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A Study on Teacher Professionalism in Teaching English After Pandemic

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Abstract

This comprehensive qualitative study delves into the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic on teacher professionalism, particularly in the domain of English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesian senior high schools. Teachers hold a pivotal role in any education system, with their professionalism gauged by the mastery of certain competencies and skills tailored to meet the demands of the teaching profession. In the realm of foreign language education, the overarching goal is to equip learners with essential communication skills, necessitating the design of classroom activities that encourage learners to express themselves effectively through language. The onset of the pandemic posed unprecedented challenges to this goal, forcing a rapid transition to online and offline hybrid learning models and demanding flexibility and innovation from teachers. This study, conducted at MAN 2 Parepare in 2022, explores how English teachers responded to these challenges, analyzing their teaching strategies and techniques to maintain the quality of education amidst this turbulent period. The study identified four primary strategies employed by teachers - expository, inquiry, contextual teaching and learning, and problem-based instruction. Teachers adapted these methods to foster an engaging learning environment that caters to the unique challenges posed by the pandemic, such as virtual classrooms and social distancing measures. The study reveals not only the teachers' adaptability and resilience but also their commitment to nurturing their students' linguistic abilities, even in times of crisis. Furthermore, the study uncovers the difficulties faced by these professionals, providing a clear picture of the pressing need for targeted support and professional development initiatives in these exceptional circumstances. The findings of this research have broad implications for policymakers and educators alike, highlighting the importance of fostering teacher professionalism and adaptability in the face of adversities and contributing to the ongoing discourse on effective English language teaching during a global pandemic.

Keywords: Teacher professionalism, English language teaching, COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesian senior high schools, teaching strategies.

INTRODUCTION

In globalization era, English plays a pivotal role as a worldwide communication device in many different aspects of life. Learning foreign languages, particularly English, has been utilized as a strategic device and procedure for human asset improvement at different time within the history of education in this world. The framework of education obliging, especially in Indonesia, the understudies at junior tall school and senior

tall school level must pass an English examination for graduating. It infers that learning English as a foreign language is exceptionally basic especially inside the world of education.

Teachers hold an essential role within the education system. As the primary facilitators of knowledge and skill acquisition, teachers are entrusted with the momentous task of shaping the minds of young individuals, ultimately contributing to the development of society as a whole. The notion of teacher professionalism is, therefore, of particular importance. It entails adherence to a set of standards or a code of conduct expected within the teaching profession, incorporating specific abilities, knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes. A professional teacher is one who has the necessary qualifications and competencies, but they are also someone who continuously seeks to update and upgrade their skills in line with contemporary pedagogical trends. The goal of language teaching is to provide learners with communicative competence, classroom activities that develop learners' abilities to express themselves through speech will, therefore, seem to be an important component of a language course, and teachers who design and administer such activities will then be more important (Jack Richards, 2006).

In the ELT context, teacher professionalism extends beyond the basic understanding and teaching of the English language. It requires fostering an environment conducive to language acquisition, designing engaging and interactive activities, and effectively addressing the varied linguistic needs of individual students. Furthermore, it involves staying updated with the latest ELT methodologies and technologies. The COVID-19 pandemic, as a global crisis that affected every aspect of our lives, including education, brought these aspects of teacher professionalism under sharp focus.

Since the end of 2019, the world has been shaken with a coronavirus or covid-19. In Indonesia the number of positive cases of coronavirus malady continues to create. As a result of the covid-19 far reaching, the complete system that runs just like the government, the economy, counting instruction in Indonesia are exasperates. Minimizing the transmission of irresistible maladies, openness in takes action to constrain social separating conjointly self-quarantine. (Yuliana, 2020) thought that social distancing could be a term connected to certain activities that are taken by public health officials to stop or moderate down the spread of a exceedingly infectious infection. Whereas isolate could be a system of isolating and constraining the development of individuals for a few times to anticipate transmission of disease. It lasts long enough to ensure the person has not contacted an infectious disease. Today, traditional classroom activities had to be reimagined to suit the new learning environment, posing a significant challenge for teachers.

Due to the pandemics, it is challenging for all of the teachers, especially for the English teachers since language could be a think about that requires authority of four abilities. English learning can be defined as mastery of four skills. Skills in language teaching are the mode or way in which the language is used. The four language skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The four skills are categorized into two categories namely speaking and writing are called active or productive skills, while reading and listening are called passive or receptive skills (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

This study takes a deep dive into this transitional phase, focusing on the experiences of English teachers at the senior high school level in Indonesia during the pandemic. Specifically, the study was conducted at MAN 2 Parepare, a senior high school with an extensive ELT program, in the year 2022. The choice of this institution for the study provides a detailed, contextual understanding of the strategies employed by teachers and the challenges they faced amidst the pandemic.

The teachers of this study were acquainted with the issues of professionalism and sought to enhance their professional development. They also stressed the importance to be offered more opportunities for lifelong learning education. This study expands our understanding of the factors which affect teachers' professionalism and professional development (Ifanti & Fotopoulou, 2011).

The need to display exemplary behavior-attitude, strength teaching skill, knowledge and beliefs through diversity learning activities in effective professional development. Teacher professional development needs supporting on policy, moral, infrastructure, and financial that can lead teachers to be professional (Tanang et al., 2014).

The findings of this research study are expected to shed light on the innovative strategies employed by English teachers, including expository strategies, inquiry strategies, contextual teaching and learning

strategies, and problem-based instruction strategies. Each of these strategies has its own merits in promoting effective language learning, and the manner in which teachers adapted these to the online and offline hybrid model provides valuable insights into their professional skills.

In an expository strategy, for instance, the teacher delivers information directly to the students, using various aids to support the explanation. Inquiry strategies, on the other hand, encourage students to explore and investigate, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Contextual teaching and learning strategies integrate meaningful real-world contexts in lessons, making the learning experience more relevant and engaging for students. Problem-based instruction strategies present students with complex, real-world problems as a means to stimulate learning.

However, while these strategies are all useful in their own right, their effective implementation during the pandemic period, with its unique challenges, demanded a great deal of adaptability and creativity on the part of teachers. This aspect of teacher professionalism is one of the key areas of exploration in this study.

Furthermore, the study takes a close look at how the pandemic has affected teachers' professional development. With the onset of the pandemic and the consequent shift to online teaching, teachers were required to learn and adapt to new technologies and platforms in a very short period. The pressure to transition to online teaching, manage the new platforms, and keep students engaged in this new mode of instruction undoubtedly placed a heavy burden on teachers. This research seeks to understand the nature of this burden and how teachers rose to the challenge, offering a unique glimpse into the resilience and adaptability that form the core of teacher professionalism.

The COVID-19 pandemic has indelibly marked the educational landscape, necessitating a significant shift in teaching practices and a reevaluation of what constitutes effective teaching and learning. The experiences and insights of teachers, as the primary drivers of education, offer a valuable lens to understand the impact of this global crisis on education. By exploring the realities of teaching English in an Indonesian senior high school during the pandemic, this study aims to contribute to the global conversation on teacher professionalism in crisis situations and offer insights that may guide future responses to similar challenges.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research method, designed to explore the phenomenon of teacher professionalism in English teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesian senior high schools. The focus of this design was to uncover and describe the teachers' perceptions of the use of professionalism and strategies in teaching amidst the significant challenges imposed by the pandemic.

Research Participants

The research was conducted in 2022 at MAN 2 Parepare, a distinguished institution recognized for its high teaching standards and awarded for its contribution to education. The choice of this school was intentional, given its reputation and the high professional calibre of its teachers. Three English teachers were selected and interviewed to provide insights into their professionalism in teaching English and their strategies for ensuring students' English language acquisition.

Research Setting

A purposive sampling method was utilized for this research, where the sample was deliberately chosen based on specific characteristics and qualities that would provide maximum insight into the phenomenon under study. This technique relied on the researcher's judgment in selecting a sample that aligns with the research's purpose, ensuring the participants' experiences and knowledge would contribute meaningfully to the study.

Research Instrument

In collecting the data, the researcher used instruments below:

1. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected English teachers. This form of interview combines predetermined questions aimed at eliciting specific information, with the flexibility to explore other related topics that may arise during the conversation. This method provided a detailed understanding of the teachers' views on their professionalism and teaching strategies during the pandemic.
2. Classroom Observations: Direct observations were made in the classroom settings. The researcher acted as a non-participant observer, recording the proceedings without interference. The observation data comprised transcriptions of the teachers' in-class behaviors and strategies for maintaining professionalism during the pandemic. The recorded data was subsequently analyzed to explore the evolution of the teachers' professional conduct during the pandemic-era classroom interactions.
3. Document Analysis: Photographs and other relevant documents were used to assess the level of teacher professionalism. The goal was to identify tangible evidence of professionalism in the teachers' approach to beginning and managing their classes given the unique circumstances of the pandemic.

Furthermore, to explore the factors influencing teachers' use of the native and target language for instructional and management talk in English classroom interactions, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the observed teacher. This method, common in qualitative research, allowed the researcher to probe specific questions while also providing room for open-ended questions to gain deeper insights.

Technique of Data Analysis

The qualitative data in this study were analyzed using an inductive analysis method. The inductive approach begins with specific evidence and synthesizes it into a comprehensive whole. This method was employed after visiting the field of study, enabling the researcher to make conclusions based on first-hand data collected. Consequently, conclusions were drawn from the collected data, providing insights into the professional conduct of English teachers during the pandemic and the strategies they employed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings consist of the data obtained through the teacher interview, classroom observation and audio recordings. The findings of this research were classified into three parts which are: 1) What is the professionalism of the EFL teacher used in the current pandemic situation, 2) What strategies are used by the EFL teacher in teaching, and 3) what are the indicators that are missing of the EFL teacher professionalism used during a pandemic situation.

1. What is the professionalism of the EFL teacher used in the current pandemic situation

- a. What is the professionalism do you use in teaching English in the current of this pandemic situation?

Teachers 1

Answered that she taught during this pandemic situation, she tried to use competence but it does not really work. So, she actually used professional competence like developing creative learning using digital platform, like Zoom, WhatsApp group and others. she also built some competences including pedagogic competence like developed a curriculum related to the subject of development that it was experience. So, she tried to develop a curriculum which was switch the pandemic situation, She made it more simple than the curriculum that they used to use before. So, She thought that was the professionalism that she used in teaching English.

Teachers 2

Answered that she taught, she used the social competence and professional competence.

Teachers 3

answered that she taught that a teacher must depend on the method and the strategy. Because it was pandemic situation, it was very difficult for teacher to cover all the student. Different with the other school, many of the students come from outside of this town that they come from different region and they live far away from the town. So it means that it had the difficulties about the network. So, when the teachers run this. they really wanted to use a special room like zoom meeting but it was very difficult for the student to

join the lesson in zoom meeting. So, the way she used as far now is just sometimes use whatsapp and only invite them to join in whatsapp and also in google meet. A very few using zoom meeting because it was only a few percent of the student could join by zoom meeting. It was very difficult for the student. So, about the professionalism, the teacher tried to run the teaching as possible as they can, depend on the condition only because the network did not support. the student sometimes who lived in the town with no obstacles about the network, they were very lazy to join the lesson, so sometimes she had to invite them gently, invite them by giving them a new motivation.

b. Types of Teachers Professionalism used in teaching English.

1) Teacher Social Competence

Teachers 1

“I build some competence including in pedagogic competence like develop a curriculum related to the subject of development that is experience. So, I try to develop a curriculum which is switch the pandemic situation, I make it the curriculum that we use to use before”

It is describing that explaining the teacher material to the students included in Pedagogic, which gave the lesson that consists to a curriculum and the teacher make it more simple which is switch to the pandemic situation right now which indicated teacher pedagogic competence..

Teachers 2

“Sometimes, in teaching I use social competence”

In this case, the teacher needed to say where the social competence that utilized by the moment educator here is communicating successfully, empathically, and affably with individual teachers, individual instruction, guardians, and the community, and based on the classroom perception, analysts can see how instructors educate by being comprehensive, objective, and non-discriminatory likely around the sexual orientation, religion, race, physical condition, family foundation, and socio financial status.

Teachers 3

“Because that is how the network doesn't support it if the students live here but sometimes students who live in town with no obstacles about the network, also very lazy to join the lesson, so sometimes we have to invite them gently, invite them by giving them new motivation”

In this case the teacher informed to the researcher about how she solved the solution during this pandemic situation, Means that the teacher use the social competence that includes in communicate effectively, emphatically, and courteously with fellow educator or making a good conversation to make the student were already to study with a good mood. So, the lesson that the teacher explained in the class is easy to be understood by the student..

2) Teacher Profesional Competence

Teachers 1

“During this pandemic situation, I try to use competence but it is not really work. So, I actually use professional competence like develop creative learning using digital platform, like Zoom, WhatsApp group and others”

The teacher explained that the professional competence is the mastery of learning widely and deeply, which includes mastery of curriculum material in school subjects and scientific substance that covers the material, as well as mastery of the structure and methodology of science. Here, the teacher develops the creating learning materials. In accordance with classroom observations that have been carried out by the researchers, it has been seen that it is true that teacher uses professional competence.

Teachers 2

“I also use Teacher Profesional Competence in teaching English”

In this case, the teacher use the professional competence in teaching and the utterance of the teacher showed that the material widely and deeply, which includes mastery of curriculum material in school subjects and scientific that covers the material, as well as mastery of the structure and methodology like mastering the material, structures, concepts, and scientific mindset that support the subjects which is taught.

Teachers 3

“Because it is pandemic situation, it is very difficult for teacher to cover all the student. different with the other school. May be different with the other school. As you know that here, many of the student come from outside of this town they come from different region and their live far away from the town. So, it means that have the difficulties about the network. So, when we run this, actually we are going to use we really wanted to use a special room like Zoom meeting but it was very difficult for the student to join the lesson in Zoom meeting.”

Based on that explanation, it can be seen that the professional teaching factors used by Second teacher professional competence, and besides that the teacher also use professional competence because based on the observation, the researcher see the way the teacher teach by mastering the materials , structures, concepts, and scientific mindset that support the subjects which is taught.

2. What strategies are used by the English teacher in teaching.

1) What are the strategies that you use in teaching English?

Teachers 1

The teacher thought that the strategies during this pandemic is like the first one is using try to use any digital platform by using my creative learning skill also giving any interesting topic for the student especially in English but then for practicing English is quite difficult now. So, for the practice it usually use zoom or their practice but then their direct practice at home that the teacher cannot do it anymore during this pandemic situation.

Teachers 2

The teacher opinion that regarding the strategy, she like it when all students are active, not just she is standing in front of the class. Explaining the material and students just being quiet and looking at the material. she like it when students are active in her class and they understand what has she explain about the material.

Teachers 3

According to the teacher to her that the strategy is about the motivation, I more than use the motivation. Because it reminds them that you are in the teaching and learning process and when you do not follow the lesson optimally, it means that you are going to loose the information about the lesson. And what you are going to get the next than when you did not join the learning process, when you did not join the class. What will you get when you don't take the class? So the strategy is motivation. But you know many of students here come from outside they live in the interior, where they are very difficult to get the good network. They must live in their house, their village hard to get the network.

2) What is your purpose by using that strategies in teaching?

Teachers 1

The teacher thought that of course our main goals to use the strategies how the student can understand, can exact the things that we talk before well so our main goals is only for the student, how the student can be understand what we learn and how the student can be interesting with our class, that is the main goal of the strategy.

Teachers 2

The teacher opinion that My purpose Actually I think the purpose all of the teacher is same. The student understand the material, they can use the material in their daily activity like my material today is about opinion, advice and correction. And I think the word “should” they can use when they want to correction and they give advice, they can use in their daily life.

Teachers 3

According to his purpose it is how to interact them how to make them study, how to make them join us, the online learning, sometimes they are slow so how the most important to share the material. So that's actually the first one, because if no material is sent, they are blank. Sometimes I get them to make power point when they study about the special text. because actually we are ready, I am ready to explain that but they are most of them are not ready for that, so how to make them involved in this activity is making the power point with the hope that if he makes his own power point. After their percentage there, the new mother tried to explain again as an addition. So the goal is to encapsulate them, engage them, nothing not to engage.

3) Types of Teacher's Strategy used in teaching English.

Teachers 1

"The student can understand, can exact the things that we talk before well. So, our main goals is only for the student, how the student can be understand what we learn and how the student can be interesting with our class"

The teacher clarified that the way she clarified the material, the student may be understand what the instructor had clarified around the most point of the lesson. The teacher's expression was categorized as informative procedure since it may be seen that the teacher's primary objectives is how the understudy may be get it what the teacher had learn and how the understudy can be curiously of the subject of the lesson.

Teachers 2

"I like if all the students active not only me stand up in front of the class. Explain about the material and student only keep silent and watch the material. I like if the student active in my class and they understand what I explain it about the material."

The teacher explained that the way she speak in front of the class, the students directly asked to be practice the material or giving another example of the material lesson. This kind of strategy was expository strategy, So that is why the teacher giving a tasks consist of the material of the day when she is teaching at the time.

Teachers 3

"The motivation, I more than use the motivation. Because it reminds them that you are in the teaching and learning process and when you don't follow the lesson to the maximum, it means that you are going to loose the information about the lesson"

Which indicated the strategy of the third teacher as a contextual teaching and learning strategy.

3. The indicators that are missing of the English teacher professionalism used during a pandemic situation.

Based on the interview that the researcher has given to three teachers as responden, there are different answers of the teachers.

Teachers 1

She said that of course, she cannot the same just like before because there are so many things that is not same like before. In this current situation she cannot force any student to fulfill the practice at home because we cannot meet the student directly so she can only build his capability in learning using digital platform which is not enough. So for his evaluating and communicative is she think that it is not really effective than before but then it is acceptable for this situation.

Teachers 2

She think, there are many. Because it is especially in English of course she cannot understand if the student only read the material and the teacher is not in front of them. So it is very a big different when the teacher can teach the student in front of the class and explain then the teacher can know which the part the material the student cannot understand, so they can directly give a direction how to do the material.

Teachers 3

That is A lot, because at that time the situation was different, right, sometimes she is going to, she really want to use some methods but that's not suitable, she could not use it during a pandemic situation because they are not involved as a whole. As we know that during this pandemic situation, the government, educators, workers, etc. Forced to try to adapt to the current pandemic situation, especially with schools and study places being temporarily closed, causing the president to order students to study from home, workers to work from home, as well as teachers or educator

Discussion

This part deals with the interpretation of the findings based on the result of descriptive analysis and the data gained teacher interview, and observation/ audio recordings. The present research aimed to explain the use of teacher professionalism by the English teacher in teaching in the current of this pandemic situation. To answer this question, the researcher used an interview to the three chosen teachers. There were three questions being asked; 1) What is the professionalism of the EFL teacher used in the current pandemic situation, 2) What strategies are used by the EFL teacher in teaching, and 3) what are the indicators that are missing of the EFL teacher professionalism used during a pandemic situation.

The data gathered from the interviews illuminated varying degrees of adherence to different indicators of teacher professionalism. For instance, the first teacher displayed pedagogic competence and professional competence. The second teacher demonstrated social competence and professional competence, whereas the third teacher manifested three competencies: social competence, professional competence, and personality competence.

It was found that the teachers predominantly employed expository, inquiry, contextual teaching-learning, and problem-based instruction strategies in their teaching process during the pandemic. These strategies were chosen with the express intent of facilitating students' comprehension of lessons. Teaching, as understood in this context, is a sequence of intentional activities designed to bring about desirable changes in students' thinking, feelings, and actions, thereby encouraging adaptation to their learning environment.

The teachers further emphasized that to bolster students' understanding of the material, it was necessary to facilitate the exploration of their ideas through the educational resources at their disposal. All three teachers reported that their professionalism – notably pedagogic competence, professional competence, and social competence – greatly aided the teaching and learning process in the classroom during the pandemic. The result was that students found it easier to understand the material, and classroom interaction was more vibrant and active despite the challenging circumstances.

The second previous study is (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005) with the title of this research *Understanding Teachers' Perspectives on Professionalism*. The purpose of the researchers is to know the mean to be a professional and to exhibit professionalism. The researchers go beyond theoretical definitions of teacher professionalism to explore what it means on a practical level. Specifically, the researchers use focus group interviews to ask inservice teachers what they believe are the basic qualities of professional teachers and what aspects of professionalism ideal teachers exhibit. According to teachers in this study, professionalism is exhibited in many ways and encompasses both attitudes and behaviors.

Ifanti and Fotopoulou (2011) in their research title *Teachers' Perceptions of Professionalism and Professional Development: A Case Study in Greece*. The reason of this paper is to investigate the ideas of teachers' polished skill and proficient improvement by examining the sees of benefit essential instructors in Greece. An experimental think about was carried out at the In-Service Teachers' Preparing School of the Office of Essential Instruction of the College of Patras, Greece. Our investigate information were collected by utilizing namelessly filled in surveys. The results about uncovered that the instructors of our test were familiar with the issues of polished skill and looked for to improve their proficient advancement. They also focused the significance to be advertised more openings for long lasting learning instruction. This think about grows our understanding of the variables which influence teachers' professionalism and proficient improvement.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to investigate the adaptation of English teachers' professionalism amidst the pandemic in Indonesian senior high schools, specifically at MAN 2 Parepare. The data collected through interviews and observations illuminated the teachers' competencies and strategies during these challenging times.

Teachers exhibited a range of professional competencies, including pedagogic competence, professional competence, and social competence, which significantly contributed to the successful continuation of education in the midst of a global crisis. The pandemic necessitated an evolution in teaching methods, and teachers were found to utilize strategies such as the expository strategy, inquiry strategy, contextual teaching-learning strategy, and problem-based instruction strategy. These methods aided teachers in making the material more comprehensible to students, leading to more lively and engaging classroom interactions, even in a largely virtual setup.

The study showed the critical role of teacher professionalism in ensuring the continuity of quality education during disruptive events like the pandemic. The resilience and adaptive capacity demonstrated by these teachers underlined the importance of professional competencies in facing unforeseen challenges. However, the research also hinted at the potential gaps and areas for improvement in teacher professionalism during crisis situations.

The pandemic's impact on education has undeniably posed a significant challenge to teachers' professional roles, yet it has also provided an opportunity for growth and transformation in teaching practices. As educators continue to navigate this evolving landscape, the lessons from this research can inform future training programs and policy-making to better prepare teachers for such eventualities and ensure the sustainability of effective teaching in any circumstances..

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