

EFL TEACHERS' PERCEIVED CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE 21ST-CENTURY PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Pedagogical competence is considered very crucial in the teaching profession. It is one of the major prerequisites for teachers. Due to the massive and rapid change of science and technology in the current era, teachers should keep developing their competence. This research intended to investigate EFL teachers' perceived challenges in the implementation of 21st-century pedagogical competence. The study employed a qualitative case study. a semi-structured interview conducted to collect qualitative data from the participants. Included in this study were 4 EFL teachers of a school in Surakarta, Central Java of Indonesia. The findings indicated that the challenges were perceived as both internal and external factors. The internal factors deal with teachers' age and time management. The external factors deal with students' lack of motivation and unsustainable school facilities. The study suggested providing professional development programs for teachers about confronting the 21st-century education to keep teachers faddish of any adjustments, innovations, and modifications in education.

KEYWORDS: EFL teachers, pedagogical competence, 21st-century learning, professional development

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a global acknowledgment that teachers should be qualified with all the quintessential competencies and knowledge. Such fundamental acknowledgment is due to the pivotal role of teachers in education. A teacher is considered as the soul and the backbone of the classroom teaching and learning activities. Teachers assist students to maximize their potentials. Moreover, teachers act an incalculable role and share-worthy accountability to help and lead students to succeed in the educational lives. In other words, teachers have significant impacts on students' lives.

However, being a good teacher is not an effortless process. A teacher is a critical factor in students' learning, and his or her power can notably impact students' life. Teachers should go through never-ending challenges as they have responsibilities, such as developing students' potentials, transferring knowledge, clarifying values and promoting moral development (Suyanto & Jihad, 2012). Therefore, to play such a pivotal role, undoubtedly, it is necessary for the teachers to possess certain competencies to effectively accomplish their duties and to provide for qualities (Amosun & Kolawole, 2015). Furthermore, in order to be effective, a teacher should be competent, motivated,

and comprehensive of what makes a good teaching practice. Since teachers significantly affect students to become successful learners, it, therefore, is essential for them to understand and continuously develop their quality and professionalism in terms of their competence, or pedagogical practice (Ismail & Jarrah, 2019).

Teachers' quality is one of the key elements to give shape to successful learning. Teachers' quality is reckoned as one of the absolute factors influencing students' learning experience (Wichadee, 2010). Teachers are chargeable to guarantee and facilitate students to be their best versions. Teachers are in charge to encourage their students to have a better future. In a similar way, creating an attractive classroom situation, planning various learning activities, and using materials of instructions effectively are parts of teachers' responsibility (Richards, 2002).

In terms of the Indonesian educational system, teachers' quality is regulated in the Act of the Republic of Indonesia number 14 in 2005 about Teachers and Lecturers. A professional educator must have four major competencies; pedagogical competencies, personality competencies, social competencies, and professional competencies (article 10, verse 1). Further, teachers should also consider the students' interest and ability in conducting professional work. Regarding the social changes, teachers should cover themselves both as professional and society members. They not only have to serve for students' request and needs, but also to fulfill the stakeholders' demands. To sum up, teachers should perform and show their best in any situation. Therefore, it is clear that indeed teachers carry an unquestionably vital role in education as they are the "architects" of the next generation (Sisman & Ok, 2012).

Also, teachers' actions in the execution of the teaching and learning process should be undertaken by considering students' needs. Regarding the current era which is known as the 21st century, it is believed that there is a contrastive difference in terms of students' needs. In other words, students from the past years have different needs regarding the situation than do the students from the current era. This extent was strongly maintained by Bedir (2019) who elaborated on the differences in some sorts of terms, such as millennial students or 21st-century learning. Furthermore, Bedir (2019) in his study rationalized that 21st-century education manifests more projections on promoting certain pivotal skills. He certified that such skills are crucial to learn and to sustain the learning which does not meet the needs of contemporary students since the curriculum was not initially designed to meet the societies' demands. A similar viewpoint was perceived by Trilling & Fadel (2009), elaborating that the current education goal should also focus on developing students to acquire both skills and knowledge to organize the virtue of digital technologies in extending their opportunities. In addition, 21st-century learning focused on furnishing students with compulsory skills which they can use to compete and become successful in the globalized world. Moreover, it is a vital consideration for teachers to voluntarily accommodate themselves with information and skills adapted to the present situation in order to capably overcome threats and to accomplish the 21-century educational goals. In

line with this, teachers should possess a comprehensive understanding of technological, pedagogical and content knowledge (Ball, Thames, and Phelps, 2008).

One of the most substantial competencies, pedagogical competence is not merely seen as the way how teachers can use various teaching techniques or methods carefully. It further is about the acquisition of routines that every teacher undoubtedly needs in order to save time and energy for more significant aspects of the works. As cited in the Act of the Indonesian Republic in 2005 number 14 about educators (teachers & lecturers), it is mentioned that pedagogical competence refers to the ability to efficiently manage the students' learning. The pedagogical competence has been recognized as an ensemble of potential behaviors or capacities allowing for the efficient manifestation of activity, and it is considered as a minimum professional standard particularized by law, which should be achieved by professional teachers (Suciu & Mata, 2011). Effective pedagogical competence will help teachers in embodying skills in creating curricula that are designed to build on learners' present schemata and understanding and move those learners to more sophisticated and in-depth abilities, knowledge, concepts, and performances (Amosun & Kolawole, 2015). Furthermore, in the case of foreign language teacher education, there have been discussions among researchers discoursing about effective teacher characteristics by virtue of the goal of teacher education which is to produce qualified teachers (Bernhardt & Hammadou, 1987; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Vélez-Rendón, 2002). Specifically, the discussion has been concentrated on teachers' knowledge base in terms of both subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge.

Several studies on the pedagogical competence have been conducted by some educational experts. Firstly, Liakopoulou (2011) conducted a research aimed at exploring the kinds of pedagogical knowledge assessed through the teachers' exam and investigating types of qualifications which prospective teachers need. The finding showed that regarding qualification types that prospective teacher's needs, the exam questions do not seem to comprehensively assess teachers' abilities and attitudes. As a conclusion, the study stated that the criteria set by the government do not appear to be based on any obviously defined philosophy of pedagogical competence. Secondly, Amosun & Kolawole (2015) researched to investigate the pedagogical knowledge levels and skills of Nigeria's pre-school teachers. 58 pre-school teachers were randomly chosen from public schools in Ibadan city. By employing a descriptive survey research design, the study revealed that the level of pedagogical knowledge and skill competencies displayed by the pre-school teachers in Ibadan, Oyo state Nigeria was quite low. Thirdly, one of the newest pieces of literature, Astuti et al. (2019) conducted research about pedagogical competence aimed at investigating the EYL teachers' beliefs on pedagogical competencies and exploring how their beliefs were reflected in the teaching and learning process. The study revealed that teachers encountered several challenges in applying their beliefs on pedagogical competencies.

Although pedagogical competence has been a hot topic of interest among teachers and educational researchers, there has been no extensive exploration of such notions regarding the challenges,

particularly in the view of 21st-century education. Considering the aforementioned studies, with all these things in mind, this unique case was taken into a study aimed at filling the gap under the theme. The research questions were extended to; 1) what are internal and external factors contributing to challenges in the implementation?

2. METHODS

The study was conducted as a qualitative case study to probe into a description of an issue. The qualitative method was used because this study attempted to discover the particularities and discrepancies of data, instead of merely condensing limited views pertinent to the data. The case study research design was chosen due to the uniqueness of the phenomenon attracting the researcher to do an exploration. A case study enables researchers to develop an in-depth analysis of a case, a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Stake, 1995 and Yin, 2009 in Creswell, 2009). The study involved 4 EFL teachers in one of the schools in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. The subjects were purposively chosen due to the research goals. Two of them are female, and the rest are male. Further, their teaching experience ranged from 7 to 25 years.

The data were obtained by conducting a semi-structured interview. The instruments of this study were adapted from Wichadees (2010) framework of effective EFL teachers' pedagogical competence and the framework of 21st-century pedagogical competence of National Educational and Technological Standard (NETS) cited in Indonesia Teachers Professional Development Module (2019). Then, it was customized to be suitable for the research questions and theories. A semi-structured interview was preferred because it allows both the researcher and the participants to go beyond the prepared questions while maintaining a focus and consistency (Hamilton & Corbertt-Whittier, 2013). The interview was executed using the Indonesian language to facilitate subjects in providing details regarding the focused data. This study used the Interactive model of data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The procedure consists of collecting data, reducing data, display data, and drawing conclusions.

The interview was employed to collect the data in the form of information in regard to the teachers' shared perspectives on the internal and external factors which become challenges in the implementation of 21-century pedagogical competence in the EFL learning paradigm. In the data reduction process, the entire data were classified systematically. The grouping was based on the coded themes to portray any mandatory information relevant to the study problem. Concerning the data display, the properly grouped theme-based data were displayed into conceptual charts. In addition to this, the details of the interview transcriptions were also presented. At last, the findings of this study were carefully discussed.

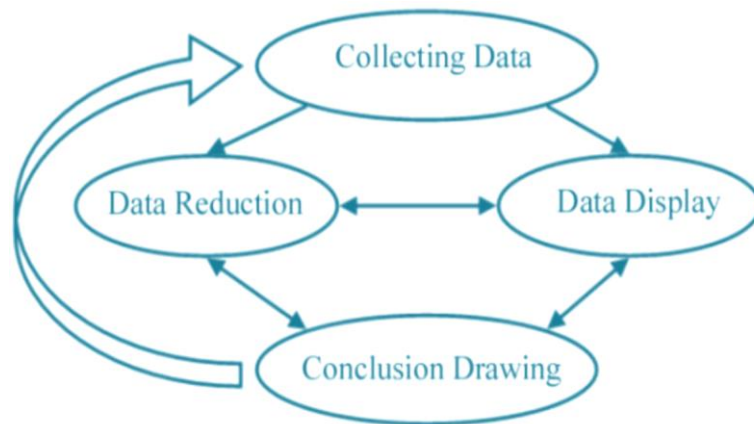


Figure 1. Interactive model of data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

3. RESULTS

The participants perceived their challenges in implementing the demanded 21st-century pedagogical competence. Furthermore, the challenges were classified into internal and external factors.

3.1 Internal Factors

On the realization of the 21st-century pedagogical competence, the participants acknowledged some internal factors which become challenges for them. With this regard, P1 acknowledged that the main internal factor that becomes a challenge for her is age. P1 acknowledged herself as a part of an old generation migrating to the new era of life, the era of digital media. P1 realized that she had limited knowledge about digital media if compared to other younger teachers. Nonetheless, P1 asserted that she always tried to catch up with the development by exposing herself to the use of technology. Further, she confessed to occasionally ask her students to tell her new things about such an extent.

P1: “The internal factors, honestly it is because I am considered as a generation which migrates to the new era of media. That is why I usually ask my students for help in terms of digital media, such as creating attractive slides.”

P2 acknowledged the capability to do time management as one of the internal factors which become the challenge for him to implement the 21st-century pedagogical competence. P2 realized that he had difficulty to be consistent with regard to time. According to him, it is difficult to have a regular schedule with the students as he has other administrative works to complete. Such administrative works consumed much of his time that he had less time to prepare his teaching well.

P2: “From myself, I think it is about time. It is difficult to manage the time so that I have to make some reschedules to my class because teachers have to do some

time-consuming administrative works from the department. It also has impacts on my preparation time.”

Similarly, P3 recognized time management as the internal factor affecting his way of realizing the pedagogical competence. P3 mentioned that he has a lot of activities that require him to spend much time. Such activities impacted his time to prepare materials for his teaching.

P3: “I think, the main problem is time. I have so many activities to do. For example, I have to review many articles. That is why I have very limited time to prepare my teaching materials.”

Also, P4 acknowledged her preparedness as the internal factor becoming a challenge toward her implementation of 21st-century pedagogical competence. P4 confessed that often she felt unsatisfied as she did not prepare her teaching sufficiently. Such a problem is due to the huge number of other works to do outside the class. However, P4 always tried to prepare her teaching in spite of the limited time.

P4: “Internally, it is all about my preparedness to teach. As I have to do many other works, I have limited time for my teaching preparation. I often feel unsatisfied with my teaching because of this problem. Yet, I always try to do preparation though I have very little time because preparation is important.”

3.2 External Factors

Some external factors which become challenges concerning the implementation of the 21st-century pedagogical competence were also acknowledged by the participants. P1 acknowledged that students' motivation is the main external factor which determines the success of teachers in conducting the teaching-learning process. It was inferred from P1's interview that students' internal motivation determines whether or not the classroom instructions are executed well.

P1: “I think, the external factor is students' motivation. It is very helpful if students are passionate or motivated to study. If so, they will work hard no matter what teachers asked them to do.”

P2 mentioned some problems which externally challenge him regarding the realization of pedagogical competence. The first problem is the facilities provided in the institution. P2 had experienced a problem related to technology. P2 mentioned that disruptions on internet connection have affected his teaching as a speedy internet connection is urgently needed in this current era of education. Regarding the facility, P2 mentioned that the availability of the room has become a problem. Furthermore, P2 asserted that all students have various competency levels, particularly in the early terms. Inferred from the interview results, P2 had a difficulty in creating adjustments to students with very contrastive ability levels.

P2: *“If we talk about technology, the problem can be an internet connection. Then, sometimes we have problems with the availability of the rooms. Also, the ability of students is a problem. Sometimes, in the early terms, we find students with very different ability levels.”*

Similar to P1, P3 deemed students’ motivation as an external factor affecting his effectiveness in teaching. He mentioned that students’ lack of motivation significantly affects their achievement in the class. Additionally, P3 underlined facilities as another problem, for instance, a broken projector. However, P3 realized that the facility is a complicated problem since the provisioning of facilities is closely related to an institution’s bureaucracy. Furthermore, P3 asserted that the rapid development of technology has become another challenge for him. Therefore, he keeps on learning to catch up with such an issue. Surprisingly, he confessed to having consulted some students regarding some new information.

P3: *“Facilities can sometimes be a problem. For example, I had an experience that the projector in the class was not working. It really affected what I have prepared. The facility is a bit complicated because it deals with calculation. Another problem is the students’ motivation. Students with low motivation should be improved, and it is not easy to do it.”*

Also, P4 highlighted students’ motivation as one of the most challenging external factors since it determines how students learn in the classroom. Similarly, the facility was also considered as another challenging external factor in realizing the pedagogical competencies. She mentioned that the disruptions to facilities would impact the use of learning materials and media that she had prepared. Accordingly, P4 suggested other teachers always prepare other options due to unexpected things that may happen in the classroom.

P4: *“I think, there are many external factors. It is usually related to the facilities. For example, a blackout of electricity and any unexpected things. That is why teachers should prepare their plan B, C or even D in case unexpected things like this happen. I guess another problem is students’ motivation.”*

4. DISCUSSIONS

Generally, there are factors influencing the success of teachers in conducting the teaching and learning process, particularly when implementing the pedagogical competencies. The factors can be from both teachers’ internal and external sides. However, it is undeniable that some factors may contribute to the ineffective execution of pedagogical competence in the teaching and learning process. In other words, some factors may be acknowledged as challenges.

As found by the researcher, there are some points that were considered as internal factors challenging the participants regarding the implementation of 21st-century pedagogical competence. Furthermore,

there are also some external factors challenging the EFL teachers' implementation of 21st-century pedagogical competence.

4.1 Internal factors

The first internal factor is age. It is broadly known that the term, 21st century, is closely related to the era of integrating digital media or technology. Such a term is considered as a modern era of education in which technologies are deliberately utilized to assist students' learning. Following such an issue, teachers' skills of using technology play a crucial role in order to be able to utilize technology to assist students' learning in an appropriate way.

However, it is undeniable that using technology is a kind of new approach in the Indonesian educational system. Pertinent to this issue, not all teachers get hold of the capability of integrating or operating technological tools, especially some senior teachers who have been teaching for more than 25 years. Those teachers are compelled to be hard-working to cope with such a problem. It is essential since they were not taught about the utilization of modern educational technological tools during their training. Due to such conditions, old teachers will experience anxiety when dealing with sophisticated technological tools. Moreover, they will see technology as a threat. This finding is in line with some previous researches which found that teachers can experience new technological developments in education as a threat, and technological innovations can be a cause of much anxiety (Goodwyn, Adams, and Clarke, 1997).

The second internal factor which becomes a challenge to the realization of 21st-century pedagogical competence is teachers' ability to manage time. Generally speaking, time is one of the most precious things in the world. Therefore, all people (including teachers) need to learn how to effectively manage time (Khan, et al., 2016). Concerning the teaching-learning process, the success of it can be enhanced by controlling and managing time appropriately. The finding confirmed the research by Horng (2010) and Master (2013), asserting that time management is a part of crucial elements for teachers' effectiveness and school's results. Further, it is in line with Khan, et al. (2016) who mentioned that time allocation of different classroom activities should be precisely considered as it is one of the most important components in teachers' time management.

4.2 External factors

As mentioned before, several aspects were known to be external factors challenging teachers in applying the 21st-century pedagogical competence. The first external factor contributing to the unsuccessful implementation of the pedagogical competence is students' motivation. Students' motivation is considered as an immense factor influencing the success of language learning (Ng and Ng, 2015). The students' intrinsic motivation will stimulate students to voluntarily learn everything which they consider as important things. Intrinsic motivation will lead students to do self-regulation. Self-regulation allows students to show engagement as they identify goals, create strategies to plan and manage resources, and monitor their own progress (Zimmerman, 2002). Moreover, students'

motivation will determine whether or not they are willing to do the classroom instructions and tasks. It is in line with Raiyn & Tilchin (2015), saying that students with high intrinsic motivation will use their interest and sense of satisfaction to give themselves challenges with any particular task.

Another contributive factor to the unsuccessful implementation of the 21st-century pedagogical competence is the facility. School facilities are considered important to support the learning process. Accommodating teachers and students is the essence of facilities as mentioned by Alimi (2004). Therefore, the quality and sustainability of the facilities should be seriously watched by stakeholders since they are vital in terms of supporting the teaching-learning process. To sum up, if facilities are available and efficiently exploited, they will positively affect the learning and make it more meaningful (Alimi, Ehinola, and Alabi, 2012).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Several factors were found contributing to the ineffective implementation of the 21st-century pedagogical competence. The factors are extended to internal and external factors. The internal factors contributing to the ineffective implementation of the 21st-century pedagogical competence are age and time management. In terms of age, old teachers have difficulties in adjusting themselves with the current educational situation, particularly on technology utilization. Old teachers tend to have limited knowledge about digital media if compared to younger ones. Such a condition requires them to work hard to catch up with the development. In terms of time management, teachers' administrative works, as well as other activities, were considered time-consuming. Such conditions impacted teachers' preparation time and teaching schedules. Teachers cannot prepare the learning material well, and they sometimes have to reschedule their classes.

The external factors contributing to the ineffective implementation of the 21st-century pedagogical competence are students' motivation and school facilities. It is generally believed that students' motivation is an immense factor in the success of language learning. It stimulates students to voluntarily do and learn everything which they consider important. In other words, students with low motivation will not do any of the teachers' instructions. This will result in fruitless teaching. Additionally, school facilities are considered important to support the learning process. Whereas, accommodating teachers' and students' activities is the essence of facilities. Therefore, the quality and sustainability of the facilities should be seriously watched by stakeholders since they are vital in terms of supporting the teaching-learning process.

The study has revealed some ways of the teachers in reflecting their perceived challenges their pedagogical competencies in the class. Also, the study is considered fruitful for teachers in terms of developing their professionalism. The study could serve as a reference or citation for other teachers, particularly for those who have limited teaching experience, in order to straighten up their pedagogical quality.

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