

PROFESSIONALISM IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNER

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Abstract

Professionalism is an important thing that every people should have if they want to succeed and move ahead. In teaching world, professionalism is also important. Professionalism in teaching means the professional teachers who have been qualified where they can face the difficulties in teaching by the skills and experiences they have. Teaching English for young learners is not as easy as what people think, the teachers of young learners must be aware of children's basic physical and psychological needs, they should provide the care necessary to meet the needs so they can thrive and focus in learning. Most of English teachers of primary school are graduated from the primary school teacher education (PSTE) where they have enough skill in teaching young learners but they do not have enough knowledge English. This problem can caused the students get lost if the teachers are not properly skilled and professional.

Keywords: Professionalism, English for young learner, professional.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English has become a need and a trend for every individual living in twenty first century. We can find many people in public place speak in English even they are not the native. This phenomenon also 'attacks' Indonesia and as a country which uses English as a foreign language, all schools in Indonesia put English as a subject matter that their students have to learn in class. To support the subject, Indonesian government has already set up the curriculum for English subject in the school where the main point is the students are asked to master the four skills in English. In Indonesia, this subject is given starting from the primary level until the university level with various sources of material.

Unfortunately, there are some problems in English subject especially for primary level in Indonesia. First, English in the primary level or it is known as English for young learners was officially introduced into the school curricula as local content subject to students in year four (Decree of Minister of Education and Culture No. 60/U/1993) while Cameron (2001) says that student could start to learn a foreign language at the earlier age. In 2006, through the Decree of Minister of National Education No.22/2006, Indonesian government changed the regulation where the primary school can start teach English to their students from year 1 but around 2014 in the newest Indonesian curriculum/curriculum 2013, the government just changed the regulation for English subject in primary level (Zein,2016).

The other problem occurs in the TEYL (Teaching English for young learners) is that most of the teachers who teach this level are not graduates from English major. Most of them are only graduated from the primary school teacher education (PSTE) (Zein, 2015). The graduates of PSTE are surely good in teaching young learners. They know the skill, theory, strategies in dealing with the young learner in the classroom but they do not have adequate knowledge and skill of English. While based on the accreditation item of Elementary school and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah 2017 point 41 and 42 for teachers and educational personnel standard, it is clearly mention that the teachers have to teach the subject matter based on their educational background. Still on the teachers and educational personnel standard, in point 44, it is mention that every teacher must have professional competence where they should (1) mastering the matter, structure, concept, and scientific mindset that can support the subject matter that they teach, (2) mastering the core competencies and basic competencies of the subject matter, (3) be creative in developing the material, (4) developing the professionalism continuously by having reflective action, (5) use the ICT. Looking at this problem, where most of English teacher in primary level are graduates from primary school teacher education, can give bad effect for the students. It can caused the students get lost if the teachers are not properly skilled. And how could the teachers can be professional if they do not graduate from the same subject field with what they teach at the school? While being professional is the key point to be success in the future. So, this paper is try to focus on one of competencies based on the accreditation for SD/MI items that every teacher in primary level should has, the professional competence. It will describe the five points in professional competency.

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Professionalism in Teaching English for Young Learner

Professionalism is an important thing that every people should have. No matter what jobs that they have, if they want to succeed and move ahead, they need professionalism. Professionalism does not mean you have to wear a suit, shoes or bring a stack of data in your hand every day. Evetts (2013) says that professionalism is a key concept in the sociologies of work, occupations, professions and organizations. While Creasy (2015) says that professionalism means demonstrates behavior which portray the knowledge and skill of profession. Professionalism is also defined as “an ideal to which individuals and occupational groups aspire, in order to distinguish themselves from other workers” (Pratte & Rury, 1991).

Professionalism means conducting ourselves with responsibility, integrity and always finding a way to be creative. Furthermore, Demirkasimoglu (2010) in his article said that professionalism is a multi dimensional structure including one’s work behaviors and attitudes to perform the highest standards and improve the service quality. As it is mention above that no matter what the profession is, they need what they call professionalism. In teaching world, professionalism is also important. Demirkasimoglu (2010) said that professionalism is interpreted in terms of what extent the teacher’s outcome the difficulties and what extent they are able to use their skills and experiences related to their profession. Professionalism can be determine as the competences that meet professional education standard so the teacher is required to possess a qualified professional background (Wardoyo, Herdiani, Sulikah, 2017). In other word, it could be says that professionalism in teaching means the professional teachers who has been qualified where they can face the difficulties in teaching by the skills and experiences they have, should be responsible with what they teach what they delivered to the students, be creative in delivering and teaching the subject matter in the class room.

Teaching English for young learners is not as easy as what people think. The teachers need patient, method and skill to teach these young generations. According to Nunan (2010) the teachers of young learners must be aware of children’s basic physical and psychological needs, they should provide the care necessary to meet the needs so they can thrive and focus in learning. Young learners are different with the adult learner in learning a language. Young learners, they cannot analyze the language yet even they understand the meaning, they are lack of skills in reading and writing and they enjoy the fantasy, imagination and movement (Nunan, 2010). From those characteristic of young learner, we can see that the English young learners really need a competent English teacher to teach them. The teachers whose not only understand the method of teaching young learners but also have capable knowledge of English. It is in line with the English teacher’s competence for SD/MI written in the Minister of National Education regulation No.16 year 2007 where the English teachers for young learner must have the knowledge of language aspect in English (linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategies) and mastering it both written and spoken, but the expectation is different with the reality.

The fact, most of English teacher in primary schools, especially the public schools, is not graduated from the English study program. Most of them are graduated from Primary School Teacher Education (PSTE) (Zein, 2015). Indeed, the graduates of this study program (PSTE) are capable enough in teaching young learner. They know the method and skills in teaching young learners but they do not have enough knowledge of English. While, to be a professional teacher means the teacher should be responsible and understood with what they will give to the students in the class and can face the difficulties they find in the subject matter. Maybe, they can teach English to young learners but they do not understand the language aspects of English. Through the fact, the teacher himself cannot create what the professionalism in teaching is.

METHODOLOGY

In this paper, the researcher used literature review as the methodology. This kind of method can be narrow, such as investigating the effect of or relationship between two specific variables, or it can be broader, such as exploring the collective evidence in a certain research area. In addition, literature reviews are useful when the aim is to provide an overview of a certain issue or research problem. Typically, this type of literature review is conducted to evaluate the state of knowledge on a particular topic.

DISCUSSION

Talking about professionalism in teaching, there are four competencies that the teachers should have in order to build the professionalism. According to the accreditation items in education and educational personnel standard year 2017, there are four competences for the teacher to create the professionalism. They are pedagogical competence, professional competence, personality competence and the social competence. As it is mention above, this paper focus on the professional competence as one of the competences the teacher needs to create the professionalism. Professional competence is the characteristic of individual in the level of correspondence with the profession as the ability to perform certain labor tasks, to act independently and responsibly (Orazbayeva, 2016). According to accreditation items of SD/MI 2017, there are 5 points that the teachers and schools should concern for professional competence. They are:

1. Mastering the matter, structure, concept, and scientific mindset that can support the subject matter that they teach: it is important for the teachers to know and understand the subject matter that they will teach. Teachers who have the comprehensive knowledge of their subject matters let their students actively participate in the lessons (Hotaman, 2010). This point is also in line with the teacher's of young learner qualification for English subject matter that based on Minister of National Education regulation No.16 Year 2007. In this regulation, it is mentioned that: First, the English teacher for young learner must have the knowledge of language aspect in English (linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategies). Second, the teachers have to mastering English, written and spoken, receptive and productive in all communicative aspects (Linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategies).
2. Mastering the core competence and basic competence of the subject matter: Core competence is a competency that binds the several basic competencies to the aspect of attitudes, skill and knowledge that the students must learn in the school level. By mastering these two things, the teachers will know the aim of the subject matter so it will be easy for them in planning the teaching process for the students. Planning the teaching process is really important for the teachers; it allows the teacher to synthesize their understanding of second language and language teaching pedagogy with their knowledge about the students, curriculum and teaching context (Snow & Campbell, 2017).
3. Be creative in developing the material: In teaching process, the creativity is really needed by the teachers. Teachers must be a creative person in developing the material to be more interesting in order not to make the students feel bored in the classroom. Especially in teaching the young learners, the teachers really need to be creative in developing and also in delivering the material. Creative teaching will create a good and effective atmosphere in the classroom and creative teachers will create creative students because creative teachers are autonomous professionals, who actively model their own creative engagement in the classroom and seek to nurture this in children (Wilson, 2009).
4. Developing the professionalism continuously by having reflective action: Developing the professionalism continuously or people know as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is an action for the teacher in order to update their skill, knowledge of the subject matter and increase the professionalism which in accordance with teacher needs (Minister of Administrative Reform No.16 year 2009). For teachers in Indonesia, they have a right to get and join the professional development (Indonesian Republic Constitution No. 14 year 2005). There are so many things that the teachers can do in reflective action for CPD such as publication scientific, developing innovative creation or attending the other collective activities that related with their profession (Minister of Administrative Reform No.16 year 2009) .
5. Make use of the ICT: Nowadays, technology plays the main rules in every single aspect, no exception in education. ICT can be a medium for sharing and transfer the information related with the subject matter from the teacher to the students. ICT can also help the teachers to find and get the sources for teaching young learners such as a funny video, picture, children song and others. The teachers himself should possess update knowledge and skills to use the new digital tools and resources because the use of ICT can promote active learning in the classroom like sharing ideas and discussion so the students can achieve the high academic standards (Sharma, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

From those explanations, it can say that it is not easy to be a professional teacher and to slightly overcome the problem, the writer thinks there should be more attention to the English teachers for young learners in order to help them to be professional. Start from the preparation for future English teacher, the qualification of English teacher in the school and also from the professional development program by the government. For the preparation for the English teacher, the English study programs can give deepest discussion about English for young learner subject for their students, like the methodologies and the strategies as the students' preparation later on. For the primary schools, they must be stricter in applying the teachers' requirement especially for English teacher. The teachers must have a relevant educational background with the subject matter that they are going to teach in the school (Accreditation item for SD/MI, 2017). Last, the government must create more and more the professional development program for English teachers for young learner. Beside it is the teachers' right to join the professional development program (Indonesian Republic Constitution No. 14 year 2005), the program can also help the teachers in improving, upgrading their knowledge and skills of the subject matter which can help them to be a professional teachers (Minister of Administrative Reform No.16 year 2009).

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