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## Enhancing Learning Awareness of English Teachers in Indonesia's Elementary Schools: A Lesson Study

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### Abstract

With the rapid globalization occurring all around the globe, educational landscapes also underwent some dramatic shifts. Enhancing teachers' learning awareness can be done by conducting lesson studies. Lesson study itself is a collaborative project where the teachers can share their knowledge and skills to improve teaching performances continuously. Although lesson study is useful, it may have a different result if it is implemented in online mode, particularly during the pandemic situation, because the teachers cannot always meet physically with their colleagues and the students. Thus, the researchers are interested to analyze the lesson study implemented during this pandemic situation. This research aims to find out how lesson study can improve teachers' learning awareness during this pandemic situation. In this research, the participants are five English teachers from different elementary schools in Indonesia. To gain the data, the researchers implemented a case study method. Besides, the researchers used interview guidelines and an observation sheet. After collecting and analyzing the data, the researchers concluded that the teachers could enhance their learning awareness by implementing the following procedure: knowing their role in the learning process and knowing attractive learning activities.

### Keywords:

*learning awareness, English teachers in Indonesia's elementary schools, lesson study, online learning*

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## INTRODUCTION

Lesson study has been introduced in Indonesia since 2000 (Rozimela, 2020). At that time, the program was conducted collaboratively with the government. It was done by pilot schools that were chosen by the government. At that time, the pilot schools accomplished the project well. However, after the project from the government was completed, the schools did not continue to conduct lesson studies as lesson studies consisted of several cycles and commonly consumed much of their time. Before conducting the cycles, the teachers had to discuss the learning activities and media that would be implemented in the class. Sometimes, some teachers could not use the chosen media. In addition, lesson study required reflection and discussion after having a teaching performance.

The cycles of lesson study consist of setting goals, designing the plan, implementing the plan of the learning process (teaching activities and observation), evaluating the teaching performance, and reflecting on the lesson study (Kanellopoulou & Darra, 2019). In the stage of setting goals, the teachers should collaborate with their colleagues by discussing the goals to determine the next step of the lesson's study cycle. In the discussion, the teachers are expected to participate actively in the discussion of lesson study with their colleagues (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). It means that the teachers are expected to have the willingness to involve themselves in the discussion by sharing their opinion related to the way to develop the learning process. Through discussion sessions, the teachers identify the possibilities of difficulties that may be faced by the students. Besides, the teachers are required to know the students' background or students' needs in the context of learning. Thus, it will influence them in designing the plan so that the teachers can select suitable learning activities, learning media, and assessments to help the students to achieve knowledge. In conducting the learning process, the observers should take notes based on the facts. After that, the teacher can reflect on what they have done during the learning process. Then, the observers can evaluate the learning process and ask the teacher the reason he/she did a particular action. In this case, the questions which are given by the observers can be a reflection of the teacher. It gives opportunities for the teacher to give reasons based on a particular action he/she does. Then, they can have discussion sessions to provide better teaching performance (Rozimela, 2020; Uştuk & Çomoğlu, 2019). Thus, after evaluating the previous learning process, the teachers can find out the thing that should be improved in the next meeting. Then, the teacher can re-implement the cycles with revision if it is needed. After teaching the unit on the learning materials, the teachers can reflect on the lesson study that they have conducted (Kanellopoulou & Darra, 2018). In this stage, the teachers can conclude the lesson study they have done.

Lesson study allows teachers to improve their professional knowledge and skills in teaching so that they can help the students to sharpen their critical thinking and get meaningful knowledge (Kanellopoulou & Darra, 2019; Ogegbo et al., 2019). It also allows the teachers to accommodate students' interest in the learning activities to attract the students to the learning process. By integrating the learning process with students' interests, the teachers have taken the roles of educators who facilitate the students to learn in fun ways. In discussing the learning process, teachers play a key role in encouraging and motivating students in learning (Putri & Imaniyati, 2017). It means that the teachers must understand that they have the responsibility to build students' willingness to learn. Thus, the teachers tend to look back to the previous teaching performances to check whether or not the students get meaningful learning. By evaluating their teaching

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experiences and analyzing which part of the teaching episodes they should improve, the teachers are expected to conduct a better learning process in the next meeting. By doing that, the teachers can help the students to cope with the difficulties in the learning process so that they get a meaningful learning process (Holmqvist & Lelinge, 2020).

Discussing the use of lesson study for the learning process also enhances teachers' reflection on the critical incident in learning. According to Reardon, Robert; Fite, Kathleen; Boone, Mike; Sullivan, (2019), implementing critical self-reflection after teaching can review what they have done so far. Based on the result of their research, teachers' critical reflection is about looking back to the critical incidents that happen in the learning process that the teacher conducts. The critical incident places the analysis on the context of the event. For instance, teachers tend to reflect on and identify a specific incident they perceive to be critical in influencing the final outcome. Through critical incidents, teachers can recognize the moments that are memorable, confusing, and enjoyable. Such moments may be perceived as positive or negative. As a result, teachers who do critical self-reflection tend to be more insightful. Thus, they tend to explore and improve their teaching skills. However, being successful in doing critical self-reflection cannot be achieved instantly. The teacher may try to implement critical self-reflection several times. Although lesson study is useful in enhancing teachers' teaching development, such practices are still not widely implemented as teachers may have not got sufficient self-awareness to participate in the teachers' community (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). Discussing that issue, the teachers are supposed to work collaboratively in the community or the team to develop their professionalism through lesson study. To sum up, lesson study facilitates the teacher to learn to perform better teaching in the following meeting (Setayawan & Taram, 2017; Warwick et al., 2018).

After knowing the use of lesson study and its challenge, the researchers also deemed the significance of the lesson study via online mode in Indonesia, especially during a pandemic situation. Since Covid-19 spreads all around the world, many schools prefer to conduct online learning to limit physical interaction (Dhawan, 2020). It causes the students and the teacher to meet virtually by using a video conference application. Thus, the implementation of lesson study in an online learning mode is still quite new in education research. According to Amin (2021), lesson study can be useful to develop students' learning and teachers' performance. It is in line with the result of the research conducted by Arifani, Susanto, and Sokip in 2020. They find that lesson study enhances teachers' creativity to provide innovation in teaching the students so that the learning process will be fun. In addition, based on the result of its finding, lesson study makes learning more student-centered learning. Although there are positive impacts after implementing lesson study, Arifani, Susanto, and Sokip (2020) state that the professional development of teachers does not develop significantly. In contrast, Purwanti and Hatmanto (2019) find that lesson study is one of the ways to enhance teachers' professional development, including teachers' knowledge, teaching pedagogy, and teaching innovation. From its finding, it can be seen that teachers' professional development is interlinked with teachers' capacity in teaching students. In fact, teachers' capacity in teaching is affected by their learning awareness.

Due to that result, the researchers are still curious whether or not lesson study can enhance teachers' learning awareness if it is conducted online. It may have a different result. Thus, the researchers were interested in analyzing the implementation of lesson study in elementary schools in Indonesia during online learning in the context of English

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subjects. The research question is formulated as follows: How can lesson study be used to enhance teachers' learning awareness during this pandemic situation?

### METHOD

#### Research Design

This research used a case study method, one that is used to investigate and describe phenomena that happened in life, such as experiences and perceptions (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Rezavieh, 2010). In addition, it could be used for examining in-depth data. It allowed the researchers to gain data by observing activities and interviewing people. In this research, the researchers implemented a case study method by observing the learning process and conducting interviews with the teachers. In this case, the researchers also observed the teachers in doing the procedure of lesson study: setting goals, designing the plan, implementing the plan of the learning process (teaching activities and observation), evaluating the teaching performance, and reflecting on the conducted lesson study. During those processes, the researchers monitored and helped the teachers. Besides, all of the procedures were conducted online through Zoom meetings and WhatsApp. After doing several procedures, the researchers interviewed all the participants. After gaining the data, the researchers analyzed the data by reducing the data, displaying the data, and making conclusions or verification.

#### Participants

In recruiting the participants, the researchers applied a homogeneous sampling technique. Homogeneous sampling can be used to represent a particular subgroup that has similar experiences in-depth (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Rezavieh, 2010).

The participants of this research were five English teachers of elementary schools in different cities Indonesia. They taught different grades and different schools as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Demography of the Participants

| No | Factors                |                                          | Male | Female |
|----|------------------------|------------------------------------------|------|--------|
| 1. | Age                    | 24 Years                                 | 1    | 1      |
|    |                        | 25 Years                                 |      | 1      |
|    |                        | 31 Years                                 |      | 1      |
|    |                        | 34 Years                                 |      | 1      |
| 2. | Department             | English Letter                           |      | 1      |
|    |                        | English Language Education Study Program | 1    | 3      |
| 3. | Location of the school | Denpasar                                 |      | 1      |
|    |                        | Jakarta                                  |      | 1      |
|    |                        | Samarinda                                |      | 1      |
|    |                        | Surabaya                                 | 1    |        |
|    |                        | Yogyakarta                               |      | 1      |

All the participants were interviewed by the researchers after they did the teaching activities. However, before conducting this research, the researchers asked permission from the headmasters and the participants.

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### Instruments and data collection procedures

The data collection was undertaken through observation and interviews in online mode. In conducting observation, the researchers joined the online classes. At that time, the learning activities were conducted by using the *Zoom meeting* app. During the learning processes, the researchers observed how the learning activities went out by using an observation sheet. The observation sheet was adapted from Fitriati, Rosli, and Iksan (2022). The observation sheet is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Observation sheet

| No | Observation focus    | Description |
|----|----------------------|-------------|
| 1  | Students' learning   |             |
| 2  | Students' behavior   |             |
| 3  | Teacher' performance |             |

After the researchers did observation, the researcher conducted interview sessions to enrich the data. The interview sessions were conducted online by using the *Zoom meeting* app and *WhatsApp*.

### Data Analysis Technique

In this research, the researchers wrote interview transcripts from the audio recording before analyzing the data. To explore the credibility of the result of the research, the researchers did participants' validation through member checks of the interview transcripts. After the transcripts were agreed upon by the research participants, the researchers read the transcripts several times to familiarize themselves with the data and then focused on coding the emerging ideas from the interviewees. Some important and repeated ideas were subsequently categorized under related themes (open coding labels). Then, the researchers reduced the data by mapping out and categorizing meaningful ideas (axial codings). The final step was undertaken through the selective coding procedure to decide the abstract concepts for data presentation.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From this research, there are two findings of how lesson study enhances teachers' learning awareness during the Covid-19 pandemic situation. The detailed result can be seen in the following parts.

### 1. Knowing their role in the learning process

By implementing lesson study, the teacher can see their role of themselves as "a teacher" in the learning process. By perceiving their role in the learning process, they tend to develop their professionalism in teaching. The following table describes the first finding which is the role of the teachers in the learning process.

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Table 3. *Teachers' role*

| No | Participants  |   | Teachers' role                                                 |
|----|---------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Participant A | • | • As the facilitator in the learning process                   |
| 2  | Participant B | • | • As the facilitator in the learning process                   |
| 3  | Participant C | • | • As the facilitator in the learning process                   |
| 4  | Participant D | • | • As the facilitator in the learning process<br>• As a learner |
| 5  | Participant E | • | • As the facilitator in the learning process<br>• As a learner |

Since the teachers teach the students in elementary schools, the teachers realize that they are expected to teach the students patiently. They understand that they have to do it because they cannot let the students read the materials by themselves without explaining the learning topic in detail. Based on the result of this research, all of the participants describe their roles as a facilitator in the learning process because they need to guide the students in understanding the learning materials. It is proven by the following interview transcription:

“In my opinion, being a facilitator means facilitating students to achieve their learning goals, such as providing suitable learning materials that can be understood easily and guiding the students in understanding the learning materials. At their age, the students tend to have curiosity. In other words, they have a willingness to know or to learn something. Thus, the role of the teacher as a facilitator is crucial.” – Participant A

From the statement given by the teacher, the researchers find out that the guidance of the teachers helps the students to make meaningful learning. It is proven by Anggraeni & Yusnita (2017) that the way the teachers facilitate the students to learn will influence students' achievement in learning. In playing the role of a facilitator, the teachers tend to encourage the students to learn. The encouragement that the teachers give to the students is shown through the utterances during the interaction between the teachers and the students.

“Since it is online learning, the students get bored easily because they have to learn from home. In fact, students' enthusiasm influences the flow of the learning process. Thus, I always tell the students to be happy because they still can learn together through an online meeting. Besides, I need to conduct fun learning activities to engage the students” - Participant B

From the statement above, the researchers understand that boredom is one of the challenges that should be faced by students in online learning. To facilitate the students

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in the learning process, the teachers tend to support the students to foster and maintain students' excitement in learning. The teachers hope that by encouraging the students, they will participate themselves in the learning process. In addition, selecting and implementing fun learning activities may boost students' learning enthusiasm. Due to engaging the students in the learning process, technology offers interesting learning media or learning applications. In fact, the learning process is conducted online nowadays. Thus, in conducting the learning process, the teachers are supposed to use technology to promote learning (Benson, 2013; Bye, 2017; Swatevacharkul & Boonma, 2020; Yajie & Jiaqian, 2021). However, the teachers need to guide the students in utilizing technology so that the students do not misuse the technology (Swatevacharkul & Boonma, 2020).

Discussing teachers' role in the learning process, 2 out of 5 participants agree that they play a role as a learner in the learning process. In the learning process, the learners also function as a teacher. Since learning is a long-life process, the teachers have the opportunity to learn from their classes. By interacting with the students, the teachers have the potential to improve their teaching performances because they can make suitable learning activities based on students' characteristics or students' interests. It is proven by the statement below:

“As a teacher, I realize that I am imperfect. I make mistakes when I teach the students. After teaching, I usually reflect on what I have done during the learning process. Besides, I often ask my students to give their responses to the learning activities. Thus, I can conduct a better learning process for the next meeting” – Participant D

According to the stated interview transcription, it can be concluded that the teacher recognized herself as a learner that could make mistakes during their teaching performances. As teachers, they are invited to be open to their mistakes. They need to reflect on their mistakes and use them as experiences that can help them to develop their teaching skills (Shallenberger, 2015). This finding is the same as the statement from Participant E. Her statement can be seen below.

“Although I have followed the lesson plan in conducting the learning process, I often find difficulties in controlling the students. Consequently, the learning process cannot run as well as I expected before. Due to that teaching experience, I need to perceive it positively so that it can develop my teaching skills – Participant E.

From that statement that is given by the participant, the researchers find out that the participant reflects on the difficulties she faces as a learning process that she must take to conduct a better teaching performance. According to both participants, it can be concluded that perceiving emotional teaching experiences positively can develop their teaching skills.

## 2. Knowing attractive learning activities

Teaching performances cannot be separated from learning activities. It means that the learning activities support the teachers in teaching the students. In addition, the selected learning activities will influence students' engagement in learning. Thus, learning Sulistyawati & Kuswandono: *Enhancing Learning Awareness of English Teachers in Indonesia's Elementary Schools: A Lesson Study*

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activities should be selected by the teachers carefully. It means that the teachers should consider the students' level of learning English.

**Table 4. Learning Activities**

| No | Participants  | Treatments                                                                                                    |
|----|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Participant A | Providing TPR (Total Physical Response) in the middle of the meeting.                                         |
| 2  | Participant B | Providing a singing session to attract students to the learning process before explaining the learning topic. |
| 3  | Participant C | Providing a singing session at the end of the meeting.                                                        |
| 4  | Participant D | Providing a singing session to fill out "the blank spaces" at the end of the meeting.                         |
| 5  | Participant E | Providing TPR (Total Physical Response) in the middle of the meeting.                                         |

Based on the result above, 2 out of 5 participants implement Total Physical Response (TPR) in their class. By applying TPR, the teachers focus on phrasal verbs. TPR allows the students to respond to the instruction from the teacher by using the parts of their bodies. The following interview transcription is gained to give a clear understanding of the implementation of TPR in the learning process.

"From the discussion with my colleagues when making the lesson plan, we agree to implement TPR in every meeting this semester. Since the students are at the beginner level, we focus on creating fun English learning so that the students will not be stressed. TPR helps me in teaching the students about the English vocabulary. As a result, the students enjoy the learning process." – Participant A

From the interview result above, the researchers conclude that having discussion sessions with colleagues in lesson study helps the teachers to decide the suitable learning activity based on the students' level or capability in learning English. It is the same as the result of the lesson study that is conducted by Setayawan & Taram, (2017) that the discussion between the teachers and their colleagues facilitates them to develop the teaching-learning activities through the collaboration between the teachers. By implementing TPR, the students can learn new English words in a fun way. In addition, it is easier to explain English words by using TPR because the students can remember them directly (Hounhanou, 2020; Shi, 2018). Furthermore, it also helps the students to practice their listening skills (Shi, 2018). To complete the information about the implementation of TPR in the lesson study, the researchers provide additional interview transcription.

"In conducting the learning process, I always follow the lesson plan that I make with my colleagues. I always discuss the learning activities together with them so that we can give our perspective about the appropriate activities. In teaching 4th graders, I implement TPR in the middle of the meeting. Thus, they learn English by responding to my short instruction with their body movement." – Participant B

It can be concluded that the discussion session between the teachers in making the lesson plan takes an important role in real teaching performances. By discussing with colleagues, the teachers can share their own opinion related to the students' needs and students' level of learning English. Besides, it can accommodate colleagues' perspectives

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on the students based on their own observations. Thus, the teachers can decide the most suitable learning activity for the students. It might develop teaching professionalism because the teachers can enrich their knowledge about the activities that engage the students. Based on the interview transcription above, both participants implement TPR in their learning process because they think that TPR can one of the ways for the students to learn English enthusiastically.

However, 3 out of 5 participants apply different learning activities in their teaching. In teaching their students, they use “an English song” to attract the students to learn English. Meanwhile, the three teachers implement the “singing a song” activity at different times. One of them puts that activity at the beginning of the meeting to attract the students’ attention. The following transcription explains the implementation of the “singing a song” activity that is implemented by Participant B.

“At the beginning of the learning process, I invite all students to sing an English song together. It is used to build a fun learning atmosphere. Besides, singing an English song facilitates the students to enhance their vocabulary. In addition, it bridges the students with the learning topic they are going to learn about because the song is fitted with the learning topic on that day.” – Participant B

Then, one of the participants puts that activity in the middle of the meeting as a game. During listening to the song, the students are required to fill out the blank spaces with the correct vocabulary based on the lyrics. Thus, the students can enhance their English vocabulary. It was proven by the previous study conducted by Engh in 2013 that English songs facilitate the students to learn English. However, the other one applies the “singing a song” activity at the end of the meeting as the reward for the students after accomplishing the learning activities on that day. Regardless of it all, the teachers have made innovations for the class they teach. Teaching innovation itself is needed in the learning process because it may attract the students to participate in the learning process (Jagtap, 2016). Thus, the teachers are expected to be able to design and implement fun learning activities.

## CONCLUSION

From the result of this research, the researchers concluded that lesson study facilitated the teachers to enhance their learning awareness. By conducting lesson studies, the teachers tended to know their roles in the learning process. According to the result, they perceived their role as a facilitator and a learner in the learning process. Thus, as a facilitator, they were supposed to guide and encourage the students so that students could get meaningful learning. Taking the role of a facilitator meant facilitating the students to learn so that they could achieve their learning goals. In other words, the teachers were supposed to develop themselves, especially their teaching performance by learning new things so that they could improve their teaching skills and teaching performances. In contrast, some teachers perceived themselves as learner because they thought that they needed to learn from the teaching experiences they had. Besides, the difficulties they encountered during the teaching performances could be learning experiences for them. In addition, their acceptance of their mistakes in teaching would develop their teaching skills. Moreover, they could find out attractive learning activities which are suitable for the students. Thus, their learning awareness through teaching experiences can develop

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their professionalism in teaching. Since the focus of this research is investigating how online lesson study can enhance teachers' learning awareness, further research studies should be able to find out the factors that enhance teachers' learning awareness in depth.

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