

Teachers' Beliefs and Practice on Assessment in English Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Teacher needs to assess the students in the classroom objectively. This study was to explore the teachers' belief and practice on assessment in English language teaching. The main object of the study concentrated on teachers' beliefs about assessment in MTs Yasis At-Taqwa. Three English teachers participated in this study that consist two certificated and experienced teachers and one novice teacher. The data source of this study were observation, interview, open-ended questionnaire and document analysis. The data validity used was data triangulation to acquire accurate information through multi data sources. The technique to collect data were data reduction, data display and verification. The findings of this study indicated that assessment must cover psychomotor, affective, and cognitive aspect and orientate on the learning process, consider the students' activeness and attitude. The teachers' beliefs and practice demonstrate positive relationship between teachers' beliefs on assessment and classroom practice. The dominant factors that shape teachers' beliefs and classroom practice reflected in the classroom were school culture, training, teaching experience works best and experience as language learners.

Keywords: Teacher beliefs; Assessment; English Teaching.

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INTRODUCTION

The teacher is a reflection of the education quality for a country. If the teachers have good and qualified teachers, the country will have good generation. The education quality is started from the teaching quality in the schools that are operated by the teachers so that ensuring the teachers' competencies is required. Besides, teacher is an important figure in education. We can see how teacher gives huge impact in teaching such as material selection, learning media, classroom management and assessment selected in the class. The great achievement of teaching and learning can be built from the teachers. The teachers' quality decides the quality of teaching delivery. Teacher must have adequate understanding of pedagogy that leads teaching concept in shaping meaningful learning. Teacher belief is one of outstanding issues to discuss in teaching and learning. The belief that teacher hold can navigate how the teacher perform and organize the classroom. Strong belief helps the teacher handle every situation in classroom practice and gives the confidence to implement the

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classroom activity (Diana, 2020). Basically, teacher belief is a accumulation of thought that humans hold strictly how they behave in life. In teaching and learning process, teacher belief takes essential role to manage and control teaching and learning process successfully (Wafa, 2016).

Some studies indicated that teachers' beliefs significantly contribute to their classroom practices. Beliefs are a reflection of personal concept that show the understanding of teaching literacy (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996, cited in Shinde & Karekatti, n.d.). The terminology use of teachers' beliefs is varied. We can trace on the continuum of teacher's belief . in 1986 Clark and Peterson classified as teacher thinking, in 1992 Pajares mentioned teacher beliefs, Borko and Putnam in 1995 claimed teacher knowledge and literacy, while Black in 2002 called it as teacher image and Borg 2003 conveyed it as teacher cognition

In teaching English, assessment is compulsory activity that teacher conducts to see the students' improvement. Assessment is an important part of making decision to conduct teaching and learning process (Thomas, 2012). It is conducted to identify the students' improvement as a basis to enhance learning to achieve instructional goals (Widiastuti et al., 2020). Additionally, assessment not only can be used as instrument that provides the teacher a picture of students' understanding level related to the material but also provide feedback on what students are learning, how much learning material can be understood, and how well students learned (Box est al., 2015).

In several preliminary studies carried out to the EFL teachers demonstrated that the success and failure of assessment practice are determined by the teacher belief (Guadu & Boersma, 2018). Teachers' assessments demonstrated in the classroom is shaped by the teaching concept, experience and pedagogical knowledge. The type and form of assessment is influenced by a number of factors. One of factors contributes teacher belief is the nature and reason of assessment itself. Basically, assessment is a general term used in education to assess the students' achievement by looking at the students' performance, but education instructor or trainer use the term interchangeably. It is required to match the term to figure out the appropriate term in teaching. Gultom (2016) differentiates assessment and evaluation. Assessment is a process of getting information how far the learning achieved based on the competency, whereas, evaluation refers to identification of activity to see whether a program that has been planned can run efficiency or not on the program.

Assessment is divided into three: (1) daily test, this kind of test is conducted periodically to measure the achievement of one competency or more based on the indicator (2) semester test, the test is carried out to evaluate students' competency after eight to nine weeks teaching (3) final test, the test is conducted to measure the students' competency in the end of the semester, (4) school examination, the test is carried out by the local school to gain the acknowledgement on students' achievement as a pass requirement of the school and (5) national examination, the test is conducted nationally under National Education Standard Board. Furthermore, assessment is categorized in 3 types based on its function; diagnostic test, the test is to investigate the students' weakness and the factors, formative test, the test is conducted by the teachers in the learning process to know the achievement of the teaching and learning ; summative test, the test is carried out in the certain end of teaching and learning period. (RI, 2005)

In addition, Escobar (2018) categorized the basic reason of assessment are pedagogical and administrative. The pedagogical means assessment is to support and improve learning and teaching thus providing a basis for reflection, discussion and feedback to all those involved in the assessment process. The pedagogical goal of assessment is reflected through formative assessment. This type of assessment leads teacher decision making about future instruction, it also provides feedback to students so they can improve their performance. Teacher belief has a variety of aspects such as belief about teaching, belief about learning, belief about subject matter and others. Hidayat, (2017) insisted some aspect of teacher beliefs about learning and learner, teachers' instructional roles and student activities., Basturkmen et al. (2004) categorized teachers' beliefs about practical, personal practical, subject matter

content, pedagogical content, and curricular while Richard & Rodgers (2007, p. 30) added a couple of belief aspects; those are belief about English learning, teaching, curriculum and belief about language teaching as profession.

The benefits of study on teachers' beliefs in education are: (1) it can inform researchers and teacher trainers about how teachers are likely to implement their teaching, and how to provide appropriate teacher education programs, (2) teachers' beliefs can provide a picture of teachers' skill and competencies, (3) it will depict how teachers conceptualize their knowledge and practice and (4) It gives information about the pedagogical understanding that drives the teacher in decision-making strategy (Liao, 2007, p. 45). While Johnson (1994, p. 439) added that teacher' beliefs contribute a critical role in how teacher learn to teach, how they interpret new knowledge about learning and teaching and how that knowledge is translated into classroom practices. Teacher belief is one concept that can lead positively and negatively in teaching practice. How important teachers' belief in practice indicates that teachers' beliefs are a central issue to know whether teachers' beliefs and practices are discrepancy or not and why those beliefs are shaped. Farrell (2013, p. 9; Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 86; Masuda, 2012, p. 239 cited in Diaz, 2013, p. 172) indicates that the link between beliefs and practice in teacher education is fundamental to understand the quality of language teaching and learning.

Conversly, Fatemi and Mellati (2013) conducted a study related to instructor's beliefs about language teaching and the classroom practice. The study attempted to compare between state university and some private universities in Iran. It demonstrated that there was connection between belief and language practice. The teachers' beliefs seem discrepancy because of (1) internal factor; willingness, weak beliefs and pedagogical knowledge, (2) external factor; teaching and learning context, and institution vision. Muhammad (2006) found that (1) the teachers in Maldives do not follows their pedagogic beliefs, therefore there are some discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and practices, (2) The major factors of the consistency between teachers' beliefs are context, institution rules and best previous experience, (3) Instructional practices are congruence with their teachers' beliefs because teachers' lack of openness to change, low professional motivation and the lack of a supportive school culture.

Based on the literature review and preliminary studies about teachers' beliefs. It was required for the researcher to capture the more specific, therefore the researcher concentrates on assessment. The study is a case study that conducted held at MTs Yasis At-Taqwa. This study poses several research questions namely: (1) what are teachers' beliefs about assessment in MTs Yasis At-Taqwa?, (2) Is there any discrepancy between teachers' beliefs on assessment and classroom practice ? and (3) what do factors mostly influence to shape the teachers' beliefs and the classroom practice?.

METHOD

This study took qualitative study. According to According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007) cited in Herman et al (2021:146), qualitative research is a research where data are collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers (Van Thao, Herman, & Tho, 2020; Munte, et al, 2021). The approach of research design was descriptive case study design. The explanation began with presenting a descriptive theories that lead framework for researcher to navigate the study and formulate research question based on the context of reserach setting. The main object of this study was teachers' beliefs and classroom practice on assessment with case study approach at MTs Yasis At Taqwa. The participants of the study were three English teachers at MTs Yasis At-Taqwa. Two teachers were certificated and experienced and one novice teacher. T1 (teacher 1) was categorized as a novice teacher with 3,5 years teaching experience, T2 (teacher 2) was categorized as an experienced and certificated teacher with 10 years experience, T3 (teacher 3) was 15 teaching year experience and was about to be 16 years by the beginning of August. Data and data source were

observation, semi-structured interview and document that support the research such as field note, lesson plan and assessment worksheet. The data of this study were teachers' activities that transcribed in form of observation, field note, documentation and informant and recorded events. The researcher took Richard & Rodger's guideline to conduct semi-structured interview. The observation was occurred in the class wrote in narrative form then analyzed the document by doing data reduction, data display and verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of open-ended questionnaire, semi-structured interview and document analysis. The findings of teachers' beliefs and classroom practices on assessment in English teaching at MTs Yasis At Taqwa are in the following explanation:

Teacher Belief about Assessment

T1 insisted that assessment is a process of collecting, reporting and using information about learning outcomes students obtained through measurement by applying the principles of assessment, authentic, accurate, and consistent evidence. The assessment must be carried out to make sure students' attention in learning by asking question, giving exercise regularly. T2 stated that :

"Assessment is a process to determine to what extent, and in what ways, how educational goals have been achieved, what and how they have not been achieved and what is the cause, and what follow-up actions are". (OEQ, T2/8a)

T3 added that assessment must be orientated on authentic assessment that English skill such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. T1 emphasizes on the learning process that students participate actively in classroom. T3 made a range of assessment to evaluate students' competency such as matching vocabular from English to Indonesian, fill in blank, and completing sentence. A teacher needs to upgrade the knowledge about assessment and its purposes, T2 assumed that :

"Assessment is an activity of collecting information to measure the students' achievement in learning outcomes. The activity includes selecting assessment techniques, suitable instruments, to assess what we will measure ". (OEQ, T2/8a)

The teachers' assessment needed to do and evaluate regularly. T2 confirmed that the assessment must be authentic and valid. T2 gave variation model provided in workbook such as daily test in fill in blank form and homework in essay form. T3 argued that :

"Assessment is a process of collecting information comprehensively that are carried out regularly to know the competency students' or achievement in learning through assessing their individual or group task". (OEQ, T3/8a)

T3 noted that assessment is not only focused on learning outcomes, but also on the process study. Students are involved in the self-assessment process and peer assessment among students as a means to practice assessment. The assessment is positioned as if separate activities from the learning process. Scoring should be implemented through three approaches, namely assessment of learning (assessment conducted in end of learning), assessment for learning (assessment that occurred in learning process), and assessment as learning (assessment that occurred in process of learning that involve students' participation).

Based on the descriptions, the assessment that the three English teachers are authentic, objective, reliable, valid and continuous that include psychomotor, affective and cognitive aspect. The teachers also use some variations in their assessment like short-answer question, fill in bank, completing sentence, jumbled word arrangement, essay and multiple choice.

The teachers' beliefs and the classroom practice about assessment are obviously varied. T1 and T2 tends to orientate on the process of learning in the class, then looks the assessment based on the students' participation and activeness, attitude and learning process while T3 proposes that assessment must be based on the three aspects namely affective, cognitive, and psychomotor, before T3 makes assessment, T3 always decides the learning outcome that will be measured such as determining the scoring system and providing rubric description in order to minimalize the teacher subjectivity and the assessment is more fair. The classroom practice of the three English teachers in MTs Yasis At-Taqwa indicate that the beliefs are different even they are English teachers. T2 and T3 often pose question to stimulate the students while grading the students based on the students' answer.

T1 is disposed to distribute worksheet and played English music and the student fill in the blank song lyric to grab the students' attention and in the last discussion, T1 often gives homework for each chapter in the workbook. The teachers select assessment form based on the skill or competency that the teachers will be measured. In writing skill, T1 will take essay to give students' opportunity in expanding the writing ability. Whereas T3 adopts short-answer question or jumbled word to see the students' understanding in grammatical structure. On the contrary, T2 prefers multiple choice than essay or completing sentence to evaluate the students' understanding.

The teachers ponder scoring or grading as assessment source such as weekly test, assignment, mid-term test and final test to transcribe into scoring system that depicted the students' ability. The finding of the study is in line with Yoshihara's work (2011). He states that teachers' beliefs and classroom practice significantly matches with the beliefs. Although, the teacher belief and practice are mostly consistent, the researcher found that there is one aspect of the assessment aspect is not in line with the teachers' beliefs namely affective assessment. The teachers claimed that they took affective assessment, they give a various form in assessment based on the principles of assessment, but in the classroom practice, the researcher did not find the consistency between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice. The researcher found that they tended to use cognitive and psychomotor assessment to use in teaching and learning.

Factors that shape teacher beliefs and practice

The classroom practice and how the teachers demonstrated naturally in the classroom was shaped by the teachers' beliefs. There were a variety of factors that leded the teachers' beliefs based on the transcription of semi-structured interview can be summed up into four factors that form beliefs and classroom practices in MTs Yasis At-Taqwa are :

School Culture

The policy in school determined how the teachers applied the instruction from the Ministry of Education. The teachers gained dissemination of the implementation of the curriculum. They had to update the curriculum in the end of the semester each year to be assess and monitored by the local education department the progress and form of 2013 curriculum implementation. Even there was still left personality factor in the classroom practice. The school culture had big effect in curving the teachers' beliefs and classroom practice. T1 and T3 were in line with T2 statement, that is :

"As teachers who work under the Ministry of Education, we require to follow the instruction and select the type and form of assessment based on textbooks that we get from district education office and we are monitored by the school supervisor." (T2, Interview,2, R14)

Even the teachers required to follow-up the 2013 curriculum, they still had personal tendency T1 and T2 argued that personality leads the teacher to express theoretical and conceptual in classroom. T3 noted that:

"The type of assessment that I use in class usually depends on what I want to apply, if I want to use multiple choice then I will use it, and if I want to assess students with

essays, I will take essays to find out how far my students understand the material. (T3, Interview,2, R14)

In another side of the assessment the teachers adopted to match the implementation of 2013 curriculum, some teachers thought they had problems to practice, the teachers conveyed that the assessment was complicated, it took longer time to set the assessment and it started with the assessment must be underlied the objective of the lesson or basic competence so we tended to select any kinds of assessment in students' worksheet.

Training

Training or seminar that teachers participate has big contribution to the type of assessment to pick up in the class. They all agreed that they acquire lots of experience in the training in implemementing a variety of assesment form. T1 added that

"When I was a novice teacher that 3 year teaching experience, I used to select multiple choice to measure students' competency especially for reading comprehension". (T1, Interview,2, R14)

Based on the statement of beliefs, we can infer that seminar or training gives lots of optional choices in assessment. The teachers gained the orientation of implementing 2013 curriculum through preservice teacher training. T3 stated that when T3 participated in traning, T3 motivated himself to apply what T3 got in the training, T3 was introduced to make specific procedure to assess students' competency and scoring based on the rubric. T2 added that in assessment teacher did not only graded the students but gave positive corrective feedback to help student as well.

Experience as language learner

T2 never imagined that we would be an English teacher. T2 had dream to be a nurse. The teachers did not passe the entrance examination so T2 decided to enjoy the teacher profession. T1, T2 and T3 agreed that that education had huge impact to build the beliefs. the education process from the first the teachers studied English to the last education they gained strongly shape their beliefs. Then, T1 insisted that:

"I still remembered a couple of years ago, my English teacher used to drill in every meeting while distributing worksheet that contain blank dialogue, it helped me more to enrich my vocabulary so, my English improved significantly, so when I taught my students, I still used technique to make my student work more in the class". (T1, Interview, 2, R14)

It could be summed up that education and experience shaped the practical teachers' performance. Every teacher had success experience in learning. It automatically curved their pedagogical act in the class. A teacher that experienced to be fluent and good in English, they would repeat the way they studied successfully..

Teaching experience works best

One of factors that form teachers' beliefs about assessment is teaching experience works best. Most teachers confirmed that the assessment applied in classroom is practical to use such as completing sentence or dialogue, fill in bank and multiple choice in which the students are familiar with. In the other hand, T3 conveyed that:

"We use students' worksheet to assess student competency, personally I prefer essay than short answer question or multiple choice in reading text, when we use essay, we not only can see students' comprehension in reading but the writing skill as well". (T3, Interview, R14)

While T1 preferred completing dialogue to measure the students' understanding level than multiple choice. T1 felt that completing a dialogue in group more interesting than just circle or cross multiple choice.

CONCLUSIONS

Teacher belief is a subjectivity that navigate the operational and conceptual knowledge in classroom practice. As a result of the study, it can conclude that the teachers' beliefs on assessment in MTs Yasis At-Taqwa indicated that the assessment must orientate on the process of learning, consider the students' activeness, and cover three aspects of assessment namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor. There is no discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and classroom practice, it indicated that both of them have positive relationship between teachers' beliefs on assessment and classroom practice. The factors contribute to shape the teachers' beliefs can be various. The dominant factors shape the teachers' beliefs are school culture, training, experience as language learner and teaching experience works best.

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