

Language Teacher Professional Development in Remote Area: The Reason and Method

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Abstract

With the respect of the development of English service demand, Indonesian government is now applying some language teacher professional development (TPD). One of them is Teaching for Indonesia. A good TPD need long preparation and effort including need analysis. By employing case study method, this research aimed to know the reason and method done by the English teachers in remote area to develop their professionalism. The data were collected from questionnaire and interview. This research revealed that self-monitoring (66,6 %) was the favorable method. It is then followed by action research (33,4 %). Teachers claimed that they use these methods because of the limited sources. In addition, most teachers claimed that professional development they did because the internal motivation instead of external intervention. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that teachers in remote area did professional development because of the internal motivation rather than the hard situation they face in completing their task

Keywords: Teacher professional development, remote area, motivation

Introduction

It is important to maintain creativity, interest, and enthusiasm of experienced teachers in doing their profession (Farrel J. C., 2005). As the one who is responsible to shape, build and improve the quality of human resource, a teacher needs to keep learning before, while even after finishing the task. In the term of English education in remote area with very hard situation and limited sources, it is not easy to quantify how enormous English teachers' responsibilities to complete their tasks. It can be seen from the very wide work coverage English teachers should embrace. Besides teaching under the curriculum that may intermittently change as the result of the dynamics in education-related policies and performing their best under the limited sources, they have to progressively learn and develop their competence as well. Therefore, language teacher professional development (TPD) in remote area functions both to improve English teachers' competencies and to maintain their interest towards their profession.

English teachers' efficacy fundamentally lies on their competence both academically and pedagogically, efficiency (work load, ability and commitment) (Mosha, 2004) and (Rogan, 2004) in (Mahmoudi, 2015). Furthermore, it is then added by (Dumitru, 2015) in that a teacher never stops learning. Hence, it can be seen that teaching English is not an easy task. English teachers are not merely expected to teach their students but they also have to commit to do a lifelong learning as well as an integral part of their task.

Besides work load related to classroom ecology, English teachers are pursued to cope with the social changes covering themselves both as a professional and as a human being. English teachers are the heart of classroom instruction (Galabawa, 2001) in (Mahmoudi, 2015). They have to answer the students' needs and request as they are expected to fulfill the principle's demand. In addition, English teachers in remote area have to perform their best under the limited facility and hard situation. It can be seen that they are the main actor of education as it is stated that teachers are the architects of the next young generation (Sisman, 2012). From these explanations, it can be concluded that if a country wants to fasten its essential development, it has to properly be initiated by paying extra attention to the quality of the English teachers. Moreover, English is now used in almost all parts of this life such as economy, tourism, politics, trading, etc.

Teaching English means being involved with complex ecology of situations, people, systems, policies and social norms (Tan, 2015). In the remote area context, the ecology becomes more complicated since the input students know and use English less (Interview 1). As the main part of this complex ecosystem, English teachers have to deal with expectations and demands from many parties such as students, parents, principles, other English teachers, government, English service users, etc. They are responsible for teaching students in a good way, understanding the policies, negotiating the situation, and they have to work and report to parents about their children progress. These are only a hand of demands faced by English teachers in completing their tasks. However, there are many other responsibilities which still lie with the respect to their profession. Corresponding to these very complex responsibilities, English teachers should be receptive to take suggestions for them to keep upgrading their skills.

Objectives of the Research

Some of these crucial issues corresponding to TPD are subjected to the investigation towards the reasons why English teachers in remote area are willing to join TPD. Besides, considering the hard and limited situation they have, what activities done by English teachers to develop their professionalism is also important to be investigated. Hence, the research investigating the reason and method of language TPD in remote area is important to fill the gap. This research is expected to contribute to decrease the research gaps under the theme language teacher professional development which is very important not merely for English teachers themselves, but also for many other stakeholders such as schools, professional development providers and some other parties such as policy maker.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate (1) The reasons why English teachers in remote area are willing to engage teacher professional development program, (2) The methods taken by English teachers in remote area to develop their professionalism

Research Question

Referring to the previous studies, there are still found some areas that are not investigated yet by the previous ones as regards the issue of language teacher professional development. It is important to know the reasons why English teachers in remote area are willing to join TPD. In addition, it is also crucial to investigate the method done by English teachers in remote area to develop their professionalism. From this explanation, the writer subsequently formulates two problem statements of this research, they are:

1. What are the reasons for English teachers in remote area to engage professional development program?

2. How do the English teachers in remote area develop their professionalism?**The Notion of Teacher Professionalism**

As the one who is responsible for improving students' quality, teacher needs to improve their knowledge and skills to enhance, improve and promote professionalism. How does a teacher learn to be professional? It begins with teachers' understanding of what professionalism means in the field of education. (Pratte & Rury, 1991) in (Creasy, 2015) defines professionalism as an ideal to which individuals and occupational group aspire, in order to distinguish themselves from other workers. It is supported by (Helbling and Lubeck, 2008), defines professional is exercises discretion in making decisions within the scope of their expertise. From these two definitions, it can be seen that discretion in making decision that differs professional teachers from those who are not professional.

In addition, professional refers to behavior that is expected of individuals in specific occupation (Tichenor, 2005). Unlike other professionals like lawyer, doctor or engineer that have specific definition, teachers may be viewed differently. Professional in the field of education may be multifaceted based on the situation. It is in line with (Cheng, 2003), the needs of teachers vary from person to person and from school to school. It can be assumed that the word professional may be understood differently by the teachers depending on the situation they face. The level of professionalism demand in the city may be different from those in the urban or remote area.

In Indonesian context, based on to be professional, teacher must have four kinds of competencies. They are personality, professional, pedagogical, and social competence (Regulation for Teacher and Lecturer No. 14, 2005). Competencies can be seen as a combination between skills and knowledge that enable teacher to be successful, to maximize students learning and to face complex environment where hundreds of critical decisions are required. Regarding to this research, these four competences will be one of the important topic in investigating the reasons, methods and influences of teacher professional development (TPD). The followings are the four competencies needed by language teachers to a professional teacher. They are:

Personality Competence

Personality competence is knowledge of the subject matter, effective communication skills, punctuality, disciplinary and understanding of children psychology (Bhargava & Pathy, 2011) in (Pahrudin, 2016). It is supported by (Surya, 2003) (Hakim, 2015), personality competence is things regard to personal ability of self-understanding, self-acceptance, self-direction, and self-realization. From these two explanations, it can be seen that personality competence is the ability to manage things related to personal ability to manage emotion, and action regarding to professional life. It is in line with government Regulation. No. 19 of 2005 which states that personal competence includes personal steady, stability, maturity, wisdom, and authority.

Professional Competence

Professional competence is a wide and deep understanding of teaching material including curriculum material, its substantial knowledge, and its structured methodology (Regulation for Teacher and Lecturer No. 14, 2005). Furthermore, language teacher has professional competency when they are knowledge about the various aspects of language (linguistics, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic) and they master the English language spoken and written, receptive and productive in all

aspects of communicative (linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic) (Endang Asriyanti, 2013). Professional competence is also mastering the competency standard and basic competency, developing learning material, developing professionalism in sustainable reflective action, and utilizing technology information and communication to develop themselves. In addition, (Brehm, 2006) in (Creasy, 2015) argues that professionalism is divided into three categories, they are:

- a. Professional parameters, it focuses on the legal and ethical issues to which a professional issue must adhere such as the local, state and federal laws to instructional issues. For instance, child maltreatment.
- b. Professional behaviors are observable actions that demonstrates the individual's appropriate behaviors such as appropriate relationship with students, parents and colleagues.
- c. Professional responsibilities, it includes demonstrating responsibility to the profession, students, school and community. For example, becoming an active member of professional association and attending school events.

Pedagogical Competence

Pedagogical competence is the ability of understanding learners, planning and conducting the teaching plan, evaluating learning result, and developing learners' potency to actualize themselves (Law No. 14 in 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers). In addition, Pedagogic competence is mastering cultural, emotional, and intellectual aspects. Pedagogic comp learning principles, developing curriculum, organizing the learning, u communication in the learning process, communicating effectively and politely to the learners, conducting assessment and process evaluation and learning result, using the result of assessment and evaluation for the sake of learners and utilizing the results of assessment and evaluation for the sake of learning and taking the reflective action to improve the quality of learning. (Endang, 2013). Hence, it can be said that pedagogical competence is the ability related to how deliver the knowledge, what to teach and assess and when to conduct it.

Social Competence

Being a teacher means being a long-life learner as the role model for students. To facilitate this long-life learning process, institutions such as schools and government should provide supporting program to improve teachers' competence. The need for ongoing teacher education has been a recurring theme in language teaching circles in recent years. It has been given renewed focus as a result of the emergence of teacher-led initiatives such as action research, reflective teaching, and team teaching (Richards, 2005). In addition, English language teaching cannot operate effectively without the dedication and effort of such teacher day by day and year by year throughout their careers (Richard, 2005). It means that teachers professional development (TDP) is the process which should be taken by such teachers to cope with the everchanging situation faced by the teachers. It is supported by (Richards, 2005) language teaching is subject to rapid changes depending on the educational paradigm shifting or demands from the outer parties.

The Notion of Teacher Professional Development

As teachers grow and become more experienced, their job skills, knowledge, attitudes, behavior, and outlook continuously change (Burden, 1982). This change is an inevitably process that may be resulted from the changing motives, responsible, work load and demands. It means that maintaining English language teaching as a rewarding

profession remarkably need effort and long process. To be able to fulfill this responsible, teacher should become a professional. A professional is someone whose work involves performing a certain function with some degree of expertise (Ur., 2002). In a simpler definition teachers' role are as same as doctors' or psychiatrists', whose expertise involves not only skills and knowledge but also exercise of highly sophisticated judgment. In addition, teachers' accreditation may necessitate extensive study done by professional board. Hence, it can be concluded that teaching English is now assumed as professional as other jobs such as lawyer, doctor, pilot and engineer that is impossible to do the job unless having adequate knowledge and skills.

Teacher professional development is remarkably based on the philosophy that teachers develop themselves if they are actively involved in the identification of their own strengths and weaknesses in their teaching practice (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Burns, 2010). It means that teachers need to systematically observe their teaching, interpret what happens in their classrooms, detect problems, and find solutions (Roux, 2014). It can be concluded that one of the biggest responsible of being a teacher is not only teaching the students certain competences, but also conducting self-monitoring so that one's strength and weaknesses can be controlled. The result of this self-monitoring enables to teachers to decide which part need to be improved and which one need to be avoided.

The Definition of Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically (Glatthorn, 1995) in (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). It is then supported by Hassel in (Tan, 2015) who defines TPD as the process of improving teachers' skill and competencies for producing stellar educational outcomes for students. The word "systematically" in Glatthorn's and the word "process" in Hassel's explicitly inform us that teacher professional development is a long-term process of the effort to increase teachers' ability. Hence, it can be concluded that TPD is considered as a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession. In addition, it can be said that TPD will be more effective when it is an on-going program, includes training, practice and feedback, and provides adequate time and follow-up support. It is in accordance with (Villegas-Reimers, 2003), TPD is a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession.

In regarding to TPD, (Burns, 2009) considered TPD is consisted of two different knowledges, they are knowledge about and knowledge how "Knowledge about" here means the teachers' capability of linguistics matter such as phonology, discourse analysis, etc. In addition, the term "knowledge how" means the teachers capability to transfer or teach those linguistics matter to the students. It means that TPD is the matter of combination between "knowledge about" and "knowledge how". The notion of teacher professional development is very large since it is a multifaceted construct with multiple definitions of what constitutes TPD (Tan, 2015). It is line with (Richards, 2009) the focus on teacher professionalism may mean different things in different places. Meaning that the focus of TPD in Indonesia differs from those are in other countries. The focus of TPD in certain country is possibly based on the need or demand from other bodies.

Approaches on Teacher Learning

Talking about TPD, it means that talking about the effort and process of improving teachers' quality both linguistically and methodically. Therefore, it cannot be separated from the term teacher learning. It is supported by (Richards, 2005) who divided teacher learning into four different approaches, they are:

Teacher Learning as Skill Learning

This view sees teacher learning as the development of a range of different skills or competencies, mastery of which underlies successful teaching. Teaching can be broken down into discrete skills that can be mastered one at a time. The skills targeted with this approach (e.g., questioning, giving explanations, presenting new language) are those identified with a model of effective teaching. It means that this approach consider teacher learning as a process or gaining certain skills needed to make the teaching process runs effectively. Hence, this process should provide teachers the chance to learn and imitate those skills. In addition, it can be seen that this view considers this process by using the approach of Behaviorism.

Teacher Learning as a Cognitive Process This approach views teaching as a complex cognitive activity and focuses on the nature of teachers' beliefs and thinking and how these influence their teaching and learning. It emphasizes 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" (Borg, 2003) in (Richards, 2005). In teacher education, it encourages teachers to explore their own beliefs and thinking processes and to examine how these influence their classroom practice. Processes used include self-monitoring, journal writing, and analysis of critical incidents. It can be seen that this approach considers teacher development by using Cognitivism approach.

Teacher Learning as Personal Construction. This educational philosophy is based on the belief that knowledge is actively constructed by learners and not passively received. Learning is seen as the nature of teacher education involving reorganization and reconstruction and it is through these processes that knowledge is internalized. New learning is fitted into the learner's personal framework (Roberts, 1998). In teacher education, this has led to an emphasis on teachers' individual and personal contributions to learning and to understanding of their classrooms, and it uses activities that focus on the development of self-awareness and personal interpretation through such activities as journal writing and self-monitoring. It can be seen that this view considers it by using Constructivism theory.

Teacher Learning as Reflective Practice This view of learning is based on the assumption that teachers learn from experience through focused reflection on the nature and meaning of teaching experiences (Schon, 1983; Wallace, 1991; Richards & Lockhart, 1994) in (Richards, 2005). Reflection is viewed as the process of critical examination of experiences, a process that can lead to a better understanding of one's teaching practices and routines. In teacher education, this has led to the notion of reflective teaching, that is, teaching accompanied by collecting information on one's teaching as the basis for critical reflection through such procedures as self-monitoring, observation, and case studies. However, the teacher-development activities are not linked to a single theory of teacher learning because it is believed that teachers can usefully learn from procedures drawn from different educational philosophies (Richards, 2009).

Related to the perspective of TPD, there are four kinds of perspective in it. They are teacher learning as skill learning, teacher learning as cognitive process, teacher

learning as personal construction and teacher learning as reflective process. From those various perspectives of teacher professional development, this research will apply the perspective of teacher professional development as reflective practice.

Teacher professional development as reflective practice is based on the assumption that teachers learn from experiences through focused reflection on the nature and meaning of teaching experiences Schon,1983; Wallace,1991; Richards & Lockhart,1994 in (Farrel J. C., 2005, p. 18). Reflection is viewed as the process of critical examination of experiences, a process that can lead to a better understanding of one's teaching practices and routines. In teacher education, this has led to the notion of reflective teaching, that is, teaching accompanied by collecting information on one's teaching as the basis for critical reflection through such procedures as self-monitoring, observation, and case studies. However, the teacher-development activities are not linked to a single theory of teacher learning because it is believed that teachers can usefully learn from procedures drawn from different educational philosophies (Richards, 2009, p. 18).

Methodology

Related The topic of this research, that is language teacher professional development in remote area: Reason, and methods. Hence, the main purpose of this research is to investigate the phenomena related to the reasons and method of professional development (TPD). For the sake of this research, the writer employed case study. How and why questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies (Yin, 1984). By giving three participants of this research questionnaire and in-depth interview, it is expected that the result of these two data collecting techniques are able to reveal the reason and method of TPD in remote Area.

Literature Review

Related to the great importance of TPD in English teachers' life, some researches under this theme have investigated tension and dilemmas in teacher professional development (Tan, 2015) the finding shows that individual needs will be adversative with organizational needs. It happened when the English teachers and the organization are not in the same line. It can be seen that English teachers and the organization in this case the school should stand in the same stream with the same purposes. In addition, (Thomas, 2018), with his research entitled "Policy embodiment: Alternative certification and teach for America English teachers in traditional public schools", offers the findings revealing that the new schools where the new English teachers are placed tend to resist the policy. It can be seen from their treatment to them that is caused by their worries that those new English teachers will replace their position and take their power in the school. However, the old schools tend to more warmly welcome the new English teachers. It can be seen that not all English teachers agree with this professional development.

Modern views on language TPD categorize this issue not as a short-term intervention, but as a continuing process extending from experts and experienced practitioner in the level of university to the workplace (Richter, 2015) in (Celik, 2016, p. 3). It is supported by Broad and Evans (2006, p. 70) that English teachers are supposed to pass through some stages in which they improve different comprehensions and grab several abilities and skills that they need as the requirements to cope with their task and their career improvement. Hence, it can be concluded that TPD is an important aspect in English teachers' life since it supports English teachers to go through their

daily task. It can be seen from a number of stages which should be completed by English teachers to do their job and to develop their career level.

Furthermore, the aim of this continuous development is to portray, change and broaden knowledge gained by English teachers and to offer them new professional knowledge and capabilities (OECD, 2005, p. 25). It means that language TPD is conducted to prepare better answers to practical classroom problems that may be faced by the English teachers. This continuous development allows English teachers to comprehend the relation among some phenomena and other aspects in the classroom (Dumitru, 2015, p. 4). Therefore, it can be concluded that language TPD will enable English teachers to answer the challenges of the changing demands that they may confront with.

Related to the great importance of TPD in English teachers' life, there are world-wide researches conducted under this theme. In Singapore, there are the investigation related to tension and dilemmas in teacher professional development (Tan, 2015, p. 6). The finding of this research shows that individual needs are occasionally adversative with the organizational needs. It happened when the English teachers and the institution where they teach are not in the same line in perceiving professional development. It can be seen that English teachers and the organization in this case the school should stand in the same stream with the same purposes related to the issue of teacher professional development.

In addition, In USA there is a research conducted by Thomas which entitled "Policy embodiment: Alternative certification and teach for America English teachers in traditional public schools". The findings reveal that the new schools (first time institution) where the new English teachers are placed tend to resist the policy (Thomas, 2018, p. 5). It can be seen from their not warm treatment to the new teachers that is caused by their worries that those new English teachers will then replace their position and take their power in the school. However, the old schools (more than once) tend to more warmly welcome the new English teachers. From this phenomenon, it can be seen that not all English teachers agree with this professional development.

Furthermore, there are still many other researches such as the research in USA entitled "Beginning English teachers experience of the workplace learning environment in alternative teacher certification program" (Struyven, 2014), in Russia with the title English language teacher development in Russian University: Context, problem and implications (Green, 2017), English teachers' use of competence in professional development needs for specific classroom activities (Abali, 2013) in Turkey, Non-native English language English teachers' perception of professional development: Implication for career stages (Celik, 2016) in Turkey, Professional development as product implementation training (Crowley, 2017), EFL English teachers' preferences for teacher learning activities in a professional development course (Yumru, 2015), Exploring experienced and novice English teachers' perceptions about professional development activities (Mahmoudi, 2015), The English teachers' perception towards the continuous training program and identifying the achieved competencies (Dumitru, 2015), and Improving quality in English language teacher education (Kareva, 2013) in Macedonia.

In Indonesian context, there are also some researches that have been conducted related to the issue of TPD, they are the political economy of teacher management reform in Indonesia (Fahmi, 2018, p. 1). This research aimed to describe the teachers' management problem, identify the political obstacle to teacher management reforms and specify the political condition under which the country has made progress in promoting teacher management reform. The findings of this research show that during the past

decades Indonesian government has made some efforts to promote teacher management reform. It has argued that the country's teacher management problems have their origins in the way in which political and bureaucratic elites have for decades used the school system to accumulate resources, distribute patronage, mobilize political support, and exercise political control.

Findings

The Reason Why English Teachers in Remote Area Engage in TPD

In this part, the findings of the first research objective that is to investigate the reason why English teachers in remote area engage in TPD. When asked for the reason why they engage in TPD, the participants explicitly stated that:

Being professional

"Our students have the same system of testing and grading. So, as their teacher I am responsible to give the same feelings, the same quality and the same knowledge as the those in big city. That is why I push myself to be at the same level as teachers in the city." (Mis MP)

Role modelling of life-long learning

"no matter how good you are at teaching English, learning is one variable that cannot be avoided in teachers' life. Becoming a teacher means be willing to learn. Therefore, I myself keep learning to show my students that life-long learning is needed to be more skillful, wiser and more mature." (Mr. AG)

Keeping the knowledge up to date

"having the newest knowledge both linguistic and other such as method or media is important for us to deal with the changing situation. Although teaching in such this place I have to keep updating myself" (Mr. I)

From the data presented above, it can be seen that those three teachers are engaging their knowledge because of their inner motivation as teachers that are responsible to do their profession professionally instead of any other outer intervention such as they got extra salary for teaching in remote area or to be promoted for the higher position. Furthermore, from the respond they give and their enthusiasm in giving information, it can be said that they are categorized as professional teachers.

The Method of Language TPD in Remote Area

During the interview session, the participants showed some of their photographs and videos as the evident that really did the professional development. However, they claimed that more or less they are influenced by the situation they are faced such as the very limited facility, and limited sources. When asked about the method they did to develop their professionalism, they stated that:

Self-Monitoring

"To be honest, it is not easy for me to do professional development. However, the spirit to build the quality of the students in remote area fuels me to keep improving my quality as a teacher by recording my teaching and then do reflective teaching afterwards." (Mr. I)

"facing the very limited sources doesn't mean I cannot develop my professionalism. As far as I know I can develop my skill by looking the teaching portfolio or any other record of my activities during teaching. Then I used those

data to see and measure myself. Whether or not I was good at that one and not good at that thing”.

Action Research

“there was one thing that I like doing it most to develop both my teaching quality as well as my students’ performance is by conducting action research. I do realize that these data I have been collecting will be very useful for me and for many other teachers later.”

The data presented above show that hard situation in this case limited sources and facility as they are in many other remote areas does not make them block them to improve themselves by doing some methods that are possibly and easily to do. As it is stated by (Richards, 2005) A starting point in teacher development is an awareness of what the teachers’ current knowledge, skills, and attitudes are and the use of such information as a basis for self-appraisal. In addition, teachers’ awareness about their levels is remarkably important in improving their professionalism. There are two ways to do self-monitoring, the first one is by providing outsider’s perspective and the other one is by collecting data about their own teaching. Self-monitoring or self-observation is basically intended to report activities in which information about one’s teaching is documented or recorded in order to review or evaluate teaching. And the data proofed that the two teachers did professional development by self-monitoring method in the form of collecting data about their own teaching. While the other teacher did professional development by conducting action research.

Limitation

This study is expected to be beneficial for those who have something to do with language teacher professional development especially TPD in remote area. However, we do admit that there are still some gaps to complete regarding to the issue of this research such as the effect of TPD towards language teachers’ classroom performance and possibly the difference between TPD and remote area and in the downtown.

Recommendation

The decision to do such professional improvement is made personally. It does not mean that best teachers are teaching in big modern school with sophisticated facilities. This research shows that teachers in remote area are able to negotiate with the limited condition to do professional development. It is recommended that policy maker should start considering the program that can support the teachers who teach in remote area not merely prior to teach in such isolated place but also the program designed to support them during the teaching process in remote area.

Conclusion

The result of this research proofed that no matter the place where teachers teach and how many facilities supporting them to develop their professionalism, the decision to do such this improvement is made personally. It does not mean that teachers teaching in big modern school with sophisticated facilities are better in doing professional development than those who teach in remote area. It can be concluded that the soul of being and educator is the main fuel for teacher in remote area to engage in professional development in a cognizant way.

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