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THE REALIZATIONS OF TEACHING PROFESSION: FOUR INDONESIAN NOVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' NARRATIVES DURING THE PANDEMIC

Tabita Melania Mustaka Weni[1] and Mateus Yumarnamto[2*]
[1,2]Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya, Indonesia
melaniatabita@gmail.com[1] and mateus@ukwms.ac.id[2]
*correspondence: mateus@ukwms.ac.id
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Abstract
This study explores teacher professional identity (TPI) of novice English teachers in Indonesia by looking at their narratives related to their experiences before and after they entered the profession. The central question leading this inquiry is "What realizations about the profession shape the participants' TPI?" The data were collected from four participants through emails and follow-up interviews by phone. The data, then, were co-constructed to create coherent narratives of the four novice teachers. Further analysis was conducted by identifying their new realizations and awareness of being English teachers. These realizations about teaching and the profession were discussed in terms of the TPI elements. The findings indicate that realizations about various aspects of TPI of the novice teachers could lead to a better understanding of their professional identity formation before entering the profession, after entering the profession, and at the time of COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021). The TPI claims in the three stages indicate the complex process of TPI formation and the implications of the process can be the foundation of English teacher education and professional development reform.

Keywords: narrative inquiry, novice English teachers, teacher professional identity

Introduction
Novice teachers begin entering the new phase of their professional life when they graduate from university and begin their career as teachers (Farrell, 2012). This early stage is the transition period for many novice teachers as they adapt into a new environment. The transition period is very critical as it determines whether or not the teachers will survive and thrive. This situation is precisely described as 'sink-or-swim' experience (Huang, Wang, & Teng, 2019; Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986; Wijaya & Cendra, 2023). In this 'sink-or-swim' experience, some novice teachers can successfully navigate their career, while others give in and drop out of the profession (Clandinin et al., 2015; Farrell, 2012; Suryani & George, 2021; Varadharajan, Buchanan, & Schuck, 2019). Their decision to stay or to leave the profession can be influenced not only by the transition time but also the decisions they make before and after being teachers. In fact, there are many factors influencing the decisions, including personal, social, and professional factors

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(Clandinin et al., 2015; Kelchtermans, 2017).

In the profession, they may face unexpected challenges as the reality of the real world teaching can be different from what they have imagined when they were students. In the contexts where English is spoken as a foreign language, such as in Indonesia and in other Asian countries, their English proficiency is often questioned, making them doubt about themselves as competent English teachers (Lie, 2007; Lie, Tamah, Trianawaty, Triwidayati, & Jemadi, 2019). The subsequent concerns of novice teachers are the pedagogy of their teaching. They concern with the methods, materials, and classroom activities as they deal with the reality of the classroom in which many students are not motivated to learn English. Aside their grade, they "do not think what advantages they are able to get from their good English proficiency" (Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011, p. 291). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic that has hit Indonesia since March 2020 has brought about a big shift in education as students mostly study from home and many novice teachers have to face the reality that they are not prepared for this new challenges (Ferdig, Baumgartner, Hartshorne, Kaplan-Rakowski, & Mouza, 2020; König, Jäger-Biela, & Glutsch, 2020; Moser, Wei, & Brenner, 2021).

Another challenge faced by novice teachers is the lack of supporting environment at school. The expectations of novice teachers can be very different from the reality of school life (Ardi, Mukti, Basthomi, & Widiati, 2023; Holstein, Weber, Prilop, & Kleinknecht, 2022; Lie, 2017; Mudra, 2018; Nue & Manara, 2022). In addition, schools are the ground of policy implementation and competing powers in the Indonesian sociocultural context. This situation is reflected by a teacher who came from small town and taught in a big city (Widiyanto, 2005). At the first time he taught the students, he found that they seemed to be more competent in speaking English than he was, as a novice teacher. The challenging situation forced him to become a better teacher and to claim his professional identity as a proficient multicultural English teacher.

A similar experience was encountered by Yumarnamto, another English teacher, when he was doing his preservice teaching (Yumarnamto, 2017). The mentor helped him and encouraged him to be a better teacher even though he felt that his English was not good and he felt that he had a "cassava tongue" because of his thick accent. To improve the pronunciation, his mentor asked him to practice by reading aloud. Because of the crucial first experience of becoming English teachers, and the success of overcoming challenges and problems, the period in the formation of English teachers is very important and can provide foundations for future professional progress as teachers. It is worthy to note, however, that the school as a supporting place for teacher learning to be professional seems to be far from the ideal and may need to be reformed to accommodate the complex "multiple interactions between stakeholders and their respective engagements with the policy environment at all levels" (Milton et al., 2020, p. 1).

Indeed, the first year of teaching is usually marked by adaptation to new professional environment (Gatbonton, 2008; Huang et al., 2019; Xu, 2019). From within the teachers themselves, doubts and confirmation about their competence may become a major factor in the process of adapting to the new professional life. For example, Lie et al. (2019) found out that novice English teachers in Indonesia tended to have inadequate, unprepared, and lack of English proficiency that inhibited them to use English as a medium instruction in the classroom. What Lie

and her colleagues reported is captivating but the article does not provide more information about how novice teachers coped with the problem, how to adapt with the new environment, and how to survive in the profession. What was left in Lie's work in some degree have been addressed in current investigations on pre-service teachers in Indonesia and other Asian countries (Ardi et al., 2023; Mudra, 2018; Nue & Manara, 2022; Yüksel & Başaran, 2019)

The question on the process that influences novice teachers to survive in the profession is our major interest in the current inquiry. We are interested in documenting what novice English teachers say about their professional life and their struggles in the profession, especially in the time of pandemic that forced them to teach online. The narratives of teachers would inform educators, researchers and policy makers on how to enhance teachers' professional development in their early career so that they can survive and thrive in the profession as accomplished teachers (Clandinin et al., 2015; Cullum, Shaughnessy, Mayat, & Brown, 2020; Gu, 2014; König et al., 2020; Suryani & George, 2021; Varadharajan et al., 2019; Yumarnamto, 2019). We expect that the narratives could reveal how the realizations about their profession could influence the TPI formation.

Considering the importance of early experiences in the profession, we focus on exploring four novice teachers' narratives with the following guiding question: "What realizations about the profession shape the participants' TPI?" With this guiding question, we intend to explore how the participants' TPI are shaped and reshaped through their experiences as novice English teachers in Indonesia.

Teacher professional identity (TPI) formation

TPI has emerged as a legitimate field of inquiry in education field (Barkhuizen, 2019) and it has been central in current research related to teacher education and teacher professional development. To stay in the profession and to thrive as professionals, teachers should claim their identities by overcoming challenges and tensions in the profession and eventually aligning the personal identities with the professional ones that can bring about professional growth and happiness (Alsup, 2008). Failing to integrate personal values and identities with the professional ones, teachers may not survive in the profession.

Therefore, TPI is important in the life of teachers as it central to their professional growth (Braine, 2010; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Johnson, Lustick, & Kim, 2011; Prihendriani & Yumarnamto, 2023; Yumarnamto, 2016). From the sociocultural perspective, TPI is dynamic and it is shaped and reshaped by teachers' past experiences and through time in their profession. In the framework of the expanding scope of teacher education (Freeman, 2009; Freeman, Webre, & Epperson, 2019), the professional growth began from the mastery of pedagogical content knowledge to the engagement with the professional community at school and beyond. Therefore, teachers will grow in a supportive environment that allows identity negotiation. From the field of medical education, Cruess et al. (2015) highlight the importance of this environment for professional identity to develop. The environment plays a crucial role in the identity formation. For example, healthy and inclusionary environments can help teachers adapt and grow in the profession while a hostile or negative environment can bring about unproductive tensions and conflicts—hindering teachers to grow as professionals. In this way, the environment can be equally considered as a habitat where those who live in it

depend on each other, and all actors influence both their behaviors and the environment. It is the sociocultural context that shapes and reshapes the identities of the subjects (Cross, 2006; Edwards & Tsui, 2008; Kwan, Lopez-Real, & Tsui, 2008).

Elements of teacher professional identity

In the Indonesian context, as mandated by The Republic of Indonesia's Law Number 14 about Teachers and Professors (2005), teacher professional identity is subsumed in the four core teachers' competencies, namely (1) pedagogical competence, (2) personal competence (character), (3) social competence, and (4) professional competence. It is expected that all teachers in schools should develop the four cores of competencies and embrace them as their identity. First, pedagogical competence is related to the knowledge and skills needed by teachers to teach and act in the classroom, from preparing the teaching materials to assessing students' achievements. Second, personal competence is related to their individual characters that should be able to become an example of mature adults. Third, social competence deals with the ability to communicate and collaborate with students and other teachers so that they can become effective teachers. Finally, the fourth competence is the professional competence that refers to the mastery of subject matters being taught by the teachers.

The conception about teachers in the Law Number 14 reflects the holistic perspective on the ideal teachers, embracing the personal and the social aspects. Those teachers' competencies can be attained through formal education, internship, and trainings in the profession. In fact, at certain degrees, the four domains echo the pedagogical content knowledge suggested by Shulman's seminal works on teacher knowledge (Shulman, 1986, 1987, 2000, 2005; Shulman & Shulman, 2004), in which the nature of human as social and individual beings are taken into consideration in the formation of TPI.

Focusing on the personal and professional, Karaolis and Philippou (2019) identify three types of teachers in relation to TPI, namely (1) teachers with positive TPI, (2) teachers with negative TPI, and (3) uncommitted teachers. From the three types of teachers, they draw seven elements of TPI, reflecting the important domains of being teachers. These elements include (1) self-esteem, (2) self-efficacy, (3) professional commitment, (4) job satisfaction, (5) work motivation, (6) task orientation, and (7) future perspectives.

The first one, teachers' self-esteem, is related to how they perceived themselves as teachers. It is related to "a general descriptive assessment of the teacher's performance" (Karaolis & Philippou, 2019, p. 400). Second, teachers' self-efficacy concerns with the ability to effectively complete teaching tasks. Additionally, in teaching-learning process, students can learn better when their teachers put high effort on creating an effective teaching. Therefore, teachers' self-efficacy can be seen as teachers' ability to effectively guide students' learning. Third, teachers' professional commitment is related to the bond of the teachers with their profession, their students, and their schools. Fourth, teachers' job satisfaction refers to the value they put in their work as teachers. The degree of valuation of their works as teachers leads to their satisfaction. Job satisfaction may also be influenced by their relations with their students, colleagues and principal. Fifth, teachers' motivation refers to forces that influence the way they work and engage

in their profession. The motivation can be altruistic as teachers feel that teaching is their vacation and they do it for higher altruistic goals. It can also be intrinsic as they feel the satisfaction for doing their job as teachers. It can also be extrinsic as they pursue job security, social status or economic advantage.

Apart from different types of teachers' motivation, they cannot be separated and it is more productive when we see the different types of motivation as interweaved. The dominant motivation in teachers can evolve as they getting more experienced in the profession. Sixth, teachers' task orientation deals with their fixation to do tasks that enable them to be good teachers. Therefore, it is related to their beliefs about themselves, about the subject matter, and about the pedagogy. Finally, teachers' future perspective concern with their view about themselves as teachers in the future time. This future perspective can also influence their commitment to the profession and can be the precursor for teachers to survive and thrive or to give up their profession.

These seven elements of TPI are relevant in identifying professional identity claims in narratives as they are more personal and subjective in nature. In teachers' narratives, the claims can be accessed from their explicit and implicit statements surrounding events being told. For our inquiry, these seven elements are the framework to understand teachers' narratives and their realizations about teaching and the profession.

Method

This study was a narrative inquiry focusing on teachers' narratives about entering the teaching profession and about being English teachers at public school. From their narratives we wanted to understand more about the formation of TPI of the participants. The formation of the TPI in the narrative can be shaped and reshaped from the teachers past experiences, the perceived challenges, and decisions made in the profession.

The participants of this study were four novice English teachers, who had been less than five years in the profession. They were Anna, Bita, Arman, and Barto (pseudonyms). Two participants were male and two others were female. The four participants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) they graduated from English education department, (2) they had experience a teaching practice as students (preservice teaching), and (3) they were novice English teachers (less than five years of teaching after graduation). Table 1 described the detailed information about the participants.

Table 1. The participants

Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	School	Education Background	Teaching Experience	Year of Graduation (Bachelor)
Anna	Female	Private elementary school	English Education, private university	2 years	2018
Bita	Female	Private vocational school	English Education, private university	4 years	2016

Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	School	Education Background	Teaching Experience	Year of Graduation (Bachelor)
Arman	Male	Private middle school	English Education, public university	3 years	2017
Barto	Male	Public elementary school	English Education, public university	2 years	2019

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the data from the teachers were collected by means of written correspondence and follow-up interviews by phone. To get the narrative data, the participants were asked questions related to their experiences as novice English teachers. The questions cover the following areas, including participants' background, personal and professional milestones, problems they faced as English teachers, and their opinions about teaching profession. The participants answered the aforementioned questions via email. Next, as a further way of confirmation and clarification, the telephone interviews were conducted by focusing on their previous written answers sent via email.

The data, then, were reconstructed to create coherent narratives, which involved intersubjectivity between the researchers and the participants. The narratives were coded and analyzed in terms of thematic analysis by looking at the emerging identity claims (Barkhuizen, 2021). The emerging identity claims from the analysis, then, were analyzed further in the lenses of the seven TPI elements (Karaolis & Philippou, 2019).

Member checking and triangulations were conducted to make sure the integrity of the data and the interpretations (Creswell & Miller, 2000). First, member checking were conducted by asking the participants to check the reconstructed narratives and to make sure the accuracy of the narratives. After the member checking was completed, triangulations were conducted by asking a triangulator to make sure that the interpretations of the researchers on the narratives were consistent and faithful to the participants intended meaning and voices. In this way, we maintain the trustworthiness of this study.

Findings and Discussion

The formation of TPI is complex and it is a continuing process. From the data analysis, we identified the TPI claims of the four novice teachers by looking for clues in the participants' realizations or awareness about their experiences. The reflection on their experiences could bring about their identity claims and aspirations on becoming teachers.

Table 2. Realizations and identity claims of four novice English teachers

ANNA	BITA	ARMAN	BARTO
Realizations and Identity Claims before entering the profession			
• having no teacher calling; no intention to become a teacher	• having no intention to become a teacher; wanting to work	• having no intention to become a teacher; planning to work	• wanting to be a good English teacher; feeling the calling to

ANNA	BITA	ARMAN	BARTO
but later she changed her mind	with English, but not teaching	in the export-import company	become a teacher and feeling confident and passionate about it
• realizing that she was good at English; feeling confident to speak in English	• being inspired and encouraged by her senior high school teacher	• being inspired by his junior high school's English teachers and his native English teacher when he was in the senior high school	• loving English but realizing weaknesses in teaching; feeling that he needed more practices
• loving peer tutoring; wanting to be good and friendly English teacher (in contrast to one of her lecturer, who was arrogant and mean)	• being encouraged by her friends and lecturers to become a teacher	• being encouraged by some subjects in the university (English pedagogy and teaching philosophy) and teaching practice; being encouraged by his senior to apply to be a teacher in the school	• wanting to help other to learn English
Realizations and Identity Claims after entering the profession			
• realizing the need to improve her competence and to advance her career; deciding to pursue a Master's Degree in TESOL	• realizing the need to improve her competence and to advance her career; deciding to pursue a Master's Degree in TESOL	• feeling good about her decision to become a teacher • realizing the importance of professional community to improve his competence and to advance his career; joining English teacher association in his city	• realizing the importance that teacher should be a life-long learner; preferring to learn more about English and English education independently
• realizing that she loved being in control of her class (using more teacher-centered approach) and wanting to become a good model for her students.	• realizing that she loved being in control of her class (using a lot of drills and exercises for the students, especially to prepare for the national exam)	• realizing the importance of learner-cantered approach; encouraging the students to learn	• realizing that he used teacher-cantered approach for the sake of effective teaching learning processes.
• realizing the importance of students' motivation to learn English (she	• realizing that the students needed more help.	• realizing the importance of students' motivation to learn English (he	• realizing the importance of students' motivation to learn English;

ANNA	BITA	ARMAN	BARTO
liked to motivate her students to love English and to learn English better at school.)		wanted to raise the awareness related to the importance of English for the students' future.)	making the class more interesting by using technology and his communication skills.
Realizations and Identity Claims in the time of COVID-19 Pandemic			
• realizing the need to improve the application of technology in the classroom; using different platforms and apps to help the teaching-learning processes	• realizing the importance of technology in the classroom; realizing the need to use and make online games for the students to learn English better	• realizing the importance of technology for teaching-learning purposes (he learned to create videos to help the students to learn better in the time of pandemic)	• realizing the importance of technology, especially in using and creating videos for the teaching learning purposes
• feeling doubtful about the future (she wanted to find a better school)	• feeling bad with her teaching performance during the COVID-19 pandemic	• feeling doubtful and confused about being a teacher (he felt not sure whether he was happy or not as a teacher)	• feeling worthless and unsatisfied with the teaching and learning processes during the pandemic
• feeling the burden of the administrative work as a teacher and the meager salary she received	• feeling confused and doubtful about her decision to stay in the profession (she wanted to leave the profession but she felt doubtful that she could find a better job outside teaching)	• feeling the burden as a teacher and felt unsatisfied with the school administration and the salary (he realized that there was no clear career path and he wanted to leave the profession and for a better opportunity	• wanting to stay as a teacher but he expected to be more appreciated

Table 2 shows these kinds of awareness on teachers' experiences, from the time before they entered the profession to the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had forced them to change face-to-face meetings in the classroom into online ones using various platforms of online education.

Realizations about teaching before entering the profession

From the four participants, only one had the aspiration to become a teacher. The reluctance to become teachers indicates that teaching profession in Indonesia may not be the first choice. In relation to the TPI elements (Karaolis & Philippou, 2019), this reluctance may also indicate the lower professional commitment and the uncertainty of future perspective about teaching. The image of the profession is not as prestigious as other professions regardless of the government's continuing reforms in education since the New Order in 1966. The government's effort does

not seem to lift the image of the profession significantly (Bjork, 2005, 2006; Chang et al., 2014).

Anna thought that she did not like teaching. She never wanted to become a teacher. However, she loved children and she felt that she enjoyed being around them. She thought she was good at English and she enjoyed tutoring children. This experience has brought her to the teaching profession, which was not her first choice. Once she was in the profession, she wanted to become a better teacher than the one of her lecturers in college, who was "not nice and rude". It was a challenge to prove that she could be a good English teacher. In her words, she wanted to be "a good and respected teacher."

> *Speaking the truth, she* [her teacher in high school] *is my motivation to be a better teacher. My reason is simple; I do not want to be somebody like her. I do not want younger generation to hate English just because the teachers are not nice and rude to the students. I do not want to be a teacher like her. That has been my strongest motivation to become a better teacher.* (Anna, 16 August 2020)

Similar to Anna, Bita did not want to be a teacher. She wanted to use English for her job but not as an English teacher. When finally she became a teacher, she realized that she liked the way her high school teacher taught English and she was inspired to become a better English teacher. She also remembered when she was in college, her friends and her lecturers used to praise her for her talent as an English teacher.

> *Actually, at first I only love English [but I did not want to become an English teacher]. I tried to find other jobs that would allow me to work using my English degree. However, after I entered the third year of college, I experienced an event which moved my motivation to teach. My friends and lecturers said that I was good at teaching. ... Then after I graduated, I was accepted [to work] as an assistant manager in a company. However, after I'd worked there for three years, I missed teaching inside the class. ... [Now], it has been three and a half years I have been teaching in my current school.* (Bita, 23 August 2020)

The third participant that did not want to become teacher was Arman. He did not want to become a teacher because he thought that he could not achieve his financial goal by teaching. He liked English but he did not want to become an English teacher. On the contrary, he wanted to work in an export-import company where he could use his English for international business communication and to advance his career. Thus, teaching was not his first choice. However, once he entered the profession, he realized that he was falling in love with teaching. Particularly, his college prepared him to become an English teacher. He enjoyed courses related to education, such as *English Pedagogy* and *Teaching Philosophy*. Especially, he was inspired by his teacher so that he gradually changed her mind about teaching.

> *During my time in college, I took English Teaching Pedagogy; it was about teaching [methods and practices]. I also took Teaching Principles and*

> *Teaching Philosophy. I think these subjects had encouraged me to become a teacher.* (Arman, 27 August 2020)

The only participant that wanted to become a teacher was Barto. At high school, he loved English and he aspired to become an English teacher. He respected teachers and saw them as a promising profession in which he could help children learn English. It was his future perspective and commitment that brought him into the profession.

> *Yes, the only thing that makes me want to become a teacher is that I do love English. ... I like English because it is interesting. I like watching movies [in English] and I like listening to music, English music, American or British, and some Korean [songs] with English lyrics. That's the reasons why English is interesting for me.* (Barto, 21 August 2020)

Considering the early stage prior to entering the profession, the prominent TPI elements are future perspective about the profession and the commitment to the profession. Not all participants indicate their high commitment at the beginning as they see uncertainty about the future of becoming teachers. However, they entered the profession and they began their journey with the excitement, curiosity, and doubts.

Realizations about teaching after entering the profession

The first new awareness dominating the novice teachers' experience is related to their lack of knowledge and skills in the classroom. Their early experience in the profession was not like what they had imagined when they were students or when they were outsiders of the profession. At the time of becoming teachers, they realized that what they had learned in the past was not enough. That was why two participants decided to pursue their master's degree. Anna and Bita described their effort to pursue the degree as to improve their knowledge and skills in English education. They also felt that the degree could advance their career. The realization about lacking knowledge and skills was described by Anna as a gap between the theory and practice and by Bita as the need to improve her teaching. Anna, for example, said that she knew theories but she had difficulties to implement them in the classroom

> *I was completely blind at that time. What I knew was the theory but I never really knew how to implement them in a real classroom where no lecturers can help me. I was struggling a lot since not all teachers in the working place were nice and helpful.* (Anna, 16 August 2020)

The second realization is related to the demand of more learner-centered in the classroom. Three participants (Anna, Bita, Arman) felt that their teaching method was basically teacher-centered. They liked to take a control in classroom activities. This understanding indicates that they were in tension. They knew that the learner-centered process was the ideal approach in teaching but they persisted in using the direct teaching method—the teacher-centered pedagogy, which they felt more effective. For example, Arman focused his teaching on explaining and he demanded the students pay attention to his teaching.

> *I think it's kind of a normal thing you have as a teacher when you teach English and some of the students pay attention to you and some other will not and some of them understand with your explanation and some other do not understand. I always make sure to my students that in my teaching they just need to pay attention whether they understand or not. ... I always ask my students to attend my class and submit all my assignments. What do I feel when my students not paying attention to me? Sometimes I feel ok with that, sometimes I feel sad.* (Arman, 27 August 2020)

The third important realization is related to students' motivation. Three participants explicitly showed that they concerned with students' motivation and they wanted to encourage the students to learn English. Anna wanted to be a likeable teacher and she liked to motivate her students to love English. Bita, who dealt with students from socio-economically and academically disadvantaged groups, spent extra hours to help the students by drilling them with exercises. Arman, whose students seemed to have no motivation to learn English, had to work hard to convince them that English was important for their future. Similarly, Barto hoped he could motivate his students to learn English better by making the class more interesting.

> *It [students' ignorance] made me think that I had to pay attention more and give them motivation by telling stories, giving them movies or some music [in the classroom]. I tried to make English interesting for them.* (Barto, 21 August 2020)

The realizations about teaching English and their profession had brought about tension in the participants. They were challenged and they were motivated to improve themselves as teachers. Additionally, this tension reflects the reality that the early stage of their being in the profession is a challenging transition period. Gomez and Lachuk (2018, p. 2) precisely described "[t]he interactions that hold the most promise for aspiring teachers' development are filled with tension and struggle, challenging what they know and how they talk and behave." The four novice teachers, in this way, had similar experiences in their struggle with their teaching and their students in the classroom and they put great effort into their profession.

By these new understandings, the four novice teachers were claiming their professional identity and pursuing their membership in the professional community they engaged in. In doing so, the early stage of being novice was the transition period as being labelled as 'novice' mean that they had not been fully accepted in the profession. In order to be fully accepted, they do not only "need to acquire the complex knowledge and skill base of a teacher, but they also need to refine their understanding of pedagogical practices and develop their professional knowledge" (Sutherland, Howard, & Markauskaite, 2010, p. 462). In this way, they could claim their full membership of the community of practice in the profession.

Realizations about teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic

Being novice teachers in the time of COVID-19 pandemic was like being in two transitions simultaneously. The first transition was with the real teaching in the classroom. Second, the pandemic that hit at this early stage of becoming teachers

forced them to shift the teaching mode from face-to-face in the classroom to online teaching via video conference and other online learning platforms. These double edges adaptation was really felt as a difficult period by the four novice teachers.

The novice teachers realized the importance of technology for teaching online. For them, however, the challenges in using technology were not a real problem as they had used the technology before and they could easily learn new apps and online platforms. As young teachers, they belonged to the digital natives, not the digital immigrants (Lewis, 2018), compared to the senior teachers working in their schools. In some occasion, they even helped senior teachers to use the new apps and online learning platforms. The current finding of realization about the importance of technology in the classroom echoes the research finding of Krull, van der Schaaf, and Okas (2014) as Estonian novice teachers "stressed technological teaching aspects" as an important professional image of teachers (Krull et al., 2014, p. 327). Referring to the research data, Barto describes the importance of technology in terms of the use of the video, internet, and smartphones.

> *During this pandemic, the teacher should be more creative in making a video and media, especially for teaching elementary students. They can't use online meeting application such as Zoom Meeting or Google Meet. The only solution is* [that] *teacher must make media by sending a video about the material. It is one of the changes that I get. It is interesting because we know that some students have different background, or different family, maybe they don't have any notebook or laptop or maybe they have smartphones with Android or iOS, but they cannot use it properly, so that's why I need to make a video to make it more easily for them. What I feel it's little bit challenging for me and I need learn more about editing video or the material for the English teaching.* (Barto, 21 August 2020)

While the novice teachers were aware that the technology in the classroom was very important and indispensable in the time of pandemic, they found the online teaching burdensome as they required more time to prepare and to teach their students. They were content with new technology, but it turned out they spent more time preparing their classes. Consequently, this brought about doubts about their teaching and their satisfaction. Anna felt doubtful about the future career and she thought about finding a better school. Meanwhile, Bita felt bad about her teaching performance and she wanted to leave the profession for another job but she was not sure if there were other job vacancies outside teaching. Similarly, Arman felt the burden as a teacher in the time of pandemic and he was unsatisfied with the support of the school. He was looking for a better opportunity. On the contrary, Barto wanted to stay as a teacher at his school but he expected to be more appreciated.

The echoing theme of teaching during the pandemic among the novice teachers were the burden in preparing and teaching the students online. They felt no satisfaction as the problems lied in both ends, namely the school, which was generally perceived as not supportive to teachers, and the students, who were generally disadvantaged by online learning as many of them had difficulties to access the Internet due to their limited data connection. In this way, in terms of TPI elements (Karaolis & Philippou, 2019), their job satisfaction and motivation were low and their future perspective was in question. As a result, all other elements were also in doubts as they were in the middle of professional identity crisis. They

questioned their self-esteem and efficacy as teachers and most of them were doubtful about their professional commitment as they felt dissatisfaction about their work.

> *For now it's like I'm lacking of satisfaction or something like that. It's just because this current situation, this pandemic. It makes me feel worthless or useless for teaching because it's little bit taking more efforts for teaching the students, like using online application. As you know, elementary students need more extra attention. When we have an offline class, we can pay attention on them and we can give some advice. Well, when we're doing online teaching, it makes me not satisfied about it.* (Barto, 21 August 2020)

Hostile and negative environments became worse during the pandemic as those involved in schools were adapting with uncertain situations. For some schools that did not have strong and supportive cultures, this might create stresses and tensions. This difficult situations may "raise questions about the capacities of schools to act as sites of professional learning for new teachers" (Milton et al., 2020, p. 2). Such unsupportive environments were felt by the four novice English teachers in different forms. Anna felt the domination of senior teachers and she had difficulties working together with them. Bita felt that one of the vice principals was not fair as he scolded her because she had a conflict with one of her students.

> *Senior teachers are dominating my school. Most of them are aged between 44-60 years old. We do not have a lot of things in common, starting with what to talk about until what to do. I honestly felt a little bit annoyed by them once they came to my class just to ask me gossiping about other teachers. I prefer to spend my free time at school to prepare for tomorrow's lesson or correcting my students' work. I did not enjoy the conversation I have with them*." *(*Anna, 16 August 2020)

> *Once, I was scolded by one of the vice principals. He said that I have to look at myself related to the conflict I had with one of my students. He said the students were OK with other teachers. Then, I told him to reverse the sentence: how could there be only one student who did not like me while the other 3 batches were OK with me*. (Bita, 23 August 2020)

The realizations about teaching and the profession during the pandemic were two opposite edges. First, there were optimism on the use of technology for distance education, bringing information technology closer to the teachers and students. On the other hand, there was also the gloomy side of education where teachers were stressed out and many students were left behind due to the limited access to the internet. For the novice teachers, the optimism and frustrations marked the difficult period of their career. The four novice teachers realized that they were in the beginning of a great shift in education with uncertain future. They realized that the pandemic was a test for the ability to adapt with uncertainty. If they were successful, they "will have the chance of a lifetime to transform learning for the better" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020, p. 336).

Conclusion

The findings show that TPIs of the four novice teachers were shaped by their experiences before and after they entered the profession. The difficult period of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially, had brought about the optimism related to the use of technology and in some degree, the novice teachers were more prepared compared to senior teachers in their school. However, tensions and conflicts during the pandemic also influenced their self-esteem, self-efficacy, and their future perspective—the dominant elements of TPI as felt by the novice teachers. In this situation, supporting school environments indeed were needed for the long-lasting transformation of the novice teachers and the school in general.

While this research reveals the realizations of the four novice teachers about their experiences in the profession, the special context of the pandemic can be limiting as the period was temporary albeit transformative. It is also worthy to note that the four novice teachers may not be representative of all English teachers in Indonesia. Therefore, more documentations of the TPI formation from different areas in Indonesia are needed for future research. In addition, continuing study on TPI after the pandemic is recommended as face-to-face meetings in the classroom are back at public schools and teachers may adapt to the new roles of technology in the classroom.

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