
STUDENT TEACHERS' BELIEFS ON TEACHING ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE ON DIGITAL ERA

Noor Aida Aflahah

Universitas Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin

aidaafilahah@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed to describe student teachers' belief on teaching English as foreign language on digital era. The rapid grow of technology on digital era brings challenge and more demanding high-tech environment for teachers. Facing students of the future who are extremely accustomed with the use of technology change the way they communicate, work and learn. Teacher education now emphasizes on teaching method in line with the growth of technology. As student teachers, they should be able to take this opportunity and grasp the benefits of it. However, for student teachers who accustomed learning English in low-tech environment, there will be a gap between their experiences on learning English at school and teaching students now days. This research interviews student teachers who are currently taking their English language teaching graduate program. The interview result uses to gain understanding about their belief on teaching English on digital era and become incorporated awareness rising on language teaching program. The result could be as an attempt to make language teaching program more relevant and support training student teachers for the classroom practices on digital era.

Keywords: student teachers' beliefs, teaching English as foreign language, digital era

A. INTRODUCTION

In digital era, technology has control over our youth generation today and cannot be separated with their lives. Commonly, we found each of them has their smartphone which is used to keep them up with current issues on the internet based on their interests or to get along with their friends through social media. Hence, the rapid growth of technology changes the way youth generation communicates, work and learns. Students nowadays are known as "digital natives" of technology as they are born with and heavily influenced from it (Presnky, 2001).

As student teachers who are prepared to teach them on future, they should be able to take this phenomenon as opportunity and grasp the benefit of it. There is need to develop new teaching strategy or technique which involves technology to promote better English teaching and learning process. Previous researches have been conducted about the use technology in English language teaching process, for instances, Ni'mah (2016) used video dubbing application to improve pronunciation ability, Mouli (2016) explained Indian English teachers implemented several kinds of technology to enhance students' communicative competence.

However, the success of language learning process is influenced by many factors such as, students' motivation, teachers' beliefs and school environment (William & Burdern: 1997). The way the teachers teach is influenced by their beliefs. It will shape how they organize their lessons or choose teaching materials and strategy in their teaching practices. Related to this phenomenon, the teacher may ignore or grasp it as

great opportunity to improve language learning and teaching process. It only can be seen by exploring their beliefs on teaching English as foreign language in digital era.

Research on teachers' beliefs is necessary and valuable of educational inquiry. Its finding may give strong relationship and prediction between teachers' educational planning, their instructional decisions and classroom practices (Pajares: 1992). Therefore, depending on teachers' experience and preparation, they differ in their reactions to the use of technology on TEFL.

Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) on Digital Era

As the researcher stated before, our digital native students are surrounded by technology. One problem which may arise on language teaching and learning process is that they tend to have lack of motivation engagement. Prensky (2001) characterized students nowadays as having short attention span. They only want to learn based on their interest and passions, work in peers, make decisions, share control in learning process, have free chance to express the idea and the content of subject is relevant and useful for real world life. Therefore, it is better for the teachers to incorporate technology utilization on language teaching and learning process.

The existence of technology in digital era offers great opportunities for both of teachers and students. Brown and Lee (2015) elaborate that implementing effective technology such as Web 2.0 on language classroom offers opportunities for interaction between students with native speaker, have full access to authentic linguistic data and use, promote autonomous learning, and foster cross-cultural awareness. For instances, many Web 2.0 applications offer great potential on maximizing students' ability to become an active user of target language through interaction with native speakers or even with their peers. As language teachers, they have full access to select authentic materials based on students' interest and promote cross-cultural awareness through the materials. language teachers also can arise students' curiosity to promote automaticity in learning English.

As English language educators, teachers should consider several things before choosing the technology involved in classroom. According to Sutherland et al (2009) and Brown and Lee (2015), in order to improve teaching and learning process, teachers should analyse and understand the potential different uses of technology as they can corporate with the practices and purposes of different subjects of teaching. Considering the threats while using certain technology is also needed before implementing it. Teachers should create established scaffolding of the use technology for successful task in classroom.. As technology grows rapidly, teacher should maintain themselves to keep up with the new information, knowledge and resources are available on the internet.

Student Teachers' Beliefs

No agreement has been reached about the definition of this belief. Due to experts' negotiation on overlapping definition between knowledge and beliefs, it is quite hard to distinguish between knowledge and belief. Fenstermacher (1994) as cited in Zheng (2015) assumes that knowledge relates to factual perception, while beliefs relates to personal values which may not necessarily true. Other experts have argued that the term "knowledge" and "belief" are synonymous, interchangeable, and inseparable (Calderhead: 1996, Pajares: 1992, Kagan: 1990, Murphy and Mason: 2006 in Zheng: 2015). On other hand, experts claimed that belief as a form of knowledge (Zheng: 2015).

However, there is sufficient consensus about the core concept about belief for continued research to make sense. Based on the core concept of belief, according to Skott (2013) as cited in Skott (2015), teacher's belief term is used to infer individual,

subjectively true, value-laden mental construct that are the relatively stable results of substantial social experiences and that have significant on one's interpretations of and contributions to classroom practice.

In implementing student teachers beliefs into future practices, there are internal and external factors which might support or hindrance. According to Buehl and Beck (2015), internal factors involve their knowledge, self-awareness, self-reflection, responsibility for students' learning, aspects of their immediate teaching and other beliefs such as their belief about self-capacity and self-efficacy on teaching process. While external factors involve classroom-context, students' attitudes and preferences for language instructions and school-context factors.

B. METHOD

1. Participants

The participants of this research consist of 3 student teachers, one male and two females of graduate program form three different universities in Malang. Their age are ranging from 25 - 31 years old. They also have different amount of English language exposure time. They are currently taking English language teaching program and some of them have been experienced in English language teaching.

2. Data collection method and data analysis

Interviews with three students teachers of English language teaching graduate program are carry out to find out how their beliefs. The researcher records the interview process with audio recorder and also takes important notes. All the interviews data are transcribed into text. Once the data transcribed, the researcher reads it in order to familiarize with the gathered information and provide it in findings.

Table I. Interview's Questions

1. Would you like to tell me about your experiences in learning English especially the use technology in your class?
2. What is your belief about teaching English as foreign language in digital era?
3. What is your suggestion to your English language program regarding with incorporating technology in classroom practices?

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Question 1: Would you like to tell me about your experiences in learning English especially the use technology in your class?

Student Teacher A: I would like to talk about my learning experiences in English, I started my English lesson as early as when I was 3rd grader in elementary at thatt time. So, my English subject was a must subject, even only once a week English lesson at that time. My teacher did not use any technology, it was in nineties, we barely know about computer. She only used whiteboard and chalk as her tools. When I enter my junior high schools, I also have limited access with technology. My teacher only use blackboard, books that's all. It continued until i enter my senior high school. i started get involvement of technology in my learning of English maybe as i entered university, and it's just only use OHP or projector and my lecturer started using laptop and so on. And we had connection with the internet but also in limited. We have an independent internet access. It means that we

have access beyond our classroom. It is like autonomous learning. so as i explored to internet, it helps me on vocabulary, expand my knowledge about English, and my lecturer they did not stick use of one single sources at that book, which was book, but they also advised us to explore by the availability sources of internet.

Student Teacher B: I started learning English in junior English we only learned vocabulary and tenses up to i graduated from it for the sake of UN. and then for senior high school i come to Istiqomah boarding school the demand speak English is higher than junior high school. So I was getting one day about five times English subject before coming to the class such as vocabulary class. It was only vocabulary so i just memorize the vocabulary. I also chose language major when i was senior high school. So my chance to learn was bigger. But there was no use any kind technology up to my undergraduate level. i did not find any use technology by my lecturers such as language lab because i took weekend class. In my graduate program there is no special subject about technology but my lecturers taught me on to implement the use digital media on teaching and learning.

Student Teacher C: I started to learn English in my Islamic junior high school till my graduate program. On my junior high school the teacher used traditional method means that the teacher's was only blackboard. I started to access technology in learning English on my senior high school. I could access language laboratory for my listening subject. On my graduate program, it offers me ICT subject. My ICT subject is brighten up my knowledge about the use appropriate technology in language teaching and learning process. Since our students have been changed in term their characteristics.

The question is intended to explore their learning experience in learning English. As stated before that someone's belief can be shaped by their experiences. Here, it can be seen that the previous interviewees' English language teachers and lecturers aware about the importance utilization of technology in classroom practices in line with the growth of technology. This kind of teaching and learning activities unconsciously will shape student teachers beliefs by experiencing the benefits technology in teaching and learning process.

Question 2: What is your belief about teaching English as foreign language in digital era?

Student Teacher A: In digital era in my opinion i think we should, all lecturers open their mind that we cannot prevent any intervention from digital technology whether we like it or do not like we have to accept that nowadays our teaching and learning process cannot be separated from digital technology. And our students most of them are bringing technology like oxygen they wake up in the morning and they take their cell phone rather than other things so the first thing that you get in the morning. If you are a teacher i guess that you should embrace technology in your teaching practices because it helps to brighten up your teaching environment in classes i won't be dull it would be more exciting to have more technology inside your class. It doesn't mean that i do not appreciate the old method but when we have more practical method to learn and to teach English or any other languages why don't we use it.

Students Teacher B: As a teacher we should be able to apply any kind of technology but i think the old method and modern method both of them have

to be considered because we have to see our students' needs. Do not leave it all such as drilling exercise.

Student Teacher C: As a teacher we should keep up to date with current technology to improve teaching environment. We know that our curriculum emphasize to implement technology on classroom practices. As the time pass by, probably there will be new technology which is better than before. For me when the words "digital era" comes up, I think about teaching media that involved in technology.

The interviewees' beliefs about TEFL in digital era demonstrate that the utilization of technology in language teaching and learning process provide rich learning environment. They aware that technology becomes a part of students' daily life. Moreover, as future teachers they should take this phenomenon as opportunity to improve the way of teaching.

However, one of interviewee is still doubt about the important use of technology. Students B stated that old teaching method also has significant advantage even it is not emerged with technology. It may implies there is still learning gap between teacher education for preparing them as teachers.

Question 3: What is your suggestion to your English language program regarding with incorporating technology in classroom practices?

Student Teacher A: Currently I have special issue on literacy and literacy that we have to understand is not about reading and writing only. But in the digital era writing and reading getting more complex understanding that is not only reading on your book, not only writing an essay but how do you read or write using digital technology devices. And my expectation that more teachers or more lecturers would adapt their methods in introducing about teaching reading and writing along the usage with digital technology product rather that separate it. since our students they have very limited of attention span why don't we just try to incorporate of both technology with reading method into very interesting technique method of teaching and i think that more teachers now they have to realize that time has changed and people have to change also that we have to adjust ourselves to the current need.

Student Teacher B: Experience shapes the way you teach. The more you teach the more you know about students. It is better for English language teaching program gives students teachers chance to have experiences in implementing several types of technology in real-life classroom.

Student Teacher C: in my opinion, my campus has been promoted the student teachers to implement technology in classroom. For instances, one of our tasks is we created teaching media which involved technology based on students' needs. We use whatsapp audio record in listening subjects. However, it would be better for us to implement in real-life classroom to know the strength and weakness on certain technology.

The last interviews question is intended to explore student teachers expectation on how English language teaching program prepare interviewees as future teachers. It implies that their English language teaching program have lack of training program on the use of technology on real classroom context. Furthermore, from student teacher A statement, it can be inferred that English language teaching lecturers in her program tend to separate between the English language teaching methodology and the technology utilization.

D. CONCLUSION

This study tried to explore student teacher beliefs about teaching English as foreign language in digital era. The finding indicates that teaching in digital era will be more convenient and practical by implementing the technology in classroom practices. However, it is found that the one of the interviewees doubts that technology gives sufficient advantage on teaching and learning process.

Based on the findings, the student teacher also found the difficulties in implementing the technology on real classroom context. To overcome this problem, English language teaching program should provide more learning opportunities, conduct well developed technology curricula and offer professional technology training for them. English language teaching program should prepare them with relevant abilities and competencies in order to shape their positive beliefs towards the utilization of technology to improve their teaching process in the future.

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