| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Rethinking of the Knowledge Base for Teaching through Duoethnography Reflective Inquiry

Rizki Fitriyana Yatiman[1] ✉ **Reza Abdulillah[2], Naufal Nur Hilmy[3] and Setia Budiyanti[4]**
[1234]*Dept. of English Education, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati (UGJ), Cirebon, Indonesia*
Corresponding Author: Rizki Fitriyana Yatiman, **E-mail**: rahasiarizki26@gmail.com

| **ABSTRACT**

This article explores our formation, transformation, and scrutiny into our teaching practice using a duoethnography reflective inquiry. The purpose of the duoethnographic inquiry was to reexamine our understanding of the knowledge base for language teaching. The context of our reflective autoethnography inquiry was the school teaching practicum that we experienced at the beginning of the seventh semester of our teacher education program. Throughout the teaching practicum program, we engaged in four duoethnographic reflective dialogues facilitated by our faculty advisors to share stories from our teaching practices. The objective of the dialogues was to reflect on our teaching experience and reexamine our understanding of "what counts as knowledge for language teaching." The analysis of our duoethnographic reflective dialogues revealed that we relied more on a) the knowledge-in-person and in-place, and b) knowledge for teaching as the primary base for our teaching than those of c) disciplinary knowledge and d) knowledge of pedagogy. Below, we outline the segments of conversation that reflected how we relied on our practices on a) the knowledge-in-person and in-place and b) knowledge for teaching.

1. Introduction

Learning to teach is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become." (Britzman, 2003, p. 31). This article explores our formation, transformation, and scrutiny into our teaching practice using a duoethnography reflective inquiry. The purpose of the duoethnographic inquiry was to reexamine our understanding of the knowledge base for language teaching. The context of our reflective autoethnography inquiry was the school teaching practicum that we experienced at the beginning of the seventh semester of our teacher education program. Throughout the teaching practicum program, we engaged in four duoethnographic reflective dialogues facilitated by our faculty advisors to share stories from our teaching practices. The objective of the dialogues was to reflect on our teaching experience and reexamine our understanding of "what counts as knowledge for language teaching?" especially in the context of English as a Second Language (EFL) teaching and learning.

2. Literature Review

Previous studies informed our duoethnography reflective inquiry about the critical benefits of teaching practicum and reflection in teaching practicum for preservice teachers' personal and professional development. One of the benefits of school teaching practicum that has been primarily acknowledged by literature is that the practicum could foster theory and practice reflection. Researchers have identified that teaching practicum has provided preservice teachers with an environment to integrate and implement theoretical knowledge they learned in college in actual realities they found in school classrooms (Allen, 2011; Korthagen, 2010). However, integrating and actuating theoretical knowledge into practical application in teaching practicum is not an easy

endeavor; it requires a dialectical process that transforms both the theoretical knowledge and the practical application (Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2007; Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003). Therefore, preservice teachers need to be facilitated and mediated to reflect on their practices in integrating their theoretical knowledge into their teaching practicum.

Reflection has become a remarkable characteristic of a decent school teaching practicum program. Researchers have used various reflection tools to facilitate preservice teachers to make the most benefit from the reflection they made, including videos, portfolios, journals, blogs, and person-to-person conversations (Gelfuso & Dennis, 2014). However, many studies have also identified that, in reality, the tools and strategies teacher educators developed are seldom sufficient to foster reflection that includes a more profound analysis of preservice teachers' learning process (Mansvelder-Longayroux, Beijaard & Verloop, 2007; Gelfuso & Dennis, 2014; Larrivee, 2008; Chamoso and Cáceres (2009). Therefore, these researchers advocated for teacher educators to take pedagogical intervention to develop preservice teachers' reflection skills and help them integrate the theoretical knowledge they learned from college into their own practice in teaching.

Our duoethnography was meant to provide an example of providing pedagogical intervention and a platform for preservice teachers to develop their reflective skills. In our duoethnography, we engaged in reflective dialogues to reflect on the knowledge base we used in teaching practicum. Guided by the question, "What counts as a knowledge base for EFL teaching?" we reexamine our efforts in integrating theoretical knowledge and practical application of language teaching. Although our inquiry is context-bounded to our learning experience and teaching practices, we expect to contribute to scholarly conversation about developing preservice teachers' reflective skills by offering an innovative duoethnography method as a reflection mediation tool.

3. Methodology
In our reflective inquiry, we adopted a duoethnography approach (Sawer and Norris, 2013) to reexamine the knowledge base for teaching that we used in our teaching practicum. Duoethnography is a qualitative research approach where two or more researchers engage in dialogues to examine their lived experiences on a common phenomenon (Norris, 2008; Norris & Sawyer, 2012). Furthermore, in a duoethnography study, researchers play dual roles as researchers and participants. The lived experiences we examined in our duoethnography study were our teaching practices in the school teaching practicum program. We used duoethnographic dialogues to juxtapose our individual life histories (Lawrence and Lowe, 2020) in teaching to come to a new understanding of what counts as knowledge for teaching. We decided to approach our inquiry using duoethnography because the nature of our inquiry is joint reflective (Rose and Montakantiwong, 2018). In this inquiry, we engaged in reflective dialogues to share stories from our teaching practicum and make reflections on the experience. Another reason why we chose duoethnography was that the research approach provided us with a relatively safe environment to engage in dialogues where we must examine our own worldview of teaching collaboratively. The polyvocal and dialogic process of duoethnography (Norris & Sawyer, 2016) has provided a trusting platform for us to share our experiences and voices about the knowledge base for our teaching practices and fostered collaborative co-constructions of meaning about what counts as knowledge for teaching.

Moreover, we were intrigued by the potential power and value of duoethnography as an emerging research method in teacher education. Researchers have indicated that duoethnography is an acceptable research approach in education. Many educational researchers have used duoethnography to examine various issues such as teacher identity and agency (Banegas and Gerlach, 2021), native speakerism (Lowe & Kisckowiak, 2016), English as an international language (Rose & Montikantiwong, 2018), and native-speakerism and 'hidden curricula' in English teaching (Lowe & Lawrence, 2018).

3.1 Data collection: the duoethnographic reflective dialogues
Starfield (2020) explained that researchers' personal experience is the primary data to examine in an autoethnography study. In our duoethnography study, our lived experience in teaching in the school teaching practicum program was combined and shared through dialogues through which we constructed, deconstructed, and reflected as the dialogues unfolded. We focused our duoethnographic inquiry on our teaching practicum experiences to reexamine our understanding of what counts as knowledge in teaching. Throughout the teaching practicum programs, which lasted for about four months, we engaged in four duoethnographic dialogic reflections, guided by a question about what counts as knowledge for teaching. Our faculty advisors facilitated the dialogic reflections, who acted as critical friends (Costa & Kallick, 1993) who asked provocative questions, provided another lens through which to look at the issues we presented in our conversations, and offered critiques to our teaching practicum in supportive ways.

3.2 Data analysis: knowledge generation framework as the analytical lens
To identify what knowledge base we used in our teaching practicum, we approached our duoethnographic reflective dialogues using the framework of knowledge generations developed by Freeman et al. (2019), who defines knowledge generations as 'patterns in how ideas about thinking and about knowledge in language teaching have been understood' (p. 115). According to the framework, knowledge about language teaching can be categorized into the following generations:

1) *Disciplinary knowledge*: knowledge 'centered its focus around 'the what' of teaching knowledge' Freeman (2018; 2019). The knowledge focuses on what to teach in language teaching and learning.

2) *Knowledge of pedagogy*: Freeman et al. (2019) elaborates that this knowledge focuses on 'the how' of language teaching and learning – how is the content of language teaching 'best' taught? This is the knowledge of methods and methodology of language teaching and learning.

3) *Knowledge-in-person and in-place:* this is the knowledge about how purpose and circumstance—why language is being taught—shape teaching (knowledge-for-teaching). (Freeman et al., 2019). This knowledge of students, school environment, and teacher's personal and professional identity.

4) *Knowledge-for-teaching*: this is subject-matter knowledge that comprises common content knowledge (e.g., teacher command of the English language) and specialized content knowledge (language awareness and applied linguistics), and pedagogical knowledge that is subdivided into knowledge of second language acquisition, language teaching methods, and curriculum, materials, and assessment (Freeman et al., 2019).

We used this knowledge generation framework as the analytical lens through which we examined and made sense of the knowledge base we used in our teaching practices throughout the school teaching practicum program.

We analyzed our data using Braun & Clark's (2023) thematic analysis. We translated every audio-recorded discussion dataset using this method before beginning the analysis. We looked through the datasets individually and made the first codes. Our analysis focused on identifying segments from the conversations that demonstrated how the teaching practices have led us to deconstruct and reconstruct our understanding of the knowledge base for teaching. Then, we got together again to share our initial codes and generate possible and final themes for our study.

4. Results and Discussion

This section will present segments of our duoethnographic reflective dialogues and share stories from our teaching practicum that represent the knowledge base we used in our teaching. We elaborated our dialogues and categorized them into the knowledge bases for teaching identified by Freeman (2018; 2019). The analysis of our duoethnographic reflective dialogues revealed that we relied more on a) the knowledge-in-person and in-place and b) knowledge for teaching as the primary base for our teaching than those of c) disciplinary knowledge and d) knowledge of pedagogy. Below, we outline the segments of conversation that reflected how we relied on our practices on a) the knowledge-in-person and in-place and b) knowledge for teaching. However, for the article's brevity, we will only present the concise segments that correspond to our findings.

4.1 Knowledge in-person and in-place

Our duoethnographic reflective dialogues have focused on sharing stories about better knowing our students and the school learning environment. The following dialogue segment represents one of the many dialogue sessions where we shared our stories dealing with students and school contexts.

Rizki : I teach six classes. I focus on how we design learning to be fun, and it has also become one of our ways of knowing the needs of students. Because they are high school students and, of course, have various learning needs, backgrounds, and previous learning experiences. So, what concerns me the most is how I understand who my students are. How do they learn? Their initial knowledge about the teaching material I will convey, and so on. One way for Rizki to find out what students need may be from the concept of teaching or teaching materials that must be assisted by using media or games that may be interspersed with learning.

Faculty : How do you know and recognize your students?

Rizki : The most straightforward way is to discuss with them. I also use other data sources to identify them, such as previous learning outcomes, report card scores, and discussions with teachers who have taught them.

Faculty : How do you use data about their students in developing lesson plans?

Rizki : I use these data to determine the type of teaching materials, learning activities, and assessment strategies I will use.

Faculty : What about you, Reza, and Naufal? What is the experience like in the classroom?

Reza : It is a little different, sir because I teach 7th graders. The problem is that this 7th-grade student is transitioning from elementary to junior high school. I also do the same thing with Rizki: to try to get to know them first, their experience of learning English, what they like, and so on. I use many ways to understand them, as Rizki did. I use data about my students to develop a lesson plan.

Faculty : Does the learning plan really fit your students?

Reza : Not automated. One thing I understand is that the process of understanding students cannot be done once. However, we must continue to do it throughout the semester because many things affect them.

Faculty : Interesting; what about Naufal?

Naufal   : I am the same as Reza, teaching grade 7. From the beginning, I came in and tried to figure out what my students were like. I try to integrate technology into learning, hoping they are interested in my subjects. I use Padlet.

Faculty   : Were they interested in the class?

Naufal   : It looks pretty attractive.

The dialogue segment above is one of the many dialogue sessions where we share our efforts to know our students better. In the dialogues, we elaborated that students' knowledge was the primary knowledge base we needed to prepare before designing instructional activities that fit into our students' learning contexts. In these dialogues, we reexamined our efforts to integrate theoretical knowledge into our practice (Allen, 2011; Korthagen, 2010). However, as many researchers have identified (Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2007; Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003), connecting theory to practice was challenging. To our surprise, as we prepared theoretical knowledge related to the teaching method we would implement in our teaching, we realized that our students' knowledge and their learning contexts were more important than knowledge about teaching methods.

4.2 Knowledge for teaching

Another knowledge base we primarily relied upon in our teaching is teaching-related knowledge. After we had understood our students, the next challenge we experienced was designing instructions that fit into our students' learning contexts. Below is one of the segments where we shared and reflected on our teaching practice, which focused on designing instructional activities based on our students' learning contexts.

Reza   : Maybe it is more about approaching the students first. The students have that kind of character. Some like to use Digicom, and some are games. So, from there, we know what designing engaging learning is like. The question that most often comes to mind is after I know what my students are like? What difficulties do they face? What is their initial knowledge of the material taught? Then, how do I design learning in accordance with the data and information? For example, I use PadLet because my students love technology.

Faculty : I think you have done the right thing. And what you do is an effort so that learning can be student-centered.

Rizki   : Me too, sir. I use Canva for learning because after trying to understand my students, I find learning with hands-on activities, visuals, and involving hands-on activities is more suitable for my students. That is why I use Canva in my learning. In addition, the assessment I did was also the same, adjusting to the various learning media I made.

Faculty : With Canva, students can have hands-on and hands-on experience, not just theory. In addition, they can work together and hone their creativity.

Naufal : My experience is also like that when teaching. I adapt teaching methods, teaching materials, evaluations, and so on to the learning context of my students. However, I found that my students need to be motivated more. Therefore, I provide a reward system to my students who can perform in class. Of course, the rewards given are adjusted to my abilities, and I also remain focused on providing meaningful learning for students.

The dialogue segment above represents our efforts in integrating our knowledge base of students' learning contexts into the instructional activities we carried out in the class (Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2007; Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003). Our duoethnographic dialogues primarily focused on sharing our teaching practices, which include a combination of common content knowledge (e.g., teacher command of the English language) and specialized content knowledge (language awareness and applied linguistics), and pedagogical knowledge that is subdivided into knowledge of second language acquisition, language teaching methods, and curriculum, materials, and assessment (Freeman, 2019).

5. Conclusion and implications

Based on our duo of ethnographic reflective dialogues, we relied primarily on students' knowledge, learning contexts, and their knowledge of pedagogy. We found that knowledge of students and their learning contexts is critical and foundational as it was the base upon which instructional activities relied. Teachers must know their students and the learning context before designing instructional activities (knowledge for teaching). This is the first step in implementing student-centered instructions. However, our experience did not nullify the importance of knowledge of pedagogy and disciplinary knowledge. We argued that the knowledge base we use in teaching depends heavily on the context in which the instructional activities take place. In a classroom with lower motivation and interest in English, like in our teaching context, for example, the knowledge of students and their learning context is more important than disciplinary knowledge and knowledge of pedagogy.

Our duoethnographic inquiry has several implications for English teaching and learning and teacher education. *First*, teachers must design ways to know their students before deciding what instructional activities they would carry in the class. By focusing on students' learning context, the instructional activities are expected to be student-centered. *Second*, for teacher education programs, it is critical to equip preservice teachers with knowledge and skill in analyzing students' and their learning context to help them design student-centered instructional activities. And *third*, for future research, our duoethnographic has only focused on a big issue in student-centered instruction. Therefore, future studies must examine a more focused practical issue in EFL teaching and learning that would illuminate the field and promote improvement in teaching practices.

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