Improving Novice Lecturers' Teaching Ability on the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) through the Implementation of Lesson Study

Puji Sumarsono, Masyhud

Abstract— It is mandatory for higher education institution (HEI) to improve the quality of their teaching staff simultaneously as a basis to contribute more to society. This research aims to improve novice lecturers' teaching ability. The target of this program is 2 (two) novice lecturers in the English Department who teach ESP Reading. The skill aims to improve in the LS is reading skill as the lecturers wanted to gain more knowledge about how to teach Reading well. Also, reading skill is taught in six different levels such as; Reading I, Reading II, Reading III, and Reading IV, as well as ESP Reading I and ESP Reading II. To overcome that issue, it applied Lesson Study (LS) as a form of Classroom Action Research (CAR) which covers three stages; Plan, Do, and See. In the Plan stage, LS team collaborated to plan teaching and learning. In Do stage, the lecturers applied the teaching and learning based on the teaching and learning scenario that had been approved previously. In See stage, the LS team applied reflection on the teaching and learning that was just presented. The results indicated that LS could improve novice lecturers' teaching ability.

Index Terms— Cycle, ESP, Lesson Study, Novice lecturer, Reading, Teaching Development.

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1 INTRODUCTION

WELL-PREPARED teacher prior teaching will be able to become a catalyst for gaining higher achievement of her students [1], [2] and her higher education institution [3], [4]. For that reason, professional development could lead teachers or lecturers to produce great students. Professional development is an inevitable part either by professional teachers or lecturers [5]–[7]. For Indonesian lecturers, professional development is unavoidable since they have more complex roles and tasks than teachers. They perform *Tri Dharma* of HEI such as; teaching and learning, researching, and servicing society while teachers only perform teaching and learning. The Tri Dharma are commonly applied to measure lecturers' performance and quality [4]. The rapid development of technology demands lecturer as a symbol of an intelligent man to keep on updating his professional competence as well as his pedagogic to survive the current development. Failure of surviving will make them fail to accomplish their responsibilities and tasks as a lecturer. Moreover, their students have *digital native* characteristics who always follow the rapid development of technology and science. Therefore, to become a qualified lecturer, a lecturer must be able to apply professional development.

Every teacher and lecturer has to pass through three critical phases of professional development. First, teachers or lecturers experience self-development for the first time of learning at university—in Indonesia, it refers to Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan (LPTK). Second, the initial phase of being an independent teacher and lecturer starts when they perform daily tasks either at school or university, both as teachers or do other administrative tasks. In this phase, they experienced self-

development called induction program. Third, a sustainable self-development. Experienced teachers or lecturers usually experience this phase. They must be able to develop themselves independently without the interference from their institution [8].

In this research, the researchers discuss the second phase of becoming a novice lecturer through the induction program. Induction is a process of professional that are comprehensive, coherence, and sustainable professional development process that is organized by a school district to train, support, and maintain novice teachers and keep on developing it to be a lifetime learning [2].

As a reputable university that sustainably enhancing the institution quality by improving lecturers quality, English Language Education Department (ELED) of University of Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM) recruited new lecturers periodically to maintain the qualified learning process. However, in the last three years, UMM has recruited new lecturers massively. Four new lecturers who were recruited in 2013, three lecturers in 2014, and six lecturers in 2015. Those new lecturers mostly have less than three years of experience of teaching English. In addition, there were lecturers who have not got teaching experience at all, but some of them have got an experience of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in non-English Departments.

It is different between teaching English in ELED and ESP in non-ELED and teaching English in ELED demands more than in non ELED. Students are more critical and active in the teaching and learning process so that it makes the lecturers prepare well before teaching. Besides, based on the discussion with ELED representative, it is found that novice lecturers in ELED usually face problems in teaching English in ELED. Also, all novice lecturers and senior lecturers mentioned that in the initial years of teaching, they were nervous and felt unconfident to teach in front of the class. It is, therefore, crucial to facilitate the novice lecturers through mentoring so that they can improve their teaching ability. Mizell stated that leaving novice lecturers alone to work by themselves will be counterproductive as they will find a lot of

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unfamiliar problems such as curriculum, work ethics, classroom management, etc. [6]

Novice lecturers are they who have less than five (5) years of teaching [9] or less than three (3) years [10]. Farrell emphasizes that novice teachers or lecturers are those who teach in the first year of teaching[11]. However, they all agree that novice teachers are those who have little or limited experience in teaching. Furthermore, Tsui [12] explained about the characteristics of novice lecturers who tend to perform improperly and efficiently either in *pre-active* and *interactive* stages. For example, in *pre-active* phase, when composing a lesson plan, novice lecturers tend to work based on the guided and available model—they are not yet able to work autonomously with their own framework of thinking. Besides, they tend to focus on a short-term plan because preparing a long term consumes their time and energy. They also consider less flexible and efficient. In other words, novice teachers are who they have less than 3-5 years of teaching experience.

These lecturers need to have supports and facilities to make them able to perform their task well both as an educator and a teacher. Involving a professional group in terms of collegial collaboration will deliver significant impact [13]. The learning should be situated [14], and schools can be a place for facilitating and locating novice teachers to learn [15] collaboratively. One of the collegial collaboration forms is a Lesson Study (LS) program.

Dudley [16] identified that *Lesson Study* has existed since the 1870s. LS is the specific form of action class research that focuses on the developing knowledge and practice of teachers. Moreover, Juwairiah [17] defined *Lesson Study* as a teacher or lecturer coaching model as an educator by learning to assess collaboratively and sustainably based on the collegiality principles and *mutual learning* to establish a learning community. Therefore, LS is not a technique or learning method, but it is a coaching model to make teachers are able to teach good and right. Therefore, all techniques and learning methods can be applied based on the need of the class, students character, and material or competence standard that need to achieve.

LS is not only applied in Japan as the country that created this coaching program. It has also been applied in every part of the world, such as America, Europe, and Asia. It is because LS brings a positive impact on teachers quality development as well as learning output. Dudley (2014) identified many reasons why LS is applicable and brings benefit. First, LS facilitates teachers to observe the teaching and learning process thoroughly. Second, LS identifies the gap between teachers assumption and the fact in the teaching and learning process itself. Third, it finds ways to plan more suitable teaching and learning process based on students need. Fourth, it creates supporting teaching and learning community and committed to helping students to study as well as help the establishment of teaching and learning process professionally for members who involve in LS.

Juwairiah [17] simplified those three significant steps into three stages in every cycle. Those three plans are *plan*, *do*, and *see* that are sustainably performed. In other words, LS is a way to enhance endless education (*continuous improvement*). The stages can be seen in Figure 1.
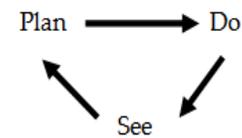

Figure 1. The Lesson Study Activity Scheme [17]

Some previous researches have already indicated that LS can improve the teaching process and teachers' ability in teaching. By doing sustainable works and collaboration among components at schools such as model teachers and observers, it is believed that LS is able to improve teachers' professionalism [18], [19]. In addition, collaborative works provide richer and better preparation for a teacher to teach [20].

Referring to the results of identification and discussion among ELED, LS team, and the lecturers, it was determined that the learning focus which was done in LS was reading course. The considerations were those lecturers want to learn a lot of things about teaching reading as reading is the most challenging and boring subject to teach, reading subject is often taught in ELED (Reading I, Reading II, Reading III, Reading IV, as well as ESP Reading I and ESP Reading II).

Purpose

This Lesson Study aims to improve the ability of the novice lecturers in teaching English as a specific purpose (ESP).

2 METHODS

To achieve the purposes stated, the researchers applied the Lesson Study (LS). LS is a very specified form of Classroom Action Research (CAR) [16], [21], [22]. LS consists of Plan-Do-See activity in every single cycle, and it was conducted for three cycles [17]. The details are presented in the following.

Plan activities cover:
a. LS team collaborated to plan teaching and learning that include learning components.
b. LS team decided the teacher/lecturers model who will put learning, moderator, observer, reporter of minutes, and documenter into practices.
c. LS team strengthened the learning focus that has been agreed.
d. LS team discussed to gain inputs from the learning components.
e. LS team revised the learning components based on the suggestion of discussion.
f. LS team prepared the facilities and infrastructure that are going to be used for learning *(Do)*.

Do activities cover:
a. The lecturers model executed the learning process based on the learning scenarios that have been agreed on.
b. Students were strived to learn in a reasonable and natural atmosphere.
c. Observers observed the learning processes based on the scenarios.
d. Observers observed deeply and rigorously and filled the learning activity observation sheet (students, educators, and their environment).

See activities cover:

a. LS team performed learning reflection that has been discussed, starting from model lecturers that delivered the impression and message about her performance.
b. Observers gave comments about good things during a learning activity.
c. Observers gave comments about bad things during learning activity that was supported by proves and solution.
d. LS team found best practices which were done by the teacher model.
e. The activity was continued to the next cycles based on the result of reflection.

Targets

The targets of this LS program were eight lecturers of ELED who teach ESP Reading subject. Two of them were novice lecturers as the main lecturers who acted as lecturers to arrange lesson plan and teach in the classroom, and six co-lecturers were novice and senior lecturers who acted as observers who helped the two main lecturers to provide feedback in designing lesson plan as well as teaching and learning processes.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following were the results and discussion of Lesson Study that were performed in teaching and learning of ESP Reading.

Cycle I

In *the Plan*, the learning activities in the lesson plan have been following the learning aims of the course outline. It assigned model lecturers to develop the critical in the reading activity. It was manifested in snake and ladders game that encouraged students to think and participate actively. Critical thinking is set in this learning activity as it is stated by Rayner & Papakonstantinou [23] that critical thinking a skill which has high value for learners. Especially for the higher education students they are encouraged all the time to think critically. In a current context, students also need to think critically as it has been stated in the curricula. In order that the lecturers' professional development run effectively, it should refer to the students' need [6]. It implies that the lecturer's aims of doing professional development should also reflect on what students want to so that the insights that the lecturers acquire can be transferred and internalized to the students.

In *Do*, the model lecturer applied Snake and ladders game as one of the reading techniques by using dice and topical board that consists of challenge boxes that will be solved by students. That challenge was related to the discussed topics in their class and encouraged them to participate in learning reading. This technique was in the game by dividing the class into several groups. Each group has its snake and ladder board as the media to play. Each group got the opportunity to perform this game based on the allocated time, and the winner of this game was the group that had the highest point who can solve all challenges in a topical board. This activity was interesting for students because they could participate actively to learn reading.

Based on the reflection, however, this technique has its shortage, such as novice lecturers did not explain the questions that should be made by the group who has had to ask questions. It made students challenging to construct the questions well and based on the text context. The questions that students created were short, simple, and pointless. Based on the idea proposed by Rayner & Papakonstantinou [23], it indicates that the lecturers have not guided students yet to think critically. It was also because there was no time limit given to students to prepare questions that should be given for other groups before the game was started.

Moreover, in giving the questions, the list of questions should be made so that students have a clear picture of the questions would be. It helped the group who had to answer the questions to focus so that the questions can be answered precisely. As it was for students in higher education, the questions should be at a higher level, which the answer is not "yes" and "no" questions. In a higher level, however, questions are proposed to find a relationship or something that is absent in the teaching materials or teacher's explanations [24].

Another control that must be prepared by the novice lecturers was the questions should be given by all groups in class, not only by certain groups. By applying this idea, it made the whole students active. If the questions were only asked by a particular group, the group that did not make question would trigger an uncomfortable situation and ignore the group who made questions. As a result, some students were noisy and did not pay attention to others. Questions posed by the students has a crucial role in presenting meaningful learning and motivation [25] and is a part of the blueprint for language that is hard-wired into the human brain [26]. It either motivates the student who asks and other students who listen to the questions. As it is commonly perceived by many students that when a student dares to ask a question at the first time, she will easily ask the next question as it can arise the student motivation and self-confidence. Additionally, Pedrosa-de-Jesus, Leite, & Watts claimed that question moments would increase students' interactions [26].

The text that was taught was a narrative text because the moral values or messages of the text must be well delivered. The narrative text is a text that contains a moral message and implicit thought that is commonly happening in social life. The narrative text includes the story of a place, legend, myth, or another folklore that is genuine or created to deliver a positive value in the story. The story itself should be relatively close to the present condition of society.

In addition to the weakness of the technique applied; however, one of the shortages in this game was the media used by novice lecturers had not been listed in their lesson plan. In composing lesson plan, the novice lecturers did not put the media in their lesson plan so that the composition of their lesson plan was not perfect. It became a noticed issue since the lesson plan was the form of teaching preparation that includes all details in the teaching and learning process, including the shape and the kind of media that will be used. Moreover, the scoring rubric needed also to be written in detail and completed by description so that the scoring process would be easily performed. It is vital to give objective values.

Meanwhile, in post-teaching, novice lecturers are suggested

to assign students to look for the narrative text as well as read it as the form of reinforcement for the material that has been learned previously, especially if the topic for the following meeting is still the same.

Cycle II

In *Plan*, the lesson plan was designed according to the result of reflection in which two points were criticized namely; building critical thinking especially the way to pose questions, and classroom management—handling the noise of students. The activity in cycle II still used group discussion strategy. This is believed as an excellent way to manage a class with loaded students. In order that students in a large class critically think and pay attention to materials presented, the lecturers assigned them with different roles. This is according to the research found by [27] that providing the opportunity for dialogue through discussion could improve the outcomes of critical thinking skills acquisition.

In *Do*, the activity involved all members of the groups in participating in a group discussion. All members of the groups had different tasks and responsibilities based on the position given by novice lecturers. The tasks and responsibilities of the members of the groups were as a reader, note taker, seaker, speaker/presenter, question asker. A reader is a student who read a paragraph that had been given to each member. A note taker is a student who made notes of different vocabulary found in paragraph that was read by the reader in the same group. A seaker or presenter is a student who had a responsibility to find the meaning of those difficult words that were given by the other groups. The last is a question asker who had a duty to ask the other group about the content of the main idea of the paragraph that had been read by question asker group. In term of encouraging the students to think critically, these activities were successful. In the first cycle, they commonly asked questions which the answers were clearly stated in the text. In cycle II, they started asking questions at a higher level. For example, they asked about the message of the narrative text according to the current condition. Higher level questions that students propose could boost their speculative, inferential, and evaluative thinking ability [28]. Questions could also be presented in the form of writing as it may facilitate students who have limited confidence to ask orally and limited time. Walker argues that journal writing—any writing that students perform during either a clinical or classroom experience that challenges them to reflect on past situations—can promote reflection [29]. Indeed, reflection is a part of critical thinking.

The different responsibilities and tasks distribution were aimed to make students focus on the group discussion so that they do not ignore class activity or make their activity other than group discussion. One of the arising problems in a big class was classroom management because the students in this class were loaded. It made the lecturer have difficulty to give focus and attention thoroughly. Therefore, one of the useful activities that was performed by the lecturers was using group discussion. A role play that lecturers presented above seems to be a part of the peer-feedback strategy, which is offered by Merç & Subasi [30] to cope with classroom management problems.

In this cycle II, the novice lecturers needed to explain in detail about tasks and stages that should be performed by students that have been divided into several groups. Students needed to know the tasks of the reader, note taker, seaker, speaker/ presenter, question asker. It was crucial to give clear and more detail picture to students to do their tasks well and precisely. Many of them did not understand the lesson since they had failed to comprehend the instruction given by the lecturers. This failure was observed for two reasons, students' ability to understand the direction and teachers' ability to deliver the directions. Therefore, it is necessary to give explicit instruction. Sowell [31] claimed that giving instruction in teaching and learning process has a direct effect because students may make teaching activity fails and chaotic when they do not understand what they are supposed to do with the instruction. Lupogo [32] stated that the language of instruction is a fundamental unit in the process of teaching and learning since it is a medium of transferring knowledge. If a student acquires a language that is different from her first language, the process of learning will be more difficult [33]. Hence, the lecturers should be aware of this circumstance so that they will use proper language instruction in the class. Besides, scoring rubric needs to be written in detail with clear description to make the scoring process easy. It is essential to give a favorable valuation.

Meanwhile, in post-teaching, every group needs to be stimulated by novice lecturers to explain the content of the whole text so that students comprehend the text thoroughly. Post-teaching is the closing activity in a learning process that is aimed to evaluate and check students understanding about the topic given in class. However, before the action is taken, the text structure needs to be explained to students. The explanation should be given in the first place so that students have sufficient background to comprehend expository text.

In short, the two problems were solved in this cycle. However, this cycle also issued new problems that were language instruction and rubric for evaluation.

Cycle III

In cycle III, the LS team designed a lesson plan by considering the two problems found in cycle II; they are language instruction and rubric for evaluation. To improve better language instruction so that students could understand easily, the lecturers designed more simple language and sometimes more details for a complex instruction. Meanwhile, for the rubric of evaluation, the lecturers just needed to put more details of description in the rubric for evaluation.

In *Do* activity, the lecturers focused on the use of the language of instruction in a classroom. They were carefully using the language of instruction to make sure that what they delivered could be understood easily by the students. For the evaluation process, it used directly the rubric of evaluation that they made. The rubric was more detail, which includes the criteria and description of students' competencies so that it made teachers quickly to assess students' performance.

In a *reflection* activity, the LS team identified that the language instruction used was better than before, but it was not sufficient for the students to easily understand. The improvement of language instruction used was manifested in the responses of the students toward the lecturers' direction—they could respond

and do some of what the lecturers instructed. However, the team concluded that understanding language instruction as well as presenting simple language instruction in a classroom cannot be directly solved within one, two, or three meetings since it needs continuous learning for students and lecturers. The students need to improve their listening skills, and the lecturers need to improve their speaking skills in term of ability in presenting instruction or direction in a classroom. Furthermore, PDST suggested that to have effective oral language instruction in a classroom, the lecturers should consider doing 5 key element such as; developing listening & speaking skills, promoting auditory memory, teaching and extending vocabulary and conceptual knowledge, creating a language learning environment, and teaching a variety of spoken texts [34]. It means that in order that language instruction is easily understood, lecturers and students should continuously perform the above activities.

In general, in cycle III, the novice lecturers have made lesson plan almost perfect based on the evaluation of cycle II and III. For example, novice lecturers explained in detail about the media that was used during the learning process and included the rubric of evaluation in details. Besides, the achievement was also accomplished during the teaching-learning process in the classroom. It can be seen from the activity instruction given by the novice lecturers. The instruction was more precise and can be understood by students so that they did not face confusion in doing the activity based on the instruction of novice lecturers in cycle III. Also, the novice lecturers applied more challenging and complex activities to students in cycle III. The activities were *Runners Game* and *Being a detective.* These games demanded students to work in a group based on their tasks. If students failed to comprehend the instruction given by novice lecturers, those students would face difficulty to perform their task with their group. For elevating critical thinking, the novice lecturers arranged the class into a competence among groups that needs the involvement of each member of the group. If there was one student, who could not understand the tasks and his role in the game, automatically that student was not able to accomplish his mission. Besides, that kind of condition would make that group lose the game.

In the accomplishment of cycle III, students were active in following learning given by the novice lecturers, so that there was no more passive student in the class. At the end of the lesson, the novice lecturers also gave stressing and concept understanding to students as a part of the evaluation. So the students would understand and get the value of learning.

4   CONCLUSION

Based on the result and discussion above, it can conclude that the enhancement of novice lecturer ability in ESP Reading subject based on the Lesson Study is able to elevate the lecturers performance in performing good learning plans based on the result of reflection of previous learning; performing good learning plans based on the planned stages; performing reflection to the learning process that has been done either independent reflection by lecturers and students; and elevating students' critical thinking.

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