CHALLENGES AND SUPPORTS OF NOVICE ENGLISH TEACHER IN INITIAL YEAR OF TEACHING

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Abstract

The importance of investigating novice English teachers' experiences cannot be overstated, as it plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges they encounter during their initial years of teaching. Past observations have highlighted support as a key strategy for overcoming the difficulties faced by novice English teachers. This study focuses on novice English teachers at a primary school and a language training center in Jakarta Barat area, selected based on their teaching experience of fewer than five years. The main objectives of this study are to identify the challenges they confronted and examine the support they received. The researcher employed reflective journals and interviews to collect information about various difficulties faced by novice English teachers. These challenges encompass aspects of student behavior, foreign language learning and teaching (the lack of learner proficiency in English, insufficient learner motivation and interest, and student parents' expectations), a large number of students, and other challenges (self-condition, colleague-related, and students' school equipment). Additionally, the study indicates that novice English teachers do receive support during their early teaching years from co-workers, perceived efficacy, and school policy.

Keywords: *Novice English teacher, challenges, support*

Introduction

The importance of novice English teachers' study is indisputable because it may play an essential role in addressing the issues they face in their early years of teaching. Teaching is sometimes referred to as one of the most demanding and difficult occupations (Chandran et al., 2022). Alhamad (2018) noted novice teachers are frequently perplexed. Supervisors or school principals want them to execute the tasks of seasoned teachers from their very first day on the job. Sanam et al. (2021) stated it is difficult for a novice teacher to deal with the various minds of multiple levels in one area, and when their stress levels rise, these teachers tend

to leave their jobs. It proves that novice teachers were perplexed since they were not provided with formal instructions or orientation when they attended the institute as novice teachers.

The chapter delves into defining novice teachers based on varying criteria such as years of experience, cultural context, and training backgrounds. Multiple precise definitions exist concerning novice teachers, leading to the conclusion that individuals with five years of experience or fewer in teaching are categorized as novice teachers (Ahmed et al., 2020). Chandran et al. (2022) claimed in the context of novice English teachers that these teachers were trained at teacher training institutions and that the majority of them obtained Bachelor's degrees in Education. Teaching practicum is incorporated into the teacher education curriculum in Indonesia and is generally referred to as *Praktikum Pengalaman Lapangan (PPL)* (Nurjannah & Lestari, 2021). Chandran et al. (2022) also added that in terms of novice English teacher preparation, language skills, grammar, and linguistics are taught to novice teachers throughout teacher education. However, because teaching is a dynamic process, it is critical to grasp the experiences of beginner English instructors throughout their first years in the teaching profession.

The initial year is a difficult situation in novice English teacher study. According to Kozikoglu (2017), the variables that make the first year tough are distinct. Career change with new and demanding duties is one of these variables. Each novice teacher may have had a unique experience in their early years, but they all have basic challenges and anxieties about the job (Michel, 2013). It has been proven by a number of publications focusing on novice English teachers at different school levels. Sali & Kecik (2018) investigated seven novice English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in public elementary and secondary schools in Turkey using various data sources, including semi-structured interviews, diary entries, video-recorded observations, and stimulated recall interviews. It seems novice EFL teachers began their educational careers in the middle of difficulties. On the one hand, they had to deal with a host of foreign language pedagogical challenges. First, the issues of classroom management. There are difficulties in delivering and maintaining classroom discipline, creating relationships with students, assigning teacher duties, instructional planning, and organizing lessons. Second, difficulties

in foreign language learning and teaching. Challenges include a lack of learner proficiency in English, a lack of learner motivation and interest, the use of language teaching techniques and materials means the teachers faced challenges due to learners' unfamiliarity with communicative activities and materials, leading to difficulties in effective implementation. Teachers also struggle with managing disruptive behavior, low learner proficiency and motivation, and large class sizes, which hampers their use of communicative techniques. Despite their preference for these methods, they often revert to traditional approaches due to practical constraints such as limited time and class size. The teachers also faced teaching language skills, the inability to add variety to classes, teacher knowledge of teaching and learning described the uncertainty and anxiety experienced by novice EFL teachers regarding their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and speaking skills in English. This creates emotional distress and difficulty in self-expression for them. The teachers said they also dealing with individual learner differences outlined the challenges novice teachers encounter when addressing the diverse learning needs of students, particularly regarding differences in cognitive abilities and academic skills. The teachers also have obstacles in putting theory into practice. It highlights the difficulties novice teachers face in translating theoretical knowledge into practice, especially in areas like classroom management, discipline, and responding to misbehavior. They attribute these challenges to a lack of practical training focus in their teacher education programs, the inadequacy of language teaching course books, and parental involvement in learners' education. Finally, challenges in the school context are related, including huge class numbers, insufficient school supplies, a demanding teaching load, and the attitudes of the school administration toward language education. On the one hand, they also have hurdles in terms of professional support, which are school administration, colleague relationship, mentor teacher, and teaching orientation courses.

Ahmed et al. (2020) found many challenges confront new teachers, including non-supportive heads of schools, disruptive students, an insufficiently conductive working environment, a scarcity of professional and communication skills, a deficiency of harmony, not enough school infrastructure, a shortage of developmental opportunities, emotional exhaustion, anxiety, a lack of self-respect,

professional isolation, an overburdening workload, and an uncontrollable large class. Some of them could not cope with the situation and, for convincing reasons, left the teaching profession due to a lack of teaching experience, professionalism, and stress.

Dickson et al. (2014) implemented interviews with six graduates who worked as primary school teachers. It showed that some of the difficulties mentioned were managing the classroom, which most new teachers struggle with at first. Then other challenges found were implementing the curriculum to mixed ability classes (through the medium of English) and a perceived lack of resources to do this, administrative demands and a perception of a lack of support to deal with these, relationships with colleagues, dealing with parents of students, and balancing home and family life.

Alhamad (2018) used a mixed-methods approach that included quantitative and qualitative assessments. A survey was used for the quantitative analysis, and a semi-constructed interview was used for the qualitative analysis. Participants were inexperienced primary, intermediate, and secondary English teacher. The survey sample includes 106 female instructors and 44 male teachers from various levels of public and private schools. The study reveals that new teachers face several hurdles that impede their development as educators. The most evident problems stated by research participants include dealing with students with low English competence and controlling students' unfavorable attitudes about studying English.

In the Indonesian context, Widiati et al. (2018) conducted a case study with a questionnaire serving as the primary data collection tool. The research investigated the difficulties faced by new English teachers at secondary schools and senior high schools, as well as vocational institutions in Malang. It reveals that these novice teachers faced a variety of difficulties, for example, planning and implementing a lesson based on the Curriculum 2013. They have difficulty designing and implementing motivating learning strategies and assessment procedures that would be applicable to a class of students with a relatively low level of ability. In addition, the participants also face obstacles in managing a large class.

It has previously been observed that support is one of the key strategies for overcoming the challenges faced by novice English teachers. Alhamad (2018)

explained novice teachers require assistance and support as they use their undergraduate educations and acclimate to their new professional environment. They also want aid in boosting their work performance and self-confidence so that they can bring out the best in their pupils. Moreover, it is critical to offer a supportive atmosphere for novice teachers as they move from pre-service to in-service. Karataş & Karaman (2013) classified support as needed to help novice teachers overcome the hurdles and thrive in this career. There are mentors that novice teachers value to provide additional feedback and emotional support, finding such assistance beneficial in addressing challenges, and they particularly emphasize the importance of being heard and receiving affirmation in their teaching practice. Then, the importance of interactions with colleagues in supporting novice teachers because colleagues act as guides and guardians, boosting morale and providing wise counsel. Novice teachers also acknowledged family members' support in tasks like purchasing supplies and organizing papers, with those who were married expressing particular appreciation for assistance in childcare, enabling them to focus on their work. Last, perceived efficacy of novice teachers should not be overlooked since these ideas are built on themselves and can predict success and commitment to work. There is a connection between support providers from family significantly predicts high levels of perceived teacher efficacy, especially when it comes to instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management, despite the role of mentors and co-workers.

Alhamad (2018) also revealed that novice teachers in public schools frequently confront obstacles and challenges through trial and error, which affects their efficiency. These novice teachers did not go through the induction procedure and received insufficient assistance from either their school administration, including principals, supervisors, and trainers, or other institutions. However, they found informal sources of support, such as co-teachers and friends, to be somewhat beneficial. By contrast, novice teachers in private schools reported receiving more formal assistance. Similarly, Farrell (2012) found some new language teachers appear to be able to endure their first years effectively, either on their own or with the help of supportive administrators, staff, and colleagues. These studies have the same result for co-workers as support givers for novice English teachers.

The prior studies concentrated on novice English teachers at the secondary and high school levels. Those studies also explored the challenges faced by novice English teachers. To date, research on novice English teachers at the primary level and in language training center has remained scarce. Therefore, there is an obvious need to continue exploring novice English teachers' challenges and the support they receive. The present study has two purposes. Firstly, it aims to discover the challenges faced by one novice English primary teacher and one novice English teacher at language training center. Secondly, the aim is also to investigate the support these novice English teachers received.

Methods

This study used a qualitative narrative inquiry approach to investigate the challenges faced by novice English teachers and the supports they received. Moen (2006) stated a narrative approach concentrates on the meanings and values that people attach to their experiences through the stories they tell and share. Additionally, Clandinin et al. (2007) emphasize that narrative is a popular practice among teachers and teacher educators. The comfort that comes from thinking about sharing and listening to stories is undoubtedly part of the charm. This sense of comfort associated with narratives and tales extends over into research that attends to the stories of teachers and teacher educators.

The study used purposeful sampling. It means to identify participants with sufficient familiarity with the study (Gray et al., 2007). The novice English teachers involved in this study are graduates of the English language education department cohorts of 2017. The participants of the present study used pseudonyms were Zila and Dara. They were chosen due to their teaching experience of fewer than five years. This is also in line with Kim & Roth (2011) definition of a novice teacher. Zila works as an English teacher in primary school and teaches grades 1 to 3. Dara works as an English teacher in a language training center in Jakarta Barat area, teaching children from 3 to 15 years old. They were requested for their consent to participate in this study, and the data would be handled with care to ensure the security of all information.

The researcher collected the data using two methods, namely reflective

journals and interviews. To begin this process, the researcher asked teachers to complete a reflective journal with guidelines that was adapted from Sali & Kecik (2018) novice English teacher challenges in foreign language pedagogy and Karataş & Karaman (2013) support providers, which was intended to guide novice teachers in recollecting their experiences for one month in Google Docs. After teaching practice, the participants wrote their reflective journals. According to Effendi & Triastuti (2022), reflective journals can be used during and after teaching practice. After one month, the researcher generated interview questions using the codes that appear in a reflective journal. The purpose of the interview is for clarification by presenting the data analysis of the narrative to validate the accuracy of the report. The researcher interviewed participants online via Google Meet separately. The researcher used an interview protocol that was adapted from Rohmah (2017). The researcher asked participants about several aspects, namely life history, contemporary, and reflection on meaning. The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview for 30 minutes in Indonesian, and also recorded the interview using a digital voice recorder.

The researcher employed code and theme analysis to examine the reflective journals. The researcher manually did the coding, highlighted some parts from participants' reflective journals. The coding process aims to understand text material, break it into text or picture segments, label the segments with codes, check the codes for overlap and redundancy, and then collapse these codes into broad themes for the coding procedure (Creswell, 2015). After coding, the researcher did the thematic analysis. Creswell (2015) stated the identification of themes adds richness to a tale and depth to the comprehension of human experiences. The themes were interwoven into paragraphs describing the individual's narrative or included as a distinct part by the researcher. For the interviews, the researcher turned it into text from an audio recording for the transript.

Findings and Discussions

The research findings are divided into two categories in this section: addressing the obstacles experienced by novice teacher and detailing the support they get. Each of these experiences is detailed through different themes that capture

the narrative progression. These themes serve as poignant markers, guiding the reader through the profound transformation of these teachers as they grapple with the complexities of their roles.

The Challenges Faced by Novice English Teacher

The research reveals several difficulties faced by novice English teachers. Then, the researcher categorized the results based on Sali & Kecik (2018) novice English teacher challenges in foreign language pedagogy framework. The data on the difficulties of novice teachers is organized into four themes. The themes include student behavior, foreign language learning and teaching, large number of students, and the other challenges which refer to novice teachers' issues outside of the guidelines.

Student Behavior

The challenge that novice teachers always mention is student behavior. The behavior of the student that should be in the learning is to be attentive. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the students are only children who always move and speak. As presented by Zila while teaching about classroom command in grade 2. Dara also shared her story when she teaches five students from three to five years old in the pre-reading class in their reflective journal.

"When there are students presenting in front of the class, there are a few students who are quite crowded behind the class. So I also have to keep the students conditioning in order during the presentation activities." (Zila)

"Students couldn't focus, and they ran back and forth in the class. They also climbed my table and lift up the board." (Dara)

They are very conscious of the need to keep disciplining their students to create a good environment for learning in the classroom. They made a significant effort to give instructions to the students to stay in order during the class. Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that they may act decisively against their students if they have been properly informed.

The finding is also consistent with other earlier studies. Ahmed et al. (2020), Dickson et al. (2014), Sali & Kecik (2018) and Alhamad (2018) found that new English teachers have challenges with classroom management or student

interference. This finding implies a crucial need for targeted support and training in classroom management strategies to enhance their effectiveness in handling student behavior and creating conducive learning environments.

Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

The research also found that novice English teachers have difficulties related to the foreign language learning and teaching section. Sali & Kecik (2018) further divided this topic into several sub-themes. Meanwhile, the research only discovered three sub-themes: students' lack of English language abilities, students' lack of enthusiasm to study, and student parents' expectations. These findings suggest that improving teacher tactics for navigating these issues might help novice English teachers create more successful foreign language learning settings.

Lack of Learner Proficiency in English

Another commonly mentioned challenge is the lack of English language skills in students, which is a major concern for English language teachers who invite students to speak English as much as they can. The result also match with Alhamad (2018), Sali & Kecik (2018) and Widiati et al. (2018) discovered that novice English teachers have difficulties with students' lack of English language abilities. This deficiency emerges as a matter of considerable concern, particularly for English language teachers who ardently encourage and advocate for students to engage in English communication to the fullest extent feasible. Zila told the story of her students in grade 1 who still need help speaking English in her reflective journal.

"Some students are already confident enough to speak English in front of the classroom, but there are also some students who still need help speaking English. There was even one student crying because he didn't want to write down his age, and when I asked him, the student was just quiet." (Zila)

Dara also recounted her four students in a pre-reading class, which consisted of two girls and two boys, that they were lacking of English vocabulary in her reflective journal.

"Furthermore, I found a big challenge was in our talk time activity. Since most of my students were lacking of English vocabularies they spoke in Indonesian so that I help them

to translate it to English." (Dara)

Dara also elaborated this throughout the interview.

Dara: "… Cuma kalo written ini sangat, apa, strict. Kita ada aturannya kalo written harus pake past tense atau apa gitu. Jadi student ini termasuk yang hmm masih butuh banyak peningkatan untuk past tense, untuk written dan past tense."

The novice teachers realized that their students had some basic understanding of English. However, the students felt insecure about their English skills. The teachers then emphasized the importance of practical approaches to improving student speech and writing skills. They provided plenty of opportunities for students to participate in conversations and articulate their thoughts effectively, both orally and in writing. Their goal is to build a dynamic learning environment that encourages active student involvement. In addition, they prioritized confidence among students by giving affirmative sentences.

Lack of Learner Motivation and Interest

Growing motivation or attracting students is sometimes a difficult condition for novice teachers. This challenge match with Sali & Kecik (2018), and Widiati et al. (2018) who observed that novice English teachers have difficulties with students' lack of motivation to learn. Recognizing the importance of motivation in driving academic achievement and cultivating a love of learning, the teachers use a wide range of creative teaching approaches and interactive learning strategies to engage and inspire their pupils. Zila narrated her effort to make students feel excited in class to learn counting 1–10 in grade 1 in her reflective journal.

"The challenge I faced in teaching first grade was that I needed an exciting ice-breaking so that the kids were also excited about learning English, like dance or playing games." (Zila)

Ice-breaking is one of the sessions that can be used to make learning interesting. In this case, ice-breaking is used to get students more active and participate in learning. However, there are also situations that do not always require ice-breaking to keep students in order. Like the experience of Zila when she taught about "dream country to visit" in English intensive class level low grade 3, in her reflective journal. She stated that she just do remind the students and find some activities to keep them focus.

"For this third grade, since learning was in the last hour before they came home, the children's spirits were also starting to decline, and the class conditions were not very conducive. I had to remind the kids to stay focused and find activities so that they don't get too bored and can keep the kids focused." (Zila)

In the interview, Zila explained more in detail about the use of ice-breaking in her teaching and learning activities.

Zila: "Untuk ngelakuin ice-breaking itu juga, kita lihat juga gitu kondisi anak-anaknya. Kalau misalnya emang anak-anaknya udah nggak terlalu kondusif banget, kadang aku enggak ice-breaking karena akan makan waktu lama karena untuk mengawasi kelas, untuk menertipkan anak-anak kan juga butuh waktu ya."

Zila strived to create a pleasant learning atmosphere with ice-breaking in order to increase the desire to learn in her students. By filling the classroom with warmth, positivity, and enthusiasm, she endeavored to arouse student learning motivation. She believed that a pleasant environment is essential for students in learning because they can feel appreciated, supported, and motivated to actively participate in learning in the classroom. She used good consideration to ensure that ice-breaking sessions are integrated smoothly, with the aim of building up student interest in learning. She also sometimes did not do ice-breaking but rather gave clear and concise instructions for students to focus on learning in the classroom. Both are used to maintain a good learning environment and increase student involvement in learning.

Student Parents' Expectations

Parents enroll their children in school hoping to acquire good knowledge for their children's future success. However, some parents believe that school is not enough and look for alternative educational institutions, such as language training center. It is done in the hope that their children can understand English lessons better. This hope makes Dara feel uncomfortable in her teaching position at the moment. She shared her feelings when she teaches a six-year-old student in a pre-reading class for lowest level 1 in her reflective journal.

"She was really the beginner and did not understand English. She probably understood 'yes' or 'no'. On one hand, her mom expected that her daughter would speak English better in the short period of time and it challenged me to help my student." (Dara)

Dara also went into great detailed in the interview.

Dara: "… Dan pastinya setiap habis kelas, kita confirm ke mama nya, dan pasti mama nya nanya apakah hari ini udah bisa ngikutin atau enggak gitu. Cuma mungkin mama nya, fine-fine aja karena di luar pun juga, dia belajar bareng mama nya setiap abis les. Jadi kayaknya mama nya tahu deh, anaknya udah sampe mana."

Interviewer: "Oh berarti ada kerja sama juga ya kak antara kakak sama ibu nya?"

Dara: "Iya. Sebenernya sih bukan kerja sama ya. Aku sih gak expect mama nya begitu karena aku tahu pasti ibu-ibu tuh sibuk, ya kan. Tapi bagus deh mama nya perhatian. Jadinya, mama nya juga latih lagi di rumah gitu."

Dara became anxious about the expectations of the pupils' parents. She did her best for her pupils to get the best results too. She encouraged her student to follow her in speaking English so that it would enrich the student's vocabulary. She tried her best to make sure that her student at least remembered the new words. Furthermore, the student's parents attempted to teach their children at home using a communication diary filled out by Dara. As a result, it is possible to assume that the teacher and parents are cooperating indirectly. This can also lighten Dara's load as a new teacher. The result only match with Sali & Kecik (2018) discovered that novice English teachers have difficulties with student parents' expectations.

Large Number of Students

A large number of students can be a difficult problem for novice teachers. It can make the classroom atmosphere unfavorable. The novice teacher also need to condition the students to stay in order during learning. Zila told about her difficulty with the large number of students when she taught in grade 1 in her reflective journal.

"Each class consists of 27 students. Because of the large number of students, there are many students who need guidance, so it takes quite a while for the conditioning in the grade 1." (Zila)

Zila spoke on this throughout the interview as well.

Zila: "… Jadi menurut aku kayak kalau misalnya anak-anak lebih sedikit, kita juga lebih konsentrasi kita terhadap anak -anak juga lebih mengerucut lagi. Kalau misalnya anak - anak lebih besar, oh berarti memang ada lebih itu lagi nih konsen kita kepada banyak anak."

Dara also told regarding this topic when she taught six students from four to five years old in the pre-reading class, in her reflective journal. She explained that the students had succeeded well in every lesson given, but there were several obstacles that she encountered when she taught them.

"First, because they were 6 in the class became so noisy because sometimes they yelled in the class." (Dara)

Dara also explained in detail in the interview.

Interviewer: "... Jadi menurut kakak, kalo misalnya muridnya lebih sedikit itu bakal meringankan beban kakak gitu lah ya kak, istilahnya karena gak keteteran. Karena yang satu kena distraksi, yang lain juga kena, dan kakak juga harus ngontrol satu per satu dan lainnya gitu ya kak?"

Dara: "Betul. Jadinya, hmm, satu jam itu kadang suka jadi satu jam lebih agak lebih gitu. Karena harusnya satu jam aja. Jadinya, harusnya selesai jam satu, tapi karena belum isi diary communication, oh karena anak-anak nya begitu crowded, bisa-bisa selesai nya jam satu lewat lima atau lewat sepuluh."

These novice teachers found it difficult to organize the students because of the large number of students in the class. They need to pay full attention to the students. However, they also have limitations in dealing with it. Because of the enormous number of pupils, Zila and Dara are unable to handle all of them. Their concentration was also divided because of the students, who are easily distracted. So, this requires good cooperation between teachers and students. When students understand and abide by the rules of the class, the number of students will not be an obstacle.

The finding also supports previous research into this topic. Ahmed et al. (2020), Sali & Kecik (2018) and Widiati et al. (2018) reported that novice English teachers face obstacles due to the large number of students. This finding highlights the significance of establishing ways to address the challenges with a large class in order to build a more conducive and collaborative learning environment in the school setting.

The Other Challenges

Another obstacle discovered involved the personal condition of novice English teachers, colleague-related, and students' school equipment. These results

have not previously been described by Sali & Kecik (2018) in relation to challenges in foreign language pedagogy. A possible explanation for this result might be the difference in the present research participants' experiences from those of earlier study participants. These newly discovered challenges can add data to the challenges experienced by novice English teachers. Furthermore, recognizing and resolving these extra problems is critical for new English teachers' professional growth and classroom management effectiveness.

Self-Condition

The challenges faced by teachers are not always things that happen in the school environment. There are health concerns that can significantly impact a teacher's ability to effectively carry out their responsibilities within the school environment. As Zila said in her reflective journal when she became a host at the Science Tech event to introduce technology, science, and art to children, but she was having difficulty with her voice.

"The hurdle I felt was my voice, which, at that time, was quite frightening and disturbing because my voice had to stay out to condition the students." (Zila)

Zila required a nuanced equilibrium between self-care and professional commitment to managing medical conditions while fulfilling her responsibilities as a teacher. On a different day, Zila mentioned in her reflective journal that despite her ongoing health issues following a two-day rest, she felt the need to maintain a cheerful demeanor in front of her students. This task is undoubtedly challenging.

"The challenge of teaching today is my condition, which is not too fit. I have to keep my voice in control because I teach four classes and have to remain joyful while teaching in front of the students, even though I am actually still drowning." (Zila)

Zila prioritized her health to the best of her abilities to manage her conditions because she understood the importance of health to her job. However, as an educator, she endeavored to teach to the best of her ability. Moreover, considering that her students are between six and twelve years old, she adjusted her teaching approach to them to deliver material effectively.

Colleague-Related

The problems that arise are also related to colleagues. This finding consistents with Sali & Kecik (2018) in relation to challenges in profesional support. It also aligns with Dickson et al. (2014), who revealed that novice English teachers have difficulty owing to relational challenges. Zila got a request to make a lesson plan from her colleague when she was resting at home for two weeks. As a teacher, making a lesson plan is a compulsory thing to do before entering a new semester. However, with the situation that, at that time, she was sick of smallpox, the request was enough to make her difficult. She mentioned this difficulty in her reflective journal.

"However, there was a struggle that I faced when I got a message from one of my colleagues to make a lesson plan for semester 2 and make a work sheet for next week's activities. Although I told her at first that I was sick, ..." (Zila)

Balancing professional obligations while dealing with difficult situations, such as poor health, can be difficult for a novice teacher like Zila. Despite facing personal difficulties, she showed commitment to her role as a teacher. She understood the need to draw up a comprehensive lesson plan for the upcoming semester. Then, from there, she decided to carry out her responsibility to create the requested lesson plan.

Students' School Equipment

The last challenge is about students' school equipment. It seems like a simple challenge for novice teachers. However, it has become a very unfortunate thing for the teachers. Students should be well prepared for any school equipment that will be brought to study. Zila and Dara shared their stories related to this in their reflective journals. Zila recounted her involvement with handicraft children's clubs making the snake shift, while Dara detailed her engagement in an online English class with a female student.

"By the way, students sometimes forget to bring handycraft equipment like scissors, glue, and origami, so they have to use the things that are in school." (Zila)

"She was also wasted the time to find her pencil, book or eraser. She should prepare the books and the pencils before my class started." (Dara)

The researcher asked the participants in the interview if the students had prepared their school equipment, whether this would make their teaching activities easier or not. Then Zila answered as below.

Zila: "Kalau misalnya mereka udah mempersiapkan di awal udah bawa barang-barang yang ada di rumah itu sangat cukup membantu gurunya sih. ..."

Similarly, Dara responded in the same manner.

Dara: "Oh, iya. Tentunya, karena anak ini, menurut aku, apa ya, untuk cari pensil, buku kalo dia gerak cepet sih gak masalah. Cuma ini dia beneran lambat banget, sampe harus ditanya terus berkali-kali kayak gitu. Kalo misalnya dia gerak cepet, gak masalah, ya kan? Tapi kan kalo anaknya lambat itu kan kalo lagi baik, sebelum kelasnya mulai udah disiap-siapin gitu."

Inadequate preparation by students to use the necessary school materials can significantly interfere with teaching and learning activities in the classroom. These situations often require additional time and effort from teachers to ensure that all students are fed up with the materials and ready for active participation in the educational process. This situation is sometimes difficult to control because the novice teachers have to work extra to explain the material, but at the same time, they also help the students prepare the school equipment. If the students have prepared the school equipment well from home, then it will not be a difficulty for Zila and Dara. They can also shorten the duration of their teaching.

The Support Novice English Teachers Received

The research also shows that novice English teachers receive some support during their early years of teaching, and categorized the results based on Karataş & Karaman (2013) support providers framework. The findings on novice teachers' support providers are grouped into three themes. The themes include co-workers, perceived efficacy, and school policy.

Co-workers

For novice teachers, the support system has become something that means a lot to them. They have to adjust to the real classroom, and that is not an easy thing. A support system most often mentioned by Zila and Dara is co-workers, namely co-

teachers, manager, and customer service. Zila shared how her co-teachers helped her when she got smallpox in her reflective journal.

"During these weeks, I was assisted by the homeroom teachers to replace me in their respective classes. I was just giving materials and worksheets as a reference to the homeroom teachers to teach English. It helped me a lot when I was not at work." (Zila)

"I got support from my friends, and even some of my friend sent food as a form of attention from them." (Zila)

Dara also talked about her experience with the help she got at work in her reflective journal. She got the help of two of her colleagues, namely the manager and customer service.

"My center of manager has always been helpful, especially if there was a student crying in the class and did not want to stop. She would help me to take care of that student and made sure that my class was in a conducive situation." (Dara)

"I was grateful as well for my customer service helped me watch over my students when I was writing their diary communication book." (Dara)

Dara expounded on this throughout the interview.

Dara: "... Kayak kelas aku crowded nih, enam anak, terus ada satu yang pengin pipis nih, atau pengin minum tapi gak bawa minum, atau pengin poop, nah itu kan gak mungkin aku bantuin anak ini sedangkan aku ninggalin lima anak yang lain. Jadi pertolongannya sama mereka. ..."

Zila and Dara highlighted the valuable contributions of colleagues, underscoring the significance of collaboration and mutual assistance in teaching. Zila's reflective journal vividly portrayed how her colleagues played an important role in supporting her when she was sick and demonstrated empathy in the teaching community. Likewise, Dara's experience exemplified the profound impact of collaborative efforts in overcoming the barriers associated with work. With the help of their colleagues, it not only eases their burden but also emphasizes the value of a caring and friendly working environment that prioritizes its members' well-being. This result is in agreement with those obtained by Alhamad (2018), Karataş & Karaman (2013) and Farrell (2012).

Perceived Efficacy

Self-confidence in teachers is important before they start teaching. A support system from the outside of a teacher is just extra support. However, the one who can determine the smoothness of learning in the classroom is the teacher who teaches at the time. Prior to stepping into the classroom, teachers must cultivate a strong sense of self-assurance, allowing them to navigate the complexities of imparting knowledge and fostering a positive learning environment. Therefore, the teacher's ability to command the classroom, engage students, and adapt to varying learning styles becomes pivotal in shaping the overall efficacy of the educational process.

Zila shared her best efforts to make learning work in her reflective journal.

"Maybe because this class is their last hour before lunch, it takes students a long time to get ready for the English activity. I was doing ice-breaking, which requires a lot of movement so the energy of the students can be channeled." (Zila)

Zila also elaborated this throughout the interview.

Zila: "Jadi tuh, kadang, dari setiap kelas misalnya di kelas satu A, sama di kelas satu B tuh beda, tergantung sama anak -anaknya. ... Itu tuh gak, misalnya itu akan bisa terlaksana di kelas A, tapi tidak, kayaknya gak akan mungkin deh kalau bisa dilaksanakan di kelas B. ..."

Zila did ice-breaking, which is expected to make the students feel happier and more ready to learn. She realized that the need for ice-breaking was very important for the students. She understood that each classroom had unique circumstances, leading to distinct activities. Consequently, she tailored every teaching activity to suit the condition of her students while she taught.

Dara also expressed her best attempts to make learning work in her reflective journal.

"I tried my best to push them to focus on the diacritical marks so that they can meet the targeted sound. I also tried to help them to answer the implicit questions, but they still struggled." (Dara)

Dara also expounded on this throughout the interview.

Dara: "Aku sih cukup percaya diri ya untuk menjalankan kelas, tapi enggak selalu. Ada masa di mana kalo kayak ada kelas yang gak ke-expect, misalkan hari ini tuh anak-anak gak bisa diatur banget atau apa. ... Tapi sebagian besar sih, aku merasa aku percaya diri tentang kelas manajemen aku aja."

Dara stated that she tried her best to make the students understand the material. She was very aware that her pupils were still children who could easily get distracted. As a teacher, she tried to do her best in class so that the students could understand the lesson well.

What emerged from the results here is that Zila and Dara have confidence in trying to do three things in the classroom, namely organize classes, give instructions to students, and encourage students to be active and focused during learning. They really understood the situation in the classroom, as did their students. They knew what they had to do to cope with the teaching challenges in the classroom, such as students who were starting to get tired or students who had difficulty understanding the material. This result was also reported by Karataş & Karaman (2013), and Farrell (2012), in which that novice English teachers are able to go through their first years of teaching by relying on themselves.

School Policy

The last support is school policy. Well-defined school policies are essential in providing a structured framework that supports both teachers and students in various situations, including instances when teachers experience health-related challenges. These policies serve as a crucial guideline, outlining the steps and procedures to be followed when educators face health issues or other unforeseen circumstances that may impact their ability to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Zila said in her reflective journal that she got permission from the school to rest for two weeks at home because she had smallpox.

"… the support given by the school, I was allowed not to go to school for 14 working days because smallpox is a contagious disease..." (Zila)

Zila also went into great detailed in the interview.

Interviewer: "Oh berarti pekerjaan kakak nih didispen kali ya kak, istilahnya?"

Zila: "Iya, kadang di back-up sih. Kalau misalnya pengajar kan bakal di back-up kelas gitu. Atau mungkin misalnya, tapi aku tetep kayak beberapa, mungkin tapi dalam kondisi aku sebenarnya udah sehat sih. Kalau memang belum …, udah waktunya gitu. Jadi ke sisanya sih kalau pekerjaan aku misalnya kayak buat ngajar itu diback-up sama guru lain. Kalau untuk yang misalnya ngerjain sesuatu itu ya paling aku, hold dulu sampai aku masuk."

The school's decision to prohibit Zila from working while she was ill is a commendable choice. Prioritizing the health of both teachers and students in such circumstances is crucial. According to that policy, Zila's work is all dispatched or backed up by her colleagues until she returns to work. She is well aware of her rights as a worker who was taking sick leave, so she should not be disrupted by job responsibilities. However, if her health improves and she is capable of performing tasks related to her job, she will willingly do so. In essence, even though Zila took a two-week sick leave, she remained dedicated to her responsibilities as a teacher.

This result has not previously been described by Karataş & Karaman (2013) and other studies. This rather contradictory result may be due to the different sources of support obtained by novice English teachers in this study and novice English teachers in previous studies. This is a good thing because this result adds data on sources of support for novice English teachers.

Conclusion

The first aim of this study was to discover the challenges faced by novice English teachers in primary school and in a language training center. It has been shown that novice English teachers confront a number of problems, as evidenced by prior studies. There are many similarities in the challenges faced by a novice English teacher in an elementary school and in a language training center, such as student behavior, a lack of learner proficiency in English, the large number of students, and the students' school equipment. However, it cannot be denied that there are differences between these two novice English teachers challenges. A novice English teacher at elementary school experienced challenges related to students' lack of motivation to learn, challenges with colleagues, and health problems. Meanwhile, a novice English teacher at language training center faced challenges related to the expectations of student parents. This difference is clearly very understandable because they teach at two different institutions and have different personal health. Then, all of them also influenced the similarities and differences of the result of present study to the previous studies.

The difficulties encountered by novice English teachers have demonstrated that they require assistance in their profession. This is consistent with the final aim

of this study, which is to investigate the support these novice English teachers received. It has also been demonstrated that novice English teachers receive some help, as evidenced by other earlier studies. A novice English teacher in an elementary school and a language training center shared similarities in the support they receive, particularly from co-workers and in terms of perceived efficacy. Nonetheless, distinctions emerge in the sources of support for these two teachers. A novice English teacher in primary school received assistance from the school during illnesses, a support not extended to their counterparts in language training institutions. This divergence is understandable given the distinct nature of these institutions and have seperate personal health. All of them contribute to the nuanced understanding of both similarities and differences observed in previous research results.

The researcher conducted the present study with only two new English teachers. Each of them taught at a different level. Then, the researcher only used reflective journals and interviews as research instruments. Moreover, the findings of this study cannot be a general overview of the challenges and support for novice English teachers. Due to the limitations of this study, the future researcher needs to increase the number of novice English teachers at different school levels and then collect data through observation to determine the challenges and support received by novice English teachers.

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