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**Secondary School English Language Teacher Agency in the Aftermath
of COVID-19 Crises:**

A Study from A West Sumatran Region, Indonesia

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic saw the prompt shift to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), which was challenging for both learners and educators worldwide. This study explores the experiences of secondary school English language teachers working within a resource-limited setting of Lima Puluh Kota Region, West Sumatra, Indonesia. It focuses not only on the ERT period but also on the re-transition to face-to-face teaching post-pandemic. It seeks to answer two research questions: 1) What adjustments did English language teachers make to their practice during and after the pandemic lockdown period, and how did they perceive and articulate these experiences? 2) How did the teachers exercise their agency, negotiate their professional identities, and manage their emotions in response to these experiences? This study adopts a qualitative dominant mixed-methods design. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis are employed to analyse data which was collected from teachers from July to November 2022 through a survey (n=63), two rounds of interviews (n=10), and classroom observations (n=10).

The findings indicated that while the teachers were emotionally affected by the abrupt shift to ERT, which was intensified by Digital Divide issues, they tried to negotiate the availability of resources and use their agency to find ways to continue teaching. Some were able to discover benefits beyond the difficulties as ERT exposed them to digital technologies, a wide range of learning modes, and opportunities to pursue professional development (PD). Throughout and after the pandemic, teachers actively negotiated their professional identities, which contributed to their professional growth and increased reflexivity on their current and future practices. This shifted their perspectives about teaching and learning and the role of technology, which proved useful when they encountered challenges re-transitioning to face-to-face classrooms. This study contributes to the literature by 1) adding evidence of how English language teachers exercised their agency during and after the pandemic and illustrating the temporal and contextual aspects involved in the process, 2) revealing different pathways of professional identity negotiation, and 3) breaking down the interplay between agency, identity, and emotions, and outlining the significant role of emotions in both enactment of agency and professional identity negotiation. In addition to these theoretical contributions, practical implications, which focus on the need for school technology

infrastructure in the region, and tailored teacher professional development at both school and MoE levels to foster student teachers' and experienced teachers' awareness of the intersection of agency, identity and emotion in the teacher education curriculum and training programmes, are discussed.

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List of Abbreviations

ERT	Emergency Remote Teaching
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
LTA	Language Teacher Agency
PSBB	<i>Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar</i>
PPKM	<i>Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat</i>
DD	Digital Divide
PD	Professional Development
ESL	English as a Second Language
MoE	Ministry of Education
IT	Information Technology

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Overview

This study investigates secondary school English language teachers' agency in Lima Puluh Kota region, West Sumatra, Indonesia, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. It examines the ways teachers responded to the challenges and affordances and made decisions about their teaching. Furthermore, it explores how teachers saw themselves professionally as they navigated through major changes during and after the pandemic. The study also investigates teachers' emotions as they made sense of these experiences. This chapter introduces the study, establishing its rationale and significance, and provides background information on the research context. The last section presents the outline of the thesis.

1.2. Rationale and Significance of the Study

My motivation to research this topic is partly personal. As an English language teacher at a tertiary institute in Indonesia, I went through the difficult process of transitioning to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) in early 2020. At that time, I also observed that almost all my colleagues in the place where I worked struggled with the move to the online space. During the early phase of ERT, like most teachers, I went through a trial-and-error process, trying to find platforms that were practical to use and suited my learners' situations. I also experienced many uncertainties as the institutional

policy regarding teaching modes was frequently changed. For me and my colleagues, it was a collective experience full of feelings of insecurity. The COVID-19 pandemic was an extraordinary global phenomenon. Having experienced the challenges first-hand, I wanted to know what the pandemic was like for other teachers. Part of me believed that my personal experience was also shared by teachers throughout the world, especially English language teachers. Therefore, researching their experiences throughout the pandemic and its aftermath was a unique opportunity for me to seize.

I believed that teaching English as a foreign language in a context where the language is rarely used (see 1.3.1) was already challenging. Therefore, with the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the sudden move online, I imagined that things would become significantly more difficult because teachers could not interact with their students as freely as they could in the classroom. At that moment, I was especially concerned with my students' access to technology and my ability to use it for teaching since I had never taught online or remotely before. I felt this self-doubt even though I had previously viewed myself as a teacher who could keep up with technology. I could not help wondering what the experience was like for other English teachers in my region, given the limited technological infrastructure.

Having worked in a higher education setting, I assumed that, in terms of access to technology and digital literacy, I was in a relatively better position compared to my compatriots working in different settings, like secondary schools. I anticipated that many schools in the region, especially smaller ones located in more rural areas, still had limited technological facilities and internet access. I based this assumption on my own prior observations, where I had noticed a discrepancy between schools in densely populated areas and those in more rural settings in terms of facilities. This reflection

strengthened my interest in researching the experiences of secondary school English language teachers in the region where I lived and worked, Lima Puluh Kota. I wanted to capture the whole process that these teachers went through; starting from their adaptation and transition into ERT; their initial responses and adjustments, and how they navigated through the challenges they faced during the ERT implementation; and finally, how they readapted to face-to-face teaching in the aftermath of the pandemic.

In addition to these personal motives, another reason for investigating this specific region is that non-metropolitan parts of Indonesia, such as this one, have been relatively under-researched. Studies have focused on either the urban or rural regions of Indonesia. There is a paucity of English Language Teaching research within settings which straddle the urban-rural continuum. Such research is important because the middle ground represents a significant realm of activity, and comparing different settings teaches us more about each. Lima Puluh Kota has a diverse socio-economic landscape with a range of secondary schools; some are located in more populated areas, and some are in areas with a sparser population. These schools also vary in terms of type, capacity, facilities, and access to resources. Some of the schools are situated in remote parts of the region, which are known to have no access to the internet network. I realised that many regions in Indonesia and many other countries, where English is taught as a foreign language, were similarly situated. The results of this study, therefore, may reflect the realities of English Language Teaching in other parts of Indonesia.

Teachers faced challenges and disruptions that they had never faced before as they were forced to shift to ERT due to the pandemic and readapt to face-to-face teaching post-ERT. Learning through these events will not only facilitate a better understanding of the settings in which these teachers work but also provide opportunities to understand

how they make meaning of their experiences. It will help to develop a better understanding of how teachers exercise their agency and negotiate their professional identities as language teachers. Overall, this research will offer a critical perspective on the realities of English Language Teaching in Indonesia and support a better understanding of English language teachers' perspectives as they go through critical periods in their careers. I hope that the findings of this study will become a valuable source of input for policymakers, school management, teacher educators, and especially, English language teachers.

1.3. Background to the Research Context

This section elaborates on the context of the current study. It comprises an overview of: English language teaching in Indonesia (1.3.1); the use of technology in Indonesian formal education (1.3.2); and the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic in Indonesia (1.3.3).

As an addition, it is also important to note that Indonesia's previous national curriculum, *Kurikulum 2013* (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013), had a strong emphasis on attitude, moral, and character-based education, which was considered central in the country's educational reform since 2011 (Qoyyimah, 2016). At the time of research, most of the schools where the participants worked were under transition to the new national curriculum, *Merdeka*, which promotes a stronger learner-centred approach to teaching, focusing on addressing individual learners' needs (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, 2024a, 2024b). Despite this transition, many of the teachers in this study still viewed moral and character-based education as a

vital part of their practice and professional identity. This was more obvious with the teachers at Islamic boarding schools (*Pesantren*), where character building and moral values teaching are regarded as the overarching educational philosophy (Qoyyimah et al., 2023).

1.3.1. English Language Teaching in Indonesian Formal Education

Indonesia is one of many countries where English in the national curriculum is regarded as a foreign language. Historically, English has been a compulsory subject in Indonesian secondary schools since 1990, with its place validated by government policies and various iterations of the national curriculum (Zein, 2020). Each student in Indonesia spends approximately seven years studying English through formal schooling, which spans from the first year of secondary school (grade seven) until the first year of tertiary study. However, Indonesian language policy and the high linguistic diversity of more than 600 local languages, regional vernaculars, and dialects (Lie, 2007; Sukyadi, 2015) mean that there is limited use of English regardless of its status as the first foreign language. Learners of English have very limited or no immediate urgency, opportunity, or context to use the language communicatively. English proficiency among high school and university graduates is still generally considered low (Lie, 2007).

The position and practice of English Language Teaching in Indonesia's formal schooling system are also often described as problematic. On the one hand, English has been positioned as a key factor for the nation's development; on the other hand, it has been seen as a potential threat to Bahasa Indonesia and other local heritage languages (Sukyadi, 2015). Although the compulsory nature of English Language Teaching still

prevails, the number of instructional hours allocated for the English subject was reduced in the *Merdeka* curriculum (Reza et al., 2023).

The relatively unsatisfactory outcomes of English Language Teaching in Indonesia have also been influenced by the country's disparities in terms of geography and social well-being. Vast archipelagic regions combined with unbalanced development and distribution of resources are some of the factors affecting education outcomes in Indonesia, in particular, English Language Teaching (Lie, 2020). Better command of English is often associated with learners in middle-upper-class society in urban areas who have more familiarity with the language, as well as opportunities and willingness to seek learning opportunities (Lamb, 2012; Lie, 2007). In other words, English Language Teaching in Indonesia already faces a range of complex problems, including large classroom size and learners' lack of motivation, problematic curriculum policy and implementation, and limited educational resources (Lie, 2007). Nevertheless, English is still taught as a compulsory subject in secondary schools (Zein, 2020).

1.3.2. The Use of Technology in Indonesian Formal Education

The education system in Indonesia relies heavily on the traditional face-to-face classroom setup. The implementation of distance and blended learning before the pandemic was limited to higher education settings. A number of universities had initiated it as an extension of face-to-face meetings. In a report about online and blended learning policy and practice of primary and secondary schools around the world, Barbour et al. (2011) stated that the Indonesian government has, for some time, made funding available for the development of technology and network-mediated learning for

secondary schools, however, their implementation at school level has remained limited and problematic. A review of English Language Teaching research in Indonesia between 2011 and 2019 by Zein et al. (2020) reveals that studies related to the adoption of technology and the internet were mostly conducted within tertiary settings. It was only during the pandemic that research on the use of technology and ICT in secondary school English Language Teaching started to flourish (e.g., Anwar et al., 2025; Haryanto, 2021). This suggests that, before the pandemic, English Language Teaching at the secondary school level in Indonesia was predominantly done through face-to-face teaching.

1.3.3. The COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Impacts on Education and People's Livelihood

From early 2020, in response to the rising number of COVID-19 cases, the Indonesian Government implemented two main mitigation policies. Firstly, the government regulation no. 21/2020, about large-scale social mobility restriction (PSBB) was issued at the end of March. This policy required the closure of schools and workplaces and placed limitations on social and public activities. In Lima Puluh Kota, as part of the West Sumatra Province, this policy took effect in the second half of April 2020. This policy was later changed to more relaxed public activity restrictions (PPKM) in June 2021, which regulated social distancing and health and safety protocols for public activities based on different zone levels according to the COVID-19 contamination rate. This allowed schools to be partially opened for teachers and students under strict regulations. This policy underwent several changes and was in place until around June 2022.

In Lima Puluh Kota, teaching and learning activities were predominantly conducted remotely from April 2020 to June 2021. Between July 2021 and July 2022, as the restrictions were gradually relaxed, schools were partly reopened and blended learning was implemented. This allowed limited classroom meetings with students attending school in small groups. Full-capacity in-classroom teaching and learning was only possible after August 2022.

The inevitable solution to mitigate these forced measures was the adoption of technology to quickly shift toward online teaching and learning. However, this posed a significant challenge to educators across different educational levels. In the Indonesian context, the literature has suggested that the majority of the teachers were not well equipped for this task and faltered in their use of technology (Churiyah et al., 2020). It was even more challenging for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in secondary schools in Indonesia, given the constraints they already faced (see 1.3.1) before the pandemic.

From the learners' perspective, the rapid move online was also problematic because many of them had difficulties figuring out how to access learning resources and materials (Sayer & Braun, 2020). Moreover, online learning required an internet connection, which incurred additional costs that many Indonesian households could not afford (Yarrow et al., 2020). This extra expense added to increasing living costs in a situation where income was significantly reduced, as the pandemic and its social restrictions had significant socioeconomic impacts on people's livelihoods in Indonesia. For example, restrictions on people's mobility and activity had negative impacts on the production sector, which decreased the average income of the Indonesian population (Prawoto et al., 2020). This was particularly evident in Lima Puluh Kota, where 46.48%

of the total population worked in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota, 2022). A large percentage of people relied on activities in fields, farms, and local trade centres such as traditional markets. With strict regulations on social and public activities in place, smallholder farmers and traders found themselves struggling to make ends meet. Consequently, there were students from these demographic groups who were unable to join online learning because they did not have access to technology devices and/or could not afford an internet data package (Kusuma, 2022; Yarrow et al., 2020).

When transitioning to ERT, teachers had to overcome several challenges, which included the limited ability of parents to support their children's learning, both financially and through the required learning supervision activities at home. Moreover, they also needed to be aware of the socio-economic conditions of their students and to try to find solutions that would accommodate their needs. By drawing on the perspectives of English language teachers, this study aims to investigate teacher agency through the exploration of their experiences and emotions. It also examines how the transition and changes of practice affected their professional identity as language teachers. While this study is significant to understanding Language Teacher Agency (LTA) in Indonesian contexts, it will also have a broader contribution to research on agency and on the relationships between agency, professional identity and emotions. Moreover, by investigating both the ERT and the post-ERT periods, this study also aims to contribute to filling the gap in the literature, which has to date focused mostly on the during rather than the post-COVID phase.

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

This chapter has presented the overall aim and objective of the study, the rationale behind it, as well as its significance. It has also provided background information about the research context. This comprised a brief overview of the practice of English Language Teaching in Indonesia, the nature of technology use in Indonesian education, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector and people's livelihood, especially in the Lima Puluh Kota region, as the study site.

Chapter Two reviews the literature on ERT in both international and Indonesian contexts. It also provides an overview of research on teacher agency. Particular attention is given to the ecological perspective of teacher agency as the main theory adopted in this study. Literature on LTA before, during, and after the pandemic is reviewed to highlight the gaps within it.

Chapter Three presents the research methodology. The early sections in the chapter describe the study's overall design, setting, and participants. The latter parts contain details about the study's data collection instruments, which comprise a survey, interviews, and classroom observation, as well as the data collection procedures. Minor adjustments that were made due to COVID-19-related constraints are highlighted and justified. The data analysis procedures, which include descriptive statistics and thematic analysis and the steps undertaken, are presented.

Chapters Four, Five, Six, Seven, and Eight present the findings of the study. These five findings chapters are based on the five themes generated through the thematic analysis. In each of these chapters, analysis of teacher agency, as well as the facilitating and constraining factors, is integrated. Chapter Four focuses on the challenges of the transition to ERT and the early phase of its implementation. Chapter Five centres on the

adjustments made in teaching practice during ERT. Chapter Six looks at the positively perceived impacts of the pandemic. Chapter Seven zooms into the process of professional identity negotiation during and post-ERT, in which identities clashed, were maintained, expanded, emerged, and transformed. Chapter Eight focuses on the return to face-to-face teaching post-ERT. It highlights the affordances and challenges of going back into the classroom after a long period of ERT. It also highlights the implications of ERT experiences for post-ERT classroom practices.

Having presented the findings in detail, Chapter Nine shifts in focus to discuss the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the study. In doing so, it discusses the findings of the study in relation to the literature. It then brings forward the contributions of the study to the literature, especially in the investigation of LTA. It elaborates on the role of the three dimensions of agency in the ecological model in teachers' achievement of agency during and after the pandemic. It also highlights the interactions between teachers' exercise of agency, professional identity negotiation, and emotions, and how each of these elements influenced the others.

Chapter Ten, the final chapter, summarises the key findings and contributions of the study. It presents the implications of the study for policymakers, school management, teacher educators, and English language teachers. Limitations of the study, along with suggestions for future research, are also presented. The Chapter concludes with a final reflection of my research journey as a PhD candidate.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Overview

This chapter reviews the existing body of literature related to general education and language teaching during and in the aftermath of the pandemic. The chapter also details the theoretical framework used in this study, which is centred on the concept of language teacher agency (LTA). Key findings from studies from both Indonesian and international contexts are highlighted to explain the recent developments in the ERT and post-ERT applied linguistics and language education scholarship.

The first two sections present the literature on ERT as a global phenomenon, indicating the challenges and affordances that came with it. This is followed by two sections specifically focused on ERT in language teaching, from international and Indonesian perspectives. Section 2.7 centres on LTA, particularly the ecological perspective, as the main theory in the current study. Two sections that focus on language teacher identity and the agency-identities-emotions triangle subsequently follow. The chapter concludes with the study's research questions.

2.2. Education in the Wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic

When the world was faced with the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, immediate actions were taken to minimise the loss of time and opportunities to access education. Worldwide, a shift to online learning was initiated with the hope that the overall process

of education would continue. However, a sudden transition from the traditional face-to-face setting to the online environment proved to be a much more complicated process (Moser et al., 2021). For example, early studies found that large numbers of teachers lacked the required digital competencies to adapt their practices to meet the demands of ERT (Wong & Moorhouse, 2021). Globally, it was not only teachers who struggled but also the learners. The provision of ERT did not guarantee that “students have the resources and capacity to learn” (Moser et al., 2021, p. 2).

A long list of factors affecting the implementation of ERT is cited in the literature. Some of these are technology-related, such as access to computers, digital devices, and information technology (Ehren et al., 2021). Others relate to human or policy aspects such as training, experience, and institutional or state-level mandates (Moser et al., 2021). Several studies highlight increased teacher workloads as a potential source of problems (e.g., Ehren et al., 2021; MacIntyre et al., 2020). Additionally, MacIntyre et al. (2020, p. 4) noted that “the COVID-19 pandemic considerably elevates the concern for teachers’ anxiety as they find themselves confronted with demanding new teaching methods, extraordinary contexts, and unfamiliar media”.

The initial phase of the transition to ERT showed that many educators were not well prepared. Nevertheless, studies have found that teachers generally maintained a positive attitude and showed a willingness to cope with online teaching (Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020). Empirical research findings also indicate that during this difficult time, teachers still strove to meet their learners’ needs (e.g., Gao & Zhang, 2020; Lepp et al., 2021). Teaching decisions were based on the consideration of the availability and accessibility of digital tools for students, and on supporting students’ social interaction and motivation to learn (Lepp et al., 2021). Lepp et al. (2021) also

point out that teachers' tolerance of their students' academic performance and willingness to take their feedback were factors that impacted their teaching decisions.

Research has also highlighted that teachers needed more support to improve their digital teaching competence through ongoing professional development programs to navigate ERT (Wong & Moorhouse, 2021). Full support from schools and other relevant agencies was required to start implementing online teaching since there were external factors, such as limited technological infrastructure (Simanjuntak & Panjaitan, 2021), that needed to be addressed. An organised support system from colleagues, administrators, and parents was also important for teachers during the pandemic (Zainal & Zainuddin, 2021)

2.3. ERT in the Developing World's Contexts

Recent studies undertaken in developing countries have focused on the challenges of ERT implementation. However, the majority of these studies discuss ERT implementation from a higher education perspective (e.g., Ahmed, 2021; Jin et al., 2021; Mahyoob, 2020; Mathrani et al., 2022; Rahayu & Wirza, 2020; Simanjuntak & Panjaitan, 2021), with a smaller number focused on secondary education (e.g., Collado et al., 2021; Lie et al., 2020). One of the most frequently highlighted issues across both contexts is unequal access to technology infrastructure, online resources, and internet networks. Although this issue is not exclusive to developing nations, it is prevalent and intensively discussed within that context. Mathrani et al. (2022, p. 636) contend that "society at large in developing worlds faces technology diffusing issues, which impact their online educational delivery". Their study highlights that overall, all the measures of the Digital

Divide (access, capability, outcomes, and gender) existed in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Nepal. From this point onward, the current study uses the term 'Digital Divide' (DD) to refer to unequal access to digital technology and infrastructure.

In addition to a focus on the DD, studies have highlighted issues of resourcing. For example, Ahmed (2021) argues that the shift to online learning in Bangladesh was taken without full consideration of supporting factors such as the preparedness of teachers and learners, and digital infrastructure. Ahmed's study points out how this forced shift was burdensome not only for teachers but also for students who had to travel to places with good network coverage to join online classes. Problems around the lack of infrastructure to support the transition to ERT were further emphasised in several other studies. For example, Collado et al. (2021) highlight that the challenges in implementing the transition to ERT in the Filipino secondary education context are linked to infrastructure limitations and underinvestment. Rodriguez et al. (2021) found a similar situation in rural Mexico, where primary and secondary school teachers had to distribute printed materials to their learners' homes and teach through phone calls due to the limitations of technology.

Issues in the transition to online education were also prominent in the few studies that have been undertaken in the Indonesian context. ERT implementation in the country was obstructed by "the uneven access to the internet, the disparity in teacher qualifications and education quality, and the lack of ICT skills" (Azzahra, 2020, p. 2). Furthermore, Churiyah et al. (2020) highlight the discrepancies in ERT practice between urban and rural schools. They found that while teachers in urban schools could teach using smart applications and a variety of platforms such as *Google Classroom*, *Edmodo*, and *Schoology*, most rural school teachers taught through instant messaging applications

like *WhatsApp*. These discrepancies subsequently led to unequal overall students' learning experiences.

Challenges were encountered in both developing and developed countries, but these were more prevalent in the former, particularly in terms of technology infrastructure. The transition to ERT in the developing countries relied heavily on teachers' motivation, resilience, and enactment of agency. Teruya (2021) suggests that investigating these aspects in all their complexities in the light of the pandemic as a socio-historical event, especially through in-depth approaches, has the potential to be a promising avenue of research.

2.4. ERT and Language Teaching

The dominant focus of the international language-teaching literature on ERT has been on the implementation of online teaching. Many of the studies have investigated the challenges, as well as learners' and teachers' experiences (see, e.g., Bachiri & Sahli, 2020; Hazaea et al., 2021; Kashoob & Attamimi, 2021). Other areas of focus include the exploration of different pedagogical approaches, adaptations that were made to facilitate learning, and the extent to which digital tools and resources were used (see, e.g., Badrkhani, 2023; Cheung, 2021a, 2021b; Yi & Jang, 2020).

As found with studies in broader education, regional or country-based language teaching studies in the earlier phase of ERT mainly focused on the sudden shift and how teachers and learners made sense of rapidly changing practices. For example, a large survey-based study by Moser et al. (2021) found that ERT implementation in secondary school language courses in the US was not carefully planned and that teachers were

anxious about students' learning outcomes. That study also notes how the lack of online teaching experience lowered teachers' confidence. Gao and Zhang (2020) reported that, in addition to the challenges related to digital competence and the availability of reliable internet networks, Chinese higher education EFL teachers also faced difficulties managing their online classrooms, which led to low student engagement. The findings of their study also highlighted that teachers needed more support transitioning to ERT (see also Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020; Simanjuntak & Panjaitan, 2021), especially for improving their online teaching skills and adjusting their practices.

Adaptability is a key theme in the literature on language teachers' experience of ERT (Simanjuntak & Panjaitan, 2021; Wong & Moorhouse, 2021). Wong and Moorhouse (2021) highlight teachers' prior experience teaching online as an important factor that might have impacted remote instruction. Teachers' prior experience teaching online, as well as their digital literacy, played a crucial role in their adaptability (Ehren et al., 2021). This created pressure for language teachers because acquiring "the skillset required for online teaching and developing courses that work well in the online environment takes time" (MacIntyre et al., 2020, p. 9).

Increased workload was identified as a significant stressor for teachers during the pandemic (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022; Ehren et al., 2021; MacIntyre et al., 2020). However, there were also other practical challenges such as learners' access to technology, student-teacher and student-to-student interaction, lesson preparation and adaptation, effective time management, utilization of synchronous (i.e., real-time meetings) and/or asynchronous (i.e., non-simultaneous interaction) approaches to teaching, learners' engagement, online assessment, and feedback provision, (Wong &

Moorhouse, 2021). Due to these complex challenges, teachers were found to lack confidence in their practice (Evans et al., 2020).

A number of studies have focused on these practical issues around ERT implementation in language teaching. For example, a case study by Cheung (2021a) highlights the issues around the use of *Zoom* video conferencing software for synchronous ESL teaching in Hong Kong during ERT. One of the important findings is that video conference meetings were predominantly used as a replacement for face-to-face meetings, and that teachers were only concerned about completing their courses, exhibiting reluctance to adopt innovative technology-based pedagogy. A similar theme is found in a study by Juárez-Díaz and Perales (2021). Based on their investigation of EFL teachers in a Mexican higher education setting, they found that some teachers were too focused on delivering content rather than creating meaningful interaction with students, as they opted for asynchronous platforms. This situation, combined with DD issues, resulted in low student engagement and an overall negative experience for teachers.

Findings of studies focusing on language teachers' emotions indicated that the transition to ERT was emotionally challenging for them. For example, an auto-ethnographic study from an Australian tertiary context by McAlinden and Dobinson (2021) reports two contrasting narratives of the two teachers' ERT emotional responses. Overall, their study emphasises the importance of human social interaction (i.e., student-teacher and student-student) in determining teachers' emotional experiences during ERT. The notion of language teacher emotional labour (or "emotion labor", see, e.g., Benesch, 2018; Benesch & Prior, 2023), which refers to work undertaken by teachers to align their feelings, values, and pedagogical beliefs with policy, instruction, and expectations set upon them (Benesch, 2018; Benesch & Prior, 2023), was particularly

prevalent during ERT. For example, in the Chinese context, Liu et al. (2023) found that frustration with one-way communication was one of the main stressors for secondary school EFL teachers during the ERT period. This case study research found that teachers undertook emotional labour in responding to negative emotions caused by the lack of interaction and engagement with their students. This intensified as they dealt with the expectation of being professional and supportive of their learners. They were also expected to maintain personal contact with students, create a sense of community, and provide emotional support for the students beyond the course (Warner & Diao, 2022). Warner and Diao's (2022) study emphasised that these three salient expectations prompted teachers' emotional labour.

Research also highlights the efforts made by educational authorities during the pandemic to mitigate the impact of the sudden transition and support teachers in overcoming the challenges and addressing the issues around ERT implementation. The most common strategy was to provide online training and workshops for teachers to improve their online teaching knowledge and skills. Moser and Wei (2023) found that participation in this kind of program significantly improved teachers' perceived understanding of online language pedagogy. It also boosted their confidence in navigating online teaching and designing classes that support interactivity, which contributed positively to their sense of teaching efficacy.

Alongside the challenges, the language-teaching ERT literature also points out the affordances or benefits experienced by teachers during the ERT period. This means that not all pandemic remote teaching experiences were synonymous with difficulties. While teachers generally had mixed views about the flexibility of online learning, some felt that it helped them manage their workload better and improve their awareness of students'

real-life and learning needs (Evans et al., 2020). It also presented opportunities for teachers to try and learn new things (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022; Sukirman, 2023). These new experiences had positive implications for teachers' reflexivity and problem-solving capacity. For example, MacIntyre et al. (2020) found that some teachers tended to choose an active/positive coping approach rather than an avoidance strategy in dealing with challenges. This positivity was mostly based on teachers' willingness not only to improve their teaching practices but also to create a more meaningful learning experience for the students (Collado et al., 2021).

Language teachers had to deal with the challenges and adapt their practice during ERT. Investigation of how language teachers exercised their agency in going about the reflective process of planning, modifying, and executing lessons in the pandemic and post-pandemic context is a gap in the literature that the current study aims to address. There are other gaps in the current literature that this study seeks to contribute to filling. First, most studies on language-teaching ERT have focused on the earlier phase of the pandemic. There is a paucity of research examining the influence of ERT experiences on both language teachers' current and future practices (i.e., Gao & Cui, 2022). Second, the majority of studies were undertaken in higher education contexts (e.g., Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022; Chen, 2022; Simanjuntak & Panjaitan, 2021; Thumvichit, 2021). There is a lack of in-depth studies on secondary school teachers, particularly in developing countries.

2.5. ERT and English Language Teaching in Indonesia

There were parallel findings between language-teaching ERT studies from international contexts and Indonesian-based ones. During the pandemic, Indonesian EFL teachers faced problems that are consistent with those of other developing nations'

contexts (see section 2.3). These challenges are related to the DD and teachers' lack of experience in online teaching. Before the pandemic, in Indonesia, there was an ongoing campaign to adopt technology and digital resources in English Language Teaching as an extension of the physical classroom (see, e.g., Arsyad, 2016). However, their use, especially in secondary school contexts, was optional and limited to schools within more developed regions (Barbour et al., 2011). Lie (2020) found variation in secondary school EFL teachers' experiences in using technology in their teaching. Teachers from less developed areas were reported to have very limited experience in using technology due to the lack of technology infrastructure at their schools.

Uneven access to the internet and technology and limited online teaching-learning experience were found to be the most salient problems which impacted the efficiency of ERT implementation on language teaching in Indonesia (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Research also highlighted that, for these reasons, online teaching was not possible for teachers working in very remote parts of Indonesia (Kurnia, 2020). Moreover, Indonesian EFL teachers faced difficulties in replicating the efficiency of face-to-face teaching and maintaining interaction and communication online, which were found to have negative impacts on student motivation (Sukirman, 2023)

Indonesian EFL teachers were reported to adopt different strategies and to experiment with the available digital platforms to mitigate the DD issues in implementing ERT. They used multiple platforms for remote teaching to serve this purpose, including *Google Classroom* (Kusuma, 2022; Sundari et al., 2021), *WhatsApp* (Defianty & Wilson, 2023; Kusuma, 2022; Silvhiany, 2022; Sundari et al., 2021), *Google Forms* (Kusuma, 2022; Sundari et al., 2021), and occasionally *Zoom* videoconferencing (Sundari et al., 2021). Rural-based teachers tended to resort to the distribution of hard-

copy materials (Kusuma, 2023) and, in the most extreme cases, the use of radio-based communication like *walkie-talkies* (Kurnia, 2020). The use of *WhatsApp* as a teaching platform was common among Indonesian EFL teachers due to its versatility, simplicity, and affordability (Defianty & Wilson, 2023; Kusuma, 2022; Silvhiany, 2022). Text and voice note features in *WhatsApp* were used to make announcements, while material distribution and task submission were conducted through *Google Classroom* and *Google Forms* (Sundari et al., 2021). Teaching was predominantly asynchronous as the majority of teachers did not meet students online synchronously due to DD challenges.

Despite the teachers' responsiveness and efforts to maximise the available digital tools, their lack of knowledge and experience in online teaching and existing beliefs, e.g., about the importance of face-to-face meetings and direct interaction with students, still significantly impacted their ERT practices. Nugroho et al. (2021) asserted that teachers' negative perceptions of online teaching and their limited skills and knowledge of online pedagogy negatively hindered their ability to design interactive lessons and effectively provide feedback to students. These negative perceptions of online teaching, according to their study, persisted even after the provision of online training and workshops focusing on improving teachers' digital competence.

Lie et al. (2020) asserted that training on digital competence alone was not sufficient to allow Indonesian EFL teachers to facilitate online learning engagement. They emphasised that teachers needed to integrate technological knowledge with their pedagogical and content knowledge. Findings of the earlier studies indicated that some of these existing pedagogical beliefs were contradictory to what was required of teachers during ERT. For example, Defianty and Wilson (2023) found that some teachers believed that they were indispensable in the learning process and that the students did not have

the capacity and motivation to learn independently during ERT. They argue that this kind of belief hindered the possibility of fostering learner autonomy, which might have been ideal for Indonesian ERT circumstances where teachers had difficulties in maintaining contact and interaction with students. The reviewed studies further confirm that teachers felt unsupported and were in need of further training, not only on the technology aspect but also on pedagogy.

The findings of both the Indonesian-based and the wider language-teaching ERT literature also illustrate that in Indonesia, as elsewhere, online teaching has brought not only enormous challenges but also opportunities for teachers. Teachers had opportunities to join professional development (PD) programs through attending webinars, accessing various websites, becoming involved in teacher working groups, and engaging in the professional community through active membership in professional organisations (Silvhiany, 2022).

Engagement in teacher PD opportunities, in particular, was reported to substantially increase during the pandemic with the establishment of government-initiated online teacher PD programs (Sundari et al., 2021). Sukirman (2021) reported that teachers saw the benefits of the pandemic in increasing the array of opportunities to join PD programs, which allowed them to connect with fellow educators, researchers, and professionals from all over the world. These opportunities consequently provided room for teachers to build professional networks and initiate collaborations. Studies also report that, during the pandemic, there was a significant increase in teachers' participation and engagement in teachers' groups and professional communities. For example, Defianty et al. (2021) assert that teacher groups have become a support system for Indonesian EFL teachers, which helped foster a sense of belonging to the professional

community. The participants in their study had a very positive view about their involvement in local teachers' groups because they valued the information shared within, especially that related to educational technology, teaching tips and strategies, as well as opportunities for PD. Engagement in teacher communities not only provided opportunities for information and materials sharing but also helped establish co-constructive understanding among teachers (Sundari et al., 2021).

2.6. Post-ERT (English) Language Teaching

The limited literature on post-pandemic language teaching focuses mainly on the use of technology. The pandemic has undoubtedly brought technology usage in language teaching into the spotlight. Language educators experienced “an enormous leap towards technology usage that may not have occurred without the pandemic as a catalyst” (Stockwell & Wang, 2023, p. 478).

Stockwell and Wang (2023) argue that challenges in sustaining the use of technology in language teaching in the aftermath of the pandemic are evident because, even though teachers and learners may have accepted technology, many of them ended up perceiving their ERT experience negatively. The negative experiences they had during ERT impact their adoption and use of technology post-ERT. They emphasise that whether or not technology becomes an influential part of language teaching post-ERT depends on the ability of teachers to create meaningful tasks and activities by incorporating the available technology.

Moorhouse (2023) analysed the use of digital technologies among sixteen Hong Kong primary EFL teachers in face-to-face classrooms after ERT. The results of their

study indicate that most of the participating teachers decided to continue using digital technology in their face-to-face teaching. LMS, digital noticeboards, digital worksheets and quiz platforms, as well as interactive presentation software, were the main examples of digital technologies that the teachers continued using. However, the study also highlights that, despite their tendency to adopt digital technologies, the participants also became critical of these technologies.

Research has also examined language teachers' perspectives on technology usage beyond ERT. For instance, Jin et al. (2021) investigated the impact of ERT experience on higher education world language educators' intention to teach online after the pandemic. The study involved 662 language educators across the US through a nationwide online survey and 17 teachers in the follow-up interviews. The results show teachers' moderately positive responses to online language teaching post-ERT. Participants expressed their willingness to integrate various technologies into their future teaching. This study also highlights positively perceived values of technology and self-confidence as factors that positively influenced participants' intention to adopt online teaching.

In their investigation of two Korean EFL teachers' adoption of technology in developing classroom-based assessments, Lee and Jeon (2024) found that individual teacher differences, such as pedagogical beliefs, investment, identity, and future goals, significantly influenced the extent to which they adopted technology. Moreover, contextual factors, such as technology affordances, assessment goals, school attitudes toward formative assessment, teacher-student interactions, students' emotional experiences, parental expectations, and institutional support for teacher PD, also played an important role in teacher decisions around the use of technology.

The reviewed studies demonstrate that research on post-ERT language teaching practices is still limited to the investigation of technology uptake and the extent to which teachers are willing to incorporate technology. There is a paucity of research focusing on the impact of ERT experiences on teachers and their decision-making about their practices when face-to-face teaching resumed. The current study aims to contribute to filling this gap in the literature.

2.7. Language Teacher Agency

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the investigation of teacher agency has become increasingly relevant since the transition to online learning is seen as a global policy that affected teachers worldwide. This section starts by discussing the broader concept of teacher agency, the theorisations of LTA, and a short overview of LTA research before the pandemic. This is followed by an introduction to the ecological perspective of agency (2.7.1), which serves as the main theory in the current study. It concludes with an overview of LTA research in both ERT and post-ERT contexts (2.7.2).

From a broader perspective, agency has been described as individuals' "socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (Ahearn, 2001, p. 112). Teacher agency is a rapidly emerging area of research to describe "teachers' active efforts to make choices and intentional action" (Toom et al., 2015, p. 615) to make a difference in their working context. White (2018b, p. 196) further asserts that teacher agency embodies

teacher's efforts to make choices within a host of contexts: in establishing and maintaining relationships with learners and colleagues, in engaging with new curricular requirements and assessment practices, in innovative learning, in participating in ongoing professional development opportunities and teacher workplace learning initiatives, in adapting themselves to the diverse requirements of their working contexts.

Teacher agency is fostered when teachers can choose between different possible options (Ashton, 2022). Teachers' choice to resist changes can also be seen as an enactment of their agency (Le et al., 2020; Lestari, 2018), whereas the absence of choice will most likely lead to a lack of or constrained agency.

Within the field of LTA, there are different theoretical perspectives. To fully understand the history and conceptualisation of LTA, it is necessary to review influential theoretical perspectives (see, e.g., Karimi & Mansouri, 2024; Kayi-Aydar, 2019a; Tao & Gao, 2021; White, 2018b). In theorising agency, Tao and Gao (2021) delineate the contribution of four theoretical perspectives: socio-cognitive, sociocultural, ecological, and post-structuralist. In socio-cognitive theory, agency is seen as individuals' intentional acts (Tao & Gao, 2021). Sociocultural theory generally views agency as a socio-culturally mediated capacity; agency is always mediated by the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which the individuals are situated (Tao & Gao, 2021). However, some scholars within this school of thought also recognise individual capacity (Karimi & Mansouri, 2024). The ecological perspective characterises agency as a temporal and situated achievement that emerges in a particular context rather than an individual capacity; a result of engagements between individuals and their environments (Karimi & Mansouri, 2024; Tao & Gao, 2021). The post-structural theory views agency as a form of discursive practice, meaning that individuals cannot take agentic actions freely and are able to use their agency only when placed in certain positions (Karimi & Mansouri, 2024; Tao & Gao, 2021). While most LTA studies are based on one of the four main theoretical conceptions, Karimi and Mansouri (2024) also found that some studies treat teacher agency as a broad concept without clear theorisation.

The ecological perspective of agency developed by Priestley and colleagues (Biesta et al., 2015; Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Priestley et al., 2015; Priestley et al., 2016) serves as the main theoretical framework in the current study. This is because the model views agency as a temporal and situated achievement, a reflection of the quality of engagement between the actors (teachers) and their temporal and relational context, which includes the structural, material, and cultural aspects of their work environment (ecology) (Priestley et al., 2015, 2016). The following sub-section (2.7.1) goes into this in more detail.

Before the pandemic, LTA research had covered a wide range of topics in both education and applied linguistics. One of the dominant strands is the investigation of LTA in the context of the implementation of certain language policies and planning (Karimi & Mansouri, 2024). This includes researching language teachers' response to the introduction of a new educational policy or a curriculum reform, along with its implications on their agency, identity, and practices (e.g., Ali & Hamid, 2018; Ashton, 2021; Hoang & Le Bach, 2016; Le et al., 2020; Lestari, 2019; Ruan et al., 2020; Tao & Gao, 2017; Warren, 2019).

In the context of the pandemic, the shift to ERT can also be seen as a major educational policy that affected teachers worldwide. Therefore, LTA research has become more prominent in the context of the pandemic and its aftermath.

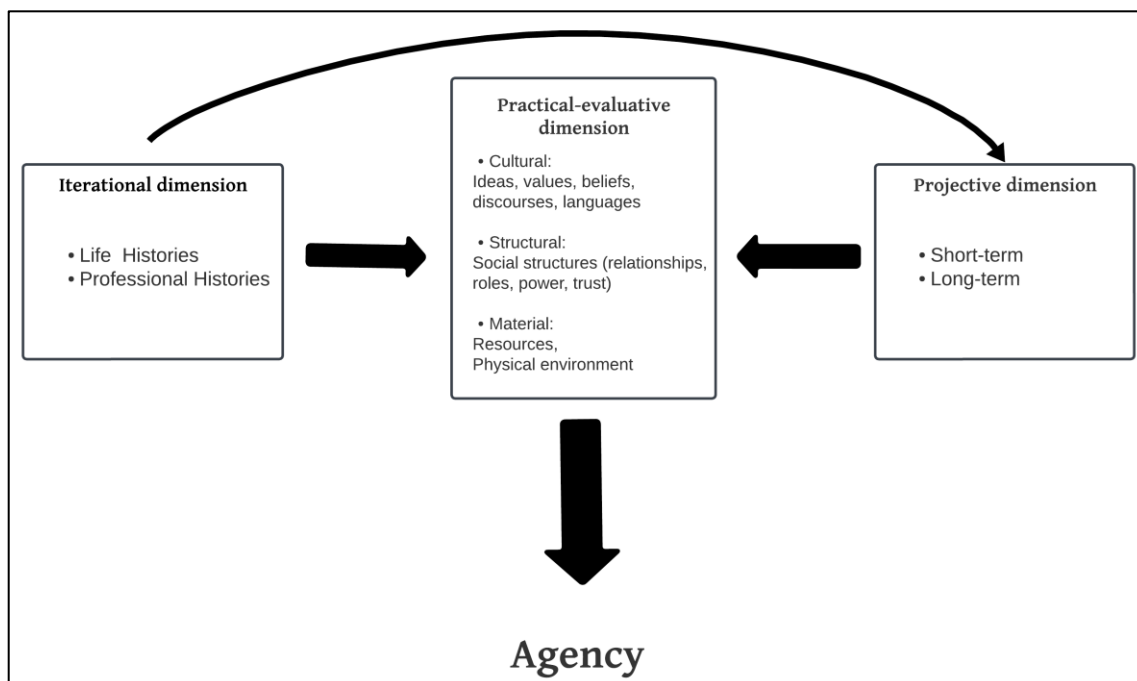
2.7.1. Ecological Perspective of (Teacher) Agency

The most commonly used model of ecological perspective of agency is that of Mark Priestley and colleagues (see, e.g., Biesta et al., 2015; Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Priestley et

al., 2015; Priestley et al., 2016), which draws from earlier work of Emirbayer and Mische (1998). This model emphasises the role of ‘the chordal triad’ of agency: the iterational, practical-evaluative, and projective dimensions.

The ecological perspective characterises agency as an emergent phenomenon; something that can occur or be achieved by the actor (teacher). It represents the quality of the engagement between the actors and their temporal (past experience, current situation, and future aspirations) and relational (cultural, structural, and material) contexts (Priestley et al., 2015, 2016). The ecological model (see Figure 1) hence acknowledges not only the capacity of individuals but also the key roles of structures and time within a particular ecology (Biesta et al., 2015). However, it is also important to note that the contribution of each of the dimensions to the achievement of agency may vary in real situations (Priestley et al., 2015).

Figure 1. Ecological Perspective of (Teacher) Agency Based on Priestley et al. (2015, 2016)



The iterational dimension of agency includes personal and professional histories which entail personal capacity (skills and knowledge), routines, personal and professional beliefs, and values which form a rich repertoire of experience (Priestley et al., 2015, 2016). The projective dimension is concerned with teachers' aspirations towards the future, both short-term and long-term, for their work (Priestley et al., 2015, 2016). The practical-evaluative dimension, which relates to the day-to-day working routines and environment of a teacher (Priestley et al., 2015), is seen as the most influential as it is "powerfully shaping (and often distorting) decision-making and action, both offering possibilities for agency ...and inhibiting it" (Priestley et al., 2016, p. 7). Even though agency is linked to the past and the future, it can only ever be enacted in the present (Priestley et al., 2016). It is manifested in the actor's judgment and real action, and is influenced by cultural, structural, and material aspects (Priestley et al., 2015).

Regarding these three aspects, Priestley et al. (2015, p. 30) further elaborate:

Cultural aspects have to do with ways of speaking and thinking, of values, beliefs and aspirations, and encompass both inner and outer dialogue. Material aspects have to do with the resources that promote or hinder agency and the wider physical environment in and through which agency is achieved. Structural aspects have to do with the social structures and relational resources that contribute to the achievement of agency.

In other words, teacher agency is enacted in the present through their in-the-moment judgment and decision-making as the outcome of their interaction with their environment (structural, material, and cultural aspects). This includes, for example, relationships with students or colleagues (structural), access to facilities (material), and discourses of good teaching practice (cultural). This process is informed by the teachers' repertoire of experiences, such as pedagogical beliefs and knowledge. The extent to which the teacher can draw on this repertoire influences their exercise of agency. Teacher agency is also projected towards the teacher's future goals. It could be oriented

to a long-term goal, such as the provision of quality education for their students, or a short-term one, like helping the students pass an upcoming test.

In addition to the emphasis on the importance of cultural, structural, and material aspects of a teacher's work ecology on their exercise of agency, Rushton and Bird (2024) raise the notion of understanding teacher agency through the spatial lens. They contend that “agency is formed by complex and relational interactions with places and people, over time ... [and that] agency [is seen] as a phenomenon where teachers identify, move between and ... create spaces of agency.” (2024, p. 257). Based on the findings of their UK-based longitudinal case study, which investigated early career secondary school geography teachers’ agency development, they assert that, when encountering structural, material, and contextual constraints, teachers were able to identify and negotiate the available resources to create (new) spaces to facilitate the enactment of agency. For example, when a teacher in the study felt constrained by the curriculum, they created new spaces, like a student club, in which they could exercise their agency to make learning more enjoyable for students.

In this study, the pandemic and its aftermath are viewed as a unique period in which teacher agency was greatly affected due to the sudden change in the learning and teaching environment. This makes the ecological model a good fit to investigate teacher agency during and after the pandemic, emphasising the temporal aspect, within a resource-limited environment in which teachers need to negotiate the changes in the specific structural, material, and cultural aspects of their work, which embody the situated aspect.

2.7.2. (Language) Teacher Agency Research in the Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Teaching Context

During the pandemic, both education and applied linguistics research had a strong focus on teacher agency. For example, Ehren et al. (2021) identify five factors that could potentially facilitate or constrain teacher agency in teaching online during the pandemic. They are students' access to digital tools, the availability of home support, collaboration with parents, the availability of collaborative network support, and the availability of support from school management and other relevant authorities. The results of the study indicate that teachers with prior experience using technology and innovative tools were more likely to be motivated and to take agentic actions to adjust their practice as a response to the pandemic.

Heikkilä and Mankki (2021, p. 1000) emphasise that “the change in the materiality of the teaching (i.e., from physical to virtual space) had both positive and negative consequences for teachers' agency”. While the shift to ERT was seen as a constraint to teacher agency due to its negative impacts on both teacher-student and student-student interaction (Burns, 2022; Chen, 2022; Heikkilä & Mankki, 2021; Ludwig & Tassinari, 2021), it also brought positive impacts towards teacher agency since it fostered collaboration with parents and colleagues (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022; Ehren et al., 2021; Heikkilä & Mankki, 2021). It also enhanced teachers' explorative orientation to experiment with new teaching methods and implement valuable practices for supporting their learners (Heikkilä & Mankki, 2021; Jin et al., 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2021).

The context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the inevitable shift to ERT have emphasised the role of teachers as agents who are capable of enacting agency by making

“efforts to influence and make a difference” (Chaaban et al., 2021, p. 3). The temporal, relational, material, and contextual factors (Biesta et al., 2015; Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Heikkilä & Mankki, 2021; Priestley et al., 2015, 2016) of the pandemic are seen as a trigger of a global change in the field of education, as the rapid transition from physical classrooms to online teaching was made. The investigation of teacher agency within the context of ERT as a global phenomenon has become increasingly important since studies have found that the change in teaching and learning environment, from physical to virtual, had both positive and negative consequences for teachers’ agency (Heikkilä & Mankki, 2021). The investigation of the affordances and constraints brought about by the pandemic and how teachers exercised their agency to negotiate them was the focus of many studies conducted around the period between 2021-2024, both in the general education and language teaching fields.

Studies found that there is individual variation between teachers in terms of their achievement of agency. For example, a quantitative study involving 171 teachers in Norway by Damşa et al. (2021) categorised teachers into three profiles based on their agency and responses to the pandemic. Profile 1 (36,7%) comprised those who used few online teaching methods and tended to be pessimistic about their practice. They also tended to resist the change required for online teaching and refused to acknowledge its potential benefit. Teachers in profile 2 (55,2%) made moderate use of new teaching methods and software. They attempted to engage in online learning activities but were unsure if their efforts would yield positive outcomes. They tended to see online teaching as problematic. Teachers in profile 3 (8%) could use a wide range of teaching methods and technology to support their learners. They viewed the transition online as a challenging but rewarding experience.

The extent to which teachers can exercise their agency is influenced by both personal (internal) and contextual (external) factors (Priestley et al., 2015, 2016). Mansfield et al. (2023) delineate five key conditions that helped facilitate teacher agency during ERT: 1) an open individual mindset, 2) flexibility to respond in appropriate ways, 3) reduced (structural) complexity, 4) effective relationships with leadership, students, parents and colleagues, and 5) parental support. Besides individual teachers' open-mindedness and willingness to change, they also emphasise the importance of support from school leadership and parents in facilitating teacher agency.

As detailed above (see 2.7.1), in the ecological perspective, agency is enacted in the present (practical-evaluative dimension). However, in enacting agency, teachers draw on their knowledge and past experience (iterational dimension) and orient their actions towards their future aspirations (projective dimension) (Priestley et al., 2015, 2016). Reyes-Rojas and Salinas (2024) highlight the 'fractured' nature of the teachers' iterational and projective dimensions of agency during the pandemic. The iterational dimension was fractured because many teachers did not have anything in their repertoire on how to deal with the novel teaching situation caused by the pandemic. The projective dimension was also compromised since the participants faced uncertainties regarding the future of their teaching (i.e., long-term aspirations were impacted) as they were predominantly focused on the immediate challenges in front of them (i.e., short-term goals).

The findings of research on language teaching and LTA during the pandemic are in line with those of the earlier studies from the general education field. The latter have highlighted some of the ways teachers exercised their agency in emergency response teaching, such as maintaining relationships with students, providing extra support for

them, adjusting to content and delivery (Evans et al., 2020), and raising the urgency for fostering collaboration with colleagues and parents (Kukulka-Hulme, 2021). Similar themes also emerged from the LTA studies published during the pandemic. Table 1 highlights the findings of some of these studies.

Table 1. Summary of Early LTA Research on ERT

Agency enactment	Related studies
Maintaining relationships and providing support for students	Ashton (2022)
Adjusting content and delivery	Sari (2021); Zainal and Zainuddin (2021)
Seeking help and initiating collaboration with colleagues	Sari (2021); Zainal and Zainuddin (2021)
Engaging in online learning communities	Sari (2021); Zainal and Zainuddin (2021)
Developing interactive activities and a constructive learning atmosphere	Ashton (2022); Thumvichit (2021)
Exploring and using different approaches/methods in teaching	(Chen, 2022; Thumvichit, 2021; Zainal & Zainuddin, 2021)
Collaborating with students (and/or parents) to evaluate and develop their teaching practices	Ashton (2022); Sari (2021)
Finding additional resources to develop lessons	Sari (2021)
Fostering learners' autonomy	Thumvichit (2021)
Using formative assessment	Thumvichit (2021)

In post-pandemic times, new topics in LTA research are emerging. One salient example is the investigation of the impact of teacher education courses or professional development programs on LTA (e.g., Estaji, 2024; Meihami & Malmir, 2024). Some studies have focused on teacher agency in language assessment (e.g., Estaji, 2024; Lee & Jeon, 2024). Despite this emergence, some scholars have continued exploring other topics around teacher agency in the context of ERT/post-ERT. Many of them have focused on the exploration of the links between LTA and emotions (e.g., Cong-Lem & Nguyen, 2024; Jang, 2024; Tao et al., 2024), and LTA and (professional) identity (e.g., Ahn & Chi, 2023; Morita-Mullaney et al., 2023). This strand of LTA research is reviewed in

section 2.9. The current trends in LTA research indicate that topics around ERT or post-ERT remain relevant even years after the pandemic ended.

Investigation into how agency was exercised by language teachers to overcome the challenges amidst the crisis is therefore the lingering central theme of LTA research published both during and after the ERT period. Besides this overarching theme, LTA research also highlights the factors influencing teacher decision-making, a key element of the practical-evaluative dimension of agency. Chen (2022) highlights that L2 teachers' different approaches to assisting and facilitating students in their remote classrooms were based on factors such as student characteristics, course content, and class size. In their case study research, which explored the implications of Chinese EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs on their agency in using online technology during and after the pandemic, Gao and Cui (2022) found that teachers' pedagogical beliefs were factors influencing their agency. However, they also assert that pedagogical beliefs should not be regarded as the sole indicator. Further considerations about teachers' peripheral beliefs and dynamic teaching context are required to assess the interplay between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their agency in integrating technology.

Similar to the wider ERT literature discourse, LTA research also delineates challenges and affordances faced by teachers as they delved into ERT, which ultimately became facilitators and/or barriers to their agency. Factors like lack of confidence (Charbonneau-Gowdy & Frenzel, 2023; Hancock & Hancock, 2024; Mansfield et al., 2023), unfamiliarity with online teaching (Gooran et al., 2022; Hancock & Hancock, 2024; Nugroho et al., 2021), limited access to technology and resources (Hancock & Hancock, 2024; Nordstrom & Zhang, 2023) and unconducive working space (Hancock & Hancock, 2024) were found as the prevalent challenges language teachers faced during

ERT constraining their agency. Despite these challenges, studies also highlight the benefits and opportunities brought by the shift to ERT, which enabled teachers to exercise their agency by adopting innovative solutions to cater to their learners' needs (Hancock & Hancock, 2024; Nordstrom & Zhang, 2023).

There was a plethora of LTA research conducted within the context of language teaching during the pandemic (ERT). However, these studies have predominantly focused on teachers' in-the-moment decision making, which constitutes the practical-evaluative dimension of agency. Moreover, there is a paucity of research investigating post-ERT language teaching practices. One among the very few examples is Lee and Jeon (2024), who investigated two South Korean primary school English teachers' agency in implementing classroom-based assessment in a post-ERT setting. This study found that teachers' individual differences significantly influenced their enactment of agency in adopting technology for classroom-based assessment in post-ERT classrooms. The variations between the two participants were interpreted through individual (e.g., pedagogical beliefs, investment, identity, and future goals) and contextual factors (e.g., cultural, structural, and material dimensions).

The current study aims to contribute to the literature on LTA by investigating all three dimensions of agency and the interactions between them, which led to the enactment of agency during and post-ERT within an under-researched context of Indonesia. It will add to the current discussion of how agency is achieved within a particular ecology within a specific time.

2.8. Language Teacher (Professional) Identity

There is a strong link between teacher agency and identity. The ecological perspective acknowledges the focal role of teacher identity in the enactment of their agency (Tao & Gao, 2021). The interconnection between these two constructs is explored further in 2.9.1.

Research on language teacher identity took off almost three decades ago (e.g., Duff & Uchida, 1997). It has been described as something that is of both individual and social nature (Richards, 2016). Richards (2023) further asserts that it is informed by both teaching practice and teacher education experience as well as target language proficiency. It has had multiple foci, which started with the investigation of linguistic and sociocultural identity, and recently, shifted towards the post-structural approaches, in which they “are described as multiple, complex, and shifting” (Kayi-Aydar, 2019b, p. 282). Given its dynamic nature, identiti(es) need to be constructed, maintained and negotiated through careful consideration of both internal and external factors, which can be social, cultural, and sometimes, political (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Varghese et al., 2005).

One of the most commonly used theoretical lenses in recent language teacher identity studies is the concept of professional identity (see, e.g., Alosaimi, 2023; Ashadi et al., 2022; El-Soussi, 2022; Jang, 2022; Sanczyk-Cruz & Miller, 2024; Wang & Yazan, 2024). Vähäsantanen (2022) defines professional identity as the way individuals perceive themselves as professionals based on their experiences and life history. When it comes to teachers, it “comprises the notion of agency, or the active pursuit of professional development and learning in accordance with a teacher’s goals” (Vähäsantanen, 2022, p. 177).

The major strand in teacher professional identity research looks at the implications of changes in the work context on teachers' professional lives (Vähäsantanen, 2022). In the field of language teaching, the focus of professional identity research has been conducted on topics such as workplace conflicts (e.g., Moradkhani & Ebadijalal, 2021), pre-service teacher identity (e.g., Kayi-Aydar, 2015), agency in PD (e.g., Huang, 2021), curriculum reform (e.g., Tao & Gao, 2017), and the shift to online language teaching (e.g., White, 2016). The interest in the shift to online language teaching grew as the COVID-19 pandemic saw the inevitable shift to ERT, a global transition which drove teachers to negotiate, reshape, or even transform their professional identity (Alosaimi, 2023; Chaaban et al., 2021; Nazari & Seyri, 2021; Yuan & Liu, 2021).

Related research conducted during the pandemic sheds light on the implications of the sudden transition to ERT for teacher roles and ultimately, identity. For instance, El-Soussi (2022) asserts that there were disruptions, ambiguities, and tensions in teachers' sense of professional identity as they felt insecure and uncomfortable with the shift. Burns (2022) further notes that identity crises can happen when a teacher feels exposed in front of the screen during online teaching. A study from an Indonesian context highlights that the role of teacher was significantly narrowed due to the absence of face-to-face meetings, and they were forced to negotiate and reshape their identities as they learned to "adjust to new roles that might be lost, diminished, emerged, or even enlarged" (Ashadi et al., 2022, p. 140). Research on language teacher identity during ERT has focused on the identity crises and tensions, and how the teachers dealt with them. These studies have indicated the link between identity and agency as teachers exercised their agency to resolve their identity tension and negotiate their identities. However, very few of these studies attempted to further explore the connections between identity negotiation and teacher agency, emotions, and overall professional identity trajectory.

There is also a paucity of research on the professional identity of language teachers in the post-pandemic context (i.e., Ahn & Chi, 2023; Alosaimi, 2023; Charbonneau-Gowdy & Frenzel, 2023). A US-based study by Ahn and Chi (2023) found that participants negotiated and reshaped their identity after returning to the classroom by expanding their roles to those of caregivers and community builders. Similarly, Alosaimi (2023) found that teachers developed a strong awareness of the positive transformation of their professional selves as a result of their personal and professional growth during the pandemic. The findings of this study also suggested that, upon returning to the classroom, some teachers reshaped their professional identities by taking up new responsibilities in conjunction with their professional growth as language teachers.

A study by Charbonneau-Gowdy and Frenzel (2023) undertaken in a Chilean higher education EFL setting is the only research to date that has investigated teacher identity in both pandemic and post-pandemic contexts. The results of this study suggest the continuous impact of the pandemic experience on both teacher professional identities and practices after the pandemic. The impact is seen through the ways teachers, through a partnership with their students, redefine the use of technology, establish collaborative control over decision-making, and access the professional support they need. Teachers also expanded their roles in assisting students with technology, reshaping their professional identity.

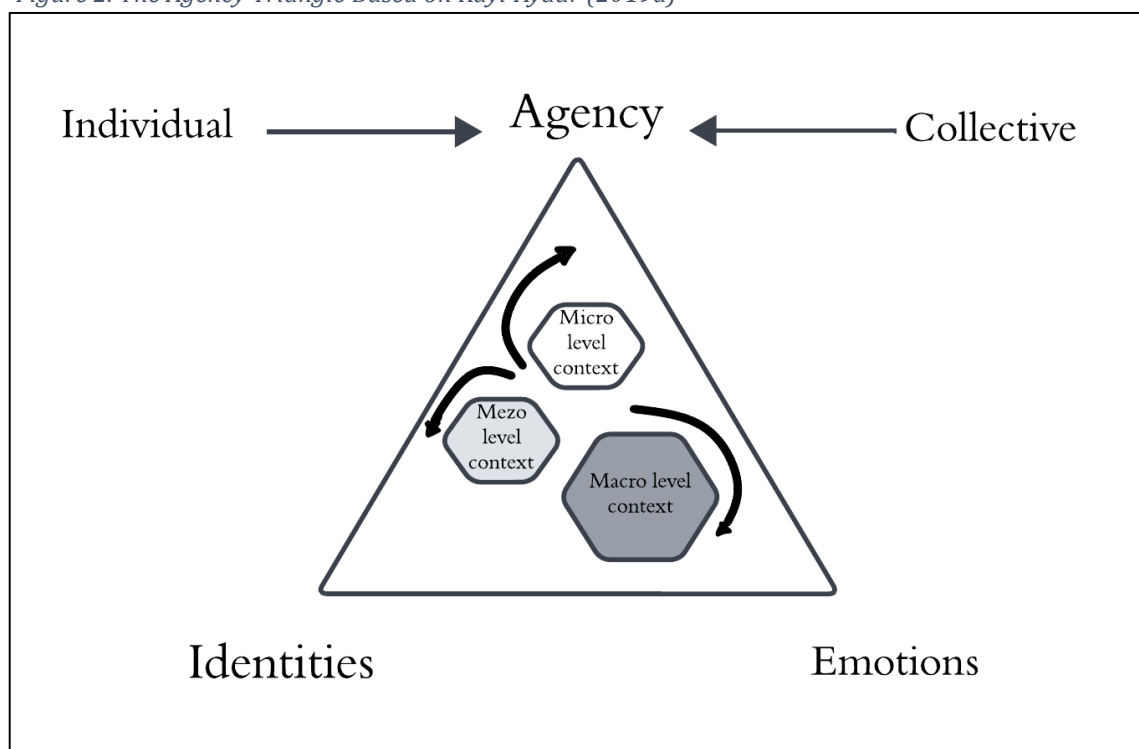
2.9. Agency-Identity-Emotion Triangle

The pandemic literature on LTA has underlined that investigations of LTA are context-dependent and complex, and sometimes, overlap with other concepts such as

identity (e.g., Ashton, 2022) and emotions (e.g., Sari, 2021; Thumvichit, 2021). Within the wider literature, LTA is often investigated with other theoretical constructs (Tao & Gao, 2021). The pandemic saw the emergence of new strands of LTA research. More studies were initiated on the investigation of LTA in conjunction with other conceptual/theoretical domains, like language teacher (professional) identity and emotions.

Conceptually, LTA is tied to identity and emotion (Karimi & Mansouri, 2024). Kayi-Aydar (2019a) argues that the best way to understand LTA is by exploring the relationships between agency, identity, and emotion, as visualised by the triangle in Figure 2. However, while during the pandemic, language teachers faced issues that challenged both their identity (Alosaimi, 2023) and emotions (Jang, 2024), research on this so-called agency triangle in empirical research is still very limited.

Figure 2. The Agency Triangle Based on Kayi-Aydar (2019a)



The literature suggests that the investigation of professional identity and emotions is integral in researching LTA in the context of the pandemic and its aftermath. Several studies have explored the interplay between two of the three concepts (i.e., agency-identity, agency-emotion, and identity-emotion). This section highlights findings from empirical research on the interplay between agency, identity, and emotions. The subsequent sub-sections focus on the agency-identity (2.9.1), agency-emotion (2.9.2), and identity-emotion (2.9.3) links. Engaging with this strand of literature is essential in establishing an understanding of how teachers exercised their agency and negotiated their professional identity in the context of the pandemic and its aftermath. The following three sub-sections are structured based on the most researched topics (agency-identity) to the least researched (identity-emotion).

2.9.1. (Language) Teacher Agency and (Professional) Identity

The majority of research on teacher agency delineates the connection between teacher agency and identity (Karimi & Mansouri, 2024). The reciprocity between agency and identity is frequently highlighted in the findings of studies focusing on either LTA or language teacher identity. Some studies have focused on the mutual relationship between the two constructs (see, e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Duff, 2013; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Tao & Gao, 2017). This relationship is best described as continuous and reciprocal rather than one-off-causative, as the possible result of the realisation of teacher identity comes in the form of teacher agency (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Teacher agency, in turn, plays a crucial role in maintaining or (re)shaping teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Morita-Mullaney et al., 2023). This two-way relationship is echoed by Zhang and Hwang (2023, p. 2):

A teacher's agency is reciprocally related to teacher identity. When teachers construct their identity in teaching contexts, they exercise their agency and take actions that they believe are associated with this identity construction. These actions, and how they are perceived by others, influence ongoing teacher identity construction.

The interplay between LTA and (professional) identity is further addressed in some studies. For example, a longitudinal case study of a Hong Kong early-career secondary school ESL teacher by Huang (2021) found that mismatches between perceived and actual practices (expectation vs reality), combined with a lack of professional development opportunities, constrained teacher agency. This caused instability (tension) in their perceived identities, which further impacted their agency. The teacher's perceived identity was also found to influence their ability to negotiate the challenges to teacher agency.

Findings of earlier studies focusing on ERT and online teaching also suggest that agency is an important element of teachers' identity tension-negotiation (see, e.g., Sanczyk-Cruz & Miller, 2024; Wang & Yazan, 2024; Xu & Tao, 2023; Zhang & Hwang, 2023). Negotiating identity tensions during the pandemic required teachers to exercise agency in adjusting their practices and determining the (new) course in their professional identity (Wang & Yazan, 2024). Research conducted within the ERT context further elucidates how teachers exercised their agency in overcoming identity tensions and negotiating their professional identities. For example, Burns (2022) notes that, as a response to the identity tension, teachers expanded their identity by providing more pastoral care, developing a better understanding of students' learning needs and conditions and paying more attention to their well-being. Similar findings are highlighted in a case study researched by Xu and Tao (2023), indicating that, in dealing with the pedagogical tension of shifting to online teaching, teachers enacted their agency by maintaining their initial identity, strategically adopting new identities, and switching

between multiple identities. The participants in the study also exercised their agency by redefining the identity of a teacher as a caregiver. Teachers in the study provided support for students by showing empathy, helping develop independent thinking skills, establishing a connection through a virtual community, and investing time and effort in students' psychological well-being.

Research also further delineates how individual teacher factors, as part of their professional identity, might influence their ability to exercise agency. For example, Zhang and Hwang (2023) illustrate the significant role of teaching experience in teacher agency in responding to pandemic teaching challenges. These distinct responses distinguish the type of agency enacted by the teachers (Chaaban et al., 2021) and shape the way they view themselves as teachers, which is key to their professional identity negotiations (Zhang & Hwang, 2023).

2.9.2. Language Teacher Agency and Emotions

The link between agency and emotions has received less attention in the literature compared to the link between agency and identity (Tao & Gao, 2021). The roles of teachers' emotions are also considered vital in the achievement of agency. All emotions are potential sources of language-teacher agency, which also signify the condition in which teachers are working (Benesch, 2018). Exploring language teachers' emotions is integral in the process of investigating LTA since an analysis of emotions would provide further insights into the enactment of agency (Kayi-Aydar, 2019a).

Emotions can play both a negative and a positive role in a teacher's work. The ways teachers regulate their emotions have implications for their emotional well-being, which

ultimately affect their teaching (Talbot & Mercer, 2018). Furthermore, emotions can constrain and/or facilitate agency (White, 2018a). They prompt teachers to “initiate reflection on how particular discourses of teaching intersect with their emotion experiences and choices to exercise agency” (Miller and Gkonou, 2018, p. 57). For example, in a study about language teachers’ responses to university plagiarism policy, Benesch (2018) illustrates the role of emotions towards agency by highlighting that empathy for students and a sense of pedagogical responsibility were behind teachers’ reluctance to report and process students’ acts of plagiarism.

Research on language teacher emotions has gradually gained momentum since the outset of the pandemic. Over this time, there has been a significant increase in research investigating language teachers’ emotional experiences, emotional vulnerability, emotion regulation, as well as emotional labour (e.g., Cong-Lem & Nguyen, 2024; Jang, 2024; Nazari et al., 2024; Song, 2022; Tao et al., 2024; Warner & Diao, 2022). This increased importance is due to the variety of emotions that teachers experienced during ERT, as they dealt with challenges such as changes to their practice and increasing workload (Ehren et al., 2021; MacIntyre et al., 2020).

Lately, more studies have focused on the link between language teacher emotions and agency. For example, a study by Cong-Lem and Nguyen (2024), which focused on how Vietnamese university EFL teachers deal with dramatic events in their classrooms, found that there is a reciprocal relationship between the participants’ emotional experience and their agency. Their emotional experience significantly influenced their agency, and their agency had a positive impact on transforming the emotional aspect of the teachers’ experience. Findings of earlier studies also indicated that teachers’

decisions to embrace their emotional vulnerability positively affected their agency (Nazari & Hu, 2024).

A study by Tao et al. (2024) further examined the interplay between teacher emotions and agency enactment of Chinese university-level language teachers during ERT. They found that the emotions-agency interplay was contingent on the achievement of their teaching goals. This means that negative emotions about students' learning outcomes might push teachers to exercise their agency. When agency leads to the achievement of learning goals, it will, in turn, positively impact teachers' emotions. However, when the learning target is not achieved, agency enactment will not have a positive impact on teachers' emotions.

A case study of a Korean EFL teacher's emotional vulnerability and their exercise of agency during ERT by Jang (2024, p. 6) highlights that the participant "exhibited agency at various levels to mitigate emotional vulnerability associated with online teaching modes and contexts". The teacher in the study exercised their agency through their effort in locating and compiling learning resources, finding alternative measures to support learners, negotiating and enhancing teaching practice, participating in training programs to improve online teaching knowledge, and problem-sharing with peers, which in turn, helped them overcome their emotional vulnerability. Jang (2024, p. 10) concludes that "emotional vulnerability can serve as a critical resource for the development of agency in online teaching practices", and being emotionally vulnerable does not necessarily constrain the achievement of agency.

As stated earlier, the investigation of the link between agency and emotions is a recently emerging trend in research that bloomed from the outset of the pandemic. There is a paucity of research looking at how these two elements influence one another

in the context of the pandemic and its aftermath. The current study aims to contribute to filling this gap in the literature.

2.9.3. Teacher (Professional) Identity and Emotion

Investigation of the interplay between teacher emotion and identity was pioneered by Zembylas (2003). The study highlights the pivotal role of emotions in identity formation, establishing that accounts of emotional experience help provide a more nuanced understanding of identity construction. This notion is echoed in many other studies related to teacher identity. Emotion has consequently been highlighted as an integral part of teacher identity (Warner & Diao, 2022).

The reciprocal relationship between the two constructs has also been elucidated in recent studies on teacher emotions. For example, in a study examining language teachers' emotional vulnerability during online teaching, Xu et al. (2024) underline that one of the factors causing this vulnerability is the clash between the reality of the online classroom and teachers' professional identity. They further contend that teachers' emotional experiences and teaching practices are intertwined with their sense of professional identity. Challenged or lost professional identity may lead to emotional vulnerability.

Apart from the seminal work of Zembylas (2003), there has been very limited empirical research to further investigate the link between teacher identity and emotion. One example is the work of Vähäsantanen et al. (2020). Drawing from a study focused on the interplay between professional identity work and emotions in the context of an arts-based identity coaching program in Finland, they highlight the reciprocity between

emotions and professional identity. Their findings indicate that emotions can either facilitate or constrain professional identity work. On the other hand, professional identity work is also seen as an emotional endeavour that can consequently evoke both positive and negative emotions.

The emotional aspect of teacher identity has been further highlighted in the findings of research on language teacher identity during the pandemic, which further suggests the link between language teacher emotion and identity work. For example, El-Soussi (2022, p. 7) states that “personal, professional and situated uncertainties can generate tensions in the emotional makeup of identity; therefore, teachers have to stay strong and get enough emotional support when faced with change”. In a study investigating Iranian language teacher identity transition and construction during the shift to ERT, Nazari and Seyri (2021) identify emotional labour as one of the key components in their participants’ identity transition process.

While the literature has indicated the link between identity and emotions, thus far, only a very limited number of studies have investigated this connection explicitly in the context of ERT and post-ERT (i.e., Jang, 2024; Tao et al., 2024). The current study aims to look further at the interplay between agency and emotions as part of an effort to better understand LTA in the context of the pandemic and its aftermath.

2.10. Research Questions

This study’s objective is to investigate LTA within ERT and post-ERT contexts. It aims to investigate how Indonesian secondary school EFL teachers exercised their agency when they were forced to teach remotely during the pandemic, and when they

returned to face-to-face teaching after the pandemic. To achieve this objective, the following research questions are proposed:

- 1) What adjustments did English language teachers make to their practice during and after the pandemic lockdown period, and how did they perceive and articulate these experiences?
- 2) How did the teachers exercise their agency, negotiate their professional identities, and manage their emotions in response to these experiences?

Initially, the study was designed to focus more strongly on agency and professional identity. However, as the role of emotions became more apparent during the study, this was added to the research questions.

2.11. Summary

This study aims to investigate language teacher agency in the context of ERT and post-ERT. In this chapter, scholarship on ERT has been examined to outline the recent development in the field of education and language teaching amidst and at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Literature on LTA was also reviewed to highlight the relevance of the ecological perspective on agency to this current study. By drawing on the literature, this chapter has highlighted the reciprocal relationships of teacher agency, identity, and emotion. This is important since identity and emotion, as reviewed in this chapter, are important elements of language teachers' ERT realities. The study, hence, has been designed to explore LTA through its dynamic interaction with identity and emotion (Kayi-Aydar, 2019a)

Literature on ERT elucidates not only the challenges faced by the teachers as they transitioned into online teaching during the pandemic, but also the affordances of technology, innovation in teaching methodologies, and teachers' adaptability in responding to the challenges. The literature consistently raises the concern about supporting teachers' PD to improve their future preparedness. However, from the review, it is evident that there is a relatively smaller number of studies looking at post-ERT language teaching practices when compared to those used during ERT. There is also a paucity of research undertaken in under-researched contexts such as the secondary school setting within a semi-urban region of developing countries like Indonesia. The current study aims to contribute to filling these gaps.

The section on LTA explained the ecological perspective and elaborated on its relevance for the current research. It also provided an overview of LTA research in both pandemic and post-pandemic contexts. The reviewed studies revealed a few gaps in the current LTA literature. Firstly, while the number of LTA studies that focused on ERT and the ecological model significantly increased, there has been less focus on three dimensions of agency. Secondly, there are very limited studies investigating LTA in post-pandemic teaching settings. This study seeks to contribute to filling these gaps.

This chapter has elucidated that, while there are studies that are dedicated to exploring the links between LTA and the other two concepts (i.e., identity and emotion), few have examined LTA through the lens of the agency-identities-emotions triangle. The reviewed studies suggested that research on this topic is still in its infancy. This research aims to contribute to the literature by investigating LTA through further exploration of the interplay between teacher agency, identity, and emotion. Engaging with the literature on the agency-identity-emotion interplay can provide preliminary insights into how

teachers exercise their agency, negotiate their professional identities, and manage their emotions in challenging times.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Overview

This study was designed to investigate secondary school English language teacher agency in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. Each of the methodological decisions was based on the overall aim of answering the two research questions: 1) *What adjustments did English language teachers make to their practice during and after the pandemic lockdown period, and how did they perceive and articulate these experiences?* and 2) *How did the teachers exercise their agency, negotiate their professional identities, and manage their emotions in response to these experiences?*

This chapter comprises detailed explanations of the research design (section 3.2), the setting of the study (section 3.3), participants and selection decision (section 3.4), data collection instruments and procedures (section 3.5), ethical considerations (section 3.6), and the process of data analysis (section 3.7).

3.2. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach. It is philosophically based on a *pragmatic* worldview, which emphasises the consequences of research, the importance of research questions rather than the methods, and the use of multiple methods of data collection to inform the research problem under study (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017). This paradigm was relevant for my research since I thought all decisions on

methodology should be based on the research objective to investigate English language teacher agency during and after the pandemic. This study is also oriented toward the *interpretive paradigm* as it aims to look more deeply into the teachers' views on their experience of COVID-19 as a shared social phenomenon, and highlights how they felt and acted during the difficult period and how the pandemic affected and influenced their agency and their professional identities. Interpretive research is usually *inductive* and *data-driven*, focusing on understanding the meaning of human actions and behaviours and scrutinizing the personal motives and reasons that affect the ways people behave and act in certain contexts within an overall effort to describe a social phenomenon from the view of the participants of the research (Riazi, 2016).

I also see this research as a case study of English language teacher agency in secondary schools in the chosen context, the Lima Puluh Kota region. Case study research in general emphasises “the singular nature of the case, the importance of context, the availability of multiple sources of information or perspectives on observations, and the in-depth nature of analysis” (Duff, 2008, p. 22). This study can be categorised further as a predominantly qualitative interpretive case study (Duff, 2014) in which “participants and sites ... are described in rich detail” (2014, p. 236).

Although the study is predominantly a qualitative interpretive case study, it has an initial phase which comprised an online survey that consisted not only of closed ended ‘quantitative’ questions to obtain demographic data and broad data on the experiences of the pandemic, but also ‘qualitative’, open-ended questions. This survey was generally aimed to systematically examine a larger amount of respondent data than would be possible through purely qualitative measures. Furthermore, the survey was the basis for recruiting participants for the latter part of the study, and at the same time, built the

context for the core qualitative studies (Morgan, 2014). This is followed by the second phase, which consisted of interviews and classroom observations.

The two phases of the study were based on the two main research questions. The first phase, the survey, began the investigation of the first research question: *What adjustments did English language teachers make to their practice during and after the pandemic lockdown period, and how did they perceive and articulate these experiences?* The broad aim was to explore the general pattern of the adjustments of teaching practices and experiences of English language teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through an online survey, it was expected that this phase would generate a large number of responses. However, the intention was not to make generalisations about the data; it was purposed to obtain a clearer picture of the phenomenon under investigation within a specific region and, at the same time, to provide context for phase two. The second phase of the study, which involved multiple interviews and classroom observations, was aimed at responding to the second research question: *How did the teachers exercise their agency, negotiate their professional identities, and manage their emotions in response to these experiences?* It also continued the investigation of the first research question. This phase investigated the practices highlighted in the survey responses to look in-depth at how English teachers exercised their agency, negotiated their professional identities, and managed their emotions in the light of their current pandemic-related experiences. This phase was the dominant focus of the study as it focuses on the central question of how English teachers as professionals acted in response to the pandemic and reflected on their recent experiences. The overview of the study's research design can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Overview of the Study's Research Design

Research paradigm	Research approach	Data collection methods	Addressed research questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pragmatic • Interpretive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Qualitative-dominant) Mixed-methods • Case study 	1 st phase: Survey	<i>a. What adjustments did English language teachers make to their practice during and after the pandemic lockdown period, and how did they perceive and articulate these experiences?</i>
		2 nd phase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-rounds Interview • Classroom observation 	<i>a. What adjustments did English language teachers make to their practice during and after the pandemic lockdown period, and how did they perceive and articulate these experiences?</i> <i>b. How did the teachers exercise their agency, negotiate their professional identities, and manage their emotions in response to these experiences?</i>

3.3. The Setting of the Study

The setting of this research is Lima Puluh Kota, one of 19 administrative regions in West Sumatra province, Indonesia. The geographical position of West Sumatra province in Indonesia can be viewed in Figure 3.

Figure 3. West Sumatra in Indonesia (image source: [Wikipedia](#), TUBS, 2011)



This region was chosen predominantly because of my connection to it, since I have spent more than fifteen years working and living there. Personal motivation aside, this region has economic and geographical characteristics that bear similarities to several others in Indonesia. It is a developing region with a mixture of rural and suburban areas in which people's livelihood relies on the agricultural sector. In other words, this region could be seen as a representative of the Indonesian non-urban regions, which have been relatively under-researched. The region covers 13 sub-districts with a total population of 383,525 (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota, 2022).

At the time of this research, in total, there were 121 state and private secondary schools in this region. This number comprises 86 lower secondary level schools and 35 higher secondary level schools (Ministry of Education and Culture, n.d.). These schools were categorised further into:

- Junior high school (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama/SMP*)
- Senior high school (*Sekolah Menengah Atas/SMA*)
- Islamic junior high school (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah/MTs*)
- Islamic senior high school (*Madrasah Aliyah/MA*)
- Islamic boarding school (*Pesantren*)
- Vocational high school (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/SMK*)

It is important to note that the focus on morals and character-based education is long-established in the Indonesian culture and education system (Puad & Ashton, 2020; Qoyyimah, 2016; Qoyyimah et al., 2023). During the time of the study, most of the schools were under transition from the previous national curriculum, the 2013 curriculum (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013), to the *Merdeka* curriculum (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, 2024a, 2024b). The former

strongly emphasised attitude, character building and the teaching of moral values, while the latter has a stronger learner-centred focus, granting teachers more flexibility, greater autonomy and agency in interpreting learning objectives and developing their own materials for tailored teaching based on their understanding of their learners' needs. However, many of the teachers in this study still regarded moral and character-based education as the core of their teaching. This was more obvious with the teachers at Islamic boarding schools (*Pesantren*), since the focus on students' character and moral values teaching were not only considered in line with the Islamic principles but also regarded as one of the strengths of these schools (Qoyyimah, 2016; Qoyyimah et al., 2023).

Participants in the study included English teachers from each category of secondary school in Lima Puluh Kota. However, after consulting my supervisors, I decided not to include vocational high school teachers. This was mainly because this type of school was completely different from the others, as its teachers worked with different types of students and curriculum content.

3.4. Participants

3.4.1. The Survey

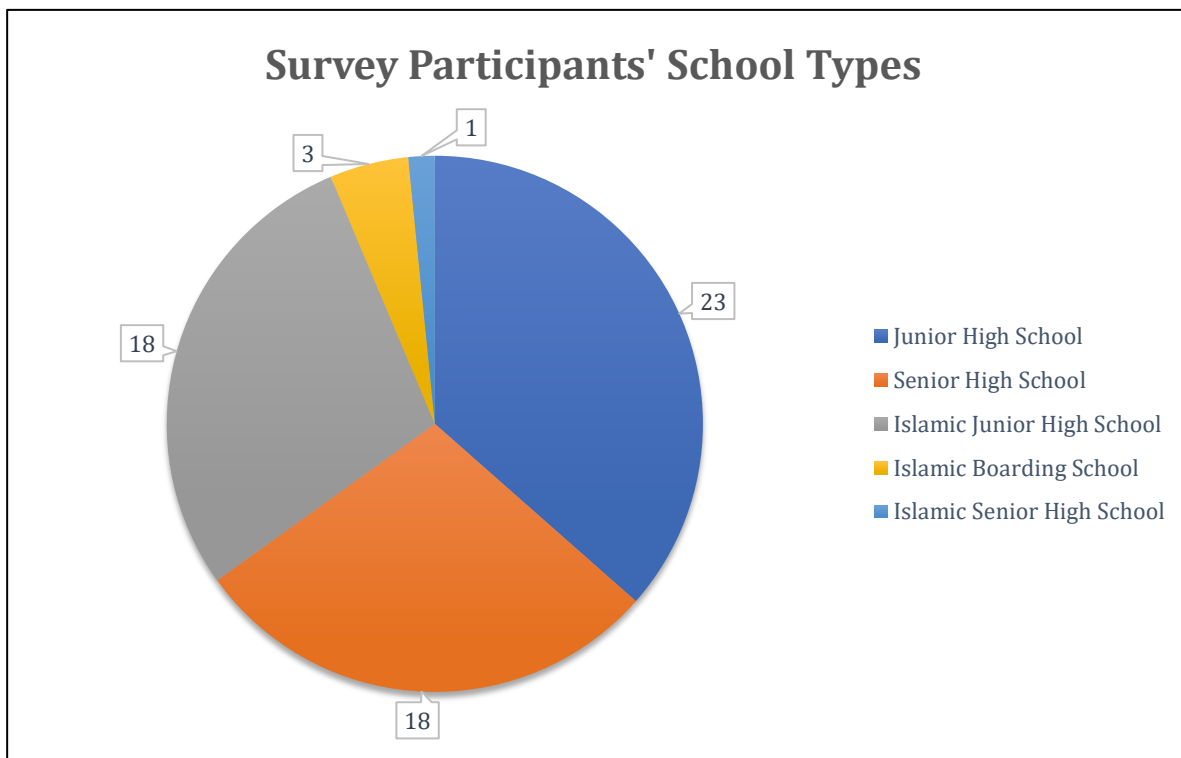
To capture the bigger picture of teaching practices during and after the pandemic lockdown period, English teachers working in secondary schools within Lima Puluh Kota were invited to complete a survey, which was administered both in online and paper-based form. Volunteer (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017) and snowball (Ary et al., 2019) sampling methods were implemented to recruit potential respondents to the survey. It is

important to note that in using *volunteer sampling* as a *non-probabilistic sampling* method, the sample cannot be claimed to be representative of the overall population (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017). Following ethics approval (see section 3.6), the invitation, description, and link for the online survey were distributed through *WhatsApp* personal and group chats. *WhatsApp* was chosen because it was the communication platform used by the majority of people in the region at that time. I contacted my teacher friends to help share the survey invitation with those teachers who might be interested. Through this communication, I also connected with the coordinators of three local English teacher groups (junior high school, senior high school, and Islamic junior high school level) in the region. I met them in person to explain my research and ask for their help to circulate the invitation in their *WhatsApp* groups. With the help of these gatekeepers, I had the privilege of attending face-to-face meetings of each of the groups, where I had the opportunity to explain more about my research and invite teachers to participate. Those who consented to participate were invited to complete the survey during these meetings. A small number of participants were also recruited during school visits at a later stage of the survey administration period. The role of the teacher group coordinators was paramount in helping me to gain access to potential participants.

In total, 63 teachers participated in the survey, comprising 57 female teachers and six male teachers. In this thesis, alphanumeric codes (e.g., S1-S63) were used to identify the survey respondents. The participating teachers came from five different types of secondary schools: junior high school, senior high school, Islamic junior high school, senior high school, Islamic senior high school, and Islamic boarding School. The largest cohort was junior high school teachers with 23 participants. Further details regarding the respondents' school types can be viewed in Figure 4. The participants were mostly

experienced teachers. Approximately 33% of the respondents possessed 16-20 years of teaching experience, followed by those with 6-10 years (22%), and 11-15 years (21%). Full details regarding participants' teaching experience can be found in Figure 5.

Figure 4. Survey Participants' School Types (Survey Data)



In terms of distribution, 12 out of 13 administrative areas in the Lima Puluh Kota region were represented in the survey. Only for one area (subdistrict M), participation could not be obtained. The most represented area was subdistrict A, followed by subdistrict B, subdistrict C and subdistrict D. Participation from subdistrict A and B was significantly higher because these were the areas with the highest number of schools and teacher population (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota, 2022) in the region. Further details regarding participation based on school location can be viewed in Figure 6.

Figure 5. Survey Participants' Duration of Teaching Experience (Survey Data)

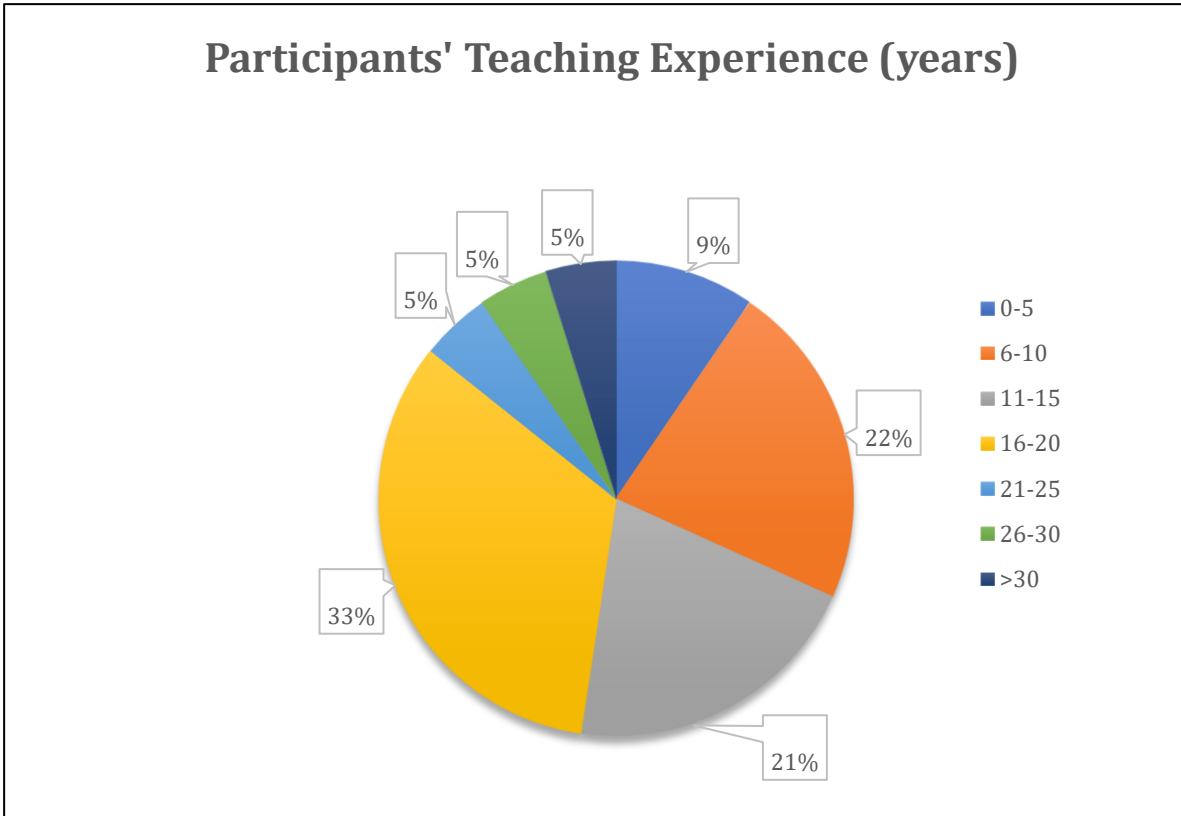
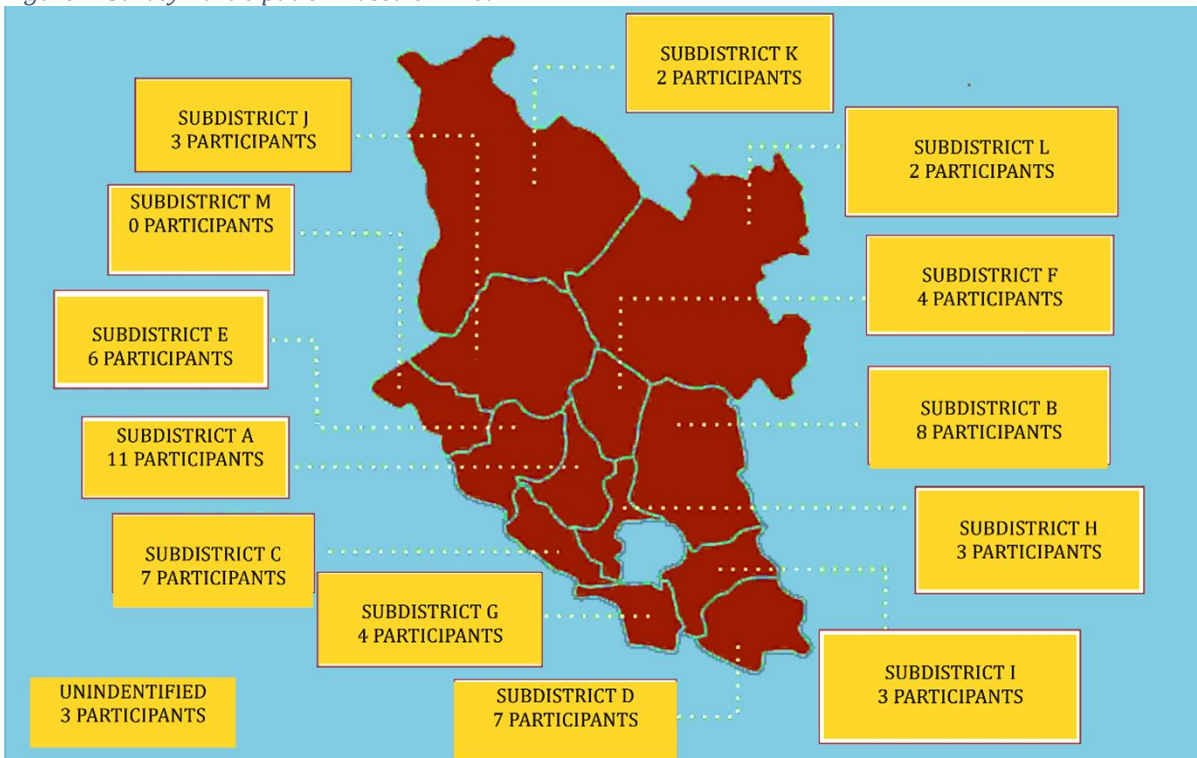


Figure 6. Survey Participation Based on Area



3.4.2. Interviews and Classroom Observations

The second phase of data collection consisted of two rounds of semi-structured interviews and a classroom observation session for each of the teacher participants. In the last section of the survey, I invited teachers to participate in this phase. Twenty-two teachers expressed an interest and were committed to taking part by providing their contact details as they responded to the final question of the survey.

Through purposive sampling (Ary et al., 2019), 10 teachers were selected from the pool of 22 teachers. This selection was primarily based on preliminary results of the survey data, as I chose 10 teachers whose responses detailed their ERT experiences and practices. Additional considerations were ease of communication and convenience in setting up appointments for interviews and classroom observations. I was also conscious of the distribution of participants; hence, in choosing the candidates, the type of their school was also taken into consideration.

In qualitative studies, due to the in-depth nature of the inquiry, the number of samples is typically small (Ary et al., 2019). I considered that having 10 teacher participants in this phase was more than enough to respond to my research questions. Moreover, it helped me to mitigate the effects of any attrition that might occur and to avoid too much weighting towards one particular type of school. After contacting the 10 teachers on my priority list to invite their participation and arrange the schedule for the first interview, two of them stated that they would not be able to participate due to time constraints. I contacted two more teachers from the pool who later confirmed their participation. In total, I contacted 12 teachers. After I confirmed the participation of the teacher participants, I contacted the remaining 10 teachers who in the survey expressed an interest in participating in an interview, to thank them for their willingness and

interest to participate and to explain that I could not include all of them in the subsequent phase of my research. The list of participants for the interviews and classroom observations can be found in Table 3. In this thesis, pseudonyms were used for interviewees to protect their privacy.

Table 3. List of Second-Phase Participants

No	Name (pseudonym used)	Gender	Age (range)	Years of teaching experience (range)	School level	School location
1	Dona	Female	30-39	11-15	JHS ¹	Subdistrict B
2	Najwa	Female	30-39	5-10	IJHS ² /IBS ³	Subdistrict B
3	Meri	Female	30-39	11-15	JHS	Subdistrict B
4	Zaki	Male	40-49	16-20	SHS ⁴	Subdistrict E
5	Roza	Female	30-39	5-10	IJHS/IBS	Subdistrict B
6	Marsiah	Female	30-39	11-15	SHS	Subdistrict F
7	Sari	Female	40-49	16-20	JHS	Subdistrict H
8	Gina	Female	40-49	16-20	JHS	Subdistrict I
9	Anita	Female	40-49	16-20	IJHS	Subdistrict A
10	Fatma	Female	50-59	26-30	SHS	Subdistrict H

As can be seen, the 10 participant teachers worked at three different types of secondary schools, located in five different subdistricts in the region (subdistricts A, B, E, F, and H). Four of the participants were from subdistrict B, which is the administrative capital of the region with the biggest number of schools (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota, 2022). Representativeness of the school categories or the areas was not seen as important since this study did not strive to make generalisations or comparisons. The following are short descriptions of each of the participants.

¹ Junior high school

² Islamic junior high school

³ Islamic boarding school

⁴ Senior high school

Dona

Dona was a junior high school teacher with over 10 years of experience teaching English. Her school is located on the outskirts of subdistrict B. However, it is relatively close to local business centres. Apart from teaching, she treasured her involvement with students' activities and clubs.

Najwa

Najwa was an English teacher working in an Islamic boarding school setting. The school comprises an Islamic junior high school and an Islamic Senior High school. Najwa mostly worked with junior high school students, but she also occasionally taught senior students. The school is a privately owned institution located at the heart of subdistrict B. She had 5-10 years of teaching experience.

Roza

Roza was a colleague of Najwa's. They both worked at the same Islamic boarding school located centrally in subdistrict B. Unlike Najwa, she mostly taught senior high school students. She had 5-10 years of teaching experience. She described herself as an old-fashioned teacher who was not very familiar with teaching with technology.

Meri

Meri is the only teacher in this study who worked in a rural junior high school setting, located in a very isolated area in subdistrict B with almost no access to the internet or cellular networks. The school only had a handful of students, roughly around 10 on average per grade. She had over 10 years of teaching experience. At her school, she was also a homeroom teacher and a student council advisor. Besides teaching, she

regularly performed the role of an advisor for student extracurricular activities. She was a leading figure in the junior high school teacher group for this region.

Zaki

Zaki was a senior teacher with 16-20 years of teaching experience. He worked in a centrally located major public senior high school in subdistrict E. The school had more than a thousand students enrolled. Outside the school, Zaki was the region's coordinator of the Senior High School English language teacher group.

Marsiah

Marsiah was an English teacher in a recently established public senior high school. The school is located in a sparsely populated area on the outskirts of subdistrict F, close to agricultural centres. It is relatively small in size and student body when compared to the public high schools in the other subdistricts. She had 11-15 years of teaching experience. Before moving to her current school, she taught in a high school in North Sumatra for more than five years. Her current responsibility outside teaching included being the head of the school library. She described herself as a teacher who liked to work with new challenges and learn new things.

Sari

Sari was a senior teacher with teaching experience in the 16-20 year range in junior high school contexts. She worked in the main public junior high school in subdistrict H. This school has a large number of students and is located centrally within the area.

Gina

Gina worked in a considerably well-established junior high school within subdistrict I. Her school is categorised as a model school because it is one of the few early adopters of the new national curriculum. She was an English teacher with teaching experience in the 16-20 year range. She was considered very experienced and knowledgeable by her peers in the junior high school English teacher group and was often asked for counsel during the teacher group meeting I observed.

Anita

Anita taught at an Islamic junior high school in subdistrict A. This school is considered the biggest Islamic junior high school in Lima Pulu Kota, with a substantial number of students, and is located strategically at the heart of the subdistrict. She was an experienced teacher, having been teaching for over 16 years. Anita provided a significant contribution to this research, not only as a participant but also as the coordinator of the Islamic junior high school teacher group. She helped me with access to other potential participants, especially during the survey phase. Her insights were invaluable for the research due to her unique position as a teacher and executive member of the teacher group.

Fatma

She was the most experienced teacher to take part in this study. She had been teaching for over 26 years. She worked in a centrally located senior high school in subdistrict H. She described herself as a confident teacher who enjoyed her time with her students in the classroom.

3.5. Instruments and Data Collection

This section elaborates on the study's data collection instruments, which comprised a survey, interviews, and classroom observations. It also explains the data collection process, which took place between July and November 2022.

3.5.1. Instruments Design

[The Survey](#)

The aim of the survey was to collect descriptive data, including respondents' biographical information and demographics, the types of schools and teachers' current teaching practices, such as digital tools and modes of teaching during and after the pandemic lockdown. In addition, the survey also collected answers to open-ended questions regarding the challenges, affordances, emotions felt, and actions taken during ERT. Some of the closed-ended questions were adapted from a questionnaire used by Li Jin, Yi Xu, and Katie Angus (DePaul University, University of Pittsburgh, University of Southern Mississippi, 2021) for their research, which investigated ERT practices in the US context. The open-ended questions were formulated mainly based on the study's first research question: *What adjustments did English language teachers make to their practice during and after the pandemic lockdown period, and how did they perceive and articulate these experiences?* However, there were also open-ended questions asking about the challenges faced and actions taken to overcome them.

The survey consisted of three parts (see Appendix A); the first part contained questions about the participants' demographics (e.g., age, teaching experience, type of school, and school location). The second part included questions related to their training and experience of teaching online before the pandemic, as well as ERT teaching practices

(e.g., learning platforms used), support systems, and the changes in their role as teachers. It also included open-ended questions about the challenges and the responses to the situation. The third part focused on post-ERT classroom teaching, the challenges and the responses, and the evaluation of the overall pandemic experience.

The questionnaire was initially drafted in English. I consulted my supervisors on the draft and revised it according to their feedback. However, it was later decided that the Bahasa Indonesia version should also be made available to ensure a comprehensive understanding by the participants. Both English and Bahasa Indonesian were piloted. Five teachers completed the pilot run for the English version, and three teachers completed the Bahasa Indonesia one. These trial runs were designed to gather the teachers' feedback on the wording of the questions and the overall presentation of the survey. It was after these pilot runs that I decided to use the Bahasa Indonesia version for the final version of the survey. The platform chosen for the online version was *JotForm* since it could accommodate more complex question structures like multiple drop-down boxes, which was not possible in the commonly used *Google Forms*. In the later phase of data collection, I also opted to use a paper-based version of the survey to mitigate the low response rate of the online version (see 3.5.2).

[Interview](#)

The Interview is regarded as the most prominent data collection instrument in qualitative studies (Punch & Oancea, 2014). In this study, the interview is regarded as the primary data collection instrument, "a means of accessing and presenting participants' beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences" (Talmy, 2010, p. 133). Two rounds of semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the 10 participants. The semi-structured interview was chosen because it uses a set of questions and

prompts to guide discussion and, at the same time, allows flexibility to respond to interviewees and situations (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Each session was audio-recorded and lasted approximately one hour.

The questions for both interviews (see Appendix B and Appendix C) were designed to address both research questions. There was an equal amount of emphasis put on both interviews for investigating the challenges faced by the teachers and the exercise of agency in overcoming the challenges. However, each interview also had a slightly different purpose. The first was focused predominantly on the exploration of participants' teaching experience during the pandemic and their perceptions about those experiences. Each of the interviewees' survey responses was identified and used as prompts to dig deeper into the adjustments they made during ERT. Participants were also asked to describe the challenges they encountered and the actions they took in response. There were also questions assigned to investigate the construction of the participants' professional identity pre-ERT.

The second interview sessions were scheduled right after classroom observations. With this arrangement, I could focus the interview more on their current practice as observed during the observation sessions. With the information from the observation log (see Appendix D) as prompts, the second interview was aimed at investigating the teachers' current views on teaching and teaching practices and how they might have been altered or adjusted by their experiences during the pandemic. There was a section in the second interview in which participants were asked to describe the challenges they faced in their classroom teaching post-ERT and their response to them. In this interview, I also aimed to look deeper at the participants' future projections of themselves as language teachers as a part of the investigation of their professional identity negotiation.

The interview guides were drafted and revised repeatedly through the processes of breaking down the research questions and intensive consultation with my supervisors. The main goal was to make sure that the interview guide was consistent with the research questions and the purpose of the study, while at the same time, easy to understand, avoiding academic or technical jargon. The questions were written in both English and Bahasa Indonesia to allow interviewees a choice during the interviews. After a couple of revisions, the interview guides were piloted with two of my colleagues. The aim was to get feedback regarding the wording of the questions and also to estimate the time needed for each interview session. The second interview guide was not finalised until the last session of the first interview.

Classroom Observation

One classroom observation session was arranged for each participant. The nature of the classroom observation was non-participatory and relatively unstructured, allowing it to be conducted in a more natural, open-ended way without the use of predetermined categories (Punch, 2009). In this study, observation logs were used in the process of constructing a comprehensive understanding of the observed post-ERT classroom practices of each of the participants, which was essential for data analysis. It was intended to help me understand the professional environment (e.g., how the school operated, and what access there was to resources) in which the teachers worked to understand the challenges and affordances in their contexts. It was also designed to help me in achieving a more comprehensive understanding of how the participants' working environment contributed to their exercise of agency.

The points in the observation form (see Appendix D) were based on Jim Scrivener's (2005) observation tasks. It primarily focused on the classroom set-up, the use of both

technological and digital tools, and the descriptions of activities used in the lesson.

Important facts about the individual participant’s ERT/post-ERT teaching practice from the first interview were listed in the form before the observation session started. These served as a cue for things to notice during the observation.

3.5.2. Data collection process

The data collection process in this study comprised three steps: survey (first phase), first interview, and classroom observation and second interview (second phase). It commenced with the distribution of the online version of the survey through personal and group *WhatsApp* chats, which was initiated on 5 July 2022 and concluded with the last session of the second interview on 4 November 2022. The full data collection timeline can be viewed in Table 4. The overall flow of the process can be found in Figure 7.

Table 4. Data Collection Timeline

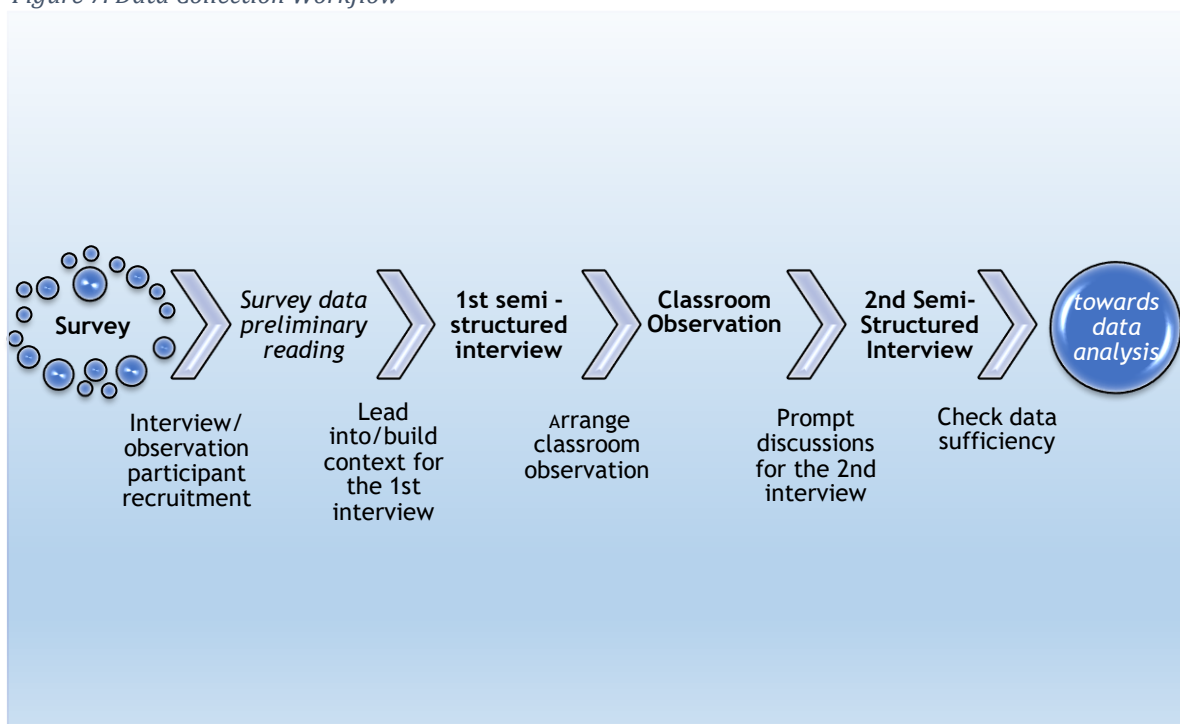
Data Collection Activities	Time frame					
	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22
Research instruments piloting						
Preliminary communication with potential participants and gatekeepers						
Field research permit application						
Survey distribution						
First interviews						
Classroom observation and second interviews						

Initially, I planned to start the interviews and classroom observations after the completion of the survey. However, it was later decided that the survey run needed to be

extended due to the low response rate (more details on the survey are provided below). Hence, the last part of the survey phase slightly overlapped the first interview sessions.

Before I proceeded with the data collection, I registered my research through a local government office in Lima Pulu Kota to obtain a permit to conduct field research. After the registration process, an approval letter was issued on 1 July 2022. This letter was included in every invitation to participate in my study. This was done to emphasise that my research was legitimate and acknowledged by the local authority. This approval proved essential in granting me access to visit schools and arrange appointments with the teachers and principals. There was also a university ethics procedure, which will be explained in section 3.6.

Figure 7. Data Collection Workflow



The Survey

The survey was aimed at capturing the overview of ERT teaching practices and recruiting participants for the second phase. To achieve this goal, secondary school

English teachers across Lima Puluh Kota were invited to complete the survey. It was initially planned to be distributed online with a target response of 100. This number was based on my initial estimation of the total population of around 300 secondary English language teachers across the region. However, after talking to some of the teachers, I found that the actual population size was smaller. This consequently made the target of 100 participants seem rather ambitious. In recruiting survey participants, volunteer (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017) and snowball (Ary et al., 2019) sampling procedures were implemented. Most of the time, participant recruitment and data collection were done simultaneously, as the first part of the survey contained an invitation, information about the study, and a consent form (see Appendix A). A mixture of approaches for participant recruitment was taken, including distributing a paper-based version of the survey during the later stage of the survey distribution period. In total, 63 teachers from 12 (out of the 13) subdistricts completed it.

The survey was first distributed on 5 July 2022 through personal communication, social media, and teacher groups' networks, as previously explained in 3.4.1. After approximately one month of circulating the survey through these channels, only nine teachers had completed it. This was considered a slow start to the overall data collection process and a low response rate for the survey, considering the estimated population of English teachers in the region. There was difficulty in inviting participants through social media networks and phone calls because these methods were considered uncommon according to local cultural practices. It seemed that the teachers were reluctant to participate in the survey because I had not formally introduced myself to them.

To mitigate the low participation rate, I decided to meet the teachers in person during one of their monthly meetings to directly invite them to participate in the study.

This was done with the help of teacher group coordinators as gatekeepers (see 3.4.1). The first teacher group meeting I attended was the junior high school group on 20 July 2022. In this meeting, 17 teachers from the overall attendance of 51 completed the survey. Some teachers chose not to participate. This was primarily due to their unfamiliarity with online surveys and technical issues with the internet connections. On 27 July 2022, I joined the senior high school teacher group meeting. Fifteen teachers were present on this occasion, and 12 of them participated in the survey. The last teacher group meeting that I attended was with the Islamic junior high school group on 5 August 2022. Drawing from the experience in the previous two meetings, I decided to bring paper copies to provide more options for the teachers who agreed to participate. This strategy was successful. All 15 teachers present completed the paper-based survey. A decision to extend the timeline for the survey was later taken after a consultation with my supervisors. It had initially been planned to run for the period of one month (July to August 2022). In the meantime, I continued my efforts to increase participation by inviting teachers through snowballing and personal communication. However, there was no significant addition to the survey count after the string of teacher group meetings. This was probably because teachers were busy adjusting to life and teaching post-pandemic.

I also made an additional visit to a senior high school in subdistrict A on 26 September 2022. I was accompanied by a gatekeeper who helped me identify the English language teacher cohort at this school. Three teachers participated in the survey during this short visit. In total, 63 teachers participated. More than half of these entries were from the paper-based version, data from which I later manually uploaded into the online survey database. The survey did not achieve the initial target number of 100 responses. However, the fact that I already had a good distribution of participants, which covered 12

out of 13 subdistricts (see Figure 5), and that I had initially overestimated the English language teacher population, justified the decision to conclude the survey after approximately a two-and-a-half-month distribution period.

The First Interview

I gained access to potential interviewees from the invitation included at the end of the survey. Survey respondents who opted to participate were asked to provide details, which included their names, the names of their schools, and their phone numbers. Selection of the eventual 10 interviewees was conducted through the process as previously explained in 3.4.2.

Before conducting interviews, I contacted each of the participants to discuss the time and the location according to their preferences. For some interviewees, multiple scheduling adjustments needed to be made due to their activities inside and outside school. Eight of these sessions were conducted in the participants' school area, while the other two were conducted at the participants' houses at their request. The first interview sessions were conducted between 12 August 2022 and 8 September 2022.

On average, the first interview sessions lasted for approximately an hour, except for the session with Marsiah, which ran for almost two hours, as she was eager to spend more time and share her story in detail. Seven of these sessions were conducted bilingually, while three were completely in English. Participants were given the choice to use Bahasa Indonesia or English, or both at their convenience. Before starting the interview, I explained its purpose and the topics that would be covered. The discussion during the first interview also used the participants' survey entries as prompts. The interviewees were invited to reflect on their answers to the survey questions. The semi-

structured nature of the interview allowed me to follow up on the participants' elaboration.

I wanted to make each of the interviewees feel comfortable during the interviews by establishing a casual and friendly atmosphere. However, I still adhered to local norms and paid careful attention to the way I talked to the participants, considering age and gender differences (I am a male and was 37 years old at the time).

Throughout the first interview period (August to September 2022), I continued inviting teachers to participate in the survey. I used the opportunity every time I met English teachers (i.e., colleagues of the interviewees) during my visits to schools for the interview appointments. I always had the paper copies of the survey prepared for this purpose. Overall, five teachers completed the survey during this period.

Classroom Observation and the Second Interview

The second interview and classroom observation sessions were conducted between 15 October and 4 November 2022. The interval between the two interview sessions was between two and two and a half months. While the first interview sessions were conducted during the transition between ERT and post-ERT face-to-face teaching, the second interviews were scheduled around the time when schools were already fully opened and teaching and learning activities in the classroom were already normalised.

Classroom observation and the second interview were arranged to be undertaken on the same day or within a 24-hour period. The plan was that after I joined the classroom to observe a lesson, I would continue with the second interview. This setup was, however, not feasible for some participants. In these cases, I decided to come back later or on the next day, at the interviewees' convenience.

During classroom observations, I usually sat in the corner of the classroom where my presence would not interfere with the proceedings of the lesson. I took a passive position in the classroom while making sure that I focused my observation on the teacher, the classroom setting, and the activities used. The observation was solely recorded on the observation log form.

The second interview followed the interview guide as explained in 3.5.1. The setup, timeframe, and procedures were similar to those in the first. Almost all of these second interview sessions took place at school, except for Marsiah's, where I went to her house.

3.6. Ethical Considerations.

As a researcher, I am responsible for considering all ethical issues arising from the design of the study in line with the Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching & Evaluations Involving Human Participants (Massey University, 2017). The research proposal was reviewed by my supervisors and another staff member who was not part of the supervisory team to ensure that the research procedures adhered to the university's ethics code. In the recruitment process, I ensured that there was voluntary informed consent. Participants' privacy has been safeguarded by using pseudonyms (interviewees) and alphanumeric codes (survey respondents). When referring to interviewees' survey responses, both pseudonyms and alphanumeric codes were used. No identifiable details regarding the participants' schools and their locations were to be included in this thesis.

Ethical clearance in the form of a low-risk notification no. 4000026245 was issued on 23 June 2022 by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix E). In

conducting the observations, I made sure that the focus was on the class in general, the lessons and the activities run by the teachers, the physical features of the classrooms, and the learning facilities, not on the students. Details about students in the classroom were not recorded in the observation logs; no pictures or videos were taken during these sessions. Before visiting a school, I met the respective principals to explain my research and formally asked for permission to access the school area.

I shared the summary of the research's findings with the 10 participating teachers who were involved in every stage of the study to demonstrate research transparency. Their feedback regarding the findings was also sought.

3.7. Data Analysis

In this section, the data analysis procedures are explained chronologically. It starts with the descriptive analysis of the survey results, followed by interview transcription, and data organisation and management. The last part elaborates on thematic analysis, which constituted the main analytical procedure.

3.7.1. Descriptive Statistics

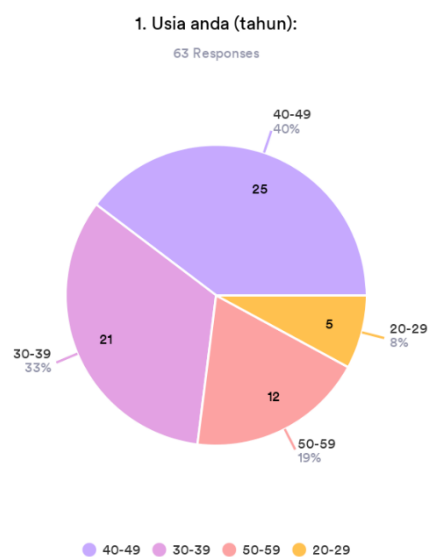
Descriptive statistics analysis was applied to the closed-ended questions' responses of the survey, which covered the participants' demographic information. Frequency distribution or measure of frequency was applied to perform this task. Mackey and Gass (2016) explain that measures of frequency are utilised to show how often a particular behaviour or phenomenon occurs. The calculation is straightforward,

and the results can be shown in frequency distribution tables or graphs (e.g., pie charts or horizontal bar charts) (Punch, 2009).

This analysis was, by default, performed through the *JotForm* platform. Therefore, an automatic report could be generated once all responses were submitted. This was conducted at the end of the survey phase in September 2022. This report contained tables and charts (bar and pie). An example of the *JotForm* auto-generated chart can be found in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Auto-Generated Chart from JotForm

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In presenting the data in the thesis, I recreated the tables and charts using *Microsoft Excel* since those generated by *JotForm* did not support copying, pasting, and editing functions. The instances of data analysed using descriptive statistics were participant distribution based on school types, teaching experience, highest academic qualification; participant distribution based on area/subdistrict; teaching modes used

during and after the pandemic; and the types of support received during the pandemic. The open-ended responses were analysed at a later stage through thematic analysis along with the interview data.

3.7.2. Interview Transcription

Transcription of interviews started as soon as I completed the first session of the first interview, so most of the process was conducted concurrently during the data collection period. It commenced around mid-August 2022 and finished late January 2023. From the 20 interview sessions (10 first interviews and 10 second interviews), 18 were transcribed online using the online transcription service platform *Sonix AI*, while the other two sessions were transcribed manually with the help of one of my colleagues. The reasons for using manual transcription for these two sessions were their extended duration and bilingual nature, which was found to be quite a challenge if they were to be transcribed using the online transcription service.

The online generated interview transcripts were manually checked for errors. They were later imported into a PDF file and named accordingly based on the participants' code names (e.g., P1, I1). These files, together with the other set of data (i.e., survey response, interview recordings, and observation log), were later organised in the participant's portfolio folder for ease of access.

3.7.3. Data Organisation and Management

I consider data organisation and management as an integral element of data analysis procedures. As mentioned, I created a portfolio folder for each of the

participants. These folders contained all research data related to each of the participating teachers, which included the recordings of the interviews, interview transcriptions, and completed classroom observation logs. Overall, I chose to save my data folders on password-protected cloud storage for ease of access. However, I also conducted a periodic backup on multiple hard drive storage as a data loss mitigation procedure.

3.7.4. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the survey's open-ended question responses and two-round interviews. It loosely followed the six steps in reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Data Familiarization

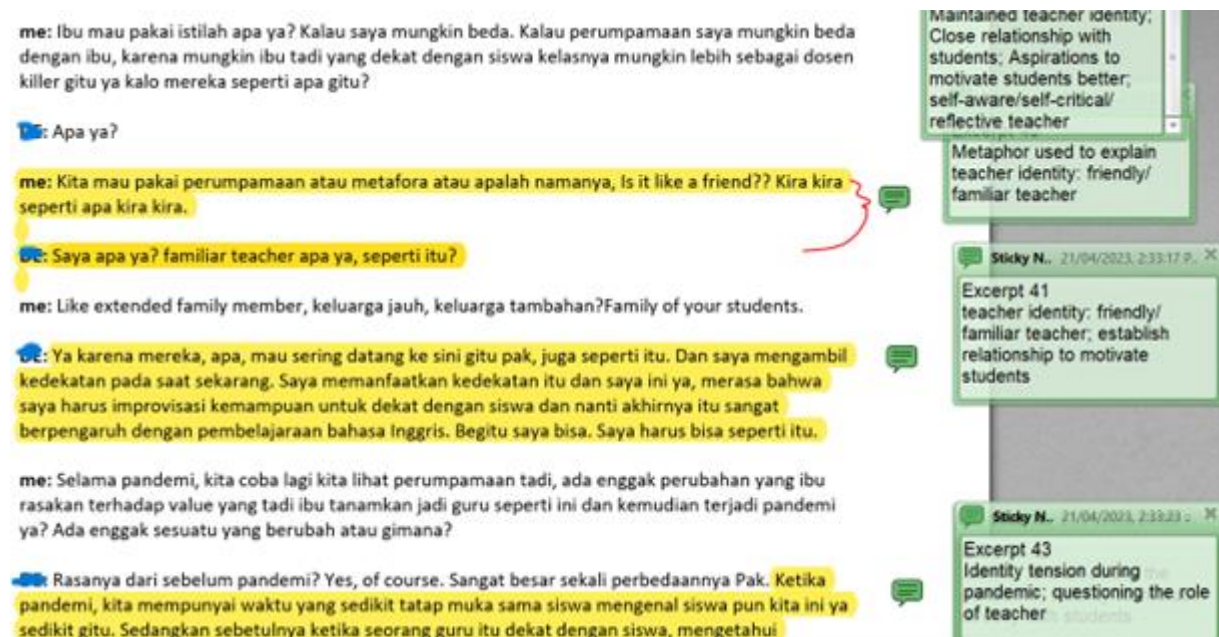
The purpose of the familiarisation process is to develop “deep and intimate knowledge” about the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 42) through intensive and iterative reading. I went through the interview transcripts and open-ended answers to the survey questions, while at the same time, starting to highlight the relevant data excerpts and taking notes. These activities were considered a transition process which led to the coding process.

Coding

Braun and Clarke (2022) assert that, in thematic analysis, the coding process involves reading the data items closely and tagging parts of the text with which the researcher actively engages in the meaning-making process while actively reflecting on

the research questions. In this case, as I went through the data familiarisation process and read the transcripts iteratively, I began by highlighting the relevant segments of the texts from the interviews and qualitative sections of the survey. These highlighted segments were later tagged with code labels. This process was performed manually since I decided not to use software or computer applications. It was initially conducted by the traditional ‘paper and highlighter’ method using hard copies of the transcripts. I later switched to a ‘digital approach’ by continuing the process using a PDF editor application and its sticky note feature to create the tags or labels. The illustration of the coding process through the application can be found in Figure 9. The decision to switch to digital format was based on data management considerations; that they are relatively easier to organise compared to physical sheets of paper.

Figure 9. Coding Process in PDF Editor Software



The tags or labels signified the codes under which the data extracts were categorised. The codes continually evolved along the process as my “understanding of meaning in relation to the dataset develop[ed]” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 54). I recorded

all the codes and the identification of the extracts associated with them in a dedicated spreadsheet database. In total, there were over a hundred codes listed in the spreadsheet database. A snapshot of this database can be found in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Spreadsheet Database of Codes and Data Excerpts

No	List of code label for data analysis	Interview data identification/excerpts
1	The pandemic impact on learning and students' character	P1 Int 1 Ex 1
2	Teacher and students Adaptation during ERT ;	P1 Int 1 Ex 2; P1 Int 1 Ex 5; P1 Int 1 Ex 20; P7 Int 1 Ex 1; P8 Int 1 Ex 2; P8 Int 1 Ex 3; P8 Int 1 Ex 4; P9 Int 1 Ex 2; P9 Int 2 Ex 3;
3	ERT shift challenges	P1 Int 1 Ex 2; P3 Int 1 Ex 6; P4 Int 1 Ex 2; P5 Int 1 Ex 17; P8 Int 1 Ex 16
4	Negative impacts of ERT/pandemic towards students;	P1 Int 1 Ex 4; P2 Int 1 Ex 36; P2 Int 1 Ex 37; P1 Int 2 Ex 12; P3 Int 1 Ex 24; P4 Int 1 Ex 14; P4 Int 1 Ex 15; P4 Int 2 Ex 14; P4 Int 2 Ex 15; P7 Int 1 Ex 29; P9 Int 1 Ex 6; P9 Int 1 Ex 11; P9 Int 1 Ex 12; P10 Int 2 Ex 3; P10 Int 2 Ex 5; P10 Int 2 Ex 23;
5	Negative impacts of exposure to gadgets/internet	P1 Int 1 Ex 4; P2 Int 2 Ex 29; P2 Int 2 Ex 31; P2 Int 1 Ex 36; P1 Int 2 Ex 14; P3 Int 1 Ex 42; P3 Int 2 Ex 10; P4 Int 2 Ex 11; P5 Int 1 Ex 28; P5 Int 2 Ex 1; P9 Int 1 Ex 6; P9 Int 1 Ex 7; P9 Int 1 Ex 12; P9 Int 1 Ex 41; P9 Int 1 Ex 42; P10 Int 2 Ex 14;
6	teachers' learning new things (technology) as agentic behavior	P1 Int 1 Ex 5; P1 Int 2 Ex 35; P5 Int 2 Ex 23; P5 Int 2 Ex 23; P5 Int 2 Ex 24; P5 Int 2 Ex 25; P6 Int 1 Ex 3; P6 Int 1 Ex 8; P6 Int 2 Ex 34; P7 Int 1 Ex 13; P7 Int 1 Ex 20; P8 Int 1 Ex 5; P9 Int 2 Ex 3;
7	Students' economic backgrounds and/or parents' level of education as challenges in shifting to ERT and Post-ERT	P1 Int 1 Ex 6; P3 Int 1 Ex 6; P2 Int 1 Ex 18; P3 Int 1 Ex 21; P3 Int 2 Ex 18; P3 Int 2 Ex 20; P3 Int 2 Ex 25; P4 Int 1 Ex 2; P5 Int 1 Ex 15
8	Reality acceptance that ERT did not work (not effective);	P1 Int 1 Ex 7; P1 Int 1 Ex 10; P3 Int 1 Ex 5; P3 Int 1 Ex 8; P3 Int 1 Ex 9; P3 Int 1 Ex 15; P2 Int 1 Ex 40; P3 Int 1 Ex 39; P3 Int 2 Ex 4; P5 Int 1 Ex 9; P10 Int 1 Ex 47;

Both *inductive* and *deductive* (Braun & Clarke, 2022) approaches were taken in the process, as some of the codes were *data-driven* (inductive) while others were informed by theory (deductive), i.e., agency, identity, and emotion. One example of inductively generated code was “teachers’ and students’ adaptations during ERT”, while an example of deductive one was “identity tension caused by inability to interact directly with students”. I also combined a *semantic* approach and a *latent* approach in labelling these codes. In doing a semantic approach, a researcher focuses on explicit surface meaning as stated by participants in data excerpts, while in the latent approach, they look at implicit, deeper, and conceptual meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Initial Themes Generation

Developing initial themes involves the process of “clustering together the potentially connected codes ... and exploring these initial meaning patterns” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 79). I started this process by utilising the different colour shadings in the code spreadsheet database to visualise the link between the codes. To help me with the

code clustering process, I created another spreadsheet document in which I grouped the codes which had potential connections in meaning in columns. I later named the groups with representative phrases or clauses. These clusters of themes were the first versions of candidate themes. I also included the total number of data extracts associated with each code in each of the matrices. The snapshot of the code clustering spreadsheet can be found in Figure 11. These clusters and the wording of the initial themes evolved as I went deeper into data analysis.

Figure 11. Code Clustering Process

Code No/cluster/frequency	Digital divide problems and challenges of ERT implementation	teacher (negative) perceptions of ERT and its outcome	students engagement and motivation problems	post-ERT/future technology use	actions taken and agency	roles, identities and tensions/conflicts	issues of ERT readiness and digital competence	feelings and emotions	(negative) impacts of the pandemic and gadgets towards students
1	ERT shift challenges/2 (N=5 P=5, N=0)	Reality acceptance that ERT did not work (not effective)/7 (N=11 P=5, N=13 S=10)	Lack of students' engagement and response in ERT/8 (N=15 P=8, N=23 S=19)	Post-ERT WhatsApp use/affordances: a platform for teacher parent communication/24 (N=3 P=3, N=0)	Teachers learning new things (technology) as agentic behavior/5 (N=12 P=6, N=1 S=1)	Journey to become a/n (English) teacher by plan/choice/40 (N=12 P=9, N=0)	The need for tech support and training for the students from the MoE offices during ERT/39 (N=1 P=1, N=0)	Sense of duty/realism/76 (N=4 P=3, N=0)	Negative impacts of ERT/pandemic towards students/3 (N=17 P=7, N=3 S=3)
2	Students' economic backgrounds and/or parents' level of education as challenges in shifting to ERT and Post-ERT/6 (N=9 P=5, N=3 S=3)	Teacher belief about students euphoria and tendency use of gadgets unproductively/73 (N=7 P=6, N=3 S=3)	Students low motivation/mindset as a challenge in ERT/12 (N=10 P=5, N=10 S=9)	Post-ERT teaching practices; technology and online features (limited) use/55 (N=22 P=8, N=2 S=2)	Feeling of agentless/9 (N=18 P=6, N=2 S=2)	Sense of achievement in sharing knowledge and seeing active students as motivation to become a teacher/41 (N=1 P=1, N=0)	ERT/Post ERT challenge: finding the appropriate activities/tools/methods to teach/114 (N=6 P=5, N=0)	Emotions: feeling of relief realizing that all students experience the same things during the pandemic/78 (N=1 P=1, N=0)	Negative impacts of exposure to gadgets/internet/4 (N=16 P=7, N=6 S=5)
3	Difficulties in controlling/monitoring/supervising students, giving feedback and/or trust issue during ERT/11 (N=10 P=6, N=9 S=8)	ERT as a traumatic experience/81 (N=7 P=2, N=0)	Link between learning English, technology, and motivation/22 (N=3 P=3, N=1 S=1)	The (re) use of (pandemic) media to support learning engagement post ERT/57 (N=11 P=6, N=0)	Teacher sense of achievement when Students engage online/during ERT/10 (N=3 P=3, N=0)	Identity as a teacher who had passions guiding students' extracurricular activities/42 (N=2 P=1, N=0)	Students' unreadiness for ERT/152 (N=3 P=1, N=1 S=1)	Emotion: teacher's frustration due to students and school related circumstances/80 (N=3 P=1, N=0)	Long period of ERT take a toll on students/33 (N=1 P=1, N=0)

The main concern I had in the process of generating the initial themes was whether I understood the distinction between the definition of a theme and a topic summary; I was worried that I had misapprehended the definition of a theme. While themes should be broad enough to capture patterns of shared meaning between and among a cluster of codes, they should not be mistakenly understood as a summary of responses around a specific topic (Braun & Clarke, 2022). I made sure that the generation of candidate themes was based on a comprehensive understanding of the concept of theme from the thematic analysis perspective. The output of this code clustering process was 15 candidate themes.

Themes Review and Refinement

A candidate theme needs to be explored further before it becomes a more settled theme (Braun & Clarke, 2022). My interpretation of this process was that the 15 initial themes that were generated through the clustering process needed to be refined through another process, which involved shifting and moving codes around within the clusters in search of meaning patterns. Throughout this process, the initial themes evolved and were redefined and renamed.

The next step I took in refining the themes was another layer of clusterisation for the 15 candidate themes. This process was aimed at identifying three levels of themes: overarching themes, themes, and subthemes (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Again, I applied different colour shadings in the clustering spreadsheet to serve the purpose. I also used thematic maps to help me visualise the pattern of meaning and link between the themes, hence making it easier to configure the three layers of themes. This process saw some of the initial themes being merged or split. The first and final versions of my thematic maps can be found in Figure 12 and Figure 13. The later version of the thematic maps was created using the *Lucidchart App* online platform.

At the end of the process, I structured the findings of the study into three overarching themes based on the three main theoretical concepts in my study (i.e., agency, identity, and emotion), five main themes, and 19 subthemes (Figure 13). Most of the subthemes were the initial themes generated through the code clustering process. By using the thematic map, I was not only able to visualise the link between the themes but also understand their position within the three dimensions of agency based on the ecological perspective. The theme structuring process was found to be helpful, not only in data analysis but also later in the writing-up of the findings chapters.

Figure 12. The First Version of the Thematic Map

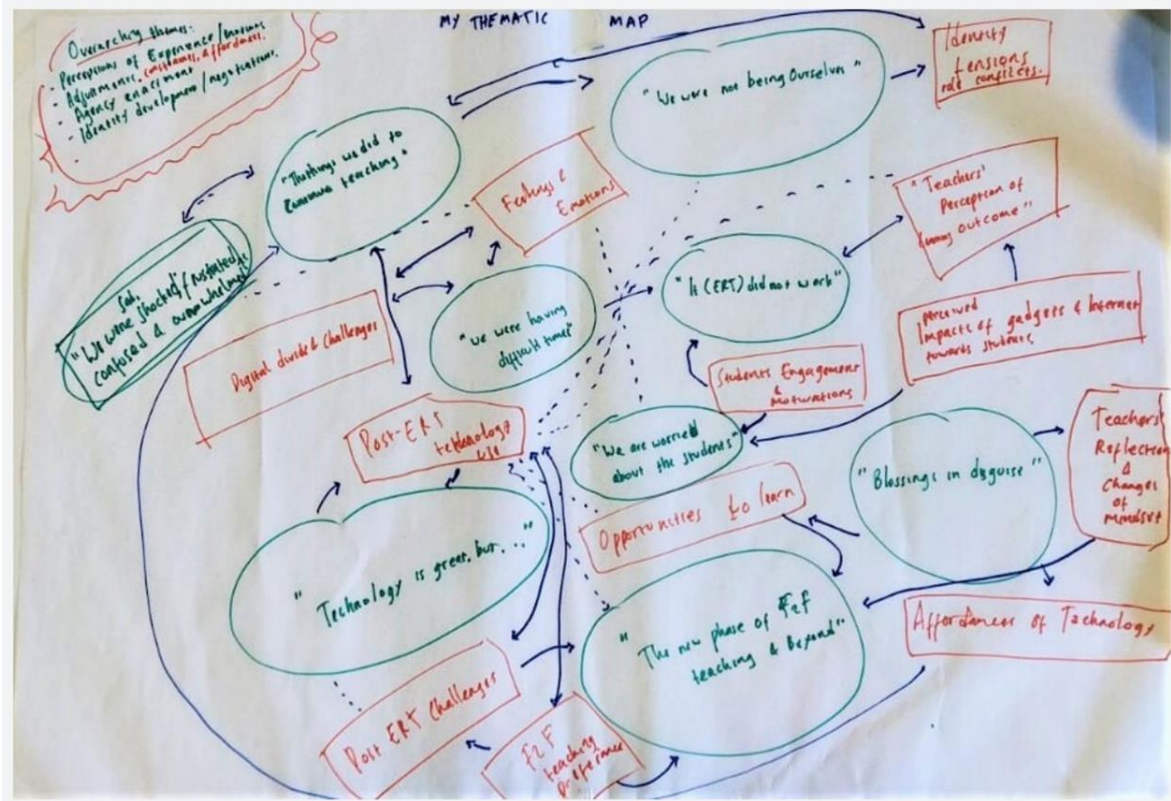
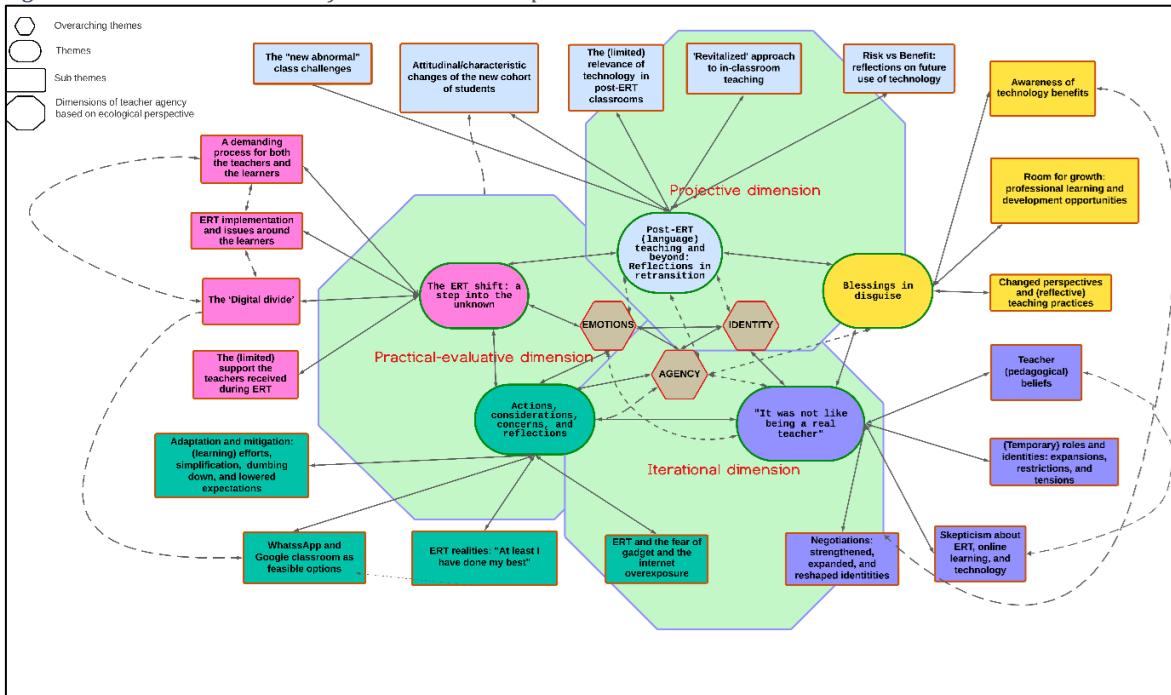


Figure 13. The Final Version of the Thematic Map



Writing Up

It took me almost the entire year of 2023 to conduct the coding and theme development stages of the thematic analysis. In the end, I found that going through this lengthy process was worthwhile because it gave me the confidence to move on to the next step: writing up the findings chapters. Braun and Clarke (2022, p. 128) assert that, before progressing to the writing up, “themes need to be fully developed in their own right and in relation to other themes”. When I decided to start writing, I felt assured that I had come through a systematic and robust process and was ready to move on to the next step.

I structured my findings chapters based on the five main themes and organised them in the thesis based on the chronological order of events (i.e., ERT to Post-ERT). However, in approaching the actual writing process, I did not take the linear approach as I started with the theme in which I had the most confidence. Before engaging in the writing process of each chapter, I planned by creating an outline and setting up a spreadsheet inventory of extracts that would be used in the chapter. This inventory was based on the spreadsheets I created earlier during the coding and theme development stage. A snapshot of this inventory can be found in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Snapshot of Data Extract Spreadsheet Inventory.

No.	Theme	Subtheme 1		Subtheme 2	
	The ERT shift: a step into the unknown	ERT implementation and issues around the learners		A demanding process for both the teachers and the learners (was difficult to teach and 'really connect' with the students)	
	code label= 2,8,31,112,143,22,30; 30,37,46,71,80,81,82,83,8 Interview Extracts; 8,90,112,129,131,141,160; 152,154,158,161	Survey Extracts	Interview Extracts	Survey Extracts	
14	"Before study online when we teach directly on the classroom, our students, maybe 50% of them get no motivation for study especially about English. Kalau bisa waktunya... saatlagi gitu. In aa online gitu. We can't protect them when they study they sometimes ahhi on their phone, sometimes not. Some they change their phone, some students think that study at home not possible for them and then they say that not comfortable to study at home, like that. And because they have some duty from their parents. Pokoknya, I think they said if study at home, that not study" (P6 Int 1 Ex 6)	"Banyaknya siswa yg tak paham materi yg disampaikan melalui daring Dan tugas yg diberikan sering diabaikan oleh siswa" (S31 Ex 2)	"Awalnya kita merasa shock ya pak, dengan istilahnya merumahkan siswa dan kita akan memberikan semua instruksi melalui dunia maya. Kami sudah coba melakukan dari awal sesuai dengan instruksi yang diberikan, tapi kita tidak merasa puas pak, karena memang kita guru ini menginginkan pertemuan dengan siswa itu tatap muka, bisa secara langsung melepaskan emosi. Bagaimana gerak-gerik kita yang bisa memuncu motivasi siswa di kelas. Tapi dengan sistem daring ini, kita hanya merasa seperti robot yang mengirimkan tugas" (P10 Int 2 Ex 2) also related to identity	"Peserta didik kurang mengerti tentang materi yang diberikan secara online" (S38 Ex 1)	
	"Memotivasi murid ya, untuk bisa tetap menikmati pembelajaran...tapi semangat untuk belajar, tetap fokus...itu yang susah, terus tugas ya buat belajar itu jangan ditunda-tunda tugas nah itu yang susah. Kadang online ini membuat anak bisa lalai. Oh bisa nanti ada batas waktunya nanti	"Sebagian siswa tidak merespon, tidak hadir pada waktu	"Kita enggak bisa untuk, memang ibu aku itu juga gasteq kan? Untuk media itu memang kebaliklah, jadi bingung juga. Bagaimana nih caranya memfasilitas ke anak. Jadi akhirnya harus dikirimkan contoh. Berikan		

From this spreadsheet, relevant excerpts were selected. I later developed the chapter draft based on these excerpts and the chapter outline. The data excerpts are presented in both Bahasa Indonesia and the English translation if they were originally communicated in Bahasa Indonesia.

The data extracts presented in the draft chapters were interpreted based on the understanding of the main theoretical constructs of this study: agency, professional identity (construction and negotiation), and emotion. Individual excerpts were identified by using the participants' pseudonyms, interview type, i.e., first or second, and excerpt identification number based on the order of appearance. For example, data with the identification (Dona, I1, E3) means that it was the third excerpt from the first interview with Dona.

3.8. Summary

This chapter presented detailed explanations of the methodological approach and research procedures adopted in the study. The decisions made regarding research approaches and procedures reflected the pragmatic paradigm, which prioritises the research questions over the preference for an exclusive research approach. This research was considered a case study of the Lima Puluh Kota region in West Sumatra Province, Indonesia, as the study focuses on the investigation of the region's secondary school English language teachers' agency in the pandemic and post-pandemic contexts. A qualitative dominant mixed-methods design with multiple data collection instruments was used to capture both the general trends and in-depth insights about ERT and post-ERT teaching practices in the region.

Comprehensive descriptions regarding the research participants, the development of research instruments, and data collection procedures have also featured in this chapter. These include the dynamic process of participant recruitment and selection, to which I needed to make a few minor adjustments. There was an issue with a low participation rate in the early stage of the survey distribution, which was successfully mitigated. The first phase of data collection, the survey, involved 63 teachers from 12 subdistricts in the region. Ten of these teachers participated further in the second phase of data collection, which comprised two rounds of interviews and classroom observations. After the explanations about the data collection processes, a critical reflection on the ethical aspects of this research was also presented. This was followed by detailed explanations of the data analysis process, which included a pre-analytic stage, data transcription, descriptive statistics, and ultimately, the thematic analysis. The details regarding the steps in data analysis, which were presented chronologically, reflected the systematic and robust process of data analysis.

In the following five chapters, I will present the findings of the study based on the five main themes generated from the thematic analysis. Chapter Four highlights the teachers' experiences transitioning into ERT. Chapter Five covers the implementation stage of ERT, and the actions taken by the teachers adapting to the new context. Chapter Six comprises elaborations on the positive experiences and progressive developments instigated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter Seven focuses on the findings around the participants' professional identity negotiations in transitioning into ERT and back to classroom teaching post-ERT. In Chapter Eight, findings around possibilities for future English Language Teaching practice beyond the pandemic are presented.

Chapter Four: The ERT Shift: A Step into the Unknown

4.1. Overview

This chapter is the first of five findings chapters. Each chapter is organised according to the themes emerging from the data analysis. In each of the sections of these chapters, excerpts are presented and interpreted with relevance to the themes being discussed to further explore teacher agency in the transition to ERT. Adjustments and solution-seeking initiatives by the teachers are highlighted to investigate teacher agency.

This first findings chapter investigates the teachers' experience of the abrupt transition into the 'uncharted realm' of ERT. This chapter starts with an analysis of how the teachers recalled their first encounter with the pandemic and ERT; and how they assessed their readiness as professionals on the verge of a major educational change. The earlier part of the chapter will focus on teachers' emotions, anxieties and concerns as they delved into ERT.

Furthermore, this chapter also uncovers the challenges the teachers identified during ERT, which ran for more than a year. Data will be utilised to illustrate how teachers perceived the challenges affected their teaching. These include the digital divide (DD) issues; the technology issues encountered; the problems around the learners' response to learning; and how these challenges affected the teachers. The last part of the chapter will focus on the teachers' perception of the support they had in navigating through the challenges.

This chapter will ultimately shed more light on teachers' emotions as they coped with the increasing workload, the ongoing challenges of adapting to ERT, and the issues around learners' engagement and participation. The sudden change, with all the subsequent challenges, affected the teachers not only emotionally but also professionally. This inquiry into the teachers' emotions, anxieties, and concerns will be the entry point to the analysis in subsequent chapters of how the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift towards ERT impacted teacher agency and professional identity.

4.2. The Shift to ERT: A Demanding Process for the Teachers

In this section, teachers' retrospective accounts are analysed to illustrate their thoughts and feelings (e.g., emotions, anxieties, and concerns) when they first encountered the pandemic and ERT. Data from the survey and the first interview, which were obtained during the latter phase of ERT, are used to present teachers' voices concerning their experience of transitioning into ERT. Furthermore, the following three sections centre on teachers' emotions in their efforts to cope with the ongoing challenges of adapting to ERT. This inquiry into teachers' emotions is an essential part of seeing the big picture of how transitioning into ERT affected the teachers' work, their agency, and professional identity.

4.2.1. A State of Shock and Confusion

When asked about their thoughts and feelings when the pandemic first hit, the first thing that the teachers recalled was that they were in a state of shock and felt

overwhelmed. For teachers in this context, it was hard to even imagine that one day a new disease would appear and prevent them from interacting face-to-face with people, including their students, and limit their lives. This feeling of shock is illustrated by Anita:

[Saya] enggak pernah menyangka akan terjadi hal seperti itu, segala sesuatunya terbatas. Kegiatan kita terbatas, seperti untuk belajar di rumah terbatas, anak-anak berkegiatan terbatas, karena itu suasana yang memang tidak tidak nyaman sekali

I never expected something like that would happen; everything was limited. Our activities were limited ... studying from home was confining, students' activities were limited, that is why it was such an uncomfortable situation (Anita, I1, E1).

Anita's comment reveals her feeling of discomfort about the overall situation. It shows a trace of her frustration about the restrictive nature of the social distancing policy during the lockdown.

A similar opinion was shared by Gina:

Pandemi memberikan efek seperti ... kekagetan untuk semua orang, baik siswa maupun guru. Apalagi bagi guru ... karena sebelumnya tidak terbiasa dengan situasi ini dan harus tiba-tiba harus dihadapkan kepada keadaan yang membuat guru harus melakukan pembelajaran seperti hal yang tidak pernah mereka bayangkan

The pandemic had an effect like ... a shock to everyone, not only students but also teachers. Especially for us teachers, ... because we were not used to that kind of situation and suddenly, we needed to face the condition that required them to teach in ways that they had never imagined before (Gina, I1, E1).

Besides the shock of the pandemic restrictions, Gina also emphasised that teachers were overwhelmed by the fact that they needed to start their ERT almost immediately. This indicates that the teachers experienced difficulties in responding to the sudden change within a very short time, as they had to make sense of the situation and prepare for ERT. This subsequently increased their anxiety about what they could expect and what was expected of them. This also inevitably led the teachers to see the shift as a demanding process. Teachers in this study were trained to teach in a physical classroom setting. Moreover, given the nature of secondary schools in the region where face-to-face

teaching had been the only pedagogical option, remote or online teaching was the last thing that they imagined would take place in such a rapid manner. This is supported by the findings from the survey, which show that 92 % (61 out of 63 teachers) had not had the experience of teaching online/hybrid classrooms before the pandemic.

For some teachers, the feeling of shock and being overwhelmed slowly evolved into frustrations and concerns as they started venturing into ERT, which, for some, had an impact on their agency. However, the evolution and the range of emotions experienced varied across the participants. For Fatma, the shock and struggle with ERT resulted in frustration, which had implications not only on her agency but also on her sense of professional identity:

Awalnya kita merasa shock ya pak, dengan istilahnya merumahkan siswa dan kita akan memberikan semua instruksi melalui dunia maya. Kami sudah coba melakukan ... sesuai dengan instruksi yang diberikan, tapi kita tidak merasa puas pak, karena memang kita guru ini menginginkan pertemuan dengan siswa itu tatap muka, bisa secara langsung meluapkan emosi. Bagaimana gerak-gerik kita yang bisa memacu motivasi siswa di kelas. Tapi dengan sistem daring ini, kita hanya merasa seperti robot yang mengirimkan tugas

In the beginning, we felt shocked by the fact that we needed to keep the students at home and start teaching online. We tried to follow the instructions that were given to us, but we did not feel satisfied because we wanted to meet our students face-to-face so that we could express our emotions. How we used gestures to motivate our students in the classroom. But with this online system, we felt like robots that only sent assignments (Fatma, I1, E1).

Fatma's frustration with ERT cannot be separated from her unfamiliarity with online teaching. Moreover, her identity as a classroom teacher was challenged by the limiting one-way nature of the asynchronous platforms like *Google Classroom* (GCR) and *WhatsApp* that were available for her to use. In addition, survey responses indicate that the teachers were not equipped with clear guidelines when they commenced ERT (44 out of a total of 59 responses). For Fatma, the unfamiliarity with online teaching, the restrictive ERT situation, and a lack of clear ERT guidance led to a conflict in her professional identity. The combination of these factors triggered her frustration and a

lack of agency in implementing ERT. Her use of the “robot” analogy illustrates her constrained agency and contested professional identity. She feels that her role was downgraded from a teacher who can build relationships with students to simply a course administrator who only sends assignments to students.

For other teachers, the frustration grew out of their concerns about their learners’ learning needs and their understanding of their teaching contexts. Roza highlighted that, in her context, her physical presence in the face-to-face classroom was essential for students’ learning:

It's awful, I think, because at the time we couldn't come to the classroom, and we couldn't explain the material to the students. And I was worried because every time I come to the classroom, I needed to explain because, you know, in *Pesantren* [Islamic boarding schools], the teacher is the only source for the children, for the students. So, I was worried at the time about how to explain my topic to my students (Roza, I1, E1).

For Roza, transitioning to ERT was considered a traumatic experience. There are multiple reasons for her negative impression. Unfamiliarity with teaching using technology was one. Furthermore, her awareness of the learners’ conditions also played an important part in shaping her perspective on ERT. From the excerpt, it can be seen that she worried that her learners would lose access to learning. Her understanding of the nature of teaching and learning in the Islamic boarding school, which relies heavily on the role of teachers, was in the foreground. Instead of seeing ERT as a possibility or affordance, she looked at it as a liability. This indeed can also be seen as evidence of constrained agency and an early symptom of professional identity tension.

The overwhelming effect of ERT also posed increasing demands on teachers. ERT required teachers to learn about technology and improve their digital skills in a relatively short time. For Anita, the shift was a distressing one. The amount of technology learning required was seen as a big leap:

Cukup sekali saja ... Karena khusus seperti kita guru untuk mengajar online itu masih kewalahan. Yang pertama, dari segi teknologi, pemakaian digital media online kita masih kurang ... di sini, kita baru WA kita yang bisa ... sebelumnya kita enggak pernah yang namanya Zoom meeting [or] Google Forms

Once is enough. Because we are lagging when it comes to teaching online. First, we had not had enough experience using online digital media. Here, we can only use *WhatsApp*. We had never heard about *Zoom* meetings or *Google Forms* before (Anita, I1, E2).

In this study, some findings indicate that senior teachers like Anita eventually enjoyed learning technology (see Chapter Six). However, this was the answer Anita first gave when being asked about her recollection of ERT. Her traumatic experience resulted from the accumulation of uncertainties, given the lack of clear guidelines and the need to deal with DD issues, which consequently led to a state of confusion. Moreover, the transition was viewed as demanding by teachers since it triggered a mixture of emotions. This is perfectly captured in a comment from Sari: "It's a mixed feeling. Like a hard feeling, confused maybe, I don't know, what should I do? So, yeah, many things that I feel" (Sari, I1, E1).

The data show that, from the beginning, teachers already expected that transitioning into ERT would be a bumpy ride. A range of emotions explained in this section were both catalysts and constraints to their agency.

4.2.2. A Rocky Road Towards ERT: Teachers' Anxiety About Digital Technology

In the survey and the first interviews, teachers were asked about the challenges they encountered during the shift to ERT. Excerpts from both sources show that issues around technology and digital skills were identified by the teachers as top-of-mind challenges. An interview excerpt from Gina provides a good starting point to understand the phenomenon:

[Masalah]yang paling pertama itu memang ... platformnya [dan] gadgetnya... Kemudian yang kedua adalah sikap atau kesiapan siswa dalam belajar secara mandiri ... Yang ketiga mungkin juga dari kesiapan guru untuk memberikan materi secara online

The first [problem] is actually the platform [and] the gadgets... the second one is students' attitude and readiness to study independently. The third one is the teachers' readiness to deliver materials online (Gina, I1, E2).

Here, Gina recounted all the challenges she faced when transitioning to ERT. The first challenge was the availability of suitable digital platforms as well as technological devices to be used for teaching and learning by the teachers and the students. This constitutes DD issues, which will be elaborated on in section 4.3. The second was the learners' attitudes and readiness to learn independently during ERT (see section 4.4). The third challenge was the teachers' readiness to implement ERT, which will be elaborated further in this section.

Teachers were not sure whether they were ready to teach remotely. This anxiety was caused not only by their concerns about access to technology but also because they realised that they were required to improve their digital skills. Some teachers were able to see this as an opportunity to grow professionally. These teachers maintained an open and positive attitude towards technology, even though they knew there would be a lot of catching up to do. Marsiah is one of the teachers who adopted this positive approach:

I quite surprised, this is so different, we must stop teaching in the classroom so we should prepare...teaching with...use IT, use gadgets, by online like that and we didn't did it before and I also have some difficulties in use technology like, by media social maybe like WA [*WhatsApp*], **that make me think more how to teach my students** (Marsiah, I1, E1, emphasis added)

The last part of her comment reveals her determination to try her best to learn about technology and to find different strategies to make sure her learners could follow her lessons during ERT. She saw the effort to learn technology as an investment, a way to cater to her learners' needs. This positivity was not shared by many teachers in this

study. The data show that many of them saw the learning of new technologies as a burden, a substantial addition to their workload. This perspective, in turn, made them feel subconsciously under pressure, focusing only on the difficulties:

Tantangan yang pertama itu mungkin yang masalah teknologinya kali ya, dari segi pemakaian teknologi. Baik untuk guru, juga untuk siswa. Kalau untuk guru memang ... kalau masa online itu memang nampaknya [guru] dituntut ... harus ahli, memang harus menguasai teknologi gitu. Saya ini kan memang kewalahan

The first challenge is maybe the technology, the use of technology, for both the teachers and the students. For teachers, ... during the online period, we are required to have expertise in using technology. I am struggling with that (Anita, I1, E3).

Before pandemic I met my student in the class. I give them material like a paper or video ... in pandemic, I created many strategy to give the material to my student. Like I used to make *Google Classroom* ... [or] *Google Form* or anything that ..., before that, I don't know ... Before I taught my student, I should learn first. I think [that is] the hard thing maybe for me (Sari, I1, E2)

Untuk melanjutkan pembelajaran tentu kita banyak bertanya tanya media-media apa yang bisa kita pakai dan banyak belajar juga banyak buka-buka youtube. Ya mencari ilmu, apalagi dengan usia yang sudah tidak muda lagi untuk menguasai IT tu ya. Terus terang kita mengalami kesulitan dibandingkan guru-guru muda sekarang

To continue teaching, we must actively inquire about what media can be used, and we also use *YouTube* a lot. We are trying to obtain new knowledge, at [my] relatively older age, I tried to master IT. To be honest, I am facing more difficulties compared to my younger peers (Fatma, I1, E2).

Anita, Sari, and Fatma were teachers with approximately 20 years of experience.

However, difficulties and struggles in catching up with technology are a common theme found in their excerpts. It also seems that, during the transition to ERT, more experienced teachers struggled considerably in their efforts to improve their technological skills. This kind of narrative was not found in younger teachers' excerpts. Marsiah was one of the teachers in this study who belonged to this younger generation of teachers that Fatma mentioned in her comment. These teachers were assumed to have an advantage when it came to digital skills because of their age and their more recent teacher education experience. Moreover, for some teachers, the extra workload imposed

by ERT was, to some degree, mitigated by the affordance of technology since it offered more flexibility for them in running classes. This aspect will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

4.3. The 'Digital Divide' (DD)

DD issues came to the teachers' minds first when asked about the main challenges of transitioning into ERT. The DD was the most frequent theme that emerged, followed by students' engagement and communication-interaction difficulties, when teachers were asked in the survey to identify the most salient hindrances they encountered. The DD factors can be seen as the pinnacle of all problems encountered since they are intertwined with student engagement and communication problems. This section focuses on how the teachers perceived DD challenges affecting their teaching, their emotions, and ultimately their agency.

4.3.1. Geographic, Socio-Economic Factors, and the Digital Divide

The data reveal that the geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds of the students were among the most influential factors affecting the shift to and the ongoing process of ERT. Student location determined access to a reliable internet network connection. Most of the students and teachers in this study relied on cellular internet networks during ERT. Unfortunately, in this region, there were still areas that did not have good network coverage. This resulted in discrepancies and inefficiencies during ERT since "*siswa tidak semuanya bisa mengikuti pelajaran dengan baik karena*

keterbatasan jaringan internet [not all students could follow the lessons well, because of network limitations]” (S61).

Aside from the network coverage issue, students’ socioeconomic condition, especially their parents’ financial situation, was also cited by the teachers as a key factor contributing to the DD, since it determined students’ access to technological devices and internet package subscriptions. These top-of-mind challenges were frequently mentioned together in the survey responses:

Banyak siswa yang daerah tempat tinggal mereka tidak memiliki akses internet yang baik sehingga mereka kesulitan mendapatkan materi yang diberikan dan banyak siswa yang kesulitan membeli paket internet

[There are] many students who live in areas without good internet access, hence they have difficulties in accessing the distributed materials ... many of them are also having difficulties purchasing internet data packages (S37).

Tantangan yang terbesar selama pembelajaran dari rumah adalah sulitnya jaringan internet dan sebagian siswa tidak mempunyai HP dikarenakan lemahnya ekonomi orang tua

The biggest challenge during remote teaching is difficulty in accessing the internet network and the fact that some students do not have smartphones due to their parents' frail economic situations (S47).

[Kendala] Jaringan internet [dan] ekonomi orang tua siswa untuk membeli paket internet

[The challenges were] Internet network [and] parents’ economic situation to afford internet data (S48).

Kebanyakan siswa tidak bisa menggunakan internet karena masalah ekonomi

Most of the students cannot use the internet because of their economic problems (S64)

The geographic and socio-economic factors tend to be seen as a unified, inseparable factor that contributed to the DD. As previously mentioned, the location of residence determined whether or not a student could obtain access to the internet. This condition was worsened by the fact that most of these students came from low-income families who could not afford internet data packages. In other words, the teachers were

aware that there was a serious discrepancy during ERT, which put the unprivileged students at risk of missing out on their learning.

In more extreme cases, parents and caregivers, because of their economic situations, could not provide technological devices for their children to use. This was particularly relevant to students and schools in rural areas:

Orang tua tadi yang tidak punya kemampuan misalnya [untuk] punya laptop ... Kalau punya laptop dia kan bisa kita ambilkan disini Youtubanya, kita kasih ini flashdisknya pindahkan ke laptopmu. Berarti kan income orang tuanya tidak cukup untuk memfasilitaskan anaknya

Parents could not afford a laptop (PC) ... If they have it, we could provide the [YouTube] videos, we could transfer the material through flash drives to their laptops. This means that parents' income is not enough to provide their children with the required facilities (Meri, I1 E1).

Most of our students come from the remote areas, and sometimes they, some of them do not have phone signal in their area. So, if I can explain to some of the students. So how about the other students that they can't, they don't get a chance to follow my lesson (Najwa, I1, E1).

The situation where students had to share mobile phones with their siblings was also a common finding across different participants:

Most of them or some of them, only have one mobile phone for three siblings in the family. So, it's hard for me to make face-to-face, yeah, face-to-face explanations. I mean. Yeah, like Zoom or the other tools (Najwa, I1, E2).

The cost is also the biggest problem for the parents, you know that. Yeah. Because they, for example, they have three children and also for the handphone they, they cannot use it, I mean like, *bergantian* [take turn], so they have to use, it's one handphone for all children (Roza, I1, E2).

The DD remained a significant challenge even for teachers who taught in schools within relatively central locations with more reliable internet network coverage. Although they were able to run their class relatively better when compared to their rural colleagues, they still encountered difficulties. They relied heavily on cellular internet connection. The unstable nature of mobile internet connection hindered students' participation, especially when performing tasks that required a reliable connection:

Kendala lainnya saat memberikan tugas berupa project sprt video, poster, Kartu Dll. Signal yg kurang kuat dr tempt tinggal mereka sehingga tugas yg sudah dibuat tidak bsa d kirim

The other challenge was when we assigned tasks in the form of projects like videos, posters, greeting cards, etc. The quality of the network signal is so poor that students' completed work cannot be submitted (S57).

Faced with these conditions, teachers found themselves in a dilemma between having to compromise, in response to the DD, and trying to ensure the continuity and quality of learning and teaching.

Teachers were strongly aware of this and viewed it as a serious constraint on their agency:

When the pandemic came and then, for the infrastructure, we were not ready yet ... we have and we had different backgrounds of the students, you know. So, we can't say to [all of them to] have the handphone ... they don't [even] have any pocket money for every day. So, there is the hindrance that we faced (Zaki, I1 E1).

For some teachers, constrained agency evolved into frustration and pessimism. The DD was affecting teacher agency greatly in two ways: first, it limited the possibility of lesson delivery and demotivated the teachers in their teaching. Secondly, teachers felt powerless and lacking in agency since they realised that DD issues and students' financial situation were factors beyond their control:

Saya rasa tidak ada jalan keluarnya karena kondisi dan tempat tinggal siswa

I think there is no solution to this problem due to the students' socio-economic condition and location (S45).

Saya rasa tidak ada jalan keluarnya karena memang kondisi tempat tinggal dan kehidupan anak didik seperti itu

I think there is no solution because that is the condition of their dwelling places and lives (S46).

Kalaupun guru mampu menggunakan aplikasi online, tetapi siswa juga kondisinya tidak mendukung

Even though teachers could use online applications, student conditions would not support that (S64).

These survey excerpts capture the magnitude of teachers' frustration over the situation, which slowly evolved into pessimism. They felt that there was nothing in their power that could be done to improve the situation. This added to their already increasing burden of having to learn and catch up with the technology. These teachers hit rock bottom. They were concerned that all their efforts would be in vain, amounting to evidence of constrained agency.

The impact of DD hit the teachers in rural schools the most. The condition was frustrating because they realised that their students were marginalised and devoid of learning opportunities, a clear instance of social injustice:

When I have materials, for example, [from] ... *YouTube*, [I think about] ... how to share to them, they don't have the laptop and they don't have something to watch there. So, I feel ... depression actually, while the other classes or schools, they can share, they can do the [online] activity, [like] *Google Meet*, while my children [students] can't do that (Meri, I1 E2).

What is noticeable from Meri's excerpt here is the feeling of irony, agony, and sympathy at the same time. She realised that she could have done better in terms of ERT if only her students had access to gadgets and the internet; at the same time, she also had to accept that she must find other ways to maintain the continuity of learning and teaching without involving technology and the internet, which she perceived as unfair for her learners. This experience affected her emotions and shaped her perspective towards ERT, which, in her case, tended to be seen as a traumatic experience.

From the data presented in this section, DD issues were seen by the teachers as the most prominent challenge when transitioning to ERT. Some of these issues were never resolved and lingered until the ERT period ended. Since DD issues were perceived by the teachers as something beyond their power to change, some of them felt discouraged

from exploring more possibilities that ERT and technology had to offer. This led to frustration, pessimism, and constrained agency. However, it is also important to note that, despite the frustration and disrupted process of learning, the DD also made teachers think more about their learners. This had the potential to be a catalyst for agency, which might be important in the post-ERT context in recharging their energy and helping their professional growth (see 6.4.3).

4.3.2. *Weighing the Options: Decisions on ERT Delivery*

DD issues significantly affected the teachers' decision-making process, putting them under enormous pressure to ensure continuity of the learning and teaching process. The distress they experienced over the DD and the inequity for their students significantly affected their agency.

Two things needed to be considered carefully by the teachers when they commenced ERT: their students' socio-economic situations and the resources that were available to them. DD issues left these teachers scrambling for solutions as they realised that they had to navigate the limiting conditions. They were aware that some aspects of their teaching were going to be compromised; one of the most obvious was the quality of the instruction. One instance of this compromise was the decision not to rely on synchronous teaching through videoconferencing applications like *Zoom* or *Google Meet*, even though they realised their ERT would be a lot better with it. The data from the interviews reveal a consensus among the participants that the synchronous option was not feasible at that time. The first reason was that they realised that they did not have enough resources:

Zoom pernah, tapi terbatas ... kuota disekolah karena semua guru memakai waktu itu wifi yang dikantor, jadi kami berebut sinyal, berebut, apa namanya, paket internet. Maka cenderung untuk tidak memilih Zoom

We tried *Zoom* once, but it was limited ... by the data quota at our school, because all teachers were accessing the Wi-Fi, so we were competing for signal and bandwidth. That is why we tend not to choose *Zoom* (Fatma, I1, E3).

Fatma was referring to the time when teachers started teaching at school, while students still learned from home. For many of these teachers, teaching from home was also not an ideal option because most households in this region did not have a broadband internet connection. Therefore, school management encouraged teachers to start coming to school after the restriction was lifted, while students remained at home. However, the limited nature of school internet infrastructure prevented teachers from exploring the synchronous option.

Moreover, from interview excerpts, it was also found that the choice not to opt for livestream synchronous lessons was due to teachers' awareness of how the DD affected learners and their parents:

The problem is some of our students didn't have enough data. And so, with the area, there was no good signal for Internet data ... We didn't use [*Zoom*] because some of the students' parents complain about data [usage]...Because if, for example, we want to do we want it ... it needs a lot of data. (Zaki, I1, E2).

It was difficult for me to, to, to make like a *Zoom* class because yeah, sometimes our ... they come from [low-income] social life ... [or] it's hard for them to find the signal (Roza, I1, E3).

Zaki's and Roza's decision to avoid videoconferencing was made with consideration of the student families' socio-economic situations, which would be further burdened if they had to buy more internet data packages if they used a synchronous approach. In the back of their mind, they realised that the pandemic had made families, especially those with relatively low incomes, financially vulnerable.

Awareness about the limited connectivity conditions and the student family's financial well-being is evident from both the above excerpts. The implication of this awareness results not only in the ruling out of the synchronous approach but also in the moderation of the asynchronous approach they used. Teachers needed to carefully pick "data package friendly" materials and platforms as "the students complain, don't use *YouTube* Ma'am, don't use *Zoom* because it makes us use ... much money to buy *paket* [data]" (Marsiah, I1, E2). In other words, the teachers needed to face the fact that they had to do their best to run their classes without imposing excessive data package costs on the students. The only option available for them at that time was running the class through less data-heavy applications like *WhatsApp* and *Google Classroom*. The trade-off for this option was that it lacked two-way communication and interaction between teachers and students. The teachers even limited the use of audio-visual materials like videos from *YouTube*.

The data presented in this sub-section reiterate the fact that DD had significantly affected and limited the teachers as they worked their way into ERT. These limitations took a toll on teachers' emotions and constrained their agency because they made them feel frustrated and powerless, as they felt unable to improve their learners' ERT experience. The teachers had to resort to minimal, low-cost asynchronous options, putting the quality of instruction at risk. However, it is also important to note that they exercised their agency and made decisions about their practice in-the-moment as they stood with their learners. They could have forced their way, opting for a synchronous approach, but they chose not to do so because they understood their learners' complex situation.

4.4. Issues Around Learners' Response to ERT

This section focuses on the teachers' accounts of how hard it was to work with their learners as ERT commenced. This includes the teachers' perspectives on the student-related factors which made the process of teaching and learning more challenging during ERT.

4.4.1. The Reality of Studying from Home

Some teachers felt that their students misinterpreted ERT and the pandemic lockdown policy. This emerged in the first interview when they were asked to describe their ERT experience. The following excerpt from Sari reveals that teachers suspected students of not having a clear idea of what was expected from them in terms of studying:

Maybe the mindset. Maybe. Yeah, said the student, that [if] I didn't go to school ... I didn't [need to] do anything. Maybe like that ... My students ... thought that [during the] pandemic, we didn't study. Just stay at home (laughter) (Sari, I1, E3).

A comment from Meri further hinted at the phenomenon:

They were very happy at that time, and they didn't think anything about their lesson, [they had] freedom, they can go anywhere actually. Even though only in their village (Meri, I1, E3).

Teachers felt that keeping the students at home during the lockdown had gradually drifted them away from school and their studies. In this sense, teachers' knowledge about their students made them feel sceptical about ERT from the beginning. They became increasingly concerned that their efforts would be in vain since the students interpreted the lockdown as a break from school. This also reveals that teachers felt the students were not well informed about ERT.

Teachers were also concerned about the absence of a supportive learning environment at the students' homes. According to the teachers, it was difficult for students to focus when studying from home. The obligation to help their parents work and to do house chores was one of the common excuses given by the students:

Some students think that study at home not possible for them and then they say that not comfortable to study at home, like that. And because they have some duty from their parents ... I think they said if study at home, that [is] not study (Marsiah, I1, E3).

From Marsiah's perspective, it was almost impossible to have effective learning at home where students had constant distractions. There was also an implicit concern about the extent to which parents would be able to support their children studying from home.

Other teachers were more concerned about what the students did with their time outside of boarding school and how that might impact them. For example, Najwa asserted that:

When they stay at home and we don't know what activities they are doing at home. We don't know where they go, with whom they interact, and what kind of bad activity [they were involved in] ... we don't know. So, we lack of role in this pandemic (Najwa, I1, E3).

To some extent, this kind of concern and assumption can be linked to the teacher's lack of experience in conducting remote study. In this case, as a teacher in an Islamic boarding school, Najwa was accustomed to immersing herself among her students. This allowed her to have a sense of authority to monitor them, not only academically, but also morally. When she lost this access, she felt that she had lost something, which affected her agency and sense of professional identity.

The analysis in this sub-section points out that the absence of a supportive learning environment was one of the main concerns of the teachers during ERT. Factors like student understanding of the situation, as well as distractions and limited support from parents, were mentioned to justify this perspective. This adds to the complexity of the

ERT transition itself, where teachers had to face uncertainties and doubts regarding the learning process, and most importantly, conflicting thoughts due to their existing pedagogical beliefs and unfamiliarity with remote teaching. This condition, for some teachers, gradually weakened their resolve and constrained their agency.

4.4.2. Students' Unreadiness to Study Independently (Online)

Aside from this concern about the absence of a supportive learning-from-home environment, this sub-section aims to illustrate how the experience of ERT led the teachers to believe that their learners were, in fact, not ready and unprepared to study independently:

Mungkin siswa ini juga sebenarnya tidak siap untuk belajar secara mandiri ini. Mereka memang butuh kontrol dari guru, kontrol dari orangtua

Maybe these students are, in fact, not ready to study independently. They need the control of teachers and parents (Gina, I1, E3).

Kurangnya keinginan siswa untuk mengerjakan tagihan tugas yang diberikan dan belum tumbuhnya kesadaran siswa untuk belajar mandiri

The students lack motivation to complete their assignments and the awareness to study independently (S4).

These conclusions were reached from these teachers' reflections on student behaviour over the length of the ERT period. The conviction of these two teachers about students' lack of independence was confirmed by what they saw in their classes. Gina further emphasises that, at that moment, the role of teachers and parents in monitoring the students' learning was indispensable. On the one hand, these arguments around the lack of learners' independence add to the complexity of factors surrounding the ERT shift.

However, on the other hand, they reveal that ERT had brought awareness about the need for student independent learning to the foreground.

The students' unreadiness was also linked to the minimal amount of support provided by educational authorities. Dona regretted that students were not given enough support for their ERT learning, especially on the technical aspects:

[Situasi] ini juga mungkin disebabkan karena ... penguasaan ... aplikasi anak anak [yang] juga terbatas ... Harusnya ada beberapa pembelajaran [untuk siswa] ...dari ... Dinas Pendidikan ... Tidak hanya ... yang dari sekolah

This situation is probably caused by the limited ability of the students to use the applications ... There should have been more training from the MoE office ... not only ... from the school (Dona, I1 E1).

Dona emphasised that one of the factors causing shortcomings in ERT was students' limited digital literacy. This excerpt illustrates her disappointment towards the MoE, which she thought had not done enough to manage the transition. It also illustrates that teachers like Dona did not feel well-supported in transitioning to ERT. The data presented in this sub-section have highlighted the lack of support for learners, which was parallel to the lack of support for teachers, as they transitioned into ERT. Both kinds of potential support were perceived to be missing during the sudden transition.

4.4.3. Broken Communication and Interaction Between Teachers and Students

Difficulties in communicating with students were cited by the teachers as one of the biggest challenges. This theme emerged from the survey data (S58; S59). The limited nature of textual communication through applications like *WhatsApp* is also linked to difficulties in giving clear lesson delivery and instruction (S5; S18; S19; S34; S56).

Technological issues, like limited knowledge about digital platforms and the limited nature of those available for use, contributed to these challenges.

The missing physical interaction, natural to the classroom, which had been the only medium for teaching and learning before COVID, can also be seen as a trigger of the teacher-student interaction and communication issues during ERT. One of the teachers asserted that: "*dikarenakan tidak bertatap muka secara langsung memang ada kesulitan dalam berkomunikasi/memposisikan/berinteraksi* [since there were no face-to-face meetings, we were having difficulties communicating, positioning [ourselves], and interacting with the students]" (S52). The absence of face-to-face teaching created difficulties for teachers not only in maintaining relationships with existing students (i.e., those they had taught face-to-face before the pandemic but also in establishing rapport with new students (i.e., those newly enrolled at the beginning of the academic year in July 2020, after ERT started). Teachers seemed to have been shocked about losing the privilege of close relationships with students within the physical classroom setting.

The challenge in communication was due not only to technology-related issues but also to the willingness of students. One of the teachers emphasised "*sulitnya mengajak siswa berkomunikasi secara direct* [the difficulties in getting students to engage in direct communication]" (S43). For some teachers, the fact that they could not make meaningful contact with students started to take an emotional toll on them. Having no real communication with her students was an overwhelming experience for Anita as she recalled: "*ketika di japri pun kadang jawabnya iya, tapi enggak ada imbasnya. Hubungan timbal balik antara guru dengan siswa tidak ada terjadi* [when we send them messages, they sometimes reply with a simple 'yes', but no impact whatsoever. Two-way interaction between teachers and students does not take place]" (Anita, I1, E4). As stated before,

multiple factors might have contributed to this frustrating disruption in communication between teachers and students. Teachers showed frustration about the substantial number of students who chose to ignore instructions and the learning materials altogether. The teachers' efforts to be in touch with the students were often in vain. They were concerned that this situation might affect the delivery and the quality of instruction. Consequently, they started to worry more about students' ability to learn during ERT. The inability to connect with the students can be considered a crucial factor constraining teacher agency in ERT. Teachers' insecurities about the broken communication eventually influenced their self-efficacy and self-confidence, which greatly affected their professional identity (see Chapter Seven).

4.4.4. Problems Around Student Engagement and Participation

Teachers frequently reported a lack of student engagement and participation. In the survey, it was reported that "*siswa kurang sekali motivasi belajar dan tanggung jawabnya* [students really lack motivation and responsibility]" (S64). This can be linked to the notion that some students thought they were basically on holiday (see 4.4.1). Another teacher added that "*sebagian siswa tidak merespon, tidak hadir pada waktu pelaksanaan proses pembelajaran melalui WhatsApp group* [some students were unresponsive, and some were absent during the *WhatsApp* group learning sessions]" (S43). Meri recalled her experience of being "ghosted" by her students when "they wrote [their name] on [the] attendance list ... [but] didn't follow the ... lesson" (Meri, I1, E4).

Teachers also reported that some students paid no attention to either the instructions given or the materials shared with them (S53; S60). When it comes to

assignments, the teachers complained that many of the students acted as if they did not care, making it even more difficult for the teachers to assess the situation and measure their understanding of the topic:

Tidak semua siswa yang mengerjakan tugas ... sebagian yang membuat tugas mengerjakannya dengan asal-asalan ... Sehingga saya kesulitan dalam memberikan penilaian terhadap pemahaman mereka

Not all students do the assignments ... for those who do, they tend not to take it seriously ... hence I have difficulties monitoring their progress (S10).

Teachers worried about both the quantity and the quality of student work. Some teachers also thought the submitted work did not represent the real learning outcomes. They also reported cases of identical and surprisingly well-done assignment submissions. This led the teachers to assume that students did their assignments by copying either internet sources or their peers' work.

They presumed that this disengagement (i.e., ignoring instructions, avoiding direct contact with teachers, and sloppy assignments) was deliberate on the part of the students. This was, in fact, a very worrisome situation for them. They placed a strong emphasis on the lack of control over students, which constrained their agency:

Tantangan terberat [adalah] partisipasi siswa. Kita merasa tidak sampai-sampai apa yang kita pesankan ke siswa. Apakah mereka mendengar? Apakah mereka tahu dengan yang kita instruksikan? Dan banyak yang seolah-olah tidak tahu karena mereka yakin tidak akan ada sanksinya. Jadi kita merasa ... tidak berdaya, ... untuk menyampaikan apa yang kita inginkan. Merasa dicuekin. Respons dari siswa sangat minim

The biggest challenge was learners' participation. We feel that our messages do not come through to them. Do they listen? Do they know what is being instructed to them? They are acting as if they don't know because they know that they can get away with that. So, we feel powerless to say what we want to say. [It] feels [like we are being] ignored. Students barely respond to us (Fatma, I1, E4).

While this excerpt can be linked to the broken communication between teachers and students, it highlights how Fatma assumed that there was something more beyond the communication and DD issues. She suspected that her students' inappropriate conduct

was partly intentional. She believed that students were experiencing a serious motivational crisis. This was supported by the fact that students tended to become less responsive in learning as they approached the end of the ERT period (S57). Boredom is probably one of the factors triggering this situation. However, according to Fatma, another of the reasons behind this attitude was that the learners knew that they would eventually pass regardless of their actual grades. The Indonesian MoE, in their ERT general guideline document (Circular Letter no. 4, 2020), emphasised that students should not be assessed solely on their academic performance during the pandemic. For teachers, being faced with this problematic situation made them feel frustrated and confused. They also tended to develop distrust towards their students. It also put teachers on edge and made them feel powerless.

4.4.5. Lack of Student Parent/Guardian Support for Teachers

Teachers also felt let down by a lack of support in the role that parents took. The teachers expected the parents would supervise their children more at home to compensate for the lack of interaction they had with teachers. However, they felt that they did not get the support they needed. In the interview excerpts, they cited a range of factors which might have caused this situation. Marsiah, a high school teacher, asserted that most parents expected teachers to have full responsibility for the students' learning and that they would not be required to monitor them as much because these students were already considered adults:

I asked some parents [to monitor their kids' learning], they say that send [them to] your high school that should not be protect by parents anymore, like that ... *Itu kendalanya* [That was the challenge]. *Jadi, hampir* [So, almost] 50% student not follow the teaching [and] learning (Marsiah, I1, E4).

The age of the learners was not the sole factor in determining the extent of parents' involvement in the students' learning. Dona, a junior high school teacher, asserted that, in general, parents failed to monitor their children's learning because they were preoccupied with their work:

Mungkin karena orang tua siswa kita sibuk seperti itu, karena pembelajaran dibiarkan begitu saja, seolah olah pembelajaran itu tidak penting ketika kita tetap muka seperti itu

Maybe because the parents were busy, the learning was left unsupervised, as if it [ERT] was not as important as face-to-face study (Dona, I1, E2).

Parents' lack of awareness and neglect were seen by the teachers as one of the contributors to students' declining attendance rate, and limited engagement and participation during ERT:

Yang hadir [for online lesson] hanya sekian (terbatas) ya. Jawabnya macam macam. Ada jawabannya yang baru dapat ... pulsa, ... paket, ... [ataupun] jaringan. Bahkan ada yang jawabnya, kemarin jawabnya ada yang lupa. Jadi mungkin faktor dari rumah juga kan, kan ndak ada orangtua menyampaikan, hari ini belajar ndak? Hari ini sekolah ndak?

There was only a limited number of students who attended online sessions. They had different excuses. Some mentioned phone credits ... internet package ... or network. Some even mentioned that they forgot. So, it was probably a factor from their homes, their parents do not ask whether they have classes or school on that particular day (Anita, I1, E5).

The last sentence of this excerpt illustrates the disappointment on the teachers' part about the lack of parental oversight during ERT. Anita thought that one of the factors behind learners' declining participation was the parents' failure to monitor their children's learning. In more extreme cases, one teacher boldly claimed that "the parents did not care whether the students followed the lesson or not" (Najwa, I1, E4). The lack of parental oversight during the ERT period was considered one of the factors preventing student engagement and constraining teacher agency.

4.5. The (Fragile) Support System

Researcher: Did you feel supported at that time?

Meri: At that time or now?

Researcher: At that time [ERT period].

Meri: **There's no support at that time from anyone.**

Researcher: You feel alone completely?

Meri: Yes (Meri, I1, E5, emphasis added).

Above is an excerpt from the first interview with Meri, a rural junior high school English teacher. In her comment, Meri claimed that she had no support in facing and implementing ERT. Meri's comment illustrates her disappointment about the situation. It captures one of the many aspects of the reality of ERT implementation within the region. This section elaborates further on teachers' perceptions about the support they had during ERT. Teachers' displays of emotions are analysed to break down their stories. This will help to uncover their perspectives regarding the support they received and how it affected their teaching, as well as their agency and professional identity.

4.5.1. ERT Transition Guidance and Support from MoE Offices, Related Authorities, and School Management

The findings from the survey show that most of the teachers (44 out of a total of 59 responses) claimed that they were not provided with clear guidelines about how to approach ERT when the pandemic lockdown was first implemented in March 2020. However, there were also teachers in the survey who explained that there were documents and learning modules prepared by the Indonesian MoE's head and regional offices (S43; S55), which generally guided the teachers about the modes of learning available for remote teaching (S30). These downloadable resources were, according to one of the teachers, "*cukup membantu dalam pembelajaran jarak jauh di sekolah* [useful

enough for ERT]" (S10). These contradictory survey responses indicate a discrepancy in their awareness of the information on the pandemic education mitigation plans. On 24 March 2020, Circular Letter no. 40/2020 (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020), about the implementation of education services during the COVID-19 emergency period, was issued. It served as the general regulation for ERT implementation. This document, which was officially addressed to all local government officials and school principals across Indonesia, however, did not include details on how ERT should be implemented.

The discrepancy in teachers' engagement with the information provided meant that some teachers were more informed about what was required to implement ERT, while others were almost clueless. This is a big loss since the provision of clear and timely guidelines would have helped teachers to prepare for ERT better.

The data from the survey provide evidence of some support from government agencies and school management. These include workshops in developing learning materials based on mobile applications (S25) and IT and technology upgrading (S37). In-house training programs (S26; S27) and coordination meetings (S26; S49; S53) were also held at the school level in addition to the many available webinars organised by education authorities, private institutions, and communities. However, the interviews reveal that the teachers felt that they did not get enough support. For example, Najwa, a teacher at a private Islamic boarding school, stated that: "We need more training [on] ... how to teach students from the remote, but we don't get it ... because at the time, everyone were busy" (Najwa, I1, E5). This indicates that there were teachers who still felt unsupported. It was likely that at that time, teachers from private schools did not get the same access to training programs as their public-school colleagues. Budgeting issues

resulted in conditions where public school teachers tended to be prioritised to join the workshops. However, even from a public-school teacher's perspective, the support was also seen as insufficient. Marsiah asserted that:

Harapannya sekolah lebih mensupport. Pelatihan-pelatihan kadang kan ada pelatihan itu yang berbayar ... [saat itu] apapun yang saya butuhkan saya cari sendiri. Usahakan sendiri

I hope that the school can support more. Sometimes there are paid training programs. ... whatever I needed, I tried to find by myself (Marsiah, I1, E5).

This excerpt, on the one hand, illustrates the perseverance and agency of a teacher to upgrade her knowledge to face ERT. On the other hand, it also highlights that teachers found the support from school management insufficient, as they sometimes needed to find their own ways to support themselves.

Teachers in rural schools appeared to feel the least supported around this time. Even though they could access training programs and webinars from the comfort of their homes, they felt that those opportunities would eventually be wasted because their situations prevented them from studying online. Meri asserted that:

We need the support from the government ... [we saw teachers from] other schools ... get the support, they get handphone, they get also tablet. But in my school, because there's no signal at that time, we do not get that one...the government from the *Nagari* [local government] [should] give the support. But they can't do that because also, yeah, they don't see the needs maybe (Meri, I1, E6)

Rural teachers like Meri felt that the authorities should pay more attention to rural schools since there was a major issue of access and connectivity, which put the students in a vulnerable position, facing the risk of 'learning loss'. She also felt that she missed out on getting a tablet or mobile phone to support her teaching because the school where she worked did not have internet coverage. This unfortunate situation unquestionably hindered the achievement of agency on Meri's part in performing effective teaching during ERT.

The data presented in this section have shed light not only on the perceived inadequacy of support the teachers had from the government authorities and the school management, but also on the discrepancy in the amount of support received by the teachers across the schools in the region. Furthermore, it also highlights the loophole in the Indonesian government's plan to mitigate the transition into ERT, which might have disadvantaged rural-based schools and students. While some teachers tried to exercise their agency despite the lack of support, most of them had their agency constrained by the very limited access to resources, e.g., digital devices and training programs.

4.5.2. Financial Support for Teachers During ERT

Teachers received very limited support to cover the cost of teaching during ERT. Many of them stated that they had to pay for the internet connection for their teaching themselves:

We did by ourselves; we buy internet connection. We, we didn't have that, for me, I only use my hand phone ... I don't have any Wi-Fi at home and also, from school we didn't get like ... increased [income] ... to buy the Internet connection. (Roza, I1, E4)

It was only around six months after the commencement of ERT (September 2020) that the government started to provide cellular data packages for teachers and students to support online teaching and learning. The nature and the timing of this support divided the teachers in their response. Some were quite appreciative of the support:

After a few times, we get the support from government. We get, like, a data package from ... Kemendikbud (MoE) ... It helps (Roza, I1, E5).

Ada sih bantuan bantuan pembelian paket, ada. Jadi itu mungkin yang memotivasi juga

There was, at least, support in the form of internet data packages. So, maybe that motivated us (Anita, I1, E6).

Roza and Anita here represent teachers who showed gratitude towards the internet data support. However, this was not a consensus among the teachers since others held the opposite opinion about it. Some teachers thought that while it was still useful, the internet data package provided had no significant impact on their work. Zaki, for example, explained that the allocated amount for each student was limited (Zaki, I1). Moreover, there were also terms and conditions of use from the data package provider, which limited the range of applications it could be used for. Marsiah's comment illustrates how the level of frustration and dissatisfaction persisted among teachers:

They make a motivation ... teacher should be study, should adapt with situation, make a rule, new rule. We should follow this, follow this. We should use this... this... this... just information ... [and] *peraturan* [regulation]. *Gitu aja gitu* [That was all]. *Tapi kan tidak ada support finansial* [But there was no financial support]. No ... facilities, *ini bisa digunakan* [that could be used [for teaching]]. ... *Saya jadi tambah pengeluaran saya. Saya jadi harus pasang dirumah Wi-Fi* [There were even extra expenses [because] I need to set up Wi-fi at home] (Marsiah, I1, E6)

While differing in degree and intensity, teachers stated that they would have liked more financial support during ERT. These perspectives about the severity of the conditions had different impacts on teacher agency depending on their working environment and the range of support they had within it. Take Marsiah, for example, a younger teacher with adequate technological understanding living in an urban area. Her stance was that she had not been supported enough, hence, she decided to set up wireless broadband internet at home to support her ERT practice. This decision was possible due to the nature of her personal and professional circumstances. Not all teachers were able to or chose to exercise their agency this way. Some might have felt constrained in their teaching because they only relied on the government data package, or because they could not afford the extra expense of more stable internet connections, or because they had a more limited understanding of technology.

4.5.3. Collegial Support: Working From Home vs Working from School

In the early phase of the lockdown, students and teachers were not allowed to come to school. During this period, some teachers were struggling with the different roles they had at home. This was the case with Roza, a teacher and a mother of two. She shared that during that period, she did not feel supported to be a mother and a teacher simultaneously:

I do need someone to help me to take care of my children while I give lessons for my students. But I couldn't do that. I couldn't get what I want because, you know, if I were at home. So, it means I am the person who have the responsible to take care of my children. ... I have, my first children, my daughter, she has already at school at the time. So, she has also asked me many things about the lesson. So, I have to accompany ... my daughter to follow the lesson from the from the teachers. But I also have responsible to give a lesson to my students. So, it was worst for me. I cannot do two things in the same time ... and ... my husband cannot ... help at this time because, because of he has his own job (Roza, I1, E6).

However, the teachers were soon allowed to be in school, and they were encouraged to start working from school while students remained at home. Even though this policy was potentially problematic for those who had children at home, overall, teachers saw this as an improvement. Dona asserted that:

Di sekolah kita apa minta bantu secara individu aja kalau memang ada yang lebih menguasai ... kita menemui langsung personalnya saja seperti itu. Kita saling mengisi saja di sekolah. Karena memang yang apa yang kita lakukan pada masa pandemi itu semuanya baru, kemudian setelah itu juga karena menghadapi kondisi yang sama, di MGMP juga

At school, we could ask for help individually if there is someone who has a better understanding ..., we could meet them in person. We were just trying to help each other out. Because everything we faced during that time was new to all of us. The same applies to the local English teacher group (Dona, I1, E3).

Dona thought that working from school enabled teachers to work together and support one another regardless of the subject they taught. It made it easier for them to communicate and ask for advice and assistance because they were all at school. In this excerpt, Dona also touched a little bit on the sense of belonging in a community in facing hardships together. This kind of camaraderie was missing when they were working from

home. This was viewed by the teachers as an important support at that time, something which helped them survive and spurred their agency.

The spirit of sharing, asking and offering assistance is one of the important findings in this study. In his interview, Zaki said that a stronger bond developed among the English teachers in his school during this period, which enabled them to share any methods or plans that they thought would be useful to help their learners:

We have a great communication because when we get, for example, I got something nice the way of teaching. So, we share in our *WhatsApp* group. Uh, I, yesterday I taught this in my student and then I use this way, and it works. So, if you want to use this, I can, it can be helpful for our students...we share anything. And also, our friend also did as I share in the group...we have a commitment, we are not competing in the school. We are friends, we are teachers (Zaki, I1, E3).

The spirit of camaraderie among teachers within schools as they worked together to improve student participation was also echoed by Roza:

If it was hard for me to understand some topic, I can ask my partner [a colleague]. I think that's a kind of support. And [support] come also from the class supervisor [homeroom teachers]. If the students didn't come to the classroom, I can ask ... the class supervisor to remind his or her students to follow the session (Roza, I1, E7).

The in-school collegial support gradually helped the teachers to solve the problems they encountered during ERT. Gina mentioned how computer science teachers and a school staff member solved the technical difficulties she encountered while running her classes:

Semuanya membantu. Misalnya guru TIK. Kalo kita butuh mereka bantu, kemudian operator sekolah, kita butuh mereka bantu. Jadi apapun kesulitan biasanya dicarikan pemecahannya bersama sama...misalnya dalam melakukan pembelajaran. Misalnya saya mau Google meet, ada kendala, mereka bantu seperti itu

All have been very helpful. Computer and information teachers, for instance. They are more willing to help when we need them. The school operator [also], ... whatever the problem was, we looked for solutions together ... For example, if I need to do Google Meet and am facing some issues, they will help (Gina, I1, E4).

This illustrates how the policy to teach from school helped the teachers run their classes during ERT. For Fatma, the opportunity to reconnect and share with her peers was one of the positive highlights of her pandemic experience:

Lebih terasa ... senasib sepenanggungan. Kita banyak sharing, kita banyak diskusi, banyak merenung. Ya karena kita ada kesempatan ... bertemu di kantor, tidak menghadapi siswa. Jadi ya semakin rasanya harmonis ya, interaksi. Alhamdulillah berdampak

It feels like we are in it together. We do more sharing, discussion, and reflection. It is because we have time to meet in the office with no students around. So, I feel harmony. Thank God, it is having an impact (Fatma, I1, E5).

The collegial support, especially within schools, was predominantly seen by the teachers as one of the things they felt good about in their ERT experience. It was one of the resources accessible to the teachers (i.e., a structural and relational affordance) that helped them rebuild their motivation and respond to the challenges they encountered. This study found that the availability of peer support within a professional community context is considered one of the enabling factors that spurred teacher agency during ERT.

4.5.4. The Influential Roles of (Online) Teacher Communities

Teachers found solace in connecting and sharing with other teachers because it compensated for the lack of support they experienced from their schools and government agencies, especially during the early phase of ERT. For instance, Najwa recalled how connecting and reaching out to other teachers helped kickstart her ERT:

I got information from the teacher from another school. When in the pandemic era I went home. I went to my husband's home in Padang Panjang and actually my mom-in-law was teaching in Diniyah [an Islamic school], and she got more ways to do well, having teaching. So, I imitated her. (Najwa, I1, E6).

In this case, Najwa was informed by her mother-in-law, who happened to be a more experienced teacher. This illustrates that the connection and the collegial relationship

between teachers indeed played a crucial role during the most critical time of their careers.

The pandemic also saw the blooming of online teacher community groups, mostly using *WhatsApp* as the platform. These groups grew substantially in terms of numbers and participation throughout the pandemic. Teacher communities and networks of different interests and sizes were mentioned by teachers as one of the more reliable support systems they had during ERT. The result from the survey shows that 24.14 % of respondents reached out to other teachers in these groups to get assistance during ERT. These groups served as a forum in which teachers could ask questions and share their experiences. They became a supportive platform that assisted teachers who were just beginning to familiarise themselves with technology. Dona recalled how effective these groups were as sharing platforms: “I asked questions in WAG (*WhatsApp* group), *ada yang merespon, ada yang jawab Kita sharing lewat itu aja* [someone responded We [started] sharing through it]” (Dona, I1, E4).

The online communities provided a platform for teachers to ask and offer assistance to each other. Sharing lesson plans and learning materials was recalled as the most dominant form of activity in these groups. For teachers, sharing the resources became an affordance as they could stop worrying about not having enough materials to teach. Teachers had access to collections of resources in these groups, which were organised by their peers:

Ada sebagian video video yang dikirim waktu Pandemi itu didapat dari teman yang di MGMP. Dia sudah kumpulkan ini, ini untuk KD satu dan berikutnya

There were a collection of video resources from a friend in a teacher group which they already collected and organised for each topic (Anita, I1, E7).

This turned out to be a big help for teachers who had limited access and ability to find and collect their own materials:

Rekan sejawat mereka share the material. For example, [jika salah satu] mendapatkan materi baru, itu kan ini materinya bagus, bisa dishare ... Jadi itu teman sejawat itu sharingnya banyak sekali

My colleagues shared the learning materials. For example, when they get new and interesting learning resources, they would share with others ... They shared many of them (Meri, I1, E7).

This turned into teamwork where teachers with more access to resources shared with those with less. Those with good internet coverage uploaded materials to the group so that those with weak internet connections could simply download them when they had access.

Some senior teachers who had to do a lot of catching up in learning technology found learning from their colleagues through the *WhatsApp* group really helpful. For example, Anita recalled how supportive the members were in assisting her to learn to use technology:

Dari kawan kawan MGMP itu lah dapat seperti ini caranya. Misalnya belajar membuat video dan scan scan ... memang sangat membantu sekali itu teman sejawat... Bahkan kadang kita ada yang nggak bisa membuat, awal-awalnya itu membuat, mengirim PPT PowerPoint ... Dapatnya dari teman teman. Enggak ada pelatihan khusus, memang dari teman teman sejawat

From colleagues in the teacher group, I learned how to teach during ERT. For example, how to create videos and scanned materials. They have been really helpful. There were even some of us who could not create and send *PowerPoint* slides ... I learned it from my colleagues. No special training. Only from peers (Anita, I1, E8).

Anita's enjoyment of learning from her peers can be linked to the spirit of collegiality, the spirit of sharing and finding solutions together. This spirit indicates collective teacher agency in responding to the challenges during ERT. The supportive online teacher groups were seen as structural affordances which helped facilitate the exercise of agency.

4.6. Early Implications: How Challenges Affected the Teachers

This section looks at how the challenges of ERT affected the teachers. It is centred around teachers' emotions having to deal with the imperfections and shortcomings as they transitioned to ERT, which had implications for their self-efficacy, sense of authority, and ultimately, agency.

In their survey responses, teachers reported that many of their students had a hard time understanding the learning material (S31). Teachers also stated that they had problems measuring their students' understanding (S59). The difficulties in monitoring students' real progress can be associated with problems around student engagement, as previously outlined in 4.4.4, and the limited options teachers had to run their classes and conduct assessments.

A range of factors caused the interaction between teachers and students to become more and more distant as they delved further into ERT. Teachers commented that they were facing difficulties meeting their students' learning needs (S12; S17). Moreover, they also thought that most of the newly enrolled students did not even know them personally (S60). They felt that they lost the opportunity to establish rapport with their students. This was discouraging for teachers and influenced how they approached ERT, constraining their agency.

Declining student engagement and students' failure to complete assignments were seen as key indicators of underachievement by teachers. Consequently, they became insecure about their self-efficacy:

Yang paling bermasalah itu adalah untuk mengumpulkan tugas, karena kita tidak bisa mengontrol secara langsung. Jadi ini selalu menjadi masalah. Jadi kalau mereka tidak ... mengumpulkan tugas tepat waktu, artinya target target pembelajaran kita kan tidak sampai

One of the most problematic things was assignment submission because we could not control directly. So, it was always a problem. So, if they cannot submit assignments on time, it means that learning targets will not be achieved (Gina, I1, E5).

One of the factors that undermined the teachers' sense of achievement was their loss of sense of control, authority, and influence over their students. Factors such as charm, charisma and the use of gestures and emotions, which had been effective ways to boost student motivation in the face-to-face classroom, were no longer able to be expressed:

Kita tidak bisa memasukkan rasa, ... [dan] persuasi ... Itu akan lebih memotivasi mereka mereka ... untuk bekerja. Mungkin dengan ada sedikit ... penghargaan penghargaan dari kita. Kalau sekarang kan gak bisa. Kita hanya mengirimkan ... Tidak ada rasa disitu

We cannot incorporate our feelings, ... and persuasion Those will give extra motivation for them to work. Maybe with a little ... rewards from us. We can't do that now. We only send ... No emotion involved there (Fatma, I1, E6).

The above excerpt illustrates how Fatma missed the opportunities to motivate her learners by showing gentle emotions and friendly gestures in the physical classroom, something she thought was taken away completely from her. Without this ability, teachers like Fatma started to feel disempowered. This had a significant impact on their sense of teacher efficacy, as they felt unable to achieve the outcome they desired.

Overall, the shift to ERT negatively affected teachers. Teachers felt that they had lost influence and control over their learners. Their diminished control and weakened authority, combined with an inability to establish teacher-student bonds, contributed to low student engagement. This led to teachers experiencing lower self-efficacy and constrained agency.

4.7. Summary

From the beginning of ERT, teachers constantly faced new challenges. They needed to deal with their emotions and anxieties as they adjusted to the changes brought up by the pandemic. The shift to ERT left the teachers shocked since they realised that they needed to move from the comfort of the traditional classroom into the uncharted territory of online teaching. There was anxiety about technology, which put teachers under enormous pressure when stepping into ERT.

This chapter also highlighted the challenges teachers faced as they delved into ERT. The DD was seen as the root cause of the shortcomings since it impacted the communication and interaction with students negatively. The disruption in communication was also linked to declining student engagement and participation during ERT.

Issues with learner motivation were also seen by the teachers as representing a significant challenge stemming from the students' unreadiness to study independently. The absence of a supportive home learning environment also added complexity to the situation. These issues, combined with the DD, made the early ERT period extremely difficult for teachers. This situation affected not only how they ran their classes, but also how they felt about them. It negatively impacted their sense of self-efficacy and confidence, in both themselves and their learners.

The chapter also elaborated on the fragile support system that the teachers had during ERT. There was a discrepancy, delay, and insufficiency when it came to government agencies' support. Teachers felt that they did not get sufficient technical and financial support. They also did not have as much parental involvement in monitoring the students' learning from home as they felt they needed. However, they found solace in

connecting with their colleagues inside and outside their school settings. There was an increased sense of positive collegiality and camaraderie. The growing online teacher communities played a significant role in supporting them. They provided not only a sense of belonging but also an efficient platform for sharing, which helped these teachers run their classes and improve their learners' ERT experience.

The challenges affected not only the ways teachers worked during ERT but also the way they perceived their experience of ERT. While some aspects of these challenges presented themselves as major constraints to teacher agency, others can be seen as catalysts for exercising agency.

Chapter Five:

ERT Implementation: Actions, Decisions, and Evaluations

5.1. Overview

This chapter presents the findings about how ERT was translated by the teachers into their day-to-day teaching. It focuses on the timeframe where teachers started to become gradually immersed in ERT after the initial transition phase. The first section highlights the efforts made by the teachers, especially in adopting different teaching modes and strategies. The second section revolves around teachers' decision-making in terms of teaching platforms and the considerations behind them. The third section looks at the teachers' perceptions and evaluations of their ERT practice. This chapter concludes with an elaboration on the teachers' concerns regarding the potential threat of technology and overexposure to the internet for students.

5.2. Adaptation and Mitigation: Learning Efforts, Simplifications, and Lowered Expectations

This section details the efforts made by the teachers in carrying out ERT. It focuses on the implementations, modifications, and adjustments of different teaching and learning modes and strategies, as well as the teachers' considerations and justifications of their pedagogical choices.

5.2.1. Learning by Doing, Finding Solutions, and Ongoing Exploration of Digital Applications, Audio-Visual Materials, and Online Resources

As highlighted in Chapter Four, when lockdown was first implemented, most teachers felt that they were not provided with clear guidelines on how to approach remote teaching. They embarked on their journey to navigate ERT by gradually learning how to use different kinds of applications and platforms. This sub-section is dedicated to teachers' agency and perseverance in learning the required digital technologies on the go and finding their way to navigate ERT.

Teachers reported that they learned to use different kinds of tools and applications to support their teaching. Teachers utilised platforms that were accessible and practical for both themselves and their learners. Most of the teachers in this study resorted to *WhatsApp* and *Google Classrooms* due to their relatively user-friendly interface and moderate use of internet data. Teachers in more remote areas also reported using other alternatives, like radio (S63), to overcome the problem of DD. Moreover, teachers reported the use of more than one tool or application. For example, Najwa asserted that she mainly focused on the use of *Google Forms*, online worksheets, and videos:

I have learned about ... how to give a test by *Google form* so the students can answer directly. And then I also find online worksheets that the students can answer on that sheets, and then I know the scores later. And also, so many video makers that ... [enable us to] combine the student's photo with ... video to make the students interest with the video (Najwa, I2, E1).

Najwa's use of different applications here reflects her willingness to create customised lesson materials to suit her teaching style and her learners' needs, with the final goal of increasing interactivity and participation. The use of tools like online worksheets and video makers also reflects her awareness of the affordance of digital technology, which she thought not only improved her work efficiency but also helped facilitate her

students' learning. Regardless of the challenges, teachers like Najwa enacted their agency through their engagement in learning about technology and the use of digital tools.

For some teachers, simultaneously acquiring technological knowledge and skills and starting to use them was challenging, particularly given their different starting points in terms of digital literacy. Teachers used their agency by actively seeking solutions to their problems through learning by doing. Fatma is one of the teachers who sought help from their peers and family members:

Kita ada tenaga muda... mau tamat ... kita banyak belajar dari mereka, mencari-carinya gimana ini kita cari di mana, cara menempel linknya itu gimana, ... masukkan ke materi. Kita cari sama sama

We had young reinforcements (student teachers) who were about to finish their studies. We learned from them how to find the resources, how to generate and attach the links ... [and] put them into our materials. We did it together (Fatma, I1, E7).

Keluarga, ada anak kan? kelas 2 SMP gitu. Kalau kita terbentur dalam, misalnya ini penyimpanan [data]... Jadi mereka tahu gimana caranya membersihkan, meringankan beban HP. Juga untuk aplikasi-aplikasi banyak minta bantuan ... [dan juga] membuat ini, green screen

Family, I have kids, right? One of them was in the second grade of junior high school at that time. When I had problems, for example, with data storage, they knew how to clean up and boost my phone's speed. I also asked for their help with the applications ... and also setting up a green screen for video shooting (Fatma, I1, E8).

These excerpts illustrate Fatma's resilience in her efforts to learn and seek support for her technological knowledge and skills. As a senior teacher, she did not feel reluctant to ask for assistance from student teachers. The second excerpt exemplifies her ongoing explorations in creating digital media like videos. Her agency is manifested in her perseverance and ability to find solutions to her problems, for example, by locating accessible resources, which, in her case, were in the form of student teachers at her school and her children.

Teachers also found enjoyment in their learning and discovering new knowledge and skills in response to ERT. Being able to plan and execute the lessons by incorporating the technology features they learned and having their students engaged was seen as a rewarding experience:

Momen yang menyenangkan itu ketika siswa mengerjakan kuis-kuis atau latihan-latihan [via aplikasi Quizzis]. Kita kan ada limit waktunya dan mereka mengerjakan sesuai dengan waktu yang diberikan gitu

One of the enjoyable moments was when the students participated in quizzes or practice exercises [via the *Quizzis* application] because we had a time limit, and the students managed to do it according to plan (Fatma, I1, E9).

When I start my lesson and I use application like *Kahoot*, [the students found it] so interesting ... And based on the result, I can make group of the student and I think I am quite satisfied (Marsiah, I1, E7)

For the first time ... I taught them how to introduce themselves ... I sent a video of me when I introduced myself to them. And after that I explained the material by using video *How to Introduce Yourself*. You can say this one, you can say this one. And then after that, I asked the student to make their own video how to introduce themselves. And that's one that I think successful enough for my lesson (Najwa, I1, E7).

For these teachers, there was an excitement of putting what they learned into action. It was not only about students' positive responses but also their self-satisfaction of having applied a new approach to their teaching. These new experiences facilitated the further enactment of agency.

Some teachers put effort into incorporating audio-visual materials to support student learning. They did this not only because they felt encouraged to do so, but also because they understood their learners' needs. Gina explained that:

Guru masih menjadi satu satunya sumber belajar untuk belajar dan itu dan segala macam itu masih sangat sulit bagi siswa. Jadi saya bantu saja dengan ya, saya create video saya sendiri yang untuk materi materi tertentu

Teachers were still the only learning source, and students were having a difficult time to keep up with ERT. I supplemented my teaching by creating my own teaching videos for certain topics (Gina, I1, E6).

She decided to create video materials because she realised that they would benefit her learners. She realised that most of her learners still depended on her extensive oral explanations. She also realised there was a limitation in interactivity because her classes were primarily run through *WhatsApp* groups. Hence, by having supplementary video materials, on the one hand, she had more flexibility in explaining the topics to her students compared to the use of *PowerPoint* slides or texts. On the other hand, her learners did not have to use an extensive amount of data to follow her explanation synchronously. Gina demonstrated her understanding of the situation and knowledge of her learners. This does not mean that she did not experience DD challenges and other connectivity constraints on both her and her students' ends. Nevertheless, her decision to create learning videos demonstrates her capacity to make choices for the benefit of her learners, an exercise of agency through in-the-moment decision-making.

Teachers also found solutions to their teaching problems as they learned new things. Teachers learned how to locate relevant resources from various websites. The availability of these online teaching resources was one of the most frequently cited benefits in ERT. For some teachers, it was like a whole new world to explore. It was seen as a solution for the lack of available printed materials at their school. This is reflected in Marsiah's comment: "on my school, you know. Not many sources. Yeah. Not complete book to use. So, we always find the, found the source material from *Google* right there" (Marsiah, I1, E8). The skill to find relevant teaching resources was seen as an affordance of technology, which both spurred and facilitated the enactment of agency.

There were substantial efforts made by the teachers to locate, compile, and select materials, considering that incorporating the Internet into their teaching was relatively

new to the majority of them. Moreover, the decision to adapt or adopt materials was taken after careful consideration of their situations:

Kita ambil dari ini di YouTube kemudian materi materinya dari situs situs yang ada di internet seperti itu Pak, yang berhubungan dengan materi pelajaran pembelajaran kita itu. ... kita pilih yang memang ... berkaitan ... karena memang di kemampuan kita untuk membuat seperti animasi juga belum ada, yang setidaknya kita cari di YouTube yang memang bisa kita pakai...dipilih yang mana yang cocok dengan pembelajaran dan materi kita

We took videos from *YouTube* and materials from websites, all that related to our lessons. We chose ... the relevant ones ... because we realised, we could not yet create animations. So, we searched *YouTube* for videos that we could use. We picked the ones that suited our topics and lessons (Dona, I1, E5).

Here, Dona highlighted the practicality of using the selected internet resources, e.g., *YouTube* videos, because she realised, at that time, it was not realistic for the teachers to produce appealing teaching materials. Despite this, she ensured that all internet resources she used were relevant and served the purpose of facilitating students' understanding of the topics being explained. Moreover, the selection of these resources was based on careful consideration of her students and their learning needs. This illustrates how she made informed in-the-moment decisions, putting her knowledge about her students into account.

5.2.2. Assignment Box

The DD issues prevented a significant number of students, especially those residing in rural areas, from attending the online classroom sessions and accessing the study materials during the pandemic. To tackle this problem, school-level policies were implemented. One of the most common across schools in this region was an assignment box. This enabled a small number of students to come to the school to pick up the study materials and submit their assignments in the form of hard copies. It was designed to

conform to the health and social distancing restrictions in place during that period. Survey responses indicate that some teachers saw this as a good solution to help students who did not have access to gadgets and the internet (S47; S51; S61). The assignment box was run simultaneously with online asynchronous teaching through *WhatsApp* or *Google Classroom*.

However, the implementation of the assignment box approach differed among schools and teachers. In terms of frequency, some schools required students to come weekly, while others worked with a less frequent arrangement:

Siswa diminta datang ke sekolah sekali seminggu untuk menjemput tugas dan siswa dibagi berdasarkan shift

Students were asked to come to school once a week to pick up assignment materials, and they were divided into smaller groups and shifts (S47).

For the students who did not have phones, we prepared the task here. And maybe one, once in a month they will come here and take the assignment (Najwa, I1, E8).

The teacher in the first excerpt (anonymous survey response) taught in a public school whose students predominantly lived within a relatively close range of the school location. They managed the assignment box weekly because the students could come on a weekly basis. On the other hand, private Islamic boarding schools like Najwa's implemented a lengthier pick-up interval because the majority of their students lived far from the school location.

There were also variations in the ways teachers arranged the assignment submission for their students. Some teachers only required the students who did not have access to *WhatsApp* to use the assignment box. Others made it compulsory for all students to submit hard copy assignments, such as in Gina's case:

Kalau yang tidak ... punya WA, ngambil tugas di sekolah itu yang diantarkan. Atau ada juga guru tertentu yang meminta diantarkan dalam bentuk ... hard copy, tidak dengan disubmit di

WA, diantarkan juga ke sekolah. Jadi kami kemarin membentuk membuat satu ruangan di ... satu kelas dibuat di sana ... Nanti mereka langsung meletakkan di ruang tersebut

Those who did not have *WhatsApp* picked up the study materials for assignments at school to be returned later. Some teachers preferred students to submit in hard copies, not through *WhatsApp*, to be returned to the school. So, we dedicated a space in one classroom for this purpose ... they put their assignments in there (Gina, I1, E7).

In one of the schools in a very rural area, the assignment box was the only option to run the classes. Teachers appointed student representatives based on the districts to support this approach:

[We have] four blocks [for assignment submission]. These regions have one [representative] to give it to me, and this one will distribute for this region and the other... region. So only four students came to school to give and deliver the task, and they will give it to their friends if they are one region (Meri, I1, E9).

The assignment box was an important element of ERT implementation in this region, which kept hope afloat when other alternatives seemed to fail. Najwa asserted: "We had so many difficulties. So that's why I think *WhatsApp* group and taking assignment to the school is the only thing we can do at the time" (Najwa, I1, E9). The assignment box approach was seen as the last resort in ERT, and from Najwa's comment, it could be easily mistaken for evidence of teachers' lack of agency. However, it was not that simple. The findings suggest that the assignment box policy was a co-constructed procedure by the teachers and the school management. Teacher involvement in arranging and implementing it was crucial; there were things to consider and choices to make. These choices would often lead to different consequences in terms of planning and material preparation. These variations of assignment box practice can be regarded as the manifestation of teachers' efforts to push the students to commit to their studies regardless of the constraints. They illustrate how teachers weighed up a wide range of factors, including the DD issues, the location of students' residences, and students' learning needs and habits, in deciding to use and setting up the assignment box.

5.2.3. Bridging Communication, Limited Face-to-Face Classroom Sessions, and Home Visits

As ERT progressed, teachers faced the challenges of DD and a decreasing student participation rate. Efforts were made to tackle these problems. In the survey, some teachers reported their efforts to establish more intensive communication involving both the students and their parents/guardians (S25; S35; S43; S49). There were also risky options taken as part of the mitigation plan.

These risky options were teacher-initiated, limited classroom sessions, and house visits. These were considered risky because they involved face-to-face meetings, which at that time could expose both the teachers and the students to COVID-19. However, teachers reported that these were properly assessed and approved by their principals, and that safety precautions were being taken carefully to make sure everyone complied with the COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

The survey responses reveal that limited classroom sessions were designed to help the students who had internet connection problems (S30), as well as those who faced difficulties in understanding the teachers' explanation of the topics in the *WhatsApp group* (S56) and completing the assigned tasks at home (S30). These sessions were arranged according to demand. Students were asked to come in small groups. Meri, a teacher in a rural junior high school, reported that only one or two students usually joined during these sessions (Meri, I1), while Zaki, a teacher at a relatively bigger senior high school, mentioned the participation of between five to seven students:

I tried to make a small class. Just seven or five [students] ... and I taught in the class. ... For everyone who got difficulties in understanding our topic today...I explained briefly, and I ask them, please, you transfer to your friends whatever your way to transfer ... the most important for me that all the class could understand our topic (Zaki, I1, E4).

The teachers felt that their decision to have the limited classroom sessions was justified. Moreover, from Zaki's comment, it was evident that there was a further purpose for the students to attend these meetings. They were expected to share their understanding of the topic with their peers. Having these small class meetings, however, was something that could potentially breach the pandemic safety procedures, but it was regarded by the teachers as a risk worth taking at that time, given the context and situation. This was an instance where teachers enacted their agency to make difficult decisions based on their understanding of their learners and their local contexts.

Teachers also reported that to push the students' participation, they conducted house visits. These visits were allowed by schools and authorised by the principals under strict conditions of COVID-19 health and safety protocols; however, they were optional. Nevertheless, some teachers deemed it necessary to tackle the students' participation and engagement problems, especially in dealing with those who never submitted assignments online (S15; S17). Regarding these visits, Gina contended that *"ada juga yang sampai kita kerumah untuk jemput bola, istilahnya meminta tugas itu kepada siswa [in some cases, we even proactively visited their homes to collect their assignments]"* (Gina, I1, E8). The house visit was seen as a last-resort strategy to keep the students attached to the schools and the learning process. Teachers enacted their agency through their willingness to do much more than what was required of them to support their learners. This was also an example of teachers trying to embrace shifting roles.

5.2.4. Simplified Curriculum Contents, Adjusted Targets, and Lowered Expectations

Another way for teachers to mitigate the constraints of ERT was to modify curriculum content, lesson delivery, and overall learning goals. Teachers realised that ERT, with all its challenges, was not an ideal situation for teaching and learning. Hence, expectations of students' academic performance were relaxed. Teachers were instructed to implement a simplified version of the curriculum, or what some of them in the survey called the "pandemic curriculum" (S33). As further explained by some in both survey responses and interviews, this simplified version only covered the essential topics and materials without any revision or extension (Anita, I1; S5/Najwa). Teachers also reported in the survey that they were encouraged to simplify lesson content and to be more efficient in their lesson delivery (S62).

Despite the top-down initiative, the teachers also had other reasons to adjust their practices and become more tolerant of what they saw as their students' declining performance. One of these reasons was their concerns regarding their students' well-being. This is illustrated in Gina's comment:

Selama pandemi itu, siswa itu sebagian besar jumlah stres mereka. Jadi saya memberikan pembelajaran itu yang ... tidak terlalu berat bagi mereka. Tugas pun seperti itu, walaupun sebelumnya kita [bekerja] sesuai dengan target dan ... tuntutan kurikulum. Kalau selama pandemi kita berikan ... sesuatu yang ndak membuat mereka terlalu tertekan ... pembelajarannya disesuaikan

During the pandemic, most of the students were stressed out. So, I gave them lesson materials that ... were not too heavy for them. That also applied to assignments, even though previously we worked according to curriculum targets and demands, but during the pandemic, we provided them with ... something that did not make them feel pressured, adjusted lessons (Gina, I1, E9).

Gina's understanding of the magnitude of the situation at that time made her think more about students' psychological state. She, therefore, employed what she felt was a more realistic approach in ensuring that she did not burden students during a stressful time.

Her decision to modify the curriculum targets was translated into simplified lesson content and assignments.

Consideration of students' ability and background knowledge was another reason for teachers to adjust their lesson materials. Dona asserted that:

Siswa mempunyai latar belakang yang amat sedikit sekali dengan pengajaran bahasa Inggris ... ketika masa pandemi ya, saya tidak harus mengikuti tagihan tagihan, apa namanya itu, tujuan pembelajaran yang ada gitu, yang ada di kurikulum ... Saya lebih mempersimpel ... pembelajarannya atau materinya

My students had very limited background knowledge of English. So, during the pandemic, I did not have to follow the targets and learning objectives in the curriculum. I simplified the lessons and the materials (Dona, I1, E6).

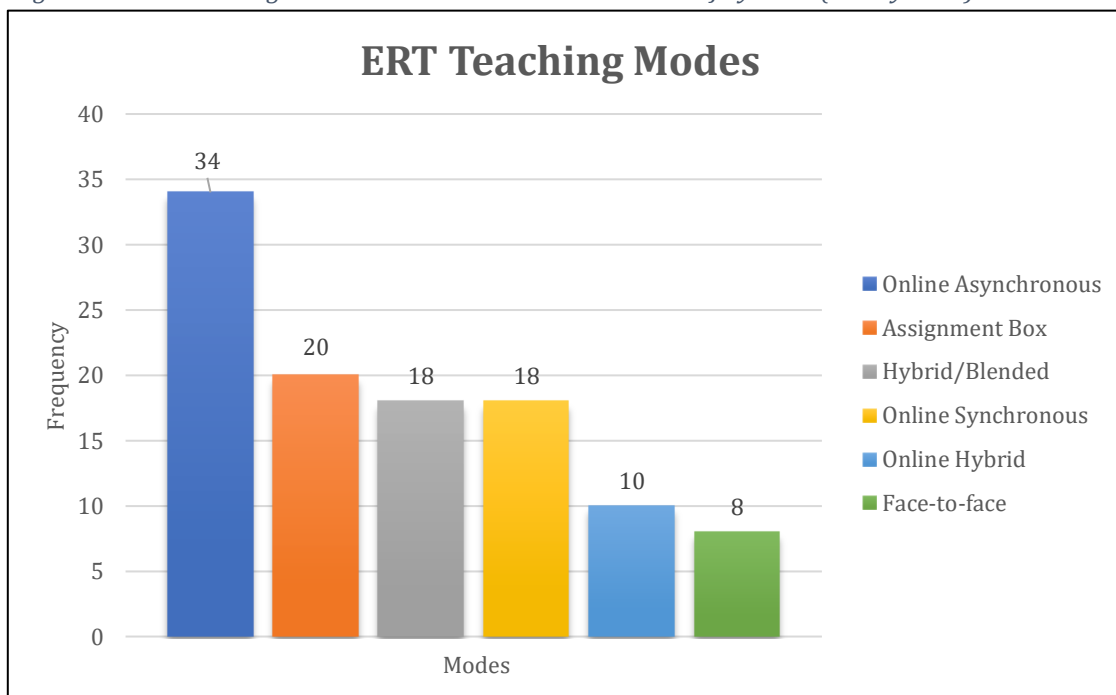
Dona was responsible for teaching grade seven students (the first year of junior high school) who had not learned English during their elementary school years. Perceiving that it would be very difficult for her students to learn a completely new language within a very disruptive learning environment, she decided to simplify the design of her lessons and make the materials more level-appropriate. This decision was intended to prevent her learners from feeling overwhelmed throughout the learning process. While this kind of adjustment was possible under the new *Merdeka* curriculum, which gives more freedom for the teachers to construct and design their curriculum content based on their learners' needs, it was teachers like Dona who exercised their agency and made the call for their students' interests. Their understanding of their contexts guided them to make important decisions that would benefit their learners.

5.3. Feasible Teaching Platform Options

This section focuses on the investigation of the teaching approaches and platforms used by the teachers during the lockdown period. It entails elaborations on teachers' justifications behind their decisions on the selection of teaching platform options.

The survey findings show that teachers tried out a wide range of approaches during ERT. This was indicated through one item in the survey in which teachers were asked to tick one or more listed teaching modes used during ERT (n=63). The results indicate that multiple teaching modes were used during the period between March 2020 and July 2021. Figure 15 provides further details of the survey results.

Figure 15. ERT Teaching Modes Used between March 2020 and July 2021 (Survey Data)



Asynchronous online teaching was the most used mode (34 ticks). This was followed by the assignment box (20 ticks). This finding illustrates the overall pattern of ERT practice in this region, which was dominated by these two modes. Hybrid or blended teaching

was an option taken by the teachers with a consideration of potential risks and benefits (see 5.2.3) concerning the social distancing policy that was in place at that time.

Synchronous online teaching (18 ticks) was also found to be one of the main approaches utilised during this period. However, results from interviews indicate that the teachers did not consider synchronous online teaching as a good fit for their students' circumstances, even though they did try it out. According to Zaki, the teachers "didn't use [synchronous mode] because some of the students' parents complained about data [use] ... to do *Zoom* now it needs a lot of [data] packages" (Zaki, I1, E5). The continuous provision of huge amounts of data required for synchronous meetings through applications like *Zoom* was almost impossible for parents, considering the price of the cellular internet package. Cellular data was the only option because most of the households in the region did not have broadband internet connections at home. Moreover, as frequently highlighted by the teachers, most students were severely affected by the DD issues. Gina elaborated on how DD negatively impacted her efforts to meet her students synchronously:

Google meet dicoba juga digunakan untuk berinteraksi secara langsung dengan siswa. Tetapi...hasilnya tidak maksimal karena ... sebagian besar siswa itu terkendala lagi pada paket, ada pakatnya terkendala lagi pada jaringan [akhirnya] dibantu melalui tetap grup WA, itu mungkin yang disekolah kami yang bisa digunakan untuk semuanya

We tried *Google Meet* to interact directly with the students. But ... the result was not maximum because ... most of our students had issues with [data] packages. Those who had packages had problems with the network. At the end of the day, it was still backed up by *WhatsApp* Group, which could be used by all at our school (Gina, I1, E10).

The main constraint was not only the affordability but also access to stable internet connections, which led teachers to focus mostly on asynchronous teaching (see Chapter Four, section 4.3), predominantly through *WhatsApp*. The justification for *WhatsApp's*

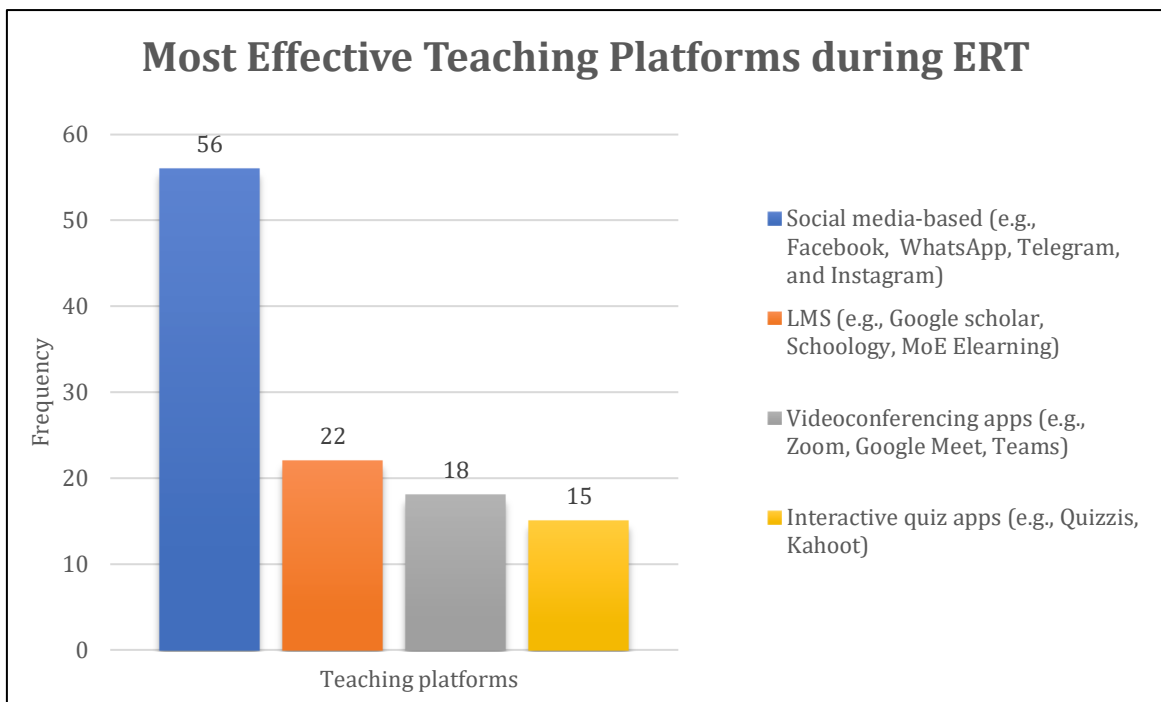
selection as the main teaching platform will be elaborated on in the next section, along with an explanation of how it was used.

5.3.1. *WhatsApp: A Practical Solution for Everyone*

Teachers in the survey reported that *WhatsApp* was generally accessible and available for almost all students to use, regardless of where they lived (S57). One key strength of *WhatsApp* was the group chat feature, which came in handy to emulate classroom forums. *WhatsApp* was seen as a reliable platform for teachers because, unlike other applications, which sometimes require a high-speed connection to use, it could still be used even if the connection was unstable (Marsiah, I2). It was “the only way ... for many teachers” (Roza, I1, E9) to teach.

The other reason teachers chose to use *WhatsApp* as the main platform for teaching during ERT was because of its relatively low data consumption. Najwa asserted that many teachers “focused [on] only using *WhatsApp* [because] that's the more efficient and effective one, the cheaper one” (Najwa, I1, E10) for them and their students. In the survey, social media (e.g., *Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, and *Instagram*) were dubbed by the teachers the most effective platforms for teaching during ERT above Learning Management System (LMS) applications (e.g., *Google Classroom*), videoconferencing (e.g., *Zoom* and *Google Meet*), and online quiz platforms (e.g., *Quizzis* and *Kahoot*) (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. Most Effective Teaching Platforms during ERT (Survey Data).



Social media were valued by teachers since they were used widely in Indonesia long before the pandemic. This helped with teachers' and students' understanding of their features. Social media-based platforms mentioned here mostly referred to *WhatsApp*. The others mentioned by the teachers were *Facebook* (Dona, I1) and *Telegram* (Survey response). However, their use was minimal when compared to *WhatsApp*, which was easier for students to use when compared to other applications, even *Google Classroom* (Dona, I1). Although *WhatsApp* was not developed for educational purposes, teachers found ways to maximise each of its features. Their familiarity with the platform made it a practical solution for those who were still catching up with technology for ERT. Fatma asserted that:

WhatsApp grup ... banyak membantu juga, terutama bagi yang IT nya tidak terlalu bagus. Cukup membantu juga. Karena instruksinya kan disana sederhana, mengirimkan video trus bisa VN (voice note) juga, lebih cepat rasanya tersampaikan ke siswa

WhatsApp group ... was a big help, especially for teachers who struggled with their IT. Because instruction there can be pretty straightforward, by sending videos and voice

notes, too. It seemed that the instruction and the messages could come across faster to the students (Fatma, I1, E10).

The group feature in *WhatsApp* allowed teachers to share learning materials with all their students. The sharing of documents, photographs, sounds, and videos was the key activity during a lesson. The use of the voice note feature, which allowed teachers to record their voice and share it with their students, was regarded as an affordance by some teachers since they could explain the lesson via this feature. It was mostly used asynchronously in a one-way communication from teachers to students. Gina described how she usually organised her ERT sessions in her class *WhatsApp* group:

[Saya jelaskan] Pakai pesan suara ... Kemudian kalau misalnya sudah ... dijelaskan topiknya, ada materi tertentu yang butuh saya bantu dengan video. Saya akan berikan link videonya kalau dari Youtube atau kalau video yang saya create sendiri saya berikan di groupnya itu. Kemudian nanti siswa akan diberikan LKPD atau tugas yang akan dikerjakan. Kemudian nanti diakhir pembelajaran tugas ini akan di diapa, dikumpulkan boleh lewat grup WA atau ada nanti siswa yang nggak punya HP, mereka ambil tugasnya di sekolah, kemudian diantarkan juga

I explained the topic using voice notes ... After that ... I usually shared supplementary materials like videos for certain topics. I provided the link to the videos if I got them from *YouTube* or sent the file to the group if they were mine. Then, students were given worksheets to complete. At the end of the session, they collected their worksheets through *WhatsApp* group or, for those who did not have mobile phones, they picked up the assignments at school and delivered the completed work later (Gina, I1, E11).

Both Fatma's and Gina's explanations above demonstrate the central role of material sharing and voice note features in the *WhatsApp* group lesson sessions. Voice note was optimised by teachers to navigate the group activities. It became the medium for delivering explanations and giving instructions. For some teachers, it helped with keeping the interactivity within the group chat as some of them also "*meminta siswa untuk mengirimkan jawaban mereka secara langsung melalui pesan suara* [asked students to send their responses directly through voice note]" (S58). For others, it was regarded as compensation for the lack of teachers' presence online. Roza specified that "It can replace me, as [if I were] in the classroom. They are, of course, listen me, and I

think it can replace the missing part in that activity” (Roza, I1, E10). Roza believed that by using voice notes, she emulated her presence among her students, which would encourage them to be more engaged in the activity. The creative use of the *WhatsApp* group and its features by the teachers illustrates the exercise of agency in maximising opportunities through the use of available resources.

It is important to note that there were other minor tools and platforms that teachers used during ERT (e.g., *Kahoot*, *Quizzis*, *Canva*), especially to create their teaching materials. These platforms were useful in helping teachers improve many aspects of their work, one of the examples of the blessings in disguise of the pandemic (see Chapter Six). They also helped shape teachers’ goals for their future practice (see Chapter Eight).

5.3.2. *WhatsApp and Google Classroom: The Complementary Pair*

Besides *WhatsApp*, *Google Classroom* was also frequently cited as a commonly used platform for teaching during ERT. They were often used simultaneously, with one complementing the other. Fatma explained how this had worked in her context:

[Penggunaan WhatsApp dan Google Classroom] berbarengan, divariasikan gitu. Kalau rasanya tidak terlalu komplis kita menggunakan WhatsApp grup saja. Tapi kalo tugas tugasnya itu memang harus di cerna siswa, mungkin banyak, jadi untuk meringankan beban HP juga kita pakai Google classroom

WhatsApp and Google Classroom were used simultaneously, interchangeably. If the lesson was not too complex, we used WhatsApp. If a lesson needed more elaboration for students’ understanding, in a rather significant proportion, and to ease the use of mobile phone memory, we used Google Classroom (Fatma, I1, E11).

Teachers realised that *WhatsApp* and *Google Classroom* had their strengths and weaknesses. Hence, they were used alternatively for different types of lessons and purposes. They tended to use *Google Classroom* for lessons with more complex planning

and materials, while *WhatsApp* was used for the less complex ones. *Google Classroom*'s key strength was its online storage feature, which was not available in *WhatsApp*. This made *Google Classroom* more mobile phone-friendly because it used less space for storage. This was an important feature for the teachers who predominantly used their mobile phones to teach during ERT. Teachers' decisions to rely on mobile phones and data-friendly applications were based on practical considerations and the desire to mitigate the impact of DD on their students and themselves. This illustrates their exercise of agency by weighing up and evaluating different digital platforms and making decisions based on practicality and student factors.

There was also evidence that teachers established a backup plan by using these two applications simultaneously. Dona explained that "*kalau memang mereka kurang respon di Google Classroom saya gunakan WhatsApp saja seperti itu untuk lebih mudahnya gitu* [If the students were unresponsive in *Google Classroom*, I would just use *WhatsApp* to simplify things]" (Dona, I1, E7). So, the purpose of having these two applications was more towards safeguarding the delivery of the lessons, making them feel more confident that they would be able to continue their teaching.

The use of each application was aimed at mitigating DD impacts and catering for the different types of students and lessons. Some teachers were more inclined to use *WhatsApp* because of its simplicity and ease of use, while others saw *Google Classroom* as a promising option because it could facilitate a more complex lesson-planning structure. This illustrates the engagement between teachers' autonomy to make decisions and their ability to negotiate the contextual factors in their local context. The findings illustrate how teachers enacted their agency in making important decisions about their

practice, which were based on consideration of both the students' learning needs and the availability of local resources.

5.4. ERT Realities: "At Least I Have Done My Best"

This section presents findings on how teachers evaluated their ERT practices based on their reflections on their experiences and perceived ERT outcomes.

5.4.1. Disappointing ERT Outcomes: Teachers' Emotional Vulnerability, and Constrained Agency

There seemed to be a consensus among the teachers when it came to their perception of ERT outcomes. This was reflected in the responses to one of the open-ended survey items that asked about their opinions of their students' academic performance during the lockdown period. While the teachers had different ways of framing their answers, most of them reported negative results. Students' performance was claimed to be pretty bad (S24), unsatisfactory, and below expectations (S22; S23; S43; S49; S64). There was an observable decline in students' performance and ability to comprehend instructions (S31; S55). Some teachers found the results to be significantly lower than pre-pandemic face-to-face teaching (S54; S55). Overall, teachers saw this development as concerning (S58), with some even boldly claiming that ERT, with all of its challenges, turned out to be a failure (S43). This result was seen as inevitable by a teacher in the survey:

[Hasil pembelajaran] sangat buruk. Dari awal bahasa Inggris adalah pembelajaran yang susah dipahami oleh peserta didik. Minim ny pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di SD, minim ny

*kontak dengan konten berbahasa inggris baik di internet maupun kehidupan sehari"
ditambah dengan tidak Efektifnya pembelajaran daring menjadi penyebab nya*

The learning outcome was really bad. Since the beginning, English has always been a difficult subject for students. The lack of English Language Teaching in elementary school and minimal exposure to English language content over the internet and in daily life. These all added up to the ineffective nature of online teaching, which was the main culprit (S8).

Teachers acknowledged that there had been problems mounting in the background when it came to English Language Teaching in secondary school settings in Indonesia. The ineffective implementation of ERT was seen as the straw that broke the camel's back, which further damaged the students' learning outcomes.

The DD issues, declining student engagement, and, ultimately, the disappointing learning outcomes took a toll on some teachers. They experienced burnout, feeling unable to achieve the learning objectives. Zaki stated that: "we can't get our target ... sometimes we give up. Okay. After I teach, up to *Allah* [I leave it to God] ... **at least I have done my best**" (Zaki, I2, E1, emphasis added). This sentence illustrates his frustration, hoping for miracles to happen to keep up with the learning objectives during ERT. The phrase "at least I have done my best" illustrates Zaki's constrained agency.

Teachers, nevertheless, continued working within the far-from-ideal circumstances. They needed to keep on going even though they did not think that they would get favourable outcomes. In the survey response, Anita reported that, at one point, she even considered continuing teaching only as a formality: "*Sepertinya belajar [selama pandemi] hanya untuk mengisi waktu anak dan mencapai target materi/kurikulum [It seemed like lessons were only for killing the students' time and curriculum content achievement reporting]*" (S49/Anita). This view could be associated with the Indonesian MoE policy at that time, which instructed teachers to let all students pass and disregard their academic performance during ERT. In the interview, Anita further elaborated:

Anak harus naik karena memang situasi ... Jadi kita di guru harus memberi ... minimal nilai tuntas itu. Walaupun memang pembelajaran itu sebenarnya targetnya bukan nilai, tetapi kita kasian anak ini ndak dapat apa apa

Students need to pass because the situation demanded so ... So, we teachers had to give ... a minimum passing grade. Even though grade was not the only purpose of learning, we felt sorry that the students got almost nothing (Anita, I1, E10).

Teachers were frustrated with the direction taken by the MoE since it clashed with their professional values to prioritise students' learning outcomes. This frustration can be linked to their tendency to hold outcome-oriented, learning-for-exam beliefs. Moreover, they were asked to continue teaching regardless of how they felt about the process. Sometimes, they needed to conceal their concerns about teaching and students and to act as if everything was normal.

Teachers were also shocked by the reality of low student engagement; they did not get the response they expected. The interview findings indicate that they went through difficulties in trying to perform their role during ERT sessions. Najwa asserted that "some of them (students) responded, but some of them are silent. I don't know why ... I'm not sure [if] the students understand or not, but I need to do this (Najwa, I1, E11). Just like Anita, Najwa felt that ERT had been reduced to a formality. However, for her, to keep on teaching was very important to maintain her professional values and identity, which can also be seen as a display of her agency.

There was also evidence that teachers experienced emotional vulnerability in dealing with the lack of student participation, which resulted in constrained agency. Fatma recalled that: "*Saya tidak punya kekuatan. Gimana [untuk membuat] siswa itu segan dan mau. Saya merasa sudah tidak punya kekuatan lagi* [I was powerless. I did not know how to make students respect me and be willing to participate. It felt that I didn't have strength anymore]" (Fatma, I1, E12). Fatma was not the only teacher who

experienced this during ERT. Those working in remote school settings experienced an even more severe impact as they were the ones most affected by the DD:

I can't do anything ... *pasrah* [feeling resigned] ... *sudahlah, biarlah berakhir saja* [so be it, let it [the pandemic] ends], *nanti kita tukar aja lagi caranya* [later we'll try different ways] ... *kita mulai lagi pembelajaran* [we'll start over]. *Seperti itu. sedih ya.* [Like that. It was sad] (Meri, I1, E10).

The severe restriction on the teaching and learning activities that could be done during the lockdown period contributed to Meri seeing ERT as a rather traumatic experience. For her, ERT practice was limited to the assignment box practice. The lack of availability of internet coverage in the area prevented her from exploring different platforms to maximise student engagement and learning. DD issues and restrictive ERT situations also significantly negatively impacted her students' learning motivation, which further constrained her agency. She almost felt bereft of agency, unable to exercise it.

Anita, Fatma, and Meri are examples of teachers in this study who, despite their struggles against loss of agency, still tried to do their best to be as agentive as possible and to maintain their professional identity as teachers. They could not do much due to the restrictive ERT circumstances. However, they realised that they still had to make something work for their students, even though it was far from ideal.

5.4.2. Teachers' Reflections on ERT Practices

During the first interviews conducted during the re-transition period between ERT and post-ERT classroom teaching, the participants were asked to comment on their overall ERT practices. These comments, while predominantly shaped by the disappointing learning outcome, contain participants' reflections on their ERT practices as they went on to discuss the ERT challenges and their constrained agency. There are

some important points to highlight from these reflections. Firstly, teachers thought that they should have made more efforts to support student learning during ERT:

Secara umum mungkin saya belum bisa menyatakan puas dengan apa yang saya lakukan, karena ... mungkin usaha saya juga belum maksimal. Kemudian keadaan juga tidak mendukung saya ... untuk menghasilkan sesuatu yang maksimal bagi siswa

In general, I could not say I was satisfied with what I did because ... probably I had not made the maximum effort. But then the circumstances were not on my side ... to do my best for the students (Gina, I1, E12).

Sebenarnya dengan apa yang saya lakukan, dengan ... pembelajaran jarak jauh yang kita ketahui belum maksimal juga kita berikan pemahaman kepada siswa

To be fair, with all that we did with ... ERT, we realised that we had not made maximum effort to provide comprehension for students (Dona, I1, E8).

Gina, while acknowledging how the circumstances (i.e., the DD issues and, consequently, her students' low motivation) affected her actions, claimed that she had not done her best to improve her students' ERT experience. Similarly, Dona reflected that *WhatsApp* was insufficient to facilitate effective instruction and to meet her students' needs.

Further reflection on *WhatsApp* use was taken by Sari:

Iya dulu kan pertama sekali [di awal pandemi], kita guru memang santai, kasih via WA, oke, tapi dibalik itu, banyak kerugian.

In the earlier phase, at the beginning of the pandemic, we teachers were too relaxed. Giving instructions only through *WhatsApp*. However, beyond that, I felt that we suffered a major loss (Sari, I1, E4).

Sari asserted that teachers relied too much on *WhatsApp* during ERT to the point that they were reluctant to consider other options. She felt that the overreliance on *WhatsApp* was associated with teachers' allegedly laid-back attitude in their responses to the situation, especially during the early phase of the pandemic. She argued that this attitude might have contributed to the negative outcomes.

These reflections reveal the complex ERT realities from the teachers' viewpoints. On the one hand, they serve as further evidence of teachers' constrained agency during the ERT period. Sari's comment, in particular, sheds some light on the paradoxical nature of teachers' overreliance on *WhatsApp*, which she felt might have negative implications on their agency. On the other hand, these reflections also indicate teachers' willingness to look back and evaluate their practices. This could be a facilitating factor to spur their agency as they prepare for future challenges and return to face-to-face teaching post-ERT.

The second important point to highlight is that, through their reflections, teachers demonstrated their understanding of ERT and online teaching beyond technology acquisition. Gina identified "*mencari media ... [dan] penggunaan teknologi ... yang tepat* [finding the appropriate medium ... and suitable digital platform]" (Gina, I1, E13) as one of the key aspects required for navigating ERT and online teaching. Instead of focusing only on what kind of technology to use, she argued that teachers also needed to start considering the best way to use technology in their contexts. Planning online lessons that cater to students' needs was another important point highlighted by Fatma as she found it challenging to "*mencari materi yang mereka (siswa) bisa kerjakan ... [dan] memvariasikan materi dan tugas* [find materials they could deal with ... and diversify materials and assignments]" (Fatma, I1, E13) during ERT. Through these reflections, teachers illustrated their increasing awareness of the implications of technology for their pedagogical and content knowledge.

A benefit of this kind of reflection was not only to evaluate past practices but also to identify future challenges. Reflecting on ERT practices gave teachers opportunities to

assess their current position as well as the direction they wanted to take in the future, now that offline teaching was again available:

Tantangan bagi kita (guru) [yaitu] menyajikan suatu pembelajaran baik secara online ataupun offline. [Yang] Memang menarik bagi mereka [siswa] ... [dan] bisa membuat mereka tu aktif belajar

The challenge for us was to deliver effective lessons either online or offline. Those which could trigger their attention. ... and make them participate actively (Marsiah, I1, E9).

Marsiah 's excerpt above captures the awareness of the main challenge that teachers need to respond to during and beyond ERT. It also reflects a progressive standpoint towards a more student-oriented approach to teaching. This reflection embodies the teachers' efforts in learning from their experience, which had implications for their long-term goals. She believed that teachers need to learn from their ERT experiences and enhance their teaching practice based on their learners' needs. Moreover, she also emphasised that teachers should be more adaptive to the change in teaching modes so that they would be better prepared if similar disruptions were to happen again in the future.

5.5. ERT Side Effect: The Threat of Technology

The use of technology was inevitable during ERT. For most of the teachers in this study, the term "technology" was synonymous with the use of mobile phones and their applications because the use of personal computers was not very common, and they were not widely available for the learners to use either. Since most of the learning activities during ERT were done through mobile devices, students became more attached to their gadgets. There was a growing concern among teachers about the high-intensity use of mobile phones among students. The pandemic, ERT, and the overreliance on

mobile phones were considered to have significantly altered “*proses pembelajaran, ... karakteristik, ... kebiasaan, dan budaya siswa* [teaching and learning process, ... students’ characters, ... habits, and ethos]” (Dona, I1, E9). This section specifically looks at teachers’ reflections on the effects of technology use and exposure to mobile devices, especially mobile phones, on learners and the overall learning process.

5.5.1. Gadget Use and Disappointing ERT Outcomes

Some teachers linked students’ low academic achievement during ERT to the increasing exposure to mobile phones. One teacher in the survey explained that student academic performance “*sangat menurun, karena siswa belum bijaksana dalam menggunakan gadget* [declined significantly because students could not use their gadgets wisely]” (S26). This comment illustrates the tendency for teachers to disapprove of the use of mobile phones for learning, which they thought would bring more negative than positive effects for students. Teachers also associated observable changes in students’ behaviour with gadget exposure. Mobile phone addiction was seen as a threat which distracted students from their learning goals:

HP, Game. Yang dapat bagi mereka [dari ERT] hanya itu, efeknya itu. Mereka jadi lengah dengan HP karena sudah terbiasa. Jadi untuk memisahkan kembali dari HP itu sangat kesulitan

Mobile phones, Games. Those were the only things they got from ERT. They became distracted by phones because they were so used to them. So, it was difficult to separate them from their mobile phones (Anita, I1, E11).

Anita described her feeling of irony as she thought ERT only succeeded in making students more attached to their mobile phones and online games, while in theory, they should be assisting students in learning. She saw mobile phone use as a paradox which

had distracted students from their learning. She attributed her students' obsession with games to mobile phones. She became highly concerned about the long-term implications of students' prolonged use of mobile phones, which she thought had brought in distractions, like games, to the learning process during and post-ERT. At that time, she considered their use by students as a constraint rather than an affordance.

The tendency to demonise gadgets and technology can be seen as a way for teachers to express their frustration and emotion during ERT. Their relatively limited previous experience of using technology in their teaching may have prevented them from finding a way to effectively integrate gadgets and technology into their lessons. Moreover, beliefs about the importance of students' learning attitude and academic performance also played an important role in shaping this perspective, since teachers could become very focused on students' attitudinal change.

Teachers' negative sentiment towards the extensive use of mobile phones, on the one hand, reflects their decision to resist a policy which they considered unfit for their students' learning interests. In this case, they tried to minimise students' exposure to mobile phones to mitigate the alleged negative impacts, even to the extent of reducing their online teaching. On the other hand, it also reflects their frustration in dealing with students who relied heavily on technology but not necessarily for learning purposes. They felt helpless since they had difficulties in providing guidance for students to effectively and appropriately use their gadgets to support their learning. They felt that their values and professional identities were challenged as they could not exercise their agency to make the students follow their instructions.

5.5.2. Implications of Obsession with Mobile Phones for Learners' Lifestyle, Learning Motivation, and Attitude

Prolonged exposure to mobile phones was assumed to have impacted many aspects of student life. This was considered the main factor behind the significant change in students' habits and what teachers perceived to be disorderly learning behaviour. The obsession with mobile phones was cited by the teachers as one of the main factors contributing to the perceived lack of self-discipline, declining learning motivation, and deteriorating attitudes. Roza recalled the tendency of her students to be distracted and lose track of time when they used their mobile phones: "They like to spend their time with their handphone and ... [so that] they forget to ... submit the test" (Roza, I1, E11).

Teachers became more concerned about their students as this alleged lack of self-discipline developed into an unhealthy lifestyle. Zaki asserted that:

Mostly our students go to bed now after 12. That is a problem now. Why? Handphone ... Sometimes, if [I ask], you know, ... 'What time did you go to bed last night? One, Sir. Two, Sir. So that's why [when] I'm teaching for the last session. You know, [there was] sleepiness. Laziness (Zaki, I2, E2).

He felt that the obsession with mobile phones prevented students from getting much-needed rest. This habit was not only seen as detrimental to their health but also to their learning motivation. Teachers were concerned that this negative trend in learning motivation would continue even after the students returned to classrooms post-ERT.

Najwa commented on how a cohort of students changed drastically during the pandemic:

I don't know what actually happened to the students, but their character, most of them are different. I mean, they become lazy, more lazy. I don't know. I guess it's because they have or they have been so close with their phone ... the students are lack of motivation now. It's hard for me to engage them to our class. And ... we say something to the students and the students are doing something else (Najwa, I1, E12).

The above excerpt illustrates how Najwa linked students' depleting motivation and changing attitudes to their mobile phone exposure. This judgment was not only based on the worrisome intensity of the use but also on her genuine belief that her students were heavily distracted by games and social media applications. Therefore, the phenomenon where "boys ... [were] addicted to *Mobile Legend* and *Free Fire* ... and the girl students are addicted to *TikTok* and *Instagram, Snapchat*" (Najwa, I2, E2) was predominantly seen as a threat rather than a teaching or learning opportunity.

5.5.3. 'Risk Outweighs Benefit' Discourse

Having witnessed students' obsession with mobile phones and a decreasing trend in motivation and academic achievement, teachers felt that using technology, especially in situations where they had very little control over the students, was "having more negative things rather than positive" (Najwa, I2, E3). Teachers also thought that the change was too extreme for the students to handle, considering they had very little experience in using technology for educational purposes before the pandemic. Full exposure to technology was then regarded as a risky approach given the students' increasing curiosity about new things, such as technology and the internet:

The danger is bigger because their interest is bigger in everything ... they want to know many things ... Maybe we ... let them use the internet, but we have to think about how to protect them from the danger of the technology (Roza, I2, E1).

Roza highlighted the urgency of having a mitigation plan to safeguard students in navigating the use of the internet, where she perceived threats were lurking. Without this, she did not think it would benefit the students.

Junior high school teachers reported more concerns regarding the perceived threats of technology and the internet in particular because they considered their students vulnerable:

Kalau saya menilai dampaknya banyak negatifnya daripada positifnya ... karena yang saya hadapi adalah junior high school student dalam masa pubertas yang harus menyesuaikan dengan segala hal yang berhubungan dengan teknologi handphone, gadget dan lain lain

I think the negative impacts outweigh the positive ones. ... because I am working with junior high school students in their puberty period who need to make sense of everything related to technology, smartphones, gadgets, and many others (Dona, I1, E10).

As a junior high school teacher, Dona felt that she had to take precautions to protect her students from the negative effects of technology. She believed that the puberty period was a key phase for self-discovery, which was vital for student development but full of challenges. She considered the introduction of gadgets and technology to students within this age group to be more problematic compared to other groups. From her perspective, the unstable nature of the adolescent psyche, combined with high curiosity levels, made students in this age group more susceptible to offensive content on the internet.

The findings presented in this sub-section show that teachers, through their reflection on their ERT practices, became more concerned about the perceived negative consequences of technology adoption on their learners. This made teachers reconsider the urgency of incorporating technology further in their teaching. This defensive stance against the idea of normalising technology usage embodied teachers' actions and decisions to protect their students from being affected further by the perceived negative impacts.

5.6. Summary

This chapter has highlighted the significant efforts made by the teachers in learning technology features required to adapt to ERT and mitigate the impact of learning loss during the lockdown period. A selection of tools and applications was used, along with the incorporation of audio-visual media. Teachers also reported employing different strategies to facilitate learning and overcome the DD issues they faced. These included assignment boxes and limited face-to-face meetings. They also adjusted their approach to curriculum goals, putting learners' well-being as a priority.

Secondly, this chapter elaborated on teachers' decision to use *WhatsApp* as the main platform during ERT. Functionality, practicality, ease of access, and cost efficiency were the reasons behind the selection of *WhatsApp* and *Google Classroom*, which, in some cases, were used simultaneously to provide more options for students.

Thirdly, the findings presented in this chapter also shed more light on the teachers' perceptions of their teaching efficacy during the lockdown period, in which learning outcomes were considered disappointing. The negative results subsequently led to teachers' frustration, which significantly constrained their agency. Their reflections on the process also indicate the substantial amount of emotional labour required to keep ERT going, notwithstanding the challenge of DD issues and decreasing student motivation. However, through their experience of hardships, teachers were stimulated to do more reflection and self-evaluation.

Lastly, this chapter illuminates teachers' concerns for students regarding technology overexposure. Negative trends in learning achievement were associated with mobile phone distractions. Technology euphoria was linked to the student's depleting motivation and changing attitude. These concerns led teachers to be more defensive

towards the idea of further technology adoption in teaching and learning. This viewpoint constitutes their actions in making the best decision based on their context.

The findings presented in this chapter illustrate how contextual factors facilitated or constrained teacher agency in implementing ERT. There were instances where teachers, with the support of adequate resources, exercised their agency to overcome the challenges. However, teachers also found their agency constrained in different contingencies over the ERT period. In some cases, they found themselves devoid of agency where there were no possibilities for any online learning due to the DD.

Chapter Six: Blessings in Disguise

6.1. Overview

Dengan adanya pandemi ini, kita dipaksa juga untuk merubah cara pembelajaran kita untuk meningkatkan diri kita sehingga bisa melaksanakan pembelajaran yang memberikan pengalaman baru bagi siswa ... walaupun secara umum mungkin hal ini adalah sesuatu yang bisa disebut ... musibah, tetapi ada juga efek, apa namanya, manfaat lain dibalik musibah itu

The pandemic forced us to change the way we teach and to improve our capability so that we can provide new learning experiences for the students ... even though it is something that can generally be seen as adversity, but there is also a kind of impact, benefits beyond it (Gina, I1, E14).

This chapter focuses on the teachers' positively perceived experiences of ERT and the pandemic. It looks closely at the teachers' perceptions of the affordances of technology. It is important to note that, thus far in this study, there has been a dominant discourse of how the participants perceived their experience of using technology for teaching and learning negatively, especially during the earlier phase of ERT. In Chapter Five, teachers' fear of gadgets and technology overexposure for students was revealed. Their negative perceptions about their student learning outcomes were also highlighted. In this chapter, however, teachers' positive viewpoints are presented to delineate the complex and nuanced array of their experiences and emotions during this period.

Regardless of the complexity of challenges faced during ERT, teachers also saw their enhanced teaching practice and increased engagement in professional

development as silver linings of the pandemic. This chapter elaborates on the participants' positive testimony of their ERT experience. The findings will be linked to teacher agency and professional identity.

6.2. Teachers' Awareness of the Benefits of Technology

In this section, findings related to the teachers' views of the values of technology use are elaborated on to elucidate how the participants exercised their agency in reflecting on their ERT experience despite the previously highlighted anxiety about integrating technology. The first part delineates the positive impacts of technology exposure on learners. The second is focused on the teachers' perspectives on digital technology as a gateway to authentic learning materials. The integration of technology into the teachers' problem-solving repertoire is the highlight of the third part. The last two parts expand on teachers' understanding of accessibility and flexibility as the affordances of technology, and their increasing awareness of technology-assisted language teaching.

6.2.1. Teacher Awareness of The Positive Impacts of Technology Exposure for Learners: An Alternative Discourse

Some teachers in this study reported that they thought their learners benefited from the increasing exposure to technology, despite the dominant apprehensive discourse of the majority of teachers presented in Chapter Five. One of the perceived positive impacts was that ERT and the pandemic allowed students to learn about technology. One of the teachers in the survey contended “[the pandemic/ERT] ... make

students learn more about technology” (S39). Through this short response, the teacher demonstrates their awareness of the overall need for students to learn about technology as one of the essential life skills of the twenty-first century, and how the ERT experience provided the chance for them to do that. Although it was not well-elaborated, this response serves as the basis of an alternative discourse of the perceived students’ ERT experience.

Students’ increasing familiarity with gadgets and technology was also viewed as beneficial to their English language learning, especially their vocabulary development.

Sari highlighted:

Sebenarnya dengan anak anak itu main HP, main game, sebenarnya vocabularynya itu sudah bagus ... Karena lewat game game itu dia memakai bahasa Inggris. Dan saya pun melihat banyak anak anak itu bisa bahasa Inggris karena dia memang hobi main game

Actually, when the students play with mobile phones, playing games, it helps improve their vocabulary... Because these games use English. And I see many of these kids develop their English because of their hobby of playing games (Sari, I2, E1).

In this excerpt, Sari referred to the fact that popular mobile games that students played mostly have an English language interface. According to her, playing games helped students enrich their English vocabulary. Furthermore, in these games, players from different parts of the world can be connected online. This requires the use of English, even if only at a basic formulaic level. Sari recognised this as one of the blessings in disguise of the pandemic. The link between technology and English language learning was also elaborated on by Dona:

Teknologi itu menunjang pembelajaran bahasa Inggris ... penggunaan teknologi sekarang [banyak] menggunakan bahasa Inggris ... [ini] bisa membantu mereka gitu dalam pemahaman bahasa Inggris atau menimbulkan ... motivasi bahwa ketika mau belajar bahasa inggris.

Technology supports English learning ... technology nowadays mostly uses the English language ... this can assist them in their English language comprehension or to spark ... their motivation to learn English (Dona, I1, E11).

Similar to Sari, Dona emphasised that the English language interface in digital technologies can be beneficial to students because it exposes them to English language use. Moreover, she highlighted that this kind of familiarity and urgency to understand technology can provide an authentic motivational drive for students to learn English.

The findings indicate teachers' awareness of the potential benefits of technology for their learners. This illustrates not only their agency in decision making and weighing down the benefits of technology for students' learning, but also their long-term aspirations as they started acknowledging the important role of technology in future practices.

6.2.2. *Technology as a Gateway to Authentic Learning Resources*

While learning English is compulsory within Indonesian secondary and tertiary education settings, the language is not used in daily communication. This means that learners have very limited opportunities to use it. At schools, the learning of English was almost synonymous with the use of predetermined coursebooks, which were often considered irrelevant to students' needs by teachers in this study. This was because they often contained "*kosakata yang luar biasa sulit* [unbelievably advanced vocabulary]" (Dona, I1, E13). Moreover, some teachers in smaller public schools struggled with the availability of textbooks. Problems of a limited school budget resulted in difficulties in making these printed resources available in their libraries.

Access to online resources was seen by teachers as a solution to the teaching and learning resource shortage issues. For example, as Marsiah asserted (see 5.2.1), *Google* had already been an important learning resource for her school, given its lack of books.

The availability of downloadable resources from the internet in the forms of audio, video, and e-books was a significant help for the teachers working at smaller schools like Marsiah.

Dona gave an example of how she used *YouTube* as one of the most versatile sources of learning materials for her classes:

Saya merasa penggunaan teknologi dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris itu sesungguhnya membantu ... Banyak hal yang bisa kita lakukan dengan teknologi itu sendiri gitu. Contohnya saja bisa anak anak kita arahkan untuk melihat youtube dengan materi yang kita berikan seperti itukan lagi banyak referensi yang bisa mereka dapat gitu

I think the use of technology in teaching and learning English is, in fact, helpful ... There are many things we can do with the technology. For example, we can ask them to watch *YouTube* clips related to the materials that we have so they would get more references (Dona, I1, E12).

For Dona, *YouTube* video clips have been an integral part of her lesson planning. This seems to be aligned with what the new *Merdeka* curriculum has suggested: that teachers are encouraged to design and develop their own teaching materials. Many teachers in this study found video clips from platforms like *YouTube* helpful for explaining their topics or developing classroom activities.

Online resources, according to Najwa, also offered opportunities for students to learn about the authentic use of the English language, something that might not be available in textbooks:

By using technology, we can get more learning sources like the real [authentic] ones. I mean, if we don't have any example from the native, for example, how do they speak? How do they pronounce the word? It will be hard for us to get the real examples (Najwa, I1, E13).

Here, Najwa pointed out how video clips from online media platforms can be used to teach pronunciation and to allow her learners to see how the language is used by native speakers. She found teaching pronunciation through videos effective because she

thought it would be more appealing for her learners, not only because it provided authentic examples, but also because it gave them a sense of cultural experience. In the observation session, it was also noticeable that Najwa used video clips for different purposes, for icebreaking activities, introducing her topic, and developing classroom activities. Interestingly, she also used videos from *TikTok*, a video-sharing platform that was popular among her students but tended to be perceived negatively by the wider society due to the nature of the typical content shared within it (e.g., dance videos). She had managed to find very different and completely acceptable videos from a less common source, such as *TikTok* (other teachers mostly got their video resources from *YouTube*), which served to expose her students to useful English.

Besides being a gateway to resources, technology was also seen as a potential tool for teachers to address the different needs and learning styles of present-day students:

Students right now need the new technology *gak* (not) only give the paper [and] take their note. They actually need some [interesting] materials. They can see, and they can watch. I think it's very good ... Because when I ask them to write down and I ask them to watch, they will like to watch, prefer to watch than to write ... *Jadi kalau teknologi kan lebih tidak monoton, lebih nyaman* [So, the technology makes the lesson less monotonous, more convenient to follow] (Meri, I1, E11).

In this excerpt, Meri referred to the traditional pen-and-paper lecturing approach, which she felt might no longer be relevant to her current students. She emphasised that the new generation of students has different learning preferences. She also asserted that by incorporating simple use of technology like videos, teachers can diversify their lesson delivery and facilitate different student learning styles, while at the same time, making lessons more appealing.

The data presented in this sub-section demonstrate that access to a broader range of learning resources was regarded by teachers as one of the affordances of technology. Access to these learning resources, together with the freedom to incorporate them into

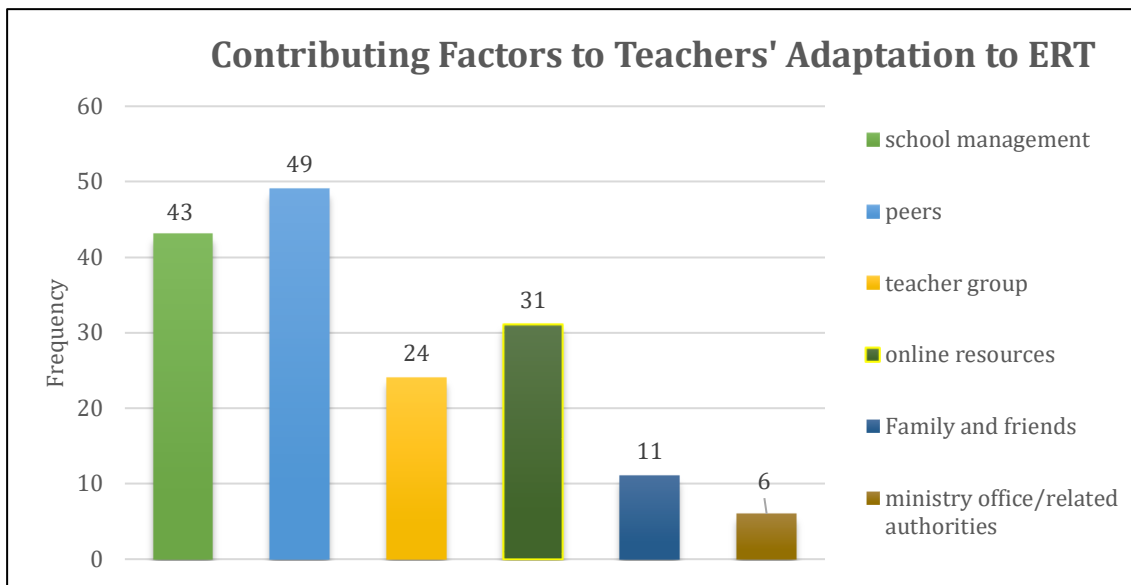
lessons, has the potential to support teachers in enacting their agency. Access to online resources was the embodiment of material affordance, while the freedom to use them was seen as the manifestation of structural affordance.

6.2.3. Contributions of Technology to Teachers' Problem-Solving and Learners' Engagement Improvement

One of the benefits of the shift to ERT is that it exposed the teachers to the use of technology. Teachers found some things they learned during the pandemic helpful in solving the problems they faced in their teaching during and beyond ERT. Furthermore, as highlighted in the previous sub-section, teachers also saw the potential of technology in increasing the relevance of their lessons for their learners and in improving learning engagement.

The contribution of technology in helping teachers solve problems during the ERT period was evident. The data from the survey show that teachers used the internet to find tutorials and online resources to help them adapt to ERT. Based on the responses to a multiple-response question asking which aspects contributed the most in helping teachers adapt during ERT (n=63, total votes=164), online resources were voted the third most helpful aspect in supporting teachers, after school management and peers/colleagues. More details about this survey result can be observed in Figure 17.

Figure 17. Contributing Factors to Teachers' Adaptation to ERT (Survey Result)



In the context of the pandemic lockdown, when mobility was restricted, teachers used the internet not only to find learning materials for teaching but also to actively look for pedagogical solutions. This gradually became one of the new routines for teachers.

Findings from the interview also reveal that teachers perceive the benefit of technology as extending beyond the pandemic context. This perspective is seen in Najwa's comment:

Technology helps me a lot ... to find a solution of teaching problem ... nowadays, before the pandemic, and also in the pandemic ... Before the pandemic when my students get bored, I used the games in the classroom, by showing them in a projector...And then in a pandemic we need social media *WhatsApp* group or *Google Form* to give them, the students a learning material. And then after the pandemic, I used the media to, to find a worksheet, like, to find a worksheet, to find a media that can, can show the students the real speakers of English ... And also, I found, ... I tried to find any kind of solution of my problem in teaching, like how to face the introvert students, how to face the noisy students, how to attract the students when they get bored, when they get sleepy and the other (Najwa, I2, E4).

This excerpt illustrates that technology gradually became a part of the problem-solving repertoire of younger-generation teachers like Najwa throughout the pandemic. Here, she asserted that different forms of technology had helped her to find solutions for her

teaching challenges. The term 'technology' here is used by Najwa in a broader sense to refer not only to the tools that she used to teach (e.g., screen projector, *WhatsApp*, and *Google Forms*) but also to gathering teacher-focused materials (e.g., internet browser). This highlights how Najwa saw technology as one of the available instruments to help her solve her teaching problems, whether teaching online or face-to-face.

The experience of ERT gradually exposed teachers to different ways to incorporate technology for teaching English. They started to reap the benefits of their increasing familiarity with it. The findings from the interviews suggest that they established a positive attitude towards its use, especially in their efforts to engage learners. This is seen in one of the comments made by Anita:

[Penggunaan teknologi] dalam bahasa Inggris sangat bagus sekali, sangat bagus sekali. Sangat mendukung. Terutama bagi guru itu terasa lebih mudah mengajarkannya itu terasa lebih mudah. Kemudian anak itu more interesting, lebih tertarik banget kalau pakai media, pakai video, pakai layar infokus. Itu akan menarik bagi mereka

The use of technology in teaching and learning English is great, really great. I support the idea. Especially for teachers, it really helps to teach with technology; it makes teaching seem easier. Furthermore, students are more interested if we use media like videos, using a screen projector, which is appealing to them (Anita, I1, E12).

According to Anita, having technology incorporated into lessons not only significantly reduced teachers' workloads since it made learning material distribution more efficient, but also increased the attractiveness of the lessons as there was a wide range of resources available for use. Anita emphasised that having the various elements of technology incorporated would attract learners' attention because it is relevant to their interests as a digital generation. The fact that schools in this region started to introduce non-paper-based learning resources only recently also explains Anita's perception of learners' fascination with technology; it was new and fresh.

Teachers also found interactive digital tools like *Kahoot* helpful in engaging learners during ERT. *Kahoot* was credited for its interactivity and fun user interface. Anita specifically highlighted her positive experience of using this application with her learners:

Researcher: *Kalau menurut ibu apa sih yang menarik dari aktivitas memakai Kahoot?*
Anita: *Yang pertama, menariknya itu yang pertama. Itu kan sejenis kuis ya. Ada soal soal. Istilahnya menyenangkan itu kuisnya ... misalnya dari warna ... Dan nanti siapa yang benar, dia itu akan muncul. Jadi ada rasa, ada rasa bangga, namanya terpampang sebagai pemenang*

Researcher: What is the strong point of activities using *Kahoot*?
Anita: First of all, it is interesting. This is a quiz platform, right? There would be questions. The quiz is fun ... for example, the use of colours ... [and] whoever gets the right answer, their names will pop up. So, there will be a sense of achievement for those whose names are displayed as winners (Anita, I2, E1).

According to Anita, *Kahoot* offers both fun and a friendly competitive atmosphere to students. She also implied that the element of connectivity and interactivity appealed to them because it was something that they had been familiar with before. She mentioned the use of vibrant colours, which added to the element of fun. However, the most important thing to note here is that, as an English teacher, Anita saw the potential of interactive applications like *Kahoot* as a medium to recognise students' achievement and to give instant feedback on her students' language task performance.

The findings presented in this sub-section illustrate how the affordances of technology spurred teacher agency not only to overcome their teaching problems but also to enhance their practice to improve student engagement.

6.2.4. Accessibility, Flexibility, Efficiency, and Convenience of Using Technology

In this sub-section, a collection of teachers' positive testimonies about using technology is analysed to illustrate points about teachers' perceptions of how technology has helped increase accessibility and flexibility in their teaching practices. These testimonies also highlight how they see technology as a tool to assist them in developing better practices centred on their learners' interests.

In the interviews, teachers credited technology for its ability to provide better access for them and their students to the course content. From teachers' perspectives, the use of LMS like *Google Classroom* can also serve the purpose of establishing a better course management practice. Practically, this means that the teachers found the use of online storage facilities to save and organise their course materials helpful. Fatma highlighted this as one of the affordances of technology, which helps in improving her practice:

[Hal] positifnya [dari Google Classroom] itu [semua] tersimpan. Semua materi-materi kita itu tersimpan. Sampai sekarang kalo butuh masih ada. Itu manfaat yang saya rasakan. Videonya. Terus juga kiriman kiriman video dari siswa sudah ada di Google Drive

The positive thing about *Google Classroom* is that everything is stored. All our learning materials are stored. They are still there if we need them. That is the benefit that I feel. The videos, all students' videos, are in *Google Drive* (Fatma, I1, E14).

Here, Fatma implicitly made a comparison with the conventional practice of having folders of printed learning material at school, to which she was accustomed. The convenience of having all the prepared resources one click away was very important for her. In this excerpt, she also touched on the possibility of material recycling and updating, which might not be as accessible without this technology. She also hinted at the convenience of having all students' work well-recorded and automatically stored.

This illustrates the potential use of this technology to improve teachers' classroom and resource management practice.

The benefit of technology for building better course and resource management practice was echoed by Sari. However, in her testimony, she emphasised the benefits with regard to the increased accessibility for her students:

I also keep my administration of lessons in the *Google Classroom*. When the students miss the material for the task, maybe they can see it again in the *Google Classroom*. So, they can also check the ones that didn't completed by them, so, or the ones that have finished. Like that. So, *jadi lebih ... terbuka, aksesnya lebih mudah bagi guru maupun siswa* [It is more open and easier to access for both the teacher and the students]. *Jadi* [So], the teacher can prepare and keep the material in the *Google Classroom*, and [when] we want to applicate it, only open it. So easy, I think (Sari, I2, E2)

Sari's perspective serves as evidence of teachers' willingness to incorporate technology, not only in their effort to provide easier access to their course content but also to give the students a certain degree of flexibility. This, in turn, might be a valuable starting point for fostering a more independent learning style. Regarding this aspect, Marsiah made a statement, which is not only in line with Fatma's and Sari's perspectives, but also provides further insights into teachers' perceptions of the importance of having accessible and flexible access to lesson contents for the students:

I share with them the video, the teaching learning video, especially the topic at that time, and they can learn whenever they can, like that. *Jadi mereka bisa mengulang lagi memahami* [so, they can watch it repeatedly until they understand] ... my students practice dialogue or speaking or reading, practice. They may record their task or their performance and send to me. That quite ... **benefit for me because I can make evaluation ... kapan saja [anytime] and dimana saja [anywhere] [it] can make me easy and also the student easy because they have some choice** they can... not only presentation in front of the class but also, they can make more practice or perform in outside effective time for both the students and also the teacher (Marsiah, I1, E10, emphasis added).

The sentences in bold emphasised the urgency for teachers to provide flexibility, which could give students choices on how they approached their learning. Marsiah thought that technology like LMS had the potential to provide that. Similar to Sari's statement,

Marsiah's comment reveals a hint of her changed paradigm. This suggests that technology could gradually change both students' and teachers' approach to learning and teaching, from teacher-centred to a more learner-centred one.

Teachers also gave particular credit to applications like *Canva* for their versatility. In their testimonies, they also cited the application's contribution to making lesson delivery more efficient. Sari asserted that:

Pembelajaran...melalui Canva [sangat bermanfaat]. Karena disitu ... kita cuma mengasih link saja. Buat kasih link ke anak anak yang, yang melihat, bisa materinya, bisa tugasnya, segala macam. Itu teknologi yang bisa memudahkan kita...tidak hanya segi waktu, juga segi materi. Karena kertas berapa itu harganya, tapi kalau kita kasih link saja anak bisa mengerjakannya...[jadi] pandemi itu...tidak hal negatif saja, tapi ada positifnya

Lesson delivery through *Canva* was really useful. Because there ... we can generate a link and share it with the students so that they can access the materials, the assignments, and many other things. **That is a technology that can make our lives easier, not only in terms of time but also cost.** Because using paper incurs costs, but now we can only send them a link, and they can get their work done. [So], the pandemic is not only about negative things; there are also positive ones (Sari, I2, E3, emphasis added).

Even Zaki, for whom many aspects of ERT had been negative (see 5.4.1 and 5.5.2), had this to say:

[Now] you can easily [teach online], I think, easy thing because we learned how to mix explanation in writing and also in audio, audio, audiovisual ... we can use *Canva* (Zaki, I1, E6).

In the two excerpts above, Sari and Zaki emphasised that *Canva* made material development and lesson delivery easier for teachers in online or blended settings. In her excerpt, Sari also touched on the time and cost efficiency aspects, which she viewed as revolutionary when compared to traditional printed materials. These points further illustrate how the teachers saw the benefits of versatile applications like *Canva*. This application, along with *Google Classroom* and *WhatsApp*, was categorised as “top of mind” tools for the teachers in the context of ERT. The statement in bold in Sari's excerpt highlights the fact that teachers had started to see technology as something with a

growing influence on their teaching practice. This phenomenon can also be linked to teachers' increased exposure to technology through government professional development programs, which were inspired by the necessity of ERT. *Canva* and *Google Classroom* were among the applications endorsed by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, with a lot of webinars and training sessions available during and after the ERT period.

Data from both the survey and interviews also highlight how teachers believed that the adoption of technology, both during and after ERT, brought flexibility in terms of their use of time. During the ERT period, technology was credited for giving teachers flexibility in running their classes so that they could spend more time with their families (S30 & S60). This also allowed them to participate in online training or webinars (S30). This is another embodiment of blessings in disguise. Post-ERT, teachers also found the option to do hybrid teaching convenient since they did not have to cancel their classes when the schools held special events:

Kadang kadang kalau misalnya ada [acara], seperti kemaren ada pawai, ada HUT. Jadi kalau tahun tahun sebelumnya pandemi, libur, kita kan libur aja ya. Kalau sekarang sudah ada dari, dari madrasah, kalau anak libur, kita tidak liburkan saja, tapi kita tetep daring. Belajar daring

Sometimes, if we have events, like recently, there was a school carnival for Independence Day. In previous years, we just cancelled the class. But now, we have a policy in the *Madrasah* that if we have special events, we do not just simply cancel the class, but we still deliver lessons online (Anita, I1, E13).

This excerpt illustrates how the flexibility of time and space offered by technology in the form of online asynchronous teaching through applications like *Google Classroom* and *WhatsApp* has given teachers an alternative option to deal with the limiting nature of scheduled traditional face-to-face sessions. From Anita's perspective, this flexibility allowed her to be consistent with her lesson planning and schedule, which otherwise

might need to be cancelled during school events. This can also be considered a huge step forward in fostering a more learner-centred approach to teaching because, in the past, such events tended to cause learners' academic interests to be deprioritised. The flexibility offered by technology gave teachers more options to run their classes; it spurred teacher agency to pay more attention to their learners' needs.

6.2.5. Teacher Awareness About Technology-Assisted Language Learning

The findings from the interviews also reveal teachers' increasing awareness about the development of current technology that can specifically assist language learning, both for themselves and their learners. A statement from Gina illustrates this point:

Kalau bagi saya itu [penggunaan teknologi dalam pembelajaran bahas]] malah sangat penting Pak. Bukan hanya untuk siswa, saya pun sampai sekarang masih saya mencari sosial media atau aplikasi yang bisa membantu saya untuk belajar bahasa Inggris ... [karena] untuk speaking itu secara umum diakui itu sangat apa namanya, weak, sangat lemah ya pak ya. Jadi sampai sekarang saya masih mencari aplikasi, malah seperti ada Halo itu kan ada speak native, seperti itu, di mana yang membantu saya practice.

For me, the use of technology for teaching and learning English is very important. Not only for students, even until now, I still try to find social media or applications that can help me with my English language learning ... because for speaking, generally, I feel that I am weak, very weak. So, until now, I still look for applications, like *Halo*, that have the feature of speaking with native speakers, which helps me practice (Gina, I1 E15).

This statement shows Gina's awareness of the importance of keeping up with technology specifically developed for assisting English language learners. She reflected on her experience to describe the benefits of this kind of technology for her learning process, and how it provided opportunities for her to improve her own speaking skills, which helped her deal with self-confidence issues as an English teacher. She was implying that this scenario might also apply to her students. She saw digital technologies as

opportunities not only to give herself and her students access to more learning resources but also to practice and experience more authentic English language use.

Furthermore, Gina also demonstrated that she was well-informed about the latest trends in technology-assisted language teaching:

Kalau [yang] bisa membantu vocabulary pronunciation seperti Duolingo itu apa ya? Terus kalau yang speaking itu banyak kan untuk speaking partner, kalo grammar pun ada. Kalo di Halo itu saya lihat ada yang kita bisa belajar dengan guru native speaker ... itu kan memberikan pengalaman atau lingkungan berbahasa, language environment

Things like *Duolingo* help with vocabulary and pronunciation, right? For speaking, there are many that provide speaking partners, even they also have something to help you with Grammar. In *Halo*, I think the important point is that we have the opportunity to learn with native-speaker teachers ... It will give a new experience and a language learning environment (Gina, I1, E16).

Gina exhibited a genuine interest and detailed knowledge of technology-assisted language learning. Moreover, she had an awareness of how technology could help create an English language environment, which the Indonesian context lacked. Her awareness provided a good starting point for her to enhance her teaching practice. The knowledge of English language learning technology also served as one of the factors that facilitated her agency in facing challenges in her teaching practice. However, another point to note here is that most of the teachers in this study were themselves experiencing DD issues; difficulties in accessing material resources like access to technology in the form of gadgets, internet connections, and most importantly, subscription-based applications. Access to technology and resources could not be taken for granted, and as a consequence of a lack of access, teacher agency might be constrained.

6.3. Room for Growth: Opportunities for Better Professional Learning and Development

This section focuses on teachers' positive perceptions of how their experiences of ERT affected their professional growth as teachers. Data are presented to illustrate how ERT led teachers to appreciate the value of participating in professional learning and development programs. The elaboration starts with an analysis of how the participants saw the pandemic as a moment of reflection, a turning point in their careers. The section then proceeds with an analysis of the implications of open opportunities to learn about technology for teacher professional learning and digital literacy. Moreover, this section also examines how teachers perceived opportunities for training and professional development programs within the context of ERT and post-ERT. The last sub-section looks at how the teachers engaged with the learning opportunities provided during and beyond ERT.

6.3.1. The Pandemic: A Catalyst for Teacher Learning

This study found that one of the most often mentioned blessings in disguise of the pandemic, when it comes to teachers' professional growth, is how it "forced" (S43) and "challenged" (S41) teachers to learn about digital technologies. As highlighted in Chapter Four, most of the teachers in this region had not experienced teaching online before the pandemic. Moreover, for many, technology use had been limited to classroom use of screen projectors and slide presentations. Hence, the ERT experience was viewed by these teachers not only as a phenomenon that elevated their digital skills but also as a catalyst for learning. Without it, significant learning opportunities would not have been available. In the survey, teachers reported that their experiences during ERT had

gradually increased their motivation to learn more about social-media-based learning platforms, to try out and experiment with digital technologies, and to find alternative methods for remote teaching.

Teachers' increasing familiarity with technology and digital platforms was one of the points highlighted by Gina:

Setelah pandemi itu kita sudah akrab aja dengan segala sesuatu yang yang berhubungan dengan internet ... [misalnya] untuk mencari materi, kita sudah terbiasa untuk membuat ... media pembelajaran yang menggunakan teknologi itu juga kita sudah terlatih. Jadi sudah bukan hal yang asing lagi

After the pandemic, we are familiar with everything related to the internet ... like looking for learning resources, we are getting used to creating ... learning media using technology. We are now used to it. So, it is not something uncommon anymore (Gina, I2, E1).

Gina's comment elucidates that the experience of dealing with ERT had subsequently led the teachers into rapid learning mode when it came to technology and digital platforms, thus enabling them to quickly familiarise themselves with the more advanced technological features required within the "new normal" context post-ERT. This can be considered a positive development for their professional growth and a good starting point to boost their readiness to initiate and embrace changes.

Zaki personally viewed ERT as a driving force that pushed him to try new things:

If there is no pandemic, we don't want to use them [technology and applications] because we feel comfortable with our way we are teaching ... But after pandemic, ... we have to be able to combine any appliance in our hand. Handphone can be connected to laptop. Laptop can be connected to students. And from both or from these technologies, we have to create something, something creative (Zaki, I2, E3).

He emphasised how ERT exposed him to the use of technology, which led to connectivity and creativity. He described it as a step in getting out of his comfort zone, an action that he urged all teachers to make. He implied that ERT should be seen as a critical moment in which teachers should start adopting an agentive role and making changes to their

practices in response to the current demands based on their understanding of their local contexts and the availability of digital technologies as primary resources.

The participants' consensus in terms of the use of silver lining discourse in describing the impact of their ERT experiences towards their professional growth is interesting, given the challenges they faced in the early phases. It shows the ability of these teachers to look at things from different angles; to see hardships as an invaluable opportunity to learn and reflect on one's experience and utilise them to grow professionally, and ultimately, to prompt enactment of agency in improving their teaching practice. This was illustrated by Anita:

Kita kan kadang belajar dari masalah ya. Anggap pandemi itu masalah yang kemarin. Jadi dengan adanya masalah, jadi kita ... harus siap dirilah, bersiap siap seandainya terjadi seperti ini kembali ... Dan jadi dari itu pun kita akhirnya menemukan ide ide baru. Bagaimana ya supaya anak ini lebih tertarik? Bagaimana ya supaya anak, saya bisa interesting terlihat oleh anak, gitu. Muncul ide ide baru

We sometimes learn from our problems. Let's say the pandemic was the problem. This problem prepared us for the same threat in the future ... and from that, we also find new ideas. How to engage the students, how to make them interested in me and the lessons. New ideas emerge (Anita, I2, E2).

The above excerpt exhibits Anita's acknowledgement of the positive influence of her ERT experience on her professional trajectory. This is in contrast with, for example, the ways she described the impact of ERT on her students' attitudes and behaviour as discussed in Chapter Five. This phenomenon illuminates the complexity of the ways teachers perceived their ERT experience, which was almost like a love-hate relationship. How teachers perceived these experiences substantially affected their agency. This means that a single event, such as the pandemic, can both constrain and facilitate teacher agency. It was also an important factor which determined the direction of their professional identity negotiation during and post-ERT.

6.3.2. The Pandemic, Learning Opportunities and Teachers' Engagement in Professional Development

Another blessing in disguise of the pandemic was that it could extend the reach of PD programs with the widespread introduction of online training and the webinar format. In the past, the approach taken by the Indonesian government for teachers' PD had been very top-down. In other words, PD programs were mostly based on the Indonesian MoE agenda. These programs usually took the form of onsite workshops held at the school, regional, provincial, or even national level, which at times required teachers to spend multiple days away from the students and their families. One issue with this approach was that it made it difficult to facilitate continuous PD of teachers all over Indonesia due to its cost-intensive nature. Most of the time, the competition to access this training was also relatively high, because of the limited available slots. The other issue was that the top-down nature of the government programs caused the teachers to lose their attachment to and sense of ownership of PD.

During the pandemic, due to the social distancing policy, the government funding for PD was reallocated from onsite to online delivery. Moreover, the pandemic also saw a more active involvement of non-government agencies like professional and community-based organisations as providers of online PD programs. Even though most of these programs only covered topics related to the use of technology and digital tools for ERT, they nevertheless provided more accessible options for teachers.

The data show that most teachers in this study saw this as positive progress, which brought more equal and equitable access to professional learning and development. This is reflected in one of the teachers' comments in the survey:

[Selama pandemi saya] dapat meng upgrade diri lebih banyak dari biasanya. Seperti lebih banyak mengikuti webinar, lebih bnyak belajar menggunakan aplikasi

During the pandemic, I could upgrade myself more than usual. For example, I followed many webinars, learn more about how to use applications (S57).

The pandemic had more to offer to teachers compared to pre-pandemic times in terms of access to training programs and opportunities for learning a variety of digital technologies for teaching. These opportunities were available even after the pandemic.

The emphasis on more equal access to PD was also highlighted by Dona:

Guru sekarang sudah ... tidak awam ... lagi gitu ... mengikuti webinar. Banyak hal yang kita ketahui, yang biasanya. Sebelum pandemi ini kita sangat jarang untuk mendapatkan ilmu. Palingan kita hanya mendapatkan dari pengawas atau melalui MGMP. Sekarang kita udah bisa langsung gitu ya dengan orang orang pusat Kemendikbud lain yang mengadakan seminar ... Seolah-olah kita dekat gitu ya ... Sebuah sebuah keuntungan bagi dan ya anugerah jadinya

Nowadays, teachers ... are familiar with participating in webinars. There are many things we learned ... before the pandemic, we rarely had the opportunity to obtain new knowledge. The possibility was limited only to learning from teacher supervisors and the local teacher group. Now, we can even learn directly from people in the MoE head office who ran the seminars. It seems that we are physically close now ... A benefit, a blessing indeed (Dona, I1, E14).

Dona's comment reflects teachers' appreciation of the more open opportunity to join PD programs, which had been considered a rarity and a luxury in the past. Here she also emphasised how the flexible nature of webinars, which transcended the boundaries of time and space, benefited teachers by enabling them to access a wider variety of sources for their professional learning.

Access to online PD programs remained open post-ERT. The pandemic circumstances had not only opened the gate to access but also given teachers choices on how to approach their engagement with PD. These options had become normalised in post-ERT times as PD programs continued to offer more flexibility in attendance.

Teachers could still attend intensive formal training onsite, while, at the same time, they

had access to those more flexible opportunities through the online training and webinar format. This could be a sustainable solution to the limited PD budget allocation for teachers. Regarding this Marsiah asserted that:

Sekarang belajar itu enggak harus ikut pelatihan ya, harus belajar semua ya, harus bimtek. Karena sekolah kita sekolah kecil. Enggak bisa berharap apa yang kelemahan kita di adakan Bimtek diadakan IHT, itu butuh dana gitu. Memang harus kita mencari sendiri

Nowadays, to learn does not always mean that you need to join a formal training program. Because our school is small, we cannot always rely on formal training or in-house training. They cost a lot. We need to find other options ourselves (Marsiah, I2, E1).

Marsiah stated strongly that teachers no longer needed to solely rely on government programs to do PD due to their limited and top-down nature. She emphasised that there were other options, which were not only free of budgeting restrictions but also offered the teachers a wide range of options in terms of topic coverage. This excerpt also captures teachers' rising awareness of the urgency to take ownership of their PD, which can be regarded as an enactment of agency facilitated by the affordances of access to online PD programs.

The data also indicate that the teachers saw their experiences during the pandemic, especially those related to their participation in online PD programs, as enlightening. They believed these new experiences had helped them find their motivation, establish new routines, and shape their professional learning habits. On this point, Dona asserted that:

Dengan adanya pandemi ... kita guru dituntut untuk ... mengikuti webinar dan lain lain seperti itu...menurut saya dengan dampaknya pandemi diadakan sebuah program. Dan saya mempelajari banyak hal disana. Saya merasakan itu, apa namanya ya, bermanfaat sekali terhadap diri saya seperti itu. Sampai sekarang. Ya kalau seandainya pandemi tidak ada kemaren, mungkin saya tidak akan mengetahui hal yang demikian. Saya tidak [akan] tertarik sekali nih mengikuti apa [pelatihan dan webinar], mungkin saya tidak akan melakukan itu

Because of the pandemic, teachers were required to follow webinars and that kind of stuff. I think one of the impacts of the pandemic is that it gave birth to programs and policies. If

there was no pandemic, maybe I would not be interested in attending online training, maybe I would not do that (Dona, I8, E18).

Dona thought that somehow the obligation to follow webinars during the pandemic had helped the teachers to realise the importance of PD. This facilitated their agency to continuously engage with PD. And again, here, the blessing in disguise was clear. The pandemic had become a phenomenon that forced a change in government policy, especially regarding PD programs, which turned out to have positive implications for teachers. This excerpt also elucidates that there was an early indication that teachers started taking the initiative in establishing new learning habits and determining the course of their PD, which denotes their exercise of agency. Marsiah's excerpt below further exemplifies teachers' growing initiative in undertaking PD, which was triggered by ERT:

Dengan mengajar online lah, jadi banyak akhirnya saya sering buka [web] disana ada [informasi tentang] pelatihan guru, saya ikut. Waktu itu tanpa disuruh oleh kepala sekolah. Tanpa disuruh dulu oleh dinas pendidikan. Saya coba sendiri gitu. Pelatihan baik dari Kemendikbud ataupun tidak. Jadi akhirnya, jadi banyak pelatihan pelatihan yang membuat seorang guru itu memahami kalau dia itu guru

With online teaching, I became accustomed to browsing the internet, through which I found information about online teacher training. At that time, I was neither asked by the principal nor by MoE to participate. I tried it voluntarily. Official training by MoE and others. So, I eventually joined many of these programs, which helped me understand the teaching profession better (Marsiah, I1 E11).

The above excerpt not only illustrates Marsiah's engagement and an increased sense of ownership of her PD but also captures her appreciation for the learning opportunities provided, which she thought had contributed significantly to her professional identity development.

Reflecting on the data presented in this sub-section, it is clear that for many teachers in this study, and especially Marsiah, the pandemic and ERT experiences with the affordances of technology and access to PD programs had helped them develop their

awareness about the importance of continuous PD. For Marsiah, her agency was spurred by her increasing familiarity with technology and better access to online training. This helped her take charge of her professional learning and negotiate her professional identity.

6.4. Changed Perspectives: Reflective Teaching Practices

This section focuses on how the ERT experience affected the participants' overall perspectives on their teaching practice and how it guided them to become more reflective. The section starts by highlighting how the pandemic was a wake-up call for teachers, which triggered their awareness of the changing nature of their profession. This is followed by an analysis of their insight into the importance of their learners' feedback. The section proceeds with a description of teachers' awareness of the importance of adaptability in responding to changes. It concludes with a highlight of teachers' efforts to stay relevant to their learners, an indication of their reflexivity.

6.4.1. *The Pandemic: A Wake-Up Call*

This sub-section focuses on how teachers viewed ERT as a critical turning point in their careers, which triggered them to evaluate and reflect on their teaching practices, and at the same time, to develop an awareness of the ongoing challenges the teaching profession faces. This is reflected in one of the teachers' responses in the survey:

Hikmah yang paling terasa adalah tantangan dalam dunia pendidikan akan terus ada. Yang perlu kita tingkatkan ada[lah] kemampuan diri dalam menghadapi tantangan tersebut

The most important silver lining is that challenges in the education field will keep coming. What we need to improve is our capability to respond to those challenges (S10).

This excerpt illustrates how the pandemic was viewed as an important historical phenomenon which triggered the teacher's increasing awareness of future challenges and the urgency to continuously grow as professionals. It also illuminates the role of teacher agency in overcoming the challenges. The pandemic was seen as a momentum for change. Anita commented that:

[Pandemi] Membangunkan kita dari tidur. Kita yang selama ini gptek, jadi tahu. Yang kurang aktif sekarang kan jadi lebih aktif, lebih terbuka pemikirannya ... kita sebagai guru itu harus, apa namanya, terbuka itu sesuatu hal yang baru

The pandemic wakes us up from our sleep. We, who had not been familiar with technology, those who remained idle, now become more active and open-minded ... we teachers need to be open to changes (Anita, I1, E14).

She implies that the pandemic was a phenomenon that pushed the teachers outside of their comfort zones and helped them change their mindsets to be more progressive. For some teachers, the shift of mindset was so apparent that they were determined to move on from the previous version of their professional selves. This indicates an awakening of agency, which is illustrated in Fatma's comment below:

Saya merasa bahwa semakin kita menganggap diri kita berpengalaman ... sebenarnya kita itu semakin kurang. Saya merasa bahwa menjadi seorang guru itu memang harus penuh persiapan, baik dari segi teknik, strategi, media, ... Tidak bisa kita mengandalkan apa yang sudah ada pada kita sejak zaman kolonial kita. [kita harus] Mengupgrade [diri] ... [Jika tidak] Saya akan tertinggal, saya akan dicemoohkan siswa ... guru guru sekarang itu [harus menjadi] semakin kreatif, kita semakin tertinggal jika kita tidak mengejar ketinggalan

I think the more we see ourselves as experienced teachers, the bigger the possibility that we actually lack capability. I feel that as a teacher we need to have good preparation, in methods, strategy, and media ... I cannot keep relying on the old ways. I must upgrade myself... otherwise I will be left behind, students will mock me ... nowadays, teachers need to be more creative, we will be left behind if we do not start catching up (Fatma, I2, E1).

Fatma's reflection above highlights the need for teachers to avoid relying on the same methods over and over, knowing that things can change very rapidly. She emphasised

that teachers need to keep themselves up-to-date and be ready to respond to changes. She asserted that the failure to respond would negatively impact a teacher's development.

The data elaborated in this sub-section illustrate how teachers considered the pandemic as a critical turning point in their careers. It also presented evidence of how the ERT experience had spurred on teacher agency. Furthermore, the data also illustrate how ERT experience pushed teachers to engage in critical reflection on themselves and their teaching practices.

6.4.2. The Importance of Teacher Adaptability in Responding to the Challenges of the New Era

The study found that, since the beginning of the pandemic, teachers had started to demonstrate reflexivity and develop awareness about major educational changes taking place. This, of course, was attributable to the learning process they underwent through the widely available online PD programs. As previously asserted, teachers began to see the immediate need to respond to changes. There was a common discourse used by the participants in both the survey and the interviews; they mentioned the urgency of being able to adapt to the demands of the times. They put a strong emphasis on how important it was for them to learn and use technology with the overall aim of being innovative and creative. For example, in the second interview, Dona explained that the incorporation of technology through the use of audio-visual materials was essential for teachers if they wanted to keep themselves relevant in this fast-changing age:

Guru harus mengikuti perkembangan jaman yang memang teknologi itu menjadi bagian penting ... Siswa sekarang, kalau seandainya kita ... memakai metode yang lama tanpa ada

menyuguhi, suguhkan mereka media. Tanpa menyuguhkan, mengikuti perkembangan teknologi, mereka. Kita tidak diperhatikan Pak. Dinas pendidikan dan kementerian ... menginginkan kita mengikuti kodratnya, kodrat alam dan kodrat zaman

Teachers need to follow the current development in which technology becomes a very essential part ... Students nowadays, if we ... keep using the old method without using any media, without following technological development, ... they will never pay attention to us. The education office and the MoE ... also demand that we follow the nature of times and adapt to recent development (Dona, I2, E1).

In this excerpt, Dona also implied that teachers who preferred to be old-school would likely fail to connect with their students. She also linked her argument to her understanding of the demands of the Indonesian MoE. This is interesting given that most teachers in the survey stated that the MoE did not give teachers clear guidance in terms of how to navigate ERT and approach the use of technology. Her statement was predominantly based on her understanding and assessment of her learners, that the incorporation of audio-visual media would enhance their engagement and learning experience. This signifies the projective dimension of her agency, as she could envision herself utilising more elements of technology in her future practice.

There is a link between the 'renaissance' of teachers in this context and the pandemic as a 'life-changing' experience. Marsiah mentioned how important it was for her to have more opportunities to learn and experience new things during the ERT period, through which she found new motivation to be adaptive and innovative in responding to the changes:

Jujur dengan adanya perubahan kondisi karena covid, saya semakin banyak belajar ... saya semakin banyak pengalaman dan ilmu-ilmu baru. Sehingga saya merasa semakin bertambah pengalaman serta motivasi untuk lebih banyak belajar lagi untuk bisa menjadi guru yg inovatif dan mampu menyesuaikan diri dengan perubahan zaman

To be honest, with conditions changed because of COVID, I learned a lot and got new experiences and knowledge. Therefore, I feel more experienced and motivated to try to become an innovative and adaptive teacher who can respond to changes in the new age (S32/Marsiah).

This adaptability towards changes reflects teachers' shifting mindset to be more open-minded. Anita highlighted this shift in one of her comments:

*[Sekarang] saya mencoba] terbuka dengan kritik, terbuka dengan saran ... yang ibu lakukan kini ... itu rajin rajin nonton nonton pengajaran di YouTube, ... Ruang Guru, ... banyak ide ide baru yang muncul di sana. Itu praktik praktik mengajar banyak di situ, terutama dari trik trik mengajar di tempat kursus itu kan beda ya dengan mengajar di sekolah itu. **Kadang mengambil trik trik mengajar di tempat kursus itu di combine kan dengan mengajar di, di kelas.** ... Sesudah mencoba itu memang ada rasa kepuasan tersendiri dan anak pun merasa lebih tertarik*

Now I try **to be open to criticism, to suggestions**. What I do now is watch teaching and learning videos from YouTube, ... [and] Ruang Guru [an Indonesia-based online learning platform] frequently ... there are many ideas from there, especially about private tuition teaching tricks which are almost entirely different from the ones with have at school. **I sometimes combined these private tuition tricks with our existing ones at school in the classroom** ... Having tried that, there is a kind of satisfaction, and the students are more interested (Anita, I2, E3, emphasis added).

The sentences in bold illustrate Anita's willingness to move forward and approach changes open-mindedly. Her engagement in self-learning on how to use digital resources from platforms like *YouTube* and *Ruang Guru* also serves as evidence that the affordances of technology have become one of the factors which facilitated teacher agency to adapt to changes brought by the pandemic. Her decision to adopt new methods in her teaching practice post-ERT demonstrates her adaptability as an exercise of agency, which was aimed to bring about a positive impact towards her learners and a rewarding experience for herself and her professional teaching journey.

6.4.3. Increasing Awareness About the Value of Reflection and Student Feedback

This sub-section focuses on how teachers translated their reflectivity into classroom practices. As illustrated in the previous sub-section, one of the silver linings of the pandemic was that it ignited reflective practice among teachers. This was captured in the ways teachers actively ask for feedback from their students. It was one of the positive

impacts of their participation in large-scale online PD programs during the ERT period. These programs covered not only practical topics like using technology or applications, but also pedagogical-related topics such as how to facilitate different learners' needs. The data from interviews show that teachers were inspired, and they showed a willingness to use the feedback from their students to inform their practice. This can be seen in the following excerpt from Marsiah:

I like do reflection after teach. I ask my student, what do you think about our learning activities. I change my mindset that teacher should be listened by the students, not only like that. Sometimes students should be listened by the teacher, what they want, what they like, and... apakah mereka enjoy, apakah mereka suka [*whether they enjoyed, whether they liked it*], and sometimes I ask them how to make lesson interesting (Marsiah, I1, E12).

Marsiah explained that she used the feedback from her students for two main purposes: first to evaluate her previous lessons, and then to plan for the next ones. In other words, she was using student feedback as an evaluative measure and as active input for her lesson planning. Meri, also used this approach for her post-ERT classroom teaching:

Setelah satu KD [Kompetensi Dasar] itu selesai, itu ditanya ke anak itu, misalnya seperti apa ingin pembelajarannya ... Tapi kalau sudah diminta dan kita lakukan seperti itu, dikerjakan ya, gitu ... selesai KD ini, [saya tanyakan ke siswa] paham tidaknya atau gimana kelemahannya ... bagaimana untuk KD selanjutnya ini kita belajarnya seperti apa

After one unit is finished, students will be asked, for instance, in what way they would like the activities in the next unit to be done. But if we were to do it that way, they would need to commit and complete the tasks. After each unit, I ask them whether they understand or not, whether they can identify some weaknesses of the lesson, what can be done for the next ones, and how we are going to approach the learning (Meri, I1 E12).

Meri saw the value of her student feedback not only for her reflection and planning but also to improve students' sense of ownership of learning, which might influence the quality of their engagement. This finding further illustrates how the pandemic experience brought teachers closer to a more student-centred learning approach, one that could better accommodate different learners' needs. It also illustrates Meri's enactment of agency in taking actions that would benefit her learners based on her

understanding of them and her teaching context (i.e., rural school and rural-based learners).

The interview data further indicate that, through ERT, teachers established an awareness of the urgency to cater to their students. For example, Fatma contended that:

Kita sudah bisa melihat perbedaan kemampuan karakter siswa dalam belajar. ... Diferensia[si]. Pengajaran yang diferensia berbeda-beda gitu. Dari gaya belajar ada yang audio, visual, kinestetik gitu kan. Kemudian dari bakat dan minat, harusnya sudah mulai mengaplikasikan itu di kelas ... ini yang tidak kita terima dulu dari guru-guru kita. Guru menyamakan kita, memaksa kita untuk tau semua hal dan mengerjakan semua

Now we can see the difference in student characters in learning ... Differentiation. The differentiated teaching approaches. There are students who are audio, visual, or kinesthetic. They also have different interests and talents. We should have started applying this in classrooms ... This is what we did not have before with our teachers. They treated us in the same way and forced us to know about and do everything (Fatma, I1, E15).

Fatma realised that teachers must start taking action to accommodate their students' different learning styles and needs. She also reflected on her experience as a learner to support this argument. This indicates that she had already developed an awareness of the change needed to provide a better learning experience for her students. While there is not enough data in this study to show whether Fatma has started putting this into practice, her statement reveals her awareness and reflexivity, which became crucial factors facilitating her agency.

6.4.4. *Staying Relevant: Keeping Up with Learners*

Indonesia's education has a very long tradition of didactic ways of teaching in which teachers hold a central role. However, with the ERT experience and intensive engagement in PD since the pandemic, teachers seemed to have slowly shifted from this teacher-centred approach to a more learner-centred one. This is not to say that this

study found that teachers were completely abandoning their long-held didactic approach and shifting to student-centred learning. Nevertheless, they had begun to see things from the perspectives of their learners when they made decisions about their teaching practice, exercising their agency. This illustrates a progressive movement towards a reflective teaching practice and a step closer to a more learner-centred approach, which embodied their exercise of agency.

The two previous sub-sections have emphasised teachers' increasing awareness of the value of their learners' feedback in informing their teaching decisions, as well as the ability to respond to changes as demanded by the times. This sub-section is dedicated to illustrating the devotion of the teachers to making themselves and their teaching relevant to their learners; another step towards facilitating learners' needs. Anita asserted that to be able to make learning relevant to learners, first, teachers need to step into the learners' world:

Kitapun nampaknya harus lebih banyak tahu apa kehidupan anak ini, apa yang mereka mainkan, apa yang mereka lihat itu. Jadi jadi satu tantangan berat juga, karena ... saat ini mereka lebih pintar. Mungkin karena mereka memegang gadget terus ya lebih pintar dari dari kita

It seems that we need to know more about their lives, what they play, and what they watch. This is one of our biggest challenges, because ... kids nowadays are smarter. Maybe because they always stick to their gadgets, they are smarter than us (Anita, I1, E15).

Anita suggested that teachers need to invest more time in researching their learners. This includes finding information about students' hobbies and interests. She linked this to the use of gadgets, games, and social media because she realised that students nowadays cannot be separated from them. Moreover, in today's world, students' hobbies are more likely to be related to what is happening in the world of gaming and social media. She also made a strong remark that this would not be an easy task for the teachers due to the nature of their current digital skills. However, there was a sense of

optimism in her comment, which also illustrates her understanding of the role of a teacher and the need to transform her professional identity.

The data also uncover how teachers translated this willingness to stay relevant into classroom practice. Gina came up with a more practical solution to bring the learning of English closer to the students' lives:

[Kita] bisa melakukan seperti itu, mendekatkan pembelajaran dengan dunia mereka atau apa yang mereka sukai ... Seperti kemaren kan shopping. Shopping itu sesuatu yang menarik, suka semuanya ... Jadi mungkin ke depannya topik topik yang kita angkat ya sesuai dengan dunia mereka. Seperti kalau kelas 7 belajarnya teks deskriptif. Mungkin kalau tentang orang kita carikan tentang apa apa yang lagi trend dalam dunia mereka. Kemudian kalau misalnya tentang binatang, apa yang mereka sukai. Jadi fokusnya lebih kepada ... yang kontekstual dengan kehidupan mereka

We can do it like that, take the lesson closer to their world and what they like ... Like the other day, shopping. Shopping is something interesting for all ... So, from now on, we need to have topics that are relevant to their world. Like for grade 7, they learn about descriptive text. Maybe if we have a topic about people, we can choose those who are trending at the moment in their world. If we talk about animals, we need to find out which ones they like. So, the focus will be more on what is contextual in their lives (Gina, I2, E2).

Gina pointed out some of the decisions she recently made for her classroom. Her choice to use the topic 'shopping' is highlighted here as one of the examples of how she conceptualised her planning to ensure her lessons were relevant for her learners. This kind of decision was made possible with the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum, with its greater autonomy for teachers. This freedom can be considered a structural resource, an affordance that spurs teacher agency in making decisions and taking agentic actions. Gina's message is somewhat similar to Anita's; English teachers should become acquainted with their learners' world and base their lesson designs on their students' interests. Gina emphasised that this approach should be prioritised more in the future to improve students' learning experiences. This signifies her reflexivity as a teacher and her effort to exercise her agency.

The study also found that, after the pandemic, teachers showed enthusiasm in incorporating technology into their lessons. The purpose of this was to gain access to their learners' world, to obtain their sympathy, and to boost learning engagement. This was the case with Najwa as she explained:

I think I need to teach in modern way. I mean, yeah, when there is a technology, I think I need to use that kind of technology. So, the students will think that, yeah ... so this teacher teach with this kind of technology. So yeah, it's interesting. I hope the students feel that my lesson is interesting for them (Najwa, I2, E5).

Najwa saw the use of technology as the key to making herself relevant to the learners, shaping her image as a 'cool', 'tech-savvy' teacher. She wanted to use her agency to capitalise on the opportunity brought by the students' strong attachment to gadgets and technology. She implied that by utilising technology in her teaching, she would make her lessons appeal to her learners.

In this sub-section, findings related to raising awareness to keep learning relevant to students have been elaborated. There was a shift in teachers' mindset as well as their actual classroom decisions and actions, which signified a movement towards a more learner-oriented approach. This phenomenon can be viewed as an achievement of agency, which was facilitated by participants' increasing reflexivity and freedom to develop their course content and syllabus.

6.5. Summary

This chapter revealed the blessings in disguise of the pandemic and ERT as positively perceived experiences of English teachers. It started with the notion of teachers' increasing awareness of the benefits of technology for learners and the teaching and learning process. Exposure to technology was seen as beneficial for both

learners and teachers as it opened access to authentic learning resources. For teachers, engagement with technology was found to contribute positively towards better problem-solving capability, providing them with more flexible options in lesson delivery as well as improving accessibility to course content. Teachers' increasing familiarity with technology also opened new possibilities for further utilisation of computer/technology-assisted language learning in the region.

The pandemic was seen as a catalyst for teacher professional learning. It provided room for growth for teachers in terms of more opportunities to engage in online PD programs, which had been made widely available. These opportunities not only improved teachers' participation but also increased their sense of ownership of their PD.

The chapter has also underlined the shift in teachers' mindset towards a more progressive direction. The findings indicated that teachers had become more reflective in their practice. The increasing value of reflection and the significance of students' feedback in informing classroom decisions and actions are among the important findings. Teachers also demonstrated an understanding of the immediate need to adapt and respond to changes brought about by the dawn of the new era. This included the urgency to keep their course content relevant to their learners, a step closer to student-centred learning. In this chapter, it was argued that factors such as the affordances of technology, open access to PD, as well as freedom in developing and modifying course content and syllabi, facilitated teacher agency, giving them room to make important calls in effecting changes. Teachers' understanding of their contexts and their learners was also highlighted as a significant factor spurring their agency in making in-the-moment decisions about teaching and in projecting future practice. Significant implications for the teachers' professional identity construction and negotiation were also highlighted.

Chapter Seven: "It Was Not Like a Real Teacher"

7.1. Overview

This chapter focuses on the participants' identity construction and renegotiation going into the ERT shift and ultimately during their re-transition towards post-ERT classroom teaching. Teachers' long-held beliefs and initial identities are analysed to give a clearer picture of their professional selves before the pandemic. The analysis then shifts to how these identities were negotiated as the teachers delved into the ERT period and on returning to the classroom post-ERT. Evidence of identity tension and negotiation from the participants as they performed their roles during and post-ERT is elaborated. Teachers' responses and actions are highlighted to illustrate how they exercised their agency in dealing with the tensions which eventually determined the path to the negotiation of their professional identities.

7.2. Teacher Pedagogical Beliefs, Scepticism, and Pre-Pandemic Professional Identities

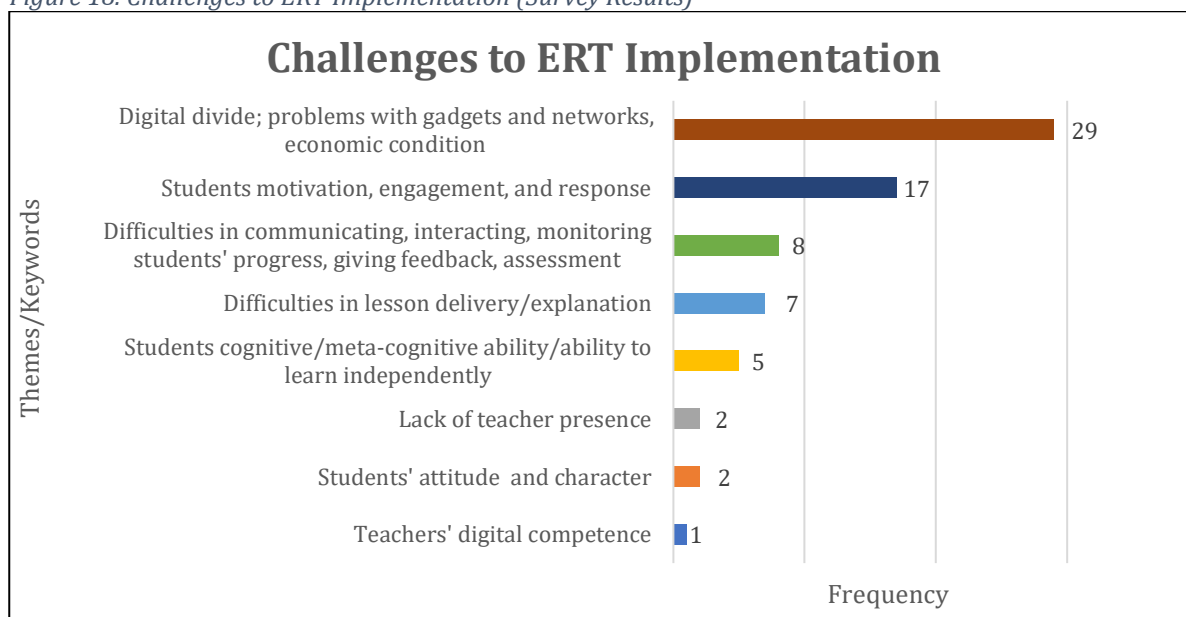
In this section, teachers' long-held pedagogical beliefs are explored. Implications of these beliefs on their ERT practices are examined. Their scepticism towards ERT and technology, which was rooted in the clash between their pedagogical beliefs and interpretations of realities after having experienced ERT, is also explained. The

elaborations on these pedagogical beliefs and scepticism gradually build up the analysis of the teachers' initial professional identities.

7.2.1. *The Importance of Teacher (Physical) Presence and Two-Way Interaction in Language Teaching and Learning*

Teachers faced a very challenging time during the pandemic. Figure 18 describes the participants' open-ended survey responses (n=63) regarding the biggest challenges they faced during the ERT response. The preliminary analysis of these responses, which was based on the frequency of the keywords used, revealed that the three most challenging aspects were: DD-related problems, the lack of student engagement, and problems in interacting and communicating with students. While these three challenges were interrelated, the link between them was not linear but more nuanced, as some other factors were contributing to them (see Chapter Four).

Figure 18. Challenges to ERT Implementation (Survey Results)



Within the Indonesian context, English Language Teaching had been synonymous with face-to-face classroom teaching and privileged with rich classroom interaction. As indicated by the survey, 97% of the survey respondents (61 out of 63 responses) indicated that they had not experienced distance or online language teaching before the pandemic. The loss of face-to-face teaching, combined with unfamiliarity with the concept of online teaching, had an overwhelming impact on them.

When asked to reflect on their ERT practice during the interviews, teachers elaborated on their belief in the importance of interaction with students:

Mengajar itu ternyata memang kalau khusus untuk Bahasa Inggris memang guru dan siswa itu perlu berinteraksi gitu. Walaupun dengan media, dengan apa, memang perlu. Kalau tidak ada siswa itu...berinteraksi gak akan ada jalan kesitu

In teaching, especially English, it turned out that teachers and students need to interact with each other. Even though we have media, it was undeniably necessary. Without interaction, there will be no way to achieve learning objectives (Meri, I1, E13).

Meri works in a relatively small junior high school in a remote part of the region. The DD issues in her context were more obvious than for any other teacher since she was working with the least privileged students, for whom technology and internet connection were almost non-existent. She emphasised her point that English language learning and teaching require fluid two-way interaction. She implied that while it was still possible for other subject teachers to do ERT, it was just not necessarily the case for her. In her context, interaction and communication with students were confined within the school walls. It was relatively more challenging for Meri to make sense of ERT since the pandemic almost completely eliminated all forms of connection with her students. There was a sense of uncertainty as to whether what she had done during ERT was of any use to her students' learning without her being physically there in the classroom with them:

Kalau kita ndak ada, itu anak ndak mau. Ternyata memang iya, kalau ndak ada kita, [diantara] anak itu tidak ada terjadinya interaksi. Tanpa kita ada gurunya disana itu sama pembelajarannya gak jalan

Without us being there will be no interaction ... without us, the teachers, the learning will not take place (Meri, I1, E14).

Her perspective was informed by her belief that interaction is an essential component of the language learning process and her understanding of her context and her students.

A similar remark was made by Fatma, who works in a high school in a relatively central area. In her comment, she put more emphasis on teachers' familiarity with classroom routines and how difficult it was to shift from those:

Akan menjadi meaningless kalau kita hanya mengirimkan [materi] tanpa ada apa namanya, emphasise dari kita. Mungkin karena kita dari dulu terbiasa seperti itu, ya Tetap interaksi dengan siswa yang kita minta. Tidak bisa siswa memahami sendiri

It would be meaningless if we only share learning materials without any emphasis or explanation from us. Maybe because we are accustomed to doing it that way for a long time ... Still, we need interaction with students. They cannot understand by themselves (Fatma, I1, E16).

Like Meri's, Fatma's reflection shows not only her belief in the value of classroom interaction but also her concerns regarding the outcome of her ERT practices, which were dominated by material sharing through social media and LMS applications such as *WhatsApp* and *Google Classroom* (see Chapter Five, section 5.3). Despite their practicality, these platforms were not considered the best options to support two-way interaction between teachers and students. Fatma's concerns can be linked to her awareness that the required interaction to facilitate English language learning was missing during ERT because both teacher-student and student-student interactions were mostly limited to textual form. Overall, her take on the significance of two-way interaction between teachers and students is informed by her beliefs about the language

learning process and her reflection on her ERT practices. This belief ultimately contributed to the construction of her professional identity.

7.2.2. 'Knowledge Transfer': A Didactic View of the Teaching and Learning Process

The phrase 'knowledge transfer' or similar terms were used repeatedly by the participants during the interviews when they described their ERT experiences. The use of this phrase is intriguing as it serves as a hint of their pedagogical beliefs. Najwa, an early-career English teacher who worked in a private Islamic boarding school, repeatedly used this term during interviews. On one occasion, she explained that:

I think it's [ERT] not good enough to **transfer my knowledge** because, yeah, we don't know what the students do at home. Are they seriously joining my class ... when we give them an assignment, only half of them do the task (Najwa, I1, E14, emphasis added).

She described her concerns about the limited nature of her ERT practice. She felt it might not be adequate to facilitate student learning, which she dubbed 'knowledge transfer'. The repeated use of this expression can be interpreted as the manifestation of Najwa's fundamental pedagogical belief about the process of teaching and learning as informed by aspects such as her teacher education, her professional and personal experience, and her school's cultural practices. It is important to note that Najwa worked in an Islamic boarding school, where teachers held more responsibility for the academic and non-academic aspects of student development, especially their *akhlak* or character development (Najwa, I1), than in public schools. In this type of school, the learning process tended to be more teacher-centred, and students depended more on their teachers. Roza, a colleague of Najwa, asserted that, in Islamic boarding schools, teachers were the main source of knowledge for students (Roza, I1).

While it was more evident in the case of Najwa and the Islamic boarding school, the data show that the belief in ‘knowledge transfer’ was not exclusive to teachers from that specific context. Similar expressions were also used by at least two other teachers who worked in public schools. One of them was Meri. She used a similar phrase when she explained her frustrations with not being able to interact online with her learners due to the DD challenges and social distancing policy:

Karena [kita] tidak punya sinyal ini, tentu itu yang sangat paling dangerous itu. Jadi kita tidak bisa mau memberikan ilmu, mau mentransfer ilmu dengan jarak yang jauh. Kemudian kita tidak [boleh juga] berdekatan

Because we do not have network coverage here, that is the most ‘dangerous’ aspect. We could not **transfer the knowledge** over such a distance. We also could not get too close to each other (Meri, I1, E15, emphasis added).

The comments about knowledge transfer reflect teachers’ beliefs about their key role in facilitating the learning process. This finding aligns with the earlier findings presented in 7.2.1 about the perceived importance of teachers’ presence and two-way interaction between teachers and students. This was emphasised by another teacher in the survey: “*peran guru untuk mendidik tidak dapat digantikan, harus ada tatap muka dan interaksi secara langsung dengan siswa* [teachers’ role to educate students is irreplaceable, hence, face-to-face teaching and direct interaction with students is mandatory]” (S10). For some teachers in the study, the only way they knew to perform their roles was to be physically present in the classroom with students. This belief is vital to understanding their professional identity development and negotiation process.

7.2.3. Teacher Roles Beyond Technology

As previously highlighted in Chapter Four (see 4.2.2), most of the teachers in this region were not prepared or well-supported to teach remotely during the pandemic. Their self-reported understanding and capability of using digital technologies remained very limited. Some of them did not even believe that ERT would be feasible and effective to implement in the region, given the DD issues and their existing beliefs about the roles of a teacher. A teacher in the survey emphasised "*pentingnya peran guru dalam mendidik siswa secara tatap muka untuk memperbaiki karakter dan meningkatkan ilmu mereka* [the key role of a teacher in educating students through face-to-face teaching to strengthen their character and improve their knowledge]" (S60). This suggests that the teachers' role in both teaching and guiding the student character was considered almost completely missing with the absence of face-to-face meetings during ERT. Another teacher in the survey further contended that "*tugas guru tidak bisa dilakukan secara daring karna di tingkat sekolah menengah masih di butuhkan penguatan karakter* [the roles of teachers cannot be enacted online because, at the secondary school level, character strengthening is still required]" (S25). This statement indicates that there was a belief among teachers that ERT impeded what they saw as their main role: to guide student character development.

The data presented in this sub-section indicates teachers' lack of confidence in ERT. Their contingent understanding of what technology could offer at that time shaped the perception that, regardless of the availability of a wide range of digital platforms, it was almost impossible to fully perform their roles and responsibilities online. This constrained their agency to teach during the pandemic. It also had a significant impact

on their professional identity as their ERT practice conflicted with their beliefs and values.

7.2.4. Scepticism Towards ERT and Technology

In this sub-section, further findings from this study are presented to reveal how the teachers' lack of confidence in ERT and technology eventually evolved into scepticism. The root of this scepticism can be traced back to the teachers' perceptions of ERT, which were shaped not only by their long-held beliefs but also by their interpretations of their ERT realities. More findings relating to the elements which led to this scepticism, particularly concerning the aspects of why the teachers thought ERT was simply not good enough, are presented and analysed in the two upcoming sub-sections.

7.2.4.1. Difficulties in Monitoring and Evaluating Students' Progress during ERT

The main aspect that contributed to the teachers' scepticism towards ERT is the perceived difficulties in monitoring and evaluating student learning progress. Both the survey and the interviews show that the teachers had a very low degree of confidence in using technology for this purpose. From the beginning, some did not believe that monitoring and evaluation were possible in ERT. This point is captured in one of the teacher survey responses: "*pembelajaran tatap muka lebih bagus drpd pembelajaran jarak jauh karena guru bisa memantau/mengevaluasi perkembangan siswa* [face-to-face learning is better than distance learning (ERT) since the teachers can monitor and evaluate students' progress]" (S20). It is important to notice that the survey was

conducted almost at the end of the ERT period, when schools had been partially opened. The excerpt shows that, from the teachers' retrospective account, monitoring and evaluating student progress was an aspect that was almost completely missing during ERT.

While this phenomenon can be linked to the teachers' existing pedagogical beliefs, it may also be attributed to the way they perceived their ERT experience. The deprived nature of communication and interaction between teachers and students during ERT did not allow them to establish a supportive, friendly, and trustful online learning environment. In the survey, one teacher noted that:

Guru tidak yakin apakah dia [student] paham dg materi tersebut, meskipun mereka banyak yang betul [jawabannya] tapi saya yakin mereka hanya mengandalkan internet saja

Teachers were unsure whether students understood the learning materials, even though many of them got the correct answers in tests. I am quite sure that they just relied on the internet (S57).

From these teachers' perspectives, their ERT circumstances did not allow them to build a supportive atmosphere for learners to engage in the learning, which, in the end, resulted in the teachers blaming the circumstances and developing scepticism about ERT, or in this case, the internet. Similar remarks were also made by Fatma:

Kita tidak tahu juga bagaimana sistemnya mereka. Apakah pakai calling-calling a friend, atau melihat sumber sumber yang lain tentu kita tidak terpantau karena kita hanya melihat kiriman daripada jawaban saja

We did not know how they worked. Whether they called each other or looked at various sources online, we never knew for sure because we only got the submitted answers (Fatma, I1, E17).

This quote indicates that there was an element of distrust developing between teachers and students, which was caused by the limited nature of their interaction. In other

words, there was a very low level of trust on the teacher's end. This was echoed by Anita when she recalled:

Memang ada yang rasanya aneh. Anak yang rasanya punya kemampuan di bawah rata rata, biasanya, sebelumnya di bidang bahasa Inggris. Tahu tahunya bisa, bisa dapat nilai yang melewati dari teman temannya yang lain. Bahkan nilainya lebih gitu. Dan ada anak yang biasanya pintar di bahasa Inggris, justru nilainya enggak masuk atau enggak ada. Jadi kemungkinan ada tugas ini bisa saja, a kemungkinan. Mungkin bukan dia yang mengerjakan. Dibantu oleh orangtua, atau mungkin juga dia cari di Google itu kan jawabannya

There was something strange happening. Lower-level students in English subjects surprisingly got better scores. Those who used to be the higher-level ones did not even complete the task. So, there was a possibility that some students did not do the task themselves. Probably their parents helped them, or they got their answers from *Google* (Anita, I1, E16).

While Anita shared Fatma's suspicion about her students' habits during ERT, she also linked her frustration to the allegation of parental assistance and/or the use of *Google* when students did their assignments. This is ironic since these two things should have been useful elements for her during ERT. Her frustration could be attributed to the lack of confidence in the overall mitigation plan for ERT that was introduced by the government through the MoE and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in her case.

In both Fatma's and Anita's excerpts, the distrust from the teacher's end is evident, as well as a strong sense of scepticism about ERT, which prevented them from discovering the full potential of digital technology as an asset that could be considered a resource to support learning. This view could also be linked to their pedagogical belief in learning for assessment.

Their scepticism can also be seen as a loss of their orientation towards being a teacher and the absence of support in adapting their agentic role and their perceived professional identity in the teaching and learning context. They could not perform their usual teaching and lost their authority in making sure learning was continued and

assignments and assessments were ethically completed by students to demonstrate their learning progress and outcome.

7.2.4.2. *'Learning Loss': ERT Drawbacks and Growing Scepticism about Technology.*

This sub-section elaborates further on the link between teachers' interpretation of ERT realities and scepticism about ERT and technology. The lack of preparation, experience, and support received (see Chapter Four) made teachers who responded to the survey feel that ERT was "*rumit untuk dilaksanakan [dan] membutuhkan lebih banyak fasilitas/biaya* [difficult to implement as it required more in terms of facility and cost]" (S40). For some teachers, this later evolved into scepticism. Scepticism here can be seen as the manifestation of their constrained agency in performing their role during ERT, especially when they felt unsupported in their work with the students.

One of the most extreme opinions was conveyed by a teacher in their survey response: "*belajar selama pandemi sama dengan pembodohan siswa* [learning during the pandemic is like deceiving students]" (S21). Scepticism is also captured in the interviews, in which teachers linked the negative learning outcomes and students' attitudes and moral degradation to ERT and the pandemic. The discourse of 'learning loss' or 'student as the victim' was present, stated implicitly or explicitly by the participants:

Efeknya itu terasa sampai sekarang ketika tatap muka ini ... ini kan siswa korban daring. Ngurut dada lagi. Ini kan mereka belum mengerti. Mereka sudah teraniaya dua tahun dengan kebiasaannya yang santai, rileks

The effect lingers even after we return to the classroom today. These are the students who are the victims of online teaching. We need to be patient. These students have not understood. They were ill-treated by their relaxed habits (Fatma, I1, E18).

Fatma saw ERT and the negative learning outcomes within a simple cause-and-effect relationship, almost overlooking other factors such as the DD issues, the lack of teacher and learner support, as well as teacher technology learning efforts. This perspective, again, can be linked to her pedagogical beliefs. For some teachers, ERT simply went on in vain, regardless of the efforts that went into the process. One of the teachers in the survey asserted that:

Untuk siswa mungkin tidak ada manfaat [ERT] tapi untuk guru bisa bermanfaat dengan bisa [belajar] menggunakan IT /komputer/aplikasi.

For students, ERT has no benefit, but for teachers, it might have had, like the opportunity to learn more about IT (S53).

In this excerpt, the teacher exhibits bold criticism in the way they saw ERT as a failure in serving students' interests, while reluctantly acknowledging the scale of its impact for the teachers. Both Fatma and this teacher articulated their scepticism about ERT.

The data presented in this sub-section reveal that, while teachers' initial scepticism was attributed to the incongruence between their pedagogical beliefs and difficulties in navigating ERT, later on, their scepticism was more associated with their attitudes, reactions, reflections, judgments, and interpretations of their ERT realities. Some teachers tended to exhibit their scepticism more obviously than others. This demonstrates the significance of the individual traits and unique working contexts of each teacher in this study.

7.2.5. Teachers' Initial (Professional) Identities

In this sub-section, teachers' original (pre-pandemic) conceptions of professional identity are investigated. The findings from the interviews suggest that there were

common portrayals used by the teachers in describing their initial professional identities. Based on the thematic analysis, these portrayals can be broadly categorised into 1) friend of students, 2) carrier of knowledge, 3) advocate of learning, 4) moral guardian/character educator, and 5) role model.

As will be illustrated, the majority of teachers did not fit neatly into a single category and had multiple professional identities. This means that there were teachers who expressed singular, simpler initial professional identity construction, and there were others with more complex ones.

7.2.5.1. Friend of students

Some participants in the interviews described themselves as teachers who were close to their students and exhibited total dedication to their students' learning. This initial conception of professional identity included not only the reality in the classroom but also teachers' aspirations. This conception is likely to have been long-established, even before the pandemic. When asked to describe themselves as a teacher, some teachers used phrases like 'familiar teacher' or 'friend to my students'. There were at least four participants who used the exact or similar phrases during the interviews. Below, quotes from Dona and Najwa are used to exemplify this.

Dona is one of the participants who was considered to have multiple initial professional identities. This sub-section will focus on her initial identity as a friend figure for students. She saw herself as a teacher who appreciated her close relationship with her students, not only as an English language teacher but also within her additional

role as the vice principal of student affairs, who dealt with students' extracurricular activities:

Saya apa ya? familiar teacher apa ya, seperti itu...Ya karena mereka...mau sering datang ke sini gitu pak...dan saya mengambil kedekatan pada saat sekarang...memanfaatkan kedekatan itu dan saya...merasa bahwa saya harus improvisasi kemampuan untuk dekat dengan siswa dan nanti akhirnya itu sangat berpengaruh dengan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris

Let me think, a familiar teacher, maybe? Something like that. Because they come to my office regularly ... and I am using my close relationship with them ... I feel that I must improve my ability to be close to the students, and at the end, I am trying to make the most of my presence to be influential for the improvement of the teaching and learning of the English language (Dona, I1, E15).

The phrase 'familiar teacher' here means that she was a teacher to whom the students could open up, as she always had her office door open for them in her role as vice principal of student affairs. While this excerpt illustrates her confidence in performing her additional role at the school, it also shows her aspirations to maximise her close relationship to establish rapport with the students to support her role as an English language teacher. Besides aspiring to be someone her students could rely on, she also wanted to use her position as a friend to elevate her students' motivation to learn the English language. This effort links to her other initial professional identity as an advocate of learning.

Dona's excerpt shows that she tried to make herself accessible and useful for students while at the same time maintaining a balance between her two roles at the school. However, for Najwa, a teacher in an Islamic boarding school, being a friend to the students was easier said than done:

Actually, I want to be like [a] friend for my students. .. my dream, actually...[but] sometimes, when we plan, totally different happen in the classroom. Actually, I want to be like friends with the students ... I want to teach them one by one if they don't understand. But most of my students, when they don't understand, they don't want to ask me ... they are afraid to make a mistake, even so many times I told them. I will not be angry if you made a mistake. I want to be a good friend (Najwa, I1, E15)

Unlike Dona, Najwa's aspiration to become a friend figure to her students had not materialised yet. Furthermore, her accounts implied that her intentions had not always been welcomed by her students. This quote provides a snapshot of Najwa's frustration about the situation in which she seemed disappointed with her students' lack of willingness to see her outside of classroom hours. It is important to note that Najwa worked in an Islamic boarding school where the students were expected to respect the teachers, and this is a stronger feature of these schools compared to public schools. An appropriate distance between students and teachers was considered necessary to make sure everyone behaved according to the school's values and Islamic teachings. Despite this, the quote shows that Najwa would not be easily discouraged from realising her aspiration to become a friend to her students.

7.2.5.2. Carrier of knowledge

This sub-section reports on some teachers who subconsciously saw themselves as the carrier of knowledge. In 7.2.2, teachers' belief about the process of 'knowledge transfer' was highlighted. This belief was likely rooted in their experience of formal schooling and teacher education programs. Some participants also tended to believe that teachers are indispensable in the learning process. For example, Meri, describing her overall opinion of her ERT experience, said: "*tanpa kita ada gurunya disana itu sama pembelajarannya gak jalan* [without us being there, the learning will not proceed]" (Meri, I1, E16). She believed that even if learners had uninterrupted access to learning materials and were provided with clear instructions during ERT, without the presence of the teacher, the learning process would not take place. Similarly, Roza stated that "in pesantren [Islamic boarding school], the teacher is the only source for the children, for

the students. So, I was worried at the time how to explain my topic to my students" (Roza, I1, E12), acknowledging that in an Islamic boarding school like hers, the central role of teachers as the carrier of knowledge was even more prevalent.

Najwa, Meri, and Roza shared a similar perspective about teachers' central role in the learning process. Besides personal and pedagogical beliefs, there were other factors contributing to this. Among those factors are school values, work culture, and DD issues. In Najwa's and Roza's cases, school values and work culture, which emphasised and glorified the central role of teachers, played an influential role in shaping their understanding and perspectives. In Meri's case, her understanding of the challenges she faced regarding access to technology, given that she worked in a rural school, might have also influenced her judgment of the situation and her overall opinion on the process. Nevertheless, these findings show the tendency for these teachers to perceive themselves as the carrier of knowledge, without whom the learning process would be compromised.

7.2.5.3. Advocate of learning

The capability to motivate and inspire students to help them reach their fullest potential was considered by some teachers as a trait of great educators. It is not uncommon for teachers in Indonesia to take inspiration from a family member or a teacher whom they look up to. In this research, Dona decided to follow her father's path and become a teacher herself (Dona, I1). Roza took inspiration from her senior high school civic education teacher and chose to become a teacher (Roza, I1). Gina looked up to her senior high school year English teacher, who, according to her, had both a

charismatic appearance and a warm personality, inspiring her to become an English teacher as well (Gina, I1).

Meri, an English language teacher in a rural junior high school, was one of the participants in this study who considered the role of pushing learners to pursue learning as a central element in her professional identity:

I am easy-[going] teacher, I think. So, for example ... I think that teaching is not only to push them, to study this one to study this one to study this one. Because I teach in the remote area, for me, teaching is not only teaching the contextual things [school subjects, e.g., English] [and] the materials. [But] also teach many things in the classroom ... maybe teaching English only 50 minutes, 60 minutes [out of 100] (Meri, I1, E17).

Meri believed that there was much more she could provide her students with than English language learning and academic content. Her awareness of her rural school teacher role made her realise that she needed to be as resourceful as possible for her learners. This identity allowed her to make English Language Teaching a second priority after being an advocate of learning for her students. She believed that without being constantly pushed, her students might give up studying and stop coming to school. Most of her students could be broadly categorised as socially disadvantaged. Coming from modest families, they might have to spend much of their time helping their parents in their work. Meri understood that her identity as an advocate of learning was required to keep her students enrolled at the school.

Fatma, a senior high school teacher, took a similar position in her approach to professional identity. She asserted that her aspiration to keep her learners engaged in their learning had been her main purpose and the biggest aim of her teaching career. In her effort to realise this aspiration, she sometimes needed to put on her stage persona in front of the class by performing role plays and making jokes. She utilised this persona in

her efforts to stimulate her students' learning and to make them feel comfortable in the classroom:

Kadang [saya seakan] jadi badut, membanyol. Ketika kita membuat satu lawakan, bukan berarti siswa bisa memberikan penilaian yang rendah kepada kita. Tidak. Itu justru memang untuk, apa namanya, membuat variasi dalam belajar, menyemangati mereka...It is the hard job from us as a teacher ... siswa mengatakan karakteristik saya ... salah satunya humorous teacher. Tapi saya tidak ingin kehilangan diri

Sometimes it seems like I have become a clown, joking around. When we throw a joke, it does not mean that students can disrespect us. No. We do it to make our lessons more appealing to them, to motivate them. It is a hard job for us as teachers... Students said that being humorous is one of my characteristics. But I do not want to lose my real self (Fatma, I2, E2).

The excerpt shows Fatma's dedication in her efforts to keep her students engaged in their learning. She established her performer persona in the classroom to keep the students amused and interested in the learning process. This persona was based on her real-life interest in arts and showmanship (Fatma, I1). In the interview, she explained that her talent for public speaking enabled the activation of this performer persona in the classroom, which in turn, facilitated her agency to keep the students engaged in their learning (Fatma, I1). However, the quote also reveals her concerns about this persona, which might be understood differently by the students. She did not want to be trapped inside this 'joker' image, which she feared would influence her students' overall impression of her as a teacher. She had this concern for two reasons. First, because she thought this persona did not fully represent her professional identity, and second, she was afraid this persona would undermine her true intention to motivate the students.

The cases of Meri and Fatma illustrate how teachers saw the importance of being able to inspire students in their learning as a key feature of their teaching identity. The portrayals of teachers as advocates of learning, in these cases, were hence considered essential in their professional identity construction and negotiation.

7.2.5.4. *Values guardian/character educator*

For some teachers, their understanding of the urgency and the importance of values and character education had been an integral part of their professional identity. This important role within the teacher's pedagogical belief was touched on earlier in section 7.2. Some participants centred the formation of their identity on their belief in the importance of values and character education for their learners. Moreover, messages about moral and ethical values, as well as good character, were frequently reiterated by teachers in the classroom to their students. Almost all the participants in the interview elaborated on the challenges they faced in performing their role as values guardians and character educators during ERT. They felt constrained because they felt that their efforts in promoting moral values and developing good character, which was central to their teaching identity, could not be performed online. Meri, Zaki, Sari, Marsiah, Fatma, and Roza explicitly mentioned this during the interviews.

Zaki, a senior high school English teacher who also acts as a student body counsellor (Zaki, I1) at his school, asserted that reminding students about life and moral values had been the dominant part of his job:

Giving the language [only constitutes approximately] 40 percent, 60 percent motivation. How to live according to our religion ... Most of the teachers think cheating, [is] something usual, but for me, not ... When you feel [that you are] honest, even though you are in your dream and you find the money, you will try to be honest. But if you are not honest, what should you do? What you can be proud of to the world? So, I mean, I give a lot of motivation in life [more] than English (Zaki, I2, E5).

Zaki linked his values/character educator identity with his personal beliefs and spirituality. Zaki's positioning as the advocate of moral values and good character can also be linked with his student counsellor role at the school, in which he dealt with the moral and ethical aspects of students' behaviour and self-discipline. His aspiration to be his students' values guardian was backed up by his willingness to provide the students

with better preparation for life. In the quote, he gave an example of honesty, which he believed to be a compulsory life skill that would lead his students to good things in life. He was a teacher who wanted to continuously guide and teach his students valuable lessons in life through language learning.

The link between Zaki's efforts to provide valuable life lessons and his professional identity illustrates how teachers' aspirations to serve their students' interests informed the conception of their (initial) professional identities. In short, Zaki's accounts clearly illustrate that character education was considered fundamental in the construction and negotiation of his professional identity.

7.2.5.5. *Role model*

The other identity that was brought up by the teachers in the interviews was a role model for character and self-discipline, building on the role of teaching moral values and good character. For some participants, the capacity to become a role model of character and behaviour for the students was particularly important in their teaching identity.

Marsiah, in the second interview, stated that:

Kita guru, harusnya dicontoh bagi mereka mereka, itu yang paling penting. Berapapun itu kepandaian yang kita ... Kalau kita enggak mencontohkan misalnya, disiplin, bahasa yang sopan, care terhadap semua orang

Teachers need to set a good example for them. That is the most important thing. It would not matter how smart we are ... if we do not set a good example, for instance, through our self-discipline, polite use of language, and the way we care for others (Marsiah, I2, E2).

For Marsiah, setting a good example for the students was at the top of her list when it came to her understanding of her role as a teacher. She implied that content knowledge is not everything that a teacher can offer to their learners. What is more important is to

be a role model for their students in terms of character, moral and ethical conduct, as well as interpersonal and social skills. This illustrates that she adopted a holistic and positive approach to learning: that learning did not have to take place formally inside the classrooms but was also possible informally through social interaction.

Anita, a more experienced teacher working in an Islamic junior high school, can be considered to have an idealistic approach to becoming a role model:

[Saya ingin] Menjadi satu sosok guru yang dikagumi, itu pasti ya. Dari segi karakter, ya, rasanya jangan sampai siswa itu masih melihat ada cela, ada cela di diri ibu. Ibu berusaha memperbaiki itu. Kemudian mereka itu bisa mengagumi kita bukan karena apa adanya, tapi karena mereka menganggap kita itu guru yang betul betul mampu dan profesional di bidang kita

I want to be a teacher who is admired, that is for sure, in terms of character. Do not let the students see that you still have flaws inside you. I am trying my best to improve that. So that they can admire us for who we really are, because we are seen as capable teachers, professionals in our field (Anita, I1, E17).

This excerpt shows her perfectionistic goal to be a flawless teacher in the eyes of her students. She wanted to be remembered as a teacher who was admired by her students for both her character and her professionalism. From the classroom observation, it could be seen that Anita was trying to maintain a proper distance from her learners to enable space for respect. This can be linked to the fact that she was working with younger students compared to Marsiah, who worked with older senior high school students. Moreover, her working context, an Islamic junior high school, is also slightly different to a normal junior or senior high school. The teaching of religious and moral values is more emphasised in this setting. Teachers in this context are expected to do their best to become role models for the students. This means more pressure on teachers to do their best to avoid any kind of issues that might put their school's reputation at risk. This illustrates how contextual factors such as the school environment can impact a teacher's actions and decision-making, and the way they negotiate their professional identity.

The data presented in this sub-section indicate that all of the participants' initial identities were informed by their understanding of their in-classroom teaching roles and their working contexts. In the next section, adjustments, compromises, and negotiations of teachers' professional identity, both in ERT and post-ERT contexts, will be elaborated on further.

7.3. Language Teacher (Professional) Identity Negotiation During ERT: Expansion, Restriction, and Tension

This section focuses on the influence of the changes brought by the pandemic on teachers' professional identity. Furthermore, it will report on how teachers saw the impacts of the changes on their professional role(s) as teachers. Finally, it will identify the nature of 'identity tension' brought about by the shift to ERT.

7.3.1. Identity Compromise During ERT

This sub-section looks at how the teachers' initial identities changed as ERT commenced. It is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the participants' temporary roles and identities, which include the expanded version of their initial identities. The second part is centred on how the participants' initial identity was restricted and limited during ERT. Elaboration on the challenges and affordances of ERT and how they affect the participants' agency and professional identity negotiation is integrated and embedded within the analysis.

7.3.1.1. Expansion: New (Temporary) Roles and Identities.

Teachers linked the expansion of roles and identities during ERT to their increased workload. Gina, an English teacher at a public junior high school, asserted that:

Selama pandemi itu kan, selain memberikan pembelajaran, kita juga kontrolnya lebih besar di kita pak untuk pembelajaran itu ... kita mengharapkan semua siswa mengerjakan apa yang sudah kita disain kemudian bisa mencapai target. Kita harus memmanage itu sehingga kontrol kita lebih besar saat pandemi itu dibanding... kalau di jam pelajaran...di sekolah. Kalau secara role nya sampai mungkin dari pagi sampai malam

During the pandemic, besides preparing and delivering lessons, we also had more control and authority over the overall process of learning itself ... we hoped that all students followed what we had designed for them so that we could achieve the learning goals. We needed to manage that; that is why our authority and responsibility were bigger during the pandemic, when compared to normal times at school. In terms of role, sometimes we needed to be available from morning till evening (Gina, I1, E17).

Gina felt that ERT gave teachers an extra workload and additional responsibility over the students. She implied that a portion of the responsibility that used to be performed by the school management and administrators needed to be simplified and delegated to the teachers (e.g., external monitoring functions). This increased pressure on the teachers. This perspective was shared by Roza, who asserted that she needed to be responsive and wait until midnight for all her students to submit their assignments through their *WhatsApp* group (Roza, I1). She linked the phenomenon to her students' work ethic and unfamiliarity with working within an online learning environment, and the fact that the students were easily distracted and lost the sense of time when working with their gadgets. Her experience was also influenced by the nature of asynchronous online teaching through *WhatsApp* groups, in which students could be very slow in responding.

Role and identity expansion during ERT are rooted in the extra workload and responsibility that were forced upon teachers. This was not something within the participants' power to reject at that time. This, in turn, constrained their agency in ERT.

Furthermore, two additional temporary identities will be elaborated based on the participants' remarks. The two temporary identities found in the thematic analysis are: 1) IT support, and 2) technology uptake role model. The IT support identity was explained by Marsiah when she described her ERT experience and her interactions with her students during the early phase of the pandemic:

Marsiah: We asked the students to use *Google Classroom*, they can't use it ... they have a difficult when download, when come to the application, we should guide them, we teach them ... how to. I can't teach them [directly], [so I] guide them directly [through a video that I downloaded for them]. If they can't see the video, I should make [an] article, yeah, I sent to them, I guide ... with via *WhatsApp* chat, until they can come to the application, they can use the application.

Researcher: it's like being a **technician**?

Marsiah: Yeah, **being [a] technician**. [And later if] they can't, if they have the task, [they would also ask] how to collect the task, Ma'am? How to open this? How to use [the application]? I should guide them also (Marsiah, I1, E13, emphasis added).

In this excerpt, Marsiah agreed that the word 'technician', which is commonly used to describe an IT support person in Bahasa Indonesia, was appropriate to explain her role. She used this word to describe how challenging it was for her to introduce *Google Classroom* to the students because she needed to provide them with a very detailed guide for downloading, installing, and using the application on their devices. According to her, this role should be covered by a school's IT support staff, as this was not a common task for an English language teacher. At that time, she had no other option other than to take up the role. The fact that she managed to help her students shows that she had adequate digital skills to handle the situation. The outcome might have been different if this situation had been faced by teachers with limited technology knowledge, as they could easily get frustrated. Moreover, her account also indicates how she was able to make decisions and take agentic actions in the moment because she had IT skills in her repertoire. Her agency also pushed her to accept this temporary identity as an IT support person.

The second temporary identity was that of a technology uptake role model. This identity was brought up during the interviews by two teachers, Dona and Najwa. Similar to Marsiah, Dona and Najwa can be categorised into a younger generation of teachers who were more accustomed to technology. When asked to reflect on her role during the ERT period, Dona noted that "*kita memberikan contoh pada mereka (siswa) bahwa ilmu pengetahuan sekarang tidak hanya di buku, tidak hanya di Ibu. Ananda (siswa) juga bisa mencari sendiri* [we set an example for them, to make them understand that knowledge is available, not only in books or from me as their teacher. They can also discover it by themselves]" (Dona, I1, E16). This quote elucidates two things: first, the identity as a technology uptake role model was voluntarily adopted by Dona. This was different from the way Marsiah accepted the IT support identity, as it was relatively easier for Dona to adopt this identity. Secondly, this excerpt illustrates how the experience of learning and using technology during ERT gradually shifted Dona's perspective on the learning process in general. This illustrates her more progressive thinking, indicating that she had adjusted her pedagogical belief, from one end of the continuum to the other, from what is referred to as a 'didactic' process seen in 7.2.2, to a more learner-centred one.

The IT support and technology uptake role models are examples of the temporary identities which the teachers accepted. Even though there was a discrepancy in how these teachers took them up, the findings show that these expanded temporary professional identities were still considered acceptable by the teachers because they were not in direct conflict with their initial identities.

7.3.1.2. Restrictions: Limited and Diminished Initial Identities.

This part elaborates on how changes brought by ERT restricted teachers' initial identities. Temporary identities emerging from this restriction are also described. In the previous sub-section, it was highlighted that the expansion of the participants' initial identity was, in general, triggered by the sudden shift to ERT, which caused not only an increase in teachers' workload but also a shift in responsibilities.

The restriction of the participants' initial professional identities during ERT can be attributed to the lack of interaction between teachers and students. The teachers were deprived of communicating freely with their learners. Inevitably, this resulted in them feeling professionally weakened because they were heavily constrained in performing their in-classroom professional identities. In the interviews, the participants explained how they thought ERT was diminishing their role as teachers to what they referred to as an instructor (i.e., a course administrator). Interview excerpts from Meri, Dona, Sri, and Fatma elaborate on this point.

Meri, a rural school English teacher, saw herself as an advocate of learning for her students (see 7.2.5.3). It was hard for her to accept the fact that she would be deprived of performing such roles during ERT. She commented:

Guru itu kan perannya mendidik, mendidik. Kalau kita [selama] pandemi, [kan] tidak ada yang kita mendidik kan? Hanya mengajarkan, mengajarkan, memberikan tugas, mengajarkan, memberi instruksi. Itu saja

The role of teachers is as educators, to educate. During the pandemic, none of us educated, right? Only teach, give assignments and instructions. That's all (Meri, I1, E18).

There are two important points to notice from Meri's quote above. First, how she used the words 'teach' and 'educate'. In Bahasa Indonesia, the verb 'mendidik' (to educate) has a slightly wider and stronger meaning when compared to the verb 'mengajar' (to teach).

The participants in this study tended to share a consensus that to 'educate' means to support their learners in both the academic and the character development aspects, while to 'teach' only refers to supporting the academic aspect. She implied that her initial professional identity was that of an educator, an advocate of learning, not just simply 'a teacher'. She felt that her professional identity (i.e., advocate of learning) was more impactful than that of a teacher, let alone an instructor who, according to her understanding, only shared learning materials with the students and assigned tasks for them. This point illustrates her sense of professional identity as a rural teacher working with students who struggled with very limited access to the internet and technology. Meri felt that ERT and the pandemic obstructed her teaching. They caused shifts in her role as a teacher, challenging her initial identity as an educator. They also constrained her agency to explore other possibilities for her teaching.

A similar feeling was experienced by Dona. She also linked ERT and the pandemic to the demotion of her professional identity from an advocate of learning and a (character) role model into what she referred to as an instructor (i.e., a course administrator). She asserted that:

Seorang guru itu kan tidak hanya memberikan materi ... lebih kepada edukasi moral dan ... sikap, seperti itu yang sebetulnya seorang guru

A teacher gives not only material ... but also moral and attitude education, that is how a real teacher should be (Dona, I1, E17).

Dona's perspective differed from Meri's on two points: first, her overall judgment of the ERT practice, and second, her initial professional identities. Unlike Meri, Dona could still see some positive aspects of ERT and the pandemic. This was probably because she was not working in a rural setting, and she could still run her classes during the lockdown periods, even though this was limited to material-sharing activities. Additionally, in the

excerpt, Dona emphasised not only the educator and advocate of learning identity but also the moral guardian and role model identity. As previously outlined, Dona had multiple initial professional identities. In this excerpt, she explained how her identities as an advocate of learning and a role model were reduced to that of a course administrator. In this discourse, a course coordinator was seen as a pale comparison to the advocate of learning or the role model identities. More teachers in the interviews also came up with a similar 'course coordinator vs real educator' discourse (Sari, I1 & Fatma, I1).

The data show that the participants strongly associated the temporary professional identities with their teaching routines during the pandemic. Hence, from this point onwards, these temporary professional identities will be referred to as 'ERT identities'. These identities resulted from both the expansion and the restriction of their initial identities. The findings also show that the participants tended to adopt some of these ERT identities and, at the same time, avoid others, depending on the extent they were considered to conflict with their initial identities; IT support and technology uptake identities were not perceived as problematic because they were in line with the participants' initial identities; however, the course coordinator identity was reluctantly performed because it was perceived as a challenge to their beliefs and their initial identities. The clashes between the initial and ERT identities later evolved into tension, which led these teachers to a state of vulnerability and insecurity about their professional selves, affecting their agency and their professional identity negotiation. For some teachers, this tension even escalated into a crisis, which affected their teaching during and after ERT. The evidence of this tension and identity crisis will be elaborated in the next sub-section.

7.3.2. *Temporary (ERT) vs Initial (Classroom) Identities: Growing Tension*

This sub-section focuses on the professional identity tension. Evidence about the clashes between ERT and initial professional identities is presented and analysed. How these clashes evolved into tension and eventually escalated into a crisis is elaborated.

As previously explained, some teachers tended to adopt and/or avoid certain ERT identities. It was emphasised that the participants' initial identities played a very important role in their decision-making process in adopting and/or rejecting these ERT identities. Their agency also played a crucial role in determining the path of their professional identity negotiation.

Najwa and Fatma are the focus of analysis in this sub-section. In the interviews, both Najwa and Fatma asserted that performing ERT identities had given them a sense of loss of their initial identities. For Najwa, her concerns about her professional identity were evident in the survey and the first interview. In the survey, she contended: "*rasanya tidak seperti guru yg sebenarnya [it does not feel like a real teacher]*" (Najwa/S5, emphasis added). She confirmed this in the first interview by asserting that: "**it was not like a teacher**, just like an instructor giving the task and ... check the student's answer. It's hard for us because we cannot see the monitor all the time" (Najwa, I1, E16, emphasis added). This excerpt illuminates the rising tension she felt because her initial identity as an advocate of learning was challenged and reduced to that of an instructor. The excerpt also illustrates her frustration since she could not relate the new set of routines to her initial identity as a classroom English teacher at that time.

A similar tension was experienced by Fatma. She linked the tension to the increasing and unfamiliar workload:

Semasa pandemi kok rasanya menjadi guru itu, sedikit lebih berat tugasnya dengan mengirimkan tugas-tugas melalui media media online, via sosial media. Rasanya kami tidak menjadi diri kami sendiri. Menjadi berbeda. Berbeda ya yang kami rasakan

During the pandemic, I felt that teachers' workload had become a little bit burdensome, with us sending the materials and assignments through online and social media. It seems that we are not ourselves anymore. We have become something else, something different (Fatma, I1, E19).

The intensity of the tension is more evident in Fatma's comment above. It was likely related to the fact that she was a teacher with more than 20 years of experience. She was educated to be a classroom teacher and had never shifted from that until the pandemic hit. The signs of challenged identities are reflected in her comments. Her initial identity was challenged by the new set of routines that she had to perform during ERT. She asserted that ERT had transformed her into something else, something she was not sure about. There was a hint of fear that she might have changed into something, but not necessarily for the better. This illustrates the inner tension and insecurity about her professional identity. This tension intensified as she proceeded with ERT. The conflict within herself became more difficult for her to handle:

Kami sudah coba melakukan dari awal sesuai dengan instruksi yang diberikan, tapi kita tidak merasa puas pak, karena memang kita guru ini menginginkan pertemuan dengan siswa itu tatap muka, bisa secara langsung meluapkan emosi. Bagaimana gerak-gerik kita yang bisa memacu motivasi siswa di kelas. Tapi dengan sistem daring ini, kita hanya merasa seperti robot yang mengirimkan tugas

We have tried to follow all the instructions, but we are not happy with it because, as teachers, we want to see our students face-to-face, to be able to show our emotions and gestures that can boost our students' motivation in the classroom. With this online teaching, we feel that somehow, we have transformed into a robot that keeps sending assignments (Fatma, I1, E20).

This quote explains the meaning of the phrase 'something different' in the previous excerpt. There was a strong sense of disapproval of the situation, and this was shown in the way she lamented her ERT realities. The excerpt above also reveals the identity conflict Fatma went through, which was preventing her from fully accepting her ERT

identity. Her initial identities as a motivator, a performer, and an advocate of learning clashed with her ERT course coordinator identity, a reluctantly performed identity which she metaphorically described as 'a robot' to illustrate her frustration and her feeling of dislike.

The conflict between Fatma's initial and ERT identity escalated into tension, which evolved into a crisis. This held significant implications for her professional identity negotiation. Despite the crisis, Fatma still had to endure and keep performing her ERT identity until face-to-face teaching eventually resumed. This situation resulted in her experiencing burnout, which inevitably took a toll on her sense of professional identity. This feeling of burnout also greatly impacted her confidence as a teacher and her agency. The impact was illustrated in the following quote:

Saya itu biasanya powerful. Saya [dulu merasa] punya suatu energi. Ketika apa yang saya mau, ini yang terjadi. Tapi sekarang saya merasa tidak punya kekuatan apa-apa untuk memaksa siswa bekerja...Saya tidak punya kekuatan. Gimana siswa itu segan dan mau. Saya merasa sudah tidak punya kekuatan lagi...effect nya itu terasa sampai sekarang ketika tatap muka ini

I used to be powerful. I used to have some kind of energy to make things happen. But now I feel that I do not have any power to force the students to work ... I do not have the power to make them respect me and be willing to cooperate. I feel that I am powerless; I still feel the impact of this even now in face-to-face teaching (Fatma, I1, E21).

This excerpt reveals Fatma's self-confidence crisis and her frustration during ERT. Her feeling of being structurally disempowered by the situation is emphasised here. Her frustration and feeling of powerlessness can be associated with her constrained agency, which affected her teaching practice both during and post-ERT. This finding serves as an example of the long-lasting impact of the pandemic on teachers' professional identity and agency in both ERT and post-ERT contexts.

This sub-section has focused on the shift in teachers' professional identity during the ERT. Both initial and ERT identities were presented and elaborated on. The data

presented uncovered the clashes between identities and the resulting tension. Fatma's case indicates that the tension, in certain circumstances, might develop into a crisis which may potentially affect teachers' agency and professional identity both in the short run and in the long run.

7.4. Post-ERT Language Teacher (Professional) Identity Negotiation: Maintained, Expanded, Reshaped, Renounced, and Emerging Identities

This section focuses on the post-ERT timeline, which marked the return of face-to-face teaching and learning. The implications of this return for teachers' professional identity negotiation process are analysed as they underwent the re-transitioning phase to in-person teaching. Both initial and ERT identities are revisited to make sense of the identity negotiation process taking place. The organisation of this subchapter is based on the following professional identity negotiation patterns: 1) maintained identities, 2) expanded identities, 3) reshaped identities, and 4) renounced and emerging identities.

7.4.1. *Maintained Identities*

For some teachers, the return to face-to-face teaching after an almost two-year period of ERT was a long-awaited moment. This sub-section looks at initial and ERT identities that were maintained during this period. These are the identities that had been consistently relevant to the participants, even though they, to some extent, were reduced or limited during ERT. Teachers' accounts are used to illustrate how the return to face-to-face classroom teaching helped them maintain their professional identities and eased the identity tension faced during ERT.

7.4.1.1. Advocate of Learning

In the post-ERT setting, the role of English teachers to accommodate their students' learning was still considered the heart of the teaching profession. Gina, a junior high school teacher, explained how the return to the classroom significantly reduced her workload, which had increased significantly during ERT. Overall, she felt more positive because she thought she could monitor her students' work better in the classroom, especially after the school hours had been normalised. She contended that:

Peran [guru] di dalam pembelajaran [sudah kembali], ya sekarang karena di sekolah itu sudah lama durasi siswanya, jadi sudah nggak terlalu berat seperti yang dulu. Kemudian karena tugas siswa kan nggak terlalu banyak di rumah lagi, mungkin sekedar untuk penguatan. Jadi kontrol gitu aja kita lagi

The role in the teaching and learning process [has returned] because we now have the normal duration of school days, so [teacher workload] is easing up a little bit. Moreover, students are no longer required to do as many assignments at home. So, our role is mainly to control that in the classroom (Gina, I2, E3).

Her sense of control and authority was restored with the normalised school hours and classroom interaction. The return to the face-to-face classroom post-ERT can be seen as a critical moment for teachers like Gina, who experienced increased workload and burnout during ERT. The return spurred her agency as she could supervise, monitor, and motivate her students better. This helped her to maintain her professional identity as an advocate of learning.

Other participants marked their return with changes to their teaching practice. Dona described how she explored the 'discovery learning' approach to working with her students in the classroom, an opportunity she felt was missing during ERT (Dona, I2). Data also illustrate how teachers appreciated their time with their students in the classroom more. For example, Meri mentioned that:

Sekarang saya dua menit ataulima menit saja tidak mau, misal dalam pembelajaran, tidak mau, keluar kelas ... karena ada interaksi itu tadi ... interaksi dengan siswa itu ketika belajar dan mengajar

Now I never want to leave the class even for two or five minutes ... because there is this interaction ... with the students during the process of teaching and learning (Meri I1, E18).

This means that the reunion with students boosted teachers' agency to rediscover their professional identities. Some teachers exercised their agency by being more creative in stimulating their learners. This was illustrated in Marsiah's comments during the interview:

Marsiah: *Terakhir ini saya gunakan...kayak game lah. Supaya anak itu tertarik nanti.*

Researcher: *Dulu sebelum pandemi ada juga seperti itu?*

Marsiah: *Gak ada hehe ... Kalau sekarang kita berusaha, game apa lagi ya ke murid. Karena murid itu kalau Bahasa Inggris diawali game mereka tertarik*

Marsiah: Last time, in the classroom, I used game activities to keep the students interested.

Researcher: Did you do that also before the pandemic?

Marsiah: No, I did not ... But now we are trying to find interesting game-like activities for the students to do. Because students will be more interested if we start with a game (Marsiah, I1, E14).

Marsiah's post-ERT teaching was marked by her revitalised approach. She showcased her efforts to enhance her classroom using fun game-like activities. This indicates that the return to the classroom was seen not only as a long-awaited redemption moment for the teachers but also as a boost to their agency, with which they can re-envision their future professional selves as advocates of learning.

7.4.1.2. Guardian of Values and Character

As previously highlighted in section 7.2, one of the teachers' pedagogical beliefs was the value and importance of character education. This belief shaped their initial identity as values guardians or character educators (see 7.2.5.4). In the context of post-

ERT face-to-face teaching, this identity was still considered highly important. This might be associated with how they viewed the pandemic and ERT as a disorienting phenomenon, which resulted in students' attitude, behaviour and motivation problems. They believed that their identity as values and character guardians was even more required post-ERT. On this point, Sari asserted that:

Before pandemic, the students has motivate, after pandemic, the students like, don't have spirit, don't have ... *semangat atau keinginan untuk belajar* [motivation or willingness to learn] ... [Now, in the] new normal, I need extra power and to manage my students. To give them motivate. To advise them (Sari, I1, E5).

Sari demonstrated her concerns regarding the decline in student learning motivation. She was implying a cause-and-effect relationship between the pandemic and this declining student motivation. She added that, as a consequence of this situation, she needed to address this problem first to make sure the learning proceeded. She used the phrase 'to advise' to encapsulate her professional identity as a value and character guardian, to ensure that her students could come to her classroom with the right attitude and character.

Dona also described how the return to the face-to-face classroom and the recovered interaction with her learners rejuvenated her identity as a guardian of value and character:

[Setelah kembali ke kelas, kita bisa] mengingatkan kembali ketika mereka misalnya sedikit saja berkata kotor atau tidak sopan, terhadap teman kita bisa menegur langsung

After returning to the classroom, we can remind the students, for example, when they use improper words in their communication with their friends. We can warn them directly (Dona, I2, E2).

Both Sari's and Dona's excerpts show that teachers resumed this identity almost immediately after their return to face-to-face classrooms post-ERT. The resumption of this identity can be linked to their understanding of their working context and judgment

of the situation. This decision to maintain this identity was therefore an enactment of agency in which they based their identity negotiation on their knowledge of their learners, their schools, and the wider community contexts.

7.4.1.3. Role Model

Being a role model for students was also found as one of the maintained professional identities. This identity was one of the initial identities that teachers felt could not be performed properly during ERT. However, the return of face-to-face classroom teaching and learning helped facilitate the resumption of this identity. Dona described her enjoyment upon returning to the classroom:

Peran sebagai seorang pendidik itu sudah kembali muncul lagi. Selebihnya kita memberikan bisa memberikan contoh contoh teladan ... setelah pandemi, peran yang bertambah adalah menjadi ... salah satu sosok yang mungkin bagi memberikan contoh ... [dalam] menguasai teknologi loh seperti ananda. Ibu juga ... sudah bisa mengaplikasikan ini dan itu salah satu peran yang juga memotivasi mereka

The role of an educator has come back. Moreover, we can set examples for students ... Another additional role after the pandemic is to become ... a figure who can set a good example of how to use technology. I show the students that I can also use the technology, and that is also one of our roles in motivating them (Dona, I2, E3).

Dona emphasised how the return to classroom teaching had allowed her to perform her role model identity again. Being a role model here means setting good examples to students on how to behave and interact with their peers, teachers, and elders. In that sense, the role model identity overlaps substantially with the value and character guardian. However, here Dona elaborated further that this role model identity was also performed through the way she set the example of the use of technology. In this sense, the role model identity was expanded from a role model of character to a role model for

technology use. The next section elaborates more on the findings about expanded professional identity.

7.4.2. Expanded Identity

In this sub-section, the expansion of the ‘friend of students’ (see 7.2.5.1) initial identity is looked at. The highlight will be how this particular identity expands in terms of meaning and relevance in the post-ERT context. The analysis covers its extension from friends of students to understanding and sympathetic teachers and caregivers.

In the post-ERT context, more teachers found that the ‘friend of students’ identity had become increasingly relevant. While previously only four teachers (Dona, Najwa, Meri, and Marsiah) has this as part of their initial identities, within the context of post-ERT face-to-face teaching, there were in total seven participants (Dona, Najwa, Zaki, Marsiah, Sari, Gina, and Anita) who described themselves as friendly teachers and caregivers of the students. It seems that the experience of having very limited interactions with their students during ERT made teachers realise the value of the teacher-student relationship; hence, they decided to close the gap between themselves and their learners. This tendency was illuminated by Anita:

Sekarang nampaknya [saya] agak ... Lebih happy menghadapi anak itu Suasananya gitu, lebih luwes, lebih humble gitu. Anak anak sekarang kayaknya udah enggak suka dengan tipe gurunya yang hanya dia mengajar itu. Mereka tipenya guru yang memang rasanya bisa dibawa berteman, bisa dibawa,sama tertawa, bisa sama bercanda

Now it seems that I am happier in my interaction with the students. The atmosphere is more relaxed ... Today’s kids do not like the type of teacher who only teaches. They prefer teachers they can be friends with, to share laughter and jokes (Anita, I2, E4)

In this excerpt, Anita implied that she had adjusted her professional identity to become a more relaxed and outgoing teacher to help establish a better classroom environment in

which she hoped her learners could learn better. This was an important decision in Anita's identity negotiation, which was made possible by her enactment of agency through her actions to establish a better classroom environment.

A similar pattern is observable from Fatma as she explained the importance of making sure the students felt comfortable in her classroom by shifting her image from 'a killer teacher' into a 'friendly English teacher' (I2) to help accommodate her learners' needs. In both Anita's and Fatma's cases, the teachers adjusted their image from 'conservative' teachers, who used to maintain a proper distance between teachers and learners, to more 'outgoing and friendly teachers', which they thought was what their learners needed at that time. To do that, Anita and Fatma negotiated their professional identities by closing the gap between themselves and their students to become teachers who could share feelings, emotions, and laughter with students.

The 'friend of students' identity was expanded not only in terms of relevance, but also in meaning, nuance, and intensity. The meaning of being a friend of students expanded from a friendly figure who was open to seeing their students after class (Dona, I1; Najwa, I1) and teaching them one-on-one in person (Najwa, I1) into a figure of protector, guardian, and caregiver. Marsiah and Sari described an ongoing change in the way they saw and interacted with their students post-ERT. Marsiah emphasised that the pandemic and ERT experience had become a critical moment which helped her value her students more than before:

Kalau saya tu kalau sekarang memandang student itu seperti anak saya gitu. Kalau dulu gak kayak gitu [Now, I take my students as my own children. It did not use to be that way before] ... before, I don't care about the student (Marsiah I1, E12).

The self-explanatory quote captures the expansion of her professional identity into that of a caregiver. The reason why she saw the pandemic and ERT experience as the catalyst

for her identity change is presented in the upcoming sub-section (7.4.3) about reshaped identity, which will have a focus on her. Meanwhile, Sari associated the urgency to negotiate and expand her professional identity with her understanding of her students' needs in the post-ERT context:

[Saya ingin menjadi] guru yang bisa memberikan pengayoman [untuk para siswa], tidak hanya memberikan ilmu tapi bisa sebagai tempat anak itu mencurahkan keluh kesahnya. Karena memang anak itu mungkin menganggap kita sudah connected, mungkin ya. Bisa dia mencurahkan perasaannya. Dan saya berusaha, masih berusaha, walaupun mungkin belum maksimal

I want to be the teacher who can provide full support, not only transferring knowledge but also being a figure to whom students can share their concerns. Probably because students already feel connected. They can share their feelings. I am trying my best, even though the result is not yet maximum (Sari, I2, E4).

Besides having an understanding of the needs and preferences of her students, Sari also aspired to become a teacher who could be fully supportive of them in almost every aspect of their lives. Here she mentioned how she wanted to become a teacher who listened to her students' problems. By problems and concerns, she meant both in the academic and personal aspects. She was willing to go all in to maintain the established connection between her and her students, a connection that she cherished.

The expansion of identity from a friendly teacher, a friend of the students, into a caregiver serves as evidence of teacher agency at work. The enactment of agency was manifested in the way these teachers used their knowledge about their learners and their assessment of the situation to inform their decisions in negotiating their professional identity.

7.4.3. *Reshaped Identities*

The return to the classroom post-ERT saw some initial identities reshaped and redefined. This sub-section focuses on the teachers who reshaped their professional identities based on the critical moments they experienced during ERT. These critical moments were impactful in triggering or constraining the enactment of agency, which is influential in the process of professional identity negotiation. Marsiah's and Fatma's professional identity trajectories are the foci of this sub-section.

Overall, there are three identities discussed in this sub-section: 1) adaptive and reflective teacher, 2) co-constructor of knowledge, and 3) realistic teacher. Before moving on to the explanation of each identity, it is important to note that reshaped identity here refers to two things: first, the reconstructed and upgraded version of one or more initial identities, and second, the compromised or appropriated version of the initial identities. For example, the 'co-constructor of knowledge' identity was considered as a reconstructed version of the 'carrier of knowledge' identity, while the 'realistic teacher' was an appropriated version of the 'advocate of learning' identity.

7.4.3.1. *Adaptive, Reflective, and Reflexive Teacher*

The elaboration on this identity is centred on Marsiah's accounts of her ERT experience and professional identity trajectory. The first finding to highlight is how Marsiah saw her post-ERT professional self in contrast with her pre-ERT one:

Kalau dulu saya hanya teach ya, saya mengajar, siapkan RPP, perangkat perangkatnya Pak. Ya gitu aja, udah selesai udah. Jadi ga ada refleksi, ga ada perubahan, ga ada menanya siswanya sudah apa atau belum gitu. Sudah paham atau belum, jadi ga ada gitu, ga ada seperti itu...sekarang sebelum masuk itu ditanya dulu, ananda sudah siap belajar atau belum. Kemudian kira-kira kita belajar ini udah pernah dengar belum. Jadi kayak ada assessment,

assessment awal. Rasanya perlu bagi saya, gitu. Kayak itulah ada perubahan. Terus saya sering nanya. Kalau dulu saya ga pernah nanya. Saya guru seperti apa, kurang belajarnya kita dimana

Before this, I only taught ... I prepared the lessons and wrote all the planning documents. That was all. No reflection, no change whatsoever. I never asked students whether they understood or not. I did none of those, nothing. Now I always ask them whether they are ready to study or not, whether they have some background knowledge on the topic. Something like pre-assessment. I feel that I need to do that. It is a change for me. I also ask their opinion about me as a teacher, my strengths, my weaknesses, and what to improve. I never did this in the past (Marsiah, 11, E15).

Marsiah described the drastic change she underwent. From a 'typical' teacher who simply saw teaching as a routine, to a teacher who regularly conducted reflective practice. Marsiah's experience during ERT led her to see the importance of critical reflection in her teaching practice and to develop a deeper understanding of her learners' needs. The data here also illustrate Marsiah's agency to start considering her learners' feedback. The decision was impactful, not only for the learners but also for her as she went through the critical period of ERT. Her spurred agency consequently helped her negotiate her identity.

Marsiah's reflexivity also plays an important role in guiding her response towards changes affected by the pandemic. Her practice of critical reflection helped her develop a more positive approach to ERT as she strove to be positive and adaptive in response to difficult circumstances:

Saya itu berusaha menyesuaikan diri gitu. Tidak bisa kita mengharapkan sesuatu sesuai keinginan kita tapi kita [lah] yang menyesuaikan diri dengan keadaan. Begitulah kaitannya dengan kondisi covid. ... Nah itu akhirnya merubah tidak hanya dalam saya mengajar sebagai guru ... Mindset saya juga berubah. Jadi itulah. Dampaknya sangat besar kondisi covid ini bagi saya. Mungkin semua orang ini masalah ya. Bagi saya itu perubahan yang sangat besar...tidak hanya sebagai guru yang mengerjakan pembelajarannya online, belajar bagaimana [...] harus tahu teknologi ... bagaimana mengadaptasi diri, me-manage waktu, bagaimana mengolah pikir[an] bahwa ini penting, bahwa ini kita bisa gitu. Itu sulit bagi saya lah. Dan saya bisa melewatinya

I am trying to adapt myself. We cannot expect everything will be the way we want it to be; we are the ones who need to adapt to the situation. That was the deal with COVID ... It changed me not only as a teacher but also my overall mindset. So, there it goes, the impact

of COVID is so huge for me. Maybe some people tend to see the pandemic only as a problem, but for me, it was a huge change. Not only as a teacher learning to teach online, learning ... about technology ... but also how to adapt, to manage time, to make up my mind that this was an important moment; to believe that I can make it through (Marsiah, I1, E16).

Marsiah emphasised the pivotal role of her pandemic experience. Here she cites the pandemic as having a very influential impact, not only on her professional life as a teacher but also on her overall life perspective, especially on how to respond to a major change. She learned how to persevere and to be adaptive. She tried to see the pandemic as an opportunity to grow, even though the majority of people around her saw it as a disruptive event. Marsiah's ability to see the blessings in disguise and adapt to the new demands of teaching during the ERT period can be considered a manifestation of her agency, which helped her reshape her professional identity.

The practice of critical reflection and her adaptability in responding to changes eventually helped her become more reflective in her teaching. The excerpt from the interview below shows that she was able to critically reflect on her practice but also to effect changes that were oriented for her learners' benefit, especially within the post-ERT context:

[Dulu] Saya gak pernah, apakah kita sudah bisa PH (penilaian harian), terus saya PH itu saya pikir. Ini anak-anak saya ini kira-kira mampu gak dengan soal ini [Before the pandemic, I never check if my students are ready for formative assessment. I never really thought on their behalf, whether they could answer my questions]. Before, I don't care about the students. [Whether] This [set of questions] is suitable for my students ... But now, kira-kira, my student kenal gak dengan soal ini. Kira-kira dia bisa gak. Saya pikirkan sekarang gitu [I always think beforehand, are my students familiar with this type of question? Can they handle that? I think about that now] (Marsiah, I1, E17).

This excerpt illustrates how Marsiah used her critical reflection to inform her teaching decisions and make changes to her teaching practice. She used the example of how she approached formative assessment by putting her learners' interests in front. These small changes are examples of the important decisions and agentic actions that teachers can

make in their classrooms. Her comment reveals that she had reshaped her professional identity as an adaptive and reflective teacher.

Marsiah's story illuminates a strong link between teachers' perception of their ERT experience, which affected their emotions, and their enactment of agency and negotiation of professional identity. Marsiah's positive perception of her ERT experience facilitated the enactment of her agency. The exercise of agency subsequently helped her in dealing with the tension she experienced during ERT as well as reshaping and negotiating her professional identity post-ERT.

Even though Marsiah credited her pandemic experience for her professional identity development, other factors might have contributed to her transformation. These include her participation in a professional development program called *Guru Penggerak* (pioneer teacher), a government-initiated national-scale management trainee program which took place during the pandemic. Another factor to consider is that she was a mid-career teacher who was strongly motivated to advance her career to principalship (Marsiah, I1). This extra motivation could make a significant difference when compared to other participants in this study.

7.4.3.2. *Co-constructor of Knowledge*

One of the initial identities that the teachers in this study tended to hold is the 'carrier of knowledge' (see 7.2.5.2). Teachers like Dona, Najwa, Meri, and Roza emphasised their central role in the process of learning. Within the discourse of post-ERT classroom teaching, however, it was found that teachers' beliefs seemed to have

shifted from didactic to a more constructivist one. This was demonstrated in Fatma's statement below:

[I have become] A new version [of myself]. Try to be better ... *tidak merasa seseorang yang superpower lagi. Kita merasa tidak seseorang yang serba tahu lagi. Tapi kita bisa menerima kondisi kita, kekurangan kita. Kita bisa belajar juga dari siswa. Artinya kita bukan segalanya. Kita bisa belajar dari siapa saja* [I no longer feel that I have superpower. We do not think that we know everything, but we learn to accept our condition, our weaknesses. We also learn from the students. This means that we are not everything. We can learn from everyone] (Fatma, I2, E3).

Fatma repositioned herself to be on equal footing with her students. She highlighted her efforts to understand that she sometimes also needed to listen more to her students and let them be more proactive in learning. This also means that, as a teacher, she took a step back and became a co-constructor of knowledge together with her students. This was evidence of a reshaped professional identity.

Although she realised the need for students to take a more active role, there is a glimpse of negative emotion in her comment. Her comment about how she had to learn to accept her condition and weaknesses illustrates that she was still experiencing ongoing tensions and changed her mind out of necessity rather than choice. What she claimed as 'the better version of herself' in the excerpt could also be seen as a compromised version of her initial identity as a performer, and an advocate of learning (see 7.2.5.3).

7.4.3.3. *Realistic Teacher*

To elaborate on the identity of a realistic teacher, the analysis centres on Fatma's professional identity work, which will be examined through both positive and negative perspectives.

Data indicate teachers' awareness of the decline in students' academic performance and work ethic post-ERT (see Chapter Five, section 5.4). In that sense, Fatma asserted that she tried to be realistic with her expectations towards the students, and at the same time, attempted to keep them motivated by recognising and appreciating their efforts:

Kaitannya dengan apa yang saya rasakan hasil dari pandemi dua tahun itu ... Saya disini tidak menuntut perfect hasil dari kerja siswa, sebarangpun yang mereka bisa ... Saya menerima ... saya hargai, saya beri applause sehingga membuat percaya diri siswa tidak berkurang

The consequence of what I have been through for over two years of pandemic ... [is that] I no longer expect students' work to be perfect ... I accept ... I appreciate and applaud them so that their self-confidence is maintained (Fatma, I2, E4, emphasis added).

While her efforts to appreciate her learners' work can indeed be seen as agentic, her realistic approach and continued lowered expectations, in the long run, could become problematic since they could be seen as a justification for normalising students' underperformance. It also signifies her constrained agency to respond to the situation and enhance her teaching practice. The first sentence of the excerpt illustrates her negative perception of ERT, which she thought had damaging consequences on students post-ERT.

In another part of the interview, she further elaborated on her realistic stance:

Realistis, [sekarang berusaha lebih] menerima diri kita dengan segala kekurangan kita, bahwa kita ini sebenarnya bukan siapa siapa. Walaupun guru tidak harus ditakuti, tidak harus di disanjung sanjung...Ini realitasnya, sekarang begini. Mungkin karena faktor umur kita, apa ketertarikan siswa kepada kita sudah menurun, tapi saya tetap berusaha untuk menjadi yang menarik gitu

I am trying to be realistic, accept myself with all my weaknesses, we are not untouchable. Even though we are teachers, we should not be feared; we should not be the ones to take all the credit. That is the reality. Maybe because of age, students lost their interest in us, **but I will keep trying my best to make them interested** (Fatma, I1, E22, emphasis added).

The last sentence of the excerpt shows her positive aspiration to keep herself relevant to her students. However, in general, her comment can be interpreted negatively. Even though she asserted that she was trying to accept reality, her statement also elucidates her ongoing identity tension and a self-confidence crisis (see 7.3.2). Her identity as a realistic teacher may have been a façade to conceal that she was still struggling with professional identity tension.

Marsiah's and Fatma's cases illustrate how teachers take separate paths in their professional identity negotiation trajectories. Their different trajectories amplify the link between teachers' perceptions of their ERT experience, which strongly affected their emotions, the enactment of agency, and the negotiation of professional identity. Fatma, who tended to perceive her ERT experience negatively, experienced constrained agency and prolonged professional identity tension. This was in contrast with Marsiah, a teacher who viewed the ERT experience more positively and experienced a surge in her agency, which helped her negotiate and reshape her professional identity.

7.4.4. Renounced and Emerging Identities

This sub-section examines professional identities that were abandoned in the post-ERT context. It also presents an emerging new identity. These identities are considered minor findings of the study since they were neither well-elaborated by the participants nor supported by a plethora of data. However, the analysis of these minor identities is still considered relevant to capture the professional identity negotiation process within the post-ERT context.

The renounced identities were some of the ERT identities elaborated in 7.3.1. While the technology uptake role model was still considered relevant (see 7.4.1), the IT support and the course coordinator identity were inevitably abandoned when face-to-face teaching resumed. The participants found that these identities were no longer relevant. Moreover, they had been reluctantly performed during ERT as teachers struggled to keep their classes running. The IT support identity was adopted because teachers could not get sufficient support from school management to assist their students in using technology. It became irrelevant post-ERT because by then, most teachers in the study had completely returned to face-to-face classroom teaching, and the use of technology was not as intensive as during ERT. The course coordinator's identity, on the other hand, was only considered as an 'emergency' role during ERT, in which the teachers' initial identities were restricted. With the classroom face-to-face learning and teaching, this 'emergency' identity was therefore relinquished.

The return to the classroom post-ERT saw not only the renunciation of temporary ERT identities but also the emergence of a new identity. This identity can be attributed to the PD opportunities that teachers were eventually provided with after the early phase of the ERT, in which teachers faced a lack of guidelines (see Chapter Four). The availability of webinars and in-school training had boosted the teachers' digital skills and familiarity with technology. Therefore, in the post-ERT context, teachers started to see themselves as confident users of technology for both personal and classroom use. On this point, Gina contended:

Kalau saya rasa memang efek efek yang bagusnya lebih banyak Pak. Karena setelah pandemi itu kita sudah akrab aja dengan segala sesuatu yang yang berhubungan dengan internet seperti itu. Untuk mencari materi, kita sudah terbiasa untuk membuat segala macam apa, media pembelajaran yang menggunakan teknologi

I think it has more positive impacts because after the pandemic, we are familiar with everything related to the internet. To find resources, we are now used to creating learning media using technology (Gina, I2, E4).

One of the positive impacts of the pandemic, according to Gina, was that it exposed teachers to the use of the internet and technology. This learning and familiarisation process was indeed seen as one of its blessings in disguise. Gina was one of the teachers whose perception of ERT was not only about obstacles and challenges but also about opportunities and affordances. This balanced view helped her to exercise her agency and negotiate her professional identity within the post-ERT context. This amplifies the notion about the importance of teachers' perception of ERT experience in facilitating their agency and professional identity.

7.5. Summary

This chapter has highlighted the trajectory of the participants' identity negotiations within the pre-ERT, ERT, and post-ERT contexts. It started with the analysis of the teachers' initial identities, which were strongly linked to their role as classroom teachers. The important role of personal and long-held pedagogical beliefs in constructing the participants' initial professional identities was also revealed. One of the important points made was how the teachers' long-held beliefs, in some cases, led to scepticism towards ERT and technology.

The negotiation of identity during the ERT period was also explained. This process resulted in some initial identities being restricted while others were expanded. The clashes between initial identities and ERT identities, in some cases, escalated into identity tension. The analysis of the participants' cases showed that, to deal with this

tension, agency enactment was required. Teachers whose agency was constrained tended to have their identity tension prolonged, even until ERT was no longer needed.

The return to the classroom marked the pinnacle of the professional identity negotiation process. Following the return, initial identities were maintained, expanded, reshaped, and renounced. One of the most important findings was how teachers' perception of ERT experience links with their enactment of agency, and ultimately, their professional identity negotiation. Teachers who perceived their ERT experience positively had their agency spurred, which gave them the capability to negotiate their professional identity almost without issues. On the other hand, teachers who tended to perceive their ERT experience negatively were likely to find their agency constrained. They, therefore, were more likely to encounter problems in negotiating their professional identities in the post-ERT context. The ways teachers perceived their ERT experience here can be linked to how they dealt with and channelled their emotions. In that sense, the findings in this chapter, in general, amplify the notion of the interplay between agency, identity, and emotion.

Chapter Eight: Post-ERT Language Classroom and Beyond

8.1. Overview

This chapter focuses on the nature of post-ERT face-to-face English Language Teaching. Overall, it contains four main sections. The first section describes how teachers approached face-to-face teaching after two years of remote and blended teaching. This is followed by a dedicated section expanding on the challenges encountered by the participants in re-transitioning to classroom teaching. This includes timing and scheduling constraints, the process of students' adapting to the classroom, including their work ethic and workload, and the subsequent implications for students' learning achievement and motivation. It also entails an analysis of the change in student characteristics, in which unfamiliarity with the classroom atmosphere was a central issue.

The ensuing two sections focus on the role of technology in post-ERT English language classrooms. In the third section, the significance of technological features that were used during ERT is examined. Teachers' testimony on the use of certain tools, applications, websites, or platforms in the post-ERT context is analysed to investigate teachers' actions and decisions around in-classroom use of technology, along with the factors that influenced them. The chapter ends with an elaboration on the projection of future technology use in English Language classrooms, as the fourth section highlights teachers' views regarding the considerations, assumptions, and complications around

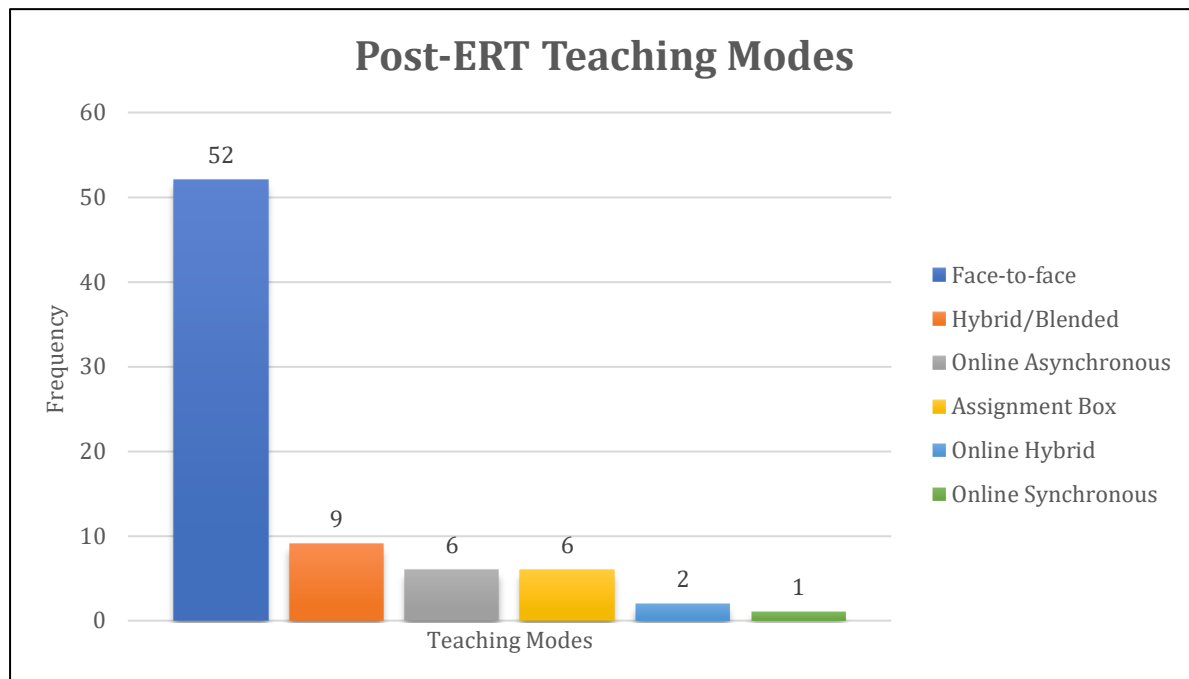
normalising technology in language classrooms. It also underlines the way in which teachers, through the exercise of their agency and constant negotiation of professional identity, determined the role of technology in the post-ERT context and beyond.

8.2. 'Revitalised' Approach to Face-to-Face Teaching

By mid-2021, schools in the region started to reopen as the COVID-19 social distancing policy was gradually lifted. These schools then went into a transition period in which students were divided into shifts, and meeting hours were shortened. At the start of the new academic year, mid-2022, which was around the time of this study's data collection, most teaching had already moved back to the classroom. Responses to a check-box question in the survey (Figure 19) asking the teachers about the teaching modes they used between the period of July 2021 and July 2022 show that face-to-face meeting was the prevalent mode (n=52). Meanwhile, online asynchronous teaching and *assignment box*, which were the most common forms during ERT, only accounted for 12 responses.

Details in Figure 18 illustrate two things about the overall trends in these English language teachers' teaching practices post-ERT. First, within this period, face-to-face teaching was the most common mode as the schools gradually reopened for all students. Second, with teaching and learning activities mostly conducted in classroom settings, online and blended options were gradually abandoned. This was marked by the relatively smaller frequency for these modes when compared to during the pandemic (see section 5.3, Figure 15).

Figure 19. Post-ERT Teaching Modes (survey result).



As face-to-face teaching and learning resumed, teachers exhibited confidence that their experience during ERT would benefit their classroom teaching post-ERT. This also signifies how the return to the classroom and their reunion with their learners prompted their agency. This section looks at three strategies teachers adopted in approaching and enhancing their face-to-face teaching post-ERT: 1) Cherishing what had been missed out during ERT, 2) Combining ERT and pre-ERT teaching methods, and 3) Recycling ERT materials.

8.2.1. Cherishing What Had Been Missed Out During ERT

The return to the classroom was an emotional moment for teachers. They expressed their relief at being reunited with their students. There was an emphasis on the value of time spent in the classroom. For example, as Meri noted (see 7.4.1), she was

reluctant to leave the classroom “even for two to five minutes” (Meri, I1, E18) because she treasured her classroom interaction with students.

Teachers also maximised the opportunities to explore and implement teaching and learning methods that emphasised intensive and dynamic classroom interaction, which they felt was lacking during ERT. This was the case with Dona and her discovery learning approach:

Ketika pandemi ini ... enggak bisa kita lakukan seperti itu. Karena ini kan kalau seandainya menggunakan metode discovery learning ... kalau seandainya kita menggunakan pembelajaran jarak jauh ... [Untuk] siswa SMP gitu kan. Kalau mereka tidak berada di lokal, sangat susah sekali kita melakukan metode ini seperti itu

We could not do this during the pandemic. We could not employ the discovery learning approach ... when we studied remotely. For junior high school students, if they are not in the classroom, it would be difficult to employ this method (Dona, I2, E4).

In another case, Fatma found confidence in developing an out-of-class assignment for her students; something she had not fully explored in the past:

Saya sedikit memiliki kepercayaan diri untuk melepas siswa saya keluar dari kelas karena saya ada memberikan mereka pegangan berupa pertanyaan pertanyaan yang memandu mereka untuk mengerjakan apa yang saya suruh mereka untuk kerjakan

I had the confidence to ask my students to do an activity outside the classroom because I gave them guidance in advance in the form of questions, which would lead them to perform the task I assigned them to do (Fatma, I2, E5).

This was an instance of the enactment of agency in which teachers took actions to uplift their classroom practices post-ERT for the benefit of their students. Fatma’s resolve to do something new was prompted by her ERT experience: to give her students a memorable learning experience, which she thought was not possible during ERT. Both Dona and Fatma implied their motive for these methods was to offer a good change for the students who were so used to studying alone remotely.

8.2.2. Combining ERT and Pre-ERT Teaching Practices

Teachers showed their optimism about combining their pre-ERT teaching practices with what they had learnt during the ERT period, which they thought would be a good fit for the 'new normal' context. In this respect, Zaki asserted:

I evaluate the way I was teaching before pandemic with a new normal. I can use my old style, but with a different version. We face the students that ever totally studied online and, it is really different. So that's why the method I used before is, it was still good, and it is good, but with a new improvement (Zaki, I2, E6).

He emphasised that this mixed approach would work with the new cohort of students who were accustomed to studying remotely. Similarly, Gina commented:

Kita kan waktu pandemi ada banyak belajar, mungkin itu bisa juga kita terapkan pada pembelajaran kita yang sekarang. Misalnya dalam pemberian tugas... kita berikan tugas yang seperti video ... poster ... menggunakan teknologi karena itu masih bisa kita terapkan [di dalam kelas]

We learned much during the pandemic. Maybe we can adopt some of the things we learned in our current teaching context. For instance, in assigning tasks ... we give them assignments that involve videos ... posters ... using technology because it is still applicable in classrooms (Gina, I2, E5).

She was confident that her learning efforts during ERT, especially relating to technology, would eventually pay off. She implied that a touch of technology would enhance her post-ERT practice, which in turn might generate students' interest. Zaki's and Gina's excerpts illustrate that the ERT experience played a very important role in shaping their 'revitalised' approach to post-ERT teaching. Teachers' confidence also reflected their 'awakened' agency when reunited with their students.

8.2.3. Recycling ERT Materials

Some of the teachers explained that they reused some of the learning resources and materials they had compiled during ERT. The use of these ERT materials was seen as an affordance in the post-ERT classroom context. For example, as Anita described:

[Saya] masih ada bahannya [dari masa pandemi] ... Untuk sekarang ibu masih pakai itu di kelas Karena waktu pandemi itu ...ada anak yang nggak bisa [akses materi tersebut]. Jadi sekarang [kitab bisa gunakan] pakai projector di kelas

I still have the materials from ERT ... I still use it in the classroom. ... Because during ERT ... there were students who could not access the materials. So now we can use them by using a projector in the classroom (Anita, I1, E18).

It was evident that Anita found the recycled ERT materials useful in planning her post-ERT lessons. The in-classroom use of the ERT learning resources was also intended to maximise their potential since she did not have the opportunity to use all of them during ERT. A similar approach was taken by Fatma. She remarked "*materi-materi ... masih tersimpan. Dan memang sekarang diminta lagi untuk memberikan materi itu. Saya ambil lagi* [the materials ... are still stored. When required to share them again, I can]" (Fatma, I1, E23). This suggests that access to the resources compiled during ERT also gave the teachers a kind of reassurance that they would never again experience a shortage of resources. This was seen as a material affordance, which helped facilitate their agency in the new era.

8.3. Post-ERT Face-to-Face Teaching Challenges

This section looks at the challenges in re-transitioning to face-to-face teaching post-ERT, particularly during the early phases. While the return to the classroom was enthusiastically anticipated by the teachers, it was not as straightforward as they

expected, as some problems arose during this transition period. A teacher in the survey contended that “siswa yang sudah kecanduan gadget, [dan] siswa yang malas, [dan] suka begadang [gadget addiction, lazy students who were used to staying up late]” (S44) were among the issues they encountered. In this section, the challenges that the teachers faced as they re-transitioned to post-ERT face-to-face teaching are explained. These comprise: 1) students’ (re)adaptation to face-to-face learning; 2) students’ motivation problems after returning to the classroom; and 3) changes in student behaviour and characteristics.

8.3.1. Students’ (Re)Adaptation to Post-ERT Classroom

Readapting to full face-to-face teaching and learning, according to teachers, was something that students struggled with. By this time, most of the students had spent around one and a half years studying from home and around six months attending restricted blended classes in which they had a more flexible learning schedule with lowered expectations. Some teachers felt that students had difficulties in readjusting to fixed schedules and longer school hours. For example, Dona explained how her students struggled to adjust their routines, which used to be more flexible during ERT, into a more systematic timetable post-ERT:

Saya melihat bahwa kesulitan mereka [siswa] itu adalah menyesuaikan kembali rutinitas mereka. Rutinitas mereka yang dulu belajar di rumah ... [yang mana] mereka boleh tidak terlampaui terikat [dengan waktu] gitu. Tapi ketika sekarang sudah tatap muka, mereka otomatis harus melakukan sesuai dengan jadwal

I think that their problem was readjusting their routines. The routines that they used to have when they were learning from home ... they were not restricted by time. But now, we have face-to-face teaching, so consequently, they have to follow the schedule (Dona, I2, E5).

In addition, Gina stated that students also faced difficulties as school hours were significantly longer than during ERT:

Yang saya lihat ... [sebelumnya] itu tatap muka terbatas, durasi pembelajaran itu singkat, sekarang sudah full seperti ini, terasa berat bagi mereka

What I observed was that ... before this, they had restricted classroom meetings, learning period duration was shorter, now that we have a full classroom set-up, it becomes a burden for them (Gina, I2, E6).

Meri added that the implementation of the normalised school hours was a shock for some of her students who were used to only having around three hours of school a day during ERT:

They accustomed to study at school only three hours [during the initial transition period] and then, more than three hours automatically they think "ah it's very tired" (Meri, I1, E20)

These teachers asserted that the more flexible learning circumstances during the ERT period contributed to students' laid-back attitude. This relaxed attitude contributed to their difficulties in readapting to classroom demands as "they used to be free in their home. And then when they back here, they need to ... follow the rules" (Roza, I2, E2). Teachers felt that this sudden change impacted students' motivation when they were in the classroom. They found it exhausting to study for an extended duration. The data here suggest that the students found it challenging to cope with less agency around their learning in post-ERT face-to-face teaching.

The issues around students' readaptation to the classroom setting were not only related to time and schedule. Some teachers also contended that students had problems keeping up with the learning demands. Chapter Five detailed how schools in the region applied a simplified curriculum and learning objectives during ERT, in which expectations for the students were lowered. However, post-ERT, the previous curriculum was restored. Gina argued that "*berat bagi mereka untuk di awal awal ini, gitu. Saat*

sudah kembali ke situasi normal [it was difficult for them in this transition period. When everything returned to normal]” (Gina, I2, E7). Teachers also observed that the students needed time to get used to the activities set for them in the classrooms. Dona added that:

Di kelas guru menuntut mereka untuk mengerjakan exercise, LKPD, dan lain lain. Itu dituntut seperti itu ... butuh waktu mereka untuk kembali menyesuaikan dengan kondisi pembelajaran tatap muka sekarang

In the classroom, teachers asked them to do exercises, worksheets, and many other activities. They are required to do so ... takes time for them to adjust to the conditions of today's face-to-face teaching (Dona, I2, E6).

Teachers reported that the students were overwhelmed by the reality of post-ERT face-to-face learning. A teacher in the survey described that "*mereka mengalami kebingungan dalam menghadapi pembelajaran* [they went through confusion in their learning]" (S30). This subsequently affected their academic performance. As some teachers mentioned in the survey, they observed a significant decrease in students' ability to comprehend topics and lessons (S52; S55; S60). There were concerns about ongoing difficulties in achieving learning objectives and curriculum goals (S55; S59) in the post-ERT classroom.

Teachers found that their students were overwhelmed and struggling to adapt to the post-ERT face-to-face learning and learning which, to some extent, affected their academic performance. The lack of student agency in adapting to post-ERT was a challenge that the teachers faced as they sought to enhance student learning in the aftermath of the pandemic.

8.3.2. Lingerin Problem of Student Motivation

Chapter Five reported that one of the main issues faced by the teachers during ERT was the students' depleting motivation for learning, which teachers perceived to be

linked to the intensive use of mobile phones. This problem persisted even after students returned to the classroom. Teachers described the instances where the issues around students' lack of interest in studying were evident. In the survey, some teachers mentioned that they found it challenging to revive students' learning motivation (S44) and spark their interest in learning (S42). This challenge was attributed by one teacher to the learning habits that the students developed during ERT, as well as the (mis)use of mobile phones for gaming purposes (S42).

Similar remarks about students' lack of motivation after the return to the classroom were also made during the interviews:

I think they have lack of motivation to study. They are easily get bored in learning process ... it's hard for me and for the other teacher to make them focus on studying (Najwa, I2, E6).

After pandemic ... [they] don't have spirit, don't have ... *keinginan untuk belajar* [willingness to study] ... I need extra power (Sari, I1, E5).

These teachers used different terms to label the state of their students' motivation after they returned to the classroom. Low spirit, lack of willingness to study, and lost focus were among the ways the teachers described their students. These teachers implied that, even though they had faced similar issues in the past, the reality of students' post-ERT motivation was worse than they anticipated and that they needed to go the extra mile to handle the situation. Meri asserted that she sometimes needed to do "extra time because most of the students right now are lazy. They are lazy because *biasa santai gitu kan ... waktu kemaren (pandemi)* [they got used to being too relaxed ... during the pandemic]" (Meri I1, E21). While this comment echoes other teachers' frustration about the state of students' motivation at that time, it also highlights Meri's effort to take agentic action to do extra classes because she realised that her students barely studied during the ERT period. This has links to DD issues, which isolated her students from their teachers and

the overall learning process. Meri's agency pushed her to take further action once she reunited with her students at school. There were two purposes of these extra sessions: to push the students back to their learning pace and to catch up with the topics that were not covered during ERT. Thus, while teachers found the lack of student motivation upon returning to the classroom a significant challenge which constrained their agency, the opportunity to meet their students face-to-face spurred teacher agency as they could be more responsive to individual student needs.

8.3.3. Change in Student Behaviour and Characteristics Post-ERT

A noticeable pattern of change in students' behaviour and attitudes was one of the themes found in teachers' accounts about their post-ERT classroom in both the survey and the interviews. These changes were perceived by some teachers as a major issue which may potentially obstruct their efforts to get learning back on track post-ERT. For example, Roza contended that "behaviour is the most complex problem that we found after the pandemic" (Roza, I1, E13).

This sub-section explores teachers' perceptions of students' attitudinal and behavioural changes post-ERT. In 8.3.3.1, a change in students' learning attitudes and communication styles is presented. It is followed by an elaboration on the change in student characteristics and in-class behaviour (8.3.3.2).

8.3.3.1. Change in Students' Attitude

When face-to-face teaching resumed, some of the teachers observed noticeable changes in the attitude of the new cohort of students. Even though there were hints about these changes during ERT, it was only after the students attended classroom teaching that they became more obvious. Dona asserted that:

Salah satu dampak yang juga sangat jadi beban pikiran bagi kami guru guru adalah ... sikap siswa ... [yang] memang terlihat sekali perbedaannya [dengan sebelum pandemi] ... Apakah ini pengaruh dulu mereka memakai gadget selama dua tahun?

One of the impacts which really concerned us as teachers is ... students' attitude ... which significantly differed to pre-pandemic times. Is this an effect of their two-year-long gadget use? (Dona, I2, E7)

The rhetorical question at the end of Dona's comment illustrates her conviction about the impacts of intensive gadget use during ERT, which she feels has had a long-lasting impact on classroom teaching practices post-ERT.

Anita commented about her students' communication style, which she perceived to be bolder and more direct compared to before the pandemic:

Cara mereka berinteraksi dengan guru, baik dari segi sikap, berbicara itu beda. Kalau anak-anak yang sebelum sebelumnya itu sangat sopan sopan, sekarang bicara, asal bicara saja

The way they interact with teachers, their attitudes, and the way they speak were different. Students before the pandemic were polite; now, they just speak at their will (Anita, I1, E19).

She thought that the new cohort of students had slightly deviated from the acceptable norms of interacting with their elders. Her perception was based on the local cultural practice in which youths should treat the elders with the utmost respect, especially teachers, whose position is regarded with great esteem. Anita implied that the way this new cohort of students communicated did not reflect their respect towards teachers.

Even though it did not directly affect the learning process, it was something that bothered the teachers and impacted their agency.

In another interview, Dona remarked that there was a problem with students' overly relaxed attitudes towards their learning. She contended that:

Seolah olah mereka menganggap pembelajaran ini ... [dengan] enteng kalau kita bilang seperti itu ya. Tidak terlampau dipusingkan. Dijalani ya, tetapi dapat gak dapat nya, ya udah seperti itu aja

It felt as if they did not take the teaching and learning process seriously, if I may say so. They did not really think about it. They just went through it without any burden; whether they'll learn something or not is another case (Dona, I2, E8).

This quote also highlights her scepticism towards her current students' work ethic. She claimed that students no longer valued the learning process. This change was predominantly seen as an obstacle to effective post-ERT classroom teaching which significantly constrained teacher agency.

8.3.3.2. Student's Lack of Focus, Restlessness and Disruptive Behaviour

Students' lack of focus in the classroom was mentioned by the teachers in the survey (S19; S42) in their response to the question about the challenges they encountered after they returned to the classroom. One teacher contended that "*siswa lebih banyak diam di kelas, tidak [me]respon, susah diatur* [students tend to be silent in class, unresponsive, and difficult to manage]" (S3). Similar remarks were made by some of the interviewees when they were asked to elaborate on their recent classroom session. Fatma asserted that it was difficult to "*membuat mereka fokus [dan] mendengarkan* [make them focused on the lesson and listen]" (Fatma, I2, E6), as these students seemed to be easily distracted. Najwa recalled that she sometimes needed "to

yell at them when they ... have been busy with another activities” (Najwa, I2, E7). Anita added that her students “*gak betah duduk di dalam [kelas] lama-lama. Permisi-permisi [could not sit still inside the classroom for a long time. They tried to find excuses to go out]*” (Anita, I2, E5).

I witnessed the instances of the students’ restless behaviour when I went to observe Sari’s class (year 8 students, second year of junior high school). In the observation log, I described the class as hectic, as students became increasingly noisy. Some of the students were not focused. They did not follow Sari’s instructions. When asked to discuss this phenomenon later in the interview, Sari remarked:

Tidak semuanya [siswa] mungkin bisa fokus, tapi setidaknya kita kurangi presentasi yang tidak fokusnya. Dengan memakai gambar-gambar yang menarik, memakai gaya tulisan tulisan yang menarik. Mungkin, ini mungkin bisa membuat motivasi anak itu lebih fokus

Not all could focus, but at least we tried to minimise the percentage ... by using interesting pictures, font styles. Maybe this could make them more motivated and focused (Sari, I2, E5).

She stated that there was a problem with the way her students behaved in the classroom. While she still tried hard to keep order, she did not respond emotionally towards the students. She tried to overlook their disruptive behaviour and focused on what she could do to make them more engaged in her lesson. From what I observed in that classroom, there was emotion regulation involved in the way she handled the situation. She later added, “*kita manusia, kalau anak ini itu segala macam, pasti marah. Tapi mungkin agak lebih direm [we are human, if the students are not listening, we are undoubtedly angry. But I try to suppress]*” (Sari, I2, E6). She realised that her emotional response to the situation would only inflict further damage on the students’ already depleting motivation. This illustrates how emotion regulation and agency were exercised simultaneously.

Similar to what happened during ERT, some of the teachers saw the students' inability to focus while learning in the classrooms as a prolonged effect of gadgets and exposure to the internet and games. As mentioned in Chapter Five, there was a tendency to demonise technology. A teacher in the survey commented that "*kebanyakan siswa kurang fokus dalam belajar karena terpengaruh atau lebih banyak berinteraksi dengan HP* [most students lack focus in studying because they are still under influence, or, using mobile phones extensively]" (S42). Fatma asserted that this lack of focus was because "*mereka memang masih terangkai pikirannya dari gadget yang biasa mereka pegang* [their minds are still strongly attached to their gadgets]" (Fatma, I2, E7). This assumption was also confirmed by the parents. Anita added that, when she consulted the parents about the students' tendency to lose focus while studying, they simply responded "*karena di rumah sering main game* [because they played too much games at home]" (Anita, I1, E20). Exposure to media like videos during ERT was also seen as a contributing factor to this condition. Zaki asserted that "the students really difficult to focus on study now, because they were spoiled by the media we set [during ERT] ... that really influence like the new normal now" (Zaki, I2, E7). According to Zaki, it was difficult for the students to learn in the classroom post-ERT because they were so accustomed to having everything explained through audio-visual media, which might not be fully available when they moved on to face-to-face teaching post-ERT.

However, not all teachers saw students' changed nature and attachment to technology as an adversity. Gina was one of the teachers who saw this circumstance as a challenge. She reflected that:

Tantangannya sekarang untuk guru ... adalah untuk membuat mereka itu tertarik dengan pembelajaran yang membuat mereka terus teringat apa yang diajarkan. ... Selama pandemi mereka memegang gadget pakai hp itu main game semua itu menarik bagi mereka, mungkin pembelajaran yang kita rancang di kelas itu bagaimana juga menarik, seperti seperti game yang mereka mainkan itu, sehingga mereka termotivasi untuk belajar

The challenge for teachers now is how to make students interested in our lessons and make them memorable. During the pandemic, they used gadgets and played games, all of which were interesting for them. We need to make our classroom lessons as interesting. Just like the games they played, so that they are motivated to learn (Gina, I2, E8).

Gina's viewpoint was different compared to the teachers previously presented in this sub-section. She was among a small number of teachers in this study who viewed it as almost impossible to keep the students away from technology and gadgets. She implied that instead of blaming gadgets, games, and the internet, teachers should develop a new perspective to look at these things and find ways to work with them in the classroom. This illustrates her aspiration to justify the use of digital technology in her future teaching, which reflects the projective domains of her agency.

8.4. The Relevance of Technology in Post-ERT Classrooms

This section investigates the ways teachers used technology post-ERT. Moreover, it examines their position and the overall place of technology within post-ERT and future teaching practices. The first sub-section highlights the different teachers' perspectives on the relevance of technology in their post-ERT practice. The subsequent four sub-sections are based on the teachers' elaborations on how and why they used digital technologies in their post-ERT language classrooms.

8.4.1. Adopting Technology Features Post-ERT: Tension in Exercising Agency

The overarching view that technology was a gateway to teaching and learning resources (see 6.2.2) was still echoed by some teachers in the post-pandemic context. However, they were divided when it came to their perceptions of the overall value of

technology in the aftermath of the pandemic. During the interview, some teachers explained that they wanted to keep some of the features of digital technology they used in ERT. Marsiah was one teacher who aspired to retain and recontextualise them for post-ERT in-classroom use. She asserted that:

I still use technology like I use media, *in focus* [projector], I use a laptop. I use applications like *Google Classroom*. [in] All the class ... I want to use like application *Quizzis*, like that ... We can see the technology in the class. I sometimes use *Kahoot*, *Quizzis* and especially for examinations, I use a *Google Form*. And then sometimes I use also [*Google*] *Jamboard* for the ... [students to] write their opinions ... I used for reflection (Marsiah, I2, E3).

This excerpt illustrates her agency in maximising the use of technology to enhance her teaching practices in the post-ERT classroom context. She was determined to bring technology to the foreground by combining online and offline tools, which served different purposes like material sharing, in-classroom presentations, quizzes and examinations, as well as for reflection and evaluation purposes.

However, not all teachers shared Marsiah's perspective. Some teachers decided to temporarily suspend the use of the internet and mobile phones, a decision which was based on their assessment of their students' condition. One of the aims of this was to minimise students' contact with gadgets, which, according to them, had inflicted damage. For example, Dona contended that:

Penggunaan handphone ini banyak masih banyak dampak negatifnya daripada positif. Itu yang membuat kan membuat kami para guru untuk tidak, untuk sementara, tidak memakai lagi apa yang telah kita pakai dulu ketika masa pandemi

The use of mobile phones has more negative than positive impacts. That was why we temporarily stopped using what we had been using throughout the pandemic (Dona, I2, E9).

This excerpt echoes the risk versus benefit discourse on the use of technology elaborated in Chapter Five. Here, Dona refrained from using mobile phones and internet-

based platforms, which she adopted during ERT, in her face-to-face teaching because she believed that they had a negative influence on students.

Based on the excerpts presented above, it is evident that while some teachers were keen to use technology within their post-ERT classrooms, others seemed to contest the idea. This illustrates the divided nature of teachers' perspectives about the overall position of technology. The subsequent sub-sections describe the extent to which teachers used features of technology in their post-ERT face-to-face teaching.

8.4.2. Audio-Visual Materials to Re-Engage Learners in Post-ERT Classrooms

Even though audio and video materials were used by some English teachers in the region in their face-to-face teaching before the pandemic, it was found to be increasingly common post-ERT. There were different reasons for the widespread implementation of these media. Some teachers explained that they needed multimedia resources like video and audio clips to improve their students' engagement, especially during the early stages of post-ERT classroom teaching when their motivation was at its lowest. For example, a teacher in the survey asserted that *"[saya mencoba] membuat kelas menjadi lebih menyenangkan melalui berbagai aktivitas kelas seperti game seru, menonton [video] [I tried to make the classroom more enjoyable by incorporating various activities like playing exciting games and watching videos]"* (S30). Moreover, Anita added that the addition of these multimedia was intended to stimulate students and to help them readjust to post-ERT face-to-face learning:

Ada sekitar dua atau tiga kali pertemuan [di awal fase kembali ke kelas yang] ... diawali dengan nyanyi. Materinya mungkin gak terlalu banyak, sedikit materinya, kemudian kita nyanyi. Nanti ada game game. Lebih banyak itu, bagaimana membuat mereka tertarik aja dulu

There were two or three sessions after the commencement of full classroom learning that started with songs. The quantity of learning material was reduced, and we then sang. There were also games. The larger proportion was those, we focus on how to make them interested first (Anita, I2, E6).

The use of audio-visual media here was designed to establish a more friendly and comfortable atmosphere for learning. The two teachers realised that they needed to somehow restore their students' affective state by doing activities that were enjoyable to them: listening to and singing songs in English, playing fun classroom games, and watching videos. This illustrates that the use of multimedia was perceived as useful by the teachers to add the element of fun to the lessons, which consequently increased the students' enthusiasm. This was combined with the strategy of reducing learning intensity in the earlier meetings and gradually adding more in later meetings as students' learning motivation improved. The incorporation of audio-visual materials also links to the idea of combining pre-ERT and ERT teaching practices, as elaborated previously in 8.2.2.

Some teachers saw adding multimedia content into the lessons as inevitable because, naturally, it would make them more appealing to students, given their strong attachment to social media, in which this kind of content flourishes. In other words, teachers considered that digital content had become an integral part of students' lives. When asked about the use of videos in her post-ERT classroom session, Dona asserted that:

Kecenderungannya anak anak sekarang memang sangat menginginkan adanya ... media ya, media pembelajaran yang menarik ... Mungkin saya tadi mengambil hanya video pembelajaran yang saya ambil dari YouTube ... Saya mengangkat itu memang mengikuti pembelajaran yang dulu ketika pandemi kita juga lakukan ... Siswa memang sangat mau dia mengikuti ... ketika kita menggunakan materi materi [audio visual] atau video-video sebagai media pembelajaran

Today's students tend to demand ... media, interesting learning media ... I just utilised learning videos which I got from *YouTube* ... I followed the learning pattern that I had

during the pandemic ... Students were enthusiastic ... when we used audiovisual materials or videos as learning media (Dona, I2, E10).

Having multimedia content like videos integrated into her lessons was part of Dona's efforts to make language learning relevant for the students in post-ERT classrooms and cater to their learning needs. It was the result of what she had observed while teaching during the ERT period. Even though Dona was one of the teachers who did not allow the use of the internet and mobile phones in post-ERT classrooms, she regularly used multimedia content in her lessons. In the observed lesson, she played a video in front of the class for the students to watch. She used the video to explain her topics and assign tasks. She considered this justifiable since she could keep control of both the classroom and the use of technology, enabling her agency.

Some teachers also displayed a strong willingness to integrate multimedia into students' tasks. After returning to the classroom, they reported constructing assignments requiring digital output in addition to the more traditional pen-and-paper assignments. One of the common forms of this was *vlogs* (video blogs). For example, in the 'how to introduce yourself' topic, instead of asking students to write an explanatory text or take turns to talk in front of the classroom, Zaki asked his students to create a vlog. He explained, "I asked them to make some kind of ... video telling about themselves, family and their ... house ... I asked them to be some kind of like a reporter" (Zaki, I1, E7). A similar idea was elaborated on by Meri when she described the benefits of learning video editing software like *CapCut*. According to her, by enabling the possibility for video assignments, the task not only became more enjoyable, but also provided options, more room for practice and creativity, and a safer space for students to express themselves:

[Penggunaan multimedia dalam pembelajaran] sangat banyak manfaatnya ... Mereka (siswa) bisa memperkenalkan diri menggunakan video. Kenapa? Ketika malu dia

mengucapkannya di sekolah kemudian dia bisa merancang nya, bisa menggunakannya dirumah ... mereka bisa mengucapkannya sambil bermain

The use of multimedia in learning was very beneficial. They can introduce themselves using videos. Why? If they cannot practice it at school, they can plan, use it at home ... they can practice it while playing (Meri, I2, E1).

The purpose of enabling multimedia-based assignments was to make English language learning more enjoyable and relevant for the students. It also aimed to facilitate different learning preferences. This demonstrates how teachers exercised their agency in using technology to enhance post-ERT face-to-face English Language Teaching.

8.4.3. Post-ERT Use of WhatsApp and Google Classroom

In section 5.3, it was reported that *WhatsApp* and *Google Classroom* were once the teachers' main choices for conducting ERT. After the return to face-to-face teaching, these platforms were not used as much. However, some teachers reported keeping *WhatsApp* as an information channel to connect students, teachers, and parents:

[WhatsApp] Masih dipakai. Untuk memberikan informasi. Kan grup kelas itu atau grup grup kelasnya masih ada grup kelas bahasa Inggris, grup wali kelasnya. Kemudian ada juga nanti yang untuk orang tua ... [untuk] Memberikan informasi ... Tentang siswa di sekolah, atau informasi-informasi yang penting

WhatsApp is still being used. To spread information. We have groups for each of the English classes, groups with homeroom teachers. There were also groups designated for parents ... to inform them ... about students' progress at school, or any other relevant information (Gina, I1, E18).

Setelah pandemi berakhir, saya tidak lagi menggunakan WhatsApp untuk dalam proses pembelajaran. Ya hanya sekedar informasi informasi saja. Karena seperti yang saya bilang, memberikan tugas, memberikan materi dengan melalui media sosial seperti itu ... kebanyakan dari siswa hanya mengabaikan saja

After the pandemic ended, I no longer use *WhatsApp* for teaching. Just as an information channel. As I said, distributing assignments and materials through social media was generally ignored by most students (Dona, I1, E18).

Besides the finding indicating that some teachers still used *WhatsApp* for their blended and flipped classroom set-up to solve the time constraints faced during the re-transition period (S58), it appeared that the use of *WhatsApp* for teaching purposes fell out of favour in the post-ERT teaching context. The return of classroom face-to-face teaching has made *WhatsApp* seem less relevant.

Nevertheless, *WhatsApp* and *Google Classroom* were not abandoned entirely by the teachers. Aside from being a channel for information and communication, they were also seen by some teachers as a part of their contingency planning when face-to-face meetings had to be cancelled. Zaki stated that within the post-ERT context, he mainly used *Google Classroom* to distribute his teaching materials to students when he could not come to the classroom. He also added that the shared materials were usually accompanied by detailed instructions sent through the classroom *WhatsApp* group (Zaki, I2). *WhatsApp* was still viewed as affording flexibility for Zaki. It also benefited the students since they would not have their classes cancelled when the teachers could not come to their classrooms. This echoes the notion of flexibility and accessibility of technology as a blessing in disguise (see 6.2.4), which helped facilitate teacher agency in the post-ERT setting.

8.4.4. Potential Affordances of Popular Digital Applications and Platforms

Even though mobile or computer-based applications and platforms were less utilised after the return to face-to-face teaching, some teachers still recognised their potential benefits in enhancing their classroom teaching practices. When asked about

specific technology applications and tools which they deemed relevant in the classroom context, Gina and Marsiah asserted that:

Canva ini ya terpakai pak, karena dia membuat presentasi di sana lebih mudah, video juga. Tapi kalau saya, kalau video lebih saya sering pakai Camtasia ya, itu yang mudah bagi saya. Kemudian kalau Quizzis pernah dulu waktu pandemi itu kita pakai untuk tes. Tapi kalo sekarang ya siswa nya ndak boleh pake HP, gimana mau dilakukan, gitu kan? Nah saya rasa itu bagus juga. Karena ... kita langsung dapat hasil, dapat analisisnya langsung ... Cuman sekarang gak bisa dilakukan

Canva is useful; it makes creating a presentation easier, and videos, too. But for me, I prefer Camtasia for video editing. I think it is easier. We used Quizzis during the pandemic for assessment. But now, students are not allowed to use their mobile phones. I think applications like Quizzis have potential. Because we can retrieve the result analysis immediately. The problem is that we cannot do it at this moment in classrooms (Gina, I2, E9).

[Pada saat ini, WhatsApp adalah] media komunikasi yang paling utama, karena di sana ada semua. Bisa dijangkau ... Terus YouTube penting juga. Karena itu ... sumber bagi saya sendiri ... Pinjam punya orang ... pakai punya orang. Terus saya juga sekarang mulai anak anak suruh membuat video dia apakan ke Youtube nanti share linknya, gitu. Jadi menyuruh anak anak buat konten ... sekarang sudah pakai TikTok juga ... Saya sudah suruh anak pake CapCut gitu untuk buat video mereka itu

Nowadays, WhatsApp is the main communication channel, because it is accessible to everyone. It was affordable. YouTube is also important. Because it is a source for me ... We can borrow ... the videos made by others. Recently, I also started to ask my students to create videos and upload them to YouTube, and they then share the links. So, I encouraged students to create [digital] content ... Now we use TikTok as well. I asked my students to use CapCut to create their videos (Marsiah, I2, E4).

Through their respective comments, Gina and Marsiah demonstrated their positivity regarding the potential benefits of the applications and platforms they got acquainted with during ERT to enhance their classroom practices post-ERT. They realised that there was still room for optimisation. However, their interest in technology seemed to have shifted from online teaching platforms to those which could assist them in developing their lesson materials and student learning tasks. This illustrates how teachers used their agency to maximise the benefits according to the current teaching situation. For example, video streaming platforms like *YouTube* and *TikTok* were seen as beneficial for material resourcing and showcasing students' work. Visual graphic design and video

editing tools like *Canva*, *Camtasia* and *CapCut* were mentioned regarding their perceived usefulness not only in helping teachers design more appealing lesson materials but also for students' use. Applications like *Quizzis* or *Kahoot* were also seen as helping to support students' language learning and provide instant feedback. This positivity was particularly evident in Marsiah's comment. Her enthusiasm was also observable during the classroom observation session in which she utilised a flipped classroom design. She continued to share her lesson materials with students through *Google Classroom*, although most activities were done in the classroom. Gina's remark, on the other hand, acknowledges that, due to certain circumstances, teachers might not be able to use technology as much as they would like to. School policies limiting or banning the use of mobile phones in classrooms were one of the challenges which constrained teacher agency to explore and use digital technologies post-ERT.

Canva was one application frequently mentioned by the teachers in this study due to its versatility in helping teachers prepare their presentations and learning materials.

Zaki explained that:

We can do anything in *Canva*. In *Canva* we can also, for example, I record about my materials, so, I just sent because *Canva* only use little space. So, I can send by *WhatsApp*. They can. Because we can combine explanation with the audio ... I can explain the tenses only by using *Canva* ... I can put my video in the corner. So, the chart in the big screen, of their handphone, or laptop if they run by a laptop. So that is why, *Canva* is still more useful (Zaki, I2, E8)

Canva was seen as 'one application to do all'. Its user-friendly interface and online storage feature were among the strengths of the software highlighted by Zaki. He also added that *Canva* had made it easier for teachers to work with multimedia resources, such as creating their video learning materials. This signifies how teachers appreciated *Canva* as an application with many affordances for different aspects of their practice. In other words, working with *Canva* was seen as a tool which facilitated their agency.

Similarly, Sari also added that “*Canva itu sudah sudah lengkap semuanya. Ada, ada flip booknya, banyak semuanya. Produknya banyak* [Canva is complete. It has *Flip Book*, and many others. There are so many different outputs]” (Sari, I2, E7). She emphasised the versatility of *Canva*, which enabled teachers to use their agency in exploring their creativity to create their own learning materials by putting them into different digital formats. During the classroom observation, I noticed that Sari used presentation slides that were created using *Canva*. This preference for *Canva* can be attributed to the fact that the software was endorsed by the Indonesian MoE. Full access was provided to all teachers. There were also different levels of tutorial training available for them to join during and after ERT.

The data presented in this sub-section illustrate teachers' awareness of the potential benefits of certain digital platforms and applications in enhancing post-ERT classroom teaching and learning. Perceived technical and pedagogical challenges led teachers to take different approaches when discussing the relevance of technology. These choices can also be attributed to the ways they envisioned the use of technology in their future classrooms, which formed the projective dimension of their agency and their post-ERT professional identity. Full access to platforms like *Canva* helped facilitate teacher agency in enhancing their practice, especially in material development. Finally, the different responses from teachers towards the challenges and perceived benefits of technology features within post-ERT classroom teaching and learning also illustrate the practical-evaluative dimension of their agency in which teachers actively evaluate, make decisions, and take actions during their teaching practice for the interests of their learners.

8.5. Projective Future Use of Technology in the Classroom and Beyond

This section looks at the ways teachers positioned themselves within the discourse of technology integration in teaching and learning English. It explores the ways they perceived challenges and possibilities regarding further implementation of technology in the classroom and its implications for learners and learning processes. In 8.5.1, teachers' practical and pedagogical considerations to keep or discard the use of technology in their post-ERT face-to-face teaching are elaborated. Sub-section 8.5.2 focuses on their anxiety and fear of counterproductivity when using technology post-ERT. Sub-section 8.5.3 looks at the dilemma faced by teachers regarding the use of mobile phones in classrooms. Lastly, sub-section 8.5.4 presents their viewpoints regarding the sustainability of using digital technology in future language classrooms.

8.5.1. Practical and Pedagogical Considerations of Post-ERT Technology Use

Section 8.4 has presented findings around the relevance of technology in the post-ERT face-to-face teaching context. Some of the teachers in this study displayed optimism about further integration of technological features in their lessons. However, the interviews and classroom observations also revealed other findings regarding post-ERT. For example, there was a sense of reluctance to use technology by some teachers. They found that reverting to the conventional classroom teaching methods reliant on lecturing and paper-and-pen-based activities was the best option for them. Teachers cited technical and pedagogical challenges in their decision-making. With consideration of the existing technology infrastructure at their schools, the conventional approach was considered by some teachers to be more effective. Zaki and Roza were two teachers who

brought up the practical issues if they were to use technology in the classroom. Zaki asserted that using technology in the classroom would consequently make his class preparation more complicated:

If I use that ... kind of media, I need a lot of tools you know, I need to take my laptop. I have to take the *in focus* player [projector], ... some cables and setting it [up] first. I should ... sit down and stand up [repeatedly because I] don't have the remote control for my laptop. So, actually I have a good media ... But I should do something more complicated. Yes. Setting [up] the tools. After teaching, open up the cables shut down the laptop and ... I think I need two bags (Zaki, I2, E9).

Roza added that the extra preparation needed for setting up the devices would significantly reduce her teaching time if she were to use technology like audio-visual media in her classrooms:

If I use videos, I think it takes time. So, we only have for right now, 40 minutes for each session. And normally my classes is on afternoon ... after *Ishoma* (lunch break), it's only 30 minutes for a session ... I am the person who old fashioned ... it's difficult for me to use the laptop or *in focus* [projector] quickly ... I think it wasting [time] for me ... also I think I couldn't find the suitable videos for them ... that still relate with my topic (Roza, I2, E3).

Both Zaki and Roza considered teaching using computers and screen projectors to be time-consuming. Given these circumstances, they considered that using technology might even disrupt the learning process. This concern was understandable since their classrooms were not permanently equipped with a computer and a screen projector (observation log, Zaki, and Roza). So, if they wanted to use these types of equipment, they would need to bring and set them up themselves before they start the lessons. The teachers were also responsible for returning the equipment to the office once they finished. The issue of practicality and time efficiency was seen by both teachers as an obstacle in the teaching and learning processes.

There were also doubts about the pedagogical compatibility of teaching with technology and multimedia in some areas of their teaching. Teachers felt that sometimes teaching with technology was just not applicable to certain aspects of their classroom

practice. For example, Anita doubted if the use of technology would be suitable for teaching specific topics like ‘how to write reports’:

Misalnya untuk teks report ... itu kan teks yang memang agak sulit itu [untuk dijelaskan]. Nampaknya mungkin anak kita memang harus lebih banyak ceramah kalau di teks report ini ... Kalau kita pakai video pakai itu, rasanya belum sampai ke anak. Karena kalau teks report itu kan kosakatanya lebih, lebih tinggi

For instance, report texts. This is a type of text that is difficult to explain. I think I would be able to explain it better through a lecture. If we use videos, it'd be more difficult for the students to understand. Because of the high-level vocabulary used (Anita, I2, E7).

Anita felt more comfortable explaining advanced topics like report texts through lecturing because she thought it would offer her more flexibility in adjusting the vocabulary choice to become level-appropriate for her learners, which she thought would accelerate their learning. She was confident that her learners would understand the topic better if she explained it in a lecture rather than from video materials from a third-party source. This perception is attributable to the didactic teaching view, which is common among teachers in Indonesia (see section 7.2). It also signifies Anita's lack of confidence in her ability to navigate the use of technology and digital media in gathering sources for her lesson materials.

Another area of concern was about conducting exams or summative assessments. During ERT, teachers were forced to conduct summative assessment processes like semester exams online through applications like *Google Forms*, in which the credibility of the results was questioned. This platform was not equipped with features to prevent the students from cheating. Reflecting on this experience and considering the prevailing emphasis on summative evaluation in the Indonesian education context, some teachers were resistant towards the idea of adopting technology for exams post-ERT. This was reflected in Fatma's opinion when she commented on her principal's policy to use *Google Forms* on mobile phones in the then recently finished semester exam:

Saya sangat tidak setuju menggunakan HP [untuk tes/ujian] karena mereka bisa saja satu orang menggunakan dua HP, satu untuk melihat soal, satu untuk mencari jawaban

I strongly disagree with using mobile phones because they could use two phones at the same time, one for performing the test, and another one for looking up answers (Fatma, I2, E8).

Fatma's strong views about this practice reflected her beliefs about the importance of integrity within the assessment process. Her limited knowledge of technology might also have influenced her perspective. However, her resistance towards the use of digital technologies for exams also demonstrates how her past experiences of designing, preparing, and administering exams, along with her understanding of her learners and her teaching context, informed her agency to critique her principal's policy. This echoes the relevance of the iterational dimension of teacher agency in which teachers' past knowledge and experience determine their course of action and decision-making.

8.5.2. *The Anxiety Around the Counterproductivity Issue*

Some participants demonstrated a very cautious approach when it came to further integration of technology into their post-ERT classrooms. While four teachers, Meri, Zaki, Marsiah, and Gina, displayed a degree of positivity and enthusiasm in terms of adding technological features, including those which involved the use of mobile phones, to support classroom learning, the others were quite unsure and tended to be sceptical about the effectiveness of involving gadgets for student learning. This scepticism can be linked to the teachers' beliefs that students had not overcome their technology obsession, as highlighted in Chapter Five (see section 5.5). Regarding the possibilities for in-classroom gadget and computer use, Dona and Najwa commented:

Saya saat ini sangat pesimis itu akan digunakan lagi Pak. Dengan membawa alat komunikasi itu ke sekolah. Terlihat sekali bahwa mereka menggunakan itu untuk lebih banyak hanya untuk main

I am quite pessimistic that it will be implemented. I mean, bringing communication devices to school. It was obvious that they would use them for playing (Dona, I2, E11).

When I ask them to go to the [computer] laboratory to study English, but they use them to [access] their social media (Najwa, I1, E17)

Both Dona and Najwa doubted their students' ability to stay focused when using mobile phones and computers to support their learning. Furthermore, there was also a concern that technology would not provide equitable learning opportunities:

Bagi siswa yang memang antusias belajarnya tinggi, mereka tidak akan salah guna terhadap gadget yang mereka pegang. Mereka tentu akan memakai aplikasi aplikasi yang ada untuk kemajuan belajar mereka. Yang kita sayangkan adalah memang anak-anak yang dalam pikiran mereka hanya bermain. Mereka terlena dengan game-game, dengan situs-situs yang tidak mendukung kepada pelajaran. Ini yang mengkhawatirkan bagi kita

Students with high learning motivation would not misuse their gadgets. They would use applications that support their learning progress. What we regret are students who can only think about playing. Those who are sidetracked by games and websites that do not benefit their studies. This is what concerns us (Fatma, I2, E9).

Fatma was particularly concerned that further integration of technology would only widen the gap between more and less able students, and between the motivated and the unmotivated ones. She contended that while the motivated students would have no problems navigating their way around the digital technologies, the unmotivated ones may become sidetracked and fall behind in their learning. The concerns regarding the negative impacts of gadgets prevented teachers from exploring further possibilities of technology use for classroom teaching. It also made them reconsider the plans for future developments:

Kami sudah ada pertemuan-pertemuan guru mata pelajaran bahasa Inggris se kabupaten. Kami sudah mendatangkan narasumber untuk membuat komik-komik pembelajaran. Ada yang menggunakan apa namanya... layar, dari WA, dari HP langsung bisa dilihat nanti ke layar di depan. Jadi sudah ada beberapa. Cuma ya kontradiktif penggunaan HP tadi itu juga yang masalahnya

We have had meetings with all English teachers in the region. We've invited people to train us to create comic strips as learning materials. Some of these activities utilise *WhatsApp*, from mobile phones to screen projectors in front of the classroom. So, we have a couple of things planned. But there is a contradiction with the use of mobile phones at school (Fatma, I2, E10).

The plan for an advanced training session on comic-based multimedia learning materials for all English teachers in the region needed to be put on hold due to the teachers' anxiety regarding the side effects of involving mobile phones in the learning process. On the one hand, this can be seen as an example of collective agency and teacher voice, given that their reluctance to adopt digital technology led to the training being cancelled. On the other hand, this reluctance also illustrates their limited agency in exploring possibilities to enhance their teaching practice post-ERT.

8.5.3. The Dilemma Around the Use of Mobile Phones at School

Teachers faced a dilemma between justifying and banning the use of students' mobile phones in classrooms. Based on the interviews and classroom observations, even though teachers saw the potential benefits of using gadgets for language learning, some were not completely sure whether their use should be normalised in the classroom. Some of these teachers cited their personal beliefs as well as parental and societal expectations as being behind their hesitation. Some specific school-level policies and regulations were also considered.

Around the time of data collection, there was no existing formal regulation set by the Indonesian MoE against the use of mobile phones at schools, in either junior or senior high school levels. This was left within the domain of the school principals' and individual teachers' consensus. Mixed reactions were exhibited by the interviewees

when they were asked about the possibilities of normalising mobile phone use to assist classroom teaching and learning post-ERT. Some had strong opinions that the idea would not materialise soon. Dona and Sari were among the teachers who supported the status quo of banning mobile phones in junior high schools. Dona contended that:

Sedikit sekali kemungkinan [untuk menggunakan gadget di kelas]. Mungkin boleh lah saya katakan tidak untuk di sekolah ya. Tetapi kalau untuk menggunakannya dengan memberikan tugas di rumah bisa jadi. Tapi memang tugasnya di rumah saja. Tidak, tidak, tidak dibawa lagi ke sekolah. Seperti itu. Tugas mungkin bisa

The chance is slim. I would say it is almost impossible ... There is nothing wrong with encouraging their use for supporting their assignment at home, but not at school (Dona, I2, E12).

Dona acknowledged the potential of using mobile phones to help the students learn English and complete their assignments. However, she would not go as far as allowing the students to bring their mobile phones to school. Similarly, Sari also emphasised the benefits of mobile phones in helping students study English at home:

Memang [sekarang] tidak boleh bawa HP ke sekolah. Memang tidak boleh pakai HP. Mungkin di rumah, setidaknya kalau untuk bahasa Inggris, vocabularynya. Dan saya pun sering menyarankan, nanti kalau HP itu, nak, pakai, pakai bahasa Inggris ya. Nanti setidaknya anak-anak ibu atau berapa ikon ikonnya itu kata kata yang pakai bahasa Inggris

At the moment, students are not allowed to bring their phones to school. Mobile phone use is prohibited. Maybe at home, at least for English language subjects, it would help with their vocabulary. I suggested that they set English as the default language interface. At least they would learn through icons and words in English (Sari, I2, E8).

While Sari tried to be diplomatic in addressing the issue, Dona openly opposed the idea. She even claimed that the teachers at her school needed to warn the parents to be more watchful in preventing students from bringing their mobile phones to school:

Himbauan yang diberikan kepada orang tua adalah sekarang [adalah] jangan percaya bahwa siswa kita dibolehkan bawa handphone ke sekolah. Kami pihak sekolah tidak membolehkan satupun

We appealed to parents not to be misinformed if their kids tell them that they are allowed to bring their phones to school. We do not allow any (Dona, I2, E13).

School policies to ban mobile phones were evident in the junior high context. It appeared that most of the teachers, with the exception of Meri, adhered to this consensus. This echoes the findings presented in Chapter Five, that teachers were worried about the side effects of exposure to technology on younger students.

Based on my notes from the observations, different types of schools tended to have different types of approaches to regulating the use of mobile phones. Najwa explained in the interview that, in the Islamic boarding school where she worked, restrictions on personal gadgets were one of her school's main policies that distinguished them from other types of schools. She asserted that:

Parents want to ... bring their children here because ... we don't allow phones to the students ... [even when] we ... we allowed tab[lets], ... or laptops, ...some of the parents do not agree ... that's why ... don't allow any kind of gadget in the school (Najwa, I2, E8).

This regulation put her in a dilemma when it came to deciding on the use of technology in teaching:

Actually, using technology is really useful. ... We really need technology to teach language. But for me, I cannot do it here. ... in this dormitory. We forbid them to use phones. And actually, if we talk about technology, most of them that I know, it's related to phone and computer (Najwa, I1, E18).

In the public senior high school context, students tended to be given more freedom. At that moment, there were no rules implemented to ban the use of mobile phones in that context (Marsiah, I2). Nevertheless, Fatma contended that she was starting to become more aware of the parents' growing concern regarding their kids' overreliance on their phones. She explained that:

Orang tua, kami rapat kemarin disini, berharap seperti yang dilaksanakan oleh SMP, lebih ketat terhadap pembinaan. Tidak perlu siswa untuk membawa HP ke sekolah. Kalaupun ada titip kepada guru yang bersangkutan

The parents, the last time we had a meeting here, hoped that we would adopt what had been implemented in junior high school. To become stricter. There was no need for the

students to bring their phones to school. If they bring them anyway, their respective teachers should keep them away (Fatma, I2, E11).

This shows that, besides having to deal with their own perceptions regarding mobile phones, the teachers also found themselves in a difficult situation where they needed to compromise with parental and societal expectations, as well as school-level policies. This is ironic given that, in this context, and during the pandemic, mobile phones were considered the main gateway to technology for both students and teachers. This illustrates the tension the teachers faced in exercising their agency. On the one hand, they realised that mobile phones would provide access to digital technologies for their learners; on the other hand, they also faced concerns about mobile phone side-effects, which were reiterated by parents and the wider community.

8.5.4. Navigating the Way Forward

Overall, teachers realised the benefits and the potential of technology integration into their English language classrooms (see section 6.2) and implied a willingness to enhance their practice in the future by learning and adopting more features of technology. They could visualise how their students would learn in ideal technology-integrated language classrooms in the future. Gina asserted that:

Untuk masa depan mungkin lebih banyak lagi menggunakan itu (teknologi). Karena dalam apa, dalam model kurikulum sekarang itu ... Dia [bisa] menerangkan dengan video, bisa dengan itu tugasnya ... dengan poster ... atau infografis ... kan mungkin butuh komputer mengerjakan[nya] ... Di masa depan, mungkin malah akan lebih banyak lagi digunakan. Untuk pembelajaran

In the future, we will probably need to use more technology. Because that is what is demanded in the recent curriculum model. Students can submit their assignments through videos ... posters ... or infographics ... for which computers are needed ... In the future, it will be used more. For teaching and learning (Gina, I1, E19).

She added further in the second interview that:

Banyak yang bisa kita manfaatkan disana [dengan penggunaan gadget dan internet]. Cuma ya, ya tadi dari segi kita kontrol itu yang sulit. Saya, kalo saya apa sangat iri melihat sekolah sekolah yang fasilitasnya lengkap seperti itu. Anak anak bekerja mencari sumber untuk pembelajaran itu sangat mudah, ...membuat projek, menyusun mini Ensiklopedi, mencari materi itu mudah sekali mereka. Sementara untuk siswa kita masih jauh dari hal hal yang seperti itu

There are so many benefits of gadgets and the internet. Controlling the use would be quite an issue, though. I am envious of schools which have complete facilities. The students can easily find learning resources, and to work on a project like mini encyclopaedias, it would be so easy for them to locate the materials. Meanwhile, this kind of privilege seems out of reach for our students (Gina, I2, E10).

Gina's comments illustrate teachers' awareness of the need and the potential benefits technology integration would bring to enhance classroom teaching practices. However, this enthusiasm was generally overshadowed by the fear of gadget addictions and other side effects of technology on students (see Chapter Five, section 5.5).

It seemed that the teachers' grim recollection of the ERT experience influenced their perceptions of what might occur if they failed to thoroughly consider the impacts of technology on students. As a consequence, they felt that there was an urgency to establish a way to govern the use of mobile phones in the classroom so that the result would not be counterproductive to students' learning.

Kalau menurut saya boleh saja sebenarnya bawa gadget ke sekolah. Asalkan nanti ada satu cara atau sistem yang mengatur pengontrolan pemakaian bagi siswa

I think students can bring their gadgets to school. As long as we can figure out a method or a system which controls the use (Gina, I2, E11).

Kalau kami [guru] bahasa Inggris, ketiganya sepakat membolehkan Pak, karena memang butuh kan? Tapi itu akan kita [buat] komitmen [kalau penggunaannya] memang untuk mensupport pembelajaran di mata pelajaran kita Kalau tidak, resikonya akan ada tindakan yang akan diberikan

We English teachers agreed that we would allow it out of necessity, right? However, we will need to make sure the students commit that they will use their phones appropriately to support the teaching and learning process in the English subject. Otherwise, there would be consequences (Fatma, I1, E24).

The evidence presented suggested that, despite the resistance shown initially, some teachers were taking small, careful steps towards integrating technology into in-classroom post-ERT English Language Teaching. This demonstrates how they carefully and cautiously exercised their agency in considering further adaptation of digital technologies. Moreover, there were indications that more teachers had shifted their initial positions and displayed more flexibility when they were asked during the second interview about future possibilities than in the first interview, even though they still emphasised the need for a careful approach to letting students use gadgets in the classroom:

Ibu dulu pernah ... pakai Google Forms. ... Dan sekarang ini kan ibu baru belajar Kahoot, Kuis kuis [dan] gim gim. Cuma masih kendalanya HP lagi ... kemarin sudah sepakat dengan anak, Ibu izinkan suatu waktu nanti kita pake HP untuk kuis. Tapi setelah belajar diserahkan kembali ... Rules sekolah, tidak diizinkan ... [Harus] Minta izin dulu ... untuk di jam itu saja ... bisa ... jadi rulesnya nanti bisa berubah ... Sesuai perubahan zaman

I've used ... *Google Forms* before. ... And now I've started to learn how to use *Kahoot* quizzes [and] games. The use of mobile phones was the issue, though ... I agreed with the students last time that one day I will allow them to use their mobile phones for a quiz. But they have to hand them over afterwards ... Our school regulations prohibit them. I have to ask for permission first ... only for that specific session ... probably ... the rules can be changed ... according to demands of the situation (Anita, I2, E8).

Saya sebenarnya. Boleh, pernah beberapa kali boleh membawa gadget. Boleh pas jam ibu boleh bawa gadget ya. Kenapa? Mereka bisa ambil lagu dari sana. Gitu kan. Lagu ini bagus, kan ada KD kompetensi dasar untuk mata pelajaran ini di terakhir itu song. Jadi kita boleh. Tapi setelah ini ibu tidak bertanggungjawab ya. Tolong disimpan HPnya

I am okay with using gadgets in the classroom. Why? Because they can find songs there ... There is a learning outcome at the end of the English subject that involves songs. So, we technically can allow that. But I keep reminding students that I will not be responsible afterwards if they are using their phones outside that purpose. They need to keep them in their bags after (Meri, I2, E2).

Anita stated that she had already set an agreement with her learners that she would allow them to occasionally use their mobile phones when required. She took this decision despite the school's regulations. She displayed her optimism that what she described as her justified use of mobile phones would be permitted by the school

management, which reflected her high level of agency. Similarly, Meri also thought that the use of mobile phones in her English classroom would be reasonable, given the nature of the lesson, which required students to be able to use the internet to access learning materials. However, she remained cautious by emphasising that they should take more responsibility in using their gadgets at school. These excerpts illustrate that even though teachers still had ongoing concerns regarding the use of mobile phones in the classroom, they were starting to be more open to the possibility of using them under strict monitoring. This development could be seen as significant progress, which demonstrated teachers' exercise of agency in taking the first, cautious steps to include technology in their post-ERT classroom teaching. Their negotiation of affordances on the material (i.e., access to digital technologies and resources to be used in the classroom), structural (i.e., the possibility to obtain permission from the school to occasionally use mobile phones) and relational (i.e., their interaction with, and ability to supervise students in the classroom) facilitated the exercise of agency.

Some teachers could envision their future classroom teaching practice in which technology would play an increasingly important role in supporting students, not only in satisfying their curiosity but also in boosting their creativity in performing language learning tasks. There were pros and cons regarding the possibility of normalising the use of mobile phones in schools, with teachers underlining certain conditions for implementation. Some teachers, through a cautious exercise of their agency, stated that they would eventually allow the use of mobile phones in the classroom and establish very strict conditions as a safeguarding measure. Others chose to be realistic, realising that they did not have the option to allow mobile phones in the classroom and recognising the need to find another space for their agency. For example, in the case where the school's regulation against mobile phones was non-negotiable (i.e., in Islamic

boarding schools), teachers were hoping for other solutions to implement technology in their classes, like using a computer laboratory. Najwa stated that:

I think we need to do more effort like finding an interesting material to, to give to them. And we also need more learning sources like two-way communication of learning material. But I think it's only can happen if we studied in the live lab laboratory because the students ... do not bring the gadget to the school (Najwa, I2, E9).

In Najwa's case, the use of a computer laboratory would be a perfect solution since her school did not allow students to use mobile phones. However, there would be further questions regarding the adequacy and capacity of these computer laboratory facilities.

These findings illustrate a degree of indecisiveness from teachers in determining the role of technology in their post-ERT English language classroom. On the one hand, some of these participants showed awareness that technology was somehow needed to help elevate their students' language learning experience, and they wanted to make sure that they took the appropriate steps towards that direction. They emphasised that the adoption of technology in the classroom should be aimed at providing the students with access to learning resources and assisting them in performing their tasks. On the other hand, other teachers showed resistance and cautiousness, especially regarding the idea of normalising the use of mobile phones in the classroom. This level of cautiousness nevertheless reflected the process taking place in these teachers' minds, in which they exercised their agency to decide what was best for their learners. They had different views, depending on their understanding of their context, on whether adopting more or reducing technology aspects would be the best option to serve their learners' interests. This significantly impacted their agency. At the point of data collection, most of these teachers were still trying to figure out the best approach to embrace technology.

8.6. Summary

There were challenges encountered by the teachers as they re-transitioned into the classroom post-ERT. At the earlier stage, the teachers faced issues around fixed scheduling and shortened school hours, which had implications for the achievement of learning objectives. Teachers also needed to deal with issues around students' academic performance, work ethic, and motivation, which significantly constrained their agency. They also observed noticeable changes in students' behaviour and attitude. They were restless and had difficulties focusing on learning. Some of the teachers linked this to the prolonged use of gadgets and the exposure to the internet during ERT, which later impacted their decision-making as to whether to adopt technology post-ERT. Moreover, there was also an observable change in the way the students communicated with teachers. Some of them found that students' attitudes towards learning had deteriorated. This had implications for their engagement in learning.

Post-ERT face-to-face teaching was characterised by a combination of their pre-ERT and ERT practices. Some of the participants explained that they recycled the learning resources and materials compiled during ERT. Access to these ERT learning materials was seen as an affordance by some of the teachers, spurring their agency to enhance their practice. Teachers also started to value the time they had in the classroom with their students more by maximising the opportunities to experiment with a variety of activities.

The data presented in this chapter indicate teachers' willingness to enhance their practices by adding technology features to their post-ERT practices. However, there was also evidence that some teachers were against it. Nevertheless, access to learning resources through free websites and video streaming platforms was greatly appreciated

by teachers as it helped them exercise their agency to develop their tailored curriculum content and enhance their teaching practice. Teachers also exercised their agency by incorporating multimedia content in their lessons to help students re-transition to face-to-face teaching post-ERT and improve their engagement.

Data indicate that applications like *WhatsApp* and *Google Classroom*, which were used as the main teaching platforms for ERT, were not abandoned entirely by the teachers, as they were still being used to connect with students and parents. Some participants exercised their agency by keeping them as part of their contingency planning. Moreover, teachers demonstrated awareness of the potential benefits of various digital technologies for their post-ERT classroom practices. However, their interest seemed to have shifted to the applications which they and their students could benefit from in the classroom, another instance of their enactment of agency by adjusting the need for technology based on the changing work context. Versatile applications like *Canva*, with many affordances to support teachers, helped teachers exercise their agency to enhance their practice post-ERT.

Despite the enthusiasm for technology, there were practical, technical, and pedagogical issues that caused some teachers to opt for a more conventional approach post-ERT. There were doubts about the compatibility and efficiency of teaching with technology and multimedia. Some teachers were sceptical about the idea of normalising gadgets in classroom learning. There were prevailing concerns regarding the negative impacts of mobile phones and the internet on students. Beyond their doubt and judgment, teachers also needed to compromise with parental and societal expectations, as well as school-level policies regarding the use of gadgets in schools. Nevertheless,

some teachers were taking small steps, cautiously exercising their agency, to achieve a more sustainable technology integration.

Chapter 9: Discussion

9.1. Overview

This chapter marks the move from the detailed presentation of the current study's findings in the previous five chapters to an attempt to bring together the key findings and discuss them in relation to the literature. It encompasses two main sections. The first focuses on discussing teacher agency through the lens of the ecological model (Biesta et al., 2015; Priestley et al., 2015, 2016). Illustrations of how teachers adjusted their practices during and after the pandemic are systemically embedded throughout this section. Sub-sections 9.2.1, 9.2.2, and 9.2.3 focus on the chordal triad, the three dimensions of agency, i.e. iterative, practical-evaluative, and projective. This allows not only deeper insights into each one of them but also a better understanding of the process of decision-making leading to the enactment of agency. Sub-section 9.2.4 presents a broader discussion about contributions and interactions across the three dimensions within the ecological model.

The second part of the chapter discusses teacher agency and the negotiation of professional identities within the framework of the agency-identity-emotion triangle (Kayi-Aydar, 2019a). Relationships between agency, professional identity, and emotions during and after the pandemic are the specific focus of the discussion in this section. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main discussion points, and ultimately, the current study's contributions to the literature.

9.2. Language Teacher Agency During and Post-ERT: An Ecological Perspective

This section discusses how English language teachers exercised their agency during and after the pandemic, i.e., during the ERT period and after school reopened. The section is structured according to the three dimensions in the ecological perspective of agency as elaborated by Mark Priestley and colleagues (Biesta et al., 2015; Priestley et al., 2015, 2016) (see 2.7.1).

9.2.1. The Iterational Dimension of Agency: Influences from the Past

This sub-section focuses on the relationship between teachers' past personal and professional experiences, beliefs, values, and decision-making during and post-ERT. This will be achieved by providing illustrations of ways in which teachers were able to draw on these aspects or faced constraints in doing so. Drawing on relevant findings of this study, this sub-section discusses the extent to which teachers were able to draw on their prior knowledge and experience, including their personal capacity (skills and knowledge), their professional and personal beliefs, and values (Priestley et al., 2015, 2016), to inform their decision-making as they navigated the changes during and post-ERT. Particular affordances or constraints in the enactment of teacher agency are also highlighted.

During ERT

In general, the findings of this study suggest that English language teachers faced constraints in drawing on their previous teaching experience, skills, knowledge, beliefs and values in exercising their agency during ERT. As highlighted in Chapter Four, most of the teachers did not have any previous experience teaching online or remotely before

the pandemic. Moreover, they felt that they were not provided with enough support on how to run their classes in the early stages of ERT, a situation which made them feel overwhelmed (see 4.2). There were only two significant instances found in which the participants were able to draw on their prior knowledge and experience when faced with the new challenges. The first was when some, e.g., Marsiah, Najwa, and Gina, used their existing knowledge about technology to support themselves and/or their students as they transitioned to ERT. These three teachers' prior experience with technology supported them in responding to the changes instigated by the sudden shift. For Marsiah, she was even able to take up a more active 'IT support' role to assist her students in using technology (see 7.3). Najwa's and Gina's gradually increasing knowledge and involvement with technology (see Chapter Seven) contributed to their better understanding of the role of technology, which consequently boosted their agency to learn even more. This increased understanding was more evident in Marsiah's experience when compared to other teachers in this study.

This finding is in line with Ehren et al. (2021), who also found that teachers who possessed digital literacy and experience using innovative tools beforehand were more likely to be motivated to respond to the challenges encountered during the pandemic. Moreover, the finding also highlights the relevance of personal and professional histories in the iterational dimension of agency (Priestley et al., 2016), which in this case were the digital skills obtained by the teachers before the pandemic. The extent to which they were able to draw on their experience using digital technology was what distinguished Marsiah, Gina, and Najwa from their peers. However, the finding also confirms that there were gaps among Indonesian teachers in terms of digital literacy and readiness to implement ERT (Azzahra, 2020; Churiyah et al., 2020). Those who lacked the required

skills did not have the past experience to draw on to respond to the sudden change, which required the use of technology throughout ERT.

The other instance of how teachers were able to draw on their iterational dimension of agency was when they utilised their prior knowledge about their students' characteristics (i.e., students' cognitive skills and learning needs) to develop tailor-made lesson contents and learning materials. This was evident for most teachers in this study, but was more prominent for Fatma and Dona. Fatma was especially concerned about finding level-appropriate learning resources for her students during ERT (see 5.4.2) because she felt that her ERT circumstances limited her ability to scaffold her students' understanding. Dona tended to prefer the materials that she compiled by herself, with full consideration of her learners' English proficiency, to those of mainstream language course textbooks, which she thought contained advanced vocabulary beyond her learners' level (see 6.2.2). This awareness and tendency of the teachers to find or develop level-appropriate learning resources for their students is consistent with findings reported in earlier studies (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022; Lestari, 2018). It also echoes the comment from Hamid and Nguyen (2016, p. 33) that "teacher agency is called for which mediates between the textbook knowledge and the local givens ... [to] appropriate textbook knowledge in the interest of their students".

Teachers' enactment of agency to develop tailored syllabus content and materials can be attributed to the affordance of having readily available online learning resources, which enabled them to locate resources that they considered relevant for their learners. This affordance was made possible by peer support within the online teacher groups that were growing at that time in Indonesia. This reflects a combination of individual and collective agency (Ehren et al., 2021). However, one interesting point remains; there

are noticeable variations across teachers in the extent they drew on their repertoire of experience despite their relatively similar circumstances and the level of support they had access to.

Except for the two instances above, the findings of this study suggest that the iterational dimension had a minimal contribution to teacher agency during ERT. Most of the teachers in the study did not have prior experience teaching online, a factor that significantly impacted their remote instruction (Moser et al., 2021). Moreover, it was the first time they had experienced such a global crisis. In that sense, the findings of this study echo the notion from Reyes-Rojas and Salinas (2024) about the ‘fractured’ iterational dimension of agency during ERT; that teachers had almost nothing in their knowledge repertoire on how to deal with the novel situation caused by the pandemic. At that time, their existing knowledge and experience did not allow them to explore what was possible in the online teaching space. This prevented them from maintaining their roles as advocates of learning (see 7.2.5), establishing two-way interaction with their learners (see 4.4.3), and facilitating student engagement (see 4.4.4); a set of challenging tasks required of teachers during the pandemic (Mansfield et al., 2023).

Additionally, some teachers in this study faced constraints in drawing on their existing knowledge repertoire as they could not recontextualise the knowledge they had in the new online teaching space. The findings suggest that most teachers in this study tried to model their ERT practices on their face-to-face teaching. As previously noted by Mansfield et al. (2023), the unfamiliarity with online space may create difficulties for teachers in effectively translating their existing practices to the new teaching context. This consequently led to a situation where their iterational dimension of agency could not be “incorporated into practical activities” (Leijen et al., 2020, p. 297) because

teachers failed to recognise the “limitations of [their] familiar practices” (Mansfield et al., 2023, p. 686) during ERT. While the choice to be consistent with their existing pedagogical beliefs can be seen as teachers drawing on their iterational dimension of agency, rigid interpretations of these beliefs, however, may prevent them from practising pedagogical flexibility during ERT (Zhang & Hwang, 2023).

The findings of the current study confirmed the ‘fractured’ state of iterational dimension of agency during ERT (Reyes-Rojas & Salinas, 2024). However, they also delineated that the ability to draw on their existing knowledge and experience, especially about their learners and technology, was a differentiating factor which facilitated the exercise of agency for some teachers during ERT. The findings also highlighted the mismatch between teachers’ beliefs and their actual practices, which, for some, resulted in scepticism and resistance towards ERT. Some of them even tended to resist ERT implementation. Resistance towards ERT was another manifestation of teacher agency. Literature notes that resistance towards a new policy can happen when teachers feel that it conflicts with their beliefs, prior knowledge and expectations (Le et al., 2020).

Post-ERT

Drawing on the iterational dimension of agency to inform teachers’ actions and decisions was considerably more prevalent in the post-ERT context. The accumulated new experiences they had during ERT became habitual or iterational over time. This means that, by the time they entered post-ERT teaching, the knowledge and experiences which they had available to draw on in the iterational dimension had increased. Compared to during ERT, the iterational dimension was less ‘fractured’ (Reyes-Rojas & Salinas, 2024) post-ERT. This is because the newly accumulated experience, which

added to the iterational dimension, contributed more to teachers' exercise of agency post-ERT when compared to during ERT, where they had almost nothing to draw on.

The findings suggest that teachers used their experiences of teaching during ERT to inform their decisions on post-ERT face-to-face teaching. This was reflected through the incorporation of some elements of ERT routines into their face-to-face teaching (see section 8.2). Teachers also reported the continued usage of multimedia, online learning resources, and digital technologies like *WhatsApp*, *Google Classrooms*, *Canva*, *Kahoot*, and *Quizzis* even after they returned to the classroom (see Chapter Eight). This finding corroborates those of earlier studies, which highlight the continuity of technology tools usage in post-ERT teaching (Gao & Cui, 2022; Jin et al., 2021; Moorhouse, 2023). Moorhouse (2023) attributed this to teachers' willingness to support learners outside the classroom and their efforts to address specific learning goals. This maintained practice was also designed to help teachers run their classes more efficiently and improve certain aspects of their teaching (Gao & Cui, 2022).

While this study confirmed some of the findings of the earlier studies mentioned above regarding the purpose behind the use of technology in post-ERT teaching, the study also revealed a different reason why teachers opted to retain some elements of technology for their post-ERT classroom. This was to help their students re-transition into full face-to-face learning (see sections 8.3 and 8.4). They felt that keeping familiar elements like digital tools and multimedia resources would prevent their students from feeling shocked and overwhelmed since, at that time, they were so accustomed to remote teaching with its flexibility. The aim was also to make the lessons more enjoyable and relevant to their learners, who had been very attached to technology during the pandemic.

This study found that some teachers combined their knowledge and experiences from pre-pandemic face-to-face teaching with those from the ERT period to enhance their post-ERT teaching practice. The findings of this study shed more light not only on how teachers drew on their iterational dimension of agency during the pandemic but also on how they used their accumulated knowledge and experience repertoire to enhance their practice for the benefit of their students post-ERT. Furthermore, the study also found individual variation among teachers in the ways they used this expanding repertoire, which tended to be related to their beliefs. For example, those who believed that mobile phones and the internet had a negative influence on students chose to reduce their students' technology exposure. This means that they would not draw on their ERT experience as much as those who aspired to continue using digital technologies. Instead, they drew more on their pre-pandemic teaching experiences and focused on recovering their interactions and relationships with the students.

9.2.2. Projective Dimension of Agency: The Orientations Towards the Future

The projective dimension of teacher agency comprises teachers' aspirations, both short-term and long-term; it is manifested in the ways teachers frame their aspirations and imagine alternative futures (Priestley et al., 2015, 2016). This sub-section discusses the extent to which teachers oriented their actions towards their future aspirations.

During ERT

This study found that, during ERT, teachers were preoccupied with the emergency response and mitigation of the impacts of the sudden shift. They aspired to keep their classes running and to minimise student disengagement and the loss of learning (see

Chapter Five). In other words, during the pandemic, teachers' aspirations were mostly short-term in nature as they aimed to cope with remote teaching to survive the study-from-home period (see section 5.4). Their focus was on the 'here and now', which means that the projective dimension was less evident when teachers made and evaluated decisions about how to enact their agency. Their concerns regarding student engagement, learning progress, and achieving curriculum targets also contributed to their lack of ability to see beyond the emergency response and overshadowed the projective dimension of their agency.

Similar findings were highlighted in earlier studies. For example, Ashton (2022) asserted that, during the pandemic, the projective dimension of agency was affected by the sudden move to ERT, which brought "a more intense focus on the present" (2022, p. 10). Similarly, Reyes-Rojas and Salinas (2024) linked teachers' focus on the immediate challenges to the 'fractured' projective dimension of agency during the pandemic. However, Reyes-Rojas and Salinas (2024) also asserted that uncertainty about the future, i.e., when the pandemic would eventually end, was also a factor behind the lack of teachers' long-term aspirations and focus on the present. The findings of the current study also concur with those of Biesta et al. (2015, pp. 634-635) that "teacher aspirations in respect of their teaching are relatively short-term in nature, ... much teacher agency is shaped by short-term aspirations to tick curricular boxes, deliver enjoyable lessons, keep students engaged and interested". The findings of the current study corroborate the results of earlier studies about the nature of the projective dimension of agency during ERT, which was relatively limited to short-term goals to continue the teaching and learning process.

Post-ERT

In the post-ERT context, the findings of this study indicated that teachers were still focused on short-term goals to make up for the loss of learning during the pandemic and to get the students back on track and achieve learning goals. These short-term aspirations were centred on curricular goals, lesson delivery, and student engagement (Biesta et al., 2015). They oriented their actions towards these goals as they exercised their agency to help students re-adapt to classroom learning and teaching. They also used their agency to enhance their teaching practices by combining pre-ERT and ERT routines (see section 8.2), drawing from their experiences during the pandemic.

However, there was also evidence that some teachers started contemplating things beyond their immediate classroom practice: a glimpse of their medium or long-term aspirations. For example, they exhibited a high level of understanding about the importance of reflection in their teaching (see section 6.4). This indicated a shift in paradigm and an aspiration to be more student-centred in the future. This was a result of ERT experiences, which taught these teachers the value of their students' feedback (see 6.4.3).

The current study also found that some teachers exhibited a high level of awareness of the benefits of technology, not only for their current practice but also for the future (see section 6.2). These teachers realised both the benefits and potential of digital technology and its increasing relevance for their profession. They aspired to find a sustainable solution for technology integration in their teaching context, which took local values into account, i.e., school policies about the use of gadgets and negative perceptions within wider society about the impact of mobile phones and the internet on students. The findings of this study indicated that some teachers oriented their actions

towards this goal as they cautiously exercised their agency to start negotiating what they considered fair use of mobile phones during lessons with school management and the students (see 8.5.4). This is consistent with the findings of Ahn and Chi (2023), which highlighted teachers' "ability to evaluate and prioritise teaching approaches based on their benefits for future teaching" (2023, p. 14).

The findings presented in this study suggest that, in the post-ERT context, teachers oriented their actions towards their short-term and medium/long-term aspirations. This is different from the ERT context in which teachers were mostly preoccupied with short-term goals as they dealt with the emergency response and mitigation plans, a finding in alignment with some earlier studies (Ashton, 2022; Reyes-Rojas & Salinas, 2024). Even though the return to the classroom was also quite challenging for the teachers (Ahn & Chi, 2023), it was relatively less intense than the shift to ERT. This, along with the experience of having gone through a very difficult time, allowed the teachers the confidence to think beyond their classroom teaching and imagine alternative futures (Priestley et al., 2015). While this study confirmed the findings of Biesta et al. (2015) about teachers' tendency to have fewer long-term aspirations when faced with a major change, it also contributes to the literature by providing a more complete picture of how teachers' future goals and aspirations informed their enactment of agency, especially after the pandemic.

9.2.3. The Engagement with the Here and Now: Teacher Decision-Making and Judgement of Affordances and Constraints

This section reviews the findings of the study to zoom in on the in-the-moment decision-making process that the teachers went through in enacting their agency, both

during and post-ERT. This process comprises a teacher's negotiation of cultural, structural and material factors (Rushton et al., 2025), taking their past experiences, histories and knowledge, beliefs and values, as well as their future aspirations, into consideration. Priestley et al. (2015) elaborate that cultural aspects are related to ways of speaking and thinking, and values, beliefs and aspirations; structural aspects refer to the social structures and relational resources, while material aspects connect to resources and the physical environment. The discussion is carried out by breaking down the process of weighing up cultural, structural, and material affordances and constraints, as well as calculating potential risks when teachers consider the best option among all possible alternatives (practical-evaluative) (Priestley et al., 2015). The overall findings of the current study illustrate how teachers went through the practical-evaluative process of juggling between these three aspects to determine the possible courses of action. These will be elaborated on in the forthcoming sections.

Negotiation of Structural Conditions During ERT

This study found the disruption of teacher-student interaction and relationships resulting from the digital divide (DD) issues to be one of the main challenges teachers faced in implementing ERT (see 4.4.3). Issues encountered by teachers in maintaining their relationships and establishing positive interactions with students online were also one of the major findings in earlier Indonesian-based studies (e.g., Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Simanjuntak & Panjaitan, 2021). The shift to ERT significantly impacted interactions between teachers and their students and students with their peers (El-Soussi, 2022). Zainal and Zainuddin (2021) noted that, during ERT, teachers were unable to get students' full participation, which consequently impacted their capacity to monitor their students' progress as well as they had in face-to-face learning. Overall, the

disrupted communication and relationship with students significantly hindered teachers' ability to respond to ERT. Moreover, the teachers felt that they lost the strength of the relationship they had in face-to-face teaching, which had been crucial to their teaching practices before the pandemic. Literature highlights interaction with students as one of the contextual factors affecting teacher agency at the micro level (Kayi-Aydar, 2019a). When it was well-maintained, it could facilitate the enactment of agency during ERT (Mansfield et al., 2023). However, this also means that its disruption can inhibit agency.

While teachers' impactful efforts to maintain relationships with their students and support them during the pandemic have been highlighted as one of the key drivers of the enactment of agency (Ashton, 2022), the evidence presented in this study suggests that their efforts to connect with their students mostly went in vain. These failed attempts can be attributed to the DD issues, which were extreme in some cases due to the remoteness of the areas where students lived. Teachers reported their efforts to proactively communicate with their students through phone calls and direct messaging on *WhatsApp*. However, due to DD issues, their interaction was mostly reduced to textual form within the *WhatsApp* group, and they found that students were typically slow to respond. Findings of earlier studies indicated that issues in both teacher-student and student-student interaction were evident in the online language teaching context (Ludwig & Tassinari, 2021). In this study, communication issues consequently constrained teachers' agency in performing their roles throughout the ERT period. They even led to teachers developing distrust towards their learners because they lost the sense of authority to monitor and supervise the learning process (see 7.2.4), which further indicated their constrained agency.

The findings indicated that the teachers perceived a lack of support from school management and related government agencies, especially in the early phase of ERT when they had to work from home. In the literature, the support from these parties was considered essential for facilitating teacher agency during the pandemic (Ehren et al., 2021). In this study, support was insufficient in terms of technical assistance to help the teachers perform their changed roles during the pandemic (see section 4.5). Detailed guidelines and instructions on how to run classes remotely were also lacking. This was a structural condition which teachers perceived as constraining their agency. This situation significantly impacted them as they felt neglected, scrambling for solutions on their own.

Teachers tried to exercise their agency through their self-initiated efforts to learn how to teach remotely, utilising resources available to them (Juárez-Díaz & Perales, 2021). Some relied on the information shared by colleagues in online teacher groups, which, to some extent, spurred their agency to keep learning to use different tools to perform their roles regardless of the difficult circumstances. These groups were considered a support system for language teachers to survive ERT (Defianty et al., 2021), a structural condition that fostered and was an affordance for their agency.

Another structural constraint found in this study was a lack of teacher-parent collaboration. Teachers reported that they hoped that parents' involvement could compensate for the lack of teacher presence. However, the interviews revealed teachers' disappointment toward parents due to their lack of awareness of the need to assist their children when studying from home (see 4.4.5). They reported feeling that parents had neglected this responsibility, making the collaboration almost non-existent. One possible explanation for this is that there was a lack of understanding between the two parties

due to the disruption of communication. On the one hand, the parents were not aware of what the teachers expected them to do; on the other hand, teachers might have expected too much from parents without communicating their goals clearly to them. This condition consequently affected teachers. Literature cites good relationships with parents as one of the catalysts for teacher agency during the pandemic (Mansfield et al., 2023).

In contrast with the above aspects, which constrained teachers' agency, this study also found certain conditions that supported teacher agency during the pandemic. These were the freedom to adjust the curriculum content, the support of blooming teachers' professional networks, and increased opportunities to undertake PD. The study found that the newly implemented *Merdeka* curriculum, as well as the general guidelines of the COVID-19 emergency curriculum, to some extent, facilitated teacher agency in developing lessons that suited their learners' needs and conditions. The pandemic co-occurred with the start of the new national curriculum implementation, which allowed teachers more flexibility in interpreting learning objectives and developing their syllabus based on their understanding of their students' needs. Moreover, the emergency guidelines also allowed teachers to make a simplified syllabus and content to facilitate ERT (Sundari et al., 2021). In this study, the practice of modifying and simplifying curriculum content as well as adjusting learning goals during ERT is evident (see 5.2.4), especially at the later stage of ERT. This was an important finding since it shed light not only on agency-enabling structural conditions but also on the enactment of agency reflected in teachers' decision to be flexible with learning agendas and objectives (Mansfield et al., 2023), which has not been fully emphasised in earlier studies. Teachers used their agency to simplify their activities and lessons based on their judgment of students' progress and situation. They ensured that the content and activities of each

lesson were simple enough to follow and to be put through *WhatsApp* and *Google Classroom*. This helped reduce the risk of the loss of learning and student disengagement.

Other structural conditions facilitating teacher agency found in this study were the blooming online professional networks and communities, and improved access to PD. These have been referred to as the positive impacts of the pandemic in earlier studies (Defianty et al., 2021; Sukirman, 2023; Sundari et al., 2021). The findings of this study indicated that teachers relied on their peers inside and outside of school to help them solve their teaching problems (see 4.5.4). In other words, involvement in online teacher groups empowered the teachers by providing them with collegial support to compensate for the lack of support from schools and relevant government agencies. This is consistent with the findings of Defianty et al. (2021), who reported Indonesian EFL teachers' strong sense of belonging to online teacher groups and their positive testimony of valuing the information shared within them. It helped teachers share and acquire information and materials that helped establish a co-constructive understanding among them (Sundari et al., 2021).

Teacher engagement in professional communities went hand-in-hand with the provision of access to PD. The findings of this study illustrate teachers' appreciation and greater awareness of the opportunities to pursue PD (see 6.3.2). Through their participation in PD programs, teachers could connect with fellow educators, researchers, and professionals to gain access to cutting-edge research, new pedagogical techniques, and evidence-based practices to cater to their learners' needs (Sukirman, 2023). Their PD engagement gradually increased their confidence, especially in teaching using technology, which positively affected their agency to enhance their ERT practices. This

corroborates the findings of Moser and Wei (2023) on the positive impacts of participation in online professional development programs on teachers' confidence in navigating online teaching. The findings of the current study shed more light on the contribution of professional communities and PD opportunities in fostering teacher agency during the pandemic.

Negotiation of Material Resources and Conditions During ERT

One of the key findings in this study was the teachers' efforts to negotiate the challenging material conditions that affected their interactions and relationships with their students (structural conditions). Most of the teachers were frustrated because some of their students did not have access to a technological device to allow them to participate in ERT. Moreover, the cost of internet data also proved to be a significant barrier. While this is consistent with the findings of earlier Indonesian ERT studies (e.g., Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Defianty et al., 2021; Kusuma, 2022; Nugroho et al., 2021), the findings of this study further elucidate how the lack of material resources (i.e., facilities and network connectivity, especially on the students' end due to DD issues) significantly constrained teacher agency to respond to ERT. Teachers in this study described how the connectivity issues prevented students from accessing the learning materials they had prepared, as well as from interacting with both their teachers and peers. Teachers felt that this led to the absence of a supportive learning environment, which constrained not only student engagement but also their agency.

However, the current study also found that, despite these limitations, some teachers adopted innovative solutions to meet their learners' needs (Nordstrom & Zhang, 2023). Driven by their goal to keep their classes running, teachers tried to use their agency to negotiate the lack of material resources when they decided to use digital

platforms that were both accessible and affordable for the students. *WhatsApp* and *Google Classroom* were chosen because they were practical to use. Their low data consumption was a key part of teachers' evaluation in making this decision. The use of both platforms for ERT was a common practice found across Indonesia (Defianty & Wilson, 2023; Fuad et al., 2020; Silvhiyany, 2022; Sundari et al., 2021) as well as similar contexts overseas (Juárez-Díaz & Perales, 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2021) where the impact of DD was prominent.

Teachers' efforts to negotiate material constraints were also reflected in their distribution of hard-copy materials through the school assignment box and their visits to students at their houses as a last resort to maintain their participation. While these were considered less common practices in this study, they were also found in other Indonesian contexts (Kurnia, 2020; Kusuma, 2023). Despite being heavily constrained by the lack of material resources, teachers still strove to keep their classes going. Their agency was seen through their decisions to juggle between different modalities to determine the best possible delivery of their lessons (Zainal & Zainuddin, 2021). Ensuring that they could continue their lessons to support students was a key factor for them when they evaluated possible actions: it was the main driver of their agency.

Despite their efforts to exercise their agency in the moment and negotiate the connectivity issues, the current study found that this was significantly impacted during the ERT period because interactions with students were heavily compromised. The material constraints (i.e., lack of connectivity and DD issues) prevented interactive communication with students, which became a structural constraint, leading to a decline in students' engagement, motivation, and eventually, academic performance.

While learners' lack of access to devices and internet networks was considered a significant material factor constraining agency, access to digital tools and online learning resources was found in this study to be a condition that fostered teacher agency. Teacher's discovery of useful learning websites and the provision of access to free and subscription-based digital tools were seen as blessings in disguise which not only spurred their agency to enhance their practice and develop interesting, level-appropriate lessons for their students, but also helped them improve their digital literacy and establish a better awareness of the benefits of technology (see section 6.2). Moreover, as discussed in 9.2.1, this also supported the development of their iterative dimension of agency.

While the findings confirmed the idea that access to technological and pedagogical resources was one of the most significant challenges for teachers delivering remote or online teaching (Ramdani et al., 2023), they also revealed that access to learning resources and digital tools was seen as affordances that enabled teachers to create a new space for agency (Rushton & Bird, 2024). The findings of the current study also echo the findings of earlier studies about teacher agency to explore emerging affordances of technology to compensate for some limitations of online teaching (Jeon et al., 2022). Teachers in this study tried to compensate for the lack of connectivity, which prevented them from conducting interactive teaching with their learners, by using a wide range of learning resources they found online to enhance their lessons. Their desire to provide facilitated learning was the driver of their agency. The sharing of learning materials through *WhatsApp* and *Google Classroom* was considered a practical way to engage learners, considering the DD challenges. In making this decision, teachers evaluated the features of the platforms as well as students' ability to access the internet. This illustrates teachers' negotiation of material conditions through their evaluation of

resource availability and the condition of the learning environment (Priestley et al., 2015).

Negotiation of Cultural Conditions During ERT

The inability to incorporate the teaching of moral values, which was regarded as important for students' character development, was a key cultural constraint that the teachers faced during ERT. Indonesia's formal education has had a strong focus on moral and character-based education, which has been at the core of the country's educational reform since 2011 (Qoyyimah, 2016). The findings of the study indicated that, in ERT, teachers had difficulties in performing their roles as 'values guardians' and 'character educators', which had been an integral part of their professional identity in the classroom before the pandemic (see 7.2.5). These roles could not be performed due to the constrained nature of student-teacher communication during ERT, which teachers felt prevented the integration of moral values in their day-to-day interaction. This means that teachers were forced to negotiate the loss of a value that had been considered central in their profession, putting them in a difficult position. Most of them struggled to negotiate this tension, resulting in a loss of confidence in their teaching.

Cultural aspects in the ecological perspective of agency also refer to values, beliefs and aspirations (Priestley et al., 2015). Education without the inclusion of the teaching of moral values was considered by the teachers to be against the local norms and cultural expectations. The findings indicated that character-based education had been integral, not only to the Indonesian national curriculum but also to the teachers' professional identity. While some teachers managed to negotiate the loss of character-based education by shifting their focus to, for example, learning digital technologies to enhance their teaching practice, most of the participants felt that something was

missing. Teachers who problematized the lack of moral and character-based education tended to view their ERT experiences negatively, as they felt that their role to educate students could not be replaced or facilitated by the implementation of technology (see 7.2.3). This reflection tended to inhibit their agency to do more than the minimum required during ERT.

Negotiation of Structural Conditions Post-ERT

Teachers initially expected that their relationship with students would automatically recover once they returned to school post-ERT. However, as the results of this study suggest, that was not the case. Teacher agency to re-establish relationships with their students and accelerate the learning process post-ERT was challenged by perceived changes in students' behaviour and attitudes (see 8.3.3), which some teachers considered as deviating from the accepted norms. This new set of student attitudes and behaviours also corresponded with their declining motivation (see 8.3.2). However, the study found that teachers responded by using their agency to help their students re-adapt to the classroom environment by optimising the affordance of material resources (e.g., ERT materials recycling). This included the use of multimedia materials and game-like activities to make the classroom less stressful and more enjoyable (see 8.4.2). This gradually helped the teachers re-establish rapport with them.

While earlier studies reported issues around students' attitudes during the pandemic as a challenge for teachers (Kusuma, 2022; Kusuma, 2023), few have touched on these issues in the post-ERT context. Among the limited examples, Charbonneau-Gowdy and Frenzel (2023, p. 57) highlighted "teachers' angst about how to navigate their students' emotional states, distant attitudes, the lack of importance students were placing on grades and succeeding" after the pandemic. The current study contributes to

the literature by shedding light on the practical-evaluative process the teachers undertook, not only to deal with the changes in student behaviour and characteristics but also to help them settle into the classroom after a long period of studying from home.

Regardless of those changes, this study found that, overall, having the students back at school after the pandemic spurred teacher agency. Teachers cherished their classroom interaction with the students, which they missed out on during the pandemic. The gradually recovering relationships with the students were a structural affordance that allowed them to use their agency to be more reflective and to listen more to student aspirations and feedback (see 6.4). This had implications for their overall approach to teaching as they aspired to be more student-oriented after the pandemic. This finding, again, is consistent with that of Charbonneau-Gowdy and Frenzel (2023), who note “a strong shift towards valuing more social constructivist teaching practices and an awareness of the importance of fostering relationship-building in learning ecologies” (2023, p. 51) after the pandemic. Above all, the results of this current study illustrated how important the students’ return to the classroom was for teachers. It allowed teachers to regain control of their teaching, enabling them to exercise their agency to re-establish connections, create a supportive learning environment, and enhance their teaching practice.

Negotiation of Material Resources or Conditions Post-ERT

When face-to-face learning and teaching resumed, teachers found themselves relieved of the burden of negotiating the limiting material conditions which had hindered their interactions with students. However, the availability of technological devices and reliable internet networks at school was still a major constraint. On top of that, this study also found that some schools (i.e., Islamic boarding and junior high

schools) prohibited students from bringing their gadgets to school. This impacted the availability of material resources and constrained teacher agency to use technology in the classroom post-ERT.

Despite the lack of technology infrastructure at school, this study found that the availability of learning resources compiled throughout the pandemic was seen as a material affordance fostering teacher agency to enhance their face-to-face teaching post-ERT. Teachers recycled ERT materials and maintained the use of certain digital tools in their post-pandemic teaching to boost their learners' engagement and help them re-adapt to the classroom environment (see section 8.2). This indicates that, while the iterational dimension was 'fractured' (Reyes-Rojas & Salinas, 2024) during ERT (see 9.2.1), teachers were building up new skills which gradually became internalised as part of their professional experience, which they could draw on in the practical-evaluative process in the post-ERT teaching context. Their ability to locate a wide range of learning resources online allowed them to be more creative and flexible in their teaching to respond to their learners' needs. Their elevated digital skills enabled them to incorporate multimedia resources and game-like activities into their post-ERT classroom so that the learning atmosphere became less stressful for learners during the early phase of face-to-face teaching. This would not have been possible without their recent ERT experiences, which had become part of the iterational dimension of their agency. The availability of these resources, along with the continued use of digital tools that helped the teachers in many aspects of their work (e.g., *Canva*, see 8.4.4), increased the perceived relevance and benefits of technology, which spurred teacher agency to learn more.

Some teachers, however, chose to limit the use of technology in their post-ERT classroom based on practical considerations like the amount of time needed to set up equipment in classrooms and the impact on teaching time (see 8.5.1). They also decided to reduce students' exposure to gadgets because of the perceived negative effects of technology and the internet on students (see 8.5.2) and focus on classroom interaction-based activities they had missed out on throughout ERT (see 8.2.1). In making these decisions, teachers drew on their ERT experience and reflected on the challenges they had during ERT. This was an enactment of agency that the teachers found in line with their beliefs and values, as well as their short-term goal to focus more on students' character development after a long period of online teaching.

While the affordance of technology, or the lack of it, has been frequently cited in studies as one of the factors mediating teacher agency during the pandemic (Chen, 2022; Zainal & Zainuddin, 2021), and post-pandemic teaching contexts (i.e., Gao & Cui, 2022; Lee & Jeon, 2024; Moorhouse, 2023), the affordance of having access to a wide range of learning resources via the internet and social media platforms has not been extensively discussed. The affordance of technology, in earlier studies, has been more often associated with the maintenance of routines using digital tools to help perform in-classroom activities (Gao & Cui, 2022), like LMS, digital noticeboards, digital worksheets, online quiz platforms, and interactive presentation software (Moorhouse, 2023). It has also been deemed to have the potential to help teachers develop classroom-based assessments (Lee & Jeon, 2024). The findings of this study have brought more nuance to the understanding of technological affordance within the post-ERT context as a facilitating factor for teacher agency, which can be attributed not only to digital tools but also to open access to repositories of learning resources.

Negotiation of Cultural Resources or Conditions Post-ERT

As the students returned to school, some teachers stated that they felt more obliged to align their practices with school values as well as the popular beliefs among parents and the local communities, especially concerning the use of mobile phones in the classroom. Priestley et al. (2015) asserted that cultural aspects that teachers need to negotiate when making decisions include the values, beliefs, and aspirations of those in the wider environment. In this case, some teachers needed to deal with their school values, which prohibited the use of gadgets and the internet, and the widely accepted beliefs in society about the negative impacts of mobile phones on students.

This dilemma was particularly evident for teachers who worked in Islamic boarding schools (i.e., Najwa and Roza), since part of their school's mission was to protect their students from addiction to games, the internet, and social media. There was very little room for negotiation in terms of allowing students to use their gadgets for learning. Teachers felt obliged to follow the school policy since it was considered part of the school's characteristics, which were advertised to prospective students and parents. A similar situation was also experienced by some public junior high school teachers in this study, as many of these schools also prevented students from bringing their phones to school. This finding is in line with the literature, which notes that school policy is one among the challenges in adopting mobile technology for language learning and teaching in Indonesian secondary schools (Ningsih et al., 2022). However, the findings of this study also highlight teacher agency in navigating this cultural constraint. Some teachers believed that having students use their mobile phones in the classroom would support the learning process since they could provide access to online learning resources and

digital technologies. They felt that they could justify the use of mobile phones in the classroom when required.

The current study also found that there were individual teachers who held a strong opinion against the use of mobile phones in the classroom (i.e., Dona and Fatma), However, they did not indicate whether this came out of their beliefs or a result of pressure from the school management and/or the community. In this case, the finding shows the interaction between the iterational and practical-evaluative dimensions of agency. The widely held view against the use of mobile phones, which was manifested in some of the schools' regulations, was a cultural condition affecting teacher agency to explore the use of technology in the post-ERT setting.

9.2.4. Contributions and Interactions across the Dimensions in the Ecological Model

This sub-section serves as a summary, pulling together the key threads across the previous three sub-sections. It focuses on the contributions of each of the three dimensions of agency and the interactions across them. These are discussed within a broader perspective to point out what has been learnt from the current study with respect to the ecological perspective of agency.

During ERT, teachers focused on continuing instruction for their learners. The findings of the study indicated that, during ERT, there was a more intense focus on the present (Ashton, 2022) to respond to the changes and adapt teaching practices. In doing so, the teachers took actions and made decisions which were manifested in their negotiation of the structural, material, and cultural constraints. They also oriented their actions towards the short-term goal of shifting their teaching online and continuing

instruction (projective dimension). While every teacher aimed for more or less the same goal, the key factor for their agency was the extent to which they could draw on their knowledge and experience repertoire (iterational dimension). However, most of the teachers faced difficulties in doing this since their knowledge, beliefs, and values were predominantly based on face-to-face teaching and were not contextualised for the online environment (Defianty & Wilson, 2023). This tended to constrain their agency.

As already stated, enactment of agency is both temporal and situated; it is informed by past professional and personal experience, oriented towards future objectives, and exercised in the present within certain circumstances (Priestley et al., 2015, 2016; Tao & Gao, 2021). While most of the teachers in the current study tried to use their agency in-the-moment to engage with their social environment (structural, material, and cultural conditions, i.e., situated aspects), the quality of this engagement was also contingent on the contribution of both iterational and projective dimensions of their agency (temporal aspects). While these two dimensions were found to be 'fractured' during ERT (Reyes-Rojas & Salinas, 2024), in this study, the contribution of the iterational dimension, in particular, was found to be key. The individual variations between the teachers in achieving agency are attributable to the extent they could draw on their repertoire of skills, knowledge, past teaching experience, values and beliefs in making decisions about their teaching.

The findings of this study highlighted the greater contribution of iterational and projective dimensions of agency in the post-ERT context than during ERT. Some teachers managed to draw on their accumulated experience from ERT in their face-to-face teaching, which had become iterative. Teachers incorporated elements of online teaching into their post-ERT face-to-face teaching (Stockwell & Wang, 2023). Moreover, as they

regained control of classroom practice (Charbonneau-Gowdy & Frenzel, 2023), they rediscovered the relevance of their knowledge, beliefs, and values about face-to-face teaching. Some teachers also aspired to be more responsive to their learners' needs and exhibited enthusiasm for finding sustainable ways to incorporate technology and enhance their teaching, indicating their long-term goals. These aspirations, to some extent, were related to their increased PD engagement throughout and after the pandemic.

The findings of the study indicated the 'awakening' of teacher agency, and an increase in the 'quality' of teachers' engagement "with temporal-relational contexts-for-action" (Priestley et al., 2016, p. 3) post-ERT. This was facilitated by the more supportive structural and material conditions with the return of students to the classroom and the fading impacts of DD. Some features of digital technology from the ERT period were also seen as affordances which positively impacted teacher agency.

Variations between teachers in terms of their exercise of agency post-ERT were also evident in the findings of the current study. The differences were, again, contingent on the temporal aspects of their agency; the extent to which they drew on their expanding iterational dimension of agency and oriented their actions towards their future goals (Priestley et al., 2015, 2016) in their in-the-moment decision making and judgment of situations. For example, in contrast to those who retained elements of their ERT in their post-ERT teaching, some teachers in this study chose not to draw on their recent ERT experience because they believed that ERT experience brought more harm than benefits to students (see 5.5.3). Consequently, they decided to suspend the use of technology in the classroom post-ERT (e.g., Fatma and Dona). They also tended not to

see technology as an important part of their future practice and professional selves as they aimed to focus on the revitalisation of character-based education.

The example also delineates the major influence of the practical–evaluative dimension on agency as it shaped teachers’ decision-making and action, which could foster or inhibit their agency (Priestley et al., 2015). For Fatma and Dona, negative views about the use of mobile phones and the internet shaped their decision to suspend them in their face-to-face classroom. While this facilitated teacher agency to focus on classroom interaction-based learning post-ERT (see 8.2.1), it could also inhibit their agency, for example, to explore more about the affordance of mobile-based learning.

This study contributes to the literature by adding further evidence of how English language teachers exercised their agency within resource-limited environments during the difficult times of the pandemic and its aftermath. It provides a more nuanced understanding of the contribution of each dimension of agency in the ecological model by highlighting the contributions of both the iterational and projective dimensions to the practical-evaluative process leading to the enactment of agency. Furthermore, this study reveals the growth of the iterational dimension agency, in particular, as the teachers internalised skills they obtained throughout the ERT period, adding to their knowledge repertoire, which they could draw on in their face-to-face teaching post-ERT.

9.3. The Agency-Identity-Emotion Triangle

9.3.1. Agency-Identity-Emotion Interplay in ERT

Emotional Vulnerability and Well-Being: Implications for Agency and Professional Identity

This study found that, throughout the pandemic, teachers experienced certain levels of anxiety and emotional vulnerability. The forced move to online teaching created significant emotional challenges (Jang, 2024) for them. Their emotional vulnerability can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the lack of experience teaching online and the lack of support they received in the early stages of ERT, which led to a growing concern about the achievement of learning objectives. Moreover, the challenges presented by the DD, which disrupted teacher-student interactions and severely impacted students' engagement, worsened the situation. As ERT progressed, the teachers' emotional vulnerability intensified as they became increasingly frustrated with the discrepancy between what they aspired to do based on their existing pedagogical beliefs as part of their professional identity, and their evaluation as to what was practically possible given the available resources (Priestley et al., 2016).

Teachers' frustration built up as in the remote setting, they could not use the pedagogical strengths they had developed in face-to-face teaching, an important aspect of their agency and professional identity. These include their close relationships with students, the use of gestures to scaffold learning, or their ability to motivate students directly. These findings are in alignment with those of Xu et al. (2024), who mentioned a range of factors contributing to teachers' emotional vulnerability in online teaching settings, such as students' uncooperative behaviours and the clash between online classroom reality and teachers' professional identity.

Findings of this study suggested a wide range of teachers' responses when faced with the complex ERT circumstance. These were influenced by the extent to which teachers could negotiate ERT realities and manage their negative emotions by applying appropriate emotional regulation strategies (Liu et al., 2023) and exercising their agency. For example, teachers who could not balance their negative emotions tended to have their agency constrained and consequently became emotionally vulnerable. Those who could tolerate the discrepancy between expectation and reality tended to be able to manage the negative emotions better while trying to focus more on the positive aspects of their work. Findings in Chapter Six revealed the different degrees to which teachers managed to see the blessings in the disguise of the pandemic. However, teachers had different ways of interpreting their pandemic experience; some were more positive than others. Teachers in this category subconsciously employed emotion regulation strategies. For example, Marsiah was able to maintain positivity in her ERT practice by sharing and reflecting on positive experiences to achieve subjective well-being, a condition where positive and negative emotions are in balance, affecting satisfaction with a certain situation (Talbot & Mercer, 2018).

Talbot and Mercer (2018) further asserted that teachers with considerably high levels of subjective emotional well-being tend to be more effective in their teaching. In the current study, there were cases where teachers were able to spot opportunities to use their agency and gradually improve their practice by drawing on the repertoires of experience, which were gradually built up and became part of the iterational dimension of their agency. For example, they would learn how to use certain digital tools or design creative activities to make up for the reduced interactivity so that they could maintain positivity about their practice. Some teachers sought help from their peers to obtain the necessary information and resources (Castro et al., 2010). This was done at school, as

well as through the online teacher groups (see 4.5.3 and 4.5.4). Participation in such groups made the teachers feel supported (Defianty et al., 2021) and helped them reduce their vulnerabilities and achieve greater agency (Nazari & Hu, 2024). Overall, the findings align with those of Xu et al. (2024), who reported that teachers who showed confidence in their ability to overcome challenges experienced positive emotions, which gave them extra motivation to teach, while teachers who could not cope tended to be more emotionally vulnerable.

The findings of the current study also indicated individual variations between teachers in terms of how they dealt with these emotional challenges of ERT. Some teachers were better at this than others. For example, Marsiah managed to focus her efforts on learning technology and improving her students' experience while engaging in PD. This was in contrast with Fatma, who seemed to be fixated on the negative impacts of technology on students and became increasingly sceptical about technology. This echoes the point made by Jang (2024) that teachers exhibited agency at various levels to mitigate emotional vulnerability. Their ability to embrace their emotional vulnerabilities, in turn, helped them facilitate their agency (Nazari & Hu, 2024), regulate their emotions, and gain confidence in their teaching. This individual capacity also influenced their ability to negotiate structural and material conditions as part of the practical-evaluative process to exercise their agency. In other words, there was a mutual relationship between the teachers' ability to manage their emotions and their enactment of agency to enhance their teaching practice.

The findings of the current study illuminated the interplay between teachers' emotions (emotional vulnerability and emotional well-being) and agency during the ERT period. Teachers' ability to negotiate their emotional vulnerability and embrace ERT

realities also had implications for their professional identity negotiation. The study found that teachers who tended to express negative emotions more strongly than others (e.g., Fatma and Najwa) were those who held a rigid understanding of their existing pedagogical beliefs. They experienced identity tensions due to the clashes between their initial (pre-pandemic) identities and their temporary identities. These identity tensions and their impact on teacher agency are discussed below.

Professional Identity Tension, Emotion, and Teacher Agency

The move to ERT disrupted interactions between teachers and students. According to teachers, it also had an overall impact on student engagement. Limited student participation was perceived by teachers to have contributed to poor student achievement, which, in turn, impacted their sense of self-efficacy (see section 4.6). These conditions had significant consequences on their sense of professional identity because their knowledge and ideas of what it takes to be a teacher were constantly challenged. The lost connection with students due to DD-related issues has been cited in earlier studies as a major challenge contributing to teachers' identity tension (e.g., Alosaimi, 2023; El-Soussi, 2022; Xu & Tao, 2023; Zhang & Hwang, 2023). The findings also indicate that the loss of face-to-face meetings during the pandemic resulted in a major shift in teachers' roles, affecting their sense of professional identities (see section 7.3). This aligns with the literature, which notes the emergence of temporary professional identities and the reduction of the pre-pandemic roles during ERT (Ashadi et al., 2022).

Findings of this study indicated that new (temporary) identities, such as course coordinators and IT support staff, did not align with the teachers' initial identities. Moreover, it was also evident that key initial identities like advocates of learning and character educators were considerably restricted or could not be enacted at all during

ERT (see section 7.3). These diminished initial identities, as well as the conflict between long-held beliefs and temporary ERT identities, led to professional identity tensions. The findings of this study aligned with those of Xu and Tao (2023), who found that identity tensions are associated with teachers' negative emotional experiences due to the incompatibility between their pedagogical beliefs and the new teaching space. Moreover, the impact of instructional, pedagogical, and emotional changes during ERT on teachers' identity (Yuan & Liu, 2021), as well as discrepancies between the way teachers saw themselves and their actual practice in the new environment (El-Soussi, 2022), were evident in the current study. Teachers with less flexibility in their long-held pedagogical beliefs tended to maintain their initial identities and resist the temporary identities, resulting in identity tensions (see 7.3.2).

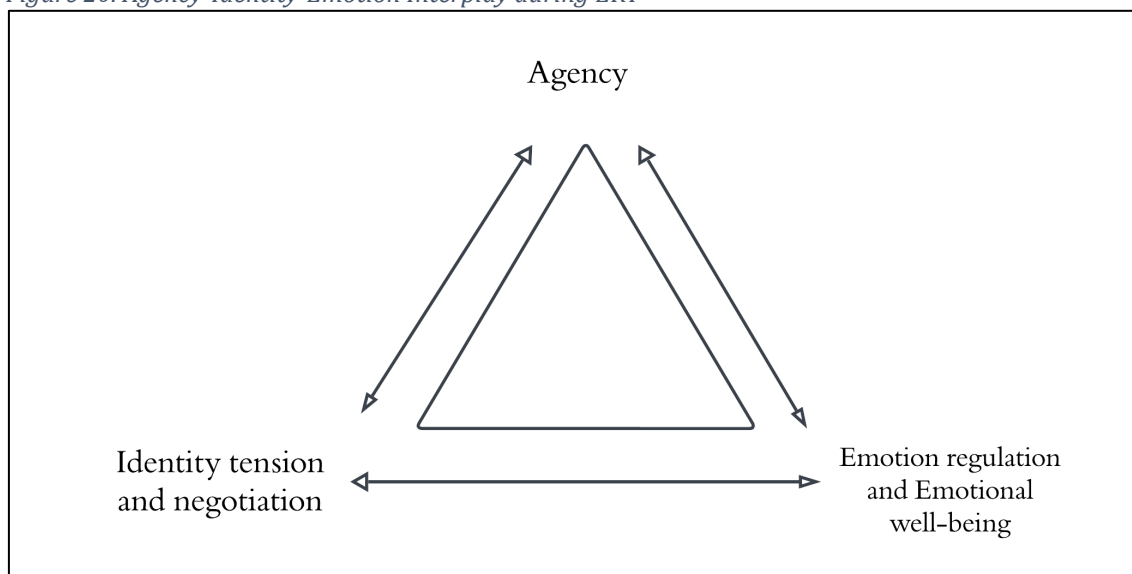
For many of the teachers in this study, identity tensions were ignited when they realised they could not enact their pre-pandemic roles, which they viewed as their pedagogical strength as English language teachers. This echoes the findings of Wang and Yazan (2024) that teachers struggled to transfer their classroom language pedagogy to the online setting. The findings are also in line with the results of studies (Charbonneau-Gowdy & Frenzel, 2023; El-Soussi, 2022), suggesting that identity tensions tend to escalate when teachers feel a loss of power and authority over their students and classroom practices. It was particularly relevant for Najwa and Fatma (see 7.3.2). Their professional identity tensions had implications for their emotional well-being and ultimately, their agency.

While this study confirms the findings of earlier studies on identity tension during the pandemic, its findings also indicate a complex interplay of agency, identity, and emotion. Each of these three constructs tended to be contingent on the others. There

were different patterns of interactions between agency, identity, and emotion reflected by different teachers. For example, for Marsiah, her agency to learn and to improve her teaching practice seemed to have helped her regulate her emotions to be more positive about her practice, which positively contributed to her emotional well-being (Talbot & Mercer, 2018). This consequently helped facilitate the process of her identity negotiation. However, for Fatma, identity tension, along with dominant negative emotions about ERT, seemed to constrain her agency. For Najwa, while the magnitude of her identity tension was similar to that of Fatma's, her agency to engage with technology seemed to have helped her suppress most of her negative emotions, which eventually helped her deal with her professional identity tension better than Fatma.

The current study further explores the agency-identity-emotion triangle (Kayi-Aydar, 2019a) and delineates the interplay across the three constructs. The agency-identity-emotion interplay found in this study during the pandemic is illustrated in Figure 20.

Figure 20. Agency-Identity-Emotion Interplay during ERT



There were multiple, two-way connections between the achievement of agency, the negotiation of professional identity, and emotion regulation; each was contingent on the others. For example, enactment of agency was dependent on how teachers regulated negative emotions and negotiated professional identity tensions. At the same time, the enactment of agency also had implications for identity negotiation and emotion. The findings show that teachers who could enact their agency during ERT managed to balance their emotions and negotiate professional identity tension better than those whose agency was constrained. The same pattern also applies to identity and emotion. The identity negotiation process during ERT involved teacher agency to regulate their emotion when they dealt with conflicting identities. When teachers were able to deal with their identity tension, they were more likely to experience positive emotions and exercise their agency. Emotion regulation was also dependent on the extent to which teachers could exercise their agency and negotiate their identity. The ability to regulate negative emotions also had positive implications for teacher agency and professional identity. The study contributes to the literature on LTA by breaking down the complex agency-identity-emotion interplay during the pandemic and illustrating examples of different ways in which it worked for teachers in practice.

9.3.2. Agency-Identity-Emotion Interplay Post-ERT

Perceptions of ERT Emotional Experience and Post-ERT Agency

The extent to which teachers could use their agency during the pandemic affected the ways they interpreted their ERT emotional experiences. This interpretation was a crucial factor in facilitating their agency to teach after the pandemic. This is in line with

the literature, which notes that teachers' emotions are considered influential for their decision-making and future choices and actions (Richards, 2020). The previous subsection highlighted the link between teachers' emotional well-being and their enactment of agency during ERT. In the post-ERT context, a similar pattern was observed.

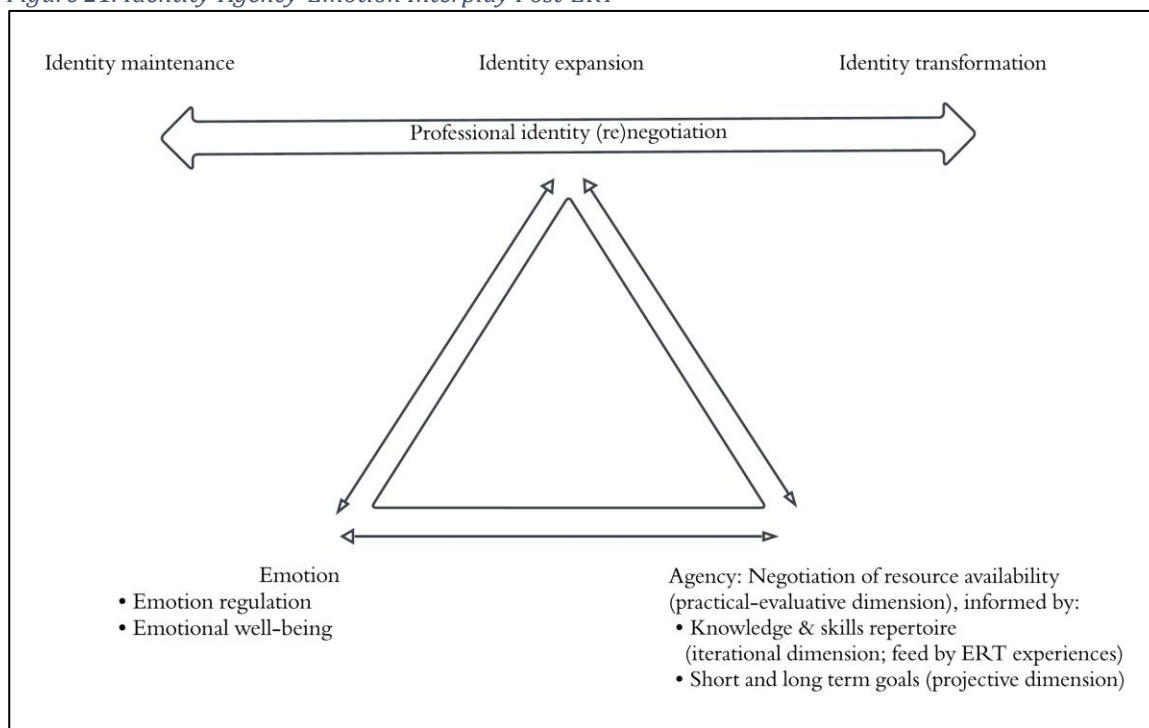
Teachers who managed to exercise their agency during ERT maximised their potential to cope with the challenges (Xu et al., 2024). This gave them a boost of confidence and generated positive emotions about their practice. Positive perceptions about ERT practice enabled these teachers to see blessings in the disguise of the pandemic, which provided them with opportunities to reflect on their teaching practices and examine their teacher selves (Alosaimi, 2023; El-Soussi, 2022). It also allowed them to draw on the skills and knowledge they obtained throughout ERT, which at that point had gradually become part of their iterative repertoire. This informed their decision-making post-ERT and helped them overcome the emotional challenges of dealing with the new difficulties they faced, such as the change in students' attitudes and behaviour.

Professional Identity Renegotiation, Emotion, and Agency Post-ERT

The findings presented in Chapter Seven (see section 7.4) indicated different paths the teachers took in undertaking their professional identity (re)negotiation process after they returned to face-to-face teaching. There were at least three notable approaches used in renegotiating their identity: identity maintenance, identity expansion, and identity transformation. These three approaches are better illustrated as points on a continuum rather than separated exclusive categories, since each teacher tended to have their own distinct methods which belonged to a certain place along the continuum. The ways teachers renegotiated their identities in the post-ERT context were contingent on both their emotion regulation and subjective well-being; their ability to focus on positive

experiences and reframe the negative ones (Talbot & Mercer, 2018); and the extent to which they could exercise their agency during ERT (Ashton, 2022). It also applies the other way around, post-ERT, teacher agency was also influenced by their emotional well-being and their identity (re)negotiation process. This process is illustrated in Figure 21.

Figure 21. Identity-Agency-Emotion Interplay Post-ERT



Teachers who could use their agency and regulate their emotions (i.e., making the most of the positive experiences) during ERT tended to view these experiences more positively. They could draw on these positive experiences, which had become part of their iterational dimension of agency when enacting their agency in the post-ERT context (e.g., in overcoming issues of students' attitudes and behaviour). This consequently gave them more confidence in making teaching decisions, like incorporating elements of technology and advocating for student-centred learning in their face-to-face teaching. They could also align their decisions with their short and long-term goals. On the contrary, teachers with dominant negative emotional experiences tended to draw on their negative recollections of ERT, and ultimately, were

prevented “from realising their aspirational or ideal teacher identity” (Richards, 2020, p. 228).

Teachers who balanced their positive and negative emotions and maintained their emotional well-being were more able to see the blessings in disguise beyond the pandemic, viewing it more as a rewarding experience, which provided them with opportunities to reflect on their teaching practices and examine their teacher selves (Alosaimi, 2023; El-Soussi, 2022). This was shown to be essential in helping them reconstruct their identity post-pandemic. It also helped them to be more responsive to their students’ needs in face-to-face teaching, which facilitated their enactment of agency. Their understanding of their learners’ needs elevated their individual capacity to negotiate the material, structural, and cultural resources in their teaching context. This included school facilities, learning resources, as well as relationships with students, parents, school management, and the wider community. In terms of the projective dimension of agency, for example, these teachers had started to think about a more sustainable method to incorporate technology into learning and teaching English, whilst also bearing in mind its negative impacts on students. The findings also indicate a shift towards a more learner-centred teaching approach, which not only reflected the projective dimension of teacher agency but also their identity renegotiation.

This study contributes to the scholarship on LTA by breaking down and illustrating the intricate relationships between agency, professional identity, and emotion. It further explores the agency-identity-emotion triangle (Kayi-Aydar, 2019a) to achieve a better understanding of teacher agency within an under-researched, resource-limited context around the difficult times of the pandemic. The study delineates the strong connections between agency, professional identity, and emotion, and how each was contingent on the

others, in both ERT and post-ERT settings. It also captures individual variations between teachers and a continuum of different processes they went through in negotiating their professional identity (see Figure 21). Lastly, the study also highlights the important role of emotion in exercising agency and negotiating identity, something that has not been widely discussed in earlier studies.

9.4. Summary

This chapter has discussed the key findings of the current study with respect to the research question of how English language teachers exercised their agency and negotiated their professional identities during and post-ERT.

The first part of the chapter discussed the evidence from the study in relation to each of the three dimensions of agency. The contribution of both the iterational and projective agency to the practical-evaluative process of negotiating the structural, material, and cultural conditions during and post-ERT was highlighted. During the pandemic, the extent to which teachers could draw on their iterational agency was found to be particularly crucial for their agency since they had not faced challenges like those encountered in responding to ERT, which limited their long-term aspirations. The return to face-to-face teaching post-ERT saw the increasing contribution of both iterational and projective dimensions as teachers could draw more on their accumulated experiences, which included the skills they obtained during ERT, to make decisions on their teaching. They could also orient their action more towards their medium and long-term aspirations.

The second part of the chapter focused on the agency-identity-emotion interplay in both ERT and post-ERT contexts. It discussed the multiple, two-way connections between the three constructs. Evidence from the study suggested that both during and after the ERT period, teacher agency, professional identity, and emotions were dependent on one another. In the post-ERT context, teacher agency and emotion influenced the trajectory of their professional identity (re)negotiation. This study confirmed the strong connections between teacher agency and identity. As illustrated in Figure 20 and Figure 21, the study illuminates the different pathways teachers took in undertaking their professional identity negotiation process during and post-ERT, in which teacher emotion regulation and enactment of agency were found to be essential. Finally, the discussion also illustrated the important roles of teacher emotion management in both their enactment of agency and negotiation of professional identity, which have not been thoroughly explored in earlier studies.

The chapter also highlighted the contributions of the current study to the literature. The first contribution was that this study adds to the evidence of how English language teachers exercised their agency during and after the pandemic and illustrates in detail the temporal and contextual aspects involved in the achievement of agency. The study also demonstrates the relevance of the ecological model in researching teacher agency as a temporal and situated achievement during and post-ERT. Secondly, the study reveals three key pathways of teachers' professional identity negotiation as part of an identity-negotiation continuum (see Figure 21) in which variations between teachers were influenced by their enactment of agency and emotions. Lastly, the study breaks down the interplay between agency, identity, and emotion, and particularly delineates the significant role of teachers' emotions (e.g., emotion regulation and emotional well-being) in both agency enactment and professional identity negotiation.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

10.1. Overview

This chapter summarises the study's key findings, presents its contributions, and expands on implications arising from its findings. This chapter starts by revisiting the two research questions. This is followed by a summary of the study's contributions to the literature, as well as an elaboration of its implications for policymakers, school management, teacher educators, and English language teachers. Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research ensue. The chapter concludes with the researcher's final reflection.

10.2. Summary of Key Findings

The objective of this study was to investigate English language teacher agency during and post-ERT. To achieve this, it was guided by two research questions. These questions were addressed across the five findings chapters. However, a summary of the key findings with respect to the two research questions is presented below.

What adjustments did English language teachers make to their practice during and after the pandemic, and how did they perceive and articulate these experiences?

This study found that the transition to ERT was challenging for the teachers. What made it difficult was the combination of a lack of experience teaching online and/or remotely and the DD issues, which disrupted teacher-student communication. According

to the teachers, this led to learners' disengagement, demotivation, and low academic performance. Moreover, teachers also felt that they did not get the support they needed.

Teachers altered their practice to adjust to the circumstances of ERT. To mitigate the DD issues, they taught predominantly asynchronously with applications like *WhatsApp* and *Google Classroom*. They also ran assignment boxes (i.e., pick up and drop off points for study materials and assignments set up at schools) and conducted house visits to accommodate students with no or very limited internet access. Teachers also reported that they modified the content of their syllabus to reduce student workload. Lesson content and activities were also simplified to adjust to the asynchronous teaching platforms and students' slow progress.

Despite their efforts, teachers felt that the learning outcome during ERT was disappointing. Teachers who experienced severe learner disengagement tended to view ERT as a traumatic experience. Moreover, students' exposure to mobile phones and the internet was viewed negatively by some as they believed this resulted in attitude and behaviour problems for students. This belief contributed to their scepticism towards online teaching and the use of digital technologies for teaching and learning. However, the study also found that some teachers managed to stay positive. Despite the shortcomings, they focused their energy on enhancing the student ERT experience by learning, exploring and experimenting with digital technologies, as well as engaging in PD programs.

Upon returning to face-to-face teaching post-ERT, teachers readjusted their practice for the classroom context. Some of them retained elements from ERT, such as the use of online learning resources and digital technology for preparing and developing their own materials and combined them in their face-to-face teaching. They also

reported using multimedia to make their lessons more appealing. However, some teachers reported that they chose not to allow the use of mobile phones and the internet in the classroom due to the perceived negative effects on students. These teachers decided to focus more on activities involving student interaction and direct communication.

Teachers reported their enjoyment of being able to meet their students in person after a long period of ERT. However, they also felt overwhelmed by the changes in student attitudes and behaviour. Some of them linked this to the prolonged use of mobile phones. For some teachers, this led to a decision to put a stronger emphasis on the teaching of moral values and character-based education, which has been an essential cultural aspect of the Indonesian education system. To achieve this, they believed that they had to temporarily stop the use of mobile phones in the classroom.

Many of the teachers in the study acknowledged the benefits they obtained during the pandemic. For example, they commented that the pandemic gave them opportunities to learn more about using technology for teaching. They also felt that they had more opportunities to join PD programs, which had been made widely available during the pandemic. Some of them also felt that the experience of ERT had positive impacts on their professional growth. They felt that it had helped them to become more reflective in their teaching and to pay more attention to their students' needs. For some, the experience was eye-opening; it shifted their paradigm about teaching and learning.

In terms of their attitude towards technology post-ERT, teachers were divided. Those who believed that mobile phones and the internet had negative influences on students tended to remain sceptical about it. Those who approached it more positively

exhibited a willingness to continue using it in a more sustainable way to support the learning process and enhance their practice.

How did the teachers exercise their agency, negotiate their professional identities, and manage their emotions in response to these experiences?

During ERT, the willingness to keep the class running and keep students engaged in their learning was the main driver of teacher agency. To achieve this, teachers put effort into learning how to use digital technologies and identified platforms that they perceived to be accessible and affordable for students. They also simplified their syllabus and lesson content to accommodate students and to match the chosen platforms for online teaching, synchronously or asynchronously.

In post-ERT times, teachers exercised their agency to help their students transition to face-to-face teaching and learning after a long period of ERT. To achieve this goal, some teachers chose to continue using technological features from ERT, which they thought would help make their lessons relevant and appealing to the students. However, others decided to limit students' exposure to mobile phones and the internet by suspending the use of mobile phones in the classroom. These teachers believed that prolonged exposure to mobile phones had negative impacts on students. These two groups of teachers shared a common goal: to help students get back on the right track and kickstart their learning post-ERT.

As previously mentioned, during ERT, teachers needed to adjust their practice significantly. These adjustments did not always fully align with their professional beliefs and values. Teachers found themselves having to negotiate and compromise with the gap between their ideals and the realities of ERT. As a result, some teachers experienced identity tension. ERT experiences had implications for their professional identity

negotiation. This study found that teachers undertook temporary identities during the pandemic. Some of these clashed with their initial identities. Some teachers responded to their ERT experiences by maintaining, expanding, or even transforming their professional identities. For some teachers, the return to face-to-face teaching post-ERT led to the re-emergence and maintenance of their initial identities. For others, it resulted in expanded or even transformed identities. This was contingent upon the way they perceived their ERT experience and regulated their emotions, as well as the extent to which they could use their agency. The study found individual variations among teachers in the way they articulated and managed their emotions, which not only influenced their agency but also determined the trajectories of their professional identity negotiation.

10.3. Contributions and Implications of the Research

10.3.1. Contributions and Implications for Knowledge

This study has presented a comprehensive discussion of how agency was enacted during and after the pandemic by a group of secondary school English language teachers in the Lima Pulu Kota region. It detailed the practical-evaluative process of English language teachers' decision-making and provided an analysis of the structural, material, and cultural conditions. Through close examination of the ecological model, the study also delineated the contribution of both the iterational and projective dimensions in this process. The contribution of the iterational dimension, especially teachers' pre-existing knowledge and skills about technology, was found to be significant to teacher agency during the pandemic.

The current study's contributions to the literature also entail a detailed explanation of agency enactment post-ERT. The study revealed greater contributions of iterational and projective dimensions of agency in the post-ERT context than during ERT, which were manifested, for example, in the use of digital technologies in their post-ERT face-to-face teaching and teachers' orientation towards a more reflective, student-centred teaching practice. Furthermore, the study highlighted the growth of the iterational dimension agency, as the teachers internalised the skills they obtained throughout the ERT period, which fed into their knowledge repertoire that they could draw on in their face-to-face teaching post-ERT. Moreover, the current study also found individual variation among teachers in their decisions to use the skills and knowledge they obtained during the ERT period in the post-ERT context. These are among the study's main contributions to the literature, which were ascertained by looking at three different timelines, the pre-, during, and post-ERT period, something that has not been thoroughly explored in earlier studies.

The study also provided detailed explanations of teachers' identity tension during ERT and how they adapted to the changes in their roles and responsibilities, which led to their professional identity negotiation. Based on these findings, the current study identified three different pathways of teachers' professional identity negotiation: identity maintenance, identity expansion, and identity transformation. These are seen as parts of an identity-negotiation continuum in which influences of agency and emotion were key (see Figure 21 in 9.3.2).

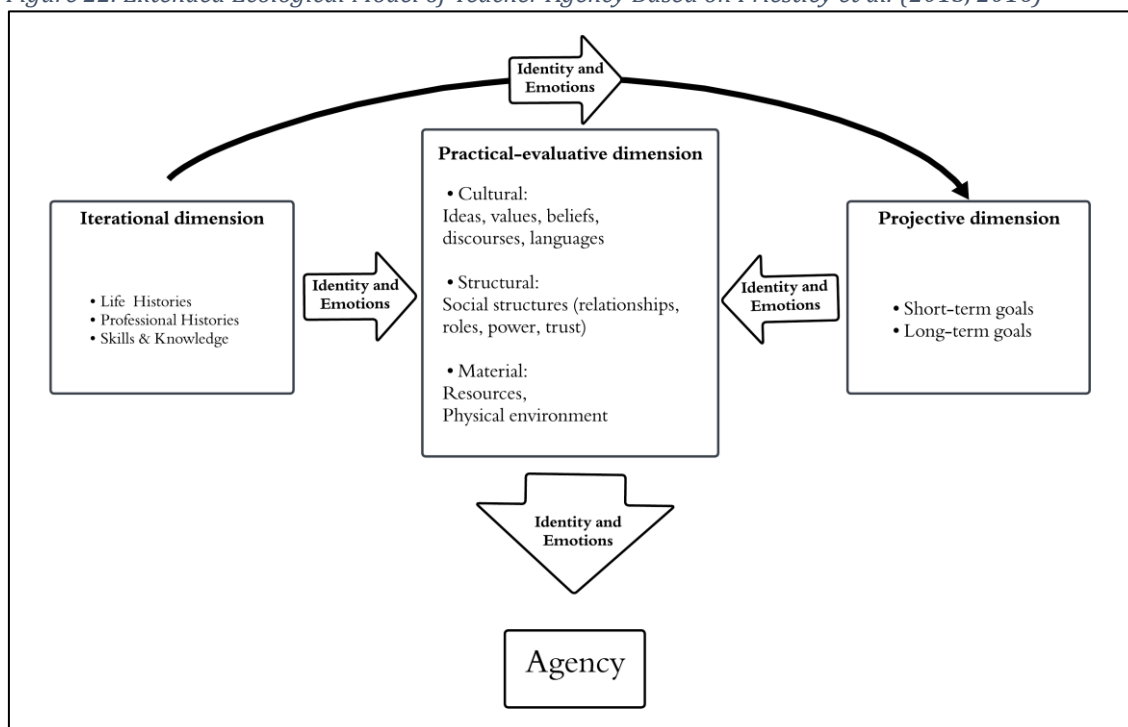
This study's exploration of the agency-identity-emotion triangle (Kayi-Aydar, 2019a) has provided a new perspective on understanding language teacher agency (LTA). Connections between agency, professional identity, and emotion, and how each

was contingent on the others, in both ERT and post-ERT times, were delineated. By breaking down the interplay of agency-identity-emotions, the study highlighted the significant role of teachers' emotions in both the achievement of agency and the negotiation of professional identity, which has not been thoroughly explored in earlier studies. The current research contributes to filling this gap in the literature.

When it comes to the ecological perspective of agency, the study contributes by contextualising the model for both pandemic and post-pandemic contexts. It also extends the theory by emphasising the crucial roles of teacher (professional) identity and emotions in their achievement of agency. These two elements were seen as integral factors which were not only involved in each of the interactions across the three dimensions of agency but were also influential in the enactment of agency itself. Agency as a temporal and situated achievement is informed by the past, oriented towards the future, and enacted in the present within real situations; it reflects the quality of teacher interactions with the temporal and contextual factors (Biesta et al., 2015; Priestley et al., 2015, 2016). However, the findings of this study also revealed that this 'quality' was also determined by teachers' (professional) identity negotiation and emotion regulation.

The aforementioned extension to the theory is illustrated in Figure 22. It visualises the roles of teachers' professional identity and emotions in the interactions across the three dimensions of agency within the ecological model. The figure also demonstrates the involvement of teachers' identities and emotions in the actual process of decision-making, which determines the course of action and the achievement of agency. The current study contributes to knowledge by pointing out the relevance of teachers' professional identity and emotions within the ecological model of agency, which have not been addressed in the current LTA literature.

Figure 22. Extended Ecological Model of Teacher Agency Based on Priestley et al. (2015, 2016)



Overall, the study found that enacting agency cannot be separated from negotiating professional identity and regulating emotions. It responds to the call made by Kayi-Aydar (2019a) and is among the first studies to investigate LTA through the exploration of the agency-identity-emotion interplay.

10.3.2. Contributions and Implications for Future Practice

[Anticipating the Possibility of Similar Wide-Scale Crises in the Future](#)

The study's findings highlighted the initial challenges faced by the teachers when transitioning to ERT. Many teachers felt that they did not get clear instructions on how to implement ERT. This has implications for the Indonesian MoE and school management across the country if similar wide-scale emergency-response teaching were to happen again. The Indonesian MoE should be able to provide clear procedures for the

implementation of ERT and provide a list of possible alternative learning platforms that consider both teachers' and learners' access to technology and internet networks, along with their complete manuals. School management teams need to respond promptly, assess their situations and contextualise MoE instructions based on their school conditions and their students' needs. Both parties should work closely to immediately develop contingency plans, so that a policy and practical guidance are ready when needed. They should also be updated regularly in line with technological development.

Another salient issue found in this study was the significant impact of the DD, which disrupted the interaction between teachers and students during ERT. On top of that, teachers also found themselves lacking technical support. This calls for more investment from the Indonesian government to improve both the technological infrastructure at schools and the internet networks across the country. This would help minimise the discrepancies between students of rural and urban schools, which were evident in this study. Schools should also have more IT staff to enable support for both teachers and students when the situation demands they adopt new digital technologies.

Key Role of Professional Communities in Supporting Teachers

This study highlighted the key roles of (online) professional groups or communities in supporting teachers' adaptation to ERT. Teachers felt that these communities compensated for the lack of support they received. For English language teachers in this study, these communities became the main platforms for discussion and material sharing, which they found particularly helpful. The existence of these professional communities should be maintained, while teachers' active involvement within them should be continuously encouraged. One way to achieve this is by acknowledging and incentivising teacher participation. This could be done both at the

school and national levels. Moreover, the Indonesian MoE should also involve these teacher groups in formulating policies, for example, when discussing the format and budgeting for PD programs.

The Urgency of Promoting and Facilitating Continuous Professional Development for Teachers

This study highlighted the clash between teachers' long-held pedagogical beliefs and teaching values and their changed practices during ERT. The findings indicated that even though teachers managed to learn about digital technologies, this did not mean that they could change their teaching beliefs and values easily. However, engagement in PD programs during and after the pandemic was found to have positive impacts on their teaching practice. Therefore, teachers should continuously engage in PD. This will not only keep them informed about the latest developments in pedagogy and teaching but also help them make sense of fast-paced changes in the world of education while becoming more flexible with their pedagogical beliefs and values. To be able to face future challenges, teachers are also required to integrate and synchronise their technological knowledge with their pedagogical and content knowledge (Lie et al., 2020). This is only possible through continuous engagement in training and workshops, which will help them to find more sustainable ways to integrate technology into their practices. This has implications for the Indonesian MoE since more investment in terms of funding and planning for PD is required. They should focus more on the online format, which was found to be much more effective, equitable, and cost-efficient than the former model of physical presence that could only accommodate a limited number of teachers. For English language teachers, this means that they should be able to take ownership and decide the trajectories of their PD.

Awareness About Teacher Agency, Professional Identity and Emotions

This study highlighted how teachers navigated the pandemic and post-pandemic challenges by exercising their agency and negotiating their professional identities. Moreover, the study highlighted the important role of teacher emotions in both these processes. In the future, teacher educators should put more emphasis on understanding and fostering these three important constructs in teacher education programs. Teacher agency, professional identity, and emotions should be incorporated within the teacher education curricula and discussed more explicitly during teacher preparation programs. This will help teachers develop awareness about their position as agents of change, encourage them to talk more openly about their professional goals and identities, push them to pursue PD accordingly, and lastly, assist them in developing strategies to effectively manage, channel, and use their emotions to support their work.

10.4. Limitations of the Research

This study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the study focused on the Lima Puluh Kota region as a representation of non-urban areas of Indonesia. While the findings of this study might be of relevance to other similarly situated regions in Indonesia, in terms of generalizability, it cannot be said that they portrayed situations in West Sumatra or Indonesia in general. However, a single focus on the Lima Puluh Kota region has granted me the opportunity to dig deeper and present more detailed findings about teachers working in the context.

Secondly, I felt that the decision to present the findings thematically rather than as individual cases might have slightly constrained the possibility of utilising a zoomed-in

lens of individual teacher perspectives. However, by making this decision and having the support of the survey data, which gave a slightly broader perspective, I was able to look at more teachers than I could normally have in a case study project. This allowed a broader perspective, which was essential in capturing the complete picture of how English language teachers in the region exercised their agency and negotiated their professional identities during and post-ERT.

10.5. Suggestions for Future Research

This study has revealed how Indonesian secondary school English language teachers exercised their agency and negotiated their professional identities during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The study's findings raise a number of possibilities for further investigation. Based on these, I would like to suggest some key areas for future research.

Regarding LTA, there are at least two themes that can be further explored. First, more research is required to investigate the role of professional communities in fostering collective agency among language teachers. This study delineated the key roles of online teacher groups during the pandemic in supporting teachers adapting to ERT as well as facilitating their agency to enhance their ERT and PD engagement. However, a question about whether this engagement led to collective agency remains. Researching this aspect might also present an opportunity to explore more about teacher participation in professional communities in the post-pandemic era. The second possibility is to look at the expansion of the iterational dimension of agency and teachers' decision to acknowledge or use their past professional experience, beliefs, and

values. As mentioned before, this study found that there were individual variations among teachers when it came to utilising the skills and knowledge that they obtained during the pandemic, especially regarding the use of digital technologies. Further research on this aspect could, for example, be considered within an inquiry into language teachers' technology uptake in the post-pandemic times.

Future studies can also pick up where this study left off in terms of investigating language teachers' professional identity negotiation. The third area that can be explored further is the trajectories of this identity negotiation in post-pandemic times. This study highlighted three pathways that teachers took as they returned to face-to-face teaching post-ERT. This was illustrated as a continuum of post-ERT professional identity negotiation (see Figure 21 in 9.3.2). However, since this study only covered the early phase of the post-ERT period, a longitudinal study, in this regard, is needed to achieve a more comprehensive understanding. The inquiry into this theme might also include an investigation of changes over time in teachers' pedagogical beliefs, values, and practices.

This study highlighted the key roles of emotions in achieving agency and negotiating professional identity. For the fourth and final suggestion, I think the influences of language teachers' emotions on their agency and professional identity also need to be investigated further within a wider timeframe post-pandemic. Future studies should also consider approaching LTA by combining the lenses of the ecological model of agency and the agency-identity-emotion triangle.

10.6. Final Reflections

Undertaking a PhD study and conducting this research enabled me to experience growth as a person, as a researcher, as well as an English language teacher. This journey has taught me many valuable life lessons, which have helped me improve in many aspects of life. This includes the courage to take up new challenges and step out of my comfort zone. I learned more about self and time management, how to be organised, how to break goals into smaller tasks and targets, and how to make important decisions and justify them. It also taught me about perseverance, focus, and resolve in achieving set goals.

Throughout the process, I experienced ups and downs. I learned from my mistakes and rejoiced at every single moment of achievement. I think this has gradually helped me to build my confidence as a researcher. Some of the things in the process that I consider monumental are: *first*, I was able to plan and conduct research on a topic that carries personal meaning, values, and relevance. *Second*, I also had numerous opportunities to present the findings of my research to different audiences, such as language teachers, fellow students, as well as scholars within the applied linguistics field and across disciplines. I learned to enjoy the process of disseminating my research and receiving feedback on it. I found it particularly satisfying when people said that they found my findings relevant to their lives and experiences. *Third*, throughout the research process, I learned more about academic integrity and ethical research conduct, and how to be robust and trustworthy in carrying out research.

The best experience yet was that I was able to understand how English language teachers exercised their agency amidst the difficult circumstances during and in the aftermath of the pandemic. I also learned how they negotiated their professional

identities and how they regulated and embraced their emotions in the process. I found many of the personal questions I had in my head when I first encountered ERT answered. This knowledge will help me to continue to grow as an English language teacher.

Finally, the study gave me the chance to get to know more about secondary school EFL teachers in my region, which helped me to appreciate their work better. Prior to this study, my minimal contact with them made me slightly hesitant when it came to initiating communication with them. This research presented opportunities for me to build personal and professional relationships with the teachers, which may lead to long-term partnerships and collaborations in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Survey Form

Secondary School English Language Teacher Agency in The Aftermath of COVID-19 Crises:

A Study from A West Sumatran Region, Indonesia



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

LEMBAR INFORMASI SURVEY

Secondary School English Language Teacher Agency in The Aftermath of COVID-19 Crises:
A Study from A West Sumatran Region, Indonesia

Informasi Peneliti

Saya Yuliandri, saat ini saya sedang menjalani pendidikan Doktoral pada program studi linguistik terapan pada Massey University, New Zealand. Latar belakang profesional saya adalah sebagai pengajar Bahasa Inggris. Saya telah bekerja pada sebuah perguruan tinggi vokasi di kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota selama kurang lebih 10 tahun.

Proyek Penelitian

Sehubungan dengan krisis pademi COVID-19 dan dampaknya, saya tertarik untuk mempelajari tentang pengalaman anda mengajar selama masa-masa sulit ini. Survey ini dibuat untuk memahami lebih jauh tentang tantangan yang anda hadapi dan strategi yang anda lakukan dalam menghadapinya. Jika anda seorang Guru Bahasa Inggris pada sekolah menengah (SMP, SMA, MTs, MA, SMK, Pesantren atau setingkat) di Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota, dengan hormat saya meminta kesediaan anda untuk mengisi survey ini. Saya sangat mengapresiasi partisipasi anda. Tanggapan anda akan menjadi masukan berharga untuk studi ini.

Selanjutnya, pada fase kedua studi ini, saya mengharapkan dapat bertemu dengan beberapa dari anda untuk berbicara lebih dalam mengenai dampak pandemi terhadap pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, dan jika anda berkenan saya ingin berkunjung ke salah satu sesi mengajar anda pada waktu yang disepakati. Jika anda hanya bersedia untuk berpartisipasi pada saat survey ini saja, tidak menjadi masalah dan dapat saya pahami. Mengikuti survey ini tidak berarti anda harus berpartisipasi pada saat wawancara dan kunjungan kelas.

Mengisi survey

Untuk mengisi survey ini saya meminta waktu anda sekitar 15-20 menit. Anda dapat melewati/tidak mengisi jawaban pertanyaan yang tidak bertanda bintang (*) jika anda memiliki keberatan mengisi menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan tersebut. Untuk jawaban pertanyaan terbuka / elaboratif (butuh penjelasan lebih lanjut) anda dapat menjawab dengan menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia atau Bahasa Inggris. Untuk dipahami, jika anda mengirim respon survey ini berarti anda setuju untuk menjadi bagian dari penelitian ini.

1

Kerahasiaan

Respon tanggapan anda pada survey ini bersifat anonim. Namun, jika anda bersedia untuk berpartisipasi lebih lanjut pada fase kedua dari penelitian ini, anda dapat mengisi nama, nomor ponsel, dan nama sekolah pada akhir survey ini. Sebagai salah satu bentuk penghargaan saya atas partisipasi anda, nomor ponsel anda akan diikutkan dalam undian untuk mendapatkan hadiah berupa paket data seluler. Detail pribadi anda (nama, nomor telepon, dan nama sekolah anda) akan dijamin kerahasiaannya dan tidak akan diekspos/dipublikasikan dalam hasil penelitian ini.

TERIMA KASIH ATAS WAKTU DAN KESEDIAAN ANDA MENGISI SURVEY INI

Narahubung Penelitian

Jika anda memiliki pertanyaan lebih lanjut terkait penelitian ini, anda dapat menghubungi saya (Yuliandri) melalui surel (yuliandri@gmail.com) atau nomor ponsel ([081333313150](tel:081333313150))

Atau pembimbing saya :

Dr. Karen Ashton (k.ashton@massey.ac.nz)

Dr. Gillian Skyrme (G.Skyrme@massey.ac.nz)

Dr. Grace Qi (G.Qi@massey.ac.nz)

Proyek ini sudah dievaluasi melalui proses peer review dan dinilai memiliki resiko rendah. Sehingga, tidak ditinjau oleh salah satu komite Human Ethics Universitas. Peneliti yang namanya disebut diatas bertanggung jawab terhadap kode etik penelitian ini.

Jika anda memiliki kekhawatiran terhadap pelaksanaan penelitian dan anda ingin menghubungi orang lain selain peneliti, silakan menghubungi Prof Craig Johnson, Direktur, Research Ethics, telepon [0635638888](tel:0635638888) ext 85271, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz

Terima Kasih

Terima kasih atas waktu anda untuk mengisi survey ini. *

- Saya telah membaca lembar informasi survey ini dan setuju untuk berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini sesuai dengan ketentuan yang telah dijelaskan.
- Saya menolak untuk berpartisipasi (anda dapat menutup tab/window survey ini di browser anda).

Part 1 Informasi Demografis

1. Usia anda (tahun): *

20-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

Other

2. Jenis Kelamin:

Laki-laki

Perempuan

3. Pendidikan terakhir:

Sarjana/S1

2

- Magister/S2
 Other

4. Total lama pengalaman mengajar Bahasa Inggris (tahun): *

- < 5
 5-10
 11-15
 16-20
 21-25
 26-30
 >30

5. Sekolah tempat anda mengajar saat ini: *

- SMP
 MTs
 SMA
 MA
 SMK
 Pesantren
 Other

6. Lokasi sekolah anda:

- Kec. Payakumbuh
 Kec. Harau
 Kec. Luak
 Kec. Guguak
 Kec. Suliki
 Kec. Gunung Omeh
 Kec. Kapur IX
 Kec. Bukit Barisan
 Kec. Mungka
 Kec. Akabiluru
 Kec. Situjuh Limo Nagari
 Kec. Lareh Sago Halaban
 Kec. Pangkalan

Part 2: Pengajaran dan pembelajaran dari rumah pada saat karantina wilayah pandemi COVID-19

Pertanyaan-pertanyaan berikut sebagian besar merujuk kepada pengalaman anda selama periode tersebut antara kisaran Maret 2020 s/d Juli 2021.

7. Sebelum pandemi, apakah anda telah memiliki pengalaman mengajar Bahasa Inggris secara jarak jauh/daring ?

Tidak

Other

Keterangan istilah: istilah-istilah berikut digunakan dalam pertanyaan no. 8

Hybrid/Blended

Kombinasi pembelajaran tatap muka dengan pembelajaran daring/jarak jauh.

Daring Asinkronus

Pembelajaran online tanpa pertemuan sinkronus/*real time*. Semua materi diunggah dan dapat diakses 24 jam oleh siswa melalui *Learning Management System* (LMS) misalnya Blackboard, Canvas, Google Classroom.

Daring Sinkronus

Pembelajaran dimana anda bertemu secara *real time*/sinkronus dengan siswa melalui Zoom atau software *videoconferencing* lainnya.

Daring Hybrid

Kombinasi mode daring sinkronus dan asinkronus.

Flex/Bimodal

Pembelajaran dengan dua metode dimana daring sinkronus berjalan secara bersamaan dengan pembelajaran tatap muka di sekolah. Siswa dapat memilih untuk mengikuti pelajaran tatap muka di sekolah atau jarak jauh melalui zoom atau software video conference lainnya. Aktivitas pembelajaran disesuaikan dan direncanakan untuk mengakomodasi kedua metode tersebut.

8. Apa saja metode pembelajaran yang anda gunakan di kelas Bahasa Inggris anda pada fase belajar dari rumah saat awal pandemi (sekitaran Maret 2020 s/d Juli 2021) dan setelah sekolah kembali dibuka (sekitaran Juli 2021 s/d sekarang)? Pilih opsi yang sesuai menurut anda (anda dapat memilih lebih dari satu opsi jawaban).

	Maret 2020 s/d Juli 2021	Juli 2021 s/d sekarang
Tatap muka	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kotak/kantong tugas, Korespondensi, Kunjungan rumah, Kelompok belajar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hybrid/Blended	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daring Sinkronus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daring Asinkronus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4

- Daring Hybrid
- Flex/Bimodal

9. Ketika kebijakan karantina wilayah diberlakukan pada sekitaran Maret 2020, apakah anda diberi semacam dokumen panduan untuk mengajar daring/jarak jauh?

- Tidak
- Other

10. Apakah anda mendapatkan pelatihan resmi (misalnya, workshop yang diadakan oleh instansi/badan pemerintah atau kantor dinas terkait) tentang pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris secara khusus atau pembelajaran daring lainnya secara umum, selama masa pandemi COVID-19?

- Tidak
- Other

11. Kepada siapa anda meminta bantuan ketika menghadapi kesulitan/tantangan dalam mengajar selama periode karantina wilayah dan/atau transisi ke pembelajaran jarak jauh/daring? Pilih semua jawaban yang anda anggap sesuai (anda dapat memilih lebih dari satu opsi) *

- Pihak manajemen sekolah
- Rekan sejawat
- MGMP
- Kantor dinas terkait (e.g, Pendidikan/Kemenag)
- Sumber/narasumber dari internet
- Anggota keluarga dan teman
- Other

12. Pihak mana yang anda anggap memiliki peranan besar dalam membantu/mendukung anda untuk beradaptasi dalam pembelajaran selama masa pandemi? Pilih semua yang anda anggap sesuai (anda dapat memilih lebih dari satu opsi). *

- Pihak manajemen sekolah
- Rekan sejawat
- MGMP
- Kantor dinas terkait (e.g, Pendidikan/Kemenag)
- Sumber/narasumber dari internet
- Anggota keluarga dan teman
- Other

13. Platform apa yang anda anggap paling efektif untuk siswa anda pada periode belajar dari rumah (karantina wilayah)? Pilih semua yang anda anggap sesuai anda dapat memilih lebih dari

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satu opsi jawaban). *

- LMS (e.g., Google Classroom, Schoology)
- Videoconferencing(e.g., zoom, google meet, teams)
- Media Sosial (e.g., facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram)
- Aplikasi kuis interaktif (quizziz, kahoot)
- Tidak ada
- Other

14. Apakah terdapat perubahan dalam peran anda sebagai guru dan/atau cara anda berkomunikasi dan/atau cara anda memposisikan diri dalam interaksi anda dengan siswa dan pihak lainnya (misalnya kolega, manajemen sekolah, wali murid) selama periode belajar dari rumah?

- Tidak
- Other

15. Hal apa yang pernah anda hadapi dan anda anggap sebagai tantangan terbesar dalam beradaptasi ke pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris selama periode belajar dari rumah (karantina wilayah)? *

16. Berdasarkan jawaban anda pada pertanyaan diatas (No.15), tindakan-tindakan apa yang anda lakukan untuk mengatasi tantangan-tantangan tersebut? *

17. Secara umum, menurut anda apakah pengalaman mengajar selama periode belajar dari rumah membawa keuntungan, manfaat, atau hikmah tertentu bagi diri anda?

- Tidak
- Other

Part 3: Pembelajaran pasca karantina wilayah/siswa kembali ke sekolah

Pertanyaan pada bagian ini berkaitan dengan cara pembelajaran setelah karantina wilayah selesai (sekitaran Juli 2021- sekarang)

18. Ketika sekolah Kembali dibuka dan pembelajaran tatap muka dimungkinkan kembali, fitur pembelajaran jarak jauh apa yang tetap anda gunakan di kelas anda? Pilih jawaban yang sesuai (anda dapat memilih lebih dari satu jawaban). *

- Pendistribusian materi/bahan ajar secara online melalui LMS/Media Sosial
- Interaksi antara siswa-guru/siswa-siswa melalui grup di media sosial/LMS
- Kuis/tugas interaktif melalui aplikasi atau laman web
- Pertemuan online melalui videoconference.
- Tidak ada
- Other

19. Setelah sekolah dibuka dan pembelajaran tatap muka dimulai kembali, apakah anda pernah mengalami masalah/kesulitan terkait pencapaian kurikulum, pengurangan jam pelajaran, atau hal lainnya? *

- Tidak
- Other

20. Berdasarkan jawaban anda pada pertanyaan sebelumnya (No. 19), tindakan apa yang anda lakukan untuk mengatasi masalah/kesulitan tersebut?

21. Bagaimana pendapat anda terhadap performa/hasil pembelajaran siswa anda secara nyata selama masa pandemi ini?

22. Secara umum, menurut anda hal-hal penting apa yang anda pelajari dari pengalaman

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mengajar selama pandemi?

Apakah anda bersedia bertemu dengan saya untuk mendiskusikan lebih jauh tentang pengalaman anda, dan berpartisipasi lebih lanjut dalam penelitian ini? Jika anda bersedia, anda akan diminta untuk menuliskan nama anda, nama sekolah anda, dan nomor kontak (ponsel/whatsapp) anda. Anda tidak perlu khawatir, data anda akan dijamin kerahasiaannya. Jika anda berkenan, nomor ponsel akan diundi dan anda akan mendapatkan kesempatan untuk memenangkan sejumlah paket data seluler. *

- Ya, saya bersedia
 Tidak, terima kasih

Mohon tuliskan nama anda

Mohon tuliskan nama sekolah anda

Mohon tuliskan nomor ponsel/Whatsapp anda

Kirim

Appendix B

First Interview Guide

*Bring the participants individual survey response printout as a reference and prompt

- Tell me, what the pandemic was like for you as a teacher?
Seperti apa, menurut bapak/Ibu, kondisi pandemi dalam kaitannya dengan profesi bapak/ibu sebagai seorang guru pada waktu itu?
- How do you feel about your teaching practices during the pandemic in general?
Bagaimana menurut bapak/Ibu praktik belajar mengajar selama pandemi ini secara umum??
- Were/was there any specific moment(s) that you remember the most when you recall your experience teaching during the pandemic? Can you tell me more about it/them?
Apakah ada momen spesifik yang bapak/ibu ingat selama pengalaman mengajar dalam pandemi ini?Bisa tolong Bapak/Ibu ceritakan?
 - Tell me about one lesson or activity that you conducted online, perhaps using technology or application that was new for you, during the pandemic that you thought was really successful.
Ceritakan tentang sebuah lesson/aktivitas yang bapak/Ibu Lakukan secara online, mgkin menggunakan teknologi yang tergolong baru bagi bapak/ibu, yang bapak/ibu anggap cukup berhasil.
 - Tell me about a lesson or activity which you felt didn't go well
Mungkin bapak/ibu bisa ceritakan sebuah lesson yang mungkin bapak/ibu nilai tidak cukup berjalan dengan baik.
- What are the things that you would change or you would have done differently if you reflect on those experiences? Why?
Apa hal yang mungkin bapak/ibu ingin perbaiki/ubah jika berkaca dari pengalaman tersebut?
- How do you see the use of technology in English Language Teaching, especially during the pandemic time?
Bagaimana pendapat bapak/ibu tentang penggunaan teknologi dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Khususnya selama masa pandemi ini?
 - Referring to their answers on question no. 13 in the survey, ask How did you use X in your teaching, why did you think it was effective at the time?
Merujuk kepada jawaban pertanyaan no.13 di survey, Bagaimana bapak/ibu menggunakan X di sesi mengajar, kenapa bapak/ibu beranggapan penggunaan ini efektif pada saat itu?
- What are some of the prevalent challenges that you face during the teaching during the lockdown period? What did you do to overcome those challenges?
Apa saja tantangan utama yang bapak/ibu hadapi selama periode belajar dari rumah? Apa saja upaya yang bapak ibu lakukan untuk mengatasi tantangan ini?
 - What made you think that/those was/were the right thing(s) to do at the time?
Kenapa bapak/ibu merasa hal itu adalah hal yang tepat untuk dilakukan pada saat itu?
- What kind of support you had in adjusting your teaching through the pandemic?
Dukungan seperti apa yang bapak/ibu dapatkan dalam menyesuaikan diri terhadap pembelajaran selama pandemi?

- What kind of support you wish you had but did not get?
Dukungan seperti apa yang bapak/ibu harapkan, tetapi tidak terpenuhi ketika itu?
- Refer to their answers on the survey questions (questions 11 and 12), asked how did chosen parties help in adjusting to remote teaching.
Tambahkan pertanyaan terkait response survey mereka, terutama terkait pilihan merek tentang support atau bantuan yang didapat saat beradaptasi ke remote learning, apa peranan kolega, bagaimana mereka membantu, bagaimana sumber internet membantu, dll
- What inspired you to become a teacher? Why did you choose to become a teacher?
Apa yang menginspirasi bapak/Ibu dulu untuk menjadi seorang guru? Kenapa Bapak/Ibu memilih untuk menjadi seorang guru?
- How do you define yourself as a teacher before in general (before the pandemic)? Use metaphors if you feel the need to. To what extent it has changed since the pandemic?
Menurut bapak/ibu, Seperti apa gambaran/definisi sosok diri bapak/ibu sebagai seorang guru? Bisa gunakan perumpamaan misalnya. Apakah ada perubahan/pergeseran tertentu terhadap definisi tersebut sejak masa pandemi ini?
- Do you think there is any change in your role as a teacher during the distance learning period? If so, please elaborate.
Menurut bapak/ibu, apakah ada perubahan dari peran seorang guru selama periode belajar dari rumah? Kalau ada, mohon jelaskan.
- How do you relate yourself to your students and colleagues, especially during these difficult times?
Bagaimana hubungan Bapak/Ibu dengan siswa, dan kolega, selama masa-masa sulit ini?
- How do you describe your English classes before the pandemic?
Seperti apa kelas/sesi mengajar bapak/ibu sebelum pandemi?
- How do you sequence your lessons in a f2f class then?
Seperti apa urutan aktivitas yang biasanya bapak ibu lakukan?
- How do you describe your classes after the resume of f2f learning? What has changed?
Seperti apa akelas/sesi belajar bapak/Ibu setelah siswa kembali ke kelas lagi? Menurut bapak/ibu, hal-hal apa saja yang berubah jika berkaca kepada tipikal kelas/sesi sebelum pandemi?
- Is there anything that you learned from the lockdown period teaching that you retain for your current classes? Why did you choose to keep it?(refer to their answer on question 18 on the survey)
Apakah ada ilmu/metode/strategi/pendekatan/aplikasi baru, dari pengalaman selama pandemi, yang bapak/ibu pertahankan/masih terapkan pada kelas bapak/ibu saat sekarang ini? Apa alasan bapak/ibu untuk tetap menerapkan hal ini?(rujuk kembali jawaban pertanyaan 18 di survey.
- What advice would you give a teacher if this kind of situation arise again?
Nasehat/masukan apa yang dapat bapak/ibu berikan ke rekan-rekan guru-guru lainnya sekiranya situasi yang sama (pandemi, belajar dari rumah) terulang kembali?

*Time used during pilot interview: 43 minutes

Appendix C

Second Interview Guide

- Tell me about yesterday's lesson and what you want to say about it?
Menurut anda bagaimana berjalanannya sesi tadi/kemaren? Apakah ada hal-hal yang mungkin anda ingin elaborasikan?
- Do you think that the lesson I observed yesterday showed the influence of the pandemic experience, or was it very similar to what you were doing before?
Menurut anda, apakah apakah sesi pembelajaran yang saya observasi kemaren merefleksikan pengalaman selama pandemi, atau apakah itu sangat mirip dengan apa yang anda lakukan sebelumnya?
*Follow up based on notes from classroom activities (observation sheet)
- What changes have come about in your actual teaching or in your expectations and preparedness for future teaching?
Perubahan apa yang telah terjadi pada praktik mengajar anda dan kesiapan/ekspektasi anda untuk pembelajaran masa depan?
- How do you think the students perceive the remote/online activities? Do you think they enjoy them? (I feel somehow this question is redundant, because majority of the interviewees talked about the lack of student engagement in interview 1)
Bagaimana menurut anda persepsi para siswa terhadap PJJ/aktivitas daring? Apakah mereka enjoy?
- You told me it was hard for the students to re-engage after lockdown. Do you think there were signs of that in the classroom yesterday / or / yesterday they all seemed quite enthusiastic. What did you think about that?
Anda mengatakan kalau sangat sulit untuk membuat siswa terlibat dalam pembelajaran setelah lockdown. Menurut anda, di sesi kemaren terdapat indikasi yang mengkonfirmasi keadaan tersebut?/ seperti para siswa kemarin/tadi terlihat antusias, bagaimana menurut anda?
 - After the resume of face-to-face teaching, are there any difficulties that you or your students find in readjusting to the classroom?
Setelah kembali ke pembelajaran tatap muka, apakah ada kesulitan yang anda atau siswa anda hadapi untuk kembali menyesuaikan diri di kelas?
 - Are there issues related to curriculum demands, reduced hours, etc. that you need to deal with after the return to the classroom?? How do you feel about this?
Apakah ada masalah terkait tuntutan kurikulum, pengurangan jam, dll, yang mungkin anda harus tangani? Bagaimana tanggapan anda mengenai ini?
- What challenges do you face when the f2f teaching resume? (I think this also covered in interview 1)
Tantangan apa yang anda hadapi ketika pembelajaran tatap muka dimulai kembali?
- What should be done to overcome these problems? Who holds the responsibility to address them? Why?
Apa yang harus dilakukan untuk mengatasi masalah ini? Siapa yang bertanggung jawab untuk mencari solusi? Kenapa?
- What have you done personally to address the issue?
Hal apa saja yang sudah anda lakukan untuk mengatasi masalah tersebut?
 - Why do you think that/those was/were the right thing(s) to do?
Kenapa anda berpikir itu merupakan hal yang tepat untuk dilakukan?

- The pandemic has brought a number of possibilities regarding the use of technology for teaching and learning English, as an English teacher, what do you think about this? Do you think some of these possibilities have helped you feel confident you can tackle some of the problems?

Pandemi telah membawa sejumlah peluang dan kesempatan baru terkait penggunaan teknologi untuk belajar dan mengajar Bahasa Inggris. Sebagai seorang Guru Bahasa Inggris, apakah menurut anda peluang dan kesempatan tersebut telah membantu anda untuk lebih percaya diri dalam mengatasi masalah-masalah terkait pembelajaran (tersebut)?

- Would you keep some of the technological features/applications/procedures that you learned during the pandemic for your future classrooms?? Why? If yes, what are some of the examples?

Apakah anda ingin tetap mempertahankan beberapa fitur teknologi, aplikasi, prosedur yang anda pelajari selama pandemic dalam kelas anda di masa depan? Kenapa? Jika ya apa contohnya?

- Some teachers adopted new roles during remote/online teaching, was this also the case with you? If yes, do you still find the new role(s) relevant when the f2f teaching was resumed?

Berdasarkan literatur, Sebagian guru mengadopsi peranan baru selama PJJ/daring/pandemic. Apakah hal yang sama berlaku pada anda? Jika iya, apakah peranan-peranan baru tersebut masih relevan ketika pembelajaran tatap muka dimulai kembali?

Appendix D

Classroom Observation Form

Classroom Observation Form

Participant : _____ Date and time: _____
 Lesson topic/content : _____

Notes from 1 st interview transcript:	
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Observation point	Description/comments		
1. First impression on classroom layout/facilities. (e.g., how teachers and learners are seated/standing in the room, space, equipment)			
2. Activities (e.g., what is happening; the kind activities used, the nature of student involvement)	Activity	Media/materials used	Observed Involvement/engagement/interaction & further comments

3. Further thoughts, comments, or questions. (e.g., things you noticed and wondered about)			
4. Final Reflections			

Appendix E

Ethics Approval



23/06/2022

Dear: ~ Yuliandri

**Re: Low Risk Notification - 4000026245 - Secondary school English language teacher agency in the aftermath of COVID-19 crises:
A study from a West Sumatran region, Indonesia**

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our database for inclusion in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please contact a Research Ethics Administrator.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director - Ethics, telephone 06 3569099 ext 85271, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Please note, if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again, answering "yes" to the publication question to provide more information for one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise
Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, 4442, New Zealand T 06 951 6841; 06 95106840
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz; animalethics@massey.ac.nz; gtc@massey.ac.nz