EFL Teachers' Identity in Self-Directed Learning: A Work-from-Home Phenomenology

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Abstract

Major potential effects of abrupt changes in educational settings particularly for education stakeholders such as teachers have been somewhat interesting to examine. This study examines how teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in different schooling levels acclimatize their experiences due to the unanticipated Covid-19 outbreak, which forced them to pursue Online Distance Learning (ODL). Employing a phenomenological approach, eight teachers from various educational and psychometric backgrounds in three different provinces in Indonesia shared their experiences in coping with the changes. Before engaging in two semi-structured interviews, they were invited to complete an e-reflection to share their feelings, concerns, difficulties, and challenges. To get to the core of their experience, the data were scrutinized following an interpretive phenomenological analysis which includes an early focus on the lines of inquiry, central concerns and important themes, identification of shared meanings, final interpretations, and the dissemination of the interpretations. The findings demonstrated that the changes created an ambivalent experience of being challenged and bored, prompting teachers to reflect on their existing practice and respond appropriately by combining empathy, new roles, and technology paramount through their

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self-directed learning (SDL). Further implications on teacher agency and identity are discussed to shed light on the reshaping of teacher identities due to ODL and SDL.

Keywords: Covid-19, role shifts, self-directed learning, teachers.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus pandemic has undesirably affected most walks of life all over the world (WHO, 2020). People's patterns of behaviour change in almost all fields to ensure health and survival in response to the spread of the virus. Counteractions to limit the spread of the outbreak have been taken by authorities, communities, and individuals. Even many predictions are made about how people are going to live after the plague (Foreign Policy, 2020). Governments also attempt to consolidate their systems to ensure that patterns develop during the pandemic in each sector, including education.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported that educational institutions, at all levels from kindergartens to universities, have been closed gradually to minimize the spread of the virus (OECD, 2020). UNESCO (2020) estimates that approximately 1.5 billion students and 63 million teachers have stayed away from their traditional face-to-face education setting and begun to implement distance education for safety reasons. The transition from classical classrooms to distance and online learning can be a new experience for teachers at all levels and may be discerned differently depending on their previous individual beliefs, professional practices, and institutional contexts. However, with the sudden occurrence of the pandemic, limited facilities, and skills possessed by involved parties, how they make meaning of their experience and react to the condition is interesting to understand.

Research in ODL has, so far, focused on the use of massive open online course platforms, the discourse of synchronous and asynchronous settings, students' response and self-regulation, and the recent use of social media (Park & Shea, 2020). However, with the pandemic condition, Ploj-Virtič et al. (2021) argue that the current models belong to forced ODL that is different from Cheawjindakarn et al.'s (2012) conception of EDL given the former's enforced nature. As a result, little is known on how teachers make sense of what they have to face in the forced ODL. Results are also still mixed on how they select and make a decision with an array of available options and limitations which the teachers have to cope with the new mode and roles in teaching.

In response to the dearth of knowledge in this area, this study seeks to understand how EFL teachers perceive their pedagogical knowledge and practice. Teachers become the focus under this present study because they understand the accounts better and eventually these teachers can make a more updated assessment about their future professional practices and nature-institution-discourse-affinity identities (Gee, 2000).

Based on Maxwell's (2005) view, the purpose of qualitative research is to elaborate exactly what a study is about and to guide the process of inquiry. Therefore, this article seeks to understand the crisis-driven instructional undertakings in three regions in Indonesia, namely Yogyakarta, Central Java, and Lampung, through the following questions:

1. What does it mean to change practice from face-to-face to Online Distance Learning (ODL) for English language teachers in the era of the Covid-19 health crisis that forces them to work from home?
2. What roles do these English language teachers play in the newly formed interaction during ODL?
3. How do they do to cope with the sudden change of pedagogical practice to maximize the students' learning?

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Online Learning

As previously stated, UNESCO (2020) estimates that more than 50 million teachers have abstained from their conventional teaching setting and begun to employ distance education for safety reasons. The shift from traditional classrooms to remote and online learning can be a novel experience for teachers at all levels, and it may be seen differently depending on their past personal views, professional practices, and institutional contexts. They, in this abrupt situation, therefore, should evince the adaptability, collegiality, and creativity of skilled professionals who are responsible for students' learning within their institutional context (Selwyn, 2020).

Instructional design and activities in the cyberspace classroom require moving beyond an old fashion of teaching into newer and more up-to-date practices. These involve much more than merely taking old models of pedagogy and shifting them to a more sophisticated mode. In an Online Distance Learning (ODL) setting, Arabasz and Bake (2003, p. 2) defined ODL as instructions occurring online without requirements for traditional face-to-face meetings between teachers and students. It is a combination of courses delivered through a Learning Management System (LMS) or other mediating tools that are facilitated by an instructor who keeps in touch with students through the online conferencing system or their modes of communication (Cheawjindakarn et al., 2012). They also further suggest five success factors to enhance the effectiveness of an ODL system, namely institutional support, learning environment, instructional design, services support, and course evaluation. These practices are believed to considerably assist the growth of an online learning community, a formidable instrument for improving the learning experience.

Prior to conducting an online course, Cuellar (2002) suggests that individual reflection and understanding of learning philosophies need to be considered. Online design and activities require certain approaches in introducing content, working with learners, and assessing students' achievement. The strategies used by the teachers may be frequently determined by a personal philosophical belief about teaching and learning, as well as institutional philosophy and traditions though the change was so sudden and massive that it forced teachers to rethink and reposition their pedagogical beliefs and practices. Moreover, when considering the Vygotskian sociocultural theory framework, Ortega (2014) characterizes foreign language learning as traditional social-interaction practice, where teacher-students interactions become important but now transformed into ODL.

Li et al. (2020), through their mental and behavioural survey in China, reveal that the public's emotional and behavioural problems in the pre- and post-pandemic of

the COVID-19 do not shift a lot. They have limited involvement in social events because social distancing protocol has kept people not to be close physically to one another. All these conditions have forced educational institutions at all levels to close their campuses and buildings and teachers have to teach from home as most students also stay at home with their parents and families.

2.2 Teachers Working from Home

When students and teachers are all home, they can be connected through the Internet and other communication tools, and according to Doucet et al. (2020), this blight communication is key during school closures. Although the country has an internet penetration rate of only 53.7 percent, lower than many countries in the Asia Pacific, Indonesia is one of the countries with the highest number of internet users in the world; as of December 2017, more than 143 million out of the country's total population of over 260 million were active internet consumers (Moore, 2019).

Boosting evidence from business and economic fields shows that home working could lead to a 13% performance increase, of which about 9% was a result of more minutes per shift (fewer breaks and sick days) and 4% due to a calmer working atmosphere (Bloom et al., 2015). The same study also reports that home workers also improved work satisfaction and experienced less turnover, although their promotion rate conditional on performance dropped. Long before that, Shamir and Salomon (1985) argue that work-from-home (hereafter, WFH) may lead to improvement in the quality of working life only under certain conditions such as sex, childcare responsibilities, type of family, and home conditions. For others, a combination of work-at-home advantages with working outside would provide more benefits. Thus, homeworking cannot be the sole panacea for modern working life (Crosbie & Moore, 2004) even for the teaching profession that often requires teachers to meet face to face with students for more practical activities.

Generally, in more developed and higher education settings like Sweden colleges, Söderström et al. (2012) demonstrate that the transition to online courses has benefited more students as they allow the development of pedagogical productivity. The online system has also contributed to better working conditions for teachers. Thus, it is interesting to see whether such a transition phenomenon works in the same fashion in a developing country setting like Indonesia.

A considerable shift to distance and online teaching of languages around the world has recurred in the last two decades (White, 2007). Meanwhile, Hall and Knox (2009) pinpoint the development in language teacher education by online and distance learning. These studies have shown that although research in distance and online language learning has increased, there has been far less research devoted to language teachers through this medium. Results are also still unclear on how the transition has affected teachers' professional life and mental well-being, particularly in the event of a health crisis causing sudden changes. With this dearth of information on how teachers respond and manage their pedagogies in such a situation, it is, thus, worth investigating a new phenomenon of teaching from distance experienced by Indonesian teachers of English as a foreign language.

Johnson and Golombek (2002, p. 6-7) wrote, "inquiry into experience enables teachers to act with foresight. It gives them increased control over their thoughts and actions, grants them meaningfully deepened and enriched experiences, and enables

them to be more thoughtful and mindful of their work". Such effort according to Pulvermacher and Lefstein (2016, p. 267) is "a significant way of constructing knowledge about instructional practice and becoming mindful of one's experience". This kind of knowledge is assembled and reflected upon and awareness for actions of that knowledge is acquired.

3. METHODS

The study reported here examined how language teachers have responded to the challenges and developed their practice in the transition from classroom settings to Online Distance Learning (ODL). It concentrated mainly on the teacher's sense-making on their current and shifting pedagogical practices. It is interesting to know how through this crisis they had been required to make considerable changes in the way they were teaching English. The selected phenomenological approach offered teacher participants a way of reflecting on how they handled and reacted to the unexpected changes.

This study employed a phenomenological approach to understanding the experience of EFL teachers in Indonesia who faced difficult times due to the Covid-19 pandemic and had to teach from home. Phenomenology is the study of human experience through the way events present themselves and are perceived by actors (Sokolowski, 2000). As research of events experienced from the first-person point of view, the current study poses questions that grow out of intense interest in the experience of EFL teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic forcing them to teach from home. This curiosity inspired the search of what and how these professional practitioners apprehend their experience to their professional identities, roles, and actions.

Selection criteria were developed to ensure that homogeneous sample members were obtained to reveal what this WFH experience means to this group of English teachers as suggested by Patton (2002). General considerations include age, gender, and school type, and location, but the participants essentially experienced the WFH phenomenon. Charmaz (2012) argues that the meanings of the phenomenon were similar or shared, regardless of demographics or other descriptors. Thus, it is interesting to examine the different participants' views.

3.1 Location and Participants

This study was conducted from Yogyakarta special region, Indonesia, by involving eight EFL teachers working in different school levels from elementary, junior, senior, and vocational high schools in its municipality, Bantul, and Kulon Progo, Central Java (Magelang), and Lampung. Besides being volunteer participants, they were also personally interested in sharing their experiences, willing to participate in semi-structured interviews, and giving the investigator the right to tape-record the interview and report the results in academic publications. The sample size, although small (Vasileiou et al., 2018), is deemed sufficient to reach evidentiary adequacy in terms of adequate amounts of evidence, variety in kinds of evidence, and interpretive status of evidence (Erickson, 1986).

Table 1. Research participants.

No.	Participant code	Age	Gender	Schooling level	Residence
1.	P1	44	Female	Elementary school	Yogyakarta
2.	P2	53	Female	High school	Bantul
3.	P3	27	Male	Elementary school	Yogyakarta
4.	P4	35	Male	Vocational school	Kulon Progo
5.	P5	45	Female	Junior school	Lampung
6.	P6	28	Female	High school	Bantul
7.	P7	46	Male	Junior school	Magelang
8.	P8	42	Female	Vocational school	Bantul

3.2   Instruments

To collect the data, an e-reflection form was distributed to around forty teachers during a workshop program on teacher pedagogical change from traditional to ODL. This form contained 10 questions to scrutinize their initial perceptions, attitude, and experience in conducting the forced ODL. The results were coded and sorted to construct further interview items for 8 selected participants. Then, an interview guideline consisting of 12 items was developed based on emergent themes in the previous stage. All semi-structured interviews with these teachers were conducted online due to the pandemic situation. Additionally, the participants were requested to collect their lesson plans and a sample of their tasks and communication with the students to corroborate their answers in the previous two collection instruments.

3.3   Data Collections

After the informed consent forms were returned by the participants for ethical and protective purposes, an online reflection form was delivered via an e-messaging platform to gain their initial judgment on the WFH phenomenon. Further interviews and online communication were conducted simultaneously with the ongoing recruitment process. Vandermause and Fleming (2011, p. 375) believe that meaning can emerge as participants share their experiences, articulate their perspectives, and respond to the researcher questions that generate interpretation and add to existing knowledge. Hence, how the interview process is conducted with the participants is vital in generating rich data. Therefore, the interview processes were conducted at least twice for each participant with additional online communication via e-messages and e-mails.
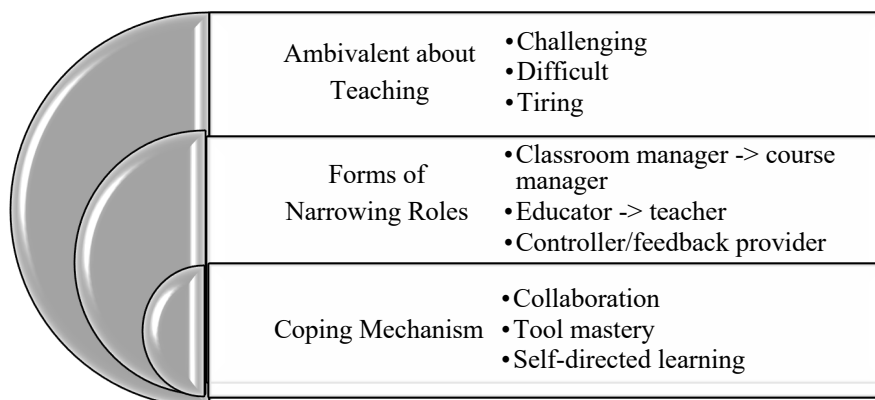
3.4   Data Analysis

This study employed Crist and Tanner's (2003) five steps in conducting phenomenological analysis. The first step was a critical evaluation of the online reflection and interview transcripts. Any missing or unclear parts were marked thematically and further exploration was discussed. The next step was identifying key concerns and significant themes or paradigmatically clustering meanings emerging for certain participants based on the research questions. As the participants' key concerns became clear, the analysis moved to any shared meanings in the third stage. Hermeneutic interpretive phenomenology does not require investigators to bracket their own assumptions or preconceptions during this process (Johnson, 2010; Lowes

& Prowse, 2001). In this study, the research stages allowed the implication of the existing conditions, and the shared meanings were positioned in their relevant context accordingly, for example, what occurred in the elementary school setting could be different from the other school settings. In the following stage, the summarized interpretation was linked between meanings discovered within and across accounts to find relational patterns, and finally, a conclusive interpretation was developed.

To increase the trustworthiness of the process and result, this study followed Yardley's (2000) four comprehensive principles for judging the value of qualitative research sensitivity to the context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. First, sensitivity to the context was developed through building a good rapport with the participants in the forms of flexible scheduling, internet connection aid, and empathy with their difficulties. Commitment and rigor were then conducted through repeatedly reading and listening to what the participants expressed in the interview recordings and transcripts during the analysis stage. Third, all transcripts were returned to the participants for member checks to ensure transparency and coherence. Finally, writing and publication are expected to increase the impact and importance of what the participants experienced and share to a wider audience.

4. RESULTS

After reading and re-reading the transcriptions and listening to the interview recordings, several themes were identified, and these could form an almost uniform pattern at four different levels and types of schools. The first is that teaching from home during the Covid-19 health crisis was considered an ambivalent experience in which there was an impression of burdensome and boredom but stirring from the English teacher participants. Words such as 'challenging', 'difficult', 'severe', and 'mixed' appeared repetitively in e-reflection and interviews with each participant in the following stage. All these lead to the second finding of the experienced role shifts that they thought were different and demanding due to the nature of the newly formed learning interactions. Finally, this section elaborates what efforts were selected by the participants to address new demands and roles in the new forms of interaction and eventually to facilitate the learning process. Based on the thematically analysed data, the findings of this study can be summarized as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Summary of the findings.

4.1   Mixed Feelings

Our analysis shows that participating teachers shared the brink of burdening, yet challenging feelings due to the ongoing pandemic that has forced them to teach from distance. Under such conditions, they admitted the shift from face-to-face teaching to Online Distance Learning (ODL) was twofold. On one hand, the experience was thought-provoking in the way that they must adapt to the new mode of technology-assisted pedagogy and thus adopt a different approach from the previous condition. On the other hand, ODL had created a new responsibility in the forms of preparation, learning feedback provision, and assessment which they needed to adjust. In the first interview, for example, P1 complained (D is for Data):

D1   "Oh, I never expected that giving feedback and marking my students' works is so tedious. It really takes time. I must face my laptop all day". (P1)

P1 admitted missing her students and interacting with them at school like what happened before the plague. This challenging but tiring experience also required the research participants to be able to adapt to new conditions and it required mastery of the sophisticated classroom management with the help of information technology to create attractive and competitive learning designs, activities, and assignments. These are important because research shows that student involvement in the form of response and participation in technology-mediated classes is important in the efforts to improve their learning (Henrie et al., 2015). Otherwise, according to them, the students' responses tend to be minimalist and the learning process would not be maximized.

As most of their students come from low to middle socioeconomic backgrounds, P7 reported setbacks in terms of student attendance and engagement in the ODL activities since the introduction of WFH.

D2   "Some of my students missed the class; others turned off their camera and some even did not submit their work online". (P7)

P8, meanwhile, revealed that fewer and fewer students were actively involved in her English online class interaction.

D3   "The longer this ODL is, the more and more students are absent from my class, perhaps their phones run out of the credit". (P8)

P8 tried to understand the difficult condition. A similar phenomenon was also felt by P6 who taught in a rural high school. In response to such situations, their schools then allowed some students with no internet access to pick up and submit their work offline at school. This dual policy was an effort to maintain education quality and learning access for all students.

The dilemmatic situation has taught these participants to be wiser and more assertive in reflecting on their interactions with students. On one hand, they wanted to get closer and be a real teacher as in the pre-pandemic practices although the distance and access prevented them from doing so. On the other hand, they felt sad as most of the students could not afford to let their cameras on all the time during their online meetings due to the limited internet access. Thus, Brenner (1997) claims that distance education is not for all students, but only for those who are motivated, and self-

regulated can be justified only when all individuals share the same access. In the end, these teachers admitted the gap and the need to understand the circumstantial changes more carefully by considering equality for all as the economic impacts of the pandemic on their students' parents inevitably influence their new forms of interaction and roles in pedagogical practices.

4.2 Narrowing Roles

All participants also considered that their role in teaching was significantly reduced due to the absence of face-to-face meetings. P8 explained that she could no longer be a 'language model' for her students so that she felt the need to provide more 'language exposure' to them. Almost all participants also felt lost the psychological touch which they used to do when motivating students directly in conventional classes. This is in line with Turner's (2001) statement which places the teacher's role as a series of tasks or activities that may be contradictory. Role theory also believes that expectations for roles can differ in terms of time, situation, and individual. The Covid-19 crisis has forced English teachers to learn, decide, and adjust to new roles that might be lost, diminished, emerged, or even enlarged.

At the elementary school level, P1 and P3 felt that their role as educators (involving teaching and disciplinary control) was being taken over by parents so that they realized the need to maintain good communication with parents. An almost similar voice was also heard from P5 who felt that she needed parental assistance to motivate and check her students' learning. Meanwhile, in the higher levels (high schools), students are thought of being less dependent on their parents as stated by P2 in D4 and P7 in D5.

D4 "I can no longer remind small things to discipline them (students) like carrying a dictionary or even just tightening their shoelaces". (P2)

D5 "Now I can only give materials and assignments, but another responsibility as an educator is missing". (P7)

Such statements sound relevant to what McLoughlin and Oliver (1999, p. 39) noted on teacher roles in face-to-face learning, namely manager, expert, disciplinarian, controller, distributor of information, goal setter, and timekeeper. However, in an online setting, these roles shift to resource, co-participant, scaffolder, co-learner, moderator, facilitator, coach, monitor, and advisor. Such shift according to Smith and Ragan (1999, p. 125) is due to several factors involving learners' characteristics, types of learning tasks, and contexts in which learning occurs. In the present study, these influences also featured in the way teachers viewed their students, the specific nature of English as a foreign language, and the school setting (levels/grades) where each participant taught.

4.3 Coping Mechanism

Following the challenges of crisis conditions and shifts in their roles in the new mode of teaching, the research participants stated that their level of technological mastery also played a significant role in their efforts to adjust to the existing changes. Using metaphors in elaborating the teacher's role in the use of technology, Goos et al. (2003) describe the relationship of the two, such as master, servant, partner, and

extension of self. Some teachers had been able to make technology a partner in working from home, while others still made technology their master. Most of the participants were quite surprised by the changes that forced them to learn new tools, methods, and roles related to instructional technology. Additionally, there were also problems related to the limitations of knowledge, skills, and experience, school culture, connectivity, and facilities owned by the schools and students. This complexity made the participants make sense of their own problems, experiences, and limitations to meet the demand of distance learning. Thus, their decisions to adapt to the new teaching vary depending on their own working contexts.

Besides, the demand for teacher adaptation in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in dealing with sudden changes had inevitably forced the participants to make choices for a rational action to facilitate the learning process. In the psychology literature, the term 'coping mechanism' is often used to explain how one deals with a difficult situation, for instance how teacher participants attempted to help their students understand the lesson despite the limited facilities and skills.

D6 "…make video content according to basic competencies mandated in the curriculum". (P8)
D7 "…still doubtful because she still needed to edit the learning media that she developed with the help of her eldest son". (P5)

P5 and P8 said that they began to develop video content based on the basic competencies required in the curriculum. If P8 (in D6) dared to upload it to YouTube, P5 (in D7) was still hesitant since she needed to finish editing the instructional materials she had created with the help of her eldest son. P8 chose the platform by considering its popularity, and cellular operators often have free programs to access uploaded videos in it. These examples show how teachers make sense of all factors for the ease of teaching and learning by considering the problems, limitations, and difficulties in the new form of interaction.

Concerning the problems above, the participants were expected to ease the burden on students and parents while still being able to maintain their role as instructors. In this case, they applied a concept called by Graham and Parry (2007) as 'technology-assisted language learning' (TALL) which is now increasingly popular during the Covid-19 crisis because of the use of various technology applications by teachers in the context of effective English learning (Ko & Goranson, 2014). In Europe, van der Spoel et al. (2020) report that the teachers have the intention to employ technology more after the COVID19-pandemic, compared to how frequently they used it in their practices before the plague. The current study also confirms van der Spoel et al. (2020) that the participating educators have the intention to maintain technology integration in their teaching, even when the condition is back to normal as voiced by P2 and P5, respectively.

D8 "I will surely keep and improve what I've learned during these difficult years even if the pandemic has gone". (P2)
D9 "It's ridiculous to step back or go back to our previous practice. There are things we can learn from our instructional mode today". (P5)

These adaptations and choices of rational actions become the variables that distinguish one teacher from the others relevant to their background, context, and capability. In the context of technology integration, however, benefits will be assessed in relation to whether students' learning processes and outcomes can improve

(Howard, 2011). Almost all participants of this study explained that not all teaching colleagues adapted to the new working environment because this was a choice that had to be made based on different considerations. Some senior teachers who were almost retired, according to the participants, tended to be apathetic about the changes occurring, and most were reluctant to adjust to the new technical and psychological demands in this inevitable distance and abrupt learning format. Although not all behaved that way, similar voices were heard in interviews with the participating teachers from various schools. Such a phenomenon is called risk aversion in behavioural research. Holt and Laury (2002) define it as the inclination to avoid risks and to prefer secure options over less secure ones. Highly risk-averse individuals, like the senior teachers mentioned by the participants, prefer a secure option. However, it may offer a lower expected value. Uncertainty surrounding technology, teaching, and change are unlikely to be answered with any confidence except that teaching and technology will continue to change, so that uncertainty will continue to exist, and with change, risks will always follow. Answering this, the key to helping teachers effectively engage with technology and change, according to Howard (2013), is to understand what teachers are at stake if they do not adapt and what they consider risky when they have to learn a new way of teaching. In other words, it is necessary to revive the meaning of being a teacher in the era of uncertainty as what the participants are facing today. To do that, the following discussion disentangles each finding for a better understanding of the issue of teacher agency and identity.

5. DISCUSSION

This section scrutinizes the previous findings through connection with relevant theories and recent literature. First, this study has shown that the participating teachers embraced the principle of adjacent possibility when faced with dilemma and complexity due to the forced nature of the current ODL. The application, however, depended on individual preference, risk aversion, and subjective assessment. Their participation in community and practice also played a role in their sense-making and further selected actions. Eventually, the unexpected transition to ODL had led to teachers' self-directed learning (SDL) which was both shaped, and shaped by their nature, institution, discourse, and affinity identities.

5.1 The Impact of Unexpected Shifts

Palloff and Pratt (1999, p. 18) explain that as teachers begin the online courses, they need to shift roles to help the students by either keeping an eye on the debate and urging the students to look at the subject in a different light or by gently steering the conversation back on track. Thus, the ODL environment requires them to improve presentation skills, pedagogical capabilities, virtual administration procedures, and the capacity to engage learners through simulated interaction (Berge & Collins, 1995). In the newly experienced ODL, P2 and P7 highlighted a key social role including forming a learning community, assisting students to work in groups, and developing a culture for productive collaboration. Combined with the lack of facilities in the current research setting, Easton (2003) claims that the boundary of traditional and online instructor roles is not clear nor easier as the latter also needs to do managerial

responsibilities, from maintaining students' records to facilitating self-directed learning. Moreover, monitoring student progress in an ODL setting could be even more difficult and tedious than in the traditional classroom as enunciated by most of the participants.

The current study has demonstrated the loss of hands-on experiences and effects on workload, diminishing professional roles, traditional interactions with students, pedagogical practices, and EFL teachers' own educational philosophies. All of these seem to threaten teachers' future practices when not carefully dealt with as how the participants viewed some of their senior colleagues who were seen as risk-averse in terms of technology-related demands. Regarding identity process theory, Jaspal and Breakwell (2014) denote the importance of examining how individuals react when their identity is threatened so that a better understanding of the force to identity construction processes can be achieved. Clegg (2008) adds that identity could not be displayed only from a position or a state, but it comes through contestation. Threats to identity can happen when the identity process and assimilation of accommodation and evaluation do not comply with the existing norms. A threat may come internally from the condition where one tries to change position with the current environment, or social network, or when there are conflicts within the assimilation-accommodation-evaluation processes.

On the other hand, a threat may stem from external changes in the social conditions such as the pandemic which has compelled teachers to teach from home. This pandemic condition has become a kind of threat to teacher identity as it impedes the principled processes of their roles in the profession. Essentially, threats demand changes to either the substance or the value dimensions of teacher identity which would be incompatible with the ongoing changes in the profession. It is important to note from P7's and other participants' voices that such changes are inevitable and must be seen as a challenge to the individual's integrity as a teacher. Kauffman's (1995) adjacent possible theory could well explain the phenomenon. To survive, all living beings including teachers as autonomous agents have had to evolve gradually toward higher complexity. P5 and P8 have exemplified such principles through their efforts in creating videos for their students for asynchronous learning activities which, as specified in the words of Hodges et al. (2020), may be more realistic than synchronous ones due to their flexibility with deadlines. Elaborating the adjacent possible theory, Johnson (2010, p. 363) explains that at any moment the world is capable of extraordinary changes and only certain changes can happen. The 'adjacent possible' allows its boundaries to grow so that individuals can explore and select the possible ones next to them.

Participating teachers nevertheless demand relevant training to adapt to the new situation, given the pandemic's abrupt and unpredicted character. Even in a more advanced education setting, Moorhouse (2020) highlights the need for such training for teachers who are prepared to deliver courses online. The dilemmatic feeling voiced by the participants in the current study could probably be reduced if they had been given preparation training previously. Goos (2011) points out that the integration of technology-supported teaching in the teacher training program has a positive impact on teachers' employment of technology in their future instructional practice. The absence of preparation seems to have created the burden and difficulties experienced by the participants. If it is not carefully addressed, their agency and identity as a teacher

can be threatened and they may handle it by adapting to the new situation through different reasoned actions.

5.2   New Identity to Cope with New Normality

Identity process theory suggests that when the common condition does not comply with self-motivational values, identity is threatened, including teachers in this study. As a result, individuals will participate in strategies for coping with the threat (Covid-19 forces them to work from home). A coping strategy according to Breakwell (2015) is any form of activity as a purpose in the exclusion or adjustment of a threat to one's identity. The participants of this study also felt the risk to their professional identity as a teacher due to the unending spread of the virus. Therefore, they looked for activities that might eliminate the barriers or help them to cope with the demand for ODL. Such efforts may drastically influence how teachers engage with other social, professional, and official groups, eventually their identity.

Identity according to Leary and Tangney (2011) is a transdisciplinary notion drawn from several theories of psychology, social psychology, anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies. Eccles (2009, p. 78) theorizes identity that covers the subsequent queries as "Who am I? What am I about? What is my place in my social group? What is important to me? What do I value? What do I want to do with my life?" Meanwhile, Norton (2010) explains it as how an individual comprehends his or her association to the world, how it is constructed throughout time and space dimensions, and how s/he understands options for the forthcoming conditions. Further, Danielewicz (2001, p. 10) defines it as one's understanding of him/herself and how s/he views other people.

These well-established operationalizations of identity have added to the diverse perspectives in the area, while Gee's (2000) classification of identities outlines identities from different views (see Table 2). Gee introduces four types of identities that intertwine each other. First, Nature-identity (N-identity) is created by nature or is organically intrinsic without any actions for example twins and genders. Next, Institution-identity (I-identity) is constructed as one holds a societal role in a system, for example being a teacher or a student. Such identity is achieved by efforts and influenced by a set of authorities that determine the rights and responsibilities of any role in the system. Third, Discourse-identity (D-identity) relates to an individual feature for example being energetic or charismatic that is developed through encounters and interactions with others. Finally, Affinity-identity (A-identity) is gained through how one links or mingles oneself with a certain group or community (e.g., student association or teacher discussion groups). This identity is realized through a set of social or professional activities in which commitment, admission, and involvement become key features of such identity. These four views on identities provide a fine-grained explanation of what identity means by nature, institution, discourse, and community, as summarized in the following table.

Hence, identity is a set of self-constructs, naturally given and socially constructed, institutionally imposed, discursively recognized, and communally shared. These identities are conceptualized in combination as ways of being, doing, acting, behaving, interacting, verbalizing or languaging, thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, relating to others, and using tools/artifacts in certain ways. This idea, therefore, seems to agree with what Varghese et al. (2005) suggest that teacher identity is a completely

individual, psychological, yet social matter. The subjective feelings that how English language teachers as individuals perceive themselves and how they view other teachers considerably affect their choices on instructional practices, and at the same time, the supporting environment in the institutional settings also impinges on the formation, negotiation, and growth of teacher identity.

Table 2. Gee's (2000, p. 100) classification of identities.

No	Type	Process	Power	Source of power
1.	Nature-identity (N-identity)	a state	developed from forces	in nature
2.	Institution-identity (I-identity)	a position	authorized by authorities	within institutions
3.	Discourse-identity (D-identity)	an individual trait	recognized in	the discourse/dialogue of/with "rational" individuals
4.	Affinity-identity (A-identity)	experiences or a set of practices	shared in	the practice of "affinity groups" or a community of social practices

Proposing the area of Embodied Cognition, Odendahl (2020) notes that all mental processes are rooted in physical interaction progressions. Comprehension, therefore, lies in allowing physical key experiences to be replicated in a series of attempts and activities. In the context of teacher sense-making, such a way can be related to the working of subjectivity and preference. The participants' physical experiences in professional activities may generate meanings because these show a subjectively perceived affective combination of dilemmatic feelings they experience during the pandemic. The subjective feelings combined with the change in the roles in the newly formed interactions and their own prior knowledge, skills, as well as experiences had brought about different rational choices which they take to navigate the teaching and learning process. Likewise, Shelley et al. (2013, p. 560) also found that "both experience and context, the developing trajectories of teacher learning, and the emergent, dynamic nature of that learning" significantly contribute to this sense-making.

5.3   Agency in Self-directed Learning

The findings suggest that self-directed learning (SDL) demands teachers to adopt new roles, but it does not mean that they are excessive and should strictly learn everything. Instead, in SDL, teachers can take such important varied roles as facilitator, empowering agent, and resource agent (Bull, 2017). SDL is about allowing and equipping learners to take control of their learning more especially in the current pandemic condition. Proponents of SDL claim that creating an advancement toward this type of learner independence is important for a collection of valuable and critical skills for autonomy and a high degree of agency in the rest of life.

With respect to this, it is interesting to relate how SDL and agency as the latent potential for self-initiated engagement (Mercer, 2011) can assist the teachers' efforts in a distance education system. While a great deal of discussion has been made in agency theory that pertains to social actions, the current study has shown the explanation of social actions as executed by the participants under limited knowledge, skills, and facilities. Priestley et al. (2015) propose an ecological concept of agency originated from pragmatist philosophy that is concerned with the way by which

educators may assertively form their own responses to problems which they face. Agency, in this case, can mean a teacher's learning capacity to make an individual choice and to act in a way that makes a difference in his/her students' learning as P8 and P5 did. This definition denotes self-driven decision-making and autonomy which make teachers agents of change.

Using web-based professional development for elementary school teachers, Beach (2017) agrees with Borko (2004) and Kao et al. (2011) that teachers learn in some different realms of practice, including classrooms, school communities, professional development programs, and other networks. P8, in the current study for example, also provided a clear example of how she learned video editing from her teenage kid. To understand how such teachers learn and make decisions, therefore we must study the various contexts they might be engaged in.

In Indonesia, English teachers commonly gather and share ideas and concerns within a subject teacher discussion group (community of practice) at school and district levels. In this way, SDL and agency, as mentioned above, may reveal the levels of involvement with professional learning, meaningful self-directed learning experiences, and greater connections between professional knowledge and teacher practice.

In brief, the agency, voice, and identity of English teachers participating in the current study seem to become drivers of their own meaningful, hands-on and empowering professional development in which they can take full initiative, responsibility, self-direction, and relevance to their own scholarship (Widodo, 2017). Later, the engaged teachers, whose actions were self-initiated or self-directed rather than prescribed by the more knowledgeable or the textbook, can exercise their agency, actualize their voice, and enact their identity as Thiele (2003) also agrees that online learners are likely more self-governing, self-disciplined, and self-trusting.

6.   CONCLUSION

The pandemic has compelled the participating teachers to change and adapt their practice into forced ODL and requires them to learn and employ new approaches in the English teaching preparation, instructional practice, and evaluation of learning, including feedback provision. All these shifts, however, might have been predisposed teachers to personal conflicts, involving their beliefs and external expectations as an effort to appear as 'good' teachers (Eslamdoost et al., 2019) and cope with 'threatened identity' because of the sudden change. From this perspective, their nature (N) identity has been unchanged, but their institution (I) identity is somewhat disturbed as their schools are strongly affected by health measures and forced ODL despite limitations from different parties. The path which the teachers have taken to adapt to a new phenomenon is alternative and subject to own experience, needs, knowledge, and skills leading to self-directed learning (SDL). Thus, their discourse (D) identity rationalizes their own practice to the existing condition resulting in different judgments and alternatives. Their involvement in a different community of practices has also examined their affinity (A) identity which shapes and is shaped by the teachers' activities in forums, associations, and networks of professional communities.

This study has outlined the significance of SDL which seems to meet each teacher's needs and goals for improving the teaching and learning process regardless

of the condition. Despite the limitation in data gathering due to the pandemic situation, this study reveals that the participating English teachers inevitably improve their daily teaching practices and roles under a coercive situation. Hence, future research can be directed to examine, on a larger scale, whether teacher agency, their voice and professional identity in SDL remain intact even if the condition is back to new normal or experiencing other sudden unexpected changes.

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