

## TEACHERS' BELIEFS AN PRACTICES OF ENGLISH TEACHING (A Case Study at MTs. N Jeketro)

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### Abstract

*Teacher's belief is a stunning issue for several years. The beliefs that the teachers hold will be a navigation to use by the teacher in their class. Teachers' beliefs are important for understanding and improving educational process. The good education quality depends on the good teacher. The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' beliefs about English teaching at MTs N Jeketro and to investigate the factors are shape the beliefs. This case study attempts to explore the English teachers' beliefs about English teaching. The technique of collecting data used is semi-structured interview, classroom observation and document analysis are applied to collect the data from participants. The finding of teachers' beliefs at MTs.N Jeketro is (1) importance of English teaching (2) approach (3) principle (4) method (5) learning activity (6) teachers' roles (7) learners' roles, and the factors shape teachers' beliefs are (1) experience as language learners (2) training or seminar that teachers participated, (3) experience works best and (4) institution policy.*

**Keywords:** *Teachers' Beliefs, English Teaching, Case Study, MTs.N Jeketro*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher beliefs have been major study for several years. Scholars and practitioners in education agree with the proposition that teacher belief is being inseparable part in Education. Notion of teacher belief is still debatable. It can be traced on the continuum of teacher's belief terms. Kaymakamoglu (2009) classified a few terms of teacher beliefs as follows: in 1986 Clark and Peterson called it as "teacher thinking" and Pajares in 1992 stated as "teacher beliefs", Borko and Putnam in 1995 used a term "teacher knowledge" and "teacher craft knowledge" used by Cooper and Mcntyre in 1996, "teacher image" by Black (2002), and in 2003 Borg called as "teacher cognition" and others. (Borg, 2001:186) said that teaching decision are made under the influence of beliefs and teaching becomes a personal act because beliefs are "accepted" as true by the individual.

Good and qualified teachers are essential for efficient functioning of educational systems and for enhancing the quality of learning. It is relevant with Wibowo (2014):

A good teacher and actions to be taken on his part in the classroom play a vital role in provoking effective and efficient learning on the part of the students. Teachers also have a fundamental role in their learners' academic achievement and their quality can highly influence student outcomes.

Combs cited in Mulkey (2015) remarks that the most important single case of a person's success or failure educationally has to do with the question of what he believes about himself. A belief is a set of big narration that human hold influencing the way human behave in their life. In teaching and learning activity, teacher belief is an influential factor to operate teaching and learning activity successfully. For the teachers holding belief in teaching that learners will understand subject matters when they drill lesson regularly through memorization, they will ask for the students to memorize during teaching and learning activity. In the other hands, teachers holding belief in teaching that learners will understand easily the subject if they exposure learning by doing. The teachers will formulate the materials to engage the students actively in teaching and learning activity.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *a. Definition of teacher's belief*

There are several experts define the meaning of teachers' beliefs. (Green,1971: 104) argues that a teacher belief seems as a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding the belief. While, Borg (2001) defines a teacher belief is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, and something is accepted as true by the individual, and therefore the beliefs inspire and guide the people's thought and behavior. Calderhead (1995, cited in Ispri, 2015: 17) affirms that teachers' beliefs refer to teachers' pedagogical beliefs or those beliefs of relevance to an individual teaching.

### *b. The importance of teacher's belief*

Teachers' beliefs are integral discussion to make sure the quality of education. Kocaman and Cansiz (2012: 799) stated that teachers' beliefs are considered to greatly influence teaching practice. Furthermore, Johnson (1994: 439) confirm that teachers' beliefs can help teachers' strategies for coping with challenges in their teaching process and how they shape students' learning environment. Liao (2007: 45) conveyed that understanding the importance of teachers' beliefs and practices are:

- a. To inform researchers and teacher trainers about how teachers implement their teaching in the classroom
- b. To understand how teachers conceptualize their approach and work.

- c. To understand teacher professional development
- d. To look at the quality education served by the teachers
- e. To find the factors that are responsible for shaping the beliefs
- f. To provide appropriate teacher education programs.
- g. To assist teachers to make sense of the complex and multidimensional nature of classroom life, to identify goals, and to shape their evolving perceptions of themselves as teacher (Richard and Lockhart cited in Fauziati, 2015: 55)

*c. Aspects of teachers' beliefs*

Recent studies related to teachers' beliefs have explored various aspects of beliefs such as belief about teaching, belief about learning, belief about subject matter etc. Reynold cited in Ispri (2015: 18) categorizes that there are three aspects of teachers' beliefs, those are (1) learning and learner, (2) teachers' instructional roles and (3) student activities. Basturkmen (2004: 215-217) added that there are five aspects of teachers' beliefs: (1) practical (2) personal practical (3) subject matter content (4) pedagogical content, and (5) curricular, while Richard and Rodgers add a couple of belief aspects; those are belief about (1) English (2) learning (3) teaching (4) program and curriculum (5) language teaching as profession.

*d. The Sources of Teachers' Beliefs*

The sources of beliefs can be complex. It can be from culture, policy and the experience the teachers go through. Muijs & Reynolds (2011, cited in Marati, 2014:17) stated that beliefs are formed by several different factors that can make them difficult to change such as:

- a) The experience of teachers; when they were a student in their school.
- b) Teacher training; where they got some experiences that can shape their new sets of beliefs and practices considering their teaching and thus can modified their former beliefs.
- c) The school culture where they work since they are involved as the integral part who take the norms and values from the place, and
- d) The experience of life and professional development that can overtime modify their beliefs.

Similarly, Richard & Lockhart (1997:30) confirm that teachers' belief systems are built up gradually over time and consist of both subjective and objective

dimensions. (Kindsvatter, Willen, and Ishler,1988 cited in Richard and Lockhart,1997) assert that the source of teachers' beliefs, they are

1. Their own experience as language learners.
2. Experience of what works best
3. Established practice
4. Personality factors
5. educationally based or research-based principles.
6. Principles derived from an approach or method.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### *a. Type of research*

The type of the research is qualitative with the case study approach. The design type of case study employed is descriptive case study. It started with the researcher presents a descriptive theory which establishes the framework for the researcher to follow throughout the study and what is searched by this approach is the formation and identification of a clear theoretical orientation before stating research questions. The researcher must also determine before beginning the research exactly what the unit of analysis in the study will be.

#### *b. Problem statements*

1. What are teachers' beliefs about English teaching at MTs N Jeketro?
2. Is there any discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and their practices?
3. How are those beliefs implemented in classroom practices?
4. What factors are responsible for shaping teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices?

#### *c. Participant of the study*

The participants of the study are four English teachers at MTs.N Jeketro. Three teachers are experienced and certificated teachers and one novice teacher. T1 is a novice teacher with 4 year teaching experience, T2 is certificated and experienced teacher with 11 teaching year experience, T3 is 19 teaching year experience and going to be 20 years by the beginning of March and the last, T4 has master degree and 11 year experience.

#### *d. Technique of collecting data*

This study uses interview, classroom observation and document analysis to collect the data. The interview is semi-structured interview with the guidelines

adopted from Richard and Rodger. The classroom observation is narrative form and document analysis is the material, students' note and workbook used by the four English teachers.

*e. Data analysis*

Data analysis is used in this study is Miles and Hubberman 1994 Model which is begun with a series steps; (1) data reduction, (2) data display then (3) conclusion drawing/ verification.

#### **4. FINDINGS**

The findings of teachers' beliefs and practices of English teaching at MTs.N Jeketro can be categorized into some categories: (1) the important of English (2) functional approach (3) principles (4) workbook oriented (5) methods (6) learning activities (7) teachers' roles (8) learners' roles and from those beliefs demonstrated by T1, T2, T3 and T4 can be concluded that there are no discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and their practices.

*a. Implementation of T1's beliefs*

T1 is a novice teacher. T1 is discipline and on time to teach in the class. The approach used by T1 is functional approach, T1 believed that the language is supposed to be taught based on the function. In the observations the researcher found that T1's beliefs are consistent with the practices. T1 taught about the language function in the class, such as expression of happiness, expression of sympathy, recount text and others. T1 had beliefs that the teaching and learning principles T1 holds is fun and interactive. The researcher often sees how close T1 with the students, T1 greets on the way classroom to other classes, then coming to the class and drew students' attention by asking the activity before the students come to the class while calling the students' names one by one, one of the eighth graders. T1 was not only friendly teacher but also kind. T1 always uses own material for the students and it looks reasonable than adopting the textbook or workbook totally. In the beginning, T1 asked for the students to see the previous material discussed then T1 posed a couple of question to the students. Then, T1 continued the lesson, T1 explained in short the lesson of the day and T1 instructed the students to teach the seatmates loudly each other, a few minutes later, T1 distributed the worksheet and a summary of the lesson to the students. During the lesson, T1 was active to check the students' works, T1 walked around while asking the reasons why the students picked up the answers. S1 said that T1 always asked for the students to do exercises such as fill in blank, match word and others. Then, a couple of minutes later, T1 offered the students to

write their work in white board, T1 will give additional score for the students who would like to answer the question in white board. The rest of teaching and learning, T1 always reminds the students to brush up the material because T1 will ask questions before continuing the lesson. T1's beliefs implemented in the classroom are functional approach, fun and interactive learning principle, authentic material, drill method, practice activity, a facilitator role and students as a partner; T2's beliefs illustrated in the classroom are functional approach, cooperative principle, workbook as primary source, discussion method, guided-discovery learning, a facilitator role, students as a receptacle; T3's beliefs are implemented in the classroom are functional approach, cooperative principle, workbook as primary source, reading method, comprehension activity, teacher as a facilitator, students' as a raw material and T4 reflected the beliefs: functional approach, fun and interactive, workbook as primary source, simulation method, application activity, teacher as a facilitator and students as an active participant, the factors that are responsible for shaping those beliefs are experience as language learners, training or seminar that teachers participated, experience works best and institution policy.

*b. Implementation of T2's beliefs*

T2 has adequately good teacher. T2 is warm for their students. In the observations are done by the researcher T2's beliefs and practices are congruence. The implementation of the functional approach can be seen from the teaching performance T2 shows in the class, T2 delivers materials related to the expression in English, recount text, descriptive text and others. In the beginning of the lesson, T2 always greet in a soft voice while smiling to the students, then a few minutes later, T2 divides the students into some groups and before T2 tells the material is going to talk about T2 gives like ice breaker, T2 provides a piece of paper to fill in the precise word or sentence in English for the group then they work in group and for the last group that submit the work, the group have to sing a song that provided by T2 in the projector screen. T2 sets passwords in the class to draw students' attention for instance when T2 says "Class?" and the students should reply "Hi", and when T2 says "class, class?" the students should reply "yes, sir or yes miss". Then, T2 checks sure the students' readiness by saying "are you ready to study class?". after that, T2 asks for the students to open the workbook entitled *Medali (Media Belajar Berprestasi)*, published by Penerbit dan Percetakan Indonesia Jaya, Surakarta, 2015). The students are excited with the lesson "family", they work in group and talk each other, and T2 checks each group then 15 minutes later, the captain of the group come to the front to show the work they have worked in the group. Afterwards, T2 gives a group task that must be collected in the following meeting. T2 has consistent beliefs and the practices

such as functional approach, cooperative principle, discussion method, application activity, teacher's role as a facilitator, learners' role as a receptacle.

*c. Implementation of T3's beliefs*

The next is the teachers' beliefs of T1 and the implementation of the beliefs in the classroom. T3 has belief that teaching English shouldn't concentrate on the grammatical orientation but it must be based on the function. T3 explained that human is a language user who uses it when required and it is supposed to teach based on the function of language such as genres based, short functional text, and daily expressions. T3 assumed that cooperative learning is one of effective ways to do in the classroom, and the students can learn from other students in a group. Student 3 (S3) conveyed that:

T3 sering membagi siswa kedalam beberapa kelompok terus mendiskusikan bacaan dalam kelompok, nanti sekitar 10 atau lima belas menit tergantung banyak sedikitnya bacaan yang diberikan kemudian T3 mengoreksi hasil kerja tiap-tiap kelompok

(S3, Interview, R6, 9E, November 14th, 2015)

T3 claims that the focus is reading because the students will not only get information about what they have read but also it will increase their understanding of a text. S3 affirms that T3 gives various of text types such as description of pet, recount text "on vacation", story of Malin Kundang and others.

Bacaan yang di berikan oleh T3 banyak mas, misal tentang hewan kesayangan, cerita liburan, dongeng Malin Kundang, dan Kangguru

(S3, Interview, R7, 9E, November 14th, 2015)

T3 uses a workbook entitled "Incer" (Indonesia Cerdas, published by PT. JePe Press Media Utama, 2015, Surabaya) as the primary source, to make more interesting T3 copy one of the worksheet in workbook then distributed to each group, and when T3 has bestowed the reading text, T3 immediately asks for the students to understand of the topic of the text, the main idea and the information the students gain from the text. T3 has similar to other teachers. T3 maintains the students' focus by looking into every group while posing several questions about how the students select the answers. Then, the groups submit the work, and if there still left time, T3 sometimes makes a quiz related to the lesson, T3 will give additional scores for all the team members who can submit earlier is going to give 20 scores for the total of the daily assessment, the second team will get 15 scores, the third will get 10 scores, then the next team will get 5 scores and for the last team need to sing any songs in English, the team know. All the students look motivated and happy for the quiz. T3 controls all the students' activities and if the students do not follow the direction T3 will give punishment such as cleaning the class, memorizing the vocabulary in front of the class, and rewrite the lesson of the day multiples into 3 times.

*d. Implementation of T4's beliefs*

The last is teacher's beliefs of T4 and the implementation T4 demonstrated in the classroom. T4 believes that functional approach is a precise approach to do in the class. T4 assumed that functional approach itself sees a language is a vehicle to express the meaning and it will be great if the teaching is underlain on the useful expressions such as offering expression, greeting expression or in the the text context the teaching is delivered in the genre of English text. In the class, T4 speaks English as much as possible to trigger the students' motivation and interest that English is a matter of habit and brave to practice it. T4 is personally kind and patient with the students. In the beginning T4 comes into the class, T4 always greets and smile to the students warmly. The principles of teaching T4 showed in the class is fun and interactive learning. T4 opens the class by showing printed numbers in a rectangle card size and asking for students to answer in English. S4 explained that T4 always ask questions about thing around the class, guessing words, favorite food and the students must answer in English. The material used by T4 is same workbook that T2 uses in the class. then the Method implemented is consistent that T4 holds the belief that role-playing is proper method to use, T4 suggests the students to do role-playing in the class related to the current lesson. Before doing role-playing the students need to set the role will be taken in the text and when the students do not understand the roles T4 comes closer to guide and direct the students to take a role as the students' interest. The core unit of the learning activity is application activity where T4 concerns on the students' performance in the class, in narrative lesson in the third observation T4 asks for the students to do role-play. The students can choose any topic related to narrative stories. T4 provides twenty minutes to prepare for each group then the group will present in the class. The role that T4 demonstrates in the class is congruent with T4's belief namely as a participant or facilitator. During the teaching and learning, T4 performs as a facilitator. T4 explains as required and assist the students to do learning. Every meeting T4 demands the students to participate actively in teaching and learning, T4 will asks for the students to perform in front of class or answer the task given by T4 in the white board.

*e. The factors shape teachers' beliefs*

Based on the finding of the research, there are four factors that shape the teachers' beliefs and practices at MTs N Jeketero. Those are teaching experience works best, training, policy and education.

*1. Experience as language learner*



Not all English teachers have a dream to be English teachers. One of the teachers (T3), in the beginning T3 had a dream to be an engineer of agriculture because T3 did not pass the entrance examination, finally T3 selected to be an English teacher as T3's interest. T1, T2 and T4 agreed that that education has huge impact to build the beliefs. the education process from the first the teachers studied English to the last education they gain strongly shape their beliefs. Then, T1 insisted that:

Proses pendidikan yang saya alami ketika saya pertama kali belajar bahasa Inggris sampai setelah saya lulus dari pendidikan bahasa Inggris ikut berperan dalam pembentukan keyakinan saya dalam menyelenggarakan kegiatan belajar mengajar

(T1, Interview,2, R14, October 16th, 2016)

From the discussion above, it can be summed up that education during the study in school as well as in university play important role in shaping teachers' beliefs and how the beliefs drive them to follow and implement in the practice.

## 2. Training

Most teacher believe that training has big impact to the teacher beliefs and practice. T1, T2, T3 and T4 are aware that training time by time can modify the beliefs they have hold. T1 noted that

Pelatihan-pelatihan yang saya ikuti berpengaruh terhadap beliefs yang saya yakini dan itu juga menguatkan praktik pengajaran selama di kelas

(T2, Interview,2, R 14, October 15th, 2015)

Form the information above, it can be concluded that the trainings they participate assist them to enrich the teaching foundation and regularly shape their beliefs. when they conduct teaching, they feel that there are assumptions underlie before selecting a precise approach, method, roles in the teaching and learning as well as leaning activity.

## 3. Personality

T3 argued that personality drives the teacher to do what the inside belief tells and indirectly it is reflected in the practice. Although, personality factor has emerged as dominant belief, it cannot be ignored that personality factor is caused by the accumulation of teaching experience, training and books as well as article publication to shape the belief.

Kalau saya pribadi dari dorongan personal saya, itu mungkin juga hasil dari akumulasi pengalaman saya saat mengajar di kelas, pelatihan-pelatihan, buku-buku atau artikel yang saya baca akhirnya muncul suatu dorongan dan gagasan bagaimana saya mengajar di kelas mas

(T3, Interview,2, R14, November 14th, 2015)

#### 4. *Teaching experience works best*

All teachers believed that the most dominant factors that influence teachers' beliefs are teaching experience works best. They affirmed that automatically what they have undergone cause the implementation in the classroom. T4 added

Apa yang kita alami dikelas secara tidak langsung mempengaruhi praktik pengajaran kita selanjutnya dan itu mengakar kuat jika kejadian itu kita alami berulang kali

(T4, Interview, R14, November 30th, 2015)

#### 5. CONCLUSION

From this study, it can be inferred that teachers' beliefs have huge impact to determine and guide the teachers' beliefs toward their practices in line. The reflection of beliefs can be translated into different implementation in the classroom based on the context the teachers confront in their real class. The context can be the age of students, teaching duration, and students' characteristic. The factors dominate the teachers' beliefs and practices experience as language learners, training or seminar that teachers participated, experience works best and institution policy.

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