

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

English has long been playing a significant role in Indonesia since it is a foreign language required for facing globalization. The growing role of English as an international language of communication has placed it at the center of the national education priorities in many countries, and English language teaching has been given a certain place within the education system, including in Indonesia. In the recent Indonesian curriculum “*Kurikulum Merdeka*”, English has been introduced from the primary school to the university level, and yet many Indonesian high school students are not confident enough to speak English. The English communicative competence of the school graduates is generally low, as only a few of them are able to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings effectively in English (Maulana, 2021). There have been challenges to the successful use of teaching strategies. As stated by Lowenberg (1991), English is a foreign language that comes with its challenges for both students and teachers. The strategies used by Indonesian EFL teachers in language classrooms do not always meet the dynamic requirements of English as an international lingua franca, resulting in the inconsistency of language proficiency among students.

Additionally, the broader education context in Indonesia worsens these challenges. According to Lie et al. (2022), English is considered the language of meritocracy, which puts pressure to teachers and students trying to achieve high scores. Such pressure may create a focus on tests and not real language use. So, the practical side of English in real life is frequently not practiced, purely on the basis that one can, for example, say everything that they know to be correct in grammar but cannot communicate to somebody. One way to address this is to move from a focus on performances of tests to strategies for

developing teaching that stimulates communication and practical language use so that students are not just prepared to pass tests but are also able to use English in their everyday life.

In Indonesia, English teaching is still mainly conducted using the traditional method of teacher-centered learning, or the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), which typically places strong emphasis on memorization of grammar rules, vocabulary lists, drillings, and translation of English texts into the first language, or L1. While this method can help learners understand the structural characteristics of English and improve their reading and writing skills, it is likely to neglect the pragmatic aspect of language learning—speaking. So, the learners tend to be passive recipients of information rather than being active users of the target language, or TL. They may pass writing activities but not possessing the ability to speak confidently. Benati (2018) argues that the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) implicitly assumes a policy stating that students who are proficient readers and writers do not necessarily become effective communicators. This kind of orientation against language diminishes the importance of communication in the classroom, so most learners do not feel confident speaking, are afraid of making mistakes, or are detached from interactive exercises. With the passage of time, this orientation not only limits their potential to speak but also takes away their motivation and confidence so that it becomes more and more challenging for them to implement English for real, actual functions outside the classroom.

To address the concerns mentioned above, it is important to realize better teaching methods are appropriate for the educational contexts in Indonesia. Aligning to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) claim that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is the most effective teaching approach to improve students' communicative skills. Additionally, it is the most often used approach when teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) and

as a second language (ESL). Musthafa (2001) asserts that *the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the classroom requires the adoption of a teaching method that prioritizes interaction or active student engagement and authentic language use in everyday life*. The latter claim is also supported in that English teaching in Indonesia needs to appreciatively consider the Indonesian socio-cultural as well as linguistic context and incorporate it into its teaching syllabus and methods (Marcelino, 2008). Attention on context-sensitive, interactive learning may raise students' motivation to learn, which lead to increased proficiency in English and allow for English language learning to play the expected role in the national curriculum.

Despite the seemingly improved teaching of English in Indonesia over the years, the overall level of English proficiency among Indonesian students remains fairly low. The standard of teacher competence themselves is one of several contributing factors. Lie et al.'s (2007) research discovers that a great number of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers are having difficulty maintaining their level of proficiency in English. This is bound to impact their teaching effectiveness because partial mastery of the language constrains the variety of input, illustrations, and explanations that they are able to provide to students. Further, as Mistar (2005) highlights, the majority of teachers in Indonesia lack of appropriate continuing professional development. Without such ongoing support, teachers are much less likely to be exposed to the most recent pedagogical advances and therefore less likely to try out new student-centered practices known to increase engagement in learning. "Unstructured professional development also prevents the reflective process that is critical for teachers to adapt and change their practices in classrooms." Hence, the majority of EFL teachers resort to traditional methods, such as grammar-translation and rote memorization, that may allow learners to acquire structural information on English yet offer little opportunity for communicative practice. This lack of

practice in real communication hinders learners' ability to acquire fluency, which is a vital component of communicative competence. Fluency requires students to be given practice opportunities to participate in natural conversations where they negotiate meaning, express personal thoughts, and respond spontaneously. Where instruction does not leave space for such activities, students are likely to be unable to use English beyond the classroom setting. The integration of teachers' low competence, insufficient professional development, and the application of conventional methods therefore significantly contributes to the generally low level of English proficiency among Indonesian learners.

Communicative English Language Teaching (CELT), or more commonly known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is in great accordance with the objectives of the Indonesian curriculum today. The requirement of Indonesian learners namely for the centers of learning EFL is only focused on the promoting of communicative competencies as a main purpose (BSKAP No.32-H-KR-2024, hlm. 165), and the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in particular is designed as a highly student-centered one focusing on transforming learners from being “not able” into “able and confident speaker”. (BSKAP No.32-H-KR-2024, hlm. 166). Consistent with this vision, CLT advocates for the use of authentic materials that replicate authentic language and communicative events, allowing for the meaningful use of English by learners. Classroom tasks in CLT are designed to increase learners’ self- confidence, reinforce listening and speaking skills, as well as experience a sense of achievement when classroom input is related to authentic contexts. In the end, both CLT and the *Kurikulum Merdeka* are hinged upon the same pedagogical value: developing students’ communicative competences in language learning that is active, meaningful and learner-centered.

Many schools and colleges in Indonesia implement the CLT approach in their English learnings. Learners are expected to have English skills beyond grammar rules and

vocabulary lists; they basically need to have communicative competence, especially for speaking and listening. This is an awareness that is still developing. Students enrolled in CLT-based learnings were found to exhibit higher oral ability, improvement in listening skill, and higher motivation to use language further than in the classroom context. When provided opportunities to talk and negotiate meaning or simply express their individual opinions, students learn in an active and student-oriented way. The implementation of CLT in Indonesia is certainly useful; however, it faces several challenges. Large classes, time limitations or delays, and the lack of authentic resources or technology in specific schools pose significant challenges. In addition, most of the teachers are still using traditional methods, as they are more appropriate and easier to set up in exam-oriented situations. At times, such obstacles prevent CELT from being able to fulfil its mandate fully. Even though it has not been commonly accepted in Indonesia, its existence is a way to improve the learning of the English language in Indonesia to be more communicative and practical.

Among the critical challenges in the practice of CLT is the reality that many teachers today are not yet in control of a firm and final grasp of its theoretical underpinnings. Without complete understanding of the roots of CLT, teachers tend to misread its goals and therefore form wrong classroom procedures as well as unsatisfactory learning achievements. For instance, there are a few remaining English teachers applying nearly all the traditional, teacher-centered strategies with mere attention to grammatical rules, lists of vocabulary, and sentence structures without developing real connections with actual life communication. The strategy might allow learners to memorize patterned language but won't be likely to facilitate learners developing the ability to employ English in communicative situations. Thus, students have few opportunities to engage in language expression, negotiate meaning, or even produce conversations that are real uses of the language. The absence of communicative practice demotivates students and denies them

the opportunity to develop confidence in speaking and listening. Professional growth, authentic teaching materials, and continuous training that emphasizes CLT principles would rectify such solutions. Once these problems are resolved, Indonesia would be able to achieve the full potential of CLT, creating classrooms where English is not only studied but also used as a facilitator of communication.

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has merit, but its implementation in Indonesia has some challenges. For instance, they are often not trained to teach using CLT, and there are few resources to facilitate such teaching. Differences in culture how Indonesian students and teachers interact in the classroom may also vary among cultures. As for local EFL teachers and *PPG (Pendidikan Profesi Guru)* as an Indonesian Teacher Professional Development, new and inspiring teachers need to understand and accept CLT effectively. This study was done to see how teachers feel about CLT and how they can use it in class. Knowing their philosophies and teaching habits can help us better implement CLT and make it more viable for students.

Despite the seemingly improved English teaching in Indonesia over the years, the overall level of English proficiency among Indonesian students remains fairly low. The standard of competence of the teachers themselves is one of several contributing factors. Lie et al., (2007) research discovers that a great number of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers are having difficulty maintaining their level of proficiency in English. This is bound to impact their teaching effectiveness because partial mastery of the language constrains the variety of input, illustrations, and explanations they are able to provide to students. Further, as Mistar (2005) highlights, the majority of teachers in Indonesia lack appropriate continuing professional development. Without such ongoing support, teachers are much less likely to be exposed to the most recent pedagogical advances and therefore

less likely to try out new student-centered practices known to increase engagement in learning. “Unstructured professional development also prevents the reflective process that is critical for teachers to adapt and change their practices in classrooms.” Hence, the majority of EFL teachers resort to traditional methods, such as grammar-translation and rote memorization, that may allow learners to acquire structural information on English yet offer little opportunity for communicative practice. This lack of practice in real communication hinders learners' ability to acquire fluency, which is a vital component of communicative competence. Fluency requires students to be given practice opportunities to participate in natural conversations where they negotiate meaning, express personal thoughts, and respond spontaneously. Where instruction does not leave space for such leave activities, students are likely to be unable to use English beyond the classroom setting. The integration of teachers' low competence, insufficient professional development, and the application of conventional methods therefore significantly contributes to the generally low level of English proficiency among Indonesian learners.

The focus of inquiry is the teachers' beliefs and practices in terms of having the same or different goals with regard to the current national curriculum in Indonesia and the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), respectively. The researcher in this report integrates CLT constructs or components—meaning-focused instruction, target language exposure, active student engagement, authentic language use, contextual, learner-centered approach, and task-based learning—to determine if these notions are being implemented in actual teaching and learning situations. The extent to which the teacher's classroom behavior reflects the ideas regarding language instruction held by the teacher can give an idea about the real-life problems and challenges they face. It as well reveals whether application of CLT is being internalized or personality being acted as a formality? This study attempts to bridge the theory-practice gap by focusing on the empirical analysis

of actual teaching practices, stressing the effect of beliefs on teaching practice and its implications for English language learning in Indonesia.

Teacher beliefs are particularly influential on the implementation gap. Teachers employ their beliefs as filters for determining on how to teach and interpret innovative educational ideas (Musthafa, 2001). The belief is not in aligned with CLT and, therefore, classroom practice generally moves to teacher-centered instruction when the beliefs are combined with elements of non-L2 use or focus on form instead of fluency. Benati (2018) insists that teachers' awareness about methods of SLA is also equally important as how some language policies guide the use and effectiveness of communicative strategies. These problems are exacerbated by contextual factors such as large classes, examination-based assessment and limited exposure to authentic English in Indonesia (Lie et al., 2022; Zein, 2017). As a result, understanding what instructors believe can be an important first step in improving communicative pedagogy.

In an attempt to bridge these ideal policies with classroom practice, Indonesia has begun to emphasize teacher professional development through the creation of programs such as Teacher Professional Education Program (TPEP) or *Pendidikan Profesi Guru (PPG)*. This programme has been created with a view to facilitate improvement and modernisation in teacher's proficiency for non-teacher narcissus under Teaching to Transform Program. When delivered as ongoing, job-embedded and collaborative learning, such professional development has a measurable impact on teachers' practices (Darling- Hammond et al., 2017) and students' outcomes. Recent researches also indicate that well- organized pre-service teacher education programs can affect the beliefs of teachers towards communicative teaching and their competence in conducting CLT (Yumarnamto, 2024). Nevertheless, there have been few studies examining how EFL in-service teachers

understand CLT beliefs and how their belief systems have an impact on their actual classroom practices under the TPEP context or *PPG*.

1.2 Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Given the gap mentioned above, the present study aims to explore EFL in-service teachers' beliefs and their implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) within the context of TPEP. The research explores the extent to which teachers' classroom behaviors are consistent with these seven components of CLT—communicative competence, meaning-focused instruction, target language use, active learner participation, authentic language use in classroom settings and beyond them, contextualized learning environment, learner-centeredness, and task-based learning. By investigating such components, the study intends to expose how much teachers' beliefs align with or deviate from enactment of classroom practices. The alignment is important, as teacher beliefs act as cognitive filters that influence choices and decisions, the acceptance of teaching options, and the uptake of pedagogical improvement. This research is intended to contribute to the exploration of how teachers' beliefs align with their real instructional practices and shed more light on the persistent theory-practice gap in CLT. The results are also expected to provide relevant references for strengthening CLT implementation and improving the quality of communicative English teaching. Therefore, in accordance with the study aims, this study addresses the following research questions:

- (1) What are the underlying beliefs of EFL in-service teachers' teaching practices in the classroom related to CLT?
- (2) How do they enact their classroom practices related to CLT?

1. 3 Research Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to explore EFL teachers' belief and practice in implementing Communicative English Language Teaching (CLT) within the context of the In-service Teacher Professional Education Program (TPEP) in Indonesia. To achieve the above-stated purpose, the research has the following specific objectives:

- To explore the underlying beliefs of in-service EFL teachers on CLT.
- To investigate how the teachers enact their classroom practices related to CLT.
- To offer some suggestions for improving the efficacy of in-service teacher continuing professional development, in particular for facilitating the take-up and implementation of CLT methods.

Addressing these particular objectives, this study intends to produce rich data that can shed light on language teaching practices, teacher beliefs, and the outcomes of professional development programs, especially in the Indonesian EFL context.

1. 4 Key Theories and Concepts:

Teacher Beliefs

Teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and thinking are one aspect of their beliefs. They possess their own predispositions and they hold different beliefs (Borg, 2003). The beliefs that teachers' hold about teaching, learning and their place in the classroom.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT focuses on the communicative capacity of learner and to communicate meaningfully in a speech community a speaker must acquire the ability to use the language accurately

and appropriately (Richard & Rogers, 2001). It views interaction as the medium and the purpose of language learning, advocating teaching which encourages learners to engage themselves in a real communication whereby they can learn the language to be used as a useful tool for life.

Teacher Professional Development

Apart from teachers' initial training, they also have to be well informed and appropriately trained in modern curricula, psychology and pedagogy of the learner and new findings in teaching and learning, and therefore they need quality in-service training too (Euryodice, 2004). Professional development includes all the learning experiences provided to the teachers to improve their mastery of their profession.

1. 5 Critical Evaluation of Theoretical Perspectives

Although the theories chosen are strong for modeling EFL teachers' beliefs in relation to CLT, they have significant limitations:

Complex Beliefs of Teachers: Teachers' beliefs are often complex and, at times, peculiar, and may not align well the existing theories. Such complexity can result in existing models not fully explaining observed inconsistencies in practice.

Cultural context: The context of Indonesian education brings with it its own set of specific difficulties that make generalized theories of teacher belief and practice less transferable. The role of local culture on the implementation of educational practice needs more investigation to better understand how local culture impact on CLT is delivered.

Research Gap: There is a lack of empirical research in terms of Indonesian EFL teachers' beliefs on CELT, especially under the context of TPEP (Teacher Professional Educational

Program). This research gap is what this current study attempts to fill by being able to shed light on the characteristics by which these beliefs are expressed in their conduct, and often reading to misapprehensions.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

This study also results in a contribution to the academic area of language teaching methodology through its investigation into EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of CLT. The study contributes to a better theoretical and practical implementation of the CLT approach by examining teachers' beliefs about CLT values, their preference for implementing this approach, and the contextual factors that may influence those beliefs.

From a practical perspective, the insights of this study could possibly guide the development and delivery of in-service teacher professional development programs, such as the TPEP in Indonesia. The research study may be useful for program developers and policy makers by investigating the TPEP's influence on teachers' beliefs and practices, allowing them to adapt their interventions to more effectively facilitate the adoption of CLT in English learning. The results should contribute to greater success in the teaching and learning of linguistic outcomes, more student successes, and a higher quality of education in Indonesia.

The broader implications of this study, however, may be beyond academic realism, for it seeks to shed light on societal and policy-making matters related to EFL in Indonesia. Understanding the challenges and contextual conditions that inhibit the adoption of CLT enables policy support and learning materials to address them. This, in turn, can empower EFL teachers in Indonesia to enhance educational equality and promote the development of 21st-century skills among Indonesian learners, helping them succeed in their personal and professional lives within a globalized context.

The value of this study is that it can provide a holistic perspective that is useful for both theoretical and practical aspects of language teaching and accommodate urgent academic demands as well as policy-related challenges in the Indonesian EFL context.

1.7 Definition of Key-terms

1. TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language): Teaching English to students of all ages and backgrounds with the goal to improve acquisition of language skills including speaking, listening, reading and writing within diverse pedagogical contexts (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).
2. CLT (Communicative Language Teaching): CLT aims to enable learners to communicate in the target language and learners use the target language great deal through communicative activities such as language games, role plays and problem solving (Larsen-Freeman, 2011).
3. Teacher beliefs: The assumptions, values, attitudes, and views held by teachers about learning, teaching, and learners that influence their own practices (Pajares, 1992).
4. Teaching Strategies: Specific methods and activities that teachers use in the classroom to assist students in their learning and what they practice in teaching (Richards, 1998).
5. TPEP (Teacher Professional Education Program): A planned professional development intervention designed to enhance the perceptions, competencies and knowledge of qualified educators and offered during their teaching careers to enhance the quality of education (Desimone, 2009).