STUDENT TEACHERS' CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING TEACHING MATERIALS DURING TEACHING PRACTICUM IN VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

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Abstract: Teaching practicum is an essential time for pre service teacher in practicing their teaching skills. It shows the student teachers ability in applying the knowledge that they have learned from the college to the real school and social environments. This study aimed to investigate the student teachers challenges in developing teaching materials during teaching practicum in vocational school and how they overcome the problems. Qualitative approach was employed in this research to understand, describe and explain beliefs, behaviors and meaning in context-specific settings (Wu & Volker, 2009) and case study used to capture the complexity of a single case (Johansson, 2003). The participants of this study were two English student teachers enrolled in teaching practicum in the eighth semester of the academic year 2015/2016. The data were collected through in-depth interview related to student teachers teaching experience in developing teaching materials in vocational school. The findings of the study revealed that the challenges faced by student teachers in developing material include (1) the lack of student teachers knowledge on students' field, (2) the lack of supervision time, and (3) the confusion in selecting media for the students.

Keywords: *teaching practicum, student teachers, developing materials, vocational school*

Introduction

Teaching practicum is considered as one of the core and central element of Pre service teacher education programs that provide student-teachers with the opportunity to examine the knowledge they gained during the theoretical study and put this knowledge into action. According to Hamaidi (2014) practicum is a real chance for the student to experience the real environments of teaching process, its complexity, and challenges that may impede the process of implementing the school curriculum. Moreover, Tuli and File (as cited in Septiani, 2014) reported that practicum allows student-teachers to discover their abilities and creativities that help them in their future teaching processes. It is also believed that through teaching practicum, "as teachers reflect on their

practice, they try to make sense of it and in so doing develop their own principled understandings" (Murray & Christison, as cited in Riesky, 2013). Therefore, the practicum is an important component of initial teacher education because it is in schools where possibilities and constraints of the teacher's identity in the classroom are first confronted.

During teaching practicum, materials are essential things which influence a teaching process in a classroom. Teaching materials help a teaching and learning process; the teaching materials must be suitable for students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them, the teaching materials should make it possible for students to preview and prepare their lessons, and the teaching materials should allow for adaptation and improvisation. In many cases, teaching materials are the center of instruction and one of the most important influences on what goes on in the classroom. Thus, development of teaching materials and teaching aids is critical to the success of educational activities.

Curriculum can be seen as a means of achieving specific educational goals and objectives. In this sense, a curriculum can be regarded as a checklist of desired outcomes (Wen Su, 2012). Indonesia was officially launched a new curriculum known as "Curriculum 2013" on July 15 2013. This curriculum was used gradually among school in Indonesia. In curriculum 2013, the syllabus and English teaching materials used in vocational school is the same as in the Senior high school. General English used instead of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). However, one of the considerations in developing materials is based on the students' needs (Brown, 1995). Thus, the teacher needs to be creative in developing teaching materials to make the material related to the vocations that the students have chosen.

Selection of materials for classroom use is a challenging task for a language teacher as it provides a platform through which students learn English language. Dudley-Evans (1998) outline the same and reiterate that materials play a crucial role in exposing learners to the language. Presentation of developmentally appropriate, relevant and engaging materials is, therefore, the prime responsibility of the material developers and the teachers. Kitao and Kitao (1997) emphasize the same and claim that materials are the center of instruction and one of the most important influences on what goes on in the classroom.

Some studies reported that there are some challenges faced by student teacher during teaching practicum (Riesky, 2013; Hamaidi, 2014; Jusoh, 2011). The study employed by Riesky (2013) aimed to explore kinds of teaching difficulties and efforts carried out to overcome them by English student teachers in the context of teaching practicum which involved 14 English student teachers reported that there are varieties of problem of student teachers during teaching practicum that can be mainly categorized into three types, namely problems related to students, to the supervising teachers, and to the student teachers themselves.

Another study conducted by Hamaidi (2014) aimed at investigating the student-teachers' perspectives of practicum experiences and challenges. 71 student teachers involve in this research. And the findings show that the challenges included the lack of guidance provided by practicum supervisor, the difficulty in communicating with cooperative teachers, and the inadequate support provided by cooperative teachers.

In addition, Jusoh (2011) conducted a study aimed to examine the problems that faced student-teachers in PTEP at the University of Sultan Zainal Abidin in Malaysia. In-depth interviews were conducted with two student-teachers who completed their practicum. The results showed that student-teachers have faced a variety of challenges, some were personal challenges related to the students themselves, while other challenges were associated with teaching.

The above studies highlight the growing attention to the quality of pre-service teachers' preparation programs. Due to the complicated context of practicum programs the previous studies discussed many aspects of practicum. This study, however aimed to focus at investigating the challenges of student teachers in developing teaching material in vocational school during teaching practicum and how student teachers deal with the problems.

Literature Review

- **Developing Materials**

According to Brown (1995) Materials can be defined as any systematic description of the techniques and exercises to be used in classroom teaching. Moreover he stated that materials come from three strategies which are: adopting, developing and adapting materials. Adopting materials involves deciding on the type of materials that are needed, evaluating the materials,

putting them to use, and reviewing them on an ongoing basis. Adapting materials includes all of the steps necessary in adopting them. Meanwhile, developing materials consist of three phases which are: developing, teaching (fiend testing), and evaluating the materials. During the developing phase, the first step teachers need to work on the materials including selecting materials, then the second phase which is teaching phase the material then be tried out and discussed in terms of their effectiveness. In the evaluating phase, then the materials are evaluated and revised to be a good material.

A study conducted by Riesky (2015) reported that there are some challenges faced by student teachers during their teaching practicum, the study evaluated all the aspects in teaching practicum including the supervisor, and the student, and the teachers themselves. This study however focused on one specific aspect which is developing material in vocational high school when the student teachers need to develop the materials to English for Specific Purposes.

- **Need Analysis in English for Specific Purposes**

ESP can be defined as a teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language for the purpose of using it in a particular domain. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) is more specific when he declares that ESP is" An approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and methods are based on the learner's reason for learning". Robinson (as cited in Javid, 2013) has defined ESP as the teaching of English to the learners who have specific goals and purposes. Moreover, Dudley - Evans (1997) stated ESP is characterized by a learner-centred approach to teaching, an emphasis on aspects of English relevant to professional discourse, communicative and immediate learning purposes of learners in learning the language.

According to Belcher (2004) ESP is an attempt to help learners accomplish their academic and occupational needs and goals. Needs analysis is considered to be the cornerstone of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). According to Duddley-Evans (2009) there are eight components in today's concept of needs analysis which have been grouped into five broad areas including:

1. target situation analysis and objective needs analysis(e.g. tasks and activities learners will use English for;

2. linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis, i.e. knowledge of how language and skills are used in the target situations;

3. subjective needs analysis, i.e. learners'wants, means, subjective needs-factors that affect the way they learn(e.g. previous learning experiences, reasons for attending the course, expectations)

4. present situation analysis for the purpose of identifying learners' current skills and language use;

5. means analysis, i.e. information about the environment where the course will run

Only after analyzing the students' needs and determining the objectives of the language course, student teachers can select a material that meets the students' need. Thus, needs analysis is the foundation in developing curriculum content, teaching materials and methods that can lead to increasing the learners 'motivation and success.

Because ESP courses are based on needs analysis, the learning objectives are more obvious than would be in the case of general ESL courses and it can be assumed that students will be more highly motivated

in learning about topics and texts which are related to their study or work areas (Otilia, 2015). Therefore, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is used in teaching English in Vocational school which is a school focus on a certain major.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative case study approach. The purpose of a qualitative research is to understand, describe and explain beliefs, behaviors and meaning in context-specific settings (Wu & Volker, 2009). A case study is expected to capture the complexity of a single case, and the methodology which enables this has developed within the social sciences (Johansson, 2003). One of the characteristics of this approach is "seek to explore phenomena" (Mack, 2005: 3).

- **Participant of the study**

The participants of this study were two English student teachers at Indonesia University of Education enrolled in teaching practicum in the eighth semester of the academic year 2015/2016 in vocational school 1 Bandung.

The participants were chosen based on several criteria, which are (1) Flexibility and availability (2) enrolled in teaching

practicum program (3) teaching English in vocational school. The participants taught English in some majors which are tourism, accounting, and office administration classes.

- **Data Collection**

The data in this study are gained through interview. Malik and Hamied (2014) state that interview is a purposeful interaction that permits researcher to obtain important data which is not possible through observation alone. Furthermore, they say that interviews allow researcher to examine attitudes, interests, feelings, concerns, and values more easily that through observations. The interview was intended to gain a rich data about the participant views, beliefs, and attitudes regarding to their challenges in developing materials and how they overcome the problems.

The interview consists of 10 main questions related to the participant experience and challenges during teaching practicum in developing teaching material. Each interview took around 20 minutes.

- **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed through codifications and themes. The researcher transcribed the data from the interview, and then analyzed it to become several themes.

Then, the challenges of student teachers were elaborated, and continued with the way student teachers overcome the problem.

Data Presentation and Discussion

The interview was conducted to the two participants in a different place in order to get a personal and valid data from 2 different perspectives. Based on the interview there are several challenges faced by the student teachers in developing materials for vocational school students. Those are including the lack of knowledge related to the students' field; the lack of supervision time; and the confusion in selecting teaching media.

- **Student teachers consideration in selecting teaching material**

Before we discussed how the student teachers develop the teaching materials, it is important to discover how the student teachers select the materials. From the interview, it is stated that the student teachers select the teaching material mostly from the internet, and then from textbook.

> *"Saya mencari materi pembelajaran di internet atau di sumber pembelajaran buku dari pemerintah pendidikan dan kebudayaan,tapi kebanyakan dari internet)."*

> *("I look for teaching materials from the internet or from the students' textbook provided by the*

ministry of education and culture, but mostly from the internet.")

The materials were chosen in the form of PDF, student worksheet, video, and also power point. Then the materials were developed in order to be a good material, which can be understood by the student.

A good teaching material, regarding to the participant is a materials which is in line with the learning objective, clear, and understandable.

"Materi yang baik adalah materi yang kontenya memuat tujuan pembelajaran, padat, jelas, dan siswa dapat memahami materi tersebut"

("A good material is a complete comprehensible material which contains learning objectives, and students can understand the material.")

Based on the interview, the student teachers think that in selecting materials, they need to focus on the students' needs. It makes the student background of knowledge as prior reasons in developing teaching materials. This is in line with Duddley-Evans (2009), there are eight components of needs analysis which have been grouped into five broad areas including: target situation analysis, linguistic analysis, subjective needs analysis, present situation analysis, and means analysis.

Moreover, the student teachers stated there are several considerations in selecting teaching materials.

"Biasanya faktor yang bisa menjadi patokan dalam mencari materi adalah (1) Apakah materi ini dapat diterima. (2) Apakah materi ini cocok terhadap tingkatan atau level pembelajar atau siswa itu sendiri (3) Apakah materi ini bisa membangkitkan rasa ingin tahu siswa (4) Apakah materi ini menyenangkan atau mudah dipahami (5) dan Apakah materi ini bisa membantu siswa dalam tujuan pembelajaran".

("Usually, factors that can be considered in selecting teaching materials are: (1) Whether the materials can be accepted, (2) whether the materials suitable with the student level of knowledge, (3) whether the materials can increase students' curiosity, (4) whether the materials are pleasant and easy to understand, (5) and whether the material can help the student to achieve the learning objectives").

"mencari materi yang sesuai dengan kemampuan english mereka, dan materi yang membangkitkan semangat mereka dalam belajar (materi yang dipenuhi dengan ilustrasi-ilustrasi yang menarik)."

("Look for materials which are suitable with the students level of knowledge and the materials can awake their passion in learning (the materials contain attractive illustrations.)

Those considerations are (1) the materials need to be suitable with the context; (2) the materials need to be suitable with the student proficiency level; (3) the materials can develop students' curiosity, (4) the materials can be achieve easily; (5) the materials in line with the learning objective; (6) the material can attract the student to learn. Howard and Major (2005) argued that there are six key factors that teacher need to take into account when designing teaching materials. Those are: learners, curriculum and context, resources and facilities,

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personal confidence and competence, copyright compliance, and time.

• **The challenges in selecting teaching materials**

There are several challenges in developing teaching material. Those are: the lack of student teachers knowledge on the student field; the lack of supervision time; the confusion in selecting teaching media.

1. The lack of student teacher knowledge on the student field

In order to develop the material to be achieved by the student easily, it is important to have a background knowledge related to the vocations that the student teacher taught. Ortilia (2015) reported that students will be more highly motivated in learning about topics and texts which are related to their study or work areas. In this case, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is used. The student teacher taught English in accounting, tourism, and office administration class. It makes them need to understand the basic knowledge of those disciples. In order to connect the materials with the student field to make the learning process meaningful. However, it is a challenge for the student teacher to understand the issue on that field, because

they need to connect the material with that issue.

> *"tantangan lain nya itu, saat saya akan mengajarkan narrative, tangkuban perahu. Dosen menganjurkan saya mengajar bagaimana menjadi tour guide pada siswa, tapi saya sendiri tidak yakin dengan kemampuan saya, karena belum pernah juga jadi tour guide."*
>
> *("Another challenge is, when I will teach narrative, tangkuban perahu. My supervisor suggested me to teach the students how to be a tour guide, but I am not sure with my own ability, because I have never been a tour guide before.")*

Therefore, the knowledge of the students 'field is important for student teachers in order to develop the teaching materials and activities in the classroom.

2. The lack of supervision time

Supervision of student teachers during student teaching is a very important exercise in teaching practicum. It may be the only form of individualized instruction that student teachers experience during their training (Henry & Beasley, as cited in Thobega, 2008). To student teacher supervisors, it offers an opportunity to engage in one-on one instruction, which is a highly regarded teaching technique (Henry & Beasley). There are two supervisors that the student teachers have during teaching practicum. Those are the in-service teacher, and a lecturer supervisor.

> *."Komunikasi dengan guru pamong dan dosen pembimbing lancar, mereka*

memberikan feedback.termasuk mengenai materi yang hendaknya disampaikan ke siswa SMK, tapi waktu bimbingan nya hanya sebentar, jadi saya kadang masih bingung dengan feedback yang diberikan."

("Communicating with the cooperative teacher and supervisor is running smoothly, they give feedback including the material that needs to deliver to the vocational students, however the supervision time was insufficient, sometime the feedback given makes me confused.")

Based on the interview, it is stated that although both supervisors give the student guidance and feedback, the time was insufficient.

3. **The confusion in selecting a suitable media for the students**

Media is an important key in delivering the material. It is an aids to support the teaching and learning process. However, based on the interview there is confusion in selecting media for the students, whether the media chosen were suitable with the students level of knowledge or not.

"Kesulitan nya menyesuaikan (media) dengan kemampuan sisw, terkadang media yang telah dibuat tidak tersampaikan dengan baik karena miscalculation saat mengembangkan materi".

("the problem is to adjust (media) with the student ability. Sometimes, the media chosen are not conveyed properly because of the miscalculation in developing the material.")

4. **Ways to overcome the problem**

Based on the interview, there are several ways to overcome the challenges in selecting teaching materials. Those are: (1) Learn the issue of the students' field in order to understand and to develop teaching material and to connect the materials to the student field; (2) Communicate with fellow student teachers and cooperate with them at finding suitable materials for the students. (3) Choose an appropriate media regarding to the student level of knowledge (It might be different in every class).

The findings of this study show that there are several challenges faced by student teacher during their teaching practicum in vocational school 1 Bandung. The findings support the previous research conducted by Riesky (2013), Hamaidi (2014) and Jusoh (2011) which investigate student teacher problems in teaching practicum.

This study elaborate the challenges of student teacher in developing materials which have been mention in Riesky (2013) as the problem from the student teacher themselves related to their teaching practice, and also mention by Hamaidi (2014) that one of the challenges in designing course is due to the lack of guidance by practicum supervisor.

Conclusion

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Teaching practicum is an essential time for student teachers in practicing what they have learned in college. In practicum, student teachers learn a lot of aspect in order to be a good teacher. One of them is to develop teaching materials for the students. In developing teaching materials, the student teachers need to focus on the students' needs and level of knowledge.

The challenges of student teachers in developing teaching material are (1) the lack of student teacher knowledge on the student field; (2) the lack of supervision time; and (3) the confusion in selecting media for the students regarding to their level of knowledge.

In order to overcome the problem, the student teacher need to (1) learn the the student field; (2) communicate with supervisor and fellow student teachers; and (3) understand the student level of knowledge and choose a suitable media.

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