

Proceedings
Vol. 1

the
5th

Southern Region of Sumatera
TEFLIN National Seminar

**SRS-TEFLIN
2016**

Developing Reflective English Language Teaching

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**SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY PRESS
PALEMBANG**

371.3

SRS SRS-TEFLIN National Seminar (*ke-5 : 2016 : Palembang*)
p Proceedings of the 5th Southern Region of Sumatera TEFLIN
National Seminar 2016 Volume 1: **Developing Reflective English
Language Teaching** diselenggarakan di Palembang pada tanggal
27 Februari 2016 / editors Chuzaimah Dahlan Diem ... [et al]. -
Palembang : Sriwijaya University Press, 2016.
x, 171 hlm. : 21 cm.
ISBN 979-587-602-3

I. Judul

II. Indonesia. Southern Region of Sumatera-TEFLIN

III. Diem, Chuzaimah Dahlan

1. Bahasa Inggris – Studi dan Pengajaran

Proceeding of the 5th SRS-TEFLIN National Seminar 2016
Developing Reflective English Language Teaching

Sriwijaya University Press

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STUDENT-TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE IN EFL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: This paper was mainly to explore problems that student-teachers encounter in managing EFL classroom and strategies they use to handle those problems. It was a qualitative study involving 3 student-teachers of English Department IAIN SMH Banten who have joined teaching practicum at state junior high school. Classroom observation, interview and student-teachers' reflective journal play as data collection methods. The result of this research indicated that student-teachers have problems starting from their students who are noise, are not interested in learning, seating arrangement, time arrangement to giving instruction. In addition, strategies that student-teachers applied to handle those problems were varied. Providing interesting material as well as enjoyable activities to do, involving students both in pairs and group work, doing teaching practice and combining the use of L1 and L2 are regarded as strategies to overcome problems.

Keywords: Student-teachers, EFL classroom management, teaching practicum.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching practicum is one of compulsory subject that student-teachers have to take. It is regarded as a challenging subject because student-teachers have to perform what they have got relating to teaching practice components in the real EFL classroom. In other words, student-teachers are expected to establish a link between theories what they have got in university and practices in the real EFL classroom at junior or senior high school level. It is in line with what Williams (2009, p. 68) states that the student teaching practicum is such an opportunity for pre-service teachers to try to apply theoretical knowledge and skills, previously gained in the teacher education classroom, to authentic educational settings. Thus,

student-teachers have to perform their skills and competences in order to have effective teaching learning process.

Based on the classroom observation that I had done in EFL classroom at Junior high school level, I found most of my student-teachers still had problem in managing EFL classroom. The fact was also supported by a short interview that I did with student-teachers' supervisors at classroom. They asserted that student-teachers had the lack skill in managing EFL classroom. Therefore, this mini research is conducted.

Classroom management has been defined as the "actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction" (Brophy, 1996, p. 5). It means that classroom management relates to

teachers' decision making in order to create positive atmosphere to enhance learning. Moreover, Brown defines classroom management widely (2001, p. 192). He classified classroom management into 2 parts. The first part dealing with elements into the physical environment of the classroom such as the sight, sound and comfort; the seating arrangements; the use of the board and the equipments needed in the class. Next, the second part related to the teacher himself or herself such as his/her voice and body language. By knowing classroom management, it is expected that EFL teachers are able to master classroom management strategies, in turn, it will assist them to control the EFL classroom and make their students enjoy it rather than regard it as a heavy burden.

METHOD

This study applies qualitative research as it focuses on process of a specific phenomenon (Maxwell, 1996, p. 19). Qualitative studies are especially suited for understanding the problem by which events and actions take place. The interest in a qualitative research is the process rather than outcome. More specifically this study deals with what student- teachers' problems in managing EFL classroom and how they overcome those problems. In addition, this study uses in-depth classroom observation, interview and student- teachers' reflective journal as instrument for collecting data. In order to keep data valid, triangulation among these instruments is applied. In other words, triangulation is established with the use of classroom observation, interview to see whether they match with the

outcomes of student-teachers' reflective journal.

This study was conducted at one state junior high school at Serang, Banten in which these student-teachers have had teaching practicum. Referring to respondents, this study only involved 3 students- teachers of English Education students, IAIN SMH Banten who has had teaching practicum at that state junior high school. Criterion-based selection is applied to decide who participants join in this study. Respondents are expected to provide important information. Thus, there are only 3 students-teachers, low, middle and high achiever students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following paragraph dealing with research questions of this study: What problems do student teachers encounter in EFL classroom? And how do student teachers overcome those problems?

WHAT PROBLEMS DO STUDENT TEACHERS ENCOUNTER IN EFL CLASSROOM?

Data from classroom observation from each student-teachers showed that: in their first meeting of teaching practice, they seemed difficult to make students calm, specifically in the first hour of their practice and indeed, the EFL classroom itself put in the last hour of that day. Other findings were recorded from classroom observation. This class was a large class with more than 40 students, student-teachers had difficulties in seating arrangement. The common atmosphere of seating arrangement in common state school was using traditional way, one row followed by the other one. Student-teachers had difficulties in asking students working in

group. Next, it was dealing with the time arrangement. Based on lesson plan that student-teachers gave to supervisors, a few activities could not be applied because of student-teachers' skill to arrange time

Moreover, data from interview with 3 student-teachers indicated that student-teachers who joined teaching practicum had to try out practicing how to arrange EFL classroom.

Persiapan utama saya adalah menguasai materi dan bahasa Inggris saya. Materi sudah saya kuasai tapi saya sangat nervous. Apa yang saya takutkan terjadi. Siswa saya seperti tidak tertarik dengan materi yang saya ajarkan. (Interview)

My major preparation is mastering material and my English. I have mastered the material, but I am too nervous. What I am scared to happen, it happens. My students are not interested in doing material that I teach.

Another interview showed that student-teachers had difficulties because of large class.

Hambatan terbesar saya adalah mengelola kelas besar. Suara saya harus jelas dan keras. Bukan hanya ketika menerangkan materi tapi juga memberikan instruksi bagaimana mengerjakan tugas, dan saya menggunakan bahasa Indonesia. (Interview)

The biggest problem for me is how to manage a large class. My voice must be clear and hard. Not only in explaining material, but also in giving instruction how to accomplish the task and I use L1, Indonesia language

Furthermore, data from student-teachers' reflective journal make

problems that student-teachers encounter in facilitating EFL classroom.

Awalnya saya kaget karena siswa tidak mau diam, ribut saja. Mereka mengobrol saja. Akhirnya saya memberitahu: Attention, please. Dan saya minta mereka yang mengobrol untuk memberikan contoh dari materi yang saya ajarkan tentang asking and giving help and something. (Reflective journal)

I am so surprised that students are not calm, they are so noisy. They talk one another. Finally I say: Attention, please. I ask students who talk to give example for material that I teach, asking and giving help and something.

Other problems that student-teachers write in their reflective journal relating to time management.

Saya belum bias mem'pas' kegiatan yang saya tulis dalam RPP dengan apa yang saya kerjakan dan intruksikan ketika mengajar. Ada kegiatan yang belum saya kerjakan dan waktunya telah habis. (Reflective journal)

I have not been able to arrange activities that I have written in lesson plan with I have done and have instructed to do when I teach. There is activity that I have not done but time has been over.

HOW DO STUDENT-TEACHERS OVERCOME THOSE PROBLEMS?

Relating to problems that student-teachers experience when they facilitated EFL classroom, student-teachers claimed that they have strategies how to overcome problems.

Table 1. The Problems and Strategies

Problems	Strategies
1. Students are so noise	Give activities to do

2. Students are not interested	Involve students in pair work, group work Providing interesting material
3. Seating arrangement	-
4. Time arrangement	Practice teaching before performing at real EFL classroom
5. Giving instruction	Combining L2 and L1

Based on result above, it is obvious that student-teachers' problem in managing

EFL classroom is in line with Brown (2001, p. 192-4) state in the first part of classroom management, specifically to comfort and seating arrangement, and the second part relating to student-teachers' voice and their language. Dealing with seating arrangement, it seems that student-teachers cannot do anything. Indeed, what student-teachers got in university to creating, for example U-shape, cannot be applied in real EFL classroom.

In addition, relating to problems in giving instruction and student-teachers' strategies to handle it by combining L2 and L1. It seems there is negotiation between student-teachers and their students. Winograd (2002, p. 350) asserts that the negotiation of power between teachers and students is an important aspect of ensuring successful classroom management. Besides, Prada Castañeda and Zuleta Garzón (2005, p. 167) also identified difficulties in giving instructions with reflecting on their own experiences and knowledge. In other

words, student-teachers apply strategy by reflecting their own experiences as students who do the task successfully, in turn by having instruction in L2 and L1.

In term of providing interesting material as well as involving students to work in pairs and group work, it indicates that student-teachers try to decrease monotony in class. It is in line with Kaya and Dönmez (2009, p. 580) that bringing variety material and different methods to attract students' attentions will help teachers to create effective classroom management.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that student-teachers have to be equipped by knowledge and skills dealing with how to manage EFL classroom. In other words, classroom management plays a significant role to create effective teaching learning process.

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