

## EFL Teachers' Level of Awareness of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teachers' Roles

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**Abstract.** This study aimed at investigating EFL teachers' level of awareness of 21<sup>st</sup>-century teacher roles in public Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta. This study was descriptive quantitative using survey design to collect the data from 50 EFL teachers selected based on purposive sampling. The data were collected using an adapted questionnaire contained 36 statements and used a modified Likert scale of four points. The findings of this study indicated that the EFL teachers' level of awareness of 21<sup>st</sup> century's teacher roles was moderate (mean = 116.82) and there is no significant differences in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the level of awareness of 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers roles (sig. 2 tailed value was above 0, 05). These revealed that some 21<sup>st</sup>-century teacher roles have been acknowledged by the teachers and the other roles have not been agreed upon by the teachers. Based on the findings, it was recommended that professional development programs related to how teachers formulate the concept of how they see themselves to be 21<sup>st</sup> century English teachers need to be highlighted.

**Keywords:** EFL Teachers, Awareness, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teachers' Roles

### 1 Introduction

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world is surrounded and immersed by sophisticated technology and it leads to the rapid changes in many aspects including in education [1] [2]. The changes in education are due to the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Consequently, educational systems face a great change in it where traditional teaching can not be applied anymore. It should be transformed regarding the demands of teaching and learning standards in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The standards and regulations related to 21<sup>st</sup>-century teaching and learning are determined as the consideration for the education practitioners in holding the education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills designs a framework of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills that consists of core academic subjects, students' skills outcomes in the terms of learning and innovation, information, media and technology, and life and career, and the support systems to achieve those skills [2]. All of these skills will support students' learning, life, and work. Thus, 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning aims to support the students to have those skills. Similar to this framework, the *3 x 3 model of 21st-century learning* also proposes the content knowledge of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning which includes foundational knowledge, meta knowledge, and humanistic knowledge that should be included in the teaching and learning process [3]. Besides that, the International Commission of UNESCO proposes four pillars of education that should be considered by the teachers in teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they are *learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be* [4]. These standards of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning are the efforts to solidify the success of the students in their school, work, and life in the future. Therefore, they are expected to be integrated into the teaching and learning process of all subjects including English subjects. Regarding English language teaching, the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL)* and *The Nations's World Language Educators* propose the standard of language teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century called World-Readiness Standards for Language Teaching [5]. It consists of 5 goals area (Communication, Cultures, Connection, Comparisons, and Community) and 11 standards (Interpersonal communication, Interpretive communication, Presentational communication, Relating cultural practices to perspectives, Making connections, Acquiring information and diverse perspective, Language comparisons, Cultural comparisons, School and global communities, and Lifelong Learning). In the context of Indonesia, Indonesia has a national curriculum which regulates the objectives of teaching English and how English taught ideally. That national curriculum is formulated and adjusted with 21<sup>st</sup> century standards, that is why during the period of 21<sup>st</sup> century, Indonesia had proposed more than one national curriculum. Hence, it will guide the English teachers to lead their classrooms based on the needs of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning. According to the ministry of national education in 2006, the objectives of teaching English are developing students' communicative competence, encourage students' awareness of mastering English, and developing students' cross-cultural understanding [6]. Then, the 2013 curriculum came as the revision of KTSP curriculum and it has important standards required for the teachers to develop students' communicative competence through providing meaningful learning, student-

centered, providing learning material, topic and project that are close to students' real-life situation, facilitating scientific approach as the way of the students to learn English, playing important role as language user and learner, providing authentic material, and giving opportunity to the students to learn English for functional communications through authentic texts and the real language use [6].

The regulation and the demands above bring new challenges and demands for language teaching standards. The demand is more like how the teaching and learning process should be adjusted with today and future needs. It should become the new beginning for the teachers, as one of the vital elements and the support systems, to develop their competences in order to facilitate the students to have the skills needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to achieve the objectives of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning and national education. The high standards of demands can be challenges for the EFL teacher especially for the teachers who already have experienced teaching before the 21<sup>st</sup>-century comes with different demands and regulations since those demands and the regulations affect the roles of teachers. The new era assigns new challenges and duties to the modern teacher. 21<sup>st</sup> century comes as the new era for the teachers where teachers' roles become more complex, so that assisting students' learning through playing various new roles aside from the main source of knowledge is required [7] [8] [9] [10]. It can be said that there is transformation in the way the EFL teachers teach English to the students. Nowadays, the teachers are expected to utilize technology in their teaching, create a dynamic learning environment, encourage student-centered learning, activate students' critical thinking skills, etc [10]. On the other hand, the traditional teaching is no longer relevant for the needs of the students today and it is not able to respond to the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. However, when it comes to the practices in the field, based on result of the interview from some teachers, it was found that the teachers were still limited in integrating technology in their classroom. They assumed that they did not have enough capability in operating technology. Moreover, smart phone was regarded as "obstacle" for the teaching and learning process rather than a tool for supporting learning activities. Likewise, related to the developing students' critical thinking skills and discovery learning, the teachers argued that it was so hard to do because the curriculum or the syllabus gave them limited time and the students did not get used to doing so especially in English language learning. Some of the teachers claim that those kinds of activities suit the science education rather than English lesson. Therefore, spoon-feeding still became the choice of some teachers in delivering teaching material. Besides, teachers' and students' interaction on social media also still limited. From this reality, it can be seen that what the teachers did and assumed did not reflect yet the demands of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning.

There have to endeavors from the teachers themselves, schools, and the stakeholders to overcome the problems faced by the teachers. Encouraging teachers' awareness related to 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning and their roles in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the first important thing needed to highlight in order to overcome the teachers' problems. Since awareness is an understanding of making decisions to do particular actions [11] [12], then there is a priori relationship between awareness and performance. Therefore, what the teachers do in their classroom is the result of their awareness. Henceforth, EFL teachers' awareness toward 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning and the demands is very essential to make them realize that educational systems are transforming and the needs of the students is already changing, so that the requirements of the way teaching and learning activities tend to be adjusted with the standards of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning. And as a result, with that awareness, the EFL teachers can determine appropriate roles to be played in English classrooms in order to pass the challenges and fulfill today's education demands. Those roles will help the students to not only have the ability to speak English but also help the students to achieve learning and educational objectives and to have 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills needed to survive and qualify in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workplace [13] [14] [15]. For this reason, it is very important for EFL teachers to have an awareness of 21<sup>st</sup>-century teacher roles.

Due to the importance of having an awareness of 21<sup>st</sup>-century teacher roles for the EFL teachers that have been explained in the previous paragraph, then the primary purpose of this study is to determine EFL teachers' level of awareness of 21<sup>st</sup>-century teacher roles in public junior high schools. More specifically, the research question of this study is 'what is the level of EFL teachers' level of awareness of 21<sup>st</sup>-century teacher roles in public junior high schools?' This study concerns to determine EFL teachers' level of awareness of 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher roles as the result of this study later can be the reference for either the teachers or the government which endeavors for the qualified EFL teachers to encourage them to learn more and work harder to be innovative and capable to pass the challenge of 21<sup>st</sup> century education. Moreover, it also can be the ground for further research in doing deep investigation regarding 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning and the teachers' professional development concerning the roles of teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and other issues.

## 2 Method

**Participants.** The participants of this study were 50 EFL teachers in public Junior High School in Yogyakarta. They were selected based on purposive sampling. The criteria of the teachers were the teachers who had  $\geq 15$  years teaching experience. This criterion was chosen because the EFL teachers who have been teaching for more than 15 years had experienced the changing of era, demands, and demands from time to time.

**Instruments.** The data were collected using an adapted questionnaire [13]. The questionnaire consisted of 7 roles of 21st-century teachers and each role has statements as the concrete action of those roles. The original questionnaire had 37 statements, but the writer reduced one statement after conducting the pilot study because that statement considered not valid. Thus, the questionnaire used contained 36 statements and used a modified Likert scale of four points of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

**Data Analysis.** The data from the questionnaire analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS.

## 3. Results and Discussion

In this section, the result of the study was displayed to answer the research question: “What is the level of EFL teachers’ awareness of 21st-century teachers roles in public junior high school in Yogyakarta”. In order to be able to determine the level of EFL teachers’ awareness of 21st-century teachers’ roles in public junior high school in Yogyakarta, mean score for the category of awareness level was decided and it was presented in Table 1. Meanwhile, mean score, standard deviations, and rank for EFL teachers’ level of awareness of 21st-century teachers’ roles showed in Table 2.

**Table 1.** Mean Score of EFL Teachers’ Level of Awareness of 21st Century Teachers Roles

Mean Score	Category
118 – 144	High
91 – 117	Moderate
64 – 90	Low
36 – 63	Not Aware

The table above informs about the mean score and category for determining EFL teachers’ level of awareness of 21st-century teachers’ roles. If the mean score from statistical analysis is 36-63, so the EFL teachers considered not aware of 21st-century teachers’ roles. Meanwhile, if the mean score is in the range of 64-90, it can be determined that the EFL teachers have low awareness of 21st-century teachers’ roles. Moreover, if the mean score is 91-117, then the EFL teachers categorized as Moderate for their awareness of 21st-century teachers roles. The last, when the mean score is 118-144, means that the EFL teachers’ level of awareness of 21st-century teachers roles is high.

**Table 2.** Mean and Rank of EFL Teachers' Level of Awareness of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teachers Roles

Types of Roles	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Technology Expert	16.22	1.741	5 <sup>th</sup>
Project Manager	16.06	1.963	6 <sup>th</sup>
Assessor	12.90	1.403	7 <sup>th</sup>
Entrepreneur	18.56	2.187	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Collaborator	16.48	1.798	4 <sup>th</sup>
Facilitator	19.90	2.131	1 <sup>st</sup>
Life-Long Learner	16.70	2.234	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Total	116.82	10.370	

Results from table 2 showed that the mean score of EFL teachers' level of awareness of 21st-century teachers' roles was 116.82. Based on the criterion mean, 91.00 – 117.00 were included as moderate. Thus, it can be concluded that the EFL teachers' level of awareness of 21st-century teachers was categorized as moderate. Furthermore, from the result obtained, the role of the teacher as facilitator seemed highly acknowledged by the teachers since it had the highest rank with a mean score of 19.90. Then, the second place was the role of teachers as entrepreneurs with a mean score of 18.56. It was followed by the role of the teacher as a life-long learner in the third position with a mean score of 16.70. Moreover, the teacher as a collaborator with a mean score of 16.48 was in the fourth rank. Unpredictably, the role of teacher as a technology expert was the fifth rank with a mean score of 16.22. Whereas, in 21st-century learning, integrating technology in the process of teaching and learning is the strongest characteristic of 21st-century learning. The next rank was a project manager with a mean score of 16.06 and the last rank was the role of the teacher as an assessor with a mean score of 12.90.

**Table 3.** Independent sample T-test difference between the mean ratings of male and female EFL teachers on the level of awareness of 21st-century teachers roles

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Sig. (2 Tailed)
Male teachers	10	118,10	9,110	0,667
Female teachers	40	116,50	10,744	0,639

Table 3 shows that male teachers have a mean score of 118,10 and a standard deviation of 9,110 with significant 2 tailed 0,667. While female teachers have a mean score of 116,50 and standard deviation 10,744 with significant 2 tailed 0,639. Since the value of significant 2 tailed for both male and female teachers is above 0,05, then it can be concluded that there are no significant differences in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the level of awareness of 21st-century teachers roles.

From the result of the study in Table 2, it was revealed that the EFL teachers' level of awareness of 21st-century teachers' roles in public junior high school in Yogyakarta that should be playing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is just moderate. This is a surprising discovery because it is the nineteenth year of 21st-century, but the teachers still do not have high awareness of their roles in this era. Whereas, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning highly requires the high level of teachers' awareness toward their roles since the roles of teachers give a big impact on students' input and output and the educational systems change due to the demand of 21st-century learning [13]. Similarly, in the teaching and learning process today, teachers hold the important roles to guide their students possessing the skills of the 21st-century [16].

Furthermore, if we closely look at the mean score of each role, it was found that they were included at a moderate level. However, they still had different mean score and they can be ranked based on the score to point out which roles were highest considered by the teachers until the lower rank. The role which came first was the facilitator. Being a facilitator in the 21<sup>st</sup> century obliges the teachers to create an environment that can facilitate the students to build effective communication, being free to express their ideas, filter and interpret information from the internet, and become autonomous learners [13]. It can be seen that this role is important to do by the teachers to guide the students on how to find and determine the right information from online sources and encourage the students to be independent, especially in learning English the students now can learn by themselves from the internet or particular platform. Thus, it will be very good if the EFL teachers have a high level of awareness toward this role.

The next role which had the top two mean scores was an entrepreneur. In doing the role as an entrepreneur, the teachers are required to be able to foster students' entrepreneurial mindset, identify business opportunities and ideas, encourage students' problem-solving skills, do improvisation, identified and empower students' talents, and producing something that can be commercialized [13]. It is linked to with the ideas from AACTE and P21 that 21st-century is related to the issue of global awareness; financial and economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy; and environmental concerns [16]. Entrepreneurship can be introduced to the students while learning English with a simple way, for example learning about procedure text, so that the teacher can ask the students to produce something and how to commercialize that product.

Moreover, the role of the teacher as a life-long learner came third. Life-long learner means the teachers should be a model of never stop learning, a model of global awareness, encourage students' curiosity, provide learning activities that involve all the senses, and teach the value of learning [13]. Soft skill is one of the important element in today's education that include character-building education, attitude, hardworking, resistance, confidence, technology mastering and life-long learning [17]. Related to global awareness, the teachers need to be up-to-date with the new information about what is going on in the world and upgrade their knowledge then bring all them in their teaching [17]. Meanwhile, a collaborator is the role of the teacher that came fourth. Acting as a collaborator means the teachers suggested to encourage effective group interaction, foster co-operation, and team-spirit, encourage students' critical thinking skills, collaborate with other stakeholders, and work with students in small groups [13]. The teachers need to be aware of this role in order to fulfill one of the skills of 21st-century learning that are learning and innovation skills including critical thinking and problem solving [2]. Likewise, the students should be guided to solve the problems collaboratively and involved in research-based project [18].

As we know 21st-century characterized by the development of sophisticated technology so that technology also becomes the part of teaching and learning equipment or media [19] [20]. Technology should not become a strange thing for the teachers because using technology in the classroom to support teaching and learning process is suggested most. The role of the teacher as technology expert include using technology in classroom instruction, having students use technology to find information, connecting with students on social media, giving internet-based assignment, and adapting software and hardware into learning tools [13]. However, the result of the study showed that the role of the teacher as a technology expert was just moderate and even it was the five rank. It indicated that the teachers do not enough consider the competences of operating and use technology to become the teaching equipment. In one short interview, most of the teachers admitted that students

were forbidden to bring phones in the classroom because it could be an obstacle in their learning process. Furthermore, only a few teachers who connected with students on social media. Whereas, social media can be the bridge between the teachers and the students to personally connected to communicate or discuss when face to face interaction cannot be handled [21].

The next role is project manager. Modern education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires the teachers to become a project manager to guide the students working their projects collaboratively, giving interdisciplinary, real-life situations, high order thinking, and research-based projects [13]. Real-life situations and interdisciplinary should be considered in the teaching material due to the greater global issue of education [22]. Nevertheless, this role came in the last two ranks. This role should be aware more. And the role of the teacher that was in the last rank was an assessor. As an assessor, the teachers should use E- assessment, various assessment strategies, tailored to the needs of the students' assessment, and performance based assessment [13]. The result of the study that found that the EFL teachers' level of awareness of 21st-century teachers' roles was moderate was similar to the result of the study from Kaegon, Leesi, Okata, and Fanny [13]. They also found that the teachers' level of awareness of 21st-century occupational roles was just moderate, even the two critical roles such as technical expert and project manager considerably low [13]. Additionally, it was also found that there is no significant difference between the male and the female teachers on their awareness level of 21st-century teachers roles. It matched with the research from [13] that also found the same result, both male and female EFL teachers had the same level of awareness of 21st-century teachers roles. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that professional development programs related to how teachers formulate the concept of how they see themselves to be 21st-century English teachers need to be highlighted in order to encourage good language teaching and learning.

#### 4 Conclusion

21st-century learning came up with multiple new demands and regulation. Then, EFL teachers' roles changed in order to fit those demands and the 21st-century students' needs. This is why this study aimed at investigating the level of EFL teachers' level of awareness of 21st-century teachers roles in public junior high school in Yogyakarta. The result showed that the level of EFL teachers' level of awareness of 21st-century teachers' roles in public junior high school was moderate and there are no significant differences in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the level of awareness of 21st-century teachers roles. It indicated that teachers' professional development programs related to teachers' readiness to be 21<sup>st</sup> century English teachers need to be increased by the government.

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