

TEACHER-CENTRED AND TEACHER CONTROLLED LEARNING: A POSTMODERNISM PERSPECTIVE

By

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ABSTRACT

The role of teachers in learning is central. It greatly influences the success and the quality of learning process. Yet, it remains lack of evidences in some areas such as diminishing the learners' learning autonomy. Language learners are positioned lower than the teachers. In decentralized learning, teachers are facilitators. As the result of this point of views, the learners are less appreciated for their imperfect learning behaviours for some reasons regarding for their potentials. Thus, this article is to criticize and to elaborate the evidences of teacher-centred learning and teacher-controlled learning in postmodernism paradigm and the realities in Indonesian efl perspectives which emphasizes on the main actors in learning and the power of learning. Yet, there is no absolute truth in terms of power in learning.

Keywords: *autonomous learning, decentralization, teacher-centred, teacher-controlled learning*

Introduction

Every language learner is dynamic (Misdi, 2013). A language learner may use his/her own learning strategies in enriching the goal of learning. Thus, language teachers keep learners learning by providing them a way of how to learn in different way (Kogan, 2007). They cannot leave them ignored so that learning activities run well in the class. Therefore, in this way, teachers are central actors in the class because teachers are mediators (Freeman, 2004; Gebhard, 2009) for students to learn in their classrooms.

Learning atmosphere in the classroom is complex. I mean the learners are heterogeneous. Single way of direction is unable to facilitate them all to learn. Thus learners' identity cannot be driven by teachers (Feinberg, 2007) as colonial did. This is the main issue which is discussed here. This is the issue of the truth. As Hayes (1995) in Graham (2009) indicates that still are schools in Malaysia and Thailand teacher-centred

learning to favour classroom centred. This is the same as in Indonesia (Suherdi, 2008) which rely heavily on teacher-centred. Teachers should be able to do all thing based on their expertise along with the approach chosen. Again, this writing is to condemn the 'irony' of learning itself. In terms of learning, the actors are learners, not the teachers. Consequently, repositioning the teachers' views is a must.

Teacher-centred and Teacher-control Learning

In case of teachers' participation within learning environment, teachers' roles can be viewed from the action given in the classroom. The demand of learning system as indicated in Thailand education system in Iemjinda (2005) shows that teachers are challenged to change their paradigm to move from being a teacher who delivers instruction in the classroom to a teacher who acts as a facilitator in a learner-centred classroom. It indicates that this model of professional development is capable of providing a means by which the desired change to a

learner-centred. The findings also suggest that teachers are professionals who responsible for the quality of the learning process. Teachers are the main actors since they design and implement the course design into teaching activities.

In modern perspective, teachers give efforts to improve the learning quality. The quality of teachers gives impact on learners. Teachers are regarded as the sources. They are hoped to provide learning model so that learners take new knowledge. Dam (2011) says that it is the responsibility of the teacher for introducing activities which conform to the principles mentioned above, i.e. activities to be taken over by the learners. First and foremost, an activity must give space for differentiated input as well as differentiated outcome.

Teaching methods or approaches such as Grammar Translation Method, Total Physical Response, or even communicative approach, influence learning atmosphere. In specific cases, this means that a weak learner as well as a strong learner feels challenged without being threatened, and that both types of learners gain from the activity. It implies that the teachers are central. It can be said that teachers will be the main factors of the learners' success.

Whereas teacher-centered learning requires high quality of teachers, teachers can be seen from the perspective of power. In learning context which applies a certain teaching method, the control remains on teachers. So, the teachers hold power. It is possible teachers control the turn-takings in the learning activities, especially in big class.

The ability of teachers in controlling turn-taking during class activities will give a *fair play*. Teachers should be able to distribute fairly. Thair & Treagust (1997) shows the important roles of teachers in learning. They observed the education development in Indonesia, especially in practical context, the teacher centered is applied. Therefore, developing professionalism of the biology teachers, for instance, is a must. Wahyudi

& Treagust (2004) indicate that in Indonesian context is teacher-centered minded. Teachers-centered approach demands high qualified teachers so that they can be good models for their learners. However, Madya (2010) found that so far efl teachers are difficult to enrich the goal of efl learning in Indonesia. teachers are still struggle to improve and dominate the class interaction so that the learners are hard to practice and to develop their English competence e.g. speaking skill.

Postmodernism critics

When the central issue in our education, especially efl learning, Foucault in Cahoon (1996) found interesting to challenge as indicated in the presented above. Teachers are the main discussed since both in teacher-centered learning and teacher-controlled learning, learners are position in somewhere out of the discussion. This is an issue of the truth which needs to be criticized. The issue in which the teacher dominates the class interaction and another issue of ignoring learners are the central tendencies to criticize. The followings are the evidences of the truth that there is no absolute truth in learning. The actors are discussed within findings of research across the nations and triangulated with the author's learning and teaching experiences.

Epstein in Kohn (2008) sees that teacher-learners interaction in post-modernism is attempted to be humanize so that humanities will create new cultural position, reflexivity and negotiation. Giroux (2004) criticizes the area of pedagogy which is frozen about its concern on social affects and critical reflection to be attentive to ethical dimensions of their own practices. It is in frozen for some evidences: the power and the history of our education.

Children have learned and developed language since in the early childhood subconsciously (Piaget, 1971). Children learn a language under circumstances accordingly. Children develop his language abilities through the environment and in this atmosphere within their families, and peers, they potentially promote

multilingual lingual community (Bearne & Grainger, 2003). It can be seen in broad sense that children as language learners develop their language competence themselves by utilizing the circumstances.

Language learners use their self-development competence to adjust their learning strategies and English language teachers/lecturers can learn improving their instructional strategies from this adjustment (Griffiths, 2008). A critical point of views was given in Hongkong (Sengupta, 1998). The point shows that teachers need to reconsider their teaching method by addressing themselves whether they are real teachers or not. This is an interesting point since they criticize themselves in terms of ways of teaching - the way to execute learning environment positively. The issue is then the power and truth. The actors in learning a language are learners and teachers in another direction.

There is another illustration in terms of the use of ICT since it is common that teachers are left behind the learners. Yet, learning language in a modern is assigned by the use of ICT and communicative approach. However, the problem is there is no guarantee of the success. Living in postmodern era, the thought is dynamic. Postmodern categories (Finch, 2013) include crossing of borders (breaking down of barriers), relativism (conceptions of time, space, truth and moral values are not absolute but are relative to the persons or groups holding them), self-contradiction (duplicity; the conscious making of self-undermining statements), self-reference and self-reflexiveness (use of meta-language and self-constructing forms). Misdi (2013) finds that even for silent language learners, they learn in their learning strategies to reach their target. Having no contribution in the class discussion, good language learners are possible to absorb and calculate the happenings in the classroom so that they can optimize their achievement.

Samardzija (2011) also suggest that language learners are able to work together in task or group activities. This is another finding which correlates

with characteristics of GLLs. Democratic way of decision making, expression of ideas and belief are the other results of being match in learning.

Here, in learning activities, teacher which is so central in modern era which is reflected through teacher-centered learning and teacher controlled learning is shifted through student-centered learning and reflexive and autonomous learning which is no standard of teaching so that both teacher and students are central actors in the class. students is self-directed learners in decentralized setting of activities while teacher's controlled which is all totally English standard is avoid. Using task based instruction is suggested to develop and establish autonomous learning. Breen & Candlin (1980) in Finch (2004) suggest learning task provide a framework for meaningful interaction to propose meaningful interaction within learning activities by providing opportunities for learners to use new language structures and items through collaboration with others. It is also to subsequently engage in more independent use of the structures they have internalized. From here, then the learners are directed to use the structures in more complex tasks.

The tasks thus combine (or encourage) many of the postmodern features of TEFL theory and practice collaboration, autonomy, student-centeredness, and negotiation of meaning. Tasks involve the students in their learning, and in so doing, promote active decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, and responsibility of learning. Furthermore, they included formative self-assessment in this new approach to learning, by requiring learners to set goals, assess their achievements, and reflect on their needs. This is real decentralization of learning.

It is interesting to note that by applying TBI and TBL, critical thinking can be developed as the one of the characteristics of postmethod paradigm (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). It gives chance for all students to get out from the silent atmosphere. Kumaravadivelu (2003) then suggests that in learning English in the paradigm of postmethod is to (1) maximise learning

opportunities, (2) minimize perceptual mismatches. (3) facilitate negotiated interaction-promote learner autonomy and to raise cultural consciousness. In this paradigm, English is learned in terms of local cultures so that standard English is less appreciated since the target is the mutual goal of learning needs in global sense. Learning to learn is a meant to realize the opportunities to open the knowledge which is not only exist in the classroom but also out class sources (Kohn, 2008; Samanci, et al (2010).

Dilemma between the two concepts of teaching: personal experiences

The author has experienced that in both learning and teaching have to be in balance. Teacher-centered learning is suitable for its own context since many regions in Indonesia, still difficult to apply this approach for some reason: number of students in every class and the level of readiness of learners' competence. Muslim et al (2010) found that by using local perspective, students were easier to comprehend the English text written in the books. It implies that local identity in English book texts help students than the absence of this paradigm. From here, students are promoted to cover both local and foreign awareness without the doctrine of the teachers blindly.

At the same time, student-centered learning is suitable for small class (Galen, 2010). At the same time, for Indonesian context, the class is big. The class, teacher change and teaching access are complex (O'sullivan, et al, 2008). It needs big efforts to reform and to make adaptation in every aspect of our teaching and learning practices. Thus, to apply student-centered learning approach with its implication, we need to improve first our resources as Gebhard (2009) indicates that teachers of efl class need to improve their professionalism in teaching method. Teacher-centered and teacher-controlled learning to comment, are still relevant at this moment of efl context in Indonesia.

Conclusion

As my conclusion, teacher-centred and teacher-controlled learning seem untouchable for critics due to their important roles in efl class. However, the truth conforms that individuals of learners are neglected. In learning, learners are central; learners are the actors, not the teachers. They are heterogeneous. They are autonomous learners with their learning strategies. Thus, as independent learners, they can enrich good achievement, and teachers, therefore, should as facilitators to help learners gaining their dreams. It is, however not the right time to apply single approach student-centered in all area of learning environment due to the complexities of the learning environment, especially in Indonesia.

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