

Peer Coaching: A sustainable Professional Development Model for High School EFL Teachers in Toraja Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

The teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Toraja-Indonesia is influenced by the quality of teachers from elementary to university level. The Ministry of National Education in Indonesia has stipulated four competencies that should be mastered by teachers: pedagogical competence, professional competence, personal competence, and social competence. Peer coaching promotes professionalism and remains sustainable for life-long professional development. The purpose of this study is to explore the EFL teachers' perception toward the implementation of Peer Coaching as a sustainable Professional Development model for high school EFL teachers in Toraja Indonesia. For this study, 20 high school EFL Teachers in Toraja were chosen randomly from both public and private schools. Data was collected by using semi-structured interviews. The descriptive qualitative results of this research show that there were two categories of EFL teachers' perception toward the implementation of Peer Coaching Model: Positive and Negative perceptions. Positive perceptions were the improvement of EFL teachers' professional competence, the improvement teachers' teaching strategies and their professional self-awareness. While negative perceptions were relating to problem of time management, the lack of peer coaching procedure, lack-of self-reflection and feedback skills.

Kata kunci: Peer Coaching, sustainable professional development model, EFL Teacher, EFL teachers' competence.

I. Pendahuluan

Strong English proficiency of course is influenced by environments and the English teaching

and learning process. The teaching and learning process of EFL affects by some factors. One important factor is the teacher as argued by Rasyid (2015) that: "There are four perennial truths of EFL teaching learning process, they are teacher, students, material, and context of time and place." Teacher is the one who should manage, plan and make his teaching process interesting and joyfulness. However, as the World Bank research result found the weakness of Indonesian teacher competence, especially in subject content knowledge (Chang et al., 2014). This is in line with the national test results of the teacher competence test conducted in 2014, the average scores of the selected teachers' subject content knowledge was 36.16 for English (Prihono, 2014). In 2015, the national average score of the competence test was only 53.02, it is lower than the minimum standard competency score, 55 (Maulipaksi 2016). It is also reported that there were 59The more specific average score of teacher professional competence in South Sulawesi was only 53.83. This average score also below the minimum standard of competence score. While the average score of the high school EFL teachers' competence in Tana Toraja dan Toraja Utara regencies, where this research took place, were also below the minimum standard of competence. For Toraja utara regency, it was only 52.27 as well as Tana Toraja, that was only 52.12. (Data base of Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara Education Offices, 2017). This result of the national competence test (Ujian Kompetensi) for teachers in Indonesia in 2014 and 2015 indicated that teachers in Indonesia, more especially the High School EFL teachers in Toraja still have serious problems with their professional competence. The government of Indonesia always encourages teachers to participate in professional development opportunities to meet updated requirements for teaching. These opportunities are provided through a number of venues: the Subject Teacher Working Group for Secondary Teachers (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran or MGMP), and the Teachers' Working Group

for Primary School (Kelompok Kerja Guru or KKG). Teachers can also be trained through Teacher Certification (Sertifikasi Guru) as well as other kinds of training and workshops. While there are a number of professional development opportunities, MGMP-focused on secondary teacher-is the focus of the discussion in this study. MGMP plays important roles in improving the professional competence of teachers in Indonesia (USAID/Indonesia 2009; Jalal, 2005; UNESCO, 2006). Through MGMP teachers from a number of schools cluster at the district level periodically meet to share their knowledge and experience and discuss or solve problems encountered in the classroom. However, based on the preliminary observations and interviews with some of the high school EFL teachers in Toraja-Indonesia, not all of the subject teachers have the same opportunity to attend such forums (MGMP). More critically, teachers from rural areas are limited because the school only sends the representative teachers because of inadequate school budget. Furthermore, Panggaa (2016) found in her research that the high school EFL teachers in Toraja based on their self-assessed professional competence, reported that they had only a fair level of professional competence. This might be because they do not have the same chance and opportunity to be involved in a regular training for EFL teachers. A few teacher reported that even they have opportunity to join a training or seminars but there were none any follow-up activity to keep maintain their professional competence. The previous studies above reveal that professional development of teachers, especially in the content knowledge or in this study, professional competence, should be intensified since the quality of educators is linked to that of students. Traditionally, professional development has been defined as "the provision of activities designed to enhance the knowledge, skills and understandings of teachers in ways that lead to changes in their thinking and classroom behaviour" (Fenstermacher, and Berliner, 1983). Professional development is

a notion inclusive of the concept of reflective practice, a now well-recognized element in teaching. "What teachers take away from professional development efforts is based on their existing knowledge and beliefs. Rather than having information delivered to them, teachers need to examine their beliefs about subject matter, student learning and instruction in the light of innovation" (Marx, Blumenfeld, Krajcik, and Soloway, 1998, p. 33). Teacher development is a way for "people to change and move toward their own carefully articulated goals to improve their schools, their relationships with each other and the teaching processes for students" (quoted by Sideris and Skau, 1994). There are some general attempts at providing profound professional development. It may take many forms, shapes and models. This is to say that the search for professional development models is to be attentive to both technical and practical knowledge. As redefined by Tafel and Bertani (1992), staff development is a way for "people to change and move toward their own carefully articulated goals to improve their schools, their relationships with each other and the teaching processes for students" (quoted by Sideris and Skau, 1994). Teacher Professional Development (TPD) can be delivered in some model. In this study, the EFL teachers, especially EFL teachers in Toraja need a professional development model that can help them in improving their teaching quality and their professionalism in teaching English. It is also supported by the previous study that had been done by Wello (1999), where he suggested that other research "needed to be conducted in order to identify the best possible in-service training practice (system delivery) that could yield the best result and reach the largest number of English teachers in both urban and rural districts" (p.136). As noted above, UNESCO and USAID studies have found that MGMP is the most effective development for teachers in Indonesia and as a forum for teachers to improve themselves. There are, however, some shortcomings in the implementation of

this program, both from teachers themselves and from other external factors. Most notable are the observation that the activity programs are not clearly and operationally planned and not all subject teachers are able to take part in MGMP programs because the limitation of school budget. To this point, Pangua (2017) has developed a collaborative learning model that still connects to MGMP but more specifically meets the teachers' desire and commitment to work with his/her peers and participate actively in order to improve their professional competence in teaching English. This model also requires low budgeting. A Peer Coaching model that offers guidance for high school EFL teachers in Toraja Indonesia on how to improve their competencies in the teaching of English as a foreign language was suggested by her research. Robbins (1991, p.1) describes Peer coaching as "confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace" There are a variety of approaches to Peer Coaching (PC) according to Robbins (1991:6), one type is designed to help teacher transfer into classroom practice new skills they learned in a workshop or training session. Other approaches to PC involve colleagues working collaboratively around issues unrelated to a specific focus generated by shared training. This type of Peer Coaching relies on teacher-specified focus. Here the approach is intended to increase professional sharing, to refine teaching practices, and to enhance teacher reflection. It may also conduct action research, solving problems related to instruction or curriculum design and delivery, or resolving problems with specific students. Regardless of the type or approach, Peer Coaching efforts all share a collaborative quest to refine, expand, and enhance knowledge about the teaching profession. These approaches make learning about business of teaching accessible to all teachers in the workplace. The Peer Coaching Model

had been developed and implemented by the researcher in 2017 in a small number of sample of high school EFL Teachers in Toraja – Indonesia, therefore, the recent study aims to investigate the high school EFL Teachers' perception toward the implementation of the Peer Coaching on Professional Competence training model (The 2PC Training Model).

II. Research Method

Twenty high school EFL teachers participated in practicing and implementing the English Teacher Peer Coaching model. Therefore, 20 high school EFL teachers were interviewed to investigate their perceptions toward the implementation of the Peer Coaching on Professional Competence Training Model.

The semi-structured interview was used to find in-depth information about the teacher participants' perceptions towards the English Teacher Peer Coaching Model. There were six questions in this semi-structured interview and the results of interviewed were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were analyzed qualitatively by using Miles and Huberman's theory in three steps namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing (1994, p.10). All interview transcripts were analyzed and coded then similar data sets were examined for patterns and emerging themes.

III. Result and Discussion

The findings of the study based on the qualitative analysis of the interview results of the twenty high school EFL teachers are described in two categories of teachers' perception, they are positive and negative perceptions. It also describes some suggestions from the participants for the improvement of the training model.

A. Positive perception or feedback:

There are three categories of teachers' positive feedback, they are described as follow:

A.1. The awareness of teachers' weakness and strengths in their professional competence through other' eyes

Eight of the teacher participants acknowledged that through this model they can notice and realize their weakness and strengths on their professional competence based on the feedback from their peer teacher.

T1/T17: I think through this model I can get positive feedback from my peer and It helps me realize and notice my strengths and weakness through self-reflection after receiving feedback from my peer.

T2: Saya dapat feedback dari teman bahwa saya terlalu banyak focus pada Grammar dalam mengajar (I got feedback from my peer teacher that I was mainly focus on Grammar rather than other skills or language aspects) T5/T7/T13/T14/T15/: The benefits I got such as I can know my weakness and got some positive input/advices from my coach teacher and we share ideas each other.

It was also noticeable that this model can help them to share and to solve their problems together. The more experienced coach teachers were likely to offer more productive feedbacks, in certain case they served to function as a role model for the less experienced teachers.

T4: I think, the 2PC training model can help two teachers to share each other, not only giving and receiving feedback, to share our experiences or problems and how we solved that problems relating to our teaching practice and our professional competence

T10: Yes, this model can help me because my friend, who becomes my coach can give feedback and we can discuss about how to be a professional English teacher.

T11: It helps me a lot, maybe I myself cannot solve my problem but other teacher, in this case my coach can help me to solve it. T12: I can measure myself (my professional competence) based on suggestions or feedback given by my friend/peer.

It was often the case that the teacher found his/her own perception of what she/he was doing in the class to be widely different from

what it actually was. The teacher coach's alternative view enabled the teacher to pursue a more objective view and more rigorous reflection upon his/her own professional competence and teaching practice (Bang, 2009)

A.2. The improvement of teaching Techniques, methods and Strategies

The participants also reported that through the proses of implementing this 2PC training model in their microteaching class, their teaching methods and techniques are improved because they can share their ideas and experiences in implementing techniques, methods and strategies in teaching specific skills or language elements.

T3/T18: I can improve my teaching methods and techniques based on the reflection and suggestion given by my coach teacher

T10/T12: I can share my experience with my peer teacher and I can learn from him about his experiences (in using the suitable teaching techniques) in teaching English)

T13/16: I think this model is a good model to improve my teaching techniques and methods.

T14/20: I think the 2PC model can help me in improving my professional competence if I do it continuously.

T19: The 2PC training model helps me in improving my competence by collaborating with other teachers.

Through this model teachers also could newly understand their current teaching methods, techniques and strategies then starting to improve it continuously. Some participants acknowledged that their current practice in teaching strategy was much less effective than they had thought, and they were determined to bring in significant changes and innovations (Bang, 2009).

Effective PD opportunities are "powerful" ways for teachers to make changes in their teaching. With the high self-efficacy, teacher can improve their ability to implement effective instructional strategies. Positive and constructive feedback from their peers enhances teachers' motivation to take risks, set the-

ir goals and implement challenging teaching strategies. (Bruce and Ross, 2008, p.348).

A.3. Impacted on Students' Achievement and Teacher self-esteem

By implementing this model continuously as their professional development activity, some participants believe that it would have positive impacts on their students' achievement as well as teachers' professional self-esteem. Critical reflection upon themselves and their teaching practices, reinforced and supported by their coach teacher assistance, contributed to the technical improvement in their teaching practice and more important to improve their feeling of professional self-concept.

If teacher prepared their teaching well and improve their professional competency continuously through this model, they will become more confidence in teaching their students, and their students automatically will be more enthusiastic in learning and as result their achievement will be improved.

T1: "Absolutely! If the teacher is qualified, the students will be motivated in learning, and as a result the students' achievement will be increased as well"

T3: "Yes, of course, because if I do it continuously then it will improve my professional competency in teaching"

T4/T20: "Yes, because I can reflect on my teaching and starting to develop and improve my professional competency based on that reflection"

T7: "Yes, because I can get some advices regarding to my bad habits in teaching"

T10: "Maybe, I don't know exactly but I should do it continuously"

T13: "Yes I do, because I can teach better than before, after doing reflection and begin to improve my teaching" T14/T15/T18: "Yes, I think so, because there will be improvement on my teaching strategy after receiving feedback and doing reflection on my teaching and the students will have high motivation to study.

B. Negative Feedback

The participants also reported negative feedback toward this model. It was relating to the difficulties they have experienced during the implementation of this model. The teacher participants reported that they have some difficulties in implementing this model as follow:

B.1. Cultural Problem

Some of the participants responded that in doing reflection and giving feedback to their peer, they felt hesitate to tell about the weakness of each other's professional competency and teaching practice. They didn't want to make their partner become ashamed so it caused them to be difficult in telling about the weakness of their partner. It was not easy for them to give meaningful feedbacks and some participants were dissatisfied with the nature of the feedback received from the coach teacher or the ways in which feedback was deliver. T1/T7/T17: Culture is the biggest problem for me, we don't want somebody blame us, we just want someone tells the truth of my weakness, I just want to know my strengths. It is difficult for me to give advice to other teacher T12/T14: My coach teacher might be difficult/hesitate to tell about my weakness. Sometimes the coach teacher didn't give the feedback honestly because she didn't want to make me ashamed (cultural problem).

B.2. Lack of reflection and feedback skills

For many of participants reported that, it is difficult for them to commit as a coach teacher. They should have proper skills in doing reflection and giving feedback. Some of participants might be dissatisfied with the nature of feedback from their coach or the ways in which feedbacks were delivered. In the opening workshop, it was really emphasized that in this 2PC model, reflection and feedback should not a tool for the judgement of others on the basis of our own beliefs and assump-

tions. However, some of the participants were not skillful at communicating their views sufficiently to make them sound a constructive criticism.

T18: It is difficult to build a commitment as a coach teacher

T3: It is hard to find fellow teacher who will loyal to help us

T4: It is difficult to find a teacher who want to be a coach

B.3. Time management and Confusedness of implementation procedure

The participants reported that time is one of the problems. They said that they need more time to learn more how to implement this model properly. They believed that this model can help them in improving their professional competence and their teaching practice but since the model is just introduced to them in a day workshop only, it was not sufficient to make them aware of every procedure to the detail. It became apparent that the one-day workshop of introductory was not enough for them to understand well of how to implement this model effectively. T5: "I'm still confused to apply this method, I need more time to learn and apply it" T15: "Honestly, we need time do know more about this model, at the first time, we confused about what should we do until the researcher explained to us in more details"

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

The high school EFL Teachers in Toraja need to update their professional knowledge and competence with the change of the society and the timely requirements of TEFL. They need professional development opportunity and a sustainable training model that enable them to improve their professional competence. The English Teacher Peer Coaching model is relevant to high school EFL teachers in Toraja and they have both positive and negative perception on this Training Model.

This model could improve high school EFL teachers' professional competence because it was designed based on their needs. Based on the result of this study, it is suggested to use this training model to improve the High EFL teachers' Professional competence. It is hoped to the next researchers to conduct related research to improve and enlarge this research findings. Before implementing this model, the teachers should understand well every phase of the model so the impact will be more significant on teachers' competence. This study only focused on the Professional Competence of the high school EFL teachers, it is suggested to the next researchers, to do other research relating to the other three competencies of EFL teachers.

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