Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching English to Adult Learners Studying in Language Courses

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ABSTRACT

Much of the literature on teacher education has suggested that teachers' beliefs affect their teaching practices and instructional decisions in the classroom. As teachers are the arbiter of methods and choice (Arden-Close, 1999), it is then necessary to take a closer look at the teachers' beliefs especially in teaching English to adult learners. Some of the pedagogical issues that were observed further in this study were: (1) who the best teachers are, (2) where the materials should come from, (3) what teaching methods should be applied. This study was conducted at six different language courses in Sidoarjo Indonesia. Thirty teachers with different backgrounds and experiences participated in this study. The data were collected using questionnaires, in-depth interviews and classroom observations. Some conclusions were drawn up, and some recommendations were provided at the end of the study.

Key words: teachers' beliefs, language courses, adult learners

INTRODUCTION

Recent trends in Indonesia's educational policy have focused on meeting the challenges of globalization. As English has achieved the status of a major international language, the Indonesian Department of National Education revised teaching policy allowing schools to make English a required subject starting as early as the first grade of elementary school. In many schools, English is allocated two hours (2x60 minutes) at every grade per week.

To some (if not many) Indonesian students, the most important factor in leaning a language successfully is related to how much time they are immersed in the language. They believe that more time they spend with the language, the faster they will learn. Such students might feel that the allocated time for studying English at school is rather insufficient. Therefore they take language courses outside their schools.

Many courses hire part time teachers of English and leave classroom teaching fully to them. In some (if not many) cases, there is no (or little) guidance and supervision from courses' administrators and national department of education. Researches in English teacher education and teaching process so far also have focused more on formal schools. Very little attention though has been paid specifically to language courses. As teachers regardless their institutions are the heart of education; they are arbiter of methods and choice (Arden-Close, 1999), this study is an attempt to examine issues concerning teaching English in language courses, with a particular emphasis on the role of teachers' beliefs.

Researchers have shown that teachers' beliefs are built up over time and play a critical role in their classroom practices (Richards, 1998; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Smith, 1996). These beliefs are proved to influence the nature of language teaching practices, roles of teachers, and relationships with students (Richards, 1998). Teachers' beliefs will also influence acceptance and uptake of new approaches, techniques and activities (Donaghey, 2003).

Richards (1998, p. 66) defines teachers' belief as "the information, attitudes, values, expectations, theories, and assumptions about teaching and learning that teachers build up over time and bring with them to the classroom". The beliefs consist of tacitly held assumptions and perceptions about teaching and learning (Kagan, 1992), that they are generally stable and that they reflect the nature of the instruction the teacher provides to students (Hampton, 1994). Other characteristics of the beliefs are:
- They guide actions, but they are also influenced by actions (Richardson, 1996)
- They are socially constructed and culturally transmitted (McAlpine, Eriks-Brophy, and Crago, 1996).
- They have to be inferred from statements, intentions, and actions (Pajares, 1992)
- They are dynamic (Woods, 1996).

In summary, the beliefs and actions are interrelated. Thus an investigation of teachers' beliefs is necessary in order to gain a better understanding of the practices happen in language classrooms. The study of teacher beliefs, as Richards, Gallo, and Renandy (2001, p. 42) have pointed out, "forms part of the process of understanding how teachers conceptualize their work".

A number of studies have attempted to investigate the beliefs of language teachers (see Richards, Tung, and Ng, 1992; Yang, 2000; Hsieh and Chang, 2002; Liao and Chiang, 2003). These studies, however, measured and identified beliefs held by school teachers respectively. Little research has been done to explore the nexus between language course teachers' beliefs and the pedagogical decisions manifested in their teaching and learning contexts. Therefore the present researcher was interested to conduct this study.

This study is trying to observe pedagogical issues related to the following aspects: (1) who the best teachers are, (2) where the materials should come from, (3) what teaching methods should be applied. These aspects were selected because they somewhat reflect the implementation of teachers' beliefs in their classroom (see Hampton, 1994 and Richards, 1998).

METHODOLOGY

The current study is a qualitative one supported by quantitative data. Dömyei (2007) addressed several reasons for choosing this type of research namely: the research uses small sample size of participant, the data analysis is done with words, it is concerned with subjective opinions, and it uses number to help the writer analyzing the data. These characteristics are actually in line with the nature of this present study.

Participants in this study were thirty teachers with different backgrounds and experiences. They were teaching at six different language courses in Sidoarjo, Indonesia. The study was carried out in Jan-March 2011. Participants were selected based on convenience sampling (Dörnyei, 2007).

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The subjects were all instructors of English language. They were made up of 10 males and 20 females. Their teaching experience ranged from one year to more than six years, 15 participants with 1-2 years, 11 with 3-4 years, 4 with 5 or more years. All of them held bachelor’s degrees. Their maximum class size which they used to teach was 25 and the minimum was 5. The average class size was around 15-20. They taught grammar and speaking.

In this study, the data collection techniques employed were a survey (questionnaire), indepth interviews and classroom observations. Nunan (1992) discussed that survey is the most popular research method to elicit facts in educational research, and it enables the researchers to obtain the general conditions of respondents. Richards (2003) pointed out that the interview is the best instrument for studying the beliefs while the observation is used to find out particular behaviors.

A set of questionnaires were distributed to all thirty teachers. The questionnaires comprised nineteen questions and were divided into two parts, each of which contained questions related to the profiles of the respondents and their beliefs. The first part presented the open-ended and close-ended questions asking for the participant’s personal details, gender, teaching experience, education and where they currently worked. The second part presented the open-ended and closed-ended questions. The participants were asked to answer questions such as:

- Who is the best language teacher?
- What type of materials is most appropriate for learning and teaching?
- What teaching methods should be applied in language classroom?
- The language used on the questionnaire is English as all teachers master this language. The survey questionnaires were administered for approximately ten minutes. In addition, to gather more qualitative data, there were semi-structured discussions (interviews) with ten teachers. The semi-structured format was basically designed to yield further details that were not included in the questionnaires. The researcher had nine guiding questions, and she could also elaborate the questions to get deeper understanding of what the respondents thought. As for the language used, the researcher used Indonesian to pose questions, and the interviewees could express their opinions in Indonesian or English. Each interview took about thirty minutes and was audio-taped. Some questions delivered during the interviews were:

- Do you think native speakers of English are the best language teachers?
- How do you feel about the materials used in this language course? What kind of materials do you actually prefer?
- What methods do you use to deliver the materials? Aside from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, ten classroom observations were carried out to observe the teaching techniques that were employed by the teachers interviewed. The researcher of the present study was a complete observer who took field notes during the observation. The focus of the observation was on the materials used and teaching methods employed. The researcher had three guiding questions written on the observation sheet. Each class which lasted for 60-100 minutes was observed once.

All instruments above were not derived from any specific sources but developed by the researcher based on her experiences in the English language teaching field. The instruments had been pilot tested and minor amendments had been made.

The questionnaires were then analyzed. The calculations were quantified in terms of percentage. The details obtained from the semi-structured interviews and classroom observations served the purpose of gathering more qualitative data. In all, the questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations were employed to triangulate the data.

**FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

The data were analyzed according to the following aspects: (1) who the best teachers are, (2) where the materials should come from, and (3) what teaching methods should be applied.

**The Best Teachers**

Non-native English speaking teachers sometimes suffer from ‘second class citizen’ syndrome from employers, colleagues and English students as well. However the present study generally shows that all participants hold both positive and negative attitudes towards the role of nativeness in relation to the teaching of English.

All respondents believed that native speakers coming from the Inner Circle countries (e.g. USA, UK, Australia) should teach speaking skills. This was based on an assumption that native speakers would become the best role model because they had appropriacy, accuracy and naturalness. The following comments illustrate this assumption:

- Teacher 1: “Native speakers are certainly ideal to practice the language. They obviously become the best teachers for speaking classes”.
- Teacher 8: “In speaking classes, I believe native teachers are preferred because English is their own language. Thus they have the ability to talk like the man on the BBC six O’clock news or talk like Bill Gates with an American accent”.
- Teachers from the Outer Circle countries (e.g. Singapore, India, Philippines) were not considered as the best teachers for speaking classes because their English was not “standard”. As teacher 7 commented, “English teachers coming from Singapore? Well, maybe they should not teach speaking subject because their English has many grammatical mistakes and their pronunciation is bad”.

The negative attitude towards the English speaking teachers coming from the Outer Circle countries could be due to the minimum exposure of English varieties from those countries. Most Indonesians are exposed to British, American and Australian English only; therefore they might think that other varieties were “not standard” and people who speak these varieties would provide bad role models.

However, according to Jenkins (2000), it makes no sense to try and teach any one “model” of pronunciation because good pronunciation is not one which imitates well a particular model, but one which makes the speaker intelligible. Moreover there is no linguistic reason to consider ‘British English’ or ‘American English’ as ‘Standard English’. People consider ‘British English’ as the standard one because of the historical reason, i.e. British Empire. People consider ‘American English’ as
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standard because of the important role America plays in the world (Floris, 2010). Furthermore, there are also regional varieties within each country (internal). Thus, it is difficult to decide which regional variety can be considered as the ‘standard’ within the country and which perhaps can be promoted as the ‘international standard’. For example, in England, there are 313 different localities which were usually not more than 15 miles apart (Crystal, 2002). It was found that the localities. Today, there are more local (regional) varieties of British English occur. The question is which one should be considered as the British Standard English.

Thought native-speaker teachers were preferred to teach speaking skills, all of the respondents felt that native speakers might not be suitable to teach other skills especially grammar. The general assumptions proposed by the respondents were:

- They could not explain the grammar rules clearly because they acquire the language so they take it for granted.
- They often make grammatical mistakes.

The following were some of the comments:

- **Teacher 2:** “Native speakers are not necessarily the best persons to teach you how to learn the grammar of your target language for one simple reason: they did not have to learn it (not as adults)”. 
- **Teacher 6:** “Language has structural features that are complicated and hard to learn. Learners of English have to master all these features so that they can communicate correctly. Native speakers often do not know these features in details. It might be hard to explain the rules because they never learn it. Grammar teaching can be daunting because they themselves often make grammatical mistakes”.

It seems that non-native teachers were preferable because they themselves had been the learners of English. They had learned and mastered the rules; and they might give better grammar explanation or relevant examples that suit into their students’ context. Native teachers who acquire the language naturally were, in the respondents’ point of view, not the best teachers in this case. To this, Révész and Medgyes (1994) point out that native speakers may not be aware of the internal mechanisms operating in the acquisition of a second language, since for them language acquisition was unconscious.

Further data analysis revealed that all of the respondents thought both native and non-native teachers could make the best language teachers if they fulfill certain characteristics:

- They should be able to communicate in English. In other words, teachers need to have high proficiency. “It does not matter whether you are native speaker or not. The important aspect is that you can speak in English and your English is intelligible”, said Teacher 4.
- They need to have appropriate educational background. As Teacher 3 stated, “I believe that if the native speakers have teaching certificates, they have good capabilities in teaching English. However, many language courses employ Americans only because they are native speakers of English. I think this is not good for the students. It is terrible”.
- They understand what it is to go through learning and acquiring the language. They understand the pains and the joys of learning English; and they really want to assist their students. Teacher 9 supported this idea by saying, “Indonesians might become the best teachers because most likely they have studied English in far more depth and detail than native English teachers. These teachers have been (and are still) struggling with English and this makes them more sensitive and understanding with their students”. “... but that does not mean that native speakers are bad teachers. As long as they understand how the students struggle and they want to help them, I think they can become good teachers”, commented Teacher 1.

- They are aware of a wide variety of teaching methods. This should include traditional classroom methods (e.g. Grammar Translation method), non-traditional classroom methods (e.g. role-playing, TPR) and even self-study methods. As Teacher 10 commented, “The best teachers are those who can help their students learning and acquiring the language. It means that the teachers need to be creative and conduct various teaching methods to ensure that each student achieves progress”. This also means that language teachers need to be aware of their teaching and learning contexts. Teacher 7 stated, “Teachers need to be familiar with the teaching and learning contexts so that they can really assist their students. I myself had ever taken an English course at XYZ, and I found that my American teacher’s explanation sometimes were confusing. I did not have such problem when I was in Indonesian teacher’s class because the teacher could use real-life samples to explain difficult concepts”.

In short, the issue of nativeness should not become the focus in determining a good teacher of English. Proficiency, educational background and teaching skills are the points that should be taken into account.

The Materials Used

All respondents in this study expressed a preference for materials from English-speaking countries. Some of them had actually been asked by their course administrators to try out locally-produced materials but still they preferred the ones produced by American, Australian, British publishers. Some of the reasons for choosing the English-speaking published materials were:

- The materials were original and correct.
- The quality especially in terms of content and appearance was much better.
- The textbooks were accompanied by teachers’ books which make it easy for the teachers to prepare the lessons.

Interestingly, some teachers interviewed admitted that they often had to modify (simplify) the materials or give additional exercises for their students. They should do this because the students sometimes had difficulties in understanding the language and/or the topic written on the textbooks.

In some of the observed classes, the researcher noticed that the teachers prepared additional handouts for their students. When discussing “Simple Present Tense”, for example, Teacher 9 also brings pictures describing typical daily activities done by Indonesian student. When asked why she bothered to prepare additional handout, she said that by giving local example, she believed that her students would get more understanding.

The Indonesian government and local publishers should be encouraged to produce more good English textbooks containing Indonesian local contexts. This is because there is evidence that the teaching material, ideological messages and pedagogy which are part of western communities
standard because of the important role America plays in the world (Floris, 2010). Furthermore, there are also regional varieties within each country (internal). Thus, it is difficult to decide which regional variety can be considered as the 'standard' within the country and which perhaps can be promoted as the 'international standard'. For example, in England, there are 313 different localities which were usually not more than 15 miles apart (Crystal, 2002). It was found that the localities. Today, there are more local (regional) varieties of British English occur. The question is which one should be considered as the British Standard English.

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The Indonesian government and local publishers should be encouraged to produce more good English textbooks containing Indonesian local contexts. This is because there is evidence that the teaching material, ideological messages and pedagogy which are part of western communities...
are often culturally inappropriate to the host countries. As a result, they cannot be used appropriately (Prodromou, 1998). If there are more production of local teaching and learning materials that are appropriate for Indonesian students, the problem of 'capitalist interest' will be minimized, the motivation of the students to learn and use English increase, and at the same time the students' (and the teachers') sense of identity within their own culture are maintained (Floris, 2002). Studies have shown that students who experience this can acquire normal English language proficiency and show the same or better level of general academic development. Furthermore, the students tend to develop positive attitudes towards other languages and cultures (Ellis, 1995).

When asked about the use of authentic materials, all teachers stated that they never used authentic materials such as letters, menus, magazines, and newspapers. They tend to follow the textbook provided. However they used visual aids such as printed pictures and overhead projector slides to assist their learners. According to the respondents interviewed, this especially happened in grammar classes.

The interviewees mentioned that they did not have time to prepare authentic materials which were appropriate for their students' proficiency levels. As Teacher 2 said, "Generally speaking, I find it difficult to prepare authentic materials because I need to spend time searching for materials which are appropriate for students' proficiency levels". Another reason was that the teachers were "busy" covering the required materials. Additional materials would give them additional burden. As Teacher 3 commented, "My language course has required textbooks that all teachers should cover. It means that I do not have any choice but to try my best to cover these materials".

In grammar classes, visual aids such as printed pictures and overhead projectors were considered as tools to help the students understand their textbooks materials. The content was similar to those presented on the required textbook. Thus, the teachers did not have to spend a lot of time preparing these visual aids. Teacher 5 explained, "I only spend half an hour on an overhead presentation. The content? I simply took it from the textbook. I made such visual aid because I would like to make my students to know the materials better".

According to all respondents interviewed, additional visual materials were not used in speaking classes. The following comment illustrates: "The topics and questions written on the textbook are sufficient, I think. It is not necessary to create other handouts. The most important thing is that we ask the students to work in groups and let them talk" (Teacher 10).

The observation that the researcher conducted in ten classes confirmed this finding. Visual aids were often used in grammar classes but not in speaking classes.

The Teaching Methods Employed

A. Teaching Approach

The respondents of this study reported that they taught grammar and speaking skills which are the common subjects taught in language course. The activities used most often in grammar classes were drill, lecture (explanation), and written exercises; whereas drill and group activities were often used in their speaking classes. In other words, the study showed that teacher-dominated activities were used more often.

Some interviewees stated that some students were weak in grammar. Therefore they felt that they should give more grammar explanations and exercises so that these students could have more grammar competence. "Well, the majority of students in my grammar class are very weak. I think that is why they enroll to this language course. Group activities were rather inappropriate to be conducted in grammar class. What these students need is traditional grammar class", claimed Teacher 1.

In speaking classes, however, all teachers admitted that they often asked their students to work in groups. Some of the reasons are:

- It facilitates the exchange of ideas and opinions.
- It develops communication and team working skills.
- It enables the students to use the target language.
- It allows students of mixed abilities to work side by side

As the following comments illustrate:

- "I like to ask my students to speak in small groups because the exchange of ideas can act as a stimulus for each student to explore more ideas. Besides, each student can learn from other members of the team" (Teacher 7).
- "Being part of a team will help each student develop his/her speaking skill as well as team working skills. These skills will be useful not only in this speaking course but also throughout his/her academic and working careers" (Teacher 4).

During her classroom observations, the writer found that teachers prefer to ask their students to work in groups for speaking classes. In grammar classes, however, the teacher acts as the controller. It seems that the teacher has the knowledge and provides all the information students need. In short, the teaching practices in grammar classes are still largely teacher-centered, teacher-dominated and drill-driven rather than learner-centered.

Interestingly, 23 teachers surveyed believed that learner-centered is the best approach. When asked why they thought so, they mentioned two major reasons namely:

- It is helpful to develop students' communicative competence.
- It creates a classroom atmosphere that encourages cooperative relationship.

An interviewee (Teacher 8) who also believed that learner-centered is the best approach commented, "The students are the ones who learn the language. They should be involved in active learning situation. Besides they are going to use the target language to communicate with other people, right? So I think learner-centered is one of the best teaching approach because it forces the students to communicate actively".

However when asked why in her grammar classes, she did not apply the student-centered learning, she said, "Well, you know that my students do not have high competency and proficiency, if we do not put emphasis on grammar, they will never the grammar rules correctly. If they have no proper grammar, they cannot communicate in English. And how can you learn grammar? I think controlled practice is the best. By doing such tasks, students will learn the language rules and finally get their grammar right. Uncontrolled practice is not productive for my students, at least for this level".

In general, the teachers interviewed also said that in speaking class, it would not be a problem if the teachers asked their students to work in groups and to have discussion because by doing such activities, the learners could actually use the target language to make requests, give
are often culturally inappropriate to the host countries. As a result, they cannot be used appropriately (Prodromou, 1998). If there are more production of local teaching and learning materials that are appropriate for Indonesian students, the problem of 'capitalist interest' will be minimized, the motivation of the students to learn and use English increase, and at the same time the students' (and the teachers') sense of identity within their own culture are maintained (Floris, 2002). Studies have shown that students who experience this can acquire normal English language proficiency and show the same or better level of general academic development. Furthermore, the students tend to develop positive attitudes towards other languages and cultures (Ellis, 1995).

When asked about the use of authentic materials, all teachers stated that they never used authentic materials such as letters, menus, magazines, and newspapers. They tend to follow the textbook provided. However they used visual aids such as printed pictures and overhead projector slides to assist their learners. According to the respondents interviewed, this especially happened in grammar classes.

The interviewees mentioned that they did not have time to prepare authentic materials which were appropriate for their students' proficiency levels. As Teacher 2 said, “Generally speaking, I find it difficult to prepare authentic materials because I need to spend time searching for materials which are appropriate for students' proficiency levels”. Another reason was that the teachers were “busy” covering the required materials. Additional materials would give them additional burden. As Teacher 3 commented, “My language course has required textbooks that all teachers should cover. It means that I do not have any choice but to try my best to cover these materials”.

In grammar classes, visual aids such as printed pictures and overhead projectors were considered as tools to help the students understand their textbooks materials. The content was similar to those presented on the required textbook. Thus, the teachers did not have to spend a lot of time preparing these visual aids. Teacher 5 explained, “I only spend half an hour on an overhead project presentation. The content? I simply took it from the textbook. I made such visual aid because I would like to my students to know the materials better”.

According to all respondents interviewed, additional visual materials were not used in speaking classes. The following comment illustrates: “The topics and questions written on the textbook are sufficient, I think. It is not necessary to create other handouts. The most important thing is that we ask the students to work in groups and let them talk” (Teacher 10).

The observation that the researcher conducted in ten classes confirmed this finding. Visual aids were often used in grammar classes not in speaking classes.

The Teaching Methods Employed
A. Teaching Approach

The respondents of this study reported that they taught grammar and speaking skills which are the common subjects taught in language course. The activities used most often in grammar classes were drill, lecture (explanation), and written exercises; whereas drill and group activities were often used in their speaking classes. In other words, the study showed that teacher-dominated activities were used more often.

Some interviewees stated that some students were weak in grammar. Therefore they felt that they should give more grammar explanations and exercises so that these students could have more grammar competence. “Well, the majority of students in my grammar class are very weak. I think that is why they enroll to this language course. Group activities were rather inappropriate to be conducted in grammar class. What these students need is traditional grammar class”, claimed Teacher 1.

In speaking classes, however, all teachers admitted that they often asked their students to work in groups. Some of the reasons are:

- It facilitates the exchange of ideas and opinions.
- It develops communication and team working skills.
- It enables the students to use the target language.
- It allows students of mixed abilities to work side by side

As the following comments illustrate:

- “I like to ask my students to speak in small groups because the exchange of ideas can act as a stimulus for each student to explore more ideas. Besides, each student can learn from other members of the team” (Teacher 7).
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During her classroom observations, the writer found that teachers prefer to ask their students to work in groups for speaking classes. In grammar classes, however, the teacher acts as the controller. It seems that the teacher has the knowledge and provides all the information students need. In short, the teaching practices in grammar classes are still largely teacher-centered, teacher-dominated and drill-driven rather than learner-centered. Interestingly, 23 teachers surveyed believed that learner-centered is the best approach. When asked why they thought so, they mentioned two major reasons namely:

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However when asked why in her grammar classes, she did not apply the student-centered learning, she said, “Well, you know that my students do not have high competency and proficiency. If we do not put emphasis on grammar, they will never the grammar rules correctly. If they have no proper grammar, they cannot communicate in English. And how can you learn grammar? I think controlled practice is the best. By doing such tasks, students will learn the language rules and finally get their grammar right. Uncontrolled practice is not productive for my students, at least for this level”.

In general, the teachers interviewed also said that in speaking class, it would not be a problem if the teachers asked their students to work in groups and to have discussion because by doing such activities, the learners could actually use the target language to make requests, give
advice, agree, disagree, complain, praise, etc. "It is fine to use these activities because the focus of the teaching and learning process would be on meaning, not on form", said Teacher 7.

However, in grammar class, all interviewees agree that it would be better to have teacher-centered approach. Teacher 7 further explained, "The focus is on form. Therefore controlled grammar practice and drills are necessary. If there are any grammar mistakes, the teachers can correct the mistakes right away. If you ask your students to chat with their friends who are not proficient, they will not learn any grammar rules".

Many people think that the learner-centered approach is not good for teaching grammar. This is not correct. In learner-centered class, students still can learn about grammar when their teachers ask them to infer and internalize grammar rules from the activities and from the exercises they do. Grammar should be taught inductively. Instead of teaching the students the rules of "The Present Progressive", for example, teachers can provide sentences expressing complaints such as "You are standing my way" or "You are driving too fast" and ask the students to infer the grammar rules. The inductive teaching of grammar would involve students in a way that requires them to think and not just provide mechanical responses.

B. The Use of Bahasa Indonesia

Another aspect of teaching methods that the teachers commented was related to the use of Indonesian in their classes. The data shows that all respondents agreed that the students' mother tongue (Indonesian) should be allowed in the classroom. There were only two main purposes namely: to explain (translate) vocabularies and to explain grammar concepts.

When the researcher asked the interviewees why they did so, some of the answers were:

- "The students' competency and proficiency levels are not high. Often I find them confused especially when I explain difficult concepts. Sometimes they do not know the English vocabulary, so that I have to translate it into Indonesian" (Teacher 6).
- "I think it is okay to use Bahasa Indonesia. The most important thing is that the students understand what we are teaching. In speaking classes, I also allow my students to use Bahasa Indonesia occasionally. It is because the students do not have enough English vocabularies. So often they need Indonesian - English translation or vice versa" (Teacher 2).

This finding confirms what Atkinson (1987) has claimed that the mother tongue can be usefully applied in the classroom as a bridge to learn the target language. The mother tongue can be used for comprehension purposes, reinforcing the linguistic items, and finding ways of expressing words in the target language. However, Hawks (2001) reminds that the students' mother tongue should be used selectively and not be seen as an easy option. The use of the mother tongue should be limited or controlled.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

This study has tried to understand the effects of the teachers' beliefs towards their teaching practices in the classroom. The subjects of this research were thirty lecturers who were teaching in six different language courses in Sidoarjo Indonesia. The subjects thought were Speaking and Grammar. Some of the pedagogical issues that were studied in this research were: (1) where the materials should come from, (2) what teaching methods should be applied.

For speaking skills, the respondents stated that the ideal teacher would be native speaker coming from Inner Circle countries for they were able to speak 'perfect' and 'standard' English. However, in general, the respondents agreed that educational background and teaching skills should be the determining factor of what constitutes a good teacher. Both native and non-native speakers would become good teachers of English.

These teachers expressed their preferences to use materials published in the Inner Circle countries. The locally-produced materials were not popular among these teachers. At the same time, the teachers said that they did not use authentic materials because they simply did not have time to search for the appropriate materials. They still, however, used visual aids such as pictures or overhead projectors.

The student-centered approach was used for speaking classes while the teacher-centered approach was used for the grammar classes. It was because the teachers believed that in grammar class, the students need to have teacher-presence for explaining grammar rules, giving and checking exercises, and correcting mistakes. The learner-centered approach was useful in speaking class because it could provide the students opportunities to interact and communicate in the target language with their peers and teachers.

Concerning the use of the mother tongue, it was found that all respondents admitted using Bahasa Indonesia occasionally in their speaking and grammar classes. This happened especially when theoretical notions were explained and when the students encountered new or important vocabularies.

With the findings, this study hopes to suggest that teacher educators and/or language course administrators should pay attention to the issue of teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices. There is the need for teacher education institutions and language course administrators to develop programs to help teachers to foster the positive beliefs and to recognize and overcome the problem of negative beliefs that may occur. The programs should be well prepared so that teachers become better equipped to reconcile beliefs and practice in order to provide more effective classroom practices.

This study also recommends possible directions for future studies. First, the participants in this current study are from six language courses in Sidoarjo; thus, the results may not be generalized to other educational contexts. Future studies may use a wider sample population from language courses in East Java province or in Indonesia. Further studies may also include teachers from other educational contexts. This would increase the validity of the research and its findings. Next, future research may focus on students' perceptions about the best language teachers, the materials used and the teaching methods employed. This is because "student" is one of the factors involved in the process of language teaching and learning.

REFERENCES


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**REFERENCES**


APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear teachers,

I am doing a small survey related to the issue of teachers' beliefs. Please fill in this questionnaire. Your answers will be treated confidentially. Thank you.

Part One: Personal Information

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Number of years of teaching experience:
   - 1-2 years
   - 3-4 years
   - 5-more years
3. Highest academic qualifications:
   - Bachelor's degree
   - Master's degree
   - Doctorate degree
   - Other: please specify
4. The subjects that you are currently teaching: (you may choose more than one answer)
   - Listening
   - Speaking
   - Reading
   - Writing
   - Grammar
5. The name of your institution:_______________
6. Number of students in one class:_______________

Part Two: Your beliefs

7. Native speakers are good in teaching ______ (choose only one answer)
   - Listening
   - Speaking
   - Reading
   - Writing
   - Grammar
8. Why do you think so?

9. Materials which are most appropriate for my class should be__________
   - Published by English speaking countries (international publication)
   - Published by local publishers (local publication)
10. Why do you think so?

11. Have you ever used visual aids in your class?
    - Always
    - Often
    - Sometimes
    - Never
12. Why?

13. Have you ever used visual aids in your class?
    - Always
    - Sometimes
    - Never
14. What kind of visual aids do you mostly use?
    - Audio
    - Overhead projector slides
    - Other: please specify

15. Why do you (not) use such visual aids?

16. The most appropriate teaching approach for my class is__________
    - Student-centered
    - Teacher-centered
    - Other: please specify
17. Why do you think so?

18. The use of mother tongue (Bahasa Indonesia) in my class is__________
    - Acceptable
    - Not acceptable
19. Why?

Thank you very much for your co-operation in filling in this questionnaire.

Interview Questions

1. How long have you been teaching English?
2. What subjects are you currently teaching at this language course?
3. Do you think native speakers of English are the best language teachers? In what ways? Why?
4. How do you feel about the materials used in this language course?
5. What kind of materials do you actually prefer? The ones published in English-speaking countries or the ones published locally? Why?
6. Do you also use authentic materials in your class? Why?
7. Do you use visual aids in your class? Why?
8. What teaching approaches do you use to deliver the materials? Why?
9. Do you allow the students to speak in Bahasa Indonesia? Why?
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    - Video
    - Audio
    - Overhead projector slides
    - Pictures
    - Other: please specify
15. Why do you (not) use such visual aids?
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   ________________________________________________________________
16. The most appropriate teaching approach for my class is
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Classroom Observation Checklist

Name: ........................................
Subject: ..............................
Institution: ..............................
Time: ..............................
Date: ..............................

1. What kinds of materials are used?
2. What kind of teaching approach used in class?
3. Is the students' mother tongue used in class? What seems to be the purpose?