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EFL TEACHER'S OWN VOICE ON THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT, A STUDY AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 1 PAREPARE

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ABSTRACT

In Indonesia, teachers are faced with a duty to master four competencies in teaching, such as; Technical Knowledge or Professional Competence, Pedagogical Competence, Personal Competence and Social Competence. These competencies seem being a burden to be fulfilled by teachers as it is created and implemented by the government. Considering this issue, in this study I want to reveal EFL teacher's opinion on the concept of professional competence development. This study applied descriptive approach. The duty taken by having an interview with five teachers at the State Senior High School 1 (SMA Negeri 1) of Parepare South Sulawesi Indonesia. The findings of the research illustrated that the teacher's opinions have similar concept with that of the government. Their opinion on professional competence development gets along with what the government wants.

Key words: Competency, Professional Competence, Teacher's voice

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as one of the countries which has placed English as a foreign language and has implemented a wide variety of English teaching models where it becomes a mandatory subject in secondary school level and up to university. In an era when English is greatly increasing in importance, excellent EFL teachers are needed to help achieve the national education curriculum goal. Furthermore professional competence development program for English teachers are undoubtedly desirable and important in all ELT context throughout the world. (Warschauer, 2000; Yuwono, 2010) [1].

In Indonesia, the duties of teachers are established in the act on the National System of education No. 20/2005, especially chapter XI article 40. It is stated that one of the responsibilities of teachers or educational workers is "to have professional commitment to improve quality of education" (Undang-Undang Sisdiknas, 2005) [2].

Because of the important role of that teacher have, teachers need to be able to improve and develop their professional competences.

The aim of the study is to investigate English teacher professional competence development within the Indonesian educational context, a context which is characterised with a lot of complex realities, limitations and obstacles in its classroom. Asriati (2013: 1) [3] states that there are several reasons that probably become the problems of the the students' failure to use English in the classroom setting. The first is the English teachers or instructors still lack of capability in teaching the subject itself. The second is the method which is used by the teacher does not cover the needs of the students' characteristics and abilities. The third is the classroom management system which applied by the teachers is still not effective to cover the students' condition in the classroom to create effective classroom circumstances.

This paper intends to explore the EFL teacher's opinion on the concept of professional competence development.

Professional Competence of EFL Teachers

Language educators need opportunities to grow in language proficiency and in knowledge and awareness of culture(s). They also must be familiar with and skilled in the use of a proficiency-oriented approach to instruction.

According to (Brown and Rodgers in Wichadee, 2008) [4], to be a good teacher in an EFL class requires a combination of two components, such as:

a. A Mechanical Component

The mechanical component of a lesson includes the skills required for the content of the lesson to be presented in the most accessible ways for students

b. A Mental Component

The mental component encompasses the teacher's belief system about teaching and learning as well as the teacher's personality.

The teachers giving question, feedback, managing the reward and punishment, praise and giving critique, answering the question from the students and help them when they have some difficulties in learning process (Schunk, *et al* 2012: 465) [5].

Professional competence which deals with the technical knowledge of the effective English language teachers. Technical knowledge closely related to the teacher ability in mastering the English itself. How far they master English in order to teach the students the proper way of using English.

Criteria For Good Professional Competence Development Of EFL Teacher

Since teachers are key to the success of reforms, they must improve their competencies to implement the language competency and Participant involvement and personal choice are key characteristics of successful professional development programs and activities.

Development of teaching competence is teacher's professional responsibility, and teachers can undertake a wide range of activities in fulfillment of this obligation. As (Crandall in Pettis, 1997) [6] pointed out in her keynote address at the TESL Canada Conference, the development of teaching competence activities in fulfillment of teacher's professional obligation are:

- a. Courses to take,
- b. Journals to read,
- c. Colleagues to talk with and observe,
- d. Classroom research to conduct,
- e. Textbooks to review, and,
- f. Workshops to attend.

Medgyes in Mayuni (2007: 26) [7]. states that the role to be a good English teacher is mastery the linguistics and language development, having ability in planning and teaching English, understanding of culture and the relation between language and culture. Further, a non-native English teacher should become an effective teacher, confidence, professional, and having ability in speaking like a native.

Anugerahwati (2009) [8] reports her findings on Professional Competence for Teachers of English in Indonesia: A Profile of an Exemplary Teacher. Her findings shows that an exemplary teacher should be one who, most of all, has outstanding personal competences, i.e. the pedagogical, subject matter, and social competencies.

(Brown, 2001) [9] formulates some characteristics of a good language teacher by dividing them into several categories such as technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills, and personal qualities. The list of them shows in the following part:

<p>Technical Knowledge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands the linguistic systems of English phonology, grammar, and discourse. 2. Comprehensibility grasps basic principles of language learning and teaching. 3. Has fluent competence in speaking, writing, listening to, and reading English. 4. Knows though experience what it is like to learn a foreign language. 5. Understands the close connection between language and culture. 6. Keeps up with the field through regular reading and conference/workshop attendance.
<p>Pedagogical Skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Has a well-thought-out, informed approach to language teaching. 8. Efficiently designs and executes lesson plans. 9. Understands and appropriately uses a variety of techniques. 10. Monitors lessons as they unfold and makes effective mid-lesson alterations. 11. Effectively perceives students' linguistic and personal needs, along with their various styles preferences, strengths, and weaknesses. 12. Gives optimal feedback to students. 13. Stimulates interaction, cooperation, and teamwork in the classroom. 14. Uses appropriate principles of classroom management. 15. Uses effective, clear presentation skills. 16. Creatively adapts textbook material and other audio, visual, and mechanical aids. 17. Innovatively creates brand-new materials when needed. 18. Uses interactive, intrinsically motivating techniques to create effective effects.
<p>Interpersonal Skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Is aware of cross-cultural differences and is sensitive to students' cultural traditions. 20. Enjoys people; shows enthusiasm. Warmth, rapport, and appropriate humor. 21. Values the opinions and abilities of students. 22. Is patient in working with students of lesser ability. 23. Offers challenges to students of exceptionally high ability. 24. Cooperates harmoniously and candidly with colleagues, including seeking opportunities to share thoughts, ideas, and techniques.
<p>Personal Qualities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 25. Is well-organized, conscientious in meeting commitments and dependable. 26. Is flexible when things go awry. 27. Engages in regular reflection on one's own teaching practice and strives to learn from those reflective practices. 28. Maintains an inquisitive mind in trying out new ways of teaching. 29. Set short-term and long-term goals for continued professional growth. 30. Maintains and exemplifies high ethical and moral standards.

From various sources, can be identified several indicators that can be used as the size of the teacher characteristics assessed professionally competent: first, able to develop responsibility well. Second, the roles capable bring about function correctly. Third, able to work to realize the goals of education in schools. Fourth, able to carry out its functions in the role of learning in the classroom.

2. THE METHODS

Discussions in this paper are based on a study conducted in the town of Parepare in South Sulawesi Indonesia. Five English teachers who worked at State Senior High school 1 in Parepare. Initially, the study aimed at investigating concept and perceptions of those EFL teachers on the issues of teacher professionalism and professional development. Semi-structured interview method by combining unstructured and structured interview approaches (Gay *et al.*, 2006) [10]. The interviews ranged from 20 to 70 minutes and were undertaken in Indonesian as the researcher is a native-speaker of Indonesian. Data from those interviews were then transcribed. The data were then translated and presented in English. The process of data analysis using analytical flow model proposed by Miles and Huberman. (Miles and Huberman, 1994) [11]. There were three concurrent flows of activities in analyzing the qualitative data, such as: data reduction, data displays, and conclusions drawing or verification. Some of the findings are discussed below.

3. THE FINDINGS

The paper argues that, based on the data obtained from interviews with 5 teachers, the terms of 'professionalism' vary among people. Every person may have her or his own opinion about 'professional'. Even though discussions on professionalism in general Perhaps for Indonesian context, English teachers – following (Walker, 2001; Yuwono 2010) [1] brief summary - are considered to be 'professional' if they at least: (1) have educational qualifications, (2) have good subject-matter knowledge, and (3) are skilled practitioners in the classroom.

This part focuses on the teachers' perception on the meaning of professional competence development. How far it influences their teaching in the classroom and how they cope with the educational system in Indonesia.

EFL teachers' opinions on the meaning of professional competence development

Professional competence of English language teachers have an encouragement to develop their ability and competence in teaching. How the teachers improve their competence whether it is in term of pedagogical or professional qualities.

Toward the question about what are their opinions on the meaning of English teacher's professional competence development here is Ms Herlina's response to the questions.

"For me, I can be a good teacher and give good treatment also to the students because I have been through the stages in the process of developing English teacher's professional competence that I have followed. There are many positive things that I learned and very helpful for me to do my jobs at the school. The ability of our language skills automatically will be good also. One of the example is PLPG program (Teacher's Training and Development Centre) that carried out at provincial level." (Ms. Herlina, First research subject, interviewed on February 13, 2016)

Based on her answer to the interview, Ms. Herlina thinks that the English teacher's professional competence development is very necessary and very helpful at all, especially on program PLPG (Teacher's Training and Development Centre), during his training program to increase the competence of teachers especially teachers of English education, it is feel like a re-fresh and recharge program. Frankly speaking she said, a lot of methods and teaching strategies that he has gained after joining the program immediately she apply in the class, She needs various ways of teaching, she does not want to teach monotonously, she realizes that the world of education recently develop and changing very rapidly specially to the students, most of students now following and use the sophisticated technology to facilitate their self with recently information, such as; the use of internet or a smart phone or gadget, as a teacher she must balance that situation and condition and he get one the solution of them through in service training programs such as PLPG, MGMP, seminar, conference and so on.

The next answer from Mrs. Sukma shows that she also shared the same experience with Ms. Herlina where she almost had the same experience about improving their teaching skills. Here is her response to the question.

"All this time I feel, the developing of English teacher professionalism competence can support my duties as a teacher, it is proved by applying what we know directly in learning process in the class, it can increase our self-confidence." (Mrs. Sukma, Second Research Subject, Interviewed on February 16, 2016)

The preceding extract shows that Mrs. Sukma is really believe that the developing of English teacher professionalism competence through in service training, such as; MGMP (Teachers Field Study Meeting Club) and PLPG (Teacher Training and Development Centre), and teaching trainings or seminar by using computer application are very influential in increasing her self-confidence at teaching, and those are influential to the teaching quality for both professional and pedagogical competence, her subject-matter knowledge can be applied in learning process directly. It is also influential to her language skills mastery such as; speaking, writing, reading, and listening.

A similar view was expressed by others teachers, such as; Mr. Umar realized that I personally feel very much helped by these activities. The following extract is his responses to the question.

"My opinion on the EFL Teacher's professional competence development, I think, it is still very necessary to do of course with the support from various sources related to education autonomous, such as; the city education department, local government and so on. Then about EFL teachers' professional competence development that we conduct, and follow all this time, I felt very influential on the mastery of the language skills, such as; Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Listening. Moreover, as an English teacher I try to use English at least fifty percent as the instructional language when I am delivering the material to the students. Not a lot of activities that we often do in order to our disciplines, there are two commonly program and activities, namely; MGMP (Teacher's Field Study meeting Club) and PLPG (Teachers Training and Development Center) which is usually hold at the province and I am really helped, you know, language is a habit, the more we use and listen it the more we will fluent." (Mr. Umar, Third Research Subject, Interviewed on February 17, 2016)

What is expressed by Mr. Umar on the EFL Teacher's professional competence development, he personally feel very much helped by these activities. Mr. Umar followed several kinds of in-service training to improve her professional and pedagogical competence such as in service training for teacher quality improvement, in-service training for SSCI (Smart School System of Indonesia) school and training of trainer for English instructor for SMA Level. he attended those training to improve his professional competence and his skills in teaching and also it was an appreciation from his school that delegated him to attend those training to improve his teaching ability.

The next answer from Ms Fatma shows that she also shared the same experience with Mr. Umar where she almost had the same experience about improving their professional and pedagogical competence. Here is her response to the questions.

"In my opinion, I am personally feel that it has effects very good and a lot for me as a teacher, for example the program and activities in MGMP which we hold every week, there, we discuss about something that relate with our profession as the English Teacher, for example; discussing about the teaching methodology, sharing the previous and latest information about strategies and teaching techniques, and the language which we use is English so automatically our speaking ability be trained too." (Ms. Fatma, fourth Research Subject, Interviewed on February 18, 2016)

Ms. Fatma feels personally EFL professional competence development has very good and a lot effects for her profession as a teacher by joining teachers training, such as; workshops and trainings, she has a lot of activities, namely; discussing about the teaching methodology, sharing the previous and latest information about strategies and teaching techniques, and she believes the English language which she uses automatically be trained too."

The next answer come from Mrs. Rosdianah. she thinks EFL teachers' professional competence development can increase teachers knowledge in generally about how to be a professional teacher. Here is her response to the questions.

"Yeah.....my opinion about the development of professional competence of English teachers, I think.....this professional development such as in MGMP's activity is very positive, because in there, fellow teacher sharing each other about many things relate to our duties." (Mrs. Rosdianah, fifth Research Subject, Interviewed on February 19, 2016)

"Well I think yes....., For example, it can increase our knowledge about how to be a professional teacher. A lot of suitable techniques and useful information how to arrange, designing, and developing teaching scenario or we term here RPP that suitable and appropriate in student learning in the classroom." (Mrs. Rosdianah, fifth Research Subject, Interviewed on February 19, 2016)

What is expressed by Mrs Rosdianah, she is really feel indeed those teacher in service training greatly help improve her ability to teach, she aware as a teacher required to find out, it means in this case teachers are expected to up to date their teaching treatment and experience, for example learning from computer like the using of Quicker school, Quicker school is the computer based program use by both teachers and students in learning via internet applications.

Based on the interviews during the field work. It is understandable that every person may have her or his own opinion about teacher's professional development. EFL Teachers professionalism and professional competence development are the result of a combination of many factors, including aspects of the English language ability, pedagogical, didactic competences and personal aptitudes or dispositions of teachers. Therefore, the teacher that may include as professional teacher is the one who shares a different background, way of interaction and specific teaching practices comparing to others.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The paper has explored what EFL opinions on the concept of professional competence development. In sum, the notions of the English language teacher professional and competence development are indeed very necessary and very helpful for successful process of teaching and learning that lead to increase the student's interest of the material this is supported by Crandall in Pettis, 1997 states that development of teaching competence is teacher's professional responsibility, and teachers can undertake a wide range of activities in fulfillment of this obligation. In line with the statements above the act on the National Sistem of education No. 20/2005, especially chapter XI article 40. It is stated that one of the responsibilities of teachers or educational

workers is "to have professional commitment to improve quality of education". The teacher professionalism and competence are two of the affecting factors for the successful in teaching English as the mandatory subject in Indonesian school and this is also supported by the act of teachers and lecturers No 14/2005, stated that teachers need to have four kinds of competences, namely; professional competence (knowledge of subject matter), pedagogical competence (skills in teaching methodology), personal competence (good behaviour and personalities), and social competence (social interaction and acceptance). Excellent EFL teachers are needed to help achieve the national education curriculum goal because of the important role of that teacher have, teachers need to be able to improve and develop their professional competences. The findings of the research illustrated that the teacher's opinions have similar concept with that of the government. Their opinion on professional competence development gets along with what the government wants.

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