



Student Teachers' Readiness to Practice Teaching at School from the Perspective of English Learning Materials Mastery

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Abstract: Student teachers need to master learning materials before practicing teaching at school. On their way to becoming good teachers, they will face some challenges. One of them is to master the learning materials. This study aims to determine how far the student teachers master the learning materials they will teach. The study investigated 63 student teachers who will instruct students in the first year of Junior High School. Therefore, the mastery measured is the learning materials for 1st grade of Junior high school. Questionnaires, tests and interviews were used to collect the data. Google forms did the distributions of the instruments. The researcher analyzed the data by counting the percentage. The findings revealed that student teachers' mastery of learning material is good quantitatively. However, based on the interview with the teachers in charge of microteaching, the knowledge of the learning materials needs improvement.

Keywords: learning materials, mastery, student teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are institutions that aim to prepare prospective teachers. The courses at this institution help student teachers acquire knowledge and teaching skills. Among the subjects presented in language teacher education is teaching practice in schools. Teaching practice in schools is one of the compulsory subjects that prospective teacher/student-teachers must carry out. Teaching practice is a much-needed experience for future teachers before performing their duties as teachers. From teaching practice in schools, students will have real experiences preparing lessons, delivering lessons, managing classes, evaluating learning, dealing with students with various characters, and different things found in the class's learning process. Students need to be equipped with knowledge and skills to carry out the practice successfully.

Knowledge for language teachers comprises professional, personal, and procedural knowledge (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Professional knowledge includes knowledge about language, language learning, and language teaching. This research focuses on knowledge about language.

According to the Indonesian law on teachers and lecturers, a teacher needs four Competencies; social, pedagogy, professional, and personality competencies. The student teachers also must have those competencies. Teacher education has equipped the student teachers with those competencies. However, this study will not examine all of these competencies. This research is limited to the competence related to professional competence, especially knowledge about language, which is the mastery of teaching materials.

Mastering the materials is a must for teachers. Without the mastery of the materials, teachers will not be confident and may lose their students' trust. Although students can search and learn on the internet, mastering the teaching material is necessary for teachers. As prospective teachers, student teachers must master the material too. The problem is whether student teachers master the teaching materials or not? Are they ready to teach by mastery of the teaching materials? The readiness of students to practice teaching from the perspective of teaching materials becomes the focus of this research. Therefore, This research aims to explore the extent to which student teachers are ready to practice teaching in terms of mastery of learning materials.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Student teachers and teaching practice

Student teachers learn in a teacher education institution to become teachers. They are learning to become good teachers. All student teachers must understand and have teaching competence during their studies. One important subject that a student-teacher requires is teaching practice.

Student teachers conduct the teaching practice in a real school. They will have to teach real students. It's different from microteaching, in which a student teacher teaches their classmate. All student teachers should prepare very well for teaching the students. There are many activities that they have to do in teaching practice. One of them that is crucial is lesson development. Souza (2017) mentions several aspects of lesson development, such as students' involvement, sequence of the lesson, teaching, learning, mastery of content, etc. Related to mastery of content, student teachers must make sure they master what they are teaching.

B. Language Learning materials

Student teachers must master the learning materials they are going to teach. They have to learn and master the language. Macalister (2014) mentions challenges that student teachers must face on their journey to become good English teachers. One of them is the challenge of learning the language. Mastering the language is an essential requirement to be a good English teacher.

The primary learning materials for school students in Indonesia are in the national curriculum. Teachers should base the materials to teach or to develop on that curriculum. Tomlinson (2011) explains that learning material is anything teachers or learners use to facilitate language learning. He added that materials give learners information about the language, expose learners and stimulate them to the language in use, or give facilities to discoveries about language use.

Teacher roles comprise controllers, prompters, assessors, resources, and tutors (Harmer, 2007). Teachers play their role as resources concerning the teaching and learning materials. It means that they become the source of language information for their students. Therefore, mastering the materials that they are teaching is compulsory.

Mastering the subject knowledge or learning materials, in this case, English will enable teachers to prepare and teach the students well. They will explain the material clearly to the students and answer their questions. The mastery of subject knowledge will contribute to the success of the teaching and learning process. Research conducted by Ngugi et al. (2014) found that if student teachers can understand and implement the materials in teaching the learners, they would significantly impact them. Besides, the student teachers can contribute to changing the environment positively. On the other hand, problems will happen if a student teacher does not master the material. Students may know well the material taught and if the student teachers cannot provide clear and correct information for the students, students will not respect them.

Teachers' mastery of learning materials will affect the students' achievement in learning. Although students can find rich learning sources anywhere, teachers' language competence still plays a vital role in their learning. Research conducted by Cahyono in October 2011 (Cahyono, 2014) found that the dominant factors that cause the high or low achievement of the National Exam were the teaching and learning process in the classroom. It showed that teachers play a significant role in teaching and learning. Meanwhile, Hammond (2000) stated that, among other things, the teacher's knowledge of teaching and subject matter, as well as the quality gained in the teacher-training program, would establish the success of teaching.

English language learning materials for school students in Indonesia can be divided into language knowledge and skills (The 2013 English Curriculum). The language knowledge covers the competence in analyzing the social function, text structure, and linguistic features. Meanwhile, the language skills cover the competence in implementing the knowledge into the language skills - listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Student teachers must master that knowledge and skills to perform well as English teachers.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims at finding out the student teachers' readiness to practice teaching at school from the perspective of learning materials. Since the student teachers will practice to teach English at first grade of junior high school, the learning materials are limited to the ones learnt by those students. This research was carried out in an English Department of a private university in Indonesia which has a Faculty of Teacher training and Education that requires student teachers to practice teaching.

This research involve 63 student teachers who will practice teaching in junior high schools and 6 teachers in charge of microteaching program. To get the data of student teachers' mastery of learning materials, a questionnaire, test, and interview were conducted. The questionnaires consist of 28 items with four scales, scoring 1,2,3 and 4; therefore, the highest score was 112. The test comprised 10 multiple choice items. The interview is asking teachers' opinions on the learning materials mastery of the student teachers.

The data collected were in number and opinion. Data in numbers were collected from questionnaires and tests given to the students. Data from opinions were taken from result of interview with the persons in charge of the microteaching program. The quantitative data were analyzed by counting the percentage and the teachers' opinions were added to complete the information.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Below are the findings of student teachers' mastery of learning materials.

1. Student teachers' mastery of learning materials based on questionnaires

Tabel1. Average score of mastery

Number of respondent	Total Score	Average score
63	5963	94.65

Tabel2. The frequency distribution of score

Score Interval	Tequency	Percentage
91 - 112	40	64%
70 - 90	21	33%
49 - 69	2	3%
28 - 48	0	0%
Total	63	100%

Tabel3. Classification of mastery

Score Interval	Category	Percentage
91 - 112	Very high	64%
70 - 90	High	33%
49 - 69	Low	3%
28 - 48	Very low	0%
Total		100%

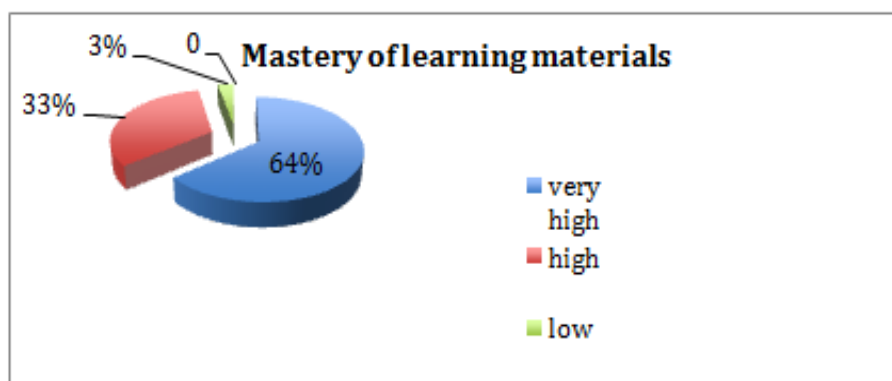


Chart1. Percentage of student teachers' mastery of learning material based on the questionnaire result

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Based on the classification above, the mean score (94.65) shows that the student teachers' mastery of learning material is in a very high category.

2. Student teachers' mastery of learning materials based on the test

Tabel4. Average score of mastery

Number of respondent	Total Score	Average score
63	463.05	7.35

Tabel5. The frequency distribution of learning material mastery

Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage
8 - 10	32	51.79%
6 - 7,9	21	33.33%
4 - 5,9	7	11.11%
2 - 3,9	3	4.7%
Total	63	51.79%

Tabel6. Classification of mastery

Score Interval	Description	Percentage
8 - 10	Very high	51.79%
6 - 7,9	High	33.33%
4 - 5,9	Low	11.11%
2 - 3,9	Very low	4.7%
Total		100%

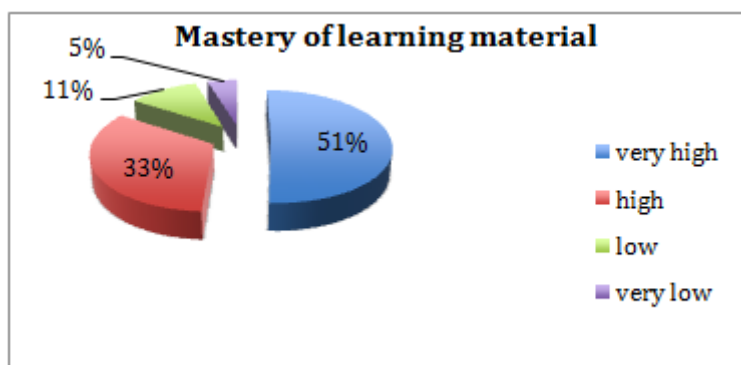


Chart2. Percentage of student teachers' mastery based on test result

The mean (7.35) shows that student teachers' mastery of learning material is high

3. Interview Result

The result of the interview about student teachers' mastery of learning materials is below.

Teacher 1

"For the mastery of the material, students have mastered it, but for teaching methods, class management and the use of appropriate media or formulas, it must be explored again which is then adjusted to the characteristics of students to practice teaching."

Teacher 2

"Students already understand the English material itself; it's just that students are not used to teaching others and are still shy, so they still need a lot of practice to deliver to students."

Teacher 3

"It needs to be maximized, especially for making materials so that all skills can be well covered."

Teacher 4

"... is still lacking in understanding the teaching materials because microteaching classes are conducted online. Student teachers need more practice. The level of student understanding of different is already good and optimal in the execution of the assigned tasks, but some still need a lot of practice."

Teacher 5

"The average is still less for the mastery of the material seen from the way they deliver the material in a microteaching class. If they have mastered the material, they must have the time of delivery they are smooth and if that does not prepare properly also seen the current lack of delivery."

Teacher 6

"They have to convince themselves that they have mastered the material to be taught, because if students are not sure of themselves how others will believe in their abilities."

5. DISCUSSION

Findings from questionnaires show the average student teachers' mastery of learning material is very high (mean score 94.65). Meanwhile, based on the test result, the mastery of learning material is high (7.35). The questionnaires ask the students to choose questions related to knowledge or theory about language. On the other hand, the test measures the student teachers' mastery of the language. However, the findings from both data show that the student teachers' mastery of learning materials is good. These will have a good effect as Hammond (2000) mentions that many factors establish the success of teaching, among others is the subject matter.

The findings from interviewing six persons in charge of microteaching classes (school teachers and lecturers) differ from questionnaires and tests. Two of the persons said that the student teachers lacked learning material mastery. The lack of learning material mastery is one of the challenges they face in becoming a language teacher, as Macalister (2014) stated, learning the language.

One of the teachers suggested that student teachers maximize the development of material. This skill is vital because teachers have to play a role as sources of information (Harmer, 2007). Another one recommended that student teachers convince themselves that they have mastered the material. It is in line with Souza (2017), who said that student teachers must make sure that they master the material well.

The two other teachers said that the student teachers had already mastered the learning material. It is a good provision to be an English teacher. When it is combined with the ability to implement it in teaching the students, it will have a tremendous impact on the learners (Ngugi et al., 2014).

6. CONCLUSION

Many factors affect a teacher's success in teaching students. One of the crucial factors is the mastery of learning materials. Therefore, it is a must for a teacher to master the learning materials. The student teachers are too. They need to master the materials they are going to teach at school. Student teachers have done the microteaching and taken subjects related to requirements to be teachers. Although based on the questionnaires and test, the findings of this research show that student teachers' mastery of learning materials is good, based on the interview result with the microteaching person in charge; their mastery of learning materials still need improvement. The students' teachers are ready to practice teaching from learning material mastery, although some improvement is required.

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Citation: Dhea H. Pratiwi & Umi Rokhyati. "Student Teachers' Readiness to Practice Teaching at School from the Perspective of English Learning Materials Mastery" *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, vol 9, no. 12, 2021, pp. 36-41. doi: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.0912004>.

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