

English Language Practices: Reflecting on Teachers' and Students' Belief

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Abstract—Belief takes an important role in both philosophy and education fields. Having known this, constructing belief is one of the most basic and essential features in someone's mind in which it relates to attitudes that he or she performs something and considers it as true. In relation to English language, teachers and students also have their own belief. Teachers' belief in English tends to have a personal issue which differs from one another reflecting on standard models of educational theory within their instructional performances. In the same line, students' belief in English also derives them to be successful in their education using different learning styles and strategies when dealing with language learning. This research is a qualitative study that aimed to describe belief in English language from both teachers' and students' perspectives. The participants of this study were five language teachers and five students. Teachers' and students' varied opinion on, feeling of, and knowledge of the issue raised were gathered using interview. The results revealed that teachers' and students' belief in language influenced how they address issues related to English language in which they are applied in their life performances. Those issues, however, help both of them in reflecting and developing their language performances that are not only occurred in social, but also in educational field. Furthermore, both of them argue that language is important in which it helps them to communicate and/or convey something such as idea and opinions, and share and/or get knowledge. Hence, their perspective as English language is served as one of essential parts existed in their life becomes fundamental notion that helps them in determining their social and education performances to be a better person throughout their life.

Keywords—*belief; language; teachers; students*

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English is regarded as prominent language. It can be identified in numbers of speakers and its uses for international communication throughout the world where English is widely used as a second language as well as a foreign language [1]. Moreover, English becomes one of languages that needs to be understood and mastered by someone in order to perform well in today's world as well as use it for travel purposes, work, for information access or entertainment [2].

Having known those points, teachers and students might have their own perspectives related to language in this case English. Teachers' perspectives towards English language will

influence their instructional process where language learning occurred within a classroom. On the other hand, how students address as well as learn English might be determined by their perspectives' towards English language.

Moreover, research on belief is important to be conducted because it reflects as one of methods in order to get knowledge and truth or something. Moreover, belief can also be regarded as knowledge by justifying it in order to get evidence based on empirical data. Therefore, investigating belief about English language from teachers' and students' sides can be used in order to understand how both of their perspectives are.

Furthermore, if teachers and students do not believe that English is important, it will result in their practices in using the language itself. Belief becomes one of basis sources in the teachers' instructional process formulated through information, attitudes, values, expectations, theories, and assumptions about teaching and learning that teachers perform within the classroom [3]. Moreover, students will succeed in their language learning process if they make use their belief in English language as the basis of their learning [4].

However, the researcher assumes that teachers and students do not rely on their belief and they tend to ignore it when dealing with language learning. Therefore, this study attempts to give different view from both teachers' and students' sides. Moreover, this study will elaborate both of teachers' as well as students' belief towards English language.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Notion of English Language

English has already known and used as a universal language around the world such as in Indonesia [5]. Furthermore, English is no longer the "property" of native-speaker communities, but it belongs to all speakers of English [6]. English language, however, belongs to the world where it is mostly and largely used simply as a medium to communicate [7]. Furthermore, Brown [8] argues that language is used for communication and operates in a speech community or culture and acquired by all people in much the same way where language and language learning both have universal characteristics.

On the other hand, communication is related to all elements of performance [9]. Thus, people will communicate their

intention, world as well as story, and idea by using specific words of language. Moreover, it is stated in Sapir's theory of language that language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols [10]. Bauman [11] thus argues that language use represents in performance as a speaking mode.

Furthermore, learning through language refers to language construction in reality in which how language builds, shapes, and transmits a picture of the world surrounding people within different cultures [12]. As English is used widely as well as internationally, it thus can be used a means to have better education and social mobility [13]. Furthermore, English language might help in having better education and career opportunities [14].

B. Teachers' and Students' Belief

Constructing belief is one of the most basic and important features in someone's mind. In addition, belief can be related to the attitude that someone has as he or she performs something and consider it as true. Furthermore, belief is defined as important concept within each subject area in which it relates to someone's behavior and learning [15]. Moreover, belief is occurred where someone judge and evaluate himself or herself, others, and the world surrounds him or her [16]. Khader [17] then argues that belief belongs to individual opinions according to observation or rational thinking.

Furthermore, teachers as well as students also have their own belief. According to Zheng [18] teachers' belief can be used in order to know their process of thinking, instructional methods, and teaching learning. In the same line, Li [19] mentions that belief indicates an important role in instructional process. Added to this, teachers' belief will influence their instructional process as reflecting on their lesson plans, decisions, and classroom activities [16]. According to Kindsvatter, Willen, and Ishler (cited in [15]), teachers' belief can be influenced by some factors: (a) teachers' experience as language learners, (b) teachers' teaching experiences, (c) teachers' personality, and (d) education-based principles.

On the other hand, Breen (cited in [20]) points out that students' belief in which they relate it with learning situation is recognized as an important point within the success of learning. Furthermore, Brindley (cited in [15]) argues that students' belief from Asian cultural background are defined into some descriptions. First, learning shape a completed knowledge. Second, there is a gap between teachers and students knowledge. Third, teachers become the centre in the instructional process. Next, teachers are given a program in the beginning. Lastly, language learning emphasizes the grammar learning.

Acknowledging those points, understanding teachers' and students' belief related to language in this case English is important. Thus, by having teachers' and students' belief that support each other will also influence the instructional process where learning will improve [21].

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

The participants in this study were chosen purposively. They were five language teachers and five students. The teachers who are four females and one male are varied in age from 25 to 50 years old. They have around two up to twenty-two years of teaching experiences. On the other hand, all of the students are females ranged around 14 and 15 years old.

Interview was used in order to gather the data. Furthermore, the questions in the interview was used to gather information about participants' belief on language. Interview guideline contained of several items adapted from Patton's theory of questions (cited in [22]) which are behaviour, value, feelings, knowledge, sensory, and background.

Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and validated by the researcher. The researcher then analyzed the transcripts in order to find the intended data. Furthermore, in order to better understand the issues underlying this study, Ellis and Barkhuizen (cited in [23]) procedures were adapted. They are divided into (a) read and note important themes from the transcript; (b) make editing from the list after checking the data; (c) define a code for the transcripts; (d) change codes to phrases and sentences in the transcript; (e) sequence each code; (f) find and draw conclusion from the data.

In this study, code LAN was used to address the theme language in which it addressed teachers' and students' preferences towards language. Furthermore, it was included the times that they said the words related to language such as "communicate", "function", "use", "language", and so on. On the other hand, teachers were coded into T1-T5 while students were coded into S1-S5.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study attempted to describe both of teachers' and students' belief towards English language. Teachers' belief towards English, however, will influence on how they conduct the instructional process in a language learning classroom. On the other hand, student' belief will also determine their position related to language learning process.

As stated in the previous section, there are several underlying theories related to language. The teachers' belief related to language were in line with the theory that language is used as a means of communication [8].

T3: *Bahasa itu se... sejenis alat komunikasi ya untuk... ya untuk berinteraksi antara orang satu dengan yang lain.*
(Language is used as a communication tool in order to interact between one and another.)

Added with the previous statements, all of the teachers believe that language serves as a means to communicate with people. On the other hand, all of the students also had same answers regarding their belief in language. One of them stated as follows.

S3 : *Bahasa adalah sarana komunikasi antara manusia.*
(Language is a means for communication between people.)

Moreover, there were also several perspectives related to the role of language coming from the participants. The data

gathered from the participants' answers were varied in how they explained. However, they had much similarity in some points. The teachers addressed that language was divided into the roles of conveying ideas and opinions with people, interacting and communicating among people, and sharing and getting knowledge. Furthermore, the students stated that language has role to communicate ideas and opinions and convey something to get done.

Acknowledging those points, teachers' and students' perspectives stated from the interview were in line with Saphir's theory of language. Language belongs to human by means to communicate ideas, emotions, and desires using certain symbols [10]. The teachers' statements were elaborated as follows.

T5 : *Peran bahasa.... Untuk menyampaikan apa ya.... Sesuatu yang diinginkan? Dari orang satu ke orang yang lain. Untuk mengutarakan pendapat, untuk membagi ilmu, untuk mencari ilmu, ya setahu saya itulah.* (The role of language is to deliver something desired from one to others, state opinion, share and get knowledge.)

S2 : *Ya, ya biar bisa komunikasi, ya biar bisa menyampaikan yang ingin disampaikan.* (It is used in order to communicate what we want to express.)

However, there was another interesting finding gathered from the teachers' statement. The teachers, however, stated that formatting habit among the students to use certain language became one of the strategies used by teachers in classroom learning. By doing so, they expected that the students would be easier and more confident in using the target language. Furthermore, the teachers tried to use their first language in order to help them in mastering the target language. Those assumption was supported by the following statements:

T1 : *Bahasa Indonesia, karena siswanya belum paham betul bahasa inggrisnya jadi dicampur sih tapi dominan bahasa Indonesia.* (I use Bahasa because the students have not really understood English language so I combine in using the language. However, I use Bahasa more frequently.)

T3 : *Bahasa inggris dan bahasa Indonesia. Karena melihat kondisi siswa yang you-know-lah, jadi kalau mengajar hanya menggunakan bahasa inggris ya anak-anak kurang paham dan tidak mengerti. Jadi tetap harus didukung dengan bahasa Indonesia.* (I teach using English and Bahasa considering students' condition and background. Therefore, if I only teach using English the students will not really understand so I also use Bahasa when teaching.)

T5 : *Kalo pelajaran saya, saya tekankan anak-anak harus pakai bahasa Inggris walaupun belum lancar. Walaupun banyak salah ya tidak apa-apa biar mereka latihan.* (In my subject, I emphasize the use of English within the classroom although they are not fluent yet. It is okay if they make mistakes as they practice using English.)

Related to the importance of using particular language, most of the teachers had similar perspectives. They stated that language should be used in everyday life in order to help them practicing the language. Students should not only use English in a classroom, but they can practice using it in their daily

activities. However, the teachers stated some constraints in which the students would face when trying to use the language every day. It is related to the exposures in which they are divided into uncooperative environment and partner. The data were presented as follows:

T1 : *Kalo dikehidupan sehari-hari ya karna lingkungan yang tidak mendukung ya belum perlu sebenarnya, cuma kalo untuk paham ya perlu cuma kalo untuk penggunaan sehari-hari ya lingkungan belum mendukung, ndak ada temennya ngomong.* (Because the environment cannot completely support the students to use the language in everyday life so that it is not a must. They cannot use it every day because the environment and they will be hard to find partner to use the language.)

T4 : *Pada hari tertentu saya kira perlu nggih untuk memotivasi saja kan kalau kita bisa memahami lagu dalam bahasa Inggris kan seneng, menurut saya tetep penting juga ya tapi untuk nganu.. untuk belajar kok.* (English can be used in particular day to give the students motivation in using the language. They will also be happy to understand English through songs so that they can use it for learning.)

T5 : *Ya harus diterapkan.* (It should be applied.)

On the other hand, the students also had their own perspectives. Majority of them stated that they should use language in everyday situations. It depends on what they believed through the use of language. The highlight point here was that the students realized that the students were demanded to master the target language in order to perform better in their life. The student's statement was presented as follows.

S5 : *Kalo bahasa Inggris tuh perlu kalo misal kita ketemu orang asing kalo nanti nggak tahu bahasa inggris nanti juga kan... apalagi kalo nanya alamat kan juga kasihan. Makanya kalo bisa e.. bisa pake... itu bahasa inggris di hari-hari.* (We need English for example when we meet foreigners in order to help them. It will not be helpful if we cannot speak English when they ask for something for example they ask directions. Therefore, it is better to use English in everyday activities.)

As discussed before, language is used to communicate in every aspect of someone's performances. In addition, both teachers and students stated that English should be practised and used in everyday language. Unfortunately, from the students' statements, they used language which was only beneficial to them. They would not use language that people surrounding them would not understand. It was seen where the students prefer to use language spoken by majority people in the society. The following are students' statements whether they use English in their everyday life or not:

S3 : *Bahasa jawa, kadang-kadang bahasa Indonesia. Ya kalo temennya ndak bisa pake bahasa jawa ya pake bahasa Indonesia, tapi ya kalo dominannya sih bahasa jawa.* (I use Javanese language to communicate with my friends, but sometimes I use Bahasa if they cannot speak Javanese. However, I mostly use Javanese language for communication.)

S4 : *Indonesia, asli jawa tapi dari kecil pake Bahasa Indonesia terus, sama orang tua sama tetangga gitu pake bahasa Indonesia juga.* (I use Bahasa although I am Javanese because I always use Bahasa when talking with my parents and my neighbour.)

S5 : *Bahasa Jawa, kan aslinya jawa mbak.* (I use Javanese language because I am Javanese.)

Hence, it can be concluded that formatting habit among students by using certain language within the classroom become one of reasons to make them familiarize with the target language. Added to this, there is mismatch between students' statement where they should practice and use English in their everyday activities and they mostly use Bahasa even Javanese languages when they communicate with others. It is thus because English is served as foreign language in Indonesia where it is not commonly used in everyday situation.

Furthermore, language can also be used as a tool to have better understanding in particular substance. In other words, learning can be accomplished through language. In addition, learning through language means that the students can get understanding that the world surrounding people has different cultures within that [12].

Having known those points, teachers' perspectives on language that can be used in learning were also occurred from their statements. By referring to all of their statements, they stated similar perspectives where language is important as it will lead students to get the advantages in mastering the target language such as broaden their understanding of different cultures. Below were several statements from the teachers:

T1 : *Ya karna bahasa inggris itu bisa untuk mereka belajar pengetahuan lain. Bahasa Inggris kan bahasa internasional ya mau tidak mau harus pelajari bahasa Inggris.* (It is because through English students can learn other knowledge. In addition, they should learn English as it belongs to international language.)

T2 : *Cara menekankan pentingnya bahasa Inggris adalah dengan menyadarkan mereka akan kebutuhan bahasa pada kehidupan sehari-hari.* (To make the students realize that English is important by making them aware that language is needed in daily life.)

T5 : *Saya menekankan bahasa Inggris kui penting karena dengan mereka bisa berkomunikasi menggunakan bahasa Inggris mereka bisa juga belajar tata krama. Mereka bisa tahu bagaimana bicara dengan sopan menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Mereka juga bisa menerapkan cara itu di bahasa mereka sehari-hari misalnya bahasa Indonesia. Saya cuma bilang begitu.* (I state that English is important for the students because they will have good manner if they can communicate using English. They will know how to use politeness when communicating by using English. That is what I said to them.)

On the other hand, the students also stated similar perspectives regarding learning through English. Their statements are as follows.

S1 : *Aku bisa belajar kalo ternyata bahasa inggris itu ada bedanya waktu kita bicara sama orang bule yang kita gak*

kenal. Ada pake sapaan Mrs., Ms., sama Mr. gitu. (I learn that we use different style when communicating in English with foreigners. There should be Mrs., Ms., and Mr.)

S4 : *Orang Inggris itu suka mengantri. Aku tahu mereka suka ngantri waktu gurunya ada bahas tentang topik pengumuman.* (I learn that queueing up is common for English people. I know this when my teacher discuss the topic of announcement.)

V. CONCLUSION

Results of this study revealed that teachers and students have their own perspectives towards language in this case English. Furthermore, their belief also influence how they address issues related to English language in which they are applied in their life performances. First, both of teachers and students address language as a means of communication in order to deliver ideas, opinions, and knowledge to others as well as get something done. Second, both of them also believe that English should be used and practiced within a classroom as well as in everyday life. However, the students face difficulties in using as well as practising English in their daily activities as English belongs to foreign language in Indonesia. Third, both of them believe that through English they can learn something such as knowledge and culture. Those issues, however, help both teachers and students to develop their performance in using language not only in social but also in education fields. In addition, the highlight point from this study is that both teachers and students have strong belief that language is important in which it helps them in communicate and/or convey something such as ideas and opinions, and share and/or get knowledge. Thus, they believe that English language is important as a part existed in their life.

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