

EVALUATION OF THE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' TEACHING VARIATIONS IN ONLINE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Variations in teaching episodes have empirically exhibited positive impacts on students' attention, motivation, enthusiasm, satisfaction, and achievement. However, the issue associated with student teachers' variations in online teaching and learning context remains underexplored. The present study focuses on gauging pre-service teachers' skill of variability by addressing four research questions: 1) How are teacher's style variations realized in online learning of the pre-service teachers?; 2) How are instructional media and materials variations realized in online learning of the pre-service teachers?; 3) How are interaction variations realized in online learning of the pre-service teachers?; 4) How do the pre-service teachers perceive the implementation of the teaching skill of variability in an online learning context? This qualitative research with a case study design involves 30 semester-6th-students majoring in English education. The data were gathered through virtual classroom observation, document analysis, and interviews. Virtual classroom observation was conducted synchronously during the pre-service teachers' teaching practice. In addition, the document analysis method was employed to investigate the realization of the teaching skill of variability utilizing teaching scripts. Interview data were used to confirm the observation and document analysis findings. Framework Analysis by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) comprising five stages – familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing/coding, charting, and mapping and interpretation was adopted as a method of analyzing data. The findings reveal that in terms of teachers' manner and teaching style, the student teachers have varied their teaching practice through voice, gesture, eye contact, pausing and focusing but not a movement. Concerning instructional materials and media, both visual and aural can be well-performed but not tactile ones. Teaching and learning practice mainly used video conferences so that they could not perform tactile variations. With online learning, there was no opportunity for students to touch or manipulate objects or materials of instruction. Teachers' activity and interaction variations can be accomplished through various activities such as questioning and responding even though student-student interaction involving physical movement is limited. The participants perceived positively that the use of technology enables them to vary their teaching through technology-based classroom language, various internet-based media and learning resources, authentic materials, and the use of applications to encourage teacher-student and student-student interaction.

Keywords: evaluation, pre-service teachers, teaching skill, variations

ABSTRAK

Variasi dalam episode pengajaran secara empiris menunjukkan dampak positif pada perhatian, motivasi, antusiasme, kepuasan, dan prestasi siswa. Namun, masalah yang terkait dengan variasi calon guru dalam konteks pembelajaran online masih belum dieksplorasi. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi keterampilan variabilitas calon guru dengan menjawab empat pertanyaan penelitian: 1) Bagaimana variasi gaya mengajar guru diwujudkan dalam pembelajaran online?; 2) Bagaimana implementasi variasi media dan materi pembelajaran dalam pembelajaran online?; 3) Bagaimana variasi interaksi yang diwujudkan dalam pembelajaran online?; 4) Bagaimana persepsi calon guru terhadap penerapan keterampilan mengajar variabilitas dalam konteks pembelajaran online? Penelitian kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus ini melibatkan 30 mahasiswa semester 6 jurusan pendidikan bahasa Inggris. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi kelas virtual, analisis dokumen, dan wawancara. Pengamatan kelas virtual dilakukan secara serempak selama calon guru melaksanakan praktik mengajar. Metode analisis dokumen skrip pengajaran untuk mengetahui realisasi keterampilan mengajar variabilitas. Data wawancara digunakan untuk mengkonfirmasi hasil observasi dan analisis dokumen. Analisis Kerangka oleh Ritchie dan Spencer (1994) yang terdiri dari lima tahap – pengenalan, mengidentifikasi kerangka tematik, pengindeksan/pengkodean, pembuatan bagan, dan pemetaan dan interpretasi diadopsi sebagai metode analisis data. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa dalam hal cara dan gaya mengajar, calon guru telah memvariasikan praktik mengajar mereka melalui suara, gerak tubuh, kontak mata, jeda, dan fokus tetapi bukan gerakan. Berkenaan dengan materi dan media pembelajaran, baik visual maupun aural dapat dilakukan dengan baik tetapi tidak dengan interaksi. Variasi taktil tidak dapat diungkap karena praktik belajar mengajar sebagian besar menggunakan konferensi video. Dengan pembelajaran online, tidak ada kesempatan bagi siswa untuk menyentuh atau memanipulasi objek atau materi pengajaran. Variasi aktivitas dan interaksi dapat dilakukan melalui kegiatan seperti bertanya dan merespon meskipun interaksi antar siswa yang melibatkan gerakan fisik masih terkendala. Para peserta berpendapat bahwa penggunaan teknologi memungkinkan mereka untuk memvariasikan pengajaran melalui classroom language berbasis teknologi, berbagai media dan sumber belajar berbasis internet, materi otentik, dan penggunaan aplikasi untuk mendorong interaksi antar guru dan siswa dan antar siswa-siswa.

Kata kunci: evaluasi, calon guru, keterampilan mengajar, variasi

INTRODUCTION

Teachers as one of the important components in education particularly in the classroom teaching and learning must be sufficiently equipped with content knowledge and pedagogical skills. In addition, to characterize teachers of the 21st century, teachers' technological skill is paramount. Not only are teachers able to deliver lesson materials by means of relevant strategies but also give variations in terms of learning material sources, media types, classroom activities and interactions. Teachers with adequate knowledge and skill of pedagogy would likely enhance their teaching quality and students' achievement (Hill, Rowan & Ball, 2005; Baumert et al., 2010; Voss, Kunter & Baumert, 2011 in Guerriero, n.d). Moreover, meaningful classroom context has always been associated with an attractive learning environment due to teacher and student dynamic interactions. Enjoyable learning atmosphere has also been believed to boost students' knowledge. Therefore, teachers are responsible for creating such a fascinating classroom situation by means of diverse skills of variability.

Sydney et al. (2003) proposed three aspects of teachers' variations comprising: 1) teacher manner and personal style, 2) instructional materials and media, and 3) teacher and students' pattern and levels of interaction. The skill of variability of teachers' manner and style deals with attributes such as voice, gesture, and movement during the instructional activities. Variations in style associated with voice, verbal markers, pausing, gesture, eye contact, and movement help create a dynamic learning environment and more interactive exchanges between teacher-students. Moreover, it helps communicate meaning, arouse student attention and interests, as well as enhance learning. In the context of face-to-face teaching and learning, this variation might be easily performed and results in the increase of students' engagement and achievement. To attract students' attention, teachers can use verbal markers (Arifadah et al., 2019) and it is argued to contribute to students' knowledge development (Pinney, 1969 in Sydney et al., 2003). Likewise, pausing to alternate between talks and silence for thinking time also influences students to achieve more (Shostak, 1982 in Sydney et al., 2003). It is also argued that silence may lead to autonomous learning which results in more satisfying learning outcomes (Bao & Thanh-My, 2020). Teachers' active and energetic position as well as enthusiasm in the classroom also impacts students' enjoyment, intrinsic motivation and vitality (Patrick, Hisley, & Kempler, 2000).

The second proposed variability of the teaching skill is variation in materials and media. This type of variation plays a significant role in attracting student attention and interests as well as promoting student achievement. Bukoye (2019) suggests that instructional materials are critical for students to learn every course in the school curriculum. Besides, he argues that materials enable "students to interact with words, symbols and ideas in ways that develop their abilities in reading, listening, solving, viewing, thinking, speaking, writing, using media and technology". Dahar and Faize (2011) suggests that instructional materials include items such as prints, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, slides, pictures, workbooks, electronic media which also contribute to better achievement. Use of audiovisual media in education strongly supports and enhances student English learning (Hartono, 2013). It has become essentially important in teaching of all levels. Moreover, this advanced technological era offers varied varieties of internet-based instructional media. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to select the most relevant media meeting the students' characteristics and learning goals.

The third teaching skill variation deals with interactions between both teacher - student and student – student. Teachers play a critical role in promoting interactions among students (Gillies, 2008). Variations in the pattern of interaction between the teacher and students can occur along the teaching and learning episodes where students work individually and independently and at some points when teachers talk and students listen. Through this line, teachers might interact with students by questioning, conversing, discussing, or creating student-student interaction. Likewise, student activities may vary, for example, individual, pair, or group work on project tasks, silent or aloud reading, movie viewing, game participation, role playing, demonstration and simulation, and other more engaging tasks. Changes in the pattern of interactions – teacher-student interaction and student involvement would seem to provoke and maintain student attention and create optimal learning opportunities. To summarize, teaching skill variations aim to:

- 1) arouse and sustain student attention to relevant aspects of teaching and learning; 2) provide opportunities for the functioning of curiosity motivation through the exploration and investigation of new situations; 3) cater for possible individual sensory preferences of and so facilitate learning; 4) promote learning by involving students in a variety of appealing and purposeful experiences at varied cognitive levels; 5) build positive attitudes towards teacher,

school and subject through the presentation of an animated and enthusiastic style of teaching and a rich classroom learning environment (Sydney et al., 2003, p. 114).

Considering the significant contribution of teaching variations to student learning, there have been a number of studies exploring how variations performed in the classroom. To our knowledge, most of them focused on face-to-face classroom interaction. However, use of teaching variations in online learning context involving pre-service teachers remains under-explored. Therefore, the present study intends to explain: 1) how student teacher's style variations are realized in online learning; 2) how instructional media and materials variations are realized in online learning; 3) how interaction variations are realized in online learning; 4) the pre-service teachers' perception of the implementation of the teaching skill of variability in an online learning context.

RESEARCH METHOD

The present study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design involving 30 6th-semester-students majoring in English education of a state university in Semarang, Indonesia. They were selected to be the research participants because teacher candidates have to be equipped and trained with the teaching skill of variability to build future teaching quality (Usman, 2004 in Tahir & Elihami, 2019). Thirty student teachers taking a Speaking for Instructional Purposes class were assigned to perform teaching practice for 10 to 15 minutes mainly focusing on the use of the skills of variability. Later in this paper, the term 'student teachers' is used interchangeably with pre-service teachers or teachers. The research data were gathered through virtual classroom observation, document analysis, and interviews. Virtual classroom observation was conducted synchronously during the pre-service teachers' teaching practice via Zoom Meeting. The observation checklist was developed based on the components of teaching skill variation by Sydney et al. (2003). In addition, the document analysis method was employed to investigate the realization of the teaching skill variations. Before their teaching performance, the student teachers were assigned to design mini teaching scenarios completed with the teaching scripts. Interview data were used to confirm the observation and document analysis findings. The interview mainly explored the student teachers' thoughts of variations associated with use of technology in online teaching and learning. Framework of Analysis by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) comprising five stages – familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing/coding, charting, and mapping and interpretation was adopted as a method of analyzing data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study focuses on student teachers' variability during their practice in microteaching classes. Variations following Sydney et al. (2003) comprise three aspects: 1) styles, 2) materials and media, and 3) interaction. Following Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) framework, the findings are presented in the following section.

Student teachers' style variations realized in online learning

Concerning the first aspect, based on the data gained through virtual classroom observations confirmed with document analysis, it is revealed that the student teachers have varied their teaching practice through voice, gesture, eye contact, pausing, and focusing but not a movement.

Variation in the voice can be seen from the rising and falling intonations. For example, when the student teachers ask the question "Do you understand?"; They use rising intonation. Meanwhile, falling intonation is used for instruction "Read the lyric very carefully to understand the message!". Another voice variation can be identified from the volume, for instance, high volume (loud voice) is used when interacting with and greeting students at the beginning of the lesson, praising or giving reinforcements, conveying important points and anticipating students' silence or no responses. However, they tend to use normal volume and speed in explaining lesson materials. At most, the student teachers slow down when asking questions.

In terms of gesture variation, because of online teaching and learning, gesture variation is limited only to facial expressions like teachers' smiling when explaining the materials and interacting with students. Meanwhile, hand and body gestures could not be performed for they have limited space to move. In an online synchronous learning context, teachers commonly sit behind the desk with devices such as personal computers, laptops, or mobile phones on them. However, they made use of the pointer in

this case the cursor acts as a gesture to emphasize significant points since it is online learning so other gestures such as raising or pointing can not be done.

During classroom interaction, teachers sometimes need to pause for some reasons. For example, teachers gave questions and gave students some time to think, checked if students followed the lesson and understood the explanation, or allowed students to discuss certain topics.

In addition, eye contact helps communicate meaning. In the classroom context, teachers are supposed to have good eye contact with students as it is also a part of giving variations. Teachers' eye contact can be seen during their interaction with students at the beginning of the class and explain the materials. Also, eye contact could be observed when taking a roll call calling students' names and when listening to their discussion. Meanwhile, during explanation with powerpoint presentations, teachers usually would focus more on screen. The teacher looked at or paid attention to the student who was speaking.

As mentioned previously, teachers have extremely limited space to move in online learning. Therefore, teachers would not vary their teaching and learning activities by means of movement from one place to another in the classroom.

Focusing is one of the variations in teachers' styles. In this study, this variation can be seen from the ways teachers put emphasis on certain expressions such as “Naah, this is the song you can hear carefully!”, “Please, listen carefully”, “Pay attention and take notes for your study material at home”, “Please read this procedure text!”. Those are the teachers' examples of verbal markers to focus on particular instruction and commonly used as attention getters. This finding aligns with Arifadah et al. (2019) that verbal markers are significant as attention grabber leading students to be more focused on the teacher and presented lesson.

Student teachers' instructional media and materials variations realized in online learning

In terms of visual variations, the teacher used the video, pictures, and powerpoint presentations (PPTs) function as both learning materials and media. The video was used as media for teaching about songs. The PPTs were designed attractively with interesting pictures and colours. Use of some pictures was for giving students with examples of greeting cards, analysing and comparing them so that the students can give their opinions about those pictures.

Aural variations can be viewed from the student teachers' performance such as introducing the students with recorded audio. Besides, the teacher used a video from YouTube for listening activities and to help explain the materials to the students. Another aural variation was shown when the teacher performed a dialog with the students.

Tactile variations could not be revealed as the teaching and learning practice was mainly using video conferences such as Zoom and Google Meet. With online learning, there was no opportunity for students to touch or manipulate objects or material of instruction. This is in line with Ulfa's (2021) findings that learning activities through video conferencing cannot support students' real-life interaction which results in ineffective communication.

Student teachers' interaction and activity variations realized in online learning

Variations in interaction and activity can be identified from the ways the teachers engage all the students as they actively participate in the class by responding to the teachers' questions and doing exercises. They introduced changes in teaching, for example, when they wanted to ask the students to answer the questions or ask about students' opinions. The teachers provided students with activity variations. Students listened to songs from the videos and participated in the games provided by the teachers as well as read some examples of dialogs. The teachers asked some questions several times to the students, gave responses for the answers, and reminded the students to take note of the presented materials. The students were engaged in the learning activities because the student teachers made them actively participate, for example, by asking them to give examples of the use of congratulation statements and share their exercise results.

Student teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the teaching skill of variability in online learning

To answer the research question related to the student teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the teaching skill variations in online learning, open-ended interview questions were addressed. The findings are presented in the following part.

The student teachers perceived that teaching and learning practices during the pandemic hindered them from having intensive interaction with students. However, this online learning mode allowed them to produce various new expressions of classroom language. The followings are examples of technology-related classroom language. These expressions are used for various purposes such as opening and closing the class as well as interaction and communication in the main activities.

“Can you hear my voice clearly?”
“Don’t forget to submit your attendance on WhatsApp group!”
“I will share my PPT”.
“Can you turn on your camera, students?”.
"Please, unmute your microphone if you want to say something."
"We will use Google form for today's quiz".
“Raise your hand”.
“Am I audible?”
“Can you see my screen?”
“Please turn on/off your camera”
“Is my voice audible?”
“Can you see my screen share?”
“Please mute/unmute your microphone”
“Can you help answering this?”
“Can you see my screen?”
“Can you turn on your camera?”
“Before we start, please turn your camera on.”
“Is my voice clear?” to make sure that the students could hear her voice.”
“Can you see the screen now?”
“Record your attendance on our WhatsApp group.”
“Can you hear my voice clearly?”
“Can you see the slides?”
“Can you hear the audio?”
“Can you open Canvas using the link or the code that I gave you?”
“Let’s start the presentation.”
“I have sent the video through the WhatsApp Group.”
“You need to record yourself.”
“Where is Dinda?” “Okay, she is not answering, maybe she has internet issue.”
“Is the screen I am sharing visible?”
“Can you turn on the camera?”
“Please mute the mic first.”

In addition, the student teachers also gained new experiences in using various learning platforms, video conferences and learning applications as the teaching and learning media. With this in mind, use of technology provides the student teachers with wider opportunities to vary their instructional activities by means of materials and media. The following is an example of the interview results with one of the student teachers.

Interview result with Student Teacher 1

The application of technology in the classroom can create a variation of classroom language. Examples are as follows: The teacher not only uses powerpoint presentation as a learning tool, but the teacher can also take advantage of certain applications such as My Quizzes, Kahoot, Menti.com, jam board, and other interactive applications. In addition to these applications, teachers can also take advantage of certain videos, audios, and images that are related to learning topics. By utilizing this application, pictures, videos, classes will be more interesting and encourage students to enthusiastically participate in class. In addition, teachers can use Google form to measure students' pre-learning and post-learning abilities (Interview ST1).

Another advantage is that the student teachers felt that technology allows them to explore more authentic instructional materials and resources. Besides, they could also make use of an application that enables student-student interaction such as in Quizizz. The following is the interview result.

Interview result with Student Teacher 2

Technology could be used to increase four skills (speaking, writing, reading, listening) of students in classroom language. The teacher may also get authentic materials from technology these days, for example, the English Listening room. Using English Listening room, the students could listen to music and practice their listening skill through filling the missing lyrics in the blanks. The teachers also are helped since technology could help them to get the score of the students fast if the quiz is in the objective question, in this case Quizziz is a famous platform to help the teacher to assess the students' ability in their four skills through subjective or objective questions.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, concerning the teachers' manner and teaching styles, the participants have varied their classroom activities through voice, gesture, eye contact, pausing, and focusing but not a movement. Due to online teaching using video conferences such as Zoom Meeting and Google Meet, physical movement is impossible to perform. With regard to variations in materials and media, the student teachers altered visual and aural variations but it seemed to be difficult to execute tactile variations. Teachers' activity and interaction variations can be accomplished through various activities such as questioning and responding. However, student-student interaction involving physical movement is limited. Finally, the student teachers perceived positively that the teaching skill of variability, despite the fact that they have limited interaction with the students, use of technology enables them to vary their teaching by means of technology-based classroom language, various internet-based media and learning resources, authentic materials, and use of applications to encourage teacher-student and student-student interaction. These findings could be a reference and basis for developing learning materials for the Speaking for Instructional Purposes course in which due to technology use, classroom language undergoes very much development.

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