Language Needs of ICT Students in Malaysian Polytechnics

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Abstract

This study investigates and come out with suggestions to engage the needs of the students, lecturers and industrial trainers. The findings promote better understanding of all the stakeholders thus are used to come out with suggestions to enhance the ESP programme practised at polytechnics. The main research questions are: What are the language needs of ICT students and How to meet the needs of all the stakeholders. A case study is conducted and aimed to identify the language needs of students who are in the Information Technology Diploma programme. A mixed method research is opted to analyze the data. Mixed method research describes and explains the second language needs of the respondents. Qualitative and quantitative data is collected in phases and involved three types of respondents: diploma in ICT students, language and content lecturers and industrial trainers. The findings of this study may add knowledge in developing human capital in Malaysia especially in relation to English competency in ICT discipline.

Background of research

This study investigates the language needs of the students, and their lecturers and trainers. The findings will then be used to produce suggestions to enhance the ESP programme practised at polytechnics. Language is no longer seen only as a means of communication but it has been accepted as a factor to develop a country. It has now become a central to culture and nation building. Malaysia as a multi-cultural country is aware of the influence of language in a society. The status of the Malay Language as the national language needs to be uphold, having English Language as the second language and on top of that, without neglecting the importance of other languages. After the independence in 1957, education in Malaysia has gone through many dramatic changes and one of them was to upgrade the standard of the Malay Language as the national language. The national language is used as a mean to unite all the races in Malaysia. Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first Prime Minister of Malaysia claimed that if the National Language is not introduced, the country will be devoid

of a unified character and personality (Abdullah, 2005). The national language took over the role of the English Language in all formal situations. In 1956, the Razak Education Report proposed that Malay Language became the official language used as the language of instructions in teaching and learning for all subjects except English. Based on the history, the education in Malaysia had gone through many challenges in the process of changing the medium of instruction from English to the Malay Language.

However, even though the Malay Language is widely used as a language for all formal correspondence in Malaysia, it is still lacking of terminology for science and technology. In the new world of globalisation and modernisation, Malaysian government cannot avoid from taking drastic actions which may be seen as retreating to the past. Language is again seen as a factor that influences a success of a nation. English has become the second most important language (Asmah, 1992) even though it is the only non-native language taught in all schools. In the mid-1990s, the government urged the tertiary institutions to use English in teaching technical courses and at the same time, senior government ministers including the ex-prime minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed have become convinced that the standard of English Language in Malaysia has deteriorated and may jeopardize the nation. Despite the dissatisfaction voiced out by many, in 2003, the government had introduced the teaching of Science and Mathematics in junior primary and secondary classes via English medium (Ridge, 2004). It was convinced that by integrating the language and content would increase the students' content and language competency. Therefore, the future generation of Malaysia will be able to accept challenges of globalisation and Information and Communication Technology. Since the shift in the language used was implemented in junior and secondary classes, the higher institutions need to take the next step to continue with the change in the language policy. This includes polytechnics and community colleges.

Purpose of study

The aim of the study is to investigate the language needs of students who are doing Diploma in Information Technology at Ungku Omar Polytechnic. This case study will be conducted using mixed methods. The description of the general situation will be gathered from the questionnaires and the in-depth situation will be done through interviews and observations. The respondents will be asked to answer a set of questionnaire to know their perceptions on language needs. Employers, English and IT lecturers were given structured interview questions in order to get further feedback on the respondents' needs. The findings may then

be used by The Polytechnic and College Community Division, Malaysia and future researches to revise the Technical English syllabus and suggest materials suitable to the field concerned.

Statement of problem

For these past years, there have been concerns that the higher institutions do not produce graduates who meet the needs and expectations of employers. The researcher will further discuss the concerns regarding language on employability, literacy and English programme in Malaysian Polytechnics.

Language and employability

The employers or industries have frequently voiced out their disappointment on the quality of graduates who do not meet the job market requirements (Industry Dialogue, 2008). It was mentioned that the graduates were lacking of hands-on knowledge and relevant skills and the industries were not keen to train new employees. The graduates' poor communication skills in English and their inability to be articulate a line of thought regardless of language are among the factors mentioned by the industries (Industry Dialogue, 2008). Thus, causes difficulties for the graduates to find a job after they have completed their studies. It becomes a nation worry when the mission to produce human capital which is IT literate, independent, highly motivated and competitive (Education Ministry, 2000) seems not been accomplished when the ex-Human Resource Minister, Datuk Dr. Fong Chan Onn revealed the feedback from employers that a number of unemployed graduates lack of communication skills, unable to use computers and lack of team spirit (Cruez, 2003). Due to these, Malaysia spends millions of ringgit to retrain unemployed graduates and teach them skills such as communication, English language and creative thinking. It is hoped this initiative will help the unemployed graduates to be able to fully adapt their generic skills thus creating wider opportunities to secure jobs.

Based on previous researches, graduates' lack of competency and poor communication skills affect their ability to secure jobs (Lee, 2004; Nurahimah, 2002). According to Tan (1999), based on the needs analysis conducted, there was about 60 percent of students in Malaysian Polytechnics with low proficiency in English and he added that there would be a need for reasonable level of English for career advancement. It was reported that only 600 from the total of 13000 graduates who registered with Human Resource Ministry for jobs in service

and marketing sectors in the first 10 months of the year 2002 were employed, while the rest were rejected due to their poor command of English and lack of communication skills (Fairuz, 2003). The decline in the standard of English is not only felt in the academic circle but also in diplomatic services (Asmah, 1992). In another survey conducted by Nurahimah and Rosmawati (2002), it was found that employers perceived the graduates were not prepared with written and oral communication skills in English.

Language and information technology literacy

The issue of not having Malaysians who are proficient in English language is widely discussed by all. Realizing this, the Malaysian government has taken serious measures in order to overcome this problem. One of the steps is to enhance the importance of English. English is the language of science and technology, therefore, Mathematics and Science subjects are best taught in that language (New Sunday Times, 21 December 2008). A previous study conducted by Hamidah (2001) showed a significant relationship between English language proficiency and Information Technology (IT) literacy. IT literacy is affected by the level of proficiency in English, the language of technology. Garcia-Vazquez, Garcia-Vazquez, Vazquez, Lopez, and Ward (1997) found out that there is a significant connection found between proficiency in English and standardized achievement scores.

The shift in the language policy may have caused uproar among many especially the linguists and nationalists. Reverting back to English is seen as depriving the status of the national language and the other languages in Malaysia. The fiery protest from education and cultural groups like Dong Jiao Zong show that the shift of using English is seen as a threat to the children instead of an alternative to improve their English language competency (Chin, 2008). However, despite all the controversies, the Malaysian government has signed multi-million-dollar, six-year contracts with overseas universities to train teachers for teaching English as a foreign language throughout Malaysia. It seems that the government has allotted RM100 million for this training project and including tuition expenses for the hundreds of students who are to be trained (Ridge, 2004).

ICT in Malaysia

Information Communication Technology is seen as the field where English is used as medium of instruction and the graduates of polytechnics should prepare themselves to be semi-

professional group who might need English for their career advancement. ICT in Malaysia has been identified as one of the factors that contribute in achieving the mission proposed in Malaysia Education Development 2001-2010. ICT development is seen as the important driver for positioning Malaysia as competitive knowledge based economy, global ICT and multimedia hub (MOSTI, 2007). One of the challenges for the nation is to develop an economy system which is based on knowledge or K-economy. K-workers or knowledged workers are the people who create information and knowledge and integrate it into business (Turban et al., 2001). In traditional discipline, knowledge grows at much less rapid pace; on the other hand, the body of knowledge associated with information technology is expanding at a very rapid pace (Westfall, 1997). Anderson and Bikson (1998), believed that generic rather than application-specific, knowledge and skills should be the focus of computer literacy. Generic skills refer to the general education literature such as learning-to-learn, analysis and problem solving, innovation and communication. Therefore, graduates who are proficient in English, which is also the language used in the ICT era, have the advantage to utilise their generic skills. They will be able to learn on their own and explore the world of IT and become future workforce who is K-worker, IT literate, independent, with high motivation and competitive in line with the mission proposed by the Higher Education Ministry.

English language programme in Malaysian polytechnics

The tertiary institutions including polytechnics have taken the next step and starting this year, English is used as a medium of instruction in teaching technical subjects. The Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education (DPCC), Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia is aware of the needs to improve the ongoing language programmes and supports progressing in polytechnics and community colleges. Among the support programmes was to prepare the subject lecturers with English courses before implementing the language shift. The three-phase language programmes enhanced the skills and abilities of the lecturers in using English in class. English lecturers were trained and they became the facilitators in this programme. In addition to that, DPCC gives opportunities for the industries to contribute by organizing industry dialogues annually, since 2006. The main objectives of these dialogues are to foster closer ties with the industry and to have first-hand feedback on current trends pertaining to the human capital needs of the industry and nation. DPCC is aware the importance of engaging the needs of the industries and how the polytechnics and community colleges can fulfil those needs for the national as well as the international market.

All these years, English has been taught and specifically designed to cater for the needs of the students. Polytechnics in Malaysia offer technical and commercial courses for certificate and diploma students. These courses cater for the post secondary students. Information Communication Technology course is among the technical and commerce courses offered at polytechnics. The ICT students may be good academically but with average proficiency in English. Since proficiency in English is not an entry requirement, many students doing certificate and diploma courses lack adequate foundation in the language. The graduates of polytechnics should be able to be skilful technical assistants in various engineering fields and prepare to start work in an organization which English is the main or very important medium of communication.

The general aims of English syllabus are to develop students' confidence and fluency in English and to enable them to function effectively at the workplace. Besides that, the graduates should be able to practise independent learning and self-monitoring as well as to develop appropriate study skills. The objectives mentioned in the syllabus include the graduates being able to communicate effectively with Malaysians and non-Malaysians (English Syllabus, 2002). Before 1991, there was no official standardized English Language Syllabus for all polytechnics. The lecturers had to work out their own scheme delivering the course. However, in October 1991, a workshop on ESP was held to review the existing English Language Programme and provide guideline with specific reference to ESP. Industrial visits and gradual exposure to ESP brought awareness amongst the English lecturers of the needs to have an English language programme tailored to the needs of the students and at the same time, sensitive towards the expectations of the students' prospective employers. Therefore, English in polytechnics is taught as English for Technical Purposes for all engineering courses, English for Commercial Purposes for all commerce courses and English for Secretarial Science for all secretarial science students.

The researcher is interested to investigate the language needs of the ICT students who are doing English for Technical Purposes. Currently, the ICT students are learning English for Technical Purposes which is `generalized' to all technical students at polytechnics. Considering the nature of ICT and the importance of English in learning IT, it shows that the `general' English subject taught to the ICT students create interests in the researcher to conduct this study. On top of that, because of the language shift, English is not only being taught as a subject but it is now used in teaching content in other core subjects.

Conceptual framework

This case study is conducted based on the needs analysis model by Jordan (1997). According to Jordan (1997), the first process in devising syllabus, courses, materials and kinds of teaching and learning is conducting the needs analysis. Jordan's needs analysis model analyses the needs from the perspective of student, employer or sponsor, course designer and teacher in order to achieve the target situation. There are many approaches in needs analysis which include the target-situation analysis, present-situation analysis, learning-centred approaches, deficiency analysis, strategy analysis, means analysis and language audits.

Objectives

This study attempts to investigate the needs of the students, lecturers and industries and give suggestions to bridge the gap by meeting their needs.

Research questions

The main research questions are: what are the language needs of IT students and how to meet the needs of all the stakeholders.

1) What are the students' needs in learning at Polytechnic?

    i)   What are the language needs the students require in learning English at Polytechnic?

    ii)   What are the language needs the students require at the training place?

    iii)   What are the students' IT literacy needs?

2) How does English help students in learning IT at polytechnic and in future?

    i)   How does the current English syllabus used suitable for the needs of IT students?

    ii)   How does English help students in learning IT?

3) How does English important for the students?

    i)   What are the language skills needed at the workplace?

    ii)   What are future expectations for graduates in IT?

Methodology

This study aims to investigate the language needs of students who are in Information Technology Diploma programme. In order to find the language needs, both quantitative and qualitative data are used. Mixed method is opted for this study. A mixed model method

involves mixing components of qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The researcher feels that opting for a mixed method research will be able to describe and explain the second language needs of the respondents. The data gathered from the questionnaires will be analyzed quantitatively and it will be able to provide general picture of the research problem. The interviews and observations will be able to refine and extend the general pictures, qualitatively.

This study will be conducted in a few phases and it involves three groups of respondents: students, lecturers and trainers. The data from the students will be gathered by using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative paradigm is useful to describe the students' perceptions regarding their language needs and IT literacy level. Therefore, for this study, the questionnaire will be distributed to the students and analyzed quantitatively. The findings will then be shared with the respondents and retrospective interviews will be conducted in groups. The qualitative data gathers from the retrospective interviews will help the researcher to gain insights based on the data gathered from the questionnaires.

The next phase will be classroom observations. The rationale of conducting classroom observations is to observe the language use in classrooms. The researcher plans to use audiotapes and field notes throughout the sessions. The reflective field notes taken from the classroom observations will be used during the interviews with the content and language lecturers.

Semi-structured interview is another method used in this study. It is conducted to find out the lecturers and trainers' views and suggestions pertaining to the IT students' language use. Interview is an important method to check and verify the impression gained from observations (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The researcher will conduct face-to-face interviews with content and English lecturers. Besides that, she will set appointment and conduct face-to-face interviews with the trainers. The trainers will be those who involved in giving the IT students industrial training. The researcher attempts to figure out the language needs and use at the workplace and the trainers' expectations of the future graduates of polytechnics. It is hoped that the data gained from the interviews will further explain the language needs in learning and working.

The researcher decides to use official documents such as the syllabus, modules, teaching plans, lecture notes and students' journals. This will help to understand the phenomenon better and the information retrieves may be helpful to support the primary data gathered.

The data will be analyzed and the findings will be triangulated and used to answer the research questions proposed. The researcher believes that using mixed method will be able to give a stronger evidence for a conclusion through convergence and corroboration of findings (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

Data Analysis

This study aims to investigate the language needs of ICT students and a thorough analyse of the situation is important for this study. It requires the general description and further insights of the situation. Therefore, the researcher decides to conduct a case study and using mixed method design to gather and analyze data. The case study aims to identify the language needs of students who are in the Information Technology Diploma programme. A case study is one which investigates individual, group, community or multiple cases to answer specific research questions (Gillham, 2001) and it can be either quantitative or qualitative or even a combination of both (Burns, 2000).

The researcher is interested to describe the language needs as perceived by the students of Information Technology and later, explore the needs of the lecturers and industrial trainers. To answer the research questions proposed, the study will be conducted in several phases. For this study, both quantitative and qualitative data are integrated in order to produce greater findings. Therefore, a mixed method design is opted. The five broad rationales for a mixed research study are triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Mixed methods research has two functions which include time orientation and paradigm emphasis (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). For this study, the data will be collected in different stages and sequential and both quantitative and qualitative data have approximately equal emphasis. Figure 1 shows general phases involved in this study. The rationale of choosing mixed method design for this study is to seek elaboration and clarification of the results of both quantitative and qualitative data. It is hoped that both data would be able to complement and give meaning to the research questions proposed.   To get the perceived language needs of the students, a quantitative data will be collected and to

get in-depth feedback from the lecturers and industrial trainers, qualitative date will be conducted.

Planning mixed method procedures

Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected in phases. Data that is collected in phases, either qualitative or the quantitative data can come first (Creswell, 2009). This study will involve three categories of respondents: diploma in ICT students, language and content lecturers and industrial trainers. Data will be collected through distribution of questionnaires, interviews and observations. Data from the questionnaire will be analyzed quantitatively. Interviews and observations will provide qualitative data which helps to give further insights of the study.
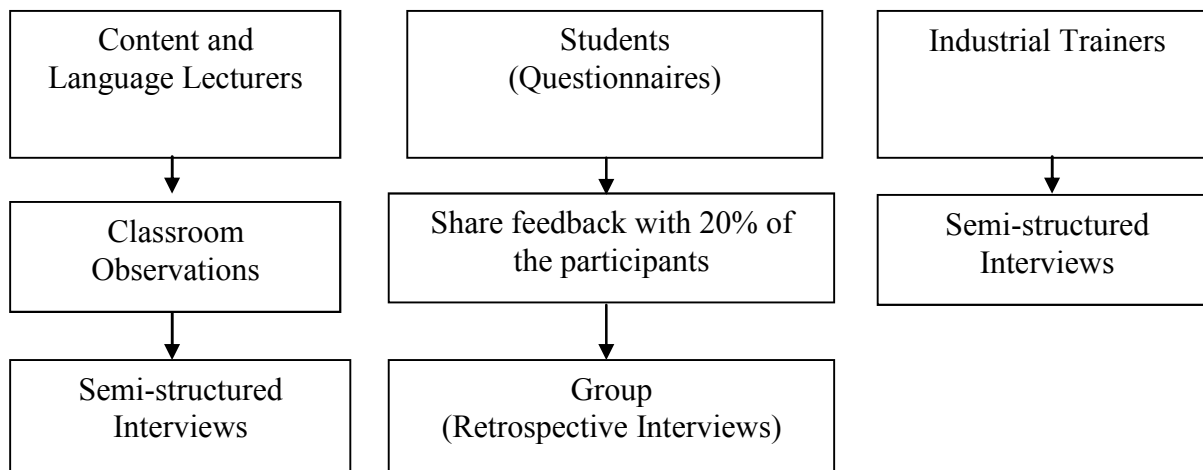
Content and Language Lecturers	Students (Questionnaires)	Industrial Trainers
↓	↓	↓
Classroom Observations	Share feedback with 20% of the participants	Semi-structured Interviews
↓	↓	
Semi-structured Interviews	Group (Retrospective Interviews)	

Figure 1: Phases proposed for this study

Sample

This study requires purposive sampling which involves ICT students, language and content lecturers and industrial trainers. In purposive sampling, the researcher identifies the characteristics of the population of interest and locates individual with those characteristics (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

ICT students

The sample is chosen based on two criteria: experience in learning English in polytechnic and have undergone industrial training. The respondents should have undergone English for Technical Purposes when they were in semester 1, 2 and 3. The researcher is interested to investigate the perceived needs of the ICT students who have taken English courses in

polytechnic. Their experience in learning English in polytechnic and during their industrial training will help the researcher to get a description what their language needs for academic and occupational purposes. The ICT students will involve in doing the questionnaires and 20% of the population will be selected to participate in group interviews. The researcher will select the respondents based on their training places. The researcher is interested to consider the size of the company and the importance of English used. Further explanation of the findings from the questionnaire will enrich the data needed for this study. The semi-structured interviews will be conducted in a group of five students and approximately four groups will be formed. The interview will be based on the findings of the questionnaire and some additional questions which may help the researcher to get in depth understanding of the situation.

Lecturers

The lecturers are chosen based on their experience in teaching polytechnic students. The researcher is interested to explore the perceptions of the content and language lecturers concerning their students' language needs. The researcher seeks to conduct semi-structured interviews with five content lecturers and five English lecturers. The respondents will be chosen after the researcher observes their teaching and learning in class. The main objective of conducting the classroom observations is to look at the language use in class. Five content and five English lecturers will be selected after the researcher has observed the lecturers and students language use in class. The selection is based on these criteria: the language use during the teaching and learning and materials in class. The five content lecturers will be chosen from the total number of lecturers teaching semester five diploma in ICT students. The English lecturers will be selected by referring to their experience in teaching English for Technical Purposes 4 (A4003); the English syllabus used in teaching and learning of semester 5 technical students.

Semi-structured interview sessions will be conducted with the content and English lecturers. The session will be a face-to-face interview. The researcher will discuss and arrange for a meeting place for the interviews. The questions will be based on the observations done before and additional questions will be asked. The questions will help the researcher to get a better understanding of the scenario. Semi-structured interviews will be recorded via mp3 and notes will be taken during the sessions.

Industrial trainers

The third group of respondents will be the industrial trainers. The researcher is interested to find out the needs and expectations of the trainers. Their needs and expectations of the use of English in the workplace are important in this study. A semi-structured interview with ten trainers will be conducted. The researcher will meet the gatekeeper who is the Industrial training officer and choose ten respondents for this study. The selection will be made by determining the types of companies the respondents are attached with. It was hypothesized that the types of the companies influence the needs and expectations of the employers. After identifying the respondents, the researcher will set up appointment and conduct face-to-face interviews. Semi-structured interviews will be recorded via mp3 and notes will be taken during the sessions.

Methods of data collection

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is developed based on a study on language and ICT literacy skills by Hamidah (2001) and Juriah et al. (1997), English and ICT syllabus used in polytechnics and Information Technology Checklist questions from CAUDIT (The Council of Australian University Directors of Information Technology) IT Literacy Policy. Questionnaire is a self-report data-collection instrument and researchers use them to obtain information about the thoughts and perceptions of research participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The findings of the questionnaire will be able to answer the research questions on the respondents' perceptions on the language needs and perceived level of IT literacy. The questionnaire is divided into four sections: demography, section A, section B and section C. The demography section asks the respondents on their perceived language proficiency and training experience. Section A is to find out the respondents' Information Technology literacy level. Section B and C help the researcher to know the respondents' language needs for learning IT and for training place.

Responses will be gathered from participants who are learning English in polytechnic and have undergone their 6 months Industrial Training Programmes. Participants will be asked to express their language needs pertaining to learning IT and training place. The data from the questionnaire will be analysed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) and descriptive statistics will provide the general description of the perceived needs of the students. Descriptive statistics provide images and/or summaries that can help the reader

understand the nature of the variables and relationships (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The questionnaire will be analyzed by using descriptive statistics and determine the measures of central tendency, measures of variability and measures of relative standing.

The questionnaire provides statements and rating scale for the participants to choose. Rating scales which are fewer than four points are not as reliable as rating scales with more points and rating scales with more than eleven points can be confusing (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Burns, 2000). Therefore, a six-point rating scale is provided for more choices for the participants and to avoid them to *lean* one way or another as mentioned in Johnson & Christensen (2008). All the statements are in plain and simple English and the researcher believes the participants should be able to understand them.

A pilot test will be conducted to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. It is important for researcher to do a pilot test to make sure whether it operates properly (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). A pilot test will significantly improve the quality of the data obtained (Seliger & Shohamy, 1990). In order to find out the internal consistency reliability index, Cronbach' coefficient alpha will be used and the result will be analyzed by using SPSS. Cronbach's coefficient alpha is another form of internal consistency reliability index (Burns, 2000) and provides a versatility of testing items in range of responses (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The pilot test will be conducted on several students similar to the actual participants of the study.

The researcher will ask the content experts to ensure the content validity. The experts will help to evaluate the statements asked in the questionnaire. Content validation is usually carried out by experts in the area and they will review the content domain, such as the course syllabus, the text and notes used (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

Interviews
For this study, the researcher plans to conduct two types of interviews; retrospective and semi-structured. Interviewing is an important way for a researcher to check the accuracy of-to verify or refute- the impressions he or she has gained through observation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). Interviews allow opportunity for researcher to prompt or probe the participants when necessary (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

Retrospective interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or informal (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The researcher aims to find out further clarification and explanation on the language needs of the ICT students. This type of interview will be conducted in a group of five students. The students will have participated in the earlier stage of the data collection; which is the questionnaire administration. They will have to answer the questionnaires and 20% of them will be chosen to participate in interviews. These students will be divided into 4 groups and they will be interviewed in groups. The researcher will show the findings of the questionnaire and the interview will be based on their perceptions of the findings. The participants for the interview will be chosen based on their previous training places. This information will be given by the Industrial Training Officer who keeps the record of the students and their industrial training sessions.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to the content and language lecturers and industrial trainers. The data gathered from the interviews is pertinent to give rich data of the needs of lecturers and trainers. This method of data collection will help the researcher to allow participants provide historical information on their fields (Creswell, 2009). Concerning these, researcher plans to conduct face-to-face interviews with five content lecturers, five English lecturers and ten industrial trainers. Their responses on the language needs of the ICT students in learning and for the training place are important to answer the research questions proposed earlier.

Both types of interviews will be conducted by the researcher. All the sessions will be audio taped and the researcher will take down notes during the sessions. Since it is a semi-structured interview, the researcher will prepare some questions before conducting the interviews. The questions will be written and responses from the participants will be noted. The data from the interviews will be transcribed and the notes will help to give better clarification whenever necessary. The researcher will read through the transcribed interviews and try to obtain general sense and give overall meaning. The next step will be to begin detailed analysis with a coding process. The analysis will be adapted from Creswell (2009) as in Figure 2.
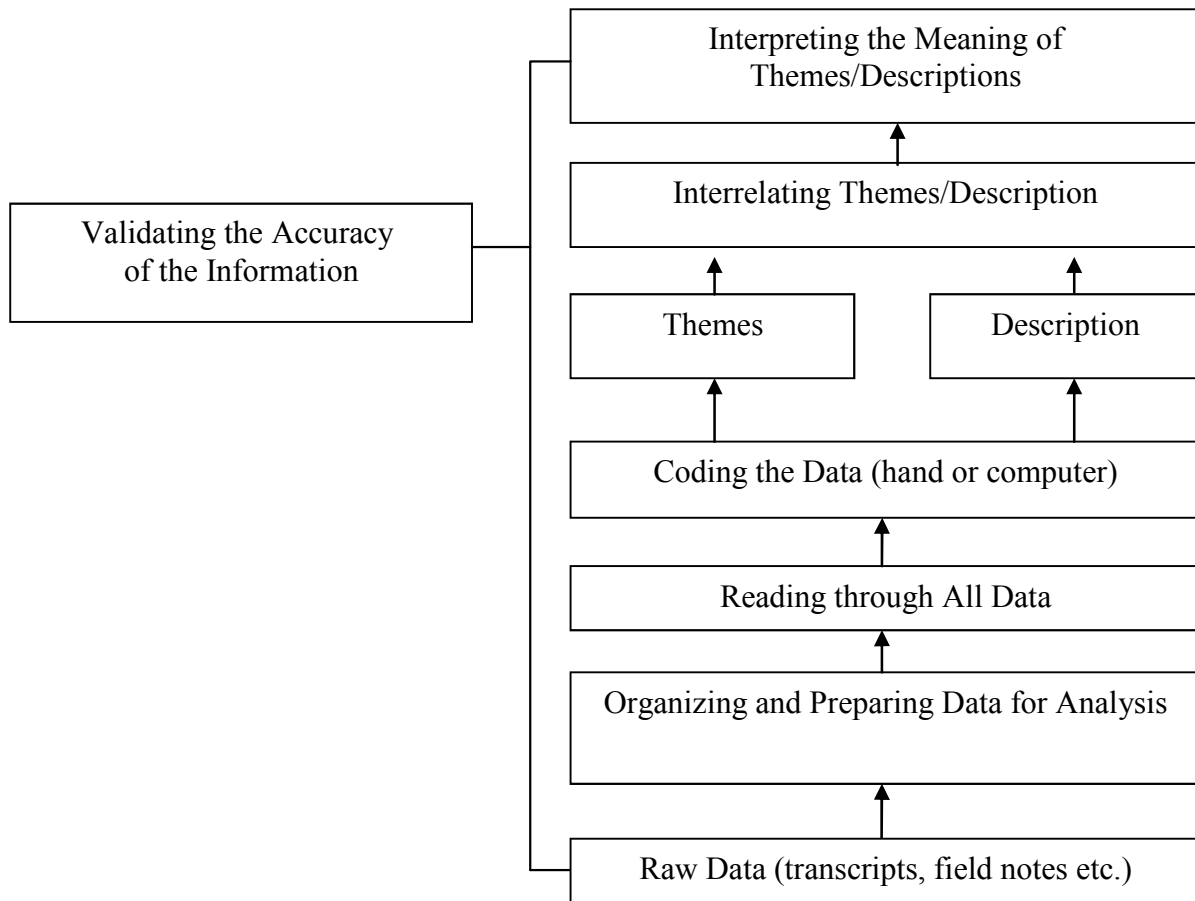
Figure 2: Data analysis in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009)

Observations

Observations were conducted to look at the language use in class. Both content and language lecturers were approached and asked permission for the researcher to sit in classes and observe the language use. Observation is defined as the watching of behavioural patterns of people in certain situations to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). During the observations, the researcher audiotaped and used field notes. Field notes are notes written down by the observer during and after making observations (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The researcher prepared a table divided into several categories. She only focused on the English language use in class. The categories were: introduction, presentation, practice, conclusion and others. The others involved the notes and teaching materials use. The field notes from the observations were organized and used during the semi-structured interview sessions. The researcher used the findings from the observations and asked for further clarification from the participants.

Significance of the study

The findings of this study may add knowledge in developing human capital in Malaysia especially in relation to English competency in ICT discipline. It is hoped to investigate the language needs from the perceptions of the students, lecturers and future employers and come out with suggestions to engage the needs of all the stakeholders.

High quality human capital is no longer a luxury but a necessity (Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, 2006). The ex-Prime Minister emphasized on the importance of producing high quality human capital. He mentioned the importance of education and continuous training to ensure the relevancy of human capital. The findings of the research may contribute in preparing the Diploma in Information Technology students to become the ideal human capital for the nation. The graduates who are able to compete, advance and with high moral values. It has been mentioned as part of strengthening the institutions is to produce confident students with a sense of balance and proportion and the Ministry of Higher Learning attempts to introduce a holistic programme that will include all disciplines and focus on communication and entrepreneurial skills. In addition to that, the findings may give benefits to the lecturers and future employers.

The findings of this study will provide information on how to improve the English for Specific Purposes programmes by engaging the needs and expectations of the students, lecturers and future employers. The ICT students as adult learners should be aware of their needs and expectations in order to decide their future. The learners should monitor, assess and reflect on their own language learning. This is important and can be rewarding for the students and the teachers (Fortanet-Gomez & Raisanen, 2008). Self-assessment may be able to increase motivation and commitment for the students. The lecturers and future employers need to be aware of the needs and expectations of each other for the benefit of the students. The integration between the content and language lecturers could clarify the idea that both lecturers are not expected to be an expert in both areas. According to Fadhil (2001), teachers tend to make mistakes by trying to be experts in both the language and content area. The collaboration between both experts may be able to enhance the quality of courses offered at the ICT department relating to ICT literacy and the ESP programmes conducted in polytechnics. By discovering the needs and expectations of the stakeholders, the English and ICT courses at polytechnics could be reliable for many years to come. Therefore, the mission

of the ministry to produce graduates who are knowledgeable, skillful and competent communicatively will be achieved. As for the future employers, the study will expose them to the actual situation happening in the polytechnics. They will be aware of the efforts and interventions done in order to produce graduates who meet their expectations.

Conclusion

Since Malaysia cannot avoid competing with other nations in today's globalization era, she needs Malaysians who are knowledgeable and skilful in the field of science and technology. In order to be competent in these areas, Malaysians need the language. Realizing the standard of English is deteriorating up to the extend that it may jeopardize the development of the nation, Malaysian government has taken several aggressive actions to overcome this issue. One of them is to shift the language policy in teaching Mathematics and Science. The implementation of Malay as the national language after independence may have caused some Malaysians especially those from the rural area, not grasping more than one language. They become monolingual instead of bilingual. Lack of competency in English hinders the future generations' employability and causes them serious setbacks in furthering their education.

Tertiary education will remain dependent on English and students who are not proficient in the language will feel deprive of not being able to make use of reading materials in English (Abdullah, 2005). The industries are keen on accepting future employees who are competent in using English language. It is not adequate to only have good grades without mastering the generic skills and communication skill is indeed one of the generic skills listed. By being sensitive to the needs of the students, the lecturers and future employers, it is hoped that the future graduates will be compatible and fit in, in order to achieve the target situation. The dominance of English as the language of science and technology may have affected the importance of the national language in Malaysia. Malaysians may need to put aside their pride and patriotism of upholding the status of the national language but maybe by giving in, the Malaysians are gaining more. After all, at the end of the road, they are for the benefits of the nation.

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