UNVEILING THE STUDENTS' OPENING AND CLOSING SKILLS DURING THE MICRO TEACHING IN EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Opening and closing the lesson is one of the basic teaching skills in Micro Teaching subject. Micro teaching is a subject that prepares and trains the teacher candidates to be able to practice teaching. Every teacher candidate needs to comprehend and practice opening and closing the lesson skill in teaching practice. The purpose of this research was to describe the teacher candidates' performance in opening and closing the lesson skill in Micro Teaching Subject. This research was categorized as a descriptive qualitative. There were five teacher candidates of the undergraduate students of the English study program of Timor University chosen as the sample. The researcher applied random sampling techniques to select the participants. The researcher used recorder and rubric to assess the basic teaching skills as the research instruments. In the procedures of collecting data; the researcher applied observation and recording techniques. The data of oral language were transcribed into written form and then the data were analyzed. The research findings reported that greeting and asking the students' condition, checking the students' attendance, prayer, and introducing the topic were very good, attracting the students' attention, mentioning the learning objectives, and using probing questions were good. While closing the lesson; reviewing the material and , giving homework/tasks were very good while giving feedback, informing the next topic and motivation were good.

Keywords – open, close, lesson, teaching, skill

Introduction

Teachers are one component that plays a very important role in developing the quality of human resources. One of the teacher's roles is teaching students in the classroom. The teaching process is a professional job that must be achieved through education, training and practices. Teachers must have the ability and skills to teach students. Teaching ability requires intellectual ability, teaching skills, talent and art. Intellectual abilities can be learned from teaching and learning theory. Meanwhile, the talent and art of teaching is developed through various teaching experiences. Sofian (2019) emphasizes that the ability to conduct teaching and learning requires a conceptual foundation and practical experience. For this reason, teacher candidates must need teaching practice before going directly to the real classroom. The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education is an institution that prepares teacher candidates, so students who choose a study program or major at this faculty; she/he must be willing to become a teacher candidate. Before the teacher candidates enter the world of teaching (real teaching) they must take the Micro Teaching subject. In the Micro Teaching subject; they are prepared with teaching theory and practice which includes basic teaching skills. A teacher candidate is required to practice teaching skills in small or limited groups. Micro Teaching becomes an important subject as the effort to develop the teaching skill and performance.

Micro teaching means a teaching activity which is designed in small class,

limited time and narrow material. In addition; Sofian (2019) noticed that micro-teaching is a mini-learning activity consisting of 5-10 student peers with 15 - 25 minutes learning duration. It involves planning and teaching a short lesson to a group of fellow students. On the other hand; micro teaching is a model of practical teaching training within a limited time, small class and simple material. Thus; micro teacher refers to a teaching activity in which all aspects are minimized or simplified. The purpose of micro-teaching is to prepare the students to practice teaching in front of their friends so they have good mental and performance ability before going to the real class. Widiyati (2020) underlines the objective of micro-teaching is giving a chance to the teacher candidates to rehearse some teaching skills in front of their friends with a constructive atmosphere. In the micro teaching class, each student is given a chance to practice teaching in a small group. During teaching practice; the lecturer as the observer observes the students' performance which are related to basic teaching skills. Through micro teaching subjects, the students are able to comprehend and practice basic teaching skills. The basic teaching skills cover opening and closing lessons, skill to explain the material, skill for variation stimulus, reinforcement skill, questioning skill, classroom management skill, small group teaching skill, small discussion guiding skill. Apling, et. al (2019) said that micro teaching is a method of teaching practice to provide pre-service teachers in mastering basic teaching skills. Therefore; every teacher candidate needs to practice the basic teaching skills.

One of the basic teaching skills is to open and close the lesson. Opening the lesson in the first activity in teaching. In opening skill; Mulyasa (2019) emphasized that the teacher prepares the students' mental and attention for the lesson. Opening the lesson is claimed as a starting point to begin the class therefore; opening the lesson must be interesting and friendly for every student. The teacher must create a good atmosphere for students that make them familiar. In the implementation of opening the lesson; the teacher candidates are trained to know the techniques of opening the lesson. There are a number of techniques in opening the lessons; convince the students that the learning experience is beneficial for themselves, create things that are considered strange for students such as by using tools and do fun interaction with students. Besides that; the teacher must create a familiar relation by greeting the students and having communication and relate the material or learning experience that is based on the students' needs. Furthermore; the teachers introduce the learning objectives and the assignment then explain the steps of teaching and explain the competence that the students must achieve at the end of the lesson. Closing the lesson is a final activity in the teaching process. In closing the lesson; the teacher must sum up the material and get feedback from students then there is a follow up action towards the students' feedback. Closing the lesson is done to review all the lessons and know the students' achievement and teacher's achievement in the teaching and learning process. Teachers also can reflect on what they have achieved and what they have not achieved; thus, there is an improvement in the next meetings. To achieve the qualified teaching performance; it is important for lecturers to train the teacher candidates during the subject of Micro teaching. This article attempts to explore the teacher candidates' performance in opening and closing the lesson in Micro Teaching subject in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The analyses focus on the indicators of opening class which includes greetings and asking the students' condition, checking the students' attendance, praying, attracting the students' attention, introducing the

learning objectives, using probing questions and introducing the topic. My observation for micro teaching subject indicates that the teacher candidate teachers were still have challenges in performing opening and closing skill. Thus; the indicators of closing the class include reviewing the materials, giving feedback, giving homework/tasks, informing the next topic and motivating the students. The findings of this research is used as the feedback for any lecturers of Micro Teaching subject to improve students' teaching quality.

Methodology

The issue of this research was categorized as a descriptive qualitative. Descriptive qualitative describes the condition, characteristics, quality, or the phenomena in the real situations. The researcher attempts to explain the reality of the teacher candidates' performance in opening and closing the lesson skill in teaching practice. There were five teacher candidates of the undergraduate students of the English study program of Timor University chosen as the participants. These five teacher candidates were chosen due to they have enough capability to perform the teaching practice in Micro Teaching subject. These five teacher candidates were the sixth semester students enrolled in Micro Teaching subject. The research was conducted during the final semester test of Micro Teaching subject. The participants studied the basic teaching skills in the early meetings of the class and then they practiced teaching in small groups before coming to the final semester test. The researcher used recorder and rubric to assess the basic teaching skills as the research instruments. In the procedures of collecting data; the researcher applied observation and recording techniques. Before recording; it was important to obtain approvals from the participants, maintain the confidentiality of participants'

identities and responses. The researcher was as the observer because he taught the Micro Teaching subject for the sixth semester students. Cresswell & Cresswell (2018) noticed that in qualitative research; the researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants. In procedures of data analyses; the data of oral language were transcribed manually into written form and then the data were analyzed through transcribing data, codifying data, classifying data, analyzing dan and discussing. While; the students' scores were tabulated and calculated to find out the average score and the level of category. The results of data analyses were described and reported as the research findings.

Findings and Discussion

Regarding the purpose of this research; this section presents the research findings and discussions. The data were collected through recording and observing the teacher candidates' performance when they were teaching practice in the final semester test in Micro Teaching subject.

Table 1
Skill of opening the lesson

No	Indicators	Category
1	Greet and ask the students' condition	Very good
2	Check the students' attendance	Very good
3	Praying	Very good
4	Attract the students' attention	Good
5	Mention the learning objectives	Good
6	Use probing question	Good
7	Introduce the topic	Very good

The table clearly presents the data related to the teacher candidates' performance in opening the lesson in the EFL classroom. The data contain the indicators of the skill of opening the lesson

in teaching practice in Micro Teaching subject. The research was conducted in an EFL classroom therefore the instructions were in English. Aulia (2021) stated that EFL context should be treated as the space for the learners in training their English skills. In hence; the competency of teacher candidates in English also has an impact on the teaching learning process. Wahyulestari (2018) noticed that the components of opening skills contain attracting students' attention, giving motivation, providing references through various efforts, and making links or connections between the material to be studied. There were five indicators which were observed during the teaching practice in the EFL classroom. The first indicator is greeting and asking the students' condition. Greeting is the first activity in class such as *good morning students* then followed by asking the students' condition, such as how *are you, Maria?* The data showed that the teacher candidates can perform this indicator very well. Praying is a must in Indonesian curriculum; therefore, every teacher must do this indicator in the early meeting and the end of the class. Prayer has become a habit in classroom activities; so that religious and moral education can be embedded in children's hearts from an early age. In this prayer; normally the teacher candidates ask the students to lead the prayer. This indicator was categorized as good. The next indicator is checking the students' attendance. It is important to check the students' attendance before starting the lesson; because the teacher candidates need to know who is present or absent in the class. The effective way to do this is by calling every student's name in the class; so, the teacher candidate can remember their names. The data showed that the teacher candidates can perform this indicator very well. Attracting the students' attention is important in opening lesson skills. Evey teacher candidate must have this indicator; but during the

observation on the teacher candidates' performance in teaching practice; the researcher found that not all teacher candidates can perform this indicator; thus, it was categorized as good. The other indicator is mentioning the learning objectives. Learning objective is stated to describe what students are expected to achieve at the end of the lesson; so, learning objective refers to the learning outcome that every student must achieve. Therefore; it is important for the teacher candidates to mention the learning objective in the opening lesson. The data showed that the indicator of mentioning the learning objectives is categorized as good. The next indicator is using probing questions which aim to guide the students to enter the new topic. By asking probing questions teacher candidates find out more detailed information in the students' answers. The data on using probing questions is categorized as good. Introducing the topic is the final indicator in the opening season. To do this; the candidate teachers said "*the topic of our meeting today is Narrative Text*; or the teacher candidate can write the topic on the whiteboard. The teacher candidates can perform this indicator very well in their teaching practice. In addition; Valent & Ngazizah (2021) evaluated the skill to open and close the lesson of PGSD students which found that the students were able to perform the skill to open and close the lesson. It was slightly similar with Fitriyah, et. al (2024) that the students' performance in opening the lesson was categorized as good. This indicated that students were able to apply the opening the lesson including greetings, asking the students' condition and checking the students' attendance. These two research findings show that opening and closing the lesson skill can be implemented by students in teaching practice.

Table 2

Skill of closing the lesson

No	Indicators	Category
1	Review the material	Very good
2	Giving feedback	Good
3	Giving homework/task	Very good
4	Inform the next topic	Good
5	Motivate the students	Good

This table presents the data about the indicators which are related to the skill of closing the lesson. Closing the lesson skill is the teaching activity at the end of the lesson/class. Closing the lesson skill contains two big parts; first to review the materials that have been taught for students and evaluate the students' learning. Wahyulestari (2018) emphasized that components of lesson closing skills include reviewing mastery of the core of the lesson by summarizing the core of the lesson and making summaries, and evaluating. The data of this research showed that the teacher candidates can review the material at the end of the lesson. The purpose of reviewing material is to sum up the main point of the material in short; the students can easily get the point. The data showed that the review material was categorized as very good. The next indicator is giving feedback; in this phase the teacher candidates and the students reflect the learning achievement based on the results of the assessment. They give feedback to each other in order to make better improvements in the next meeting. The reflection can help the teacher candidates and students to identify their strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning process. The data on teacher' feedback is categorized as good. Aulia (2021) suggested pedagogical competence in terms of evaluation and reflecting are crucial to get better feedback in the next teaching-learning activities. The other indicator of closing the lesson is giving homework/tasks for students. Giving tasks for students to do at home is helpful for students because they can repeat their learning on the material. The task reminds the students to study again at home rather than to play games or chat. The data on this indicator showed that it was categorized as very good. The next indicator is informing the next topic for students. This indicator looks simple but it is important; so, informing the topic for next week reminds the students to be ready for the next material in the next meeting. Most of the teachers cannot do this indicator; while in micro-teaching, teaching subjects emphasize that teachers need to inform the next topic for students. The data showed that this indicator is categorized as good. The last indicator of closing the lesson is motivation. Motivation can be done in the beginning of the class or at the end of the class. Motivation is important for students to improve their spirit and performance in studying English. An example of motivation found in the data; studying English is fun, if you speak English, you can go abroad. This example gives a positive spirit for students to study English. Isnaniah & Imamuddin (2022), Fitriyah, et. al (2024) reported on their research about opening and closing the lesson in microteaching class that the students' performance on both opening and closing the lesson skill was categorized as very good; thus; the research findings are slightly similar.

Conclusion

Opening and closing the lesson is a basic teaching skill that every teacher candidate must require. To have this skill; every teacher candidate needs a lot of practice in the Micro Teaching subject. The analyses of this research focused on the teacher candidates' performance in opening and closing the lesson skill in Micro teaching subject. The findings of previous studies support this current finding as Isnaniah & Imamuddin (2022), Fitriyah, et. al (2024) reported the students' performance in opening and closing the lesson was very good. The findings of the research concluded that the teacher candidates were

able to practice the opening and closing the lesson. The indicators on opening the lesson reported that greeting and asking the students' condition was very good thus this is normal thing to do in classroom activities. The checking of the students' attendance was a very good performance in teaching practice. The prayer was also categorized as very good performance. The indicator of attracting the students' attention was categorized as good performance. Then introducing the learning objectives was also categorized as good performance. The teacher candidate used a probing question which was good. While the teacher candidates introduced the topic, it was categorized as very good performance. While the indicators on closing the lesson reported that the teacher candidates can review the material therefore it was categorized as very good performance. The indicator of giving feedback was categorized good while giving homework/tasks was very good. The teacher candidates were informed the next topic was categorized as good and motivated the students with good performance. Teacher candidates need to have a lot of training in basic teaching skills; especially in opening and closing skills.

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