

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Background of the Research

The world had grown according to its living population and things that were measured as impactful as living resources. The rapid development of technology and the human population and its society interrupted how everything worked as it supposed to be, which led us to live a world of VUCA (Hadar, Ergas, Alpert, & Ariav, 2020). It meant that we currently live in the world where everything are dominated by *volatility*, which meant unpredictable and unstable change, *uncertainty*, which meant the inability for us to predict the change, *complexity*, which meant multiple issues and factors that would make us confused and hesitant in making decision, and *ambiguity*, which meant uncertain information that is caused by layered meaning on it.

Laukkonen, Biddell, Gallagher (2020) believed that as human society is strongly depended and connected to technology, it would also be affected by the rapid evolvement of technology. They also explained that VUCA affected the way people act and think as the world become more complex and unpredictable, nonetheless the educational field. Thus, the human society would be essentially encouraged to adapt and gain new important skills that would help them in adjusting themselves to this unpredictable VUCA world. Laukkonen et al. (2020) also highlighted the challenge for education in the VUCA world, which was to influence the learners to be naturally curious and independently recognize the need to learn, as these characteristics would help them to adapt and avoid the alarming aspects of VUCA world.

This kind of expectation towards education, then, also changed the expectation of how teachers had supposed to be in the teaching and learning process. Yakovleva (2022) pointed out how teachers have to be aware of the possibilities, values, limitations, and risks of any educational environment in the VUCA world in order to be able to solve problems in such environment. Bhatt, (2021), then, opined that teachers had to be innately motivated in lifelong learning along with their career, in which they kept their skills, knowledge, attitude, and behavior monitored and updated. Those expectations of being independent and lifelong learners led to the need of being self-directed in managing individuals learning experiences.

Self-directed learning itself described as a crucial life skill to fit the current demand of individuals' awareness for learning, which might help the students in adapting themselves to be fast learners in the globalized learning situation and environment of VUCA world, know how to find suitable learning resources, and also know how to manage and solve their problem (Hardianti, Fauzia, & Syafei, 2016). Du Toit-Brits, Blignaut, & Mzuza (2021) highlighted Knowles's (1975) suggestion which stated that adults should become lifelong learners who adjust themselves to the understanding and experience of independent learning.

This suggestion led Knowles in establishing the SDL process, which was the student-centered learning process. Robinson & Persky (2020) claimed that "the primary underpinning of SDL is that students take responsibility for learning well beyond what is presented by an external body (eg, faculty member, the curriculum)". Similarly, Gibbons (2002) claimed that self-directed learning is the effort of students in deciding what and how they learn and gain knowledge, skill,

accomplishment, or personal development anywhere and anytime with the help of anyone or anything as the essential elements of SDL itself are self-control, self-management, and self-motivation.

However, Purnama (2013) added that this kind of independent learning did not mean that the students are going to learn by themselves without any help, instead, they are responsible in deciding how they are going to learn during the time they cannot meet the teachers. The independence that students have in self-directed learning will also not directly make the teachers lose their roles in education. Shaalan (2019) assumed that, since in self-directed learning students had to be active in deciding the sources and materials for learning, teachers had the role to make sure that the learners choose and use the appropriate sources and materials effectively, without any hindrance.

The change of role of the teachers was highlighted by Tjakradidjaja, Prabandari, Prihatiningsih, & Harsono (2016) as they observed the role of teachers in the process of SDL, which in their case was SDL in medical education. One of the many roles of teachers claimed by the result of their study based on the participants was facilitator, in which the teacher assisted the students in organizing their learning process, pointing out their learning needs, learning how to think critically, and evaluating their own progress, and creative, in which the teacher had to have the ability to adjust the learning sources and process to be more suitable for the student's needs, thus it will prevent them from the stress while learning. This implied the important role of teachers in creating motivational areas among students in SDL and becoming an appropriate and skillful advisor for students. Hence, from these changes of roles, teachers, as

lifelong learners, were also required to be more proper models for students in engaging themselves in the environment of self-directed learning.

In measuring the readiness of self-directed learning, there were several assessment tools designed and developed based on the dimension, factor, or principal of SDL itself. Wiley (1983), as cited by Fisher, King, & Tague (2001), pointed out the definition of self-directed learning readiness as the level of attitudes, abilities, and personality characteristics owned by a person in becoming a self-directed learner.

Cadorin, Bressan, & Palese (2017) highlighted several instruments that were designed, validated, and tested by lots of researchers for the case of nursing students. Among the many kinds of instruments mentioned in their study, two instruments that were used, adapted, and adopted by lots of researchers were the instruments designed and validated by Guglielmino (1977), which is called SDLRS (Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale) or LPA (Learning Preference Assessment) tool, and also by Fisher (2001).

SDLRS by Guglielmino was designed with the combinations of 8 dimensions of self-directed learning: *openness to learning opportunities, self-concept as an effective learner, initiative and independence in learning, informed acceptance of responsibility for one's own learning, love of learning, creativity, positive orientation to the future, ability to use basic study skills, and problem-solving skills*, while SDLRS by Fisher was designed based on three dimensions only, which briefly covered in *self-management, self-control, and desire for learning*.

Since teachers still have the duty to guide, encourage, and monitor the students in applying SDL, also they need to be self-directed in keeping their

knowledge and skills updated, it is clear that teachers themselves have to be ready, which they had the crucial factors of SDL implemented inside themselves, before they could facilitate it among students. Their readiness has to be measured to prevent failure and the lack of guidance in SDL.

The terms of readiness in the educational field itself could be defined as the character of teachers or other educational staff who are well-prepared in supporting learners' learning activities in school, adjust their teaching style with learners' needs and capability, thus, the learners and their parents could be highly involved in reaching the learning purposes (Dockett & Perry, 2009).

Research regarding the measurement of teachers' readiness or abilities in SDL was very limited as most SDL research focused on students' readiness and also its impact on student achievement. However, a study done by Shiong, Aris, & Tasir (2012), who investigated the SDL readiness of Malaysian training teachers with the use of Guglielmino's SDLRS, found that the teachers there were mostly on the average and below average level of SDL readiness. In Indonesia, Kusmawan (2016) also investigated the SDL readiness of student-teachers who were registered in the Study Program of Elementary School Teachers in Bandung Regional Office (UPBJJ) of Indonesia Open University with the use of SDLRS translation and adaptation of Guglielmino by Darmayanti (2011). It was revealed that the student-teachers were in moderate level of SDL readiness, indicated that the support and exposure to knowledge on the SDL understanding and facilities were still needed for them to improve the SDL readiness. Both studies were done on the teachers' point of view with the use of Guglielmino's SDLRS and its adaptation.

However, it had to be highlighted that the SDLRS was originally designed to measure self-directed learners in general, which indicated that it could be used by students, teachers, and other educational members. Hence, the statements included in the instrument were formed in general manner without any specification on point of view of the assessment-taker. Moreover, the assessment itself did not include any digital competencies and skills that are considered important for teaching and learning purposes, as they are included as the crucial skills required for the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning* by Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2008).

The lack of digital competencies and skills included in the SDL readiness assessment, then, became the problem of this present study as it is clear that to measure the SDL readiness of current teachers, their required competencies as a teacher and lifelong learner also need to be considered in the measurement to give us an overview on their readiness as lifelong learners and their efforts in developing their professionalism as teachers who continue to learn. Thus, this present study aimed to design a digital assessment instrument to measure language teachers' SDL readiness that is easily accessed and time-saving by the teachers, embedded with skills and competencies required for current teachers professional quality according to European Profiling Grid (EPG) and DigCompEdu.

## **2. Research Question(s)**

Based on the mentioned previous studies in the background, the researcher pointed out the problems of research, which are:

1. To what extent do the existing self-directed learning readiness assessment instruments cover the digital competencies that are required for teachers' professional development in this era?
2. How are the processes in designing the digital self-directed learning readiness assessment instrument for current English teachers?
3. How is the design of the digital self-directed learning readiness assessment instrument that is suitable for current language teachers?

### **3. Purpose(s) of the Research**

Based on the mentioned problems of research, the purpose of this study is listed as follows:

1. To identify the existing instrument to measure SDL readiness, find out the needs for modification, and determine the aspects of digital competencies needed for current English teachers.
2. To show the process of modifying the conventional self-directed learning readiness assessment into the digital form of it, which embed the required digital competencies for English teachers' professional development.
3. To design a self-directed learning readiness assessment embedded with the required digital competencies for English teachers' professional development.

### **4. Scope of the Research**

For this present study, the researcher focused on designing an assessment instrument to measure the self-directed learning readiness of language teachers, especially language teachers in Indonesia. As it is specifically aimed for English language teachers, the digital assessment instrument is designed with the

consideration of the required skills and competencies as self-directed learners, also the digital competencies that are required by current English language teachers according to DigCompEdu framework and EPG.

## 5. Significance of the Research

The finding of this study was expected to give a crucial contribution to the knowledge on self-directed learning readiness among current English subject teachers in Indonesia. Practically, as the required digital competencies that are crucial for English language teachers are considered and embedded in the assessment tool, it would also be expected to be able in giving a brief picture on how understanding and prepared are the current English language teachers in adapting themselves with the possibility of unexpected shift on educational system and their attempt in resolving the problems caused by it. Hence, it is expected to be beneficial for school communities or teacher training organizations or institutions, or other teachers peers in measuring teachers' readiness to be engaged in self-directed learning environment easily and independently, also to make sure that teachers are ready in dealing with any change or shift that might occurred in educational system anytime.

## 6. Definition of Key Terms

Several technical terms used in this study are defined as follows:

1. **SDL** stands for Self-directed Learning. It is an alternative for independent learning which was popularized by Knowles which indicated learner independency in managing their learning experience.



2. **SDLR** means the level of attitudes, abilities, and personality characteristics owned by a person who is engaged in a self-directed learning environment.
3. **EPG** stands for European Profiling Grid. It refers to a Grid of competencies descriptors to evaluate the language teaching competencies among practising language teachers with varying degrees of experience.
4. **FGD** stands for Focus Group Discussion, refers to the discussion between the researcher and her advisors in validating the prototype instrument.
5. **Required Competencies and Skills for Teachers** refers to a set of crucial teaching competencies and skills listed in EPG and Law of the Republic of Indonesia.

