

A Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to understanding pre-service English teachers for professional development (a study at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan)

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Abstract:

The Pre-service teacher program is a compulsory subject at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan with the aim of giving students a real experience to do the learning process in class. Pre-service teacher program itself is divided into 2 courses, namely Pre-service teacher program I (where students are trained to make learning plans on campus followed by microteaching) and Pre-service teacher program II (where students are actually deployed to schools for real teaching practices). This research aims to analyze the extent to which the Pre-Service Teacher Program has contributed to the development of professionalism of prospective teachers or preservice teacher professional development from the perspective of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. The perspectives to be used in this study are genetic law of development, zone of proximal development, and mediation. Students as prospective teachers must develop themselves in this practicum before they become real teachers (in-service teacher). There are three pre-service students involved in this study in different schools. The data was obtained through document collection, mainly lesson plans, and through interview. The results show that there is an apparent progress in between the two courses of preservice teacher program in terms of pedagogical skills. The mediation between mentor teacher and lecturer supervisor opened a great opportunity for sharing knowledge and ideas in teaching. The pre-service teachers were benefited through sharing of in-service teachers' experiences, whereas the in-service teachers were benefited through pre-service teachers' fresh ideas in teaching.

Keywords: Vygotsky, sociocultural theory, teacher professional development, pre-service teacher program

In the effort to develop national education, it is very much needed teachers (educators) in the guaranteed quality standards of competence and professionalism. To reach the number of professional teachers who can move the dynamics of national education progress a continuous, targeted and effective coaching process is needed. The process towards this professional teacher needs to be supported by all elements related to the teacher. These elements can be combined to produce a system that can automatically

work towards the formation of professional teachers in adequate quality and quantity (Mustofa, 2007).

In line with government policy, through Law No. 14 of 2005 article 7 mandates that the empowerment of the teaching profession be carried out through self-development carried out in a democratic, fair, non-discriminatory, and sustainable manner by upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values, national pluralism, and professional code of ethics. Besides that, according to article 20, in carrying out professional tasks, teachers are obliged to improve and develop academic qualifications and competencies in a sustainable manner in line with the development of science, technology, and the arts.

Forms of teacher professional development have been around since the lecture process, namely when students take part in the field experience program or Pre-service Teacher Program, which in the new curriculum is called an internship program. In preparation practice, students are trained to be creative in preparing the learning process such as choosing the appropriate approach, making the right learning media, and so on. The professional development process as a teacher candidate has begun at this stage (Yuwono & Harbon, 2010).

The implementation of Pre-service Teacher Program is systematically scheduled in the guidance of supervisors and tutors, including limited learning activities (Micro Teaching), guided training, and independent training directed at the formation of teacher skills. Pre-service Teacher Program is expected not only to be able to aPre-service Teacher Program y the knowledge and theories that have been obtained in lectures, but also must be able to draw on new knowledge and work together in their place of practicing this profession, both in private and government business. In addition, Pre-service Teacher Program is considered necessary because it includes the three Tri Dharma of Higher Education namely Education, Research, and Community Service. Even with the demands of rapid economic growth and development, the Pre-service Teacher Program will add the ability to observe, study, and assess between theory and reality happening in the field. So that in the end can improve the managerial quality of students in observing problems and problems, both in the form of theoretical Pre-service Teacher Program implications and actual reality (Komar, 2017).

In Pre-service Teacher Program, there is an interesting activity, namely the stages of mentoring or guidance between students and supervisors and students and tutors. Mentoring is very important and deserves to be further investigated especially how students are able to aPre-service Teacher Program y this activity to prepare them to become good teachers. For Pre-service Teacher Program teachers, mentoring is important and also beneficial for teachers in the partner schools. The first advantage that Pre-service Teacher

Program students can gain from mentoring is confidence in teaching practices at school (Singh & Omar, 2018). This mentoring activity also plays a role in shaping the identity of students as prospective teachers, especially in terms of self-confidence (Izadinia, 2015).

STKIP PGRI Bangkalan has an important role to produce professional teacher candidates. This important role was further strengthened by the issuance of Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers which established teachers as professional workers who are equal to other professions in Indonesia. According to Mulyasa (2008) teachers are the most influential component towards the creation of quality educational processes and outcomes. Mulyasa further stated that any improvement efforts undertaken to improve the quality of education will not make a significant contribution without the support of professional and qualified teachers. This can be stated that the teacher has a very strategic role in efforts to realize the national goals of education, especially the implementation of formal education in schools. Based on the above issues, this study was conducted to analyze the role of the implementation of Pre-service Teacher Program on the development of professionalism of prospective teachers sent by STKIP PGRI Bangkalan with an analytical approach to the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky. This is considered important because these Pre-service Teacher Program students undertake training programs that make them professionals in the field of learning, and the process will be further investigated about their role and contribution to the development of their professionalism as teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vygotsky's Learning Theory

According to Vygotsky, the acquisition of knowledge and one's cognitive development is in accordance with the theory of sociogenesis. The dimension of social awareness is primary, while the individual dimension is derivative or is derivative and secondary. That is, knowledge and cognitive development of individuals comes from social sources outside of himself. This does not mean that individuals are passive in their cognitive development, but Vygotsky also stresses the importance of an active role of a person by constructing his knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). So Vygotsky's theory is actually more accurately called the constructivism approach. That is, a person's cognitive development in addition to being determined by the individual himself actively, also by an active social environment as well (Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner, 2015). The relationship between theory and forms of professional development can be described as follows:

Key Theoretical Concepts	Related Professional development practices
Social interaction	Workshops, colloquia, seminars, mentoring, study groups
Internalization	Individually guided activities (video self-assessment, journal writing)
Mediation	Continuous follow-up support that includes the three types of mediators' tools (materials resources); signs (newsletters and journals); and other humans (professional networks).
Psychological systems	Development of professional development programs that focus on changing teachers' attitudes as well as instructional practices.

Adopted from Eun (2008, p. 144)

Genetic Law of Development

According to Vygotsky, a person's ability will grow and develop through two levels, namely the social level where people form the social environment (Interpsychological or Intermental), and the psychological terrain in the person concerned (Intrapsychological or Intramental).

Interaction is a premier factor and towards the formation of knowledge and one's cognitive development. The view of this theory states that higher functions within a person will emerge and originate from their social life. Meanwhile, intermental functions as derivations or offspring that grow or are formed through mastery and internalization of these social processes.

Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky also proposed the concept of Zone of Proximal Development. We are short with ZPD. This concept holds that in its development a person's ability is distinguished in 2 (two) levels, namely the level of actual development and potential development.

The actual level of development can be seen from one's ability to complete tasks or solve problems independently, also called intramental ability. Meanwhile, the level of potential development can be seen from one's ability to solve tasks or problems with adult guidance or when collaborating with peers who are more competent, also known as intermental skills. The distance between the two levels of this ability is called the ZPD. ZPD is defined as the ability or function that is still in the maturation process. It is like a flower bud that has not yet become a fruit. Children develop through interaction with adults or collaboration with more competent peers. To interpret ZPD, it uses Scaffolding Interpretation, which sees ZPD as a scaffold, a type of buffer zone or stepping stone to achieve a higher level of development.

This ZPD idea underlies the development of learning theory and enhances the quality of learning and optimizes children's cognitive development. The key is that development and learning are interdependent or interrelated, the development of one's abilities is context dependent or cannot be separated from social contexts and as a form of mental objects in learning is participation in social activities.

METHODS

The present study employs qualitative study in which the researcher seeks to figure out how pre-service teacher program was carried out by the selected research participants so that they finally achieve professional development. The data were collected through two methods namely document collection and interview. Document collection refers to the analysis of the collected lesson plans made by the student teachers. The interviews were done in open-ended questions in the topics of preparation, differences between pre-service teacher program 1 and 2, mentoring with the in-service teachers and lecturers, and technology integration in their teaching practices. Three pre-service teachers were selected in this study in which they do the teaching practices in three different schools.

Pre-service Teachers	School	Teaching in which grade
Septi Sundari	SMAN 2 Bangkalan	Tenth Grade
Nurul Hayati	SMKN Blega	Twelfth Grade
Rindi Yulianti	SMPN 2 Bangkalan	Seventh Grade

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of interview data was presented in the following four categories, namely social interaction, internalization, mediation, and psychological system.

Social interaction

The first way to see teacher professional development for the student teachers is through social interaction between students and their peers, students and mentor lecturer, students and mentor teachers (at school). Mentoring is apparently dominant in this process which covers two kinds: firstly is mentoring between mentor lecturer and the students (during the course of pre-service teacher program 1) and secondly is mentoring between mentor teacher at school and the students (during the course of pre-service teacher program 2). Both provided beneficial benefits for the students as the initial teacher development.

Role of mentor teacher

- PST 1 : for me, pre-service teacher program 1 focusses more on the basics of teaching with the prepared scenario in a very small class. Pre-service teacher program 2 expands more on the real teaching with more intensive guidance with mentor teacher.
- PST 2 : in pre-service teacher program 1, the student teachers are given a freedom to select the materials for practicum, however, in pre-service teacher program 2, they must be ready with the targeted materials based on the syllabus. Of course, there is a mentoring practices from the mentor teacher at school.
- PST 3 : pre-service teacher program 2 is more challenging since the students are very diverse with different characters and background. The role of mentor teacher is significant.

Mentoring seems to happen during the process of teaching practices at school through the mentor teacher. Mentor teacher as the in-service teacher has a significant role in shaping the novice teachers to practice the pedagogical skills. The forms of mentoring is done through preparing the lesson plans, media in teaching, as well as mental. PST 2, for instance, said that mentor teacher would guide the student teacher what to teach and how the materials fit the syllabus. In this context, in-service teachers have one advantage that they have adequate experience in teaching at school.

Internalization

During the teaching practices at school, the student teachers have what is called as teaching journal. Teaching journal is classified as a sign of internalization, which express how the student teachers reflect something for themselves with the goal that they can be aware which parts need to be improved. The teaching journals were made within 8 weeks containing information about how the teaching practices were done in each meeting. The finished teaching journals were used as a report for their final assignment after the pre-service teacher program has been accomplished.

Another way of internalization is that the students teachers made a video record as a proof of their teaching and a base to analyze how the teaching went, if the activities were based on the plans or not. In both pre-service teacher program 1 and 2, they have the video records. This part of internalization is essential for their evaluation for their teaching. The videos become a part of self-feedbacks to improve the teaching quality in the future.

Mediation

Among the three types of mediators' tools (materials resources); signs (newsletters and journals); and other humans (professional networks), mediators' tools have been identified among the three student teachers during the practices of teaching in pre-service teacher

program. In terms of material resources, all the three pre-service teachers mentioned that technology had been used for their materials. For instance, many listening materials were collected from BBC learning English website, podcasting, and materials presentation through PowerPoint slides. This brings an advantage for the teacher and the students since the teaching practices did not seem to be boring.

PST 1 : in the ease of technology, I was excited to use it during my teaching, especially in finding listening materials in several websites such as BBC.

PST 2 : technology attracts the students' attention. I used PowerPoint containing picture and animation to teach the materials, and it worked.

PST 3 : the application of technology prevents me from boring teaching.

Psychological systems

As long as the pre-service teacher program 2, students teachers were instructed to behave well and obey the rules at schools. This is essential since they were the prospective teachers in the future, at least, just after they graduate from their study. In Indonesia, manners owned by teachers is very important since teachers become a live example of how manners is done by students. All the three student teachers were experiencing the same in terms of how they were practicing manners at schools such as greetings (with Islamic ways), dressing, haircut, and politeness in communication with the other teachers and peers.

CONCLUSION

As the prospective teachers, students at STKIP PGRI Bangkalan who joined pre-service teacher programs has actually gained professional development seen from the lens of sociocultural theory of Vygotsky. The shift between pre-service teacher program 1 and 2 indicates that there is a progress of how the quality of teaching has been improved. The thing that is significantly seen in the way of professional development is mentoring. The role of mentor teachers is very important during the practices of teaching at school. Mentor teacher as in-service teachers have the experience, perhaps years, while the pre-service teachers are not experienced yet. Despite, pre-service teachers have fresh ideas in instructional practices through theories and skills of internet, evidenced from the technology application in their teaching practices.

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