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The Impact of Reflective Practice on EFL Prospective Teachers' Teaching Skill Improvement

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of a study conducted to see the extent to which reflective teaching can improve prospective EFL teachers' English teaching skill and help them cope with adjusting to teaching in the real context. This empirical action research employed both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Twelve prospective-teachers undertaking teaching practicum at five different junior high schools in a city of Padang, Indonesia and eleven cooperating teachers were involved. The prospective teachers were required to do reflection on a regular basis using a guideline given prior to the commencement of this study. The data were collected through a teaching performance test, observation, interviews, and journals. The result of the analysis of the teaching performance test show that the practice of reflection improved the prospective teachers' skills over the three cycles of the teaching practicum indicated by the average teaching scores they gained and the scores of each teaching component. Moreover, the results of observation and prospective teachers' journals indicate that reflective practices reduced their problems and difficulties they faced of teaching in a real context. Another interesting finding from the interview and journal analysis was that the improvement of a teaching component was influenced by their attention to their conception of that particular component. In addition, their reluctance of using English as classroom language was apparently due their students' low English ability and the cooperating teachers' underestimation of its importance.

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Much has been written about the importance of reflective teaching for teachers' professional development. It is believed that by consciously and systematically reflecting upon their experiences, both experienced and novice teachers can improve their understanding of their own teaching (Borg, 2003; Farrell, 2007b; Ferraro, 2000; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Rodgers, 2002). In a reflective process, teachers act in a deliberate and intentional manner (Farrell, 2003) to examine their own

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classroom practices, which then raises their awareness of their weaknesses and strengths. In that way, reflective teaching is considered a means of problem solving (Rudd, 2007).

There is also a growing body of research attesting the positive impact of reflective teaching on teaching improvement. A study conducted by Cornford (2002) showed that trainee teachers and lecturers were interested in giving their positive response toward the use of self-reflection to improve teaching. Reflective teaching also brings about positive changes in both prospective teachers and teachers' teaching performance and professional development (Cirocki et al., 2014; Farrell, 2007a). In the field of foreign language teaching, some recent research (e.g. Girocki, 2014; Negari & Beiranvand, 2015; Rozimela 2013 & 2015) show promising and interesting results in improving teachers' teaching performance, raising their awareness of their declarative and procedural teaching knowledge, and enhancing their critical thinking necessary for reflection per se. Rozimela's study (2013), for instance, showed that reflection on regular basis written in a journal helped a group of EFL prospective teachers improve their English teaching skill in most rated teaching components such as selecting and using the techniques of teaching and instructional media.

Despite the great number of studies, few have been carried out to investigate the impact of reflective teaching on EFL prospective teachers' skill improvement and their perception on the practice when they do teaching practicum in Indonesian context. It is known that for prospective teachers teaching English as a foreign language is often problematic. They experience what Stoking et al. call as 'practice shock' (2003, p.340). They are required to have multi-strategic skills such as designing a lesson, developing materials, and handling students having various personalities and behaviors, while they are still struggling with their English. In addition, their instructional decisions will be influenced by cooperating teachers' instruction and guidance which may be different from theirs. Thus, it is reasonable to hypothesize that through reflective teaching prospective teachers will be critical of their own teaching and are able to incorporate cooperating teachers' and supervisors' comments into their self-evaluation. We argue that prospective teachers' apprehension or contentment would influence his/her reflection, which then raised awareness to improve that aspect.

For the purposes of exploring the use of reflective teaching for prospective teachers as argued above, research is needed. This article explains the results of a study carried out to investigate the extent to which reflective teaching by a group of EFL prospective teachers improved their teaching skill and ability to cope with adjustment problems at schools. The qualitative explanation revolves around the teaching components that the prospective teachers were concerned about in their reflection.

2. Literature Review

Pennington (1992, p.47) defines reflective teaching as “deliberating on experience, and that of mirroring experience”. It is a process of reconstructing or reorganizing experience to enhance the meaning of an experience (Rodgers, 2002). Dewey (1933) points out two important phases of reflection, perceiving and interpreting experiences. The first phase is critical because a teacher’s interpretation depends on how s/he perceives her/his experiences. Dewey (1933, p.96) adds that interpretations are subject to “the person’s own preferences, desires, interests, or even his immediate state passion.” Through writing a reflection teachers develop their ability to look at the past experience in order to plan the future actions (Pisapia, 2009; Cirocki et al., 2014).

Farrell (2007a) notes that reflective teaching falls between two main emphases. The first one emphasizes classroom actions; this is the process mentioned by Rodgers (2002) and Pisapia (2009). The second one includes matters outside the classroom. This is also called critical reflection. Jay and Johnson (2002) state that critical reflection is a process involving a broader historical, sociopolitical, and moral context by which teachers can see themselves as “agents of change” (p.80). For prospective teachers, reflective teaching focuses on the first type.

Basically teachers are able to reflect upon their actions in the class and think how they can reduce their weaknesses because “adults they have capacity for “self-reflective thought” as stated by Kohlberg (cited in Murphy, 2001, p. 499). In fact, Borg (2003) states that: “teachers are active, thinking decision-makers, who make instructional choices by drawing on complex practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs” (p.81). This means that through reflecting upon their experiences, teachers continuously exercise their understanding and construct their theory of teaching. Schön (1983) discusses two types of reflection, reflection-in-action (embedded in the action itself) and reflection-on- action (after a particular event). While in reflection-in action, teachers interpret, analyze, and provide solutions for problems emerging during an action, in reflection-on action the teachers do the reflection after teaching event is over.

The importance of reflective teaching is multifaceted. Through reflective teaching teachers gain awareness of their teaching beliefs and practices and learn “to see teaching differently” (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999, p 4). It is also a means to provide a teacher an opportunity to consider the teaching event thoughtfully, analytically, and objectively (Cruickshank and Applegate in Bartlett, 1990). It is well-known that beliefs and attitudes about teaching influence how a teacher defines effective teaching. The merits of reflective teaching are also reflected in its purposes which include: 1) to expand understanding of

teaching-learning process; 2) to expand repertoire of strategic options as a language teacher, and 3) to enhance the quality of learning opportunities (Murphy (2001). In field practicum, Payant and Murphy (2012) note that reflection on teaching practices enable prospective teachers to discuss areas for teaching improvement with cooperating teachers.

Rozimela (2015) summarizes that: “for prospective teachers the benefits of reflective practice are twofold”; that is, raising prospective teachers’ awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and building a strategy for professional development. The first is the point of departure for improvement (Bailey, 2006; Richards & Lockhart, 1996). In relation to this, Blank (2009) argues that reflective practice guarantees the development of “greater levels of self-awareness about themselves as practitioners and as people” (p.42), which leads to professional growth. The second one is the process of reflection prospective teachers which develops their reflective and critical teaching (Keyes, 2000; Zeichner, 2003; Rust, 2007). This builds a capacity to be professional teachers characterized by “open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness” (Bailey, 2006, p. 329). A great number of earlier studies cited in Tsangaridou and Siedentop (1995) show various positive effects of reflective teaching. Among others are that it could promote knowledge of teaching variables, improve attitude towards teaching, enhance the ability of preservice teachers in analyzing classroom situations, and improve student-teachers’ understanding of different issues in their own teaching. Some recent studies (e.g. Farrell, 2006 and 2007a; Rozimela, 2014, 2015; Cirocki et al, 2014; Jadidi and Keshavarz, 2013; Impedovo and Malik, 2016) also confirm the assertions of the benefits of reflective teaching. A case study conducted by Farrell (2006) indicated that reflection on action was effective for helping the teacher to discover the relationship of her beliefs and her practices, promoting the open-mindedness. The result of the study carried out by Cirocki et al (2014) that Sri Lankan ESL teachers consider reflective practice important and useful for their teaching career.

There are two ways of doing reflective teaching, planned and unplanned. The first one is done regularly. Cirocki et al. (2014, p.27) advocate for the use of regular reflection as “it is planned, active, persistent, and thus it heightens a teacher’s focus on problem-posing in his/her classrooms”. Teachers reflect upon their actions and the students’ reactions in the classroom. This leads to searching for alternative means of achieving goals or aims. Teachers who do this kind of reflective teaching most likely improve their teaching continuously with a clear direction. The second one is done irregularly. Bailey (2006, p.329) calls this second type as “rapid reflection”. By nature, the results of the irregular reflective teaching are temporary and are not well followed up. In a slightly different way, Bailey then classifies reflective teaching by quoting five dimensions of reflective teaching suggested by Zeichner and Liston. The dimensions fall in two categories; that is, reflection-in- action and reflection-on-action. The first category

includes rapid reflection (automatic and instantaneous) and repair dimensions (online decision making). The second comprises review, research, and retheorizing and reformulating dimensions which occur after or before teaching. Review is thinking and writing about one's work. Research deals with systematic thinking and observation to collect data over time. Then, retheorizing and reformulating is a process where teachers make connections between their work and the work of other professionals. In addition to these two types, Farrell (2007b) suggests another type, reflection-for-action, which is proactive in nature. In this case, teachers prepare for the future action based on the reflection on their past experience. For teacher professional development, these three types of reflection have to be an integral part of a program designed to train them to teach such as Micro Teaching or Peer Teaching.

3. Method

This study is an action research of empirical type. Chein et al. (1988) state the characteristics of this type of research are doing an action, recording what is done, and noting the changes. Cresswell (2008) says that this kind of research is a practice action research study. In this research, the characteristics of action research mentioned by Chein et al (1988) was implemented by recording the classroom activities and noting the changes made by the prospective teachers. Twelve randomly selected prospective teachers teaching at five junior high schools in a municipality of Padang, Indonesia implemented reflective teaching as outlined by the researchers for one semester (more or less four months) in 2015.

The data were collected through teaching performance task assessment, observations, journals, and interviews. Each prospective teacher taught three times of a five week interval, and their performance was video recorded. S/he was given a copy of the recording. After each performance, the prospective teachers wrote their reflection in a journal. They were suggested to watch the recording before they wrote their journals. Last, an interview was conducted. The researchers wrote the result of their observation of each prospective student. Their teaching performances were assessed with a purpose to show the improvement of their teaching skills. The three teaching performances were recorded after similar interval of time (every five weeks). The average scores of each teaching performance and the scores per-indicator were calculated to assess the improvement in the prospective teachers' teaching skills. The scores were based on the scale measurement used by the university because these were used by the supervisors and the cooperating teachers to determine their marks (see details in the appendix). The scoring rubric used was an adaptation of the scoring guideline used at the university and the indicators of each teaching component synthesized from various references. The scores were also used as their teaching practicum marks. A prospective teacher whose score was 90, for instance, earns 'A' as his/her mark. To gain the

reliability of the tool, we (i.e. the researchers) discussed the description of each component of teaching to be scored and exercises our understanding by trying it out by scoring two recorded student-teachers' teaching performance in the Micro Teaching class of the previous semester. It was found that we had the same understanding of the rubric.

The observation notes of the cooperating teachers and the supervisors and journals written by the prospective teachers were classified according to the emerging themes. The data obtained through interviews with the cooperating teachers and the prospective teachers conducted were also read and classified based on the interview guide questions. The results of the analysis were interpreted and discussed in order to draw a conclusion.

4. Findings

The results of the analysis will be presented in two parts. First, the average scores of the three teaching performances and the scores of each teaching component taken at three different times are depicted to show the prospective teachers' teaching skills. Second, the results of observation, journal, and interview will be described to provide qualitative explanation about the extent to which reflective teaching helped the prospective teachers improve their teaching skills and accordingly helped them to solve their teaching problems.

4.1. *The prospective teachers' teaching skills*

The teaching skills of all prospective teachers increased gradually from one teaching presentation to another of a five week interval. This is indicated by the scores gained by each participant as depicted in the following table.

Table 1.
The average teaching scores of three teaching presentations

Students	Average Scores of the First Performance	Average Scores of the Second Performance	Average Scores of the Third Performance
1	81.67	83.33	84.17
2	71.67	75	77.5
3	60.63	68.33	70.83
4	66.67	70	74.17
5	66.67	69.17	70.83
6	75	79.17	82.5

7	74.17	80	82.5
8	51.67	62.5	69.17
9	63.33	68.33	72.5
10	65	68.33	70.83
11	73.83	61.67	74.17
12	56.67	67.5	68.33
Average	67.25	71.11	75.04

The average scores in the table above show that the prospective teachers' teaching skill improved. At the first teaching presentation one of them (P1) taught very satisfactorily, gaining a score 81.67, while two others (P 8 and 12) performed unsatisfactorily as indicated by the scores (56.67 and 51.67). The rest performed satisfactorily. At the second teaching presentation all of them show some progress which is similar from one to another in terms of the point of the scores. Interestingly, those with the lowest scores have the biggest progress with 11 point increase. Similar to the second presentation, at the third one, all participants show promising improvement. However, the increase is not as big as at that of the second presentation. Comparing the first presentation with the third one, we can conclude that the participants enjoyed a n increase of 3 up to 13 points. Most of them fall into average category (60-75) with an increase between 5 to 10 points. Student 1 is the best one whose first performance is above 80, but the increase is the least. Whereas Student 8 and 12 who had low scores of the first teaching presentation experienced the biggest progress. The increase was statically measured by using Discriminant Analysis with the help of SPSS program.

Table 2.

The result of Discriminant Analysis of the teaching performance

	Wilks' Lambda	F	df1	df2	Sig.
G_Mean	.817	3.704	2	33	.035

The table shows that the obtained Wilks' Lambda is close to 1 (.817), which indicates that there is a difference between the prospective teachers' teaching skill in the first cycle and the second and the third cycle of teaching. The obtained F (3.704) is bigger than the critical F value (3.32) and the significance value is less than $\alpha = 0.05$. This means that the increase is significant.

The following table shows the progress the prospective teachers made in the components of teaching which were used as the indicators to assess the teaching skills.

Table 3.
The scores of each component of teaching

No.	The Teaching Components	The First Performance	The Second Performance	The Third Performance
1	Teaching Techniques	65.42	70.83	75.83
2	Instructional Materials	68.33	73.75	77.92
3	Teaching Media	64.58	71.25	75.42
4	Classroom Management	65	70.45	75.25
5	English Use	67.08	70	72.5
6	Language Assessment	69.17	70.42	72.33

The average scores depicted in the table above also show that the prospective teachers made improvement in all components of teaching. The biggest improvement is the use teaching techniques and teaching media. The least improvement is the language assessment. A comparison between the scores of the three presentations indicate that the biggest improvement at the second presentation is in the use teaching media, while the least are language assessment and classroom management. At the third presentation, the biggest improvement is on classroom management, while the least is still the language assessment, while English use is a little better than it. Of the six components, apparently the biggest improvement is on the use of teaching techniques, while the least (2 components) were, language use and language assessment. It may be surprised to know that the improvement in English use is also trivial. This fact may indicate that to improve the prospective teachers' ability in assessing their students' English skills and their English use need longer time or/and more strategies. Statistically, the increase can be seen in the following table.

Table 4.
The result of Discriminant Analysis of the teaching components

Teaching components	Wilks' Lambda	F	df1	df2	Sig.
TT	.691	7.381	2	33	.002
IM	.736	5.915	2	33	.006
TM	.724	6.295	2	33	.005

CM	.847	2.985	2	33	.064
EU	.939	1.079	2	33	.352
LA	.974	.438	2	33	.649

Note: TT=Teaching Techniques IM= Instructional Materials TM= Teaching Media
 CM= Classroom Management EU= English Use LA= Language Assessment

Based on Wilks' Lambda the result of the Discriminant Analysis reveals that the biggest difference or increase is evident in teaching techniques (0.691), while the least is language assessment (0.974). Based on the F test, the significant increase can be seen in teaching techniques (7.381), instructional materials (5.915), and teaching media (6.295) as the obtained F is bigger than the F critical value (3.32) with a significance value $\alpha \leq 0.05$. On the other hand, the increase in the three other components (classroom management, English use, and language assessment) is insignificant because the obtained F is smaller than the F critical value and the significance value is $\alpha \geq 0.05$.

The qualitative analysis which can explain some reasons behind the degree of improvement are unveiled by the results of observation, journal, and interview that will be described below.

4.2. *The Prospective Teachers' Concerns in Their Reflection*

The results of the analysis of the participants' journals, observation, and interviews in addition to the teaching performances described above suggest a promising role of reflective practice in guiding the prospective teachers to adjust to the real teaching context and understanding their problems and difficulties. Areas of teaching in which the prospective teachers gained significant improvement included classroom management, teaching techniques, teaching materials, and teaching media. The least improvement, however, was in language assessment and English use.

4.2.1 *Classroom management*

Managing the class was the teaching component of most concern perceived by all prospective teachers. Accordingly, it seems that matters dealing with this component moved them to find strategies for solutions. Their journal notes dominantly dealt with expressions of disappointment or failure in managing the class. This happened especially in the first two weeks, and decreased gradually in the following weeks. Most of their complaints and perceived failure dealt with difficulties in handling their students' misbehaviors. For instance, they said that the students did not pay attention to the lesson, disturbed their friends, made noise, refused to follow their teachers' instruction, or even fought in the

class. Our observation notes were in line with these journal entries. Most of the participants (10 out of 12) had these problems. We found that they did try to handle the class, but were not really successful.

In the journal the prospective teachers obviously gave a serious thought to this component and even planned the strategies they would use to minimize the problems. These included changing and varying teaching techniques, using more interesting media, being more confident, and using personal approach in informal way. As their supervisors we suggested them to think about the root of the problems, such as identifying the instigators who became the source of class 'chaos' and finding out strategies to approach those students.

In the following teaching presentations the progress was obvious. In the journal some of them wrote that they felt they could handle the class better and they were more confident to tackle the problems. One participant, for example, said that she approached a very naughty student outside the class and asked why he did not pay attention in class and why he had an argument with one of his teachers. He said that he was angry because his parents often scolded him and at school he experienced similar thing from his teachers. In the second visit that prospective-teacher said that she was happy because noise in the class decreased. Another student wrote in his journal that he could handle the class better because he tried to be more confident, saying to himself that he was the one with authority to control the class. Then, he was brave to hush the students who made noise or caused troubles. Eight others, however, kept writing about the difficulties in managing their classes.

In the third cycle the prospective teachers seemed to be more confident. Their comments about classroom management problems and feelings of failure in managing the class subsided. The result of our observation of the third visit and the second interview with the prospective teachers revealed that most of them had been more skillful and confident in handling their class. For example, some varied activities (e.g. question and answer, then reading, and then game-like activities) that helped keep students' attention, and thus reduced students' behavior problems and noise. In their journal, ten of them stated that they were happy because they could make their students focused, motivated, and interested in the lesson. The two others, however, kept thinking that they were not satisfied.

The results of the interview indicate that those who felt successful indicate that changing teaching strategies, using better teaching media, using personal approach, and being more confident helped the prospective teachers much. Even so, they thought that they still had to learn a lot. On the other hand, those who felt not really successful thought that their problems might be due to their limited strategies and low confidence. We encouraged them to look back at their classroom management problems and to

explore some possibilities to reduce the problems. Despite that, our observation notes show that the prospective teachers' classroom management problems decreased significantly.

In short, reflecting upon their weaknesses and then finding the causes of the problems helped the prospective teachers to improve the way they managed their students. Furthermore, the supervisors and cooperating teachers were able to assist them to handle their classroom management problems because they communicated their feelings and difficulties in this area. It should be noted, however, that the decline of the problems might also be subject to their increasing familiarity with the new teaching environment and maturity.

4.2.2 Teaching techniques

Choosing appropriate teaching techniques and arrangement of activities were the next frequently noted component by the participants. Their notes indicate that these are also difficult for them. Their comments can be grouped into: 1) certain unworkable activities, 2) being disorganized, 3) activities causing chaos, 4) a series of irrelevant activities, and 4) uninteresting activities. These problems decreased gradually from cycle to cycle of teaching.

During the first few weeks, all prospective teachers wrote in their journals that they were not happy because of one or two of the reasons stated above. For instance, one of them wrote about her teaching listening comprehension by using an audio recording on her laptop computer. She divided the students into groups. Each group was asked to listen to the recording and fill in the blanks of a text which was distributed beforehand. She still found that the activity did not work well since not all students listened to the audio and consequently could not fill in the blanks. So, she had to turn off the audio and decided to read the text. She also found that the activity did not go well and the objective was not reached as she was not able to tell which students could do well and which could not.

Our observation notes indicate that all prospective teachers had various problems both in choosing teaching techniques and executing their plans. To illustrate, they did not consider how a series of activities would be able to develop students' reading comprehension of a certain text type. They tended to ask a few questions at the beginning to activate the students' background knowledge, then asked the students to read silently for a few minutes and answered some pre-planned questions. The students then answered the questions in chorus. It is obvious that the participants did not have a clear idea what reading skills were targeted (e.g. finding the main of a text or guessing the meaning of a difficult word in context).

In the light of this, at the first visit (after the first cycle) we encouraged them to recall their teaching in a more detailed way and to check their notes in their journals, and think it over what they should do in order to improve it. They were required to look at their journals, their lesson plan, and were also encouraged to review their notes/books about teaching reading comprehension.

In the following teaching presentation as reflected in their journals, the prospective teachers indicated that they were becoming skillful in terms of choosing teaching techniques and carrying out them in the teaching process even though the condition fluctuated somewhat. Statements like “I was happy because I could reach my objective, I felt I was successful, and the students were active” showed that they felt that they were successful. Sometimes, however, they wrote statements indicating their feelings of failure and disappointment. Apparently, it was because of some strategies that they applied to solve the previous problems did not work as they expected. A prospective teacher mentioned the fact that the game she applied as a variation to increase students’ motivation ended in a mess. The class was noisy and the time spent was longer than planned. Consequently, as she said, some other activities could not be run.

In line with the prospective teachers’ journals, our observation notes revealed mixed results. Eight of them (about 67%) showed some progress. Their teaching techniques were relevant to the skills being developed and there was a variety of engaging activities keeping their students more focused. The others still had problems, especially in teaching listening and writing skills. The activities tended to merely instruct the students to listen and answer the questions and write based on a given topic. They also had problems in making the activities student-centered; they tended to give long theoretical explanation about a text. Thus, it was suggested that they did more comprehensive reflection by looking at how far they had involved the students in practicing the skills they planned to develop.

In the last cycle the prospective teachers made reassuring progress. Their notes in their journal were more about their feelings of success than disappointment. Most of them stated that finally they could teach as they planned. In spite of that, our observation notes indicated that a few essential problems persisted. First, some of them were still teacher-centered. They tended to spend time explaining the language features of a text, for example, instead of eliciting students’ knowledge through question and answer strategy. Second, they still had problems in making the activities interactive causing limited interaction between students. Third, it was still difficult for them to create activities or choose the teaching techniques that enabled them to integrate the language components into the teaching of the language skills. Furthermore, some of them had difficulties slotting and integrating meaningful fun activities.

The result of the interview revealed that ten of them often felt uncertain about the techniques/strategies they chose even though they had learned some approaches and methods of teaching English in TEFL and Topics in TESOL subjects; they were not sure how to develop them into teaching activities. Despite that, it was good to find out that they kept trying to make some improvement based on their reflections. At the end of the research all of the prospective teachers said that they felt that they had made some improvement. However, they acknowledged that they had problems in translating theories into practice and adjusting their knowledge about teaching to the students' ability and interest and motivation. Thus, we conclude that improving the way to teach (choosing teaching techniques and applying them) takes a long time regardless of continuous reflection done by the prospective teachers.

4.2.3 Selecting the teaching materials

The prospective teachers were given freedom to select and develop the teaching materials by the cooperating teachers. They were also supported by the textbooks chosen by the school where they practiced. All of them used materials from different sources such as internet, the textbooks, and worksheets.

After the first cycle only 50% of the prospective teachers wrote their reflection about materials. Those prospective students thought their teaching materials were too difficult or were not attractive for the students. Based on our observation, there were actually eight prospective teachers (75%) who had such problems. One of them, for example, had difficulty in helping her students comprehend a text which had a number of difficult words and contained many complex clauses. Consequently, she had to explain the text and even translate it sentence by sentence into Indonesian.

Materials received more attention at the second and the third cycles. Seventy five percent of the participants commented on the appropriateness of their teaching materials with respect to the students' language ability and interest. Sometimes they stated that they were satisfied, but often they were not. They were also aware of their limited ability to adapt materials taken from internet sources. A positive thing was that they did reflection and were aware of their weaknesses.

The result of our observation shows that at the second and the third teaching presentations the prospective teachers used a large variety of materials. Even though they were not adequately capable of selecting texts suitable for their students, they made improvement in developing materials for grammar and vocabulary building, exercises, and other fun materials such as games. As for exercises, five of them had been able to include three or four levels of bloom's taxonomy of questions.

In the interview it was found that most of the prospective teachers attempted to find materials they thought interesting and authentic which were mostly taken from internet sources. Six of them were aware of the problems of the selected materials, while the others thought that their problems were more on their skills in delivering the materials. Based on the interview we gathered that the prospective teachers were not yet able to select teaching materials suitable for their students. They put forward a few issues about teaching materials. First, they wanted to use authentic materials because they believed that such materials were usually motivating. Yet, they stated that they had limited skill to adapt the materials. Next, they had difficulties in copying the materials for the cost allocated. Producing the materials in power point was not an option at these schools possible because each school had only one LCD. To conclude, once they gave attention to that aspect in their reflection they were aware of the problems and made some improvements. Although not much improvement was evident, their awareness of the problems was a good starting point.

5. Teaching Media

As seen in Table 2, in the first cycle the prospective teachers' ability in selecting and using media was the lowest average score. The result of observation showed that four participants who prepared multimedia could not carry out their plan; the available LCDs at the schools were being used by other teachers. Those prospective teachers had to skip a few activities they had planned which then affected the flow of the lesson. One of them used a small tape recorder for teaching listening skill. Unfortunately, the sound was not clear, so that she had to replay the text a few times; this complicated the teaching process. The others used pictures. Some pictures were interesting (large enough and colored), while the others were not.

The prospective teachers' notes in their journals indicate that all of them reflected on this aspect after the first presentation. From their comments it can be concluded that they had different perception on their media. For instance, one of them thought that she should have had plan 'B' in case she could not use of LCD. Another said that she was satisfied that the pictures she used were evidently attractive and made it easy for her to show a model of a procedure text.

The prospective teachers kept making improvements in selecting and using media in the second and the third teaching cycles as indicated by the scores they gained. No one used multimedia, on the grounds of the difficulty of getting access to LCD. In the interview, they said this brought down their plans. Almost all of them (eleven) used more interesting –and bigger colored pictures. One, unfortunately, did not use media (except the board) at all. In the interview he said that he did not need them because the lesson focus was reading comprehension. In our observation note, we wrote that his lesson would be

more interesting if he used media to activate the students' background knowledge or to introduce new vocabulary.

Overall, it could be concluded that through reflection the prospective teachers were aware of their problems of media selection and use. They understood that it was not the sophistication of media that was important, but the function they played in the teaching and learning process.

6. English Use

This component did not emerge at all in the participants' notes in their journals after the first teaching presentation. The result of observation, however, showed two important facts. First, only one participant used English most of the time in the classroom language. The others used Indonesian more than English. Second, there were a great number of problems in their English related to grammar and appropriateness of their language use with their students' language ability/level. After the first presentation we advised them to optimize their use of English, as primary exposure of English for their students. We also pointed out examples of their grammar mistakes. They were encouraged to do reflection on their English use at their following presentations.

In the second cycle, improvement on English use was still insignificant. There were only four participants that wrote their reflection in their journals after the second teaching presentation. One of them wrote about the complexity of her English which she thought made it difficult for her students to understand what she meant. Three commented on their own grammar mistakes. The others (8) did not write anything about their English use. The result of the observation indicates that eight participants did improve the frequency of their English use for giving instruction, asking questions, and short explanation. Yet, grammar problems persisted.

When asked in the interview, the prospective teachers gave different answers. All of them agreed with the importance of using English as an input for their students. In spite of that, they stated that it was difficult for them to deliver the lesson when they used English. They gave a quite surprising answer; that is, their students wanted them to use Indonesian. Furthermore, the cooperating teachers did not require them to use English as the medium of instruction. Dealing with grammar, it was also surprising to hear their argument about not paying attention to their mistakes. They argued that making grammar mistakes should not be a problem as far as their English was understandable. This finding also suggests that the participants' reflection is influenced by their understanding of a communicative teaching approach and their cooperating teachers' view on the minimal importance of using English as the classroom language.

7. Language Assessment

The prospective teachers assessed their students' English both in formal and informal forms including test (oral and written), performance assessment, exercises, and oral feedback. In fact, the average score of this aspect of their first presentation is good. In spite of that, the observation notes showed that the way they applied the assessment needs improvement. When a student gave a correct answer for a reading comprehension question, for example, they asked the other students' opinion about the answer. If the students said it was correct, the prospective teachers went on to the next question. If the student gave a wrong answer, they asked another student or provided the correct answer.

However, improvement in this aspect was minor in the second and the third cycles. Based on the observation, it was found that the prospective teachers assessed their students in a similar way as they did in the first presentation. This may be due to their deficient attention toward this matter as reflected in the journals. No one did reflection on both the content of quizzes /exercises/tests and the way s/he assessed their students. In the interview the participants thought they had assessed their students using several procedures. Actually most of the exercises were taken from the textbooks. Thus, they thought that they had done well. When confronted with their way of responding to their students' work or answers, they stated that they needed more practice.

8. Discussion

This study reveals the positive impact of reflective teaching on prospective teachers' teaching skills, and their concern about and perception of a particular teaching component apparently influences the degree of improvement. Reflective practice on a regular basis enables the prospective teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses and can improve their teaching skills. The latter apparently pushed them to find ways to solve the problems. Moreover, the cooperating teachers also reported that the prospective teachers usually consulted them on matters dealing with what they did not feel was successful. This seems to help the cooperating teachers in directing the prospective teachers to solve their teaching problems. These findings are in line with previous studies mentioned earlier (e.g. Concord, 2002; Cirocki et al., 2014; Farrell, 2007a; Rozimela, 2014).

Next, the teaching components that received more concern in the prospective teachers' reflection showed more progress in their teaching skills than those that received less concern. The biggest improvement appeared to be classroom management- the component which received the biggest attention because the prospective teachers often faced difficulties in executing their plans because of class

management matters. In the first few weeks of teaching practicum the prospective teachers had difficulties in managing their students' behavior problems. Several internal factors in the students such as low confidence, nervousness, low self-efficacy, and age were apparently responsible for the difficulties faced by the prospective teachers. Their teaching experience in the Micro Teaching subject did not help much because their students were their peers who tend to be 'good' students. As Şen (2009) states, the limitation of peer teaching is the absence of real classroom matters such as students' behavior and reaction. A study conducted on 100 randomly selected teachers in Pakistan by Ahmad et al. (2012) also showed a similar result. One of the biggest problems was deviant behavior of the students which caused disruptions during the teaching and learning process. To our surprise, through reflective practice the classroom management problems declined significantly. In fact, the increase of the prospective teachers' scores in this aspect was the second highest. They became skillful in handling their students' misbehavior as indicated by their scores in this component. The least progress is the prospective teachers' skill in assessing their students' language ability. This component appears to receive no attention in their reflection. Their ignorance on this component may be because of their overt apprehension toward 'what and how to teach' and classroom management problems. Despite that, the prospective teachers did assess their students and did not have substantial problem in this component.

The results also show that the prospective teachers' misconception of the communicative approach and difficulties in translating the theories of teaching they had learned into practice made it difficult for them in adjusting to the real students' needs. The result of the interview reveals that the prospective teachers need to have models or examples to transfer a certain approach or method into classroom activities. They also stated that it was quite a bothersome for the prospective teachers to synchronize their plan with the class situation (especially students' needs and interest), and the cooperating teachers' instruction. Accordingly, they seem to teach intuitively or in the way they were taught. Some research (e.g. Pennington et al., 1997; Richards et al, 2001; Breen et al., 2001) report that even experienced teachers may teach in a way that is different from their ideal perception. Thus, training prospective teachers and requiring them to do reflection in their teaching practicum is a way to make them aware between the discrepancy of their perception of good teaching and their real practice.

In short, implementing reflective teaching or practice helps cooperating teachers and supervisors guide prospective teachers to adjust to situations in the real context of teaching when they do their teaching practicum. Through reflective teaching prospective teachers grow professionally. They develop positive habits and skill; that is, evaluating their own teaching to find their own strengths and weaknesses

in order to realize improvement. The practice also helps supervisors and cooperating teachers to give needed and effective guidance.

9. Conclusion

The result of this study indicates that education programs at university need to incorporate reflective teaching as a part of pedagogical competence that prospective teachers have to develop. Reflective teaching can raise teachers' awareness of their problems and difficulties in teaching, which can be taken as a source of information by supervisors and cooperating teachers to help supervisors and cooperating teachers give clear direction. Regular reflection recorded systematically in an instrument like a journal could guide a teacher/prospective teacher in outlining action needed to realize improvement.

The result of this study also suggests that classroom management which may be taken for granted is enormous and worries EFL prospective teachers, especially when they teach large classes. Problems faced by prospective teachers are affected by and at the same time affect other teaching factors such as teaching techniques, materials, and media. This means that the ability to manage a class has to be an important part in teacher professional development program. For that reason, discussions dealing with classroom management should be inserted in teaching-related subjects at the university.

Improvement is largely dependent on how much a prospective teacher is concerned with a particular aspect of teaching. The larger his/her concern about a particular teaching component, the more attention and attempt he/she pays to improve that particular component. Prospective teachers concerns appear to be influenced by their perception of their failure or weakness and their conception of a certain teaching component. This study implies that the increase of the prospective teachers' ability in looking at their own teaching experiences from one to another performance indicates that reflective thinking necessary for reflective teaching can be trained and developed, and perfected. Furthermore, guided reflective teaching in which supervisors help students or prospective teachers bring to bear their awareness and understanding about their teaching in order to move to a constructive direction is needed.

Based on the results of this study it is suggested that reflective teaching is embedded in pre-service training of teaching programs such as Micro Teaching and Teaching Practicum. In order for reflective teaching effective, necessary skills such as critical thinking and analyzing and interpreting facts need to be trained and modeled in how to do reflective teaching. As this study was conducted with a relatively small group of prospective teachers and employed a descriptive method, further research with a bigger group in different contexts employing different methods will enrich our understanding about reflective teaching.

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