

Developing ELT Teachers Professionally towards Capability Scaffolding Roles: Reflecting on Their Standing SWOT

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Abstract: ELT teachers' role in classroom practices has been widely recognized as a key factor not just for students' learning but also teachers' professional development. With such perspectives, teachers are supposed to be competent professionals that should scaffold learners' mastery of capability optimally beyond competences in the classroom. To that end, with ever-changing challenges in their profession, ELT teachers are required to be able to make themselves autonomous learners who always feel the need to make themselves updated in a number of professional and pedagogical qualities through research, publication, and socialization of their ideas. As observed from the SWOT quadrant, a preliminary observation, however, reveals several interesting points to consider in enabling EFL teachers to professionally develop themselves under the learners' capability development framework. The findings of such a preliminary study are provisional and discussed with the national policy as the background context.

1 INTRODUCTION

Upon the completion of their undergraduate study, fresh graduates - being novice teachers - begin to enter a new life in their teaching career. They are inevitably confronted with a new milieu in their workplace in their teaching services. To some, this new circumstance implores not only their anxiety to deal with diverse classrooms (Amos, 2008), but also 'excitement and nervousness' (Catapano, 2018) in the profession new to them. Some manage to cope with the challenges successfully (Catapano, 2018). However, others give up and even they quit teaching and never come back in their early profession as it has been reported by (Greenlee and Dedeugd, 2002) to refer to the American teachers' early teaching experiences. The American phenomena as observed by (Greenlee and Dedeugd, 2002) and reported by (Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond, 2017) happen because novice teachers 'are caught off guard, and left to sink or swim' (Greenlee and Dedeugd, 2002). These new-comer teachers are noticed. However, their difficulties in coping with new challenges they encounter are not appropriately addressed by stakeholders. What messages do all these impart to us in the context of professional development? It is obvious that professional

development needs to start as instantaneously as possible as a novice teacher enters their teaching profession, which later should be continued along the way of their teaching professional services. Continuous professional development is then a must if teachers are to play a significant role at their optimum teaching conduct in making students learn. With this in mind, then a new teacher advocacy is evitable as novice teachers need to have the sense of 'being in' and 'feeling seen' (Bills, Giles and Rogers, 2016) in their early professional development by not only more professional teachers but also expert teachers.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is essentially professional changes, and to this end, teacher advocacy is needed and should be inevitably conducted along the way teachers are functional through their teaching professional services – from the time upon formal education completion to teaching services. As such, CPD as the teacher's career development should not be fragmented in practice. There are whys and wherefores to do so, two of which are critical. In the first place, in the very local circumstance, teachers are obliged to implement innovations in education as they are imposed to carry out the government policy. For instance, the launch of the new curriculum a.k.a K-13 poses teachers to new policies in the teaching of English. Reviews upon

the previous curriculum on content standards, process standards, and assessment standards, not to exclude lesson planning sophistication, come up with new ideas for the teachers to implement in the classroom, which requires adequate not just socialization but also dissemination. Content standards are essentially comprised of formulations of perceived competences students need to learn that are outlined in the syllabus. Teachers are supposed to be able to understand these competences and then transform them through teaching learning processes in the classroom into functional language skills on the part of the students. However, this task is taxing for teachers to do (Panjaitan, 2013). Problems also arise in the interpretation of the so-called scientific approach as the umbrella term for process standards. While this approach to teaching is considered appropriate for teachers to make students learn the desired competences stipulated in K-13 (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2014), it is not always agreeable for the purpose of English teaching that has already had myriads of its 'own' methods of teaching to choose from, let alone, in the post method era (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Similar challenges also surface with the introduction of authentic assessment as evaluation standards in K-13. All in all, teachers are faced with challenges in implementing K-13 (Ahmad and Mardiana, 2014; Hendriani, 2016). Teachers then need 'a bridge' to realize the new policy appropriately in the classroom. It is in such a circumstance that teachers need appropriate advocacy for the optimum implementation of K-13.

Advances in theories of learning also pose teachers to challenges in their profession as well. Once there was a time when a learner was treated like a blank container. It is the role of the teacher to fill up the container with information. Thus, learning a language is imparting knowledge about language to learners. Learners are bombarded with massive information about language. Teaching was thus teacher-centered. But now, it is over. This is now the era of student-centered learning. Teachers need to shift their role from the idea as the knower to that as a learning facilitator that allows students to construct their knowledge and skills. Does this happen smoothly? In Turkey, for instance, in spite of the fact that there was a switch in the policy of using the traditional approach to the constructivist one, practically teaching practices still adheres to the traditional approach and is in contradiction to the principles of constructivism (Gül, 2016). In the Indonesian context, pessimism on the implementation of constructivist ideas was once evident as observed (Kuswando, 2004).

Other external forces obviously stand in the teacher way to professionalism. These among other things include technological advances in information and technology, millennial generations' learning habits and learning needs, and recently, challenges associated with the industrial revolution 4.0, particularly with the emergence of MOOC – Massive Open Online Courses, which should actually have plus values for teachers. Sooner or later, teachers need to be aware of their arrival, face them, and harness them for the purpose of their classroom efficiency and effectiveness.

With these aforementioned challenges, teachers in service are inevitably barraged by a number of forces which potentially affect their optimum performance in the classroom. When this happens again and again, teachers' performance will be degraded gradually, and students' learning will be considerably affected. While teachers play a key role in the classroom for student learning, such a saddening condition of teachers is not expected to take place. Therefore, supporting teachers for professional development is a compelling need. By analogy, teacher teaching is analogous to car use. As cars have after sales services upon purchase to maintain their optimum functional performance, teachers are inevitably in need of continued support upon completion of their formal education throughout their professional career.

Lessons have been shown in a number of teacher professional development programs. The subjects of the development programs were teachers of English language learners (ELLs) of immigrants. There were four programs run in Balderas Elementary School in Fresno, California; the Funds of Knowledge for Teaching; at Starlight Elementary School in Watsonville, California; and the Puente Project. There were topics dealt with and activities run in these programs. But the focus was put on among other things strengthening teachers' knowledge on content-based language teaching, enhancing knowledge on language acquisition, and doing collaborative research. These programs were claimed to be successful in providing teachers with significant learning understandings. However, a concern on these programs was launched with regards to the need of conceptual and empirical bases to run the program better.

Turkey experiences with English teacher professional development (Borg, 2015) have been another interesting example. Atlı reported a professional development through ICALT (In-service Certificate in English Language Teaching) at Bilkent University (Borg, 2015). The program, intended for new graduates, novice teachers, and novice lecturers,

had a focus on these: strengthening their teaching skills, empowering them with theoretical knowledge pertaining to classroom practice, and enhancing their professional use of English. The program was run in the form of regular reflective discussions on classroom practice and professional issues pertaining to teaching. In addition to that, personal tutoring and mentoring was also held. The program brought about outputs among other things as follows. The participants better understood institutional level objectives, teaching methodology and learner profile. Their analysis skills in textbook materials improved, and so did their using and adapting institutional course books and supplementary materials.

Previous programs on English teacher professional development have demonstrated professional enhancement on teachers' knowledge and skills which impact positively on their students' learning (Banegas *et al.*, 2013; Bando and Li, 2014; Giraldo, 2014; Gore *et al.*, 2017). These studies, however, were products of foreign contexts considerably different from those of Indonesia. As teaching conducts are uniquely contextual, EFL teacher professional development needs to be typically suited to Indonesian settings. The principles for successful EFL teacher professional development as we believe work best need to be sustainable, teacher-driven/autonomous, personal/individual, self-accountable, knowledge-based, deliberating, belief-based, and tailor-based.

We support the idea that upon joining a CPD program, teachers are not expected to become merely the consumers and the reproducers of knowledge (Borg, 2015) let alone, the knowledge wrapped in the name of innovation is frequently flying off their local ground as the knowledge is an import from other cultures and contexts. We argue that as teaching is unique experiences, teachers equipped with pedagogical knowledge and their encounter with a class constitutes a unique opportunity for them to see what best works in their context. Thus, teachers have a chance to formulate and/or hypothesize their best teaching practices unique to their context. To that end, we have been continually in continuous search of answers which will become not only theoretical but also empirical bases to establish a CPD sustainable framework for English teachers. We have been heading toward formulating a teacher sustainable support framework through which a reflective professional development practice is exerted in which the three pillars: teacher research, publication, and best practice dissemination become our primary concern. In a way, the CPD framework for English teachers we wish to develop is in line with Borg's

conception of CPD (Borg, 2010) which is based on teacher research. Teacher research may be defined as an investigation by teachers that is designed carefully to answer questions pertaining their own class which allows them to develop professional undertakings by reviewing research articles, design belief-based innovative teaching strategies, and ultimately improve their instructional delivery strategy (Borg, 2010). To us, all these undertakings should ultimately reside on students' improved performance. From teachers' side, however, we are interested in revealing their views in terms of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The law for Indonesian teachers (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2007) postulates that teachers are legally proclaimed as a profession of dignity since they are assigned to prepare and produce smart and competitive human resources as expected for the 2025 vision of education in this millennium era. As a consequence, they are compelled to develop their profession continuously to come across internal and external changes and uncertainties happening in the modern era which requires adaption and adjustment. One of the efforts to do so is likely by promoting a learning atmosphere or community in which they can always upgrade their personal, social, pedagogical and professional competences through various ways. To manifest and evaluate the latter two attributes, they can obtain their profile through formal performance evaluation suspended by self-evaluation to sustain their professionalism.

Further, teachers as professionals are subject to periodically/continuously upgrade themselves so as to nurture their professionalism. (Davidson *et al.*, 2012) and the Indonesian laws through the Government Law for Lecturers and Teachers (2005, 2007) & the Ministry Education and Culture (2012) concerning professional development (henceforth PD) efforts have put them into five categories. In the first place, PD needs to reinforce Personally-Initiated Learning (PIL) activities like reading English-related printed as well virtual materials (including research journals), taking online courses, sharing ideas with colleagues, applying innovative instructional strategies, empowering collaborative projects with teachers from other countries, and conducting research. Secondly, PD is an access for teachers to join Organized Professional Development (OPD) programs as participating many workshops, seminars, and trainings on English education and pedagogy, and

joining short summer courses. Next, PD allows teachers to publish their innovative work (IW), for instance, joining and winning some international writing competitions, writing instructional design scripts to facilitate teacher training, producing electronic instructional materials. PD is the medium within which teachers become Qualified Professional Teachers (QPT) such as holding a teacher certificate issued by the government or international agents, possessing computer certificates (Microsoft, for example), upgrading qualification into master's or doctorate degree as well as having a certified master teacher; and finally, PD engages teachers in More Advanced Roles (MAR), for examples, being a 2013 regional, provincial or national curriculum instructor, or they become a teacher assessor at school. All in all, the aforementioned efforts of PD are indispensable for English teachers for the sake of English instruction betterment in Indonesia.

The need to hold PD programs is context dependent as teacher contexts are uniquely different across places. As a consequence of this, the success in conducting PD does not depend on a fixed set of all-inclusive criteria to rule PD programs that will be applicable to any situation in any place. Borg (2015) however observes that there are favourable conditions that commonly characterize better conducts of a CPD program. The first circumstance is that PD programs that are appropriate to the needs of teachers' teaching and their students' learning matter are commonly fruitful. In such a PD program, participants' engagement in the program activities is commonly optimum. To achieve such a prolific program, accurate needs assessment should be appropriately conducted. The next condition is that teachers need to be involved in determining the program contents and activities. When teachers' needs are identified accurately, CPD program developers need to hear what knowledge and skills teachers are expected to acquire in joining the program and how they will achieve the knowledge and skills in the program. A survey may serve suitably for the purpose prior to the CPD program development (Rachmajanti, Sulistyono and Suharyadi, 2017). Another important point for a fruitful CPD program is teachers need to be backed up by the school management. Inviting teachers to join a CPD program maybe falls short if the teachers do not get the permission from the school principal to join such a program. Another form of management supports is that the school management welcomes the CPD program to be conducted in site, in that the school hosts the CPD program and supports the delivery of all the program activities in the host school. Related to the school management support,

CPD program activities need also to be directly linked to classroom practices. As such, these CPD activities are embedded to teachers' on-site job. With such an on-site strategy, CPD programs are contextually aligned to the school milieu. Next, productive CPD programs are those in which, on the delivery of CPD activities, the focus is placed upon exploring and reflecting practices and beliefs pertaining to teacher teaching and student learning. (Helyer, 2015) argues that appropriate use of reflection provides teachers with a medium of learning that enables them to develop personally and professionally. In addition to that, reflection also enables teachers to structure and to value their experience. With this, teachers can learn empirically how concepts and theories are put together in practice. As such teachers' innovative thinking is continually enhanced. PD serves also a medium for teachers that in carrying out their innovation in the classroom, they get supports from not only internal but also external mentoring processes so that they will be critically engaged upon receiving knowledge and skills.

A number of studies on CPD programs have been conducted. (Giraldo, 2014) conducted action research at a language institute of a Colombian state university to examine the impact of teacher professional development program on the in-service English teachers' classroom performance. It was revealed that the participants' classroom performance improved as it was evidenced from their teaching that was more communicative, organized, attentive to students' needs, and principled as a result of the delivery of theories, doing practice and reflection, and the tutors' mentoring during the program activities. The finding implied that CPD programs need to be conducted on the bases on not only teachers' beliefs and needs, but also effective utilization of theories, practice, experience, and reflection.

(Rahman *et al.*, 2011) examined the relationship between teachers' joining training and their students' learning achievement. Their sample was a number of 80 female teachers and their corresponding 180 girl students of grade X. They utilized questionnaires to collect teachers' data. Students' performance was taken from examination scores. The findings revealed that teachers' training was positively correlated with students' learning achievement. A similar study by (Rozati, 2017) also revealed relationships between EFL teachers' professional identity as well as EFL teachers' institutional identity and their teaching efficacy with professional identity being a better predictor of EFL teachers' teaching efficacy. Still another study by (Nurichsanika and Rachmajanti, 2017) discovered that novice or pre-service teachers

joining the SM-3T program, one of the Indonesian government programs for teachers' professional development through teaching practices in underprivileged areas, provided evidence of the improvement of their pedagogical competences, especially for the low achiever teachers. This has been strengthened by (Syahrudin *et al.*, 2013) claiming that effective teaching is in some instance influenced by the application of pedagogical competences.

3 METHOD

This study involves mixed data collection strategies. In the first stage a survey was conducted. The variables that were examined deal with teachers' experience in conducting classroom action research, publicizing their professional experience through classroom research in a journal, and presenting their professional experience in a seminar. In addition, the questionnaires also asked their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to those who ever carried out classroom action research, wrote a research-based article for publicizing their professional experience in a journal, and shared their professional experience in a seminar.

For the purpose, a number of some 207 lower secondary level teachers were involved using convenience sampling in the survey. In the second stage informal interviews were exerted to collect the data on the teachers' views and opinions regarding their classroom action research, writing a research-based article for publicizing their professional experience in a journal, and presentation on their professional experience in a seminar. These informal interviews were conducted to the 22 workshop participants when a workshop on the socialization of the results of developing a set of training materials (Sulistyo, Suharyadi and Rachmajanti, 2017). The data collected were analysed qualitatively yielding information on the teachers' views and opinions regarding teachers' classroom action research, writing a research-based article for publicizing their professional experience in a journal, and presentation on their professional experience in a seminar.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the analyses of the survey data from workshop participants from 7 provinces in Indonesia and in-depth interviews with teachers, the

findings are categorized into 4 (four) domains of teachers' standing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in terms of their doing classroom action research, writing a research-based article for publicizing their professional experience in a journal, and presentation on their professional experience in a seminar.

4.1 Teachers' Strengths

Teachers expressed their views and opinions regarding their strengths when they had the chance to carry out classroom action research. The strengths they felt they had are as follows: they learned the knowledge on doing classroom action research during their undergraduate studies, from joining workshops on classroom action research, and reading books and previous studies on classroom action research. In addition to the knowledge on classroom action research they got, they also learned the skills of doing action research from practicing the knowledge of classroom action research by doing it on either completing their undergraduate studies or teaching their own class. However, the majority felt that their teaching experiences were invaluable assets for them to carry action research. These teaching experiences included designing teaching learning processes and implementing their teaching plan in the classes.

However, they felt that both writing a research-based article for publicizing their professional experience in a journal, and presenting their professional experience in a seminar posed them with some hurdles. Most of the subjects felt that they did not have sufficient confidence in performing these two academic endeavours.

One point that may be considered as teachers' strengths is the availability of having a teacher forum that has been carried out on a monthly regular basis (MGMP). In the forum teachers have the opportunity to exchange ideas, to share teaching experiences among themselves, and to get refreshed academically by inviting experts in English teaching to facilitate customized workshops on demand. These workshops are organized by the district/city level government. However, some schools have also their own initiative to conduct in-house training workshops based on school needs.

In addition to that, teachers also gain professional supports from the government on the introduction of the government new strategic policies. They are invited to join workshops organized by the central government facilitated by expert teachers and lecturers invited for the purpose from universities. An obvious example is the workshop on the implementation of the latest curriculum – K-13.

A more important side for teachers' strengths is their engagement in a more formal and structured CPD. It is an undeniable fact that some teachers are motivated to qualify themselves by joining graduate studies. More surprisingly, rather than get the fund from the government, they have financially supported their graduate studies on their own. By having graduate studies, it is expected that their knowledge and skills on both pedagogical and professional competences as aspired in Teachers Law no. 14 year 2005 will improve significantly.

These workshops and teachers' graduate studies are considered positive for their professional development. Thus, they constitute strong sides for teachers to function more academically in doing classroom action research, writing a research-based article for publicizing their professional experience in a journal, and presentation on their professional experience in a seminar.

4.2 Teachers' Weaknesses

Points of weaknesses teachers face may be differentiated from internal and external sides. In terms of internal sides, teachers are observed as having these undesirable disadvantages: a low frequency of academic reading habits, insufficient writing skills, inadequate research skills, and tendency for enjoyment in the comfort zones (upon certification).

Teachers' low frequency of academic reading habits is shown from the fact that they faced problems when they were supposed to find theoretical and empirical evidence to support their arguments in their academic piece of writing. On the occasions of workshops on academic writing, the questions they asked were the sources of concepts and previous studies pertaining to the topic they were interested in. This indicates that their reading habits in search of academic materials fell short. When further asked their regularity of reading academic materials, mostly they admitted that they had insufficient time to do so due to their administrative and teaching work load, and they felt they did not have the urgency to read academic materials.

In addition to that, their writing skills of academic materials were also insufficient. Generally, the problems teachers faced commonly encompass organizing ideas, selecting appropriate rhetoric modes, and still language problems. For instance, they did not have ideas of the rhetoric moves they had to use in each part of research-based journal articles and how to use them appropriately. Their argument in academic writing was also insufficient. For instance,

they failed to provide evidence for the proposition they offered. In terms of language features such as accuracy in grammar forms and dictions, they were also still inadequate in mastery for academic writing. The explanation for such inadequacy is that they were not accustomed to writing academic materials such as journal articles.

Another point of teachers' inadequacy is their research skills. By research skills, it means skills pertaining to research conduct such as identifying areas of research concerns, developing classroom action research procedures, and designing innovative solutions. For instance, in identifying areas of research problems, teachers tended to fail to spot the issues. As a result, what and how to address the problems in the studies they had ever had were not clear.

Teachers already certified tended to enjoy their certification financial remuneration for non-academic purposes more than academic ones. For instance, they spent the rewards on consumptive undertakings rather than academic endeavours such as attending seminars, or joining workshops using the rewards that will qualify them more professionally as English teachers in their teaching services.

Beside those internal aspects, some external ones also contribute to the ineffectiveness of scaffolding roles to be professional teachers. Among external factors are as follows. First, whenever teachers join a sort of training program for professionalism, the materials for the training program tend to focus more on pedagogical domain and are not up to their needs to develop academically like stuff in relation to how to conduct teaching-based research (e.g. action research), how to write an acceptable scientific article to be locally/ nationally or internationally published. Not only this, since not all trainers are competently experienced (most trainers are of S1 graduates with short-term training on academic domains), the materials of such topics are not well transferred in the sense that there might be misconceptions of the topics delivered. Next, there might be no mentoring program as well as reflective action by experts in the course of conducting the action research and writing the result of study in the form of articles which end up with confusion and demotivation on the parts of teachers. (Nunan, 2010) states that writing tasks should follow the levels of gradation like starting with fully controlled task to free one. This implies that the teachers should be scaffolded step by step prior to reaching self-independence in writing a scientific journal. As postulated by (Davidson *et al.*, 2012), publishing innovative academic work, for instance, joining and winning some international writing

competitions is one way of making teachers more professional since they will be able to put forward ideas in a systematic way to other people. Finally, there is the unavailability of online platforms for teachers' publication in particular under an authoritative accountable agent which will provide academic assistance for them in producing scientific articles.

4.3 Teachers' Opportunities

Teachers expressed their optimism when they are engaged in classroom action research, writing a research-based article for publishing their professional experience in a journal, and presentation on their professional experience in a seminar. First, they believe that engagement in such academic activities provides them with a room for them to be trained to think critically and systematically. Since they have to conduct the research in their own classes, they are sure that they can identify existing practical problems of their class to be overcome critically using innovative strategies they believe can work best in the problematic class. Also, in designing their innovation and presenting the result of the research, they get the advantages of learning to make the design and the presentation systematically. They feel they have the chance to solve the problem step by step.

Next, engagement in such academic activities allows them to become more sensitive to problems that occur in their class during the teaching and learning processes. They become thoughtful to processes in identifying substantial and systematic problems, tracing the roots of the problem and selecting a solution most suitable to solve the problem. They believe that during the teaching and learning process a sensitive teacher will recognize that a problem occurs. For instance, when the plan they have already made is not running well. They will find out the cause and reasonably change the strategy to make their students learn better.

Sharing their research findings is also a great opportunity for them let other colleagues know unique solutions to the class problems and how the solutions work. Sharing information is also a chance for them to get comments and suggestions from other colleagues. Thus, this is the opportunity for teachers to understand and be understood about the substance they are dealing with. Also, the information shared will help other teacher colleagues who face the same problem stimulate critically other innovative strategies for their class problems. In brief, this improves the quality of teaching and learning process not only for themselves but also for their colleagues.

Another opportunity that teachers can merit from conducting their research, publication, and socialization is that it will give the teacher a great improvement in their skills in English. To do research, they need to review relevant literature. As such, their reading skills and strategies are sharpened. To present their innovative ideas in a paper systematically, their writing skills are enhanced. They also learn to be a leader that has a voice confidently in public speaking. In presenting their result in a seminar or conference, teachers learn a lot also: they will be tested in having public speech in front of the audience, which it is not easy for them to do so that they will need to learn and improve after several times. In the presentation, comments and feedback from the floor are good practice for them to listen carefully. Simply, again they have the chances to improve their language skills and to understand others, as well as be understood by the audience.

They also have an opportunity to work collaboratively not only with other teachers but also with other lecturers. In solving a classroom problem, for instance, they can work jointly starting from identifying the problem, selecting the strategy or media, designing a lesson plan, developing learning materials, implementing the action until recording students' learning experiences. They can also collaborate in carrying out a research project and writing an article to be published. A teacher can be the first project initiator or the first article author. Or, s/he can be the co-project initiator or co-author.

Finally, teachers are of the beliefs that by having those aforementioned opportunities, they have the chance they are essentially trained to be academically accountable. By being accountable, it means that they will be responsible for all conducts they do in the classroom in the light of enhancing and improving students' learning achievement.

As teachers are considered the most important in-school impact factor on the quality of students' achievement (Snoek *et al.*, 2009), they have ample opportunities to broaden knowledge and skills on doing research, article journal writing, and sharing information based their research. The available evidence suggests that the main driver variation in student learning at school is the quality of the teachers (Barber and Mourshed, 2007). Based on the cycle nature of classroom action research, then a teacher must continually enlarge and improve their knowledge and skills in those three areas. By doing this, they will not be left behind in solving practical class problems as they are always updated academically to cope with the class problems.

4.4 Threats for Teachers

Teachers also confront threats in connection with joining the workshop. The threats derive from both internal and external sides. Internally, teachers feel lazy to take part in any scientific activities as it takes their time and energy to do so. According to them, they have been burdened with excessive teaching load and administrative work: they must teach at least 24 teaching hours in a week and involve in any school activities. They attend the school in the morning and leave it in the late afternoon. Sometimes, they have extra hours at school and home to complete their works. It is then difficult for them to manage time of teaching and fulfilment of professional development. This is a life cycle or routine they do daily. When it becomes a habit, it will be hard for them to change it.

Secondly, although they are aware that they have to improve their teaching and professionalism, they are reluctant to allocate their money for a recharging program. Their monthly salary from certification is sufficient only to renovate their houses, buy new cars, and/or become world trotters. There is a tendency that they follow a modern lifestyle which is money oriented. We are afraid that this type of perception will affect the atmosphere of the school. For example, they are willing to attend a workshop or training if they are paid. They are available to be involved in the school activities if they are appreciated with money. This type of orientation is dangerous for their teaching survival.

Thirdly, pertinent to such an advancement, it goes without saying the government has done its best to perform educational reforms by modifying the content of curriculum to prepare human resources being capable to compete in the global era. At last, as a consequence, teachers are subject to moral responsibilities to pursue all the changes in education.

Externally, in this millennium era teachers are also confronted with threats which can be positively transformed into challenges for them in the terms of technological advances, learning theories, theories on language, teaching methodologies, and state policies as well as moral responsibilities. Teachers' position may be replaced by technology in the future. Nowadays, learning sources and facilities are available online through YouTube, Facebook, Yahoo, Google, etc. in which MOOCs become ubiquitous. They contain interesting and current information that can be accessed anytime and anywhere within the seconds. Students can open and learn the topics they like from home, school, café, etc. and via mobile, laptops, or personal computers. In this regard, students do not need to meet and hear from teachers

to understand something. As a result, students probably know better than teachers do concerning the learning materials. Therefore, teachers should be open towards the advancement of science and technology and integrate technology in teaching so that their instruction becomes more attractive and meaningful.

Along with these, in this hi-tech era teachers are simultaneously challenged to make use of technology in upgrading themselves for the sake of students' betterment in instructional process. The availability of Internet, laptop, gadget and other technology-based equipment may be of great assistance for them to be more creative and innovative in teaching if only they were not illiterate.

Next, the developments of learning theories, theories on language, teaching methodologies are by no means unavoidable delays for nowadays teachers as the ways students learn now are different from decades ago that is they are required to explore, analyze, synthesize, make associations in order to derive at final construct. Therefore, the ways the teachers teach them should be in line with how the students are engaged in instructional process, reducing the active role of lecturing. Moreover, learning a language is at the moment integrated into the delivery of content, the so-called teaching language across curriculum (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010; Brown and Lee, 2015).

Second, the ASEAN network called ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) or Masyarakat Ekonomi Asean (MEA) is now open and it enables people to migrate and work in foreign countries. They, including English teachers, can apply for jobs in ASEAN countries as long as they meet the qualifications set up by the community. An example of such qualifications for ASEAN countries in educational contexts is the-so-called ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUNQA). These standardize qualifications agreed by ASEAN countries that require human resources to satisfy the standards. For example, an architect of an Indonesian national can demonstrate their expertise in Singapore if s/he is qualified to fill that position according to the standard. In the context of education, the profession of a teacher is also potential and promising to be competed. An English teacher from Malaysia can serve as an English teacher in one of the public schools in Indonesia in the event that the school needs him/her and he/she meets the required qualifications. In other words, this implies that if English teachers of Indonesia nationals do not upgrade themselves, their positions are not safe enough. They probably lose competitive positions in their own county. Teachers

form other countries that are more competent and professional are ready to replace.

Our observations as presented in the previous sections indicate that teachers have strengths and opportunities in engaging themselves in academic activities of researching, article writing for journal publication and sharing research results through seminars besides teaching. However, they are also confronted with challenges and threats. The findings suggest that teachers gain more positive values i.e. they have more strengths and opportunities than negatives ones – challenges and threats. While their strengths and opportunities constitute more important assets for teachers to develop more professionally, challenges and threats they faced can be made minimum through a number of conceptual arguments and empirical evidence as well as normative approaches. What follows is the rationale for providing the meaning of the findings of the present study.

The Government Law No. 14 Year 2005 on teachers and lecturers states clearly that teachers are professional educators whose main responsibility includes educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, evaluating learners. It is obvious that this law does not state explicitly teachers' responsibility to conduct research; neither does it state teachers' responsibility to publish academic articles in journals. According to this law, teachers' main responsibility is those activities associated with teaching activities. However, according to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 18 Year 2007, it is stipulated therein that teachers conduct academic activities such as researching and joining academic forums. Put together, then it can be concluded that teachers' responsibility includes teaching and researching as well as activities related to their research. If this conclusion is correct, then our ideas of intending to engage teachers in academic activities like carrying out classroom action research, writing a research-based article for publicizing their professional experience in a journal, and presentation on their professional experience in a seminar does not violate the existing formal and legal regulations. Ideally, teachers deliver their instructional activities based on empirical evidence of their research results as well as informed conceptual knowledge which is synthesized with their beliefs about successful teaching contextually. Thus, their teaching is a reflective conduct which is a collaborative, mentor-based and/or peer-based framework. Under such a framework, teachers should be put as continuous learners. This reflects the idea of (Bransford, Brown and Cocking, 2000), who state that essentially

teachers need to upgrade themselves professionally by becoming continuous learners. But, in what way can they learn to become professional?

According to (Bransford, Brown and Cocking, 2000), teachers learn better to become professional in a number of different ways. In the first place, they build their professionalism through reflection upon their own teaching conducts. With reflection upon own practice, this implies the role of their cognition within which lies their belief (Calderhead, 1995; Borg, 2001, 2003, 2006) and self-efficacy (Guskey, 1988; Bandura, 1997). In support to this, a number of previous studies have substantiated the link between teachers' belief and classroom practice (Deilami and Pourghasemian, 2016; Xiong, 2016; Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2017) and teachers' self-efficacy and classroom practice as well (Gavora, 2010; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010; Klassen and Tze, 2014). Next, teachers also learn to become professional from their encounter with other teachers. There are ways teachers may interact each other professionally. Get-together activities teachers can commonly hold may take the form of workshops and seminars. A study by (Rahman *et al.*, 2011) substantiated the role of teachers' training, in which interaction among teachers by all accounts took place, in students' learning output. In addition, teachers become better in their teaching performance, classroom management, assessment procedures, and human relationships with students and school internal stake holders. All these arguments support the findings of the present study.

The presence of teacher educators in the teachers' schools is also an important factor playing a role in teacher professionalism. A program run by Center for Laboratory School Development of Universitas Negeri Malang has been an example of such an activity. A number of lecturers have been involved in teacher mentoring activities and the so-called school clinic activity on a weekly regular basis. Not only do students get the advantages, more importantly teachers also feel that they have been academically supported by lecturers during the lecturers' school visit. They can not only consult their teaching problems in the classroom but they can also consult their research conducts during the lecturers' visit. Giraldo's study (2014) obviously supports the presence of experts in school as a professional development program, in that teacher performed more communicatively in teaching; they were also organized in their teaching delivery; their attention to their students' learning needs also became better, and finally, they held more principled teaching delivery in the classroom.

Another medium for teachers to make them professional is their involvement in specific teacher enhancement projects that are specifically designed to enhance teachers' performance. A very obvious example of such an activity has been a national program - the so-called pioneering schools with international standards. Selected schools with the top-level rank were assigned to implement such a national policy. Among the activities is subject-matter teachers were to teach the content in English. Not all subject-matter teachers were able to do the new responsibility. As a result, in-house trainings to enable subject-matter teachers to teach in English were conducted. Teachers' English competence as a result of such in-house training is empirically evidenced (Rachmajanti, Sulistyono and Anugerahwati, 2018).

Teachers' professionalism may be achieved through their initiative to join graduate programs independently. Such teachers' autonomous initiative is a reflection of their motivation to upgrade themselves professionally. The phenomenon of pursuing independently graduate studies seems to be ubiquitous. However, a study by (Arar and Abramowitz, 2017) indicates very interesting findings, a part from professionalism purposes. They revealed that in Arab contexts, teachers pursued graduate studies mainly to self-fulfil their desire and to have further education. In addition, Arab teachers in their study were motivated to have social mobility by pursuing graduate studies. Meanwhile, orientation for professional development for them is less important. Their other motivation to further their graduate education is convenience in terms of ease: close to home and still deployed while pursuing graduate degrees. Meanwhile, for the subjects of their study, the college credibility was not important. A part from the findings of the study by (Arar and Abramowitz, 2017), a personal observation in teaching such teachers indicates that upon their graduation with the new attribute, the confidence and the pride of teachers pursuing such independent graduate studies become boosted. Possibly, this - confidence and pride - is the important investment such teachers gain in pursuing further graduate studies, which will become a basis for them to be responsible professionally with their new attribute in their future teaching services.

More opportunities to learning about teaching from outside i.e. informal yet professional work are more open nowadays. The availability of a number of MOOCs allows teachers to have freedom to choose the one suitable and convenient to their work load at school. (Perveen, 2018), however, revealed low level

of participation of teachers joining such an e-course, apart from the benefits teachers gained like improvement in language skills and pedagogical knowledge and skills. In Indonesian contexts, (Silvia, no date) examined the use of Coursera as a medium for professional development among teachers. The findings indicate that in spite of the fact of its well organized structure, effectiveness, and roles of the materials to improve teacher teaching practice, host institutions from which the teachers come still play a little role in supporting them to participate for their professional development. In Japan contexts, (Manning, Morrison and McIlroy, 2014) revealed that both teachers and students could benefit from joining Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). There are learning sources for both students and teachers to access for better learning outcome and continued professional development respectively.

5 CONCLUSION

There are ways teachers can take to professionalize themselves. However, the existing body of knowledge on previous research indicates that teachers' involvement in their classroom research is an important factor for them to develop their professionalism (Kirkwood and Christie, 2006; Cordingley, 2015; Holmqvist, Bergentoft and Selin, 2018). We are also of the strong belief that activities accompanying teacher research also play a significant role in shaping their professionalism.

The teachers' pedagogical and professional competences in Indonesia have not been satisfactorily managed although there exist lots of professional development programs conducted by either government or non-government institutions.

It is recommended then to always evaluate any sorts of teacher professional development programs, and what we can suggest is the carrying out of reflective training in which teachers are trained and most of the time accompanied by experts until they are personally independent to hold classroom action research themselves, write a research-based academic article, and be published online. With these, Indonesian EFL teachers will certainly exist in its academic and professional sense.

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