

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Teachers' understanding of their role in the teaching-learning process is a pre-requisite to effective instruction. The current Indonesian National School Curriculum stipulates that school instructions are conducted with the learner-centered approach (LCA). Teachers are encouraged to alter the classroom circumstances for the students to take the lead in their own learning process. This has been a great challenge to many school teachers who were brought up in and have been teaching for many years within the teacher-centered traditions. This learner-centered approach is not a new notion in teaching and learning activities. The idea of students being able to lead their own process in learning has been sought since long ago (Staker, Arnett, & Powell, 2020), and even more after the learner-centered approach has been proven to benefit the students (Aslan & Reigeluth, 2015) because it provides real-life situation problems promoting students' problem solving, team work, and critical thinking skills, especially for their career development in the future. For these reasons, since 2013, the Indonesian government has attempted to launch a curriculum that recommends teachers use the learner-centered approach in designing their learning plan, known as Kurikulum 2013.

Unfortunately, taking the lack of understanding of the learner-centered approach concept and insufficient training for the teachers into account, many teachers were in a state of confusion since they were not trained well enough to

properly implement the learner-centered approach into classroom activities (Faridi, Bahri, & Nurmasitah, 2016). In consequence, the reality of teaching and learning practices of most schools in Indonesia still tend to be teacher-centered. In 2022, the Ministry of Education and Culture Indonesia proposed Kurikulum Merdeka, the reformed version of the previous curriculum, which claimed to be more straightforward and flexible (Solihin, 2022), so that each local education stakeholder and schools can adjust the learning syllabus based on the student's needs. This shows just how much our English program provider heavily urges Indonesian educators to focus on the students' meaningful learning progress. Nevertheless, shifting roles from the teacher-centered approach to the learner-centered approach is not exactly easy. Teachers need to adapt themselves to have the significant amount of control they formerly had in the teacher-centered approach, being shared with the students in the learner-centered approach.

Generally, the traditional way of teaching demands teachers become the center of the classroom, leaving the students with almost nothing but some lectures and assignments to do (Murphy, Eduljee, & Croteau, 2021). On the other hand, the learner-centered approach emphasizes the student's participation in the learning process, and teachers are not the ones who direct all of the classroom activities. Instead, here, the teachers facilitate the appropriate learning environment, while how the learning activities proceed and the result of the activities are up to the students themselves. Dignath & Büttner (2008) found that the students who are given instructions explicitly in learning may have the beneficial effects of learning reduced. However, this does not mean that teachers do not have a big role in the classroom, as they still need to design the proper learning plan, motivate and help

the students in need, and guide them via brainstorming and discussion throughout their learning journey.

Considering the criteria of the learner-centered approach, the utilization of this learning approach is also proven to be preferred by students since they have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge (Murphy, Eduljee, & Croteau, 2021). However, in order to successfully carry out this approach and then achieve the supposed outcome in the classroom, it is crucial to figure out how well teachers understand and put into practice their roles in this way of teaching, taking into account what teachers think about their roles in this LCA and see if what they think matches what they do in class. This research wants to explore this connection, looking at how English teachers at SMKN 26 Jakarta handle and show the ideas of LCA-based teaching. By investigating the alignment between teachers' roles perception and their reported practices, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into the opportunities in fostering a genuinely learner-centered educational landscape. How teachers see their roles and what they do can be quite different, and there are very few sources of literature addressing this matter closely. Based on previous studies, the students' perceptions are more likely to be inquired about, as they are considered as the ones who take active participation in their learning. As a result, the teachers' perceptions are rarely discussed, especially the perception of EFL teachers in Indonesian schools. This study seeks to fill this research gap to acquire some insight of the learner-centered approach, especially about the teachers' roles, from the EFL teachers' viewpoint in the Indonesian high school setting.

1.2 Objectives/Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the perceptions of SMKN 26 Jakarta EFL teachers regarding their roles in the LCA and to assess the extent to which these perceived roles align with their actual implementation in the classroom.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is SMKN 26 Jakarta EFL teachers' perception of their roles in the learner-centered approach (LCA)?
2. To what extent do the teachers perform these roles in their LCA-based instruction?

1.4 Scope of the Study

This case design study focuses on exploring SMKN 26 Jakarta EFL teachers' understanding and actual performance of their roles in LCA. In this study, Richards & Rodgers's (2014) concept of teachers' role in LCA, with its four scales: *facilitator*, *need analyst*, *counselor*, and *process manager*, is used as the framework of analysis. Data of the study was collected through interviews and observation focusing on teachers' perceptions as they represent teachers' conception or understanding of the four scales based on the indicators (McMillan, 2016).

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study shall be useful to the following stakeholders:

1. EFL teachers

The findings of the study shall provide EFL teachers with insights into teachers' roles in LCA.

2. EFL programme provider

The findings shall be beneficial to EFL teachers' development program providers with insights into the needs of their target audience so that they will be more ready to deliver LCA-based instruction.

