Pre-Service Teachers' Strategies in Increasing Students' Interest of English

Classroom Learning

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Approval Page

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Abstract

This research aimed to explore the strategies used by pre-service teachers in increasing students' interest of English classroom learning. Regarding the strategies found in this research, challenges occurred when pre-service teachers attempted to implement the strategies. This research used qualitative research method and interview as the data gathering technique. Besides, this research was conducted at a private Islamic university in Yogyakarta. Four students of the English Language Education Department (ELED) with special characteristics related to this research were selected to be the participants of this research.

In addition, this research revealed three strategies used by pre-service teachers including the use of ice-breaking activity, games, and interesting media. Furthermore, there were some challenges faced by pre-service teachers in implementing the strategies categorized into several categories such as the difficulty to manage the students came as the students' factor. As the pre-service teachers' factor, they faced the difficulty to choose the interesting games, select the suitable material, and manage the time. The difficulty in teaching process raised as a challenge faced by pre-service teachers in increasing the students' interest of English classroom learning. At last, as the school or facility factor, inadequate tools or facilities and technical problem were the challenges in implementing the teaching strategies.

Keywords: pre-service teachers, internship program, teaching strategies, students' interest, challenges in teaching.

The Background of the Study

A teacher is the most important 'factor' in the educational process (Biesta, 2015). To increase the 'performance' of the educational system, it is essential to make sure that this 'factor' works in the most effective and efficient way possible (Biesta, 2015). The teachers themselves are parts of the education processes; they become the determinant factors in the educational field, particularly in the teaching and learning processes.

Pre-service teachers are also known as students of educational major in a university. According to Britzman & Danielwiczas cited from Yazan, B (2017) described the pre-service teacher as a formative and transformative process in which teacher candidates imagine, fashion, and enact their identities as a teacher. During their study, pre-service teachers must undergo an internship program.

In the Internship Program, pre-service teachers need to set achievable learning goals. When they set realistic and achievable goals, they may achieve them well (Yazan, 2017). Another factor that may influence the process of achieving the learning goal is the classroom environment.

At this point, pre-service teachers need specific strategies. The use of language learning strategies effectively can help students become effective learners of foreign language Radwan (2011) as cited from (Aljuaid, 2015). One of the ways of language learning strategies is creating engaging or interesting classroom learning to attract students' interest.

Students who are engaged and interested in classroom learning tend to gain more on their learning achievement. Gaining insights in how situational interest develops in a real classroom and how this development is related to students' academic achievement may provide valuable motivational insights that may help regulate and maintain an optimal level of students' situational interest and learning (Rotgans & Schmidt, 2011).

Based on the reason above, to encourage student learning, pre-service teachers need to be able to create interesting and attractive classroom activities. As limited study has been conducted on this topic in the context of this study, the researcher is interested in conducting research with the title "Pre-Service Teachers' Strategies in Increasing Students' Interest of English Classroom Learning".

Methodology

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative research method because the purpose of the study was explored and find out about the pre-service teachers' strategies in increasing students' interest and also the challenges they faced in implementing the strategies, in which the main purpose was explored the participants' views deeply. According to Cresswell (2012), who stated that qualitative research is best suited to the research problem where there are unknown variables and the need to explore.

The research was conducted on English Language Education Department (ELED) at one private Islamic University in Yogyakarta because this department

has the Internship Program, which is the purpose of this study. The researcher managed the time allocation to conduct the research in a period of about two months. The first month was used to collect the data using an interview. The second month was used to analyze the data after all data is well corrected and reported.

The participants of this study were the students of ELED batch 2015 at one private Islamic University in Yogyakarta. The four participants that have selected of this research have specific criteria as follows: they were the students of ELED batch 2015; they passed the six semesters of Internship Program and have experienced in conducting teaching practices in real situations, especially in the Internship Program (e. g. classroom teaching or teaching demo); all the participants were female; they were selected in one class of four class of ELED students batch 2015.

The researcher chose the interview asthe data-gathering technique. The interview was selected because the aim of this research was explored and find out about the teaching strategies and challenges in depth. The first step was chose the place of data gathering, which was at one private Islamic university in Yogyakarta. The second step was chose the participants that havethat characteristics which qualify to contribute to this study.

The data analyses were transcribing, member checking and coding. First step after conducting the interview was transcribing the result of the audio recording of the interview. Firstly, the researcher transcribed the audio recording from the interview into a form of text known as verbatim. In the data

transcription, there were pseudonyms for the four participants, including Anne, Brianna, Carol and Diane. Secondly, the researcher done the member checking in order to check whether the transcription of the interview is correct or not. Then, in coding, the researcher gave the label to the result of the interview; this data was in a text format that has been transcribed from audio data.

Finding and Discussion

Pre-Service Teachers' Strategies in Increasing Students' Interest of English Classroom Learning during Internship Program.

Using ice breaking activity. This research reveals that ice breaking activity was applied by Anne as her strategies in increasing students' interest of English classroom learning. This is in line with Flanigan (2011) as cited from Yeganehpour & Takkaç (2016), who stated that performing ice-breaking activities in English class will direct students to the good mood of learning.

The researcher assumed that it could be categorized as preventive strategy. As the reason, when the pre-service teacher had already prepared the ice breaking activity before the classroom teaching, it could be as preventive strategy. Besides, it could also be categorized as responsive strategy.For instance, when the pre-service teacher recognized that the students were not really enthusiast at the beginning of the lesson, the pre-service teacher decided to use ice breaking activity in order to encourage the students' attention and motivation in classroom learning.

Using games. This research reveal that there were four games that used by the participants to increase students' interest in English classroom learning. The

games were; jumbled story games or jumbled paragraph games; picture arrangement games; simon says games and paper ball games.

Jumbled story games or jumbled paragraph games. This games was used by two participants, they were Anne and Carol. Anne stated that she used "from elementary until senior high school can use games". She said that she used games "at the beginning of the lesson so that the students could be engaged". Furthermore, she said that "the students were more enthusiastic"; "more interested with games", as well as adding that "games could train their teamwork ability" and "indirectly motivate students to learn English, so they don't feel bored right away".

While Carol also used jumbled story/paragraph games, she mentioned the steps in implementing the jumbled paragraph. Firstly, "there is a story cut into several paragraphs". Then, she asked the students to "arrange the jumbled paragraph correctly". She also stated that she used jumbled paragraph "only at senior high school". She added that "because they were high school students that I taught who were interested in English, so it was quite successful too".

Picture arrangement games. This game was used by Brianna. Brianna said that "I implemented picture arrangement games at senior high school". This is because "that skill is quite complicated. Well, that's why I used it in high school because they were already quite advanced", thus she only implemented the picture arrangement games in senior high school. Furthermore, she stated that "the response to picture arrangement game was very positive". Brianna added that "it was group work and not individual, so they are more enthusiastic"; "so they are

excited to do the task" and also "the students became interested in learning English".

Simon says games. The Simon Says game was used by Carol as her strategy in increasing students' interest. Carol stated that "the strategy that I used for teaching was different at any time, but the first was the 'Simon Says' games". She added that "I use the games for ice-breaking". Carol mentioned that "I used the 'Simon Says' game at senior high school". She only used in senior high school as she stated that "I just found out that, if I am not mistaken, an English teacher at school suggested using Simon Says games".

Paper ball games. This game was used by Diane as her strategy. She stated that she used games "at elementary school", she added that "junior high school and senior high school can also use it. Diane stated that there were positive and negative responses from the students. The positive response was that "they are interested and enjoying it", so "there are also students who can mention animal names. However, there were also opposite responses towards the paper ball games. Some of the students were happy, while some other students were not happy. The students might be unhappy because "there are some students who cannot mention animal names", and also students who were "afraid to stand in front of their friends and speak up. However, it was stated that the students "mostly felt happy".

Based on the findings above, all of the participants were using games as their strategy in increasing students' interest. Thus, the researcher assumed that games could be used as a teaching strategy in the teaching and learning process

because many benefitswere mentioned above. This is in line with Bakhsh (2016) who stated that "games are one of the methods that could be used to avoid boredom in the classroom. They have a special role in any foreign language teaching. Both students and teachers will benefit from including games during class time". Furthermore, teachers may achieve all the educational outcomes through applying the use of games, especially in increasing students' interest.

Games were able to be categorized as preventive strategy. Owing to the fact, the games which they used in their teaching practice were already prepared before the classroom learning. The games also had been selected as their teaching material in classroom learning. Moreover, the games could be categorized as preventive strategy because it had been prepared before the classroom teaching or learning practice.

Using interesting media. This research reveals that teaching media is one of the strategies that were used by pre-service teachers as their strategy. Three participants used different teaching media as their strategy. There were two main categories of teaching media; those are visual media and audio visual media.

Visual media. First category is visual media, the visual media that used by the participants of this research were learning through visual media and flashcard. Learning through visual media was used by Brianna, she used pictures as her media, and she stated that she applied "learning through visual media". Brianna stated that there were positive and negative responses to learning through visual media. The positive response was "because they were happy to learn English or because the picture is colorful", and that "students were willing to speak up when

I ask them" and also "active". While the negative responses were that the students were "bored", in that the students were "enjoying with friends" and that "finally they talked to their friends and someone was playing around".

Another visual media that used by the participant were flashcard, this media was used by Carol, she stated that sheused a "flashcard". She stated that "I used flashcard from elementary school, junior and senior high school too". Carol added that there were different students' responses towards using the flashcard at every educational level. At elementary school, the implementation of flashcard did not run well because "at elementary school, the students were noisy". Meanwhile, "when I used flashcard at junior and senior high school, it was quite successful because it was not boring so they were interested".

Based on the findings above, Brianna used a picture, and Carol used picture card in the form of "sticky notes" as their teaching media. The researcher assumed that both strategies had run well because the students were most interested in. The use of pictures as teaching media, especially for teaching strategy is necessary for the teacher. This is in line with Gutiérrez et al., (2015) who affirmed that "pictures contribute to 1) interest and motivation; 2) a sense of the context of the language, and; 3) a specific reference point or stimulus". Moreover, using picture as visual media could be categorized as preventive strategy because the picture material was prepared before the classroom teaching and learning practice.

Audio visual media. This research reveal that audio visual media was one of the teaching strategies that used by pre-service teacher as their strategy. The audio visual media that used by the participant of this research was video. Video

as audio visual media was used by Diane. In addition, Diane used the video for "introducing various types of weather using video and singing about it". Diane stated that "I used video since senior high school" because she stated that "the problem at elementary school and junior high school was the limitations of the tools and media", such as "projectors, LCDs and sound that inhibit the implementation of video". Meanwhile, the students "were happy because the students at the school said that they were happier watching videos than teaching without a video or other device". Thus, the students found that it was "more interesting with video".

Based on the findings above, video is a teaching media that could be used by teachers to facilitate the teaching process, especially in creating interesting and engaging activities. The statement mentioned was in line with Kim (2015) who argued that there were several benefits of using video in classroom teaching such as enhancing learners' achievements and motivation, acquiring a better understanding of non-verbal expression, and including more useful than traditional lecture-based instruction.

Challenges in Implementing the Strategies

In implementing the strategies, pre-service teachers faced several challenges that come from some factors; students' factor; pre-service teachers' factor and school or facilities factor. The following sections explain the challenges in several categories, those are:

Students' factor. This challengescomes from students during the teaching and learning practice. There were several challenges from students that faced by the participants of this research, the following would explain in depth:

Students were difficult to manage. This challenge was mentioned by three participants. Firstly, Anna said that "when I implemented the games, the class atmosphere was not conducive because the students themselves were noisy". She added that the students were "less focused because they were noisy". Moreover, Anna also stated that the students were "not on for learning" when she was implementing ice breaking. Secondly, Carol said that she has difficulties in managing the students when explaining about flashcards at elementary school because "it was hard to explain because the students were noisy". She also added when implementing Simon Says games, the implementation did not run well "because at that time, my voice was soft, and elementary school students were so difficult to manage. Thus it did not run well". So, the students were difficult to manage and "they kept on going, and I had a soft voice". She added that "junior high school students were difficult to manage but not as bad as elementary school, so they can still be managed". Meanwhile, Diane said that she had difficulties in implementing games. She stated that "when we were about to do the games, the students are difficult to manage" and "the teacher is alone, so it was difficult to condition the students".

Based on the findings above, three participants had difficulties in managing students. Thus, the researcher assumes that this lead to pre-service teachers in managing the classroom learning. According to Hudson et al. (2018),

some pre-service teachers might not have enough time to develop adequate behavior management skills because they are not in the classroom as much. Thus, pre-service teachers need to overcome the students' behaviors that could add to the challenge of learning to manage a classroom effectively. Therefore, the researcher assumes that teachers need to overcome the students' conditions, especially the students' attitude by applying a variety of strategies to encourage students' interest in learning.

Pre-service teachers' factor. This challenges comes from the pre-service teachers themselves during the teaching and learning practice. There were several challenges from pre-service teachers themselves that faced by the participants of this research; those are:

Difficulty in choose interesting games. This challenge was mentioned by two participants. Anne stated that "to be attractive to students, so I have to use more interesting games" in order to encourage students' interest. Meanwhile, Brianna stated that she needs to think "if the games could be interesting for students or not".

Based on the findings above, the researcher assumed that choosing suitable games was significant for the students because the pre-service teachers needed to prepare the game which could meet the students' needs and encourage their interest. Regarding the statement mentioned, it was in line with Ucus (2015) who stated that the teachers had an important role on students' learning process with games. Following this, game was also crucial tool to be considered in order to help the students in developing the necessary knowledge and to be the active

members of their classroom learning. Therefore, choosing more interesting games could get students to relax and enjoy in using the language towards the English classroom learning (Huy, 2016).

Difficulty in choose suitable material. This challenge was mentioned by two participants, namely Brianna and Carol. Firstly, Brianna stated that she had encountered some challenges in implementing games, those are; the need to think about whether the games"were appropriate for students" or not; the need to brainstorm "the material that was appropriate for students", which lead her to have to be "adjusting the games which are appropriate for the material or not". Secondly, Carol stated that the challenge she faced when implementing the jumbled paragraph was "whether or not the material selection was appropriate or not and interesting".

Based on the findings above, both Brianna and Carol experienced some challenges in choosing the material, games and stories which were suitable and interesting for the students. Therefore, the researcher assumes that selecting the appropriate material is important in teaching regarding to achieve the learning goals, especially to meet students' needs. This is in line with Shin (2015) who stated that materials are used without a critical review of their suitability. Therefore there is a risk that teachers will present inaccurate or inappropriate content to learners. Therefore, it is important for teachers to consider these issues to ensure that they select appropriate classroom materials and design activities that meet students' needs (Shin, 2015)

Difficulty in manage time. This challenge was mentioned by three participants. Firstly, Anna stated that when she implemented ice breaking, the students were "not on for learning". Therefore she "takes a long time to build student activity". Secondly, Carol stated that she faced a challenge in managing time in implementing flashcard activities at senior high school. She added that "at senior high school, the time was about to run out, so we were in a hurry because of a lack of time". She also stated that "when I write a lot of words on sticky notes, one column consists of a lot of sticky notes, so there are a few columns so it takes quite a lot of time for me to write a lot of sticky notes". Thirdly, Diane stated that "for example, the students were enthusiastic to see the video and when the video ran out, and they asked for the video to be played again, the time wasn't enough, so we had a lack of time".

Based on the findings above, three participants faced some challenges in time management because of some factors. The researcher assumes that time management in teaching is important because it affects the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. This is in line with Huda et al. (2017) who stated that time management is important because it has a significant role to run the process of organizing and planning the teaching and learning process. Therefore this must be considered by the teacher in order to make specific activities run in effective ways.

Difficulty in teaching process. This challenge was mentioned by three participants. First, Anne stated that "I have to think about things that suddenly happened in the classroom" and that "I need a long time to develop student

activity, when the time is limited, for example, just ten minutes. She added that "I need to have a louder voice" in implementing ice breaking, thus "I need more energy". Secondly, Carol said that she has difficulty in implementing the 'Simon Says' game. She stated that she "did not really understand how to implement the 'Simon Says' game because it was the first time I use it", because she only knew the 'Simons Says' game after suggested by the school teacher. Furthermore, Diane faced difficulties in "finding the appropriate song" when implementing video to engage students' interest.

Based on the findings above, the researcher assumes that the three participants themselves have some difficulties that need to be considered so that the teaching and learning process can run well. Thus, it could be concluded that teachers need to respond and react to situations such as overcoming difficulties that are already mentioned above. Hence, teachers' response to a situation also play an important role in one's sense of teaching efficacy and could lead the teachers to likely view a challenging situation as a challenge to be overcome (Brown et al., 2015).

School or facilities factor. This challenges comes from school or facilities that have impact to the learning practice. There were several challenges from school or facilities that faced by the participants of this research; those are:

Inadequate tools or facilities. This challenge was mentioned by Diane when implementing video activities. She said that "at elementary school and junior high school, there was a limitation of tools and media". She added that

small tools "such as projectors and LCDs and sound systems, thus it could inhibit a difficulty of implementation".

Based on the findings above, the researcher assumes that inadequate or lack of school facilities could inhibit the implementation of teaching media, such as video. Meanwhile, Hallak (1990) as cited from Akomolafe & Adesua (2016), identified facilities as the main factor contributing to academic achievement in the school system. Thus, school facilities would likely motivate students towards learning. Moreover, experience shows that if school facilities are available, students tend to have an interest in learning; this will invariably lead to high performance (Akomolafe & Adesua, 2016).

Technical problem. This challenge was mentioned by Diane. She stated that when she was doing the teaching process using video, sometimes there were technical problems, such as when she implemented video, "sometimes the video can't be played, it has a problem with the projector, and usually the LCD did not connect.

Based on the findings, the researcher assumes that technical problems mentioned by Diane might happen at any time, and it could ruin the teaching and learning process. This is in line with Al-Faki & Khamis (2014) who stated that it is common that teachers face technical problems when working in technology-integrated-classrooms. Thus, teachers need to be concerned about this problem when they use technological support in teaching. Moreover, teachers need assistance when some difficulties arise immediately during lessons. Furthermore,

Glover & Miller (2001) as cited from Al-Faki & Khamis (2014) stated that co-operation between experienced teachers and beginners are needed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, several strategies were used by pre-service teachers to increase students' interest in English classroom learning. The strategies used by pre-service teachers in this research were ice breaking activity; using games; using interesting media. Thus, the researcher concludes that game was the most used strategy in facilitating the teaching and learning process.

This research also revealed some challenges faced by pre-service teachers in implementing those strategies. The challenges were categorized into several categories; those are: students' factor; pre-service teachers' factor and school or facility factor. Thus, the researcher concludes that the challenges were mostly from pre-service teachers' factors, but then also followed by school facilities factors and students' factor.

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