

TEACHERS APPROACH IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT: INDONESIAN IN-SERVICE TEACHERS BELIEFS AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Holding complex beliefs about teaching might create problems for English teachers. They sometimes are pushed to follow the new obligations given from the government and those new rules are not always in line with their beliefs. With that emerging issue, the researchers feel the need to investigate the gap between teachers' beliefs and their actual practices in the classroom. Thus, this current study was attempted to explore EFL teachers stated beliefs and their classroom practices regarding their approach in classroom management. There were three in-service teachers participated in this study. Data were triangulated by using semi-structured interview and classroom observations. The findings showed that there was only one participant who had a mismatch in regarding using first language (hereafter L1) and there were some incongruence among the participants' stated beliefs in term of instructional and people management.

Keywords: classroom management; first language; instructional management; teachers' beliefs

INTRODUCTION

Being a language teacher is not an easy task as what most people think. One of the burden that language teachers might encounter is they hold complex beliefs about teaching and learning. These beliefs further have a strong impact on classroom practices (Basturkmen, 2012; Farrell & Ives, 2014; Kuzborska, 2011). Their practices emerge as the result of their beliefs in teaching so that teachers have to improve their teaching gradually in order to attain a better teaching. It means that teachers cannot just merely rely on the practices without any attempts to expand them. They have to

reflect towards their activities conducted in the classroom in order to improve their teaching.

A large amount of the literature on teacher beliefs and classroom practices has mainly focused on English as a second language (ESL) context. They are particularly in the area of grammar, reading and pronunciation. First, some scholars have investigated teachers' beliefs and classroom practices in teaching grammar (see Nurusus et al 2015; Mohamed 2006). Some found that the teachers are characterized by explicit attention to grammar and vocabulary and it is consistent with their reported beliefs about the importance of grammar. On the other hand, some found that there are clear divergences between stated beliefs and observed practices in the area of error correction for all teachers (Ng and Farrell 2003; Farrell and Lim 2005). Second, some researchers who have investigated teachers' beliefs and classroom practices on reading (see Farrell and Ives 2014; Kuzborska 2011; Davis and Wilson 2010) found the similar thing. Some of them found that teachers do not always apply what they beliefs. There is a mismatch between their beliefs and their classroom practices. Third, teachers' beliefs also play a crucial role in the choice of pronunciation components taught in the ESL classrooms. Some researchers have investigated this issue as well (see, for example, Shah et al 2017; Baker 2014; Wahid 2013).

However, there is no study that has conducted the congruence and incongruence between EFL teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices in regard to classroom management. Therefore. This study was aimed to investigate whether their beliefs were not in line with their classroom practices.

Research Question

The main issue of this study is broken down into the following research questions:

1. What are EFL teachers' beliefs on classroom management?
2. To what extent EFL teachers' stated beliefs reflect to their classroom practices?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Beliefs and Practices in Language Teaching

An extensive literature on teachers' beliefs exists, both in education generally (e.g. Calderhead, 1996; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996) and specifically in relation to language teaching (e.g. Borg, 2003, 2006; Freeman, 2002). Zheng (2015) maintains that the study of language teachers' beliefs and of the relationships between teachers' beliefs and what they do in the classroom has rapidly and steadily developed from the mid-1990s onwards. Phipps and Borg (2006) concluded teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning: may be powerfully influenced (positively or negatively) by teachers' own experiences as learners and are well established by the time teachers go to university (Holt Reynolds, 1992; Lortie, 1975); act as a filter through which teachers interpret new information and experience (Pajares, 1992); may outweigh the effects of teacher education (Kagan, 1992; Richardson, 1996) in influencing what teachers do in the classroom; can exert a persistent long-term influence on teachers' instructional practices (Crawley and Salyer, 1995); are, at the same time, not always reflected in what teachers do in the classroom (Dobson and Dobson, 1983; Tabachnick and Zeichner, 2003); interact bidirectionally with experience (i.e. beliefs influence practices and practices can also lead to changes in beliefs) (Richardson, 1996).

Furthermore, some evidence shows that teachers' beliefs influence in language teaching and learning. Teachers' beliefs might influence the teachers' goals, procedures, materials, classroom interaction patterns, their roles, their students, and the school they work in. In line with that, Richards and Lockhart (1994) found that teachers' beliefs about learning may be based on their training, their teaching experience, or may go back to their own experience as language learners' (p. 34). Phipps and Borg (2009) add several works done by scholars regarding these issue. The data show that language teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning: have a powerful effect on teachers' pedagogical decisions (Johnson, 1994); strongly

influence what and how teachers learn during language teacher education (Freeman and Richards, 1996); can be deep-rooted and resistant to change (Pickering, 2005).

However, there seems to be huge gap among teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. Karavas-Doukas, (1996) remarks that even though there has been interest in the extent to which teachers' stated beliefs correspond with what they do in the classroom, there is ample evidence that the two do not always coincide. Phipps and Borg (2009) adds that the gap between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices have been viewed as an undesirable or negative phenomenon (and described using terms such as incongruence, mismatch, inconsistency, and discrepancy). Wallace (1991: 4) suggests that "one way to solve this is by stepping outside the narrow confines of our own profession and compare it with other professions. Therefore, it is essential for every teacher to be aware of their own beliefs and to understand their beliefs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to cope with the purposes of the research, this research applied descriptive qualitative design. A descriptive design is chosen since it "attempts to present a complete description of a phenomenon within its context" (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 33). This is due to the consideration that this study was concerned with teachers' beliefs and classroom practices in EFL classroom. In this inquiry, this research dealt with investigating two In-service EFL teachers in Cimahi, West Java. Since this study was only using small number of participants, the results was not going to be generalized as general conditions of the whole teachers in Indonesia. Rather the experiences of the teacher regarding reflections provided fruitful insight into some challenges, benefits and other aspects of reflection in teachers' beliefs and classroom practices of teaching EFL classroom in particular.

Accordingly, they were willing to assist the researcher in the present study. In order to preserve anonymity pseudonyms were given to all participants—henceforth named Citra, Hassya and Saidah, when referring to them in this study. The following is the description of each participant which provides some insight into their

personality as well as language learning and teaching motivation. All names presented in this study are pseudonyms.

First Participant: Citra

Citra is a *Sudanese* and grew up in Arcamanic Bandung. Before moving to Cimahi, she has tried to apply a test for being a civil servant in Bandung in 2005 and passed the test. Citra has been living in Cimahi from 2006 until 2018. She got her bachelor degree at Indonesia University of education in 2005. So right after she graduated, she was accepted as an English teacher in Cimahi. She is also studying her master degree in the same University.

Her intention to learn English was started when her father brought his friend who is Australian. His father's friend also took his daughter then Citra tried to speak English with her named Erica. Erica at that time always visited them every week, so the respondent needed to learn English in order to be able to communicate with his foreign friend. It was when she was at fourth grade of Elementary school. Therefore she was accustom to speak in English every week. She also mentioned that she started to love English because of that occurrence.

She has been teaching English for about 13 years since she graduated from University. Before graduating, she also ever had a part time job as a teacher in one school in Bandung. She is also active in writing a journal. She has written two action research and four journal article. Moreover, in 2015, she was appointed to be a national instructor for two weeks and she also ever followed the IELTS program funded by the government for about one month. She also actively participate in MGMP for about once in a month.

Currently, Citra teaches in several places. Instead of teaching in SMAN 4 Cimahi, she is also teaching at one school in Bandung every Friday. Moreover, she also teach English in a course placed in Bandung as well.

Second Participant: Hassya

Hassya is an English teacher who grew up in Sukaharjo, Central Java. She took her study in Solo until she graduated from senior high school. After graduating from school, she continued her study in Sanata Darma University. She got her bachelor degree in 1989.

She has been teaching English since 1991. At first she taught English at one of Senior High School in Yogyakarta. Then she moved to Cimahi in 1994 and teach in SMAN4 Cimahi until now. In teaching, she also ever taught in both private and junior high schools. Before being accepted as a civil servant, she taught in vocational school one and half year. So she has been teaching English for about 28 years.

Regarding teacher's training, Hassya has ever attended some professional training such as MGMP. Interestingly, she joined that kind of program in 2015 talking about curriculum 2013. And she rarely joined to the training. Moreover, journal writing seems to be an uncommon thing to her. She said that she only wrote journal, like an action research if she wanted to get promotion.

Third Participant: Saidah

Saidah is a *Minangese* who was born in Bandung. She got her diploma in Teacher Training School in 1987. Right after graduating from that school, she directly continued her study in STKIP Pasundan, Bandung. After she got her bachelor degree, she tried to take a civil servant test in Rangkasbitung, Banten. Luckily, the government accepted her and she was asked to teach there for about three years. In 1999, she moved to West Java, teaching English at SMAN4 Cimahi until the current time. She has been teaching for about 25 years. Before she got accepted as a civil servant, she had taught in SMAN 5 Cimahi for about three years.

Saidah had bad experiences in learning English. She learnt English for the first time at junior high school and sadly she got five in English. She was frustrated at that time but it did not make her demotivated in learning English. Regardless the bad score she got, she kept learning English and even harder. With that spirit and extra effort in learning English, she developed to love English and choose English as her

major for her higher education. In Teacher Training School, she realized that the school she was studied gave insufficient knowledge so that she took several English courses to advance her English.

As a teacher, she sometimes attended some trainings. Lately she was assigned by the school to join a training in Lembang, Bandung about technology in teaching English for about a week. Previously, she also attended seminar that discuss the 2013 curriculum. Interestingly, she rarely wrote a journal or article regarding teaching and learning processes. Besides, she also wrote three classroom action research because of the prerequisite to get a promotion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings were groups based on how the data were collected. They include data from interview and classroom observations. The data from interview clearly answered the first research question and the data from observation was pointed to answer the second research objective.

Data from Interview

As mentioned earlier, this point answered the first research question talking about “*What are EFL teachers’ beliefs on classroom management?*” Thus, the excerpts and explanations below showed the participants’ stated beliefs regarding classroom management.

First aspects regarding classroom management was the use of first language in the classroom. Generally, most of the respondents used more first language with several considerations. The following excerpts presented their beliefs in using native language in their English classes:

Citra: I still use Indonesia language and I use English as well because the input here is not really good. So when I say something in English, they cannot get what I am saying. So I still need to translate them again and again. Then I assume that in a first grade, I still need to use 30 to 50%. And then when they are in a third grade it should be more using English. I think it is more than 50% (Excerpt 1 Interview)

From the excerpts above, it can be inferred that Citra actually wanted to use English all the time in the classroom. But she found that her students did not really understand what she said and it would make a further problems for students to learn English. They might become demotivated and frustrated. This finding similar with initial research done by Nation (2001) who found that overuse of L2 will make students stressed and demotivated to learn. Therefore, combining both native and foreign language in the classroom would help both the teacher and students in pursuing the learning objectives.

Hassya: *Okay, using native language is what I usually do. I ask them first about their preferences whether to use English or Indonesia. Do you like me to speak in English more or Indonesia? And they will choose, but, although they say both, sometimes there are still some students who do not understand. So I always ask them 'do you understand' and sometimes I ask their friend to explain to them (Excerpt 2 Interview)*

In her classroom, Hassya mostly used native language since she had asked to the students in the beginning of the classroom. She asked whether to choose English or Bahasa Indonesia to her students. Meanwhile, Saidah said that she delivered the lesson mostly by using Bahasa Indonesia. The following excerpt presented her ideas:

Saidah: *I tried to use English 50% and Bahasa Indonesia 50% but they did not understand. So for the important comment, I use our mother language because if they don't understand, I am afraid that they will do the task the wrong way. Moreover, in teaching structure, I believe that it is the fundamental one so it should be explained by using Bahasa Indonesia (Excerpt 3 Interview)*

From the excerpt above, it can be inferred that the use of first language was still dominant in her teaching and learning processes especially in teaching grammar. She had a belief that her students could not understand well if she explained the materials by using English. Therefore, for an important aspects, she used Bahasa Indonesia.

The second emergence issue was about the interactions between teachers and students. Citra mentioned that she was very open with her students. Hassya also said

that in approaching her students, she often came to the students individually. While Saidah maintained that she usually came to her students when they were in group discussion. The following showed the issues:

Citra : *The interaction goes naturally because I am kind of teacher who does not like build a distance....., but sometimes I could be strict if they make me angry, but today, they did not make a homework but I am still not angry because angry can make me tired (Excerpt 4 Interview)*

Hassya: *Well, we know that there are some students who are calm and afraid of asking and there are some students who are brave to express their opinion so usually I will use personal and individually so I will come to them individually (Excerpt 5 Interview)*

From the excerpts above, Citra said that she was very open to her students. She did not like to become angry since being angry to the students would waste her energy. On the other hand, Hassya mentioned that she preferred to visit her students individually in order to reduce their anxieties or being afraid to talk to the teacher. It can be inferred that both respondents shared similar ideas that being an English teacher should be the one who can make the students love to learn.

Data from Classroom Observation

This point showed the actual practices conducted by the participants in their three times observed classrooms. By doing this, the researcher could answer the second research question *“To what extent the EFL teachers’ stated beliefs reflect to their classroom practices?”* In this research, the researcher divided classroom management into two dimension. They are instructional management and people management. Instructional management includes aspects of classroom life such as the use of first language and monitoring students’ work. The second dimension refers to the efforts teachers make to establish teacher–student relationships.

Evidence from Participants’ Actual Practices

- **Instructional Management**

In this dimension, the researcher focused on the use of first language in the classroom and the way the participants’ monitoring the students’ work. Generally, all

the participants shared similar beliefs about using L1 in the classroom. They used L1 in order to make the students understand the messages that the teachers try to deliver. Citra and Hasyaa used both English and Bahasa Indonesia in the same portion. They explained the materials first in English and confirmed whether the students understand or not. If the students did not understand, they explained it again by using their L1. This finding receives some supports from several studies (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Nation, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2000) who found that the L1 may facilitate L2 classroom activities and help students to get the meaning of what the teacher try to deliver. The following presented briefly how Citra mixed L1 and L2 in teaching Narrative text.

Evidence 1 (CitraOb#2)

Teacher: The social function of Narrative text is to entertain the reader. Social function itu sama seperti tujuan dari narrative text tersebut.

From the excerpt above, it is clear that the teacher's explanation was followed by using the students' first language. Then this evidence is supported by her own stated beliefs about the use of L1. Conversely, Hasyaa seemed to have a little mismatch regarding to her beliefs in using L1. She believed that the teacher should use English all the time. However, the reality was different. She slightly used English when it comes to ask questions or ask students' opinion. This means that her belief was not in line with her actual practices.

Other participant, Saidah, always used L1 in most of her observed class. The following excerpt presents Saidah's actual practices in using first language.

Evidence 2 (SaidahOb#1)

Teacher: due to *kan sama dengan* because of, *jadi kalau because of diikutin sama apa?* Phrase *kan, jadi jawaban untuk* due to *juga* phrase. *Ayo cung siapa yang mau jawab, iya kamu, siapa namanya?*

From the excerpt above, the researcher concluded that the respondent mostly used first language when explaining important point. It is in line with her beliefs about the use of first language in the classroom. She says "*In teaching structure, I believe that it should be explained by using Bahasa Indonesia because of its'*

importance.” (Excerpt 3 Interview). Therefore, in this first observed classroom, it can be inferred that her beliefs in using first language was applied in her classroom practices.

The other point was about the teacher’s way in monitoring the students’ work. Those three participants seemed to have different beliefs in regard with this issue. Citra believed that teacher should appreciate students’ work by giving a mark in every students’ work. Hasyaa beliefs that teacher could use students whose English were better to check their friends’ work. The researchers found those beliefs matched with what they had in their observed classrooms. It can be inferred that Citra and Hasyaa have reflected what their beliefs in regard with monitoring the students’ work.

However, Researchers found a mismatched among Saidah’s beliefs and her actual practices. In the interview section, Saidah say *“teachers should maintain their students’ work in order to keep the students in a right track while doing assignment. To do that, the teachers should not leave their students to work alone, but even in a group, the teacher should always check their work and walk all over the class to check whether the students are doing well or not”*. Meanwhile, the observed classroom, the researchers found that this participant’s belief are so contrast with what she said in the interview section. In her actual practices, she was inclined to stay in the middle of the classroom from the beginning until the end of teaching and learning processes.

- **People Management**

The second dimension was talking about the teachers’ relationship with their students. In this research, the researchers focused on the aspect of building the rapport with the students. All participant agreed that affection has a huge contribution to the success of teaching and learning. This idea was in line with Catt et al (2007) and Faranda & Clarke (2004) who found that rapport is an essential characteristic of an effective teacher. Interestingly, from those three participants, each participant seemed

to have her own ways in building relationships with the students. Citra believed that teachers should not only teach. A great teacher should look after their students' problems. The problem at school or the problem outside the school. It means that she believed that teachers should be the ones that make the students comfortable to speak with. It can be seen from the atmosphere in the observed classroom that most of the students seemed to be participate in the teaching and learning. Citra also loved to give funny jokes while teaching. Thus, the researchers concluded that her belief was in line with her actual practices.

Hasyaa and Saidah believed that teachers should be cognitively smart and should know their students very well. The researchers asked them about the definition of knowing the students. Overall they answered that the students should have teachers' attention equally, teachers should call them by their name. Teachers also should give students rewards or praise them when they do a good thing.

However, in the actual practices, the researcher found that both of them did not apply their beliefs in regard to this building rapport with the students. In their observed classrooms, both participants seemed to focus merely on particular students that sit close to where she stood. The students who were in the back corner side of the classroom were likely to have less attention from their teacher.

CONCLUSION

The findings have clearly showed that each participant hold her own beliefs about teaching and learning especially classroom management. Even though they consciously possess the beliefs, they cannot deny that they do not always implement what they believed. The gap between the teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices are called incongruence, mismatch, inconsistency, and discrepancy. Almost every aspects in this investigation the researchers found mismatches which indicate that there was a gap between their beliefs and their actual practices. It is highly recommended for future inquiry to conduct qualitative study to look for some factors that might trigger this gap.

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