gradually eliminated. Students' intention to be civil servants after graduating is no longer relevant because in the last few years the government has applied a zero civil servant growth policy (*Pegawai Negeri Sipil*) throughout the nation (Abubakar, 2013). Therefore, if entrepreneurship skills are incorporated into the Department's curriculum, self-employment opportunities might open up, especially for those who want to follow this line of work.

The question "*What opportunities should be included into the Department's curriculum?*" also revealed students' desire for provision of an opportunity to study subjects that best meet their study interests and future careers. This desire is reflected

in the following quotes:

Ideally, the English Education Department's curriculum accommodates general knowledge such as leadership and management, IT, and Arts.

or

It will be better for the Department to offer courses or subjects that best meet student's interests. Each faculty and department in most well-known universities in the world offers various professional elective subjects that students may study. This is important because not all students enrolling at the Department want to be teachers.

or

I think the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry needs to develop a curriculum that aligns Islamic values, ICT and English knowledge comprehensively. This alignment is important because, I guess, there is no significant difference between the English Education Department's curriculum of UIN Ar-Raniry and the English Education Department's curriculum of Syiah Kuala University.¹

4. What should the future curriculum look like?

This question was asked to acquire students' ideas and insights regarding the concept of the Department's curriculum in the future. Students were invited to share their opinions about this question. Table 11 illustrates the future curriculum concept according to students' responses.

Table 11: The concept of the Department's future curriculum

Focus	n = 86	% of respondents agreed
1. Provide hands-on experience with a variety of technologies		79
2. Conduct all English language classes in English		78
3. Integrate Islamic teaching into all aspects of the Curriculum rather than teach them as a separate subject		74
4. Accommodate non-teaching internship programs		59

The survey results show that a solid majority of students suggested that the

¹ There are two state higher education institutions in Banda Aceh downtown; UIN Ar-Raniry and UNSYIAH (Syiah Kuala University). UIN Ar-Raniry is an Islamic university under the management of Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA), while UNSYIAH is a "secular" university under the management of Ministry of National Education (MoNA)

Department's future curriculum could provide hands-on experiences with a variety of technologies (79%). Some preferred that all English language classes could be taught in English (78%), followed by the integration of Islamic teaching into all aspects of the curriculum rather than as separate subjects (74%). The least percentage of respondents (59%) suggested that the future curriculum should accommodate non-teaching internship programs.

Technological competency, including computer literacy, is still one of the most preferred skills students perceived as being accommodated in the future curriculum. Students claimed that the development of technology has the potential to empower education quality, particularly in terms of delivering English teaching, as argued in the following comment:

Overall, I see that the use of communication technology is important and it should be included in curriculum, it is because as the time is changing the use of technology is increasing sharply, and there are many devices, and software that we can use to teach English.

The survey results also indicate that the future curriculum could necessitate carrying out teaching and learning processes in English. Applying English language when teaching and learning in English could theoretically accelerate the language acquisition process by giving students a great opportunity to practice using English with their friends and teachers. They might be able to express their ideas in English without any psychological burden because they realise they are at the learning stage. Nevertheless, if *Bahasa* were to be used in teaching English, students suggested that ideally it should only be used in the first and second years, not in the third or upper year, as recorded in the following excerpt:

If it is possible, for the first two years, the language of instruction in teaching and learning process is Bahasa. Yet, in the last two years, English must be used to give students wide opportunity to use and practice English optimally.

The application of *Bahasa* in teaching English at the Department has, to some extent, eased the language transformation process for students and teachers. Students may easily understand what their lecturers are talking about. However, when teaching and learning English is conducted wholly in *Bahasa*, students might lose the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the English language learning atmosphere.

The survey results also suggest that the future curriculum could integrate Islamic teaching into all aspects rather than remaining as separate subjects. While this integration may bring a significant revolution to the process of disseminating Islamic knowledge to students, limited human resources qualified in both language skills and Islamic knowledge is an alarming concern at UIN Ar-Raniry.

In response to the last question regarding the future curriculum concept, 51 students (59%) agreed that the curriculum could accommodate non-teaching internship programs to enhance employment prospects. Internships in non-teaching programs were suggested as a solution for students who intend to pursue their career in a non-teaching sector. As a result, according to students, such an internship program would provide an opportunity for students to expand their study interests to meet the requirements of their chosen career.

5. What was the impact of the current curriculum?

This question was asked to understand the degree of students' satisfaction with the current curriculum. The primary objectives of this question were to understand the impact of the current curriculum on students, especially on their English language competence and pedagogical skills. Table 12 presents the results for this question.

Table 12: Impact of the current curriculum on students

1. English language skills

Focus	n = 86	% of respondents agreed
1. Reading		86
2. Grammar		84
3. Speaking		79
4. Listening		76
5. Writing		76

2. How to teach English language skills

Pedagogical skills	n = 86	% of respondents agreed
1. Select teaching and learning materials		98

2. Plan lessons	83
3. Design syllabus	76
4. Use ICT	73

When asked about the impact of the current curriculum on students' language skills, a majority of respondents (>80%) claimed that it has helped them to know English reading and English grammar skills. The other three skills—English speaking, English listening, and English writing skills—shared almost the same percentage (76%–79%).

Students also responded to a question about the impact of the current curriculum on their pedagogical skills, including using ICT in teaching English. Students claimed that the current curriculum has helped them to understand how to select teaching and learning materials (98%), how to plan lessons (83%), how to design a syllabus (76%), and how to use ICT (73%).

The above results indicate that the current curriculum has helped students to master particular pedagogical skills, and has also assisted them to master five English language skills. Yet, among the four offered pedagogical skills, students claimed to have obtained the least skill in how to use ICT. This implies that ICT-related subjects are not considered important in the current curriculum, and the concept of teaching and learning ICT is weak.

6. What is your experience of the English courses?

This question was asked to gather feedback about students' experiences of undertaking the English courses during their time at the Department. Students were asked about the core English subjects, Islamic subjects, pedagogical subjects, teaching methodology, and their readiness to obtain employment either in teaching or non-teaching sectors. Table 13 presents the results.

Table 13: Students' experience of the English courses

Focus	n= 86	% of respondents agreed
1. Satisfaction with pedagogical subjects		63
2. Satisfaction with English core subjects		60

3. Satisfaction with Islamic subjects	52
4. Satisfaction with teaching methodology	52
5. Satisfaction with preparation for being a teacher	49
6. Teaching and learning met students' needs	48
7. Satisfaction with gaining employment in non-Teaching sector	44
8. Overall curriculum content met students' learning Needs	38

The survey results above show that the majority of students were satisfied with the pedagogical subjects (63%), the English core subjects (60%), the composition of Islamic subjects (52%), and the teaching methodology applied in the teaching and learning processes (52%).

In response to the question regarding experiences in teaching English education courses, 49 per cent of students stated that they were well prepared for employment as a teacher, and 48 per cent stated that the teaching and learning strategies used met their learning needs. In contrast, the number of respondents who claimed that the current curriculum content met their learning needs was relatively small (38%). Only 38 (44%) of the 86 respondents said they were satisfied that they could gain employment in a range of occupations other than teaching.

The question, “*What is your experience of the English courses?*” recorded significant dissatisfaction among students studying at the Department. The highest satisfaction (60%) contradicts students’ responses to the preceding questions. The survey results verify that students have negative experiences of the English courses due to the current curriculum. The curriculum cannot meet students’ needs in preparing them to be a teacher or to obtain employment in a non-teaching sector. A total of 33 students (38%) claimed that the current curriculum content failed to satisfy their needs.

7. What aspects of the programs do you see as most important and why?

The purpose of this question was to discover which of the Department’s programs have been beneficial or would be beneficial in the future.

When asked about suggestions for future development, the most common response focused on pedagogical issues, including teaching and administrative skills. Respondents perceived that, somehow, the Department is still weak in providing its students with strong pedagogical qualifications. Mastering adequate pedagogical skills, according to students, would assist them (teachers in the future) to achieve planned teaching and learning targets. This idea is reflected in the following comments:

When teachers succeed in applying a variety of methods in teaching to transfer knowledge and are capable of teaching what they meant to teach, only then the purpose of teaching and learning can really be accomplished.

or

Pedagogical skills, because as education faculty students, we have to have more knowledge in teaching.

or

Lesson plan, because it can guide us how to teach professionally.

Besides pedagogical competence, Islamic values and computer skills were the second most common emerging skills raised by students for inclusion in the future curriculum. Students suggested that Islamic value domains could be strengthened in the future curriculum to preserve the Islamic institution's identity: "I think Islamic values are important, because we talk about an Islamic educational institution". Another student said that:

English for Islamic studies is critical because the main purpose of UIN Ar-Raniry, especially the English Education Department, is to train students to be English teachers at Islamic schools. Therefore, the English Education Department's curriculum should be designed by accommodating this main purpose.

The advancement of technology that has notably pervaded all sectors of life motivated students to challenge the Department to accommodate technological competence, including computer skills, in the forthcoming curriculum. Students claimed that technology, through its distinctive software, can be utilised to enrich teaching and learning English, as exemplified in the following comment:

Overall, I see that the use of communication technology is important and it should be included in curriculum, it is because as the time is changing, the use of

technology is increasing sharply, and there are many devices and software that we can use to teach English.

8. What aspects of the programs do you see as least important and why?

This essay question aimed to understand the programs offered by the Department's curriculum that least support students in developing their capacity as an English teacher candidate or their other purposes for studying at the Department.

The most common theme to emerge regarding the least important program aspects was the composition of the MKU course components (*MKU – Mata Kuliah Umum – Generic course subjects*), including national philosophy, Indonesian language, and educational philosophy. Students asserted that some of the MKU subjects do not make a significant contribution to developing their English competence or their pedagogical skills. Students felt that introductory courses normally provide common information at a superficial level, and have no implications for their future careers. Arabic courses, for example, function to familiarise students with Arabic, especially those students who have limited skills in this language. The students' critiques regarding inappropriateness of MKU courses are reflected in the following comments:

Mata Kuliah Umum (MKU), including introductory to Arabic, MSI, SPI, and Kewiraan do not support students' needs, therefore (in my opinion) MKU is not needed.

or

There are general subjects that have no relationship with English because they were not taught in English. They are Filsafat Umum, Filsafat Pendidikan, and Ilmu Alamiah Dasar.

In a similar tone, students expressed their deep dissatisfaction with some MKU courses, contending that some were irrelevant. Students suggested that the courses should be substituted with other beneficial courses, as described in the following excerpts: "MKU courses should be eliminated as they waste students' time. They should be substituted by more useful English courses"; or, "*KPM* is wasting time and energy, while we only have a very limited time to focus on English language".

9. What aspects of the programs are most effective and why?

This question aimed to gather an understanding of the most effective programs; those that the students saw as making a significant contribution to developing students' intellectual capacity during their time at the Department.

When asked about the most effective program, the most common theme was "internship in teaching practice". Students noticed that teaching practices played a significant role in preparing them to be teachers. This argument is supported by the following comments:

I think teaching practice (PPL) is very important for students before they become the real teachers.

or

PPL, because it is an internship for students to apply and practice their skills and knowledge in teaching.

or

Teaching practice (PPL). This program trains students to be more responsible and confident. This program is just the beginning before we become the real teachers.

Students noted that teaching practice trained them to apply practical knowledge before they became the real teachers, teaching formally at schools. Teaching practice gave students opportunities to apply distinctive pedagogical skills, as well as language competence in a real teaching world. In general, teaching practice programs have assisted students to strengthen their teaching capacity and their psychological maturity before being a "real teacher".

10. What aspects of the programs need to be improved and why?

The purpose of this question was to obtain significant information regarding the programs that need to be improved. Students were asked to analyse the current programs offered by the Department, and to provide their thoughts as their contribution to improving the Department's programs in the future.

Students offered diverse ideas, but most responses related to the composition of subjects offered by the Department. Students claimed that some subjects needed more credit hours, and some needed to reduce their credit hours. The survey results

indicate that students wished to study more subjects relating specifically to their study focus, including English language component courses and pedagogical-related subjects. They suggested that some generic course hours needed to be reduced to make space for more useful courses. Their claims are illustrated in the following comments:

In a week, we have only a few hours to learn how to teach. The 'Teaching methodology' course is offered only two hours a week. It should be more than that.

or

The credit hours of English Speaking and Grammar courses should be added more. Meanwhile the credit hours for general courses such as PKN, Bahasa, and Arabic should be reduced.

Students also said that the Department needed to improve its capacity to provide students with research skills, computer skills, and wider opportunities to practice English. They claimed that the Department does not currently provide all of these skills for its students, for example: "English practice, computer skills, research skills are among the very scant skills we found at this Department".

11. What is one key step you believe the curriculum or teaching could take to improve the quality of graduates?

This last question was intended to find out key steps the Department could take to improve education and graduate quality. The most frequent theme was pedagogical and administrative-related skills. Students suggested that the newly-developed curriculum could provide significant courses dealing with lesson planning, including syllabus design. This suggestion is reflected in the following excerpts:

The English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry needs to add school administration skill subjects such as syllabus or lesson plan or in Bahasa, it is called RPP (Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran). Because we still face a lot of problems about it at school when we are undertaking teaching practice (pre-service program). Hopefully RPP will be one of the new courses in a new curriculum.

or

Learning (lesson) plan is important, because at our Department there is no single subject that teaches us how to comprehensively design a syllabus or lessons plan. As a result, we often time were discouraged when we were in pre-service program (PPL- teaching practice) because we did not understand about teaching and some administrative issues.

Besides the pedagogical issues, students also suggested the Department could develop a series of internship programs to improve the quality of graduates. These programs would include collaboration not only with education institutions but also with non-teaching bodies. Students shared their opinions as noted:

Cooperation with schools and other non-education institutions should be developed because we have to have places to apply and practice our knowledge.

or

I see that integrated internship programs need to be developed, for instance writing skills should be integrated with newspaper agencies or writing media.

Tabulation of the responses also reveals that ICT skills, entrepreneurship competence, integration of Islamic values and local culture, and providing elective subjects that meet the students' interest and current employment world are among ideas the students recommended for serious consideration when the Department's curriculum is reformed. For example:

To provide more flexible strategies in teaching and to let students think about their future by providing a subject about future career overview, and also to integrate Islamic subjects with other subjects -- they shouldn't be taught separately-- is an ideal future department curriculum.

Students also proposed integration of Islamic values into the Department's curriculum as the local legacy. They pointed out that the Department needs to integrate all three significant elements— local culture, Islamic values, and English skills—into its curriculum: "I think our curriculum has to be aligned with local culture, Islamic values and English skills".

According to students, the Department's curriculum needs to include IT courses as part of student's empowerment in gaining technological mastery, including computer skills, to improve the quality of graduates. The current course entitled "Laboratory and computer practice" does not optimally assist them in mastering computer skills, as illustrated in the comment: "IT is part of the subject. The curriculum should include this subject. Now we only have Laboratory and Computer practice, which is absolutely not enough".

The final suggestion for improving graduates' quality is to maximally educate

students based on their academic preferences. Students could be classified into particular groups. This classification may provide students with the real skills they are interested in. Professional academic care could be provided for those who want to be teachers and for other work choices, as illustrated in these final comments: “Teach them the real skill required in daily life; entrepreneurship programs”; or, “Classify the students into some categories; who want to be the teacher, the translator or another occupation. And please teach us depend on what we need for our future”.

12. Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided insight into the stakeholders’ views of the Department’s curriculum. This insight has highlighted some critical aspects of curriculum development. Some stakeholders have expressed some strong opinions regarding the new curriculum, including considerable discussion about the integration of Islamic education and general disciplinary education. Leaders were strongly of the view that Islamic learning and English language learning should coexist in a new curriculum and this was supported by some comments by teachers and students.

Regarding course composition, students also mentioned that the Department could provide more elective subjects to choose from. The focus of these choices encompassed leadership and management skills, ICT skills, and entrepreneurship skills. The MKU course component was also identified as needing reform. Students proposed that some irrelevant subjects need to be exchanged for more relevant ones. However, students’ desire to have more general elective subjects in the Department’s curriculum contradicts some of the leaders’ views. These leaders perceived that the English Education Department was founded to train students to be English teachers and not to provide any other services. These contradictory perceptions between leaders and students in perceiving the direction of educational development at this institution has significant implications for the development of the Department’s curriculum. Interestingly, the survey results indicate that the students’ primary reason for enrolling in the Department was to gain a qualification to gain employment, possibly in a non-teaching sector. Only 56 per cent of the sample agreed that they enrolled in the Department because they wanted to be teachers, a significant finding give that the Department’s purpose is to train students to be English teachers.

Students were also critical of the Department's approach to teaching English and its impact on their learning. They reported that lecturers still use *Bahasa* as the communication medium; not in keeping with their expectation that they would learn English through an English language immersion program, which could accelerate the language acquisition process. Teachers also suggested implementing an English language immersion program at the Department. They reported that more frequent use of *Bahasa* when teaching English could undermine students' eagerness to use English to communicate with lecturers, colleagues, and other people. This may have potentially deleterious implications for empowering students to achieve mastery in English.

Suggested solutions to all of the concerns raised in the survey—issues regarding integrating Islamic education with disciplinary and general education, the variety and flexibility of courses, mastering technological literacy, and a curriculum that enables students to have a wider choice in terms of employment—are discussed in greater depth in the next chapter. Also discussed in the next chapter are the results of the findings and their implications for curriculum reform. The discussion explores the challenge of designing and developing a curriculum that will meet diverse students' study objectives and specific professional requirements, including graduate capabilities and technological mastery. The discussion encapsulates the challenge of improving quality instruction to increase learning outcomes and integrating Islamic and general education.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION

“Education, in its deepest sense and at whatever age it takes place, concerns the opening of identities - exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state” (Wenger, 1998, p. 263).

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study has been to conceptualise what might be an ideal approach to curriculum design and implementation for the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam, Banda Aceh, Indonesia under the new policy regime of the UUPA. As a starting point for this study, the policy and its context were analysed (see Chapter 6). Its constituents, namely leaders (government and university), university lecturers, teachers (representing graduate employers; teachers and principals in schools where graduates are employed), and university students and were then asked for their views about the new policy direction to gain an understanding of their diverse expectations of it. A key assumption underpinning this thesis was that effective curriculum change is not possible without some alignment between the nature of the change, and the needs and perceptions of the stakeholders the change will affect.

2. Summary of the study

This study was conducted at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam Banda Aceh, Indonesia. One hundred and twelve participants consisting of leaders, lecturers, teachers, and students participated. In the first phase of the research, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to capture stakeholders’ opinions concerning the English Education Department’s curriculum, and the development and change they believed were needed. In the second phase, an online survey was conducted with students in the English Education Department.

The online survey was introduced to verify the initial interview and focus group data, and to further explore the information and ideas generated from this. It is important

to note that despite the primary objective of this study—to seek participants' views and perceptions about the English Education Department's curriculum—this research does not attempt to invent a new theory of curriculum development. What is new, however, is that a new approach to curriculum development in an Islamic context is proposed that will draw upon existing theory to suggest how to best meet this new curriculum challenge for higher education in Aceh province.

It is also imperative to note that a significant constraint confronted the researcher when attempting to contextualise the outcomes in terms of Islamic higher education curricular. This constraint was the scarcity of information, in particular published research, about curriculum development in Islamic higher education, especially in the Indonesian context. This is of concern in developing a contextual framework that best suits the English Education Department's curriculum in an Islamic education institution. As a result, the discussion presented here relies mainly on a limited scope of research findings. In addition, the information and frameworks that support the discussion are adopted primarily from Western curriculum theories and concepts, which, while salient, require cultural adaptation and critique. Furthermore, those Western curriculum values would fit within a distinctive mix of local culture and contexts (Harland, Hussain, & Bakar, 2014).

3. Overview of what the stakeholders want from the curriculum

Four groups of people—leaders, lecturers, teachers, and students—were approached to obtain a clear picture of the English Education Department's curriculum concept. Their perceptions and ideas were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, and an online survey. The following statements are the synopses of their ideas.

3.1 Leaders

In general, leaders provided a strong indication that a curriculum should integrate Islamic education with general education. They believe that education needs to enable students to master general skills so that they have the capabilities to deal with worldly matters and be civilised citizens, and at the same time to nurture students to have a good understanding of Islamic religious values and be able to apply them in life.

According to the leaders, the core of the Islamic education objective is that the curriculum should contribute to improving students' *akhlak* (Moral values) through the teaching and learning process. This educational objective has been acknowledged by Zin et al., (2012) suggesting that Islamic education must focus on empowering students' morals capacity. The leaders argued that having a curriculum that was mindful of inculcating students' moral values has the potential to contribute to the development of law-abiding, tolerant, and respectful people.

Leaders also perceived that the curriculum, besides assisting students to master Islamic-related teachings, should be mindful of providing for the development of students' broad generic skills. They argued that English is merely a medium to expand students' career options. Those who gain qualifications in English have an opportunity to work not only in English education in schools but also in other non-education positions. The leaders strongly urged students to expand this opportunity by gaining the additional generic skills that most companies require, including technological-related literacy. Those skills could be achieved if the curriculum were designed and developed accordingly. Successful integration of Islamic education and general education will contribute significantly toward the development of Aceh province and its human resources.

3.2 Lecturers

The discussion with lecturers revealed several critical ideas that the English Education Department could consider in reforming its curriculum. Lecturers argued that the new curriculum needed to be flexible in developing students' most dominant language skills. They suggested that a particular subject or topic that becomes the most preferred subject, such as 'English Translation', could have more space in the new curriculum. In addition, lecturers suggested that internship programs be intensified to accelerate students' competence in such preferred skills.

Lecturers also noted that in order for English Education Department graduates to interact with the local community, they must have adequate leadership skills. These leadership skills are necessary to empower the surrounding community, including the younger generation in this region, to master both Islamic and general education.

In terms of religious values, lecturers concluded that UIN Ar-Raniry, as an Islamic

institution, has a critical role to play in preparing graduates to have a better ethical morals (*akhlak*) to build a better Muslim community. According to lecturers, the local community places a high expectation on this Islamic university to produce graduates who have good *akhlak*, and can be good leaders and *Imam* to convey *khutbah* in Friday prayers.

3.3 Teachers

In addition to mentioning the above issues, teachers emphasised the need for the curriculum to provide for students' mastery of pedagogical skills to ensure graduates can function as professional teachers. There should be a focus on teaching methodology, assessment and evaluation skills, ways to deal with classroom management, and other administrative issues such as skills in school syllabus design and development. Furthermore, to assist students seek employment in non-teaching sectors, teachers advocated that the curriculum must attend to the development of technological mastery and students' leadership capabilities. These skill sets are referred to in higher education as "generic skills," or "graduate capabilities," or "graduate attributes". Barrie (2007), and Go and McDonald (2000) assert that mastering particular graduate attributes may enhance students' employment opportunities.

3.4 Students

The interviews, focus groups and survey with students revealed that learning English language is the students' first priority. Students also recognised a significant correlation between understanding Islamic teachings and the development of moral values. Some students wanted to study at the Department to increase their awareness of Islamic values, including ways to potentially develop their own morals qualities.

The research findings elucidate that students have different objectives in learning English as a foreign language. Some students were eager to study applied English language skills rather than English language theories. They repeatedly mentioned the need for the Department's curriculum to empower them through mastering applied English skills, for example skills in English translation and English writing. Students believe that those applied skills are pivotal in enhancing employment opportunities in non-teaching positions. Students having English translation skills can work at

English translation agencies that provide services in translating documents from English to Indonesian and vice versa. Similarly, students who have practical skills in writing can become self-employed by means of writing articles and other works, including poems and short stories, to send to *Serambi Indonesia*, a local newspaper, which provides financial reward for published works. Richards' (2001) proposed the aspiration of providing English applied skills in a language curriculum as part of students' learning objectives and expectations seems applicable to the students' suggestions in this study.

Students also argued for the inclusion of generic skills, such as leadership and communication skills, in the Department's curriculum to assist them obtain a job outside the compulsory school teaching sector. They also suggested that entrepreneurship capabilities could be introduced into the curriculum as part of generic skills, highlighting their opinion that mastering entrepreneurial skills would enhance their opportunity to achieve a career in a non-teaching position. Leaders strongly recommended teaching generic skills to undergraduate students. This has also been proposed by numerous education theorists such as Barrie (2005, 2007), and Gow and McDonald (2000).

4. Similarities and differences between perceptions and ideas

Leaders, lecturers and teachers perceived that the integration of Islamic and general education could be implemented in the English Education Department's new curriculum. There was consensus that even though the students at UIN Ar-Raniry study English language, they need a good understanding of Islamic teaching to understand the divine Islamic values that apply to life in Aceh. Studying Islamic education may also enable students to develop their religious and social competence, particularly to develop their *akhlak*.

In terms of generic skills, all of the groups agreed that specific generic skills need to be developed and included in the Department's curriculum. The accommodation of particular generic skills could enhance student's prospects of attaining alternative employment. According to students, communication, leadership, and management skills are important for successfully managing people and organisations.

In regards to English skills, the findings show that English applied skills or English

practical skills were among those the students wanted to study most. Students said that the Department's curriculum needed to provide more courses and opportunities for them to learn how to write an article, a poem, and a short story in English for publication in local newspapers. They added that students who have a particular interest in certain language skill focuses, such as English writing and English translation (these are among the two courses offered by the Department), would do better to focus on these skills. It means that students would like to study these topics in greater depth, not only as the introductory topics. As such, students suggested that the curriculum should accommodate particular areas of students' study interests. Students also suggested the Department's curriculum should widen its internship programs to include private institutions such as mass media and non-governmental organisations (NGO), rather than only schools and government offices, to assist students develop their English applied skills.

5. How these findings compare with the intentions of UUPA

The UUPA, as a regulation in Aceh province, conveys a broad message about educational development throughout the province. The main point of the education approach is stipulated in UUPA Chapter 30, Article 215-216, in which it declares that the education system in Aceh must be synergised with the national education system. However, as Aceh is an autonomous province, it has authority to adjust its educational system to suit the needs of the local context and to meet the local community's expectations. The importance of considering a local culture in the development of school curricula has been proposed by numerous curriculum theorists (Taba, 1962; Tarajean, 1999; B. A. Wadham, J. Pudsey, & R. Boyd, 2007). Tarajean (1999) states that it is commonly understood in the context of religious education that religious values are part of an institution's core teaching. This argument has also been acknowledged by Taba (1962) shares this argument, concluding that schooling consciously prepares learners to have "...knowledge, attitudes, and values that have cultural relevancy or currency" (p.17). This implies that in a religious education context, curriculum is inextricably related to local cultural norms, values, and practices.

Article 216, Point 1 indicates that Acehnese people must have wide access to high quality general and Islamic education developed in light of current knowledge and

technological development. Strengthening this education concept, Point 2 of the article specifies that Aceh's education concept must honour human rights, Islamic values, local culture, and the pluralistic nature of Indonesia. Islamic education applies to the Muslim community only. The non-Muslim community living in Aceh is free to choose any educational system that meets their religious convictions.

The two UUPA articles above highlight the significance of education concepts that need to be considered when implementing a curriculum in Aceh. The first point indicates that the education system in Aceh is an integral part of the national education system, and therefore should be developed in accordance with present knowledge and technological improvement. The second point indicates that Aceh can develop the education system that best suits its local context, namely education based on Islamic religious values. This implies that both Islamic and general education institutions, and both religious education and general education study fields should be designed and developed in accordance with religious values. This concept has inspired some Islamic scholars to integrate general education with religious education, for example Hassan (2010), Lubis, et al., (2009), Salleh (2009), and Yaacob and Embong (2008).

The need to ensure Aceh achieves both educational and technological advancement is a significant element of the UUPA. Islamic education needs to adapt to modern trends in higher education, namely the development of both the general education and technological literacy of its graduates. Science and technology develop very fast and penetrate all dimensions of human life. The massive influx of technology into everyday life has made Islamic scholars realise the urgency of introducing technology into Islamic education. In short, science, general education, and technology must be part of Islamic education.

6. Overview of questions generated from the study context

Eight questions generated through examination of this study's context, as mentioned in Chapter Six, can be grouped into three classifications:

1. Effectiveness of the current curriculum regarding its primary program objective covering three questions

- Does the current curriculum accommodate comprehensive pedagogical skills?

- Should English be taught as immersion or be taught in Indonesian language?
 - Theory versus practice: are there enough opportunities for graduates to develop their capacity to practice?
2. Meeting the needs of key stakeholders and local communities encompassing
- Does the current curriculum align with the labour market orientation?
 - Does the current curriculum address the diversity of students' needs and expectations?
 - Does the current curriculum prepare students for expectations of leadership?
 - Is there adequate curriculum space to help students achieve technological mastery?
3. Curriculum design and review covering one question
- Are greater efficiencies needed in the curriculum in order to acknowledge the new emerging agenda of the UUPA?

6.1 Effectiveness of the current curriculum regarding its primary program objective

The student survey results identified a lack of pedagogical skills. Students strongly urged the Department to provide a curriculum that would enable them to strengthen their pedagogical skills, including both teaching and administrative skills. Under the current curriculum, students argued that graduates had limited skills in managing and organising a classroom and its administrative-related issues.

Results from interviews and focus groups indicated participants' (and students in particular) preference for a completely different approach to the acquisition of English language. They argued for a progressive immersion approach to acquaint students incrementally with the English language environment. Whyte (2011) argues that a progressive immersion language program enables learners to use the targeted language as frequently as possible. Progressive immersion in the study context would entail introduction to English teaching in *Bahasa* (Indonesian language) in the first year, with *Bahasa* gradually phased out in progressive years until English only is used for teaching and learning in the third and fourth years. The survey results supported this notion, with 78 per cent of students wanting all English language classes to be taught in English only.

In terms of theory and practice, the findings show that students are not specifically directed to use their English applied skills. The teaching and learning process focuses more on mastery of theory and discrete individual skills rather than applying and synthesising the skills learned, and providing experiences to develop students' capacity to utilise their English language skills in real world contexts.

6.2 Meeting the key stakeholders' needs

Despite the primary objective of the English Education Department being to train and prepare students to become English teachers in schools (Nurdin, et al., 2010), this study found that 86 per cent of students chose to study English to gain a qualification. Only 56 per cent chose to study English to become English teachers. It is understandable that the current curriculum does not have a broad labour market orientation and that designing a curriculum that would also prepare students to develop their capacity to find employment in other professions is not priority. As a result, generic skills such as leadership and management, information and communication technology, and other computer skills are not part of the current curriculum focus.

This study provides the Department a significant curriculum challenge. How can they meet the needs of their community of students while continuing to provide a curriculum that produces graduates who are appropriately equipped to teach English in schools? This is not an unusual contemporary problem in curriculum development at higher education institutions. A significant drive in contemporary curricula in higher education at undergraduate level is to establish learning outcomes that encourage undergraduate students to master general skills in order to engage in diverse and emerging professional lives (Gow & McDonald, 2000).

6.3 Curriculum design and review

The document analysis regarding the course components of the English Education Department makes it clear that there is a need to generate a space in the current curriculum to meet the needs of the stakeholders and the requirement of the UUPA more effectively. Overlapping and redundant repetition of specific subjects has been found in the current curriculum. Students who have completed English writing 1 and 2 must also enrol to study English academic writing, for example. This type of

repetition is also found in “English speaking”, where students must study English speaking 1, 2, 3, and 4 in addition to studying a subject called “English speech” to complete an English speaking subject. Furthermore, there is no overall committee to review and regulate the coverage of individual subjects across the program.

Consolidation of repetitive subjects would provide a space in the curriculum for courses that address both market needs and students’ interest in developing broad skills. Opportunities for including the development of valuable generic skills are missing from the Department’s curriculum. A process and infrastructure for reviewing and redesigning the current curriculum is needed to determine what needs to be reformed to ensure quality education for the English Education Department’s students. The Department needs a curriculum committee to oversee and navigate the curriculum scope, direction and instructional methods to enable the design and development of a curriculum that meets stakeholders’ needs. This issue is addressed in more detail in the next section and the final chapter.

7. Findings summary statement

This section discusses the implications of what needs to be considered when redesigning and developing the English Education Department’s curriculum, based on the findings from the data analysis. It responds to the research questions developed in Chapter One, which highlight the nature of the values underpinning curriculum development in the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry Islamic higher education institution.

Four potential key implications are discussed:

1. The challenge of designing a curriculum to address students’ diverse participation, including students’ objectives in choosing the Department.
2. The challenge of designing a curriculum to meet specific professional requirements as well as general graduate capabilities, technological literacy and mastery.
3. The challenge of improving the quality of instruction to meet the desired learning outcomes.
4. The challenge of integrating religious education with discipline-specific and general education.

7.1 The challenge of designing a curriculum to address students' diverse participation including students' objectives in choosing the Department

Studies about curriculum indicate that some approaches are less effective than others at promoting learning (Angelo, 2013). Angelo argues that a less effective learning atmosphere is driven by course design that does not include prior comprehensive assessment to ensure that subjects meet certain principles or criteria. As a result, students often “do not receive the quality of education that society expects and that the country needs for the years ahead” (Diamond, 2008, p. 3).

Curriculum theorists advise that curricula should be developed to provide “flexibility and greater student choice” (Diamond, 2008, p.3) to assist students to engage with their study disciplines. Darling-Hammond (2010) also argues that to prepare students to learn to be professional, curricula need to be designed and developed in such a way that they engage students in learning experiences. Providing a wider variety of courses at faculty and department level affords opportunities for students to become acquainted with what they want to pursue to prepare their future careers (Karstyn, 2012). Furthermore, Karstyn contends that providing more elective choices and a wider range of course options makes it possible to teach many important life skills to meet a broad range of student needs.

This study's findings show clearly that a major challenge to the English Education Department's curriculum at UIN Ar-Raniry is that the students' motivation for studying English varies widely from the stated purpose of the course. The fact that 86 per cent of survey respondents agreed that their main objective in learning English at the department was to gain a qualification, and 69 per cent chose gaining employment possibilities in a non-teaching sector as a second preference indicates a disparity between the students' objectives and the Department's objectives.

The majority of students do not enrol to become English teachers; they enrol to study and master English to gain a qualification that will enable them to seek employment in non-education sectors. Mastering professional English increases opportunities for Indonesian people to work at multinational companies, but it is not the only qualification required. Lu (2010) points out that mastering English skills only is not enough to work at a bona fide company; students also need to master other skills to be more competitive in the labour market upon graduation.

Most leaders believed that English Education Department graduates have the opportunity to obtain employment in non-education sectors. For example: “I notice that the employment opportunity of the English Education Department graduates is widely open. As they have good English skills, they can work both at government and non-governmental organisation (NGO), and also at educational institutions” (L.1). Similarly, L.2 stated: “The most important thing to note is that the English Education Department graduates, with capabilities and skills they have, may find suitable jobs either at government offices or at non-governmental organisations”. These comments show that the graduates of the English Education Department have had opportunities to work in non-education spheres. Therefore, it may be better for the Department in future to support students in fulfilling their study objectives by including courses to develop students’ non-pedagogical skills, which will assist students to obtain wider opportunities to work in non-teaching sectors.

Many students suggested the need for the curriculum to provide teaching and learning that best suits their expectations, whether they intend to be teachers or not. It is interesting to note that although the research participants strongly suggested the Department needs to adjust and reform its curriculum to meet current educational development and stakeholder needs, achieving this change will be difficult because it must be approved officially at both faculty and university level.

In response to the students’ demand for more subjects that meet their interests and comply with labour market orientations, the Department’s curriculum needs to adjust the number and composition of core and elective courses. The new curriculum, if it follows the principles of the UUPA, should reflect some consideration of local communities, including potential students’ expectations regarding their capabilities on graduation. The students participating in this study have demonstrated that they want to gain multiple transferable skills to support their choice in seeking future employment (Cooper, Orrell, & Bowden, 2010). In line with this, lecturers participating in the focus group discussions recommended that any courses that do not significantly contribute to the development of students’ skills and competencies should be replaced. For example:

It is imperative that the English Education Department adjust its courses or subjects which are offered in the curriculum. If there are new courses added, there are courses to be omitted. How to do this? I agree that any irrelevant courses or subjects

need to be replaced by new useful and logical subjects. (Le. 3)

The lecturers in this study have indicated some sympathy with the students' viewpoint. They would like Department and faculty authority to reassess the Department's curriculum; for the Department's objective to reflect commitment to progress and reform (Ladwig, 2010) to find better ways of providing quality education to students in Aceh.

The notion of elective courses gained considerable support, particularly among students who wished to individualise their learning experiences. Electives are not offered in the current curriculum. The notion of providing specific electives that best meet students' diverse study interests would increase the significance of students' learning experiences. Fink (2003) asserts that higher education needs to provide quality education to satisfy its stakeholders:

If students could have a significant learning experience more frequently and more consistently in higher education, everyone—faculty, students, parents, institutions, and society at large—would be more satisfied with the quality of higher education than they are at the present time (Fink, 2003, p. 6).

Furthermore, Fink (2003) concludes that the courses an education institution offers to students should have the potential to change their lives in an important way. Significant and relevant learning can assist students to change the way they perceive their life and their future because, according to Fink, all significant learning offers one or more of the following values:

(1) Enhancing our individual life: developing an ability to enjoy good art and music, developing a thoughtful philosophy of life, and so on (2) Enabling us to contribute to the many communities of which we will be a part: family, local community, nation state, religion, special interest groups, the world (3) Preparing us for the world of work: developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for being effective in one or more professional fields (Fink, 2003, p. 7).

The students' request for more subjects that meet their interests indicates the imperative for the Department to develop three course classifications:

Courses that all students will be required to know, courses that are made available to support individual student inquiry or projects and develop an important range of graduate attributes, and courses that might be of interest only to students who want to specialize in a particular area. (O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008, p. 18)

In order to address the issues identified in this study, the Department will need to

conduct a needs analysis, identifying general and specific language and other learning needs (Elisha-Primo, Sandler, Goldfrad, Ferenz, & Perpignan, 2010a). An ideal Department curriculum model that suits stakeholders' needs could be systematically developed by identifying general and specific language needs (Tang, 2011). Yet, this study has identified two areas for consideration in this endeavour beyond developing students' capacity to become teachers, namely providing elective courses to develop students' language competence and practical application to enrich their English knowledge, and providing greater diversity of electives to broaden students' employment prospects (Aimin & Yan, 2011). Undoubtedly, offering a greater number of flexible courses that best meet students' motivation to study at the English Education Department without disregarding the Department's primary strategic vision and mission will enhance the opportunity to engage students in significant learning experiences.

The Department may face some daunting challenges in reforming the current English Education curriculum to make it more stakeholder-needs-based. According to Lam, Alviar-Martin, Adler, and Sim (2013), when determining whether or not to implement a reform, "...schools and teachers must consider a number of trade-offs and address several issues, including sufficient planning time, the availability of resources, and the social and political context in which curriculum reform unfolds" (p. 24).

In the English Education Department context, the most profound challenge in reforming its curriculum may encompass human resources, infrastructure, and social and political factors. The Department may need to recruit new lecturers who are qualified in the new courses' disciplinary domains in order to achieve the new mission and goals. Such a move increases costs and logistics, including offices, and teaching and learning facilities. Increased training programs may also be required for administrative staff to acquaint them with the new environment, system, and supporting technology. These are important implications of curriculum reform.

The social and political interests of the elite at the faculty and Department level may also hamper the Department's curriculum reform. Omitting some irrelevant courses may have implications for existing lecturers, who may become unemployed. Importantly, as the core mission and vision of the English Education Department is

to provide training for students to become English teachers, shifting the Department's direction away from this established objective may be politically be risky and/or unacceptable.

7.2 The challenge of designing a curriculum to meet specific professional requirements as well as general graduate capabilities, technological literacy, and mastery

The advancement of technology that penetrates all areas of life has significant implications for education worldwide. Accordingly, education institutions are urged to produce technologically literate graduates to engage with profound social and economic changes. In order to engage in this challenging world development, graduates are required to possess multiple skills and literacies as "...a degree can no longer be regarded as an automatic passport to employment" (Krish, Meerah, Osman, & Ikhsan, 2012, p. 584).

Technological mastery is increasingly no longer merely a choice or an option. Hakkarainen et al. (2000) claim that one of the basic requirements of education for the future is to prepare learners for participation in an information society in which "...knowledge is the most critical resource for social and economic development and where distributed expertise and networked activities characterize the emerging types of work" (p. 104). Like Hakkarainen and colleagues, Kennewell and Morgan (2006) also profess that the development of young people's information and communication technology (ICT) capability is essential for their future employment and for their learning throughout life.

Despite this, the use of information and communication technology is very scarce in some Islamic education institutions in Southeast Asian nations, including Indonesia (Hamzah, Embi, & Ismail, 2010). Hamzah and colleagues assert that Islamic education has long been associated with slow technological development because it still uses traditional teaching and learning methods. At UIN Ar-Raniry, particularly in the English Education Department, there are very limited ICT-related courses or teaching and learning activities. The current curriculum offers only one technology-related subject, namely "Laboratory and Computer Practice", which accounts for only two credit hours. Thus, during their study at the Department, students only have two credit hours to learn computer skills.

Keeping up with current global technological advancement has created a need for a large number of people with mastery of both professional knowledge and technological knowledge in Indonesia and Aceh. However, this local need is not accommodated in the English Education Department's current curriculum, indicating that curriculum reform still has a long way to go. Many authors argue the significance of technological mastery in today's economic development. Barrell (1999) argues that students need to acquire pertinent skills and knowledge in line with current world development to be able to maximise their identity as valuable entities:

Pervasive, ongoing changes in society-for example, rapidly expanding use of technology-require a corresponding shift in learning opportunities for students to develop relevant knowledge, skills, strategies, processes, and attitudes that will enable them to function well as individuals, citizens, workers, and learners (p. 1).

Educationalists view technological mastery as both a means and a catalyst to innovative education. Such innovation is necessary to "attune today's education to the needs of the knowledge society" (Devolder, Vanderderlinde, Braak, & Tondeur, 2010, p. 165). It has been identified that "current in-service teachers are not well prepared to use technology, nor does it appear that the next generation is being adequately prepared to enter the profession as technology-using teachers" (Laffey, 2004 p. 361). Technological mastery as a teaching medium could be one of the skills that the English Education Department's curriculum offers, given the Department's primary objective of providing training services for students to become teachers. The study findings and other literature suggest that besides focusing on English, the Department needs to consider other professional and general skills students can master to assist them in attaining their life and work objectives.

Providing basic and advanced computer skills could assist students to learn computer skills based on their current mastery. Some students, especially from slightly rural areas, have limited computer technology knowledge. Students who have no computer skills could enrol in a basic computer course, while those who have mastered basic computer skills could enrol in an advanced computer course. This option would enable all students to develop part of their generic skills base according to their preference and needs.

Computer skills are regarded as useful not only for graduates who want to seek employment that requires technologically-related skills, but also for restructuring teaching and learning methods. This has been acknowledged by Hakkarainen, et al., (2000), who contend that "...if the computer/technological skills are properly taught and used, they could play an important role as tools for the general restructuring of learning-instruction processes, facilitating the development of students' skills of collaborating and working productively with knowledge" (p. 104). Students, as potential teachers, also need adequate computer skills to deliver teaching and learning activities. Teachers may have access to unlimited online technological teaching approaches and resources. ICT capability enables "...learners to take advantage of new opportunities for learning across the curriculum and prepares them for a life and work in a world increasingly dependent on technology" (Kennewell & Morgan, 2006, p. 266).

Accommodating particular generic skills as well as both basic and advanced computer skills in the new curriculum will entail proper preparation. The Department does not have certified and qualified computer skills lecturers currently, nor does it have adequate computer facilities such as a computer laboratory. Therefore, recruitment of adequate personnel qualified in the subjects to be added, and updated teaching and learning facilities are pivotal aspects of this area of curriculum reform. Ultimately, the Department may produce graduates who have better generic and technological skills.

7.3 The challenge of improving the quality of instruction to meet the desired learning outcomes

Some educational practitioners, especially curriculum designers and developers, have raised concerns about poor learning outcomes in universities (Felder & Brent, 1999; Krause, 2013; Ralph W. Tyler, 2013). They argue that poor learning outcomes are sometimes caused by unclear conceptions of educational program objectives (Tyler, 2013), or because teacher educators are unable to provide quality teaching (Felder & Brent, 1999). Tyler notes there are still teachers who cannot clearly articulate the objectives of a subject they teach.

Tyler (2013) suggests that curriculum designers and developers consider four questions to increase the possibility of meeting learning outcomes:

- (1) What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
- (2) What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
- (3) How can these educational experiences be effectively organised?
- (4) How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (Tyler, 2013, p. 51).

Tyler indicates that it is critical for an education institution to clearly conceptualise the objectives and purposes of its programs. The objectives will determine the teaching and learning processes, and standardised instruction. Tyler also believes that a clearly defined teaching and learning objective will enable teacher educators to select appropriate teaching materials, outline teaching content, develop instructional procedures, and prepare appropriate assessment. Similarly, Wenger (1998) considers that teachers and instructional materials become the two primary learning resources that may determine the quality of the learning output.

Developing a clear teaching and learning objective may not automatically result in improving learning outcomes because the quality of learning outcomes is also determined by quality teaching. Felder and Brent (1999) define a objective as statements of particular achievable actions that students might be able to perform after learning the content of a subject. This learning objective must be constructed on the basis of the ultimate learning goal. Therefore, constructing achievable learning goals entails a systematically planned education program, including ongoing efforts for continued improvement (Tyler, 2013). Felder and Brent have identified four fundamental strategies to promote quality teaching: (1) to write instructional objectives; (2) to use active learning in class; (3) to use cooperative learning; and (4) to systematically apply assessment and evaluation of teaching quality.

In a similar vein, Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) argue that quality teaching comprises good and successful teaching. They note that good teaching involves content that is relevant to the discipline, and teaching and learning methods that meet

disciplinary standards and are appropriate for increasing students' ability to learn. Successful teaching instils in learners certain skills and experience as the outcome of the teaching and learning process. This outcome requires three elements; willingness and effort, social surrounds, and opportunity (Felder & Brent, 1999).

Orrell (2006, p. 454), citing Moses (1994), asserts that "...the quality of teaching needs to be part of faculty and departmental agendas if the quality of higher education is to improve, rather than one of individual disposition and variable opportunity". Ball (2009) contends that teachers also need to be continual learners. They need to listen to, and learn from, their students:

I also found that as the teachers assumed the stance of learners, they began to talk to and listen to their students so that they could learn from them and use that knowledge in their student-teacher interactions and in their instructional problem solving to figure out how to meet the students' needs. (p. 48)

Lecturers and authorised bodies at Department, faculty, and university level at UIN Ar-Raniry could learn much of value from listening to the voices of students and other related stakeholders in this study. The stakeholder voices could be a valuable reference for reforming the Department's curriculum as part of an effort to empower educational quality at Islamic higher education institutions in Aceh, Indonesia.

Overall, however, a quality learning outcome can be attained by developing a good curriculum. "Good teaching is inextricably intertwined with good curriculum design, which is about planning and aligning what to teach, how to teach and how to assess so that students experience coherent learning" (Hunt & Chalmers, 2013, p. 92). In addition, good curriculum design and development enables students to engage in a quality teaching and learning environment that results in quality learning outcomes (Marshall, Orrell, Cameron, Bosanquet, Thomas, 2011).

7.4 The challenge of integrating religious education with discipline-specific and general education

The integration of discipline-specific and general education with Islamic education has been proposed strongly by a number of Islamic scholars (Hassan, 2010; Lubis, Mustapha, & Lampoh, 2009; Salleh, 2009; Yaacob & Embong, 2008). This educational integration is regarded as one of the solutions to the educational, intellectual, and morals malaise of the Muslim *ummah* (society) (Hassan, 2010).

Hassan proposes the concept of Islamic educational integration that produces Islamic scholars who master both Islamic and general education to deal with various drawbacks in the Islamic community. Hassan states:

“...the integrated model of education is brought into meaningful and dynamic interaction with one another to enrich and complement each other and produce at the end of educational process: (a) the religiously-informed and God-fearing natural scientists, engineers, doctors and social scientists and (b) the scientifically-informed religious knowledge specialists who understand the contemporary realities and changes, and know how those changes impinge on morals, ethical, theological and spiritual values and norms” (p. 207).

Many leaders in this study see the benefit of integrating general and discipline-specific education with Islamic education. They believe that comprehensive integration of Islamic Studies and General Education will potentially result in the preparation of students to be good Islamic citizens as well as members of a strong and resilient Acehnese community; namely, the students who have good *akhlak* (morals), behave accordingly, and possess broad knowledge of several disciplines.

The integration of the English Education Department’s curriculum with Islamic studies is a possibility in the reform process in which students would study religious knowledge while acquiring English language capabilities through an immersion approach to language teaching and learning. Leaders in this study claimed that mastering adequate Islamic education should enable students to become virtuous citizens (*al-Muwatin al-salih*) who will promote and promulgate righteous Islamic values in the environment wherever they are.

Both lecturers and teachers denoted that integrated Islamic education might have the potential to improve students’ morals values on one hand, and provide them with general disciplinary knowledge on the other. These participants believed that when students studied English, they mastered not only English skills but religious education as well. They added that the education process at UIN Ar-Raniry, as an Islamic institution, should always be bound to the Islamic *akhlak*, which, in the Islamic context, plays a significant role in producing good citizens.

The comment above indicates that the notion of integration of Islamic education stems from the notion of morals development. The primary objective of education from the Islamic point of view is to empower *akhlak* or morals, which may affirm

some particular actions as right or wrong. Thus, most leaders, lecturers, and teachers believed that the English Education Department's integrated curriculum should be based on strengthening the Department's role in producing graduates who have good morals as well as mastery in general education. Mastering general education enables Islamic scholars to empower their intellectual capacity to contribute critically to current world development.

Interestingly, analysis of the focus group discussion results shows that the current curriculum is considered weak in disseminating Islamic religious values. Some students claimed that they got more Islamic education and teachings from books and friends than from the teaching and learning process at the Department. This is ironic given that one of the Department's purposes is to provide Islamic education to students. It is apparent that some subjects need to be reviewed, replaced or changed from core to elective status to meet social and individual student's needs, and to improve students' understanding of Islamic teaching. The Arabic course is one example. Three consecutive Arabic subjects (Arabic 1, 2, and 3) offered by the Department do not assist students to master Arabic skills because the subjects function as an introductory course. As a result, students often learn Arabic at a superficial level or merely to pass an examination. They are unable to use Arabic either to communicate or understand the meaning of the *Holy Quran*. In the search for solutions to this problem, the researcher found that the learning needs to be understood as a response to the students' needs and desires: "Learning should become something other than a means for passing school-based test; it should become a habit, a tool, and a means for discovering viable truth upon which to base action" (Tchudi & Lafer, 1996, p. 210).

In addition, learning a foreign language, including Arabic, requires serious effort and adequate time. The current curriculum only offers six credit hours for students to study Arabic, which seems irrational because it is not possible to master or understand a foreign language within a very short time. Therefore, it might be better to replace Arabic courses with other Islamic-oriented courses that have the potential to develop students' understanding of religious values, which will strengthen their faith and teach them to behave as true Muslims, as prescribed in the divine Islamic revelations.

Nevertheless, accommodating a series of Islamic courses in the curriculum will not guarantee the production of qualified graduates in terms of their morals values and personality if a comprehensive teaching and learning instructional process is not in place. This will only be possible through holistic curriculum reform that integrates the whole body of knowledge, all activities and learning processes through formal and systematic planning and professional evaluation. Forcing students to comprehend and practice many Islamic teaching values without providing them with a humble Islamic teaching role model would be hypocritical. Therefore, part of the curriculum reform will require an institutional policy that governs appropriate and morals behaviour in teaching students. While it is possible for lecturers to teach their students various Islamic teaching values, they also have to demonstrate, through practice, that the values are embedded in their daily life.

The research findings support Lubis et al.'s (2009) assertions about integrated Islamic education. The study results indicate that the foundation of education in Aceh relies on the development of *akhlak* as the core values that empower the Islamic community. At the same time, students are encouraged to pursue general knowledge that best suits their interests. This entails developing their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Integration of the English Education Department's curriculum could be based on developing students' *akhlak* to be true Muslim citizens. After developing their *akhlak*, students could pursue the disciplinary knowledge that best suits their talents and study interests.

Studies of relevant literature and research indicate various ways of integrating general knowledge and discipline-specific knowledge with Islamic education. Adopting Islamic teaching materials written in English as the main teaching and learning resources is one option. This study approach requires students to meet the challenge of comprehending and communicating in English, while meeting the challenge of understanding Islamic-related teachings. English Education Department lecturers participating in this study proposed this English *Islamisation* approach, as evidenced in the following statements:

The teaching and learning materials for students need to be modified, for example the given materials are not solely adopted from general knowledge and information, but they should be taken from Islamic reading resources; namely the resources that elaborate the Islamic religious values. (Le. 3)

When we teach English, we do not only teach or ask students what English is. Yet, when we teach English, we can simply teach them ample of noble Islamic values by distributing Islamic reading materials which are written in English by Islamic scholars throughout the globe. (Le. 1)

The above comments also exemplify the adoption of an English language immersion program, whereby no matter what courses or subjects are taught, the teaching and learning materials are written in English. However, this method of teaching and learning (English language Islamisation) requires official endorsement in the English Education Department's curriculum to ensure its acceptance by academics, students, teaching staff, and other related bodies.

In the Western context, this educational integration is known as an interdisciplinary curriculum approach, which was proposed by Jacobs (1998). She refers to the term "interdisciplinary" as "a knowledge view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic, or experience" (p. 8).

Most literature focuses on interdisciplinary teaching as an approach linked with the real world, which develops students' knowledge in areas they want to pursue to enrich their intellectual capacity (Tchudi & Lafer, 1996). Tchudi and Lafer (1996, p. 216) also assert that not all students need, or care, to achieve the same ends from their learning: "...all do not come to the curriculum with the same predispositions, knowledge, or attitudes". Therefore, curricula need to help every student achieve their learning objectives: "A good curriculum must be able to accommodate for individuals and individuals groups of students" (Tchudi & Lafer, 1996, p.216). The interdisciplinary curriculum approach the researcher refers to in this study is an approach that associates all courses with a central study experience and objective. Students are taught English as well as other general education disciplines, but all courses are connected with religious values as a specific activity and focus (Lonning, et al., 1998).

Aina (1979, cited in Zainal, Hassan, and Alias, 2012), and Ackerman (1989) point out that knowledge integration can be applied within and across disciplines. English language can be taught 'in itself' (within) to integrate the five skills of listening, reading, writing, speaking, and grammar, as well as across disciplines to integrate

concepts, themes, and ideas from the different subject spectrums. This is an approach recommended by several authors based on the premise that "...practical experiences of life suggest that solutions to problems of living are not found in the study of separate institution subjects" (Zainal, et al., 2012, p. 403).

Integration within the English language discipline at the English Education Department is probable because the Department has adequate resources to implement this 'within' integration approach. If the five English language skills are taught separately at the current time, ways of teaching those five skills in the future could be integrated into several language disciplines. For example, English grammar can be integrated into English reading and writing, English speaking can be integrated into English listening, and so forth. Similarly, integration within religious knowledge disciplines may also be possible, for example, *Quranic* interpretation can be integrated into *Ulumul Quran, Ilm al-hadīth into Hadīth*.

As stated earlier, reforming the existing curriculum to adapt the concept of language Islamisation or interdisciplinary courses may face profound challenges. While it is relatively easy to find English Education Department lecturers who are capable in English skills, finding lecturers who also have a good Islamic understanding is slightly more difficult. The reason for this is that because most of the Department's English teaching lecturers obtained their teaching qualifications in English speaking countries, while most of the Islamic teaching lecturers obtained their teaching qualifications from Arabic speaking countries, mostly in the Middle East. Thus, UIN Ar-Raniry faces an exceptionally difficult task in finding lecturers who have mastery in both religious education and English skills.

8. Concluding remarks

This chapter has discussed significant issues regarding the intention of designing and developing the English Education Department's curriculum to meet the requirements of the UUPA, a new endorsed regulation in Aceh. It has looked back at the expectations of stakeholders regarding an ideal curriculum framework for this Department, depicting their critical insights and thoughts. Later, their thoughts are connected with the key substance of the UUPA, ensuring that what they think and want is in line with what the UUPA requires. Discussion of some of the curriculum

development challenges, including addressing students' diverse study needs, meeting specific professional requirements, improving quality instruction to meet quality learning outcomes, and integrating Islamic education with general discipline knowledge provides thought for the future educational direction at UIN Ar-Raniry.

The findings indicate that leaders, lecturers, and teachers have a similar vision in developing the Department's curriculum. They highlight the need to integrate Islamic education and general education to give students the capacity to understand and practice Islamic religious values, develop their religious and personal identities, and to nurture their competence to think critically to make wise decisions. As Wenger (1998, p. 263) states, "Education, in its deepest sense and at whatever age it takes place, concerns the opening of identities - exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state". Islamic education needs people and scholars who possess not only Islamic education but also general worldly knowledge; people with the capacity to transform their community to better the lives of all within it. Also, Islamic education must strive to prepare its scholars to become knowledge creators (Fadliadi, Habiburrahim, & Bartholomaeus, 2012).

Pursuing Islamic education may enable students to develop their *akhlak* (ethical morals) to a level where they act and behave in accordance with Islamic teachings. Undertaking general education, including learning particular generic skills, may enable students, as the younger generation, to become creative individuals with the potential for a bright future at work and in life. The integration of Islamic and general education could positively bridge these two outcomes by preparing graduates to inculcate prosperity both in this world and the hereafter (Lubis, et al., 2009).

In contrast to the leaders' and lecturers' thoughts, the findings report that students had different opinions regarding the Department's curriculum concept, particularly in terms of their motivation for studying English. While some wanted to become English teachers, others wanted to attain English language proficiency to gain employment outside the education sector. Thus, students expressed their expectation that the Department's curriculum should recognise and value their diverse learning agendas.

This chapter has also discussed various challenges in, and consequences of, fulfilling

stakeholders' views in reforming the Department's curriculum. As Ladwig states, "...development implies change, and in modern times, education implies development" (Ladwig, 2010, p. 374). The serious effort required to make this change happen has been noted.

The next chapter concludes this thesis with an overview of the study, key research findings, implications of the findings, and recommendations for the English Education Department's future curriculum development as well as for future research.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduction

The objective of this study was to investigate the curriculum development approach at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam – Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The hypothesis is that a newly developed curriculum can meet the requirements of the UUPA (*Undang-undang Pemerintah Aceh – Law on the Governance of Aceh*), Islamic values, local context, and graduate employment prospects. This chapter provides a brief overview of the study, key research findings, implications, and recommendation for future research.

2. Overview of the study

This study employed a qualitative interpretive research approach to conceptualise and understand the perceptions of research participants regarding a specific social phenomenon (Denzin, 2001). In this research context, the researcher believed a qualitative approach would capture the perceptions and insights of particular stakeholder groups in developing the English Education Department’s curriculum at UIN Ar-Raniry to meet the requirements of the newly endorsed UUPA regulations for education. It was hoped that this qualitative research would enable the researcher to explore sufficient information from the research participants to generate a novel curriculum concept for the Department.

This research employed mixed methods. Initially, in phase one, interviews and focus group discussions were used to identify the views and experiences of four groups of key stakeholders (policymaking authority – leaders; institutional academic community – university lecturers and students; and community graduate employers – teachers) regarding the current curriculum and their aspirations for change. Following analysis of these data, a basic online survey was conducted with one expanded stakeholder group (students). The aim of conducting the survey was to verify and further explore information and ideas initially obtained through the interviews and focus group discussions. In addition to these three sets of data, an

analysis was conducted of government official documents that contained government expectations regarding the design and delivery of higher education in Aceh. This analysis was used to generate a set of questions deemed critical to interpreting the findings.

The objective of recruiting these different groups of people was to seek their perceptions and ideas regarding the framework of the Department's curriculum based on their strategic roles, functions, and experiences. One hundred and twelve people participated.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, which were grouped on the basis of the most commonly emerging themes. Interview and focus group transcripts were read carefully and repeatedly. Data that did not correspond to the research questions were dropped out, leaving only appropriate, relevant themes. A basic statistics software program (SPSS) (Field, 2013) was used to analyse the survey results in terms of the percentage of participants responding to each survey question.

3. Key research findings

The overall research findings indicate that a number of significant steps can be taken to develop the English Education Department's curriculum so that it is attuned to the UUPA, local context, Islamic values and education, and graduate employability.

First, leaders, lecturers, and teachers proposed that the Department needs to synthesise its curriculum objectives to integrate the teaching and learning processes by bringing together Islamic Studies and general education, namely the preparation of teachers to teach English in schools and the development of graduates' generic and employability capabilities. This suggests that students studying English could have an opportunity to explore more experiences in learning Islamic teachings, which are the embedded institutional and local values. Integration of the two education spheres would allow students to study two different educational foci concurrently. Students could study English to develop their English and pedagogical skills in preparation to become English teachers. They may also develop their religious understanding by undertaking some particular Islamic courses offered by the Department.

According to Lubis, Mustapha, and Lampoh (2009), integration of Islamic education

is manifested in spiritual development and personal achievement in life through nurturing an individual's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The development of the spiritual self is seen as essential for individuals to attain the capacity to synthesise information based on moral considerations and to make wise decisions. Once spiritual capacity has been developed, students will have a strong educational foundation for pursuing their personal life achievements, including studying other secular education.

Second, participants proposed an immersion approach as a promising strategy for teaching and learning English language. It was recognised that there is no guarantee that an immersion program will accelerate the language acquisition process because there are too many factors affecting foreign language acquisition. However, an authentic learning environment created through immersion programs is a burgeoning movement in learning a foreign language, including English. It is likely that the more frequently the language is used, the more familiar it becomes to its learners.

It is also important to note that immersion programs can be implemented in various ways. UIN Ar-Raniry is an Islamic education institution. Therefore, it is worthwhile encouraging English Education Department lecturers and students to utilise the religious teaching materials, which are written in English, as the primary sources of teaching and learning. For example, the reading materials for the English reading comprehension courses could be adopted from Islamic books regarding the *fasting* in Ramadhan, *zakat* (Islamic charity), and other religious issues. Lecturers who teach religious subjects could also use English as its instruction language. This teaching and learning approach could familiarise students with English, and, more importantly, students would learn religious education while learning and reading English texts, and utilising their English language capabilities in authentic contexts.

Finally, the research findings show the need to create space within the curriculum to introduce subjects that prepare students to engage in more than developing their capacity for classroom teaching. Graduates need to develop their generic skills, particularly in terms of technological, communications and leadership competencies, to prepare them to function in a technologically literate modern world where they will be expected to exercise leadership capabilities from an early stage. Curriculum integration provides the possibility of freeing up curriculum space to give students a

greater choice of subjects and curriculum flexibility. The findings show the curriculum needs to accommodate a greater number of generic courses to equip students with the skills needed for seeking a wide variety of employment.

Among of the generic skills students mentioned were leadership competence, communication and computer skills, entrepreneurial capability, and problem solving ability. These are in line with the curriculum design and development directions proposed by UUPA Article 216, Point 1, which states that every Aceh community deserves access to a high quality Islamic and general education in accordance with the advancement of knowledge and technology. This implies that the curriculum at Islamic higher education institutions should not be confined to Islamic studies, but should also be in line with the development and expectations of current higher education and its engagement with modern technology.

4. Implications

The implementation of the UUPA in Aceh has placed a greater emphasis on education objectives and school curricula throughout this region. Students are expected to study both general and Islamic education irrespective of their study disciplines. For example, students who study Chemistry, Biology, Physics, and Maths should also study some Islamic courses to develop their religious understanding. The objective of studying general education is to prepare the Acehnese people to gain qualifications to function globally, including the capacity to think critically, consider information, and make wise judgements to contribute responsibly to world development.

Meanwhile, the emphasis of religious education is to prepare the upcoming Acehnese generation to have noble *akhlak* to become part of a pious Islamic community (Rabinataj, 2010). Essentially, this Islamic education objective is partly codified in the UIN Ar-Raniry mission, which is: (1) to administer Islamic education that has national and international competitiveness; (2) to conduct research on Islamic education that corresponds to community needs; and (3) to promote Islamic values in community empowerment. In the context of the English Education Department, an additional objective is to teach students to become English teachers who may teach at elementary and secondary schools. However, in reality, as demonstrated by this

research, students who study at the Department also seek a general education and qualifications that will enable them to seek employment more broadly in non-teaching sectors.

In response to the above distinctive education objectives, the English Education Department must develop its curriculum to comply with the official government regulations as well as meeting the students' needs. The results of this study show that this will challenge the status quo. The participants have challenged the Department to synthesise and integrate the various curriculum components and objectives, and to diversify and establish new learning objectives that broaden the scope and choice of what students may study. Students, lecturers, and teachers also called for a new approach to teaching through immersion and integration so that students may have the opportunity to study both general and Islamic education concurrently.

The need to render a space in the curriculum to allow greater flexibility and to introduce a greater number of generic skills subjects (such as computer technology and leadership programs) that prepare students to engage in a more flexible learning environment has implications for the current curriculum design and content. Directing students to engage in broader learning experiences, including offering a wide opportunity to study more subjects that best meet their study interests and future careers, will necessitate removing or restructuring current subjects and employing lecturers qualified to teach the new subjects. This may lead to unemployment of current lecturers who do not have the relevant qualifications to teach the new subjects, or to teach in the proposed integrated curriculum with an emphasis on Islamic values. While such a change will benefit all students, especially those wanting to study English for a qualification other than teaching or for local government employment, it may disadvantage current lecturing staff.

Comprehensively fulfilling all of the stakeholders' expectations discussed in this thesis will require significant strategic planning by the authorised bodies at Department, faculty, and university level. This is essential for the success of curriculum reform at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry. Infrastructure and human resource planning must be their first priority. The Department will need to train or recruit new teaching staff who possess the qualifications that align with the new curriculum direction. The reform also as

implications for much needed curriculum management infrastructure to implement a more comprehensive, cohesive, and sustainable curriculum design.

5. Recommendations for the university and the English Education Department

Referring to the findings above, the researcher offers critical recommendations to the university and the Department. First, the university needs to have a curriculum design and development committee that is responsible for curriculum issues. This committee must have clear terms of reference and comprehensive authority to govern the curriculum in terms of content, integrity, and quality. The committee must also be empowered to make decisions in the best interests of students and their long-term education needs.

In addition, all lecturers throughout the Department must use, and refer to, the same mutually agreed and developed curriculum and syllabi, although they will be able to use various teaching and learning materials and resources. This is to ensure achievement of the Department's teaching and learning objectives, and, more importantly, to ensure students have an opportunity to study knowledge disciplines based on what has been proposed in the curriculum.

Second, the English Education Department needs to introduce a series of entrepreneurial subjects (as part of generic skills) into its curriculum to ensure that students have the practical skills to start up a business. The department needs to introduce a flexible internship pathway scheme to assist students achieve practical skills, not only in teaching but also in non-teaching-related areas. These approaches can assist students to expand their various career trajectories, and to minimise their dependence on gaining employment as English teachers or civil servants.

Finally, referring to the educational change paradigm (Fullan, 2007), the Department's curriculum could potentially be reformed on a small or large-scale. Small-scale change could be initiated to reform the curriculum at Department or faculty level, while large-scale change would apply to the curriculum at the university level. However, both curriculum change models require discussion in the English Education Department context to formulate the best way of redesigning the Department's curriculum in consideration of stakeholders' expressed demands, and

to anticipate any implication of such the changes.

6. Recommendations for future research

The findings of the current study offer a number of significant recommendations for future research. First, there is a need for more exploration of the integration of Islamic education with general education. Extensive research relevant to this integration could render a blueprint for the improvement of both Islamic and general education in Aceh, particularly at the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam – Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Several questions could be further scrutinised in relation to this integration, such as: “What is integration in an Islamic university?”; “How to integrate Islamic and general education?”; and “What is an ideal framework to comprehensively integrate between Islamic and general education?”

Second, it is important for future research to focus on Islamic teachings that the English Education Department offers to students. The research could explore in greater depth the objectives of offering some Islamic courses, and what it means to be an Islamic scholar in a modern Islamic university. The research could analyse a set of ideal course juxtapositions and curriculum objectives that might support such a program.

Finally, the researcher suggests a study that identifies the generic skills students have gained after completing their study at the Department: what are the generic skills that comply with the labour market expectations either for those who want to be English teachers or those who want to work in non-education sectors? Specifying those particular generic skills will enable curriculum developers to specifically design the curriculum and its instructions to best suit the students’ and graduate users’ (employers’) needs.

Carrying out further research in the areas recommended above is conceived as crucial for successful curriculum reform. It is commonly believed that the government of Indonesia often tends to impose new regulations for existing programs without having adequate research evidence to support the change, and without subsequent evaluation assess the impact. New government-introduced curricula are designed and developed based on theoretical approaches rather than on grounded research evidences. Conducting comprehensive research prior to implementing a new regulation or decree would provide greater confidence to those who must make changes to their current practices to meet the new requirements.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Information letter

Information Letter

Project title: "Curriculum development in an Islamic University in Indonesia: Addressing government policy (UUPA) and graduate employability". This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number: 5040).

Aims and methods of data collection: To investigate how to comprehensively develop the existing English Education Department's curriculum of UIN Ar-Raniry in Darussalam Banda Aceh attending to UUPA, local context, and concerns for graduate employability. Individual interviews, focus group discussion will be the main methods for data collection. Document analysis is also undertaken to gain more information regarding any policies affirmed by both national and local governments in developing school curricula at this region. The results of this study will be made available to the participants, schools, English Education Department, Provincial Education Department, and other institutions/departments that are involved in this research. This will increase their understandings in developing curriculum to align with UUPA, local context, and concerns for graduate employability.

Research participants (lecturers, students, UIN Ar-Raniry Senior staff, school principals, and governmental department heads) are invited to share their knowledge, experiences, and expectations about ways to comprehensively develop the English Education Department's curriculum that accommodates UUPA provisions and concerns for graduate employability. The different roles of participants are expected to contribute different perspectives on the needs to develop a feasible and achievable curriculum that synergies the Islamic values as a core essence stipulated in UUPA, and concerns for graduate employability.



Interviews will be audio-recorded. During the interview sessions, the participants are free to stop the discussion and can choose not to answer any questions. Please be assured that all the information provided will be kept strictly confidential. None of the information in the report of the researcher's thesis or other publications will reveal participants' identity. Participation in this study is voluntary. However, to compensate the participants' times and efforts of being involved in this research, a gift package consists of a pen and a book diary is given. Participants are also free to withdraw their participation at any time without facing any consequences.

Please feel free to contact the researcher, Habiburrahim at this number: +62 8136 2504 556 email habiburrahim@flinders.edu.au or the supervisors of this research Professor Robert Conway on (+61 8) 8201 2740 or email bob.conway@flinders.edu.au or Professor Janice Orrell on (+61 8) 8278 8811 email janice.orrell@flinders.edu.au if there are any concerns or questions regarding this research.



Appendix 2: Letter of Introduction

Letter of Introduction

Dear All,

This letter is to introduce Habiburrahim, a lecturer of the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh who is currently studying in a PhD program at Flinders University in South Australia. His research aims at finding out how one might comprehensively develop the existing English Education Department's curriculum attending to UUPA, local context, and concerns for graduate employability. The title of the research is "Curriculum development in an Islamic University in Indonesia: Addressing government policy (UUPA) and graduate employability". The study has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee and is supervised by me, Professor Robert Conway and Associate Professor Janice Orrell from the School of Education. It will lead to the production of a Ph.D. thesis and/or other academic publications on the above-mentioned subject.

Habiburrahim would like to conduct a research at the English Education Department of Ar-Raniry Institute in Aceh for about four months. During that time he would like to talk with a number of students, lecturers, school principals, and some provincial government department heads about their views on the above mentioned topic. I hope you can assist by agreeing to participate in a 30-60 minute individual interview with him.

Habiburrahim would like to audio-record the interviews. At any time during the interviews you are free to stop the discussion and can choose not to answer any questions that you do not wish to. You will be given the summary of your interview for confirmation about the accuracy of the information you provided. Please be assured that all the information provided will be kept strictly confidential. Habiburrahim will be the only person to listen to the audio-recordings or to read the interview transcripts. None of the information in the report of Habiburrahim's thesis or other publications will reveal your identity or that of the community.

Participation in this study is voluntary. A gift package consists of a pen and a book diary will be offered to compensate for the time given. Please be informed that it is still possible for you to withdraw from the study at any time and without any consequences.

Finally, if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please feel free to contact me on (+61 8) 8201 2740 or email bob.conway@flinders.edu.au or Associate Professor Janice Orrell on (+61 8) 8278 8811 or email Janice.orrell@flinders.edu.au. Habiburrahim can be contacted locally at this number: +62 8136 2504 556. Email habiburrahim@flinders.edu.au

And thank you for considering our request.

Yours faithfully,

Professor Robert Conway
Professor and Dean
School of Education, Flinders University

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number: 5040). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

Dean of Education

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www.flinders.edu.au/education

CRICOS Provider No. 00114A



Appendix 3: Invitation to attend focus group and discussions

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

for a research study investigating ways to develop a curriculum that addresses government policy (UUPA) and graduate employability.

Participation requires you to attend one of two focus group discussion sessions that takes about 30 – 60 minutes. The focus group discussion is conducted at:

Venue : English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam, Banda Aceh
Day : Monday and Tuesday, 7th & 8th March 2011
Time : 10 – 11Am

You can participate if you are:

- 1) English Education Department lecturers of UIN Ar-Raniry
Tenure years: 1 – 10
- 2) English Education Department students of UIN Ar-Raniry
Semester 1, GPA: 2 – 4
Semester 8, GPA: 2 – 4

Participants will be given a gift package consists of a pen and a book diary.

If you are interested in participating in this research study or would like to obtain more information, please contact **Habiburrahim** on **+62 8136 2504 556**, email habiburrahim@flinders.edu.au

Thank you for your generous support!



Appendix 4: Consent form

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

(By interview & focus group discussion)

I am.....being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in the interview for the research project on “*Curriculum development in an Islamic University in Indonesia: Addressing government policy (UUPA) and graduate employability*”

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.
4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Consent Form for future reference.
5. I understand that:
 - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
 - I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
 - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
 - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on my progress in my course of study, or results gained.
 - I may ask that the recording be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.
6. I agree/do not agree* to the tape/transcript* being made available to other researchers who are not members of this research team, but who are judged by the research team to be doing related research, on condition that my identity is not revealed. * *delete as appropriate*

Participant’s signature.....Date.....

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher’s name.....

Researcher’s signature.....Date.....

NB: Two signed copies should be obtained. The copy retained by the researcher may then be used for authorisation of Items 7 and 8, as appropriate.

7. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read a transcript of my participation and agree to its use by the researcher as explained.

Participant’s signature.....Date.....

8. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read the researcher’s report and agree to the publication of my information as reported.

Participant’s signature.....Date.....



Appendix 5: Ethics approval Flinders University

Flinders University and Southern Adelaide Health Service

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Research Services Office, Union Building,
Flinders University GPO Box 2100,
ADELAIDE SA 5001
Phone: (08) 8201 3116
Email: human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

FINAL APPROVAL NOTICE

Principal Researcher:	Habiburrahim		
Email:	habiburrahim@flinders.edu.au		
Address:	3/2 Ayliffes Road, St Mary's SA 5042		
Project Title:	Curriculum development in line with UUPA, local context, and concerns for graduate employability		
Project No.:	5040	Final Approval Date: 24 November 2010	Approval Expiry Date: 28 February 2014

The above proposed project has been **approved** on the basis of the information contained in the application, its attachments and the information subsequently provided.

If you have any outstanding permission letters (item D8), that may have been previously requested, please ensure that they are forwarded to the Committee as soon as possible. Additionally, for projects where approval has also been sought from another Human Research Ethics Committee (item G1), please be reminded that a copy of the ethics approval notice will need to be sent to the Committee on receipt.

In accordance with the undertaking you provided in your application for ethics approval for the project, please inform the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee, giving reasons, if the research project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

You are also required to report anything which might warrant review of ethical approval of the protocol. Such matters include:

- serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants;



- proposed changes in the protocol (modifications);
- any changes to the research team; and
- unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

To modify/amend a previously approved project please either mail or email a completed copy of the Modification Request Form to the Executive Officer, which is available for download from <http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/info-for-researchers/ethics/committees/social-and-behavioural-research-ethics-committee/notification-of-committee-decision.cfm>. Please ensure that any new or amended participant documents are attached to the modification request.

In order to comply with monitoring requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (March 2007)* an annual progress and/or final report must be submitted. A copy of the pro forma is available from <http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/info-for-researchers/ethics/committees/social-behavioural.cfm>.

Your first report is due on **24 November 2011** or on completion of the project, whichever is the earliest. *Please retain this notice for reference when completing annual progress or final reports.* If an extension of time is required, please email a request for an extension of time, to a date you specify, to human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au before the expiry date.

Andrea Mather (formerly Jacobs) Executive Officer
Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee 29 November 2010

c.c Prof Bob Conway, bob.conway@flinders.edu.au



MODIFICATION (No.2) APPROVAL NOTICE

Project No:

Project Title:

Principal Researcher:

Email:

Modification Approval Date: Ethics Approval Expiry Date:

I refer to your modification request for the project above that has been approved previously. I am pleased to inform you that the Chairperson has approved your request to modify the project as outlined below:

ü	Approved Modification(s)	Details of approved modification(s)			
	Extension of Time:	From:	28/02/14	To:	31/03/14
	Change of Project Title	From:	Curriculum development in line with UUPA, local context, and concerns for graduate employability		
		To:	Curriculum development in an Islamic university in Indonesia: Addressing government policy (UUPA) and graduate employability		



Appendix 6: Student survey questionnaire

Curriculum Development Survey

Introduction

I am currently conducting a study on developing a comprehensive curriculum framework in the English Education Department curriculum of UIN Ar-Raniry, Darussalam – Banda Aceh. This survey seeks your opinions about both the current program, as well as changes you believe could be made to better meet the needs of graduates who may wish to pursue a range of occupations. The findings will be reported in my PhD thesis. As a stakeholder in the quality of the program, I am interested in gaining an insight into the opinions you have developed as a result of your experience of the existing curriculum.

Completing the survey

The survey should take about 25 minutes to complete online. The survey is primarily composed of a 5 Likert Scale degree (Strongly disagree - strongly agree) questions. There are a few questions that are open-ended. Please answer each question accurately. Do not shut down your computer or save your responses prior to submission of this survey as the data will be lost. When you have finished and are happy with the responses, please click "Submit" button on the final page of the survey. If you have any queries or technical difficulties regarding the survey, please contact me, Habiburrahim, at: habiburahim@flinders.edu.au

Confidentiality: Please be assured that all the information provided will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses are anonymous as I will be unable to know who has responded to the survey or from whom each response has come. As such, none of the information in the report of my thesis or other publications will reveal your identity.

My purpose for enrolling in the English Education Department is to:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Become a teacher of English as a foreign language	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Master the English language to gain a qualification	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Gain an employment possibly in a non-education sector	<input type="radio"/>				



4. Receive instruction in Islamic Studies	<input type="radio"/>				
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Other comments (if you have other purposes for enrolling in the English Education Department, please provide in this comment box).

Purpose of the English Education Department curriculum is to:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Provide appropriate Islamic core subjects to prepare me to be a good Islamic teacher, citizen and leader	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Prepare me to be a teacher of English as a foreign language	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Provide me information and communication technology (ICT) skills to teach English as a foreign language	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Educate me so that I can gain employment in teaching	<input type="radio"/>				
5. Educate me so that I am equipped to gain employment in area other than schools	<input type="radio"/>				

The Curriculum Design

The curriculum should include opportunities to develop:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	<input type="radio"/>				



1. Understanding of the Quran and Islamic religious values	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Pedagogical knowledge	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Entrepreneurship skills	<input type="radio"/>				
4. English language fluency	<input type="radio"/>				
5. Leadership skills	<input type="radio"/>				
6. Communication skills	<input type="radio"/>				
7. Competence in using communication technologies	<input type="radio"/>				

Other comments (if you have other comments regarding what curriculum opportunities should include, please provide in this comment box).

The curriculum design should:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Integrate Islamic teaching into all aspects of the curriculum rather than teach them as separate subjects	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Accommodate non-teaching internship programs	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Conduct all English language classes in	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Provide hands on experiences with a variety of technologies	<input type="radio"/>				



Evaluation of the Impact of the Current Curriculum

I am satisfied that the curriculum has helped me to know:

English language skills:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Listening	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Reading	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Writing	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Speaking	<input type="radio"/>				
5. Grammar	<input type="radio"/>				

How to teach English language skills:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Design syllabus	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Plan lessons	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Select teaching and learning materials	<input type="radio"/>				

Information and Communication Technology (ICT):

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
How to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills to support my teaching career	<input type="radio"/>				

Other comments (if you have other comments regarding your satisfaction about the curriculum, please provide in this comment box).

On reflecting on my experiences in the English Education Course:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I am satisfied with the teaching of the English core subjects that I have learned	<input type="radio"/>				
2. I am satisfied that the Islamic subjects helped me to understand Islamic knowledge to be a better Islamic and Acehnese citizen	<input type="radio"/>				
3. I am satisfied the pedagogical subjects have helped me to become motivated and engaged in the teaching and learning process	<input type="radio"/>				
4. I am satisfied with the teaching methodology applied in teaching and learning within the English Education Course	<input type="radio"/>				
5. Overall, the course curriculum content met my learning needs	<input type="radio"/>				
6. Overall, the teaching and learning strategies used met my	<input type="radio"/>				
7. I am satisfied that I am well prepared for employment as a teacher	<input type="radio"/>				
8. I am satisfied that I can gain employment in a range of occupations other than teaching**	<input type="radio"/>				

**If so, which other occupations could you seek employment in?



Inputs for future development

Overall, what aspects of the programs do you see most important and why?

Overall, what aspects of the programs do you see as least important and why?

Overall what aspects of the program are most effective and why?

Overall, what aspects of the programs need to be improved and why?

Overall, what is one key step you believe the curriculum or teaching could take to improve the quality of graduates?



Your sex:

- Male
- Female

Your semester:

- Seven
- Eight
- Nine>

Thank You!

Thank you for taking my survey. Your responses are very important to me and to the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, Darussalam - Banda Aceh.