

Articulating Beliefs: A Comprehensive Analysis of English Teachers' Perspectives on Grammar Teaching

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v8i2.450>

*Siska Oktawidya Wati, Hermawati Syarif, Yetti Zainil, 

^{1,2,3}Universitas Negeri Padang

ABSTRACT

Teacher beliefs are about how teachers conceptualize their work in classroom. Based on the theories, teacher beliefs is an important element in improving the quality of educational practice. Therefore, the purposes of this study are to describe the teachers' beliefs and to investigate how the teachers "practice of teaching grammar in classroom. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The subjects of this study were two English teachers who were experienced in teaching English at SMPN 1 Harau. The instruments used are interview, field notes, and documents. The technique of data analyses used the Mile and Huberman model. Based on the result of the study the data show that teachers beliefs that grammar is important because it effects on how students make the correct sentence. There are five factors that support the beliefs, lesson plan, teaching method, teaching procedure, sources of teaching materials, the teachers and students roles. However, in teaching practices not those factors are applied because the teachers had to a lot of time to manage the classroom.

Keywords: *Articulating Beliefs, English Teacher Perspective, Grammar Teaching.*

Article History:

Received 10th November 2023

Accepted 11th December 2023

Published 15th December 2023



INTRODUCTION

Belief was a thought that is assumed to be true by the people and it will guide them to do something. Borg defines belief as a proposition that consciously or unconsciously has been held which is evaluative, and imbued with the emotional commitment that serves as a guide for people's thinking and behaviour. (Borg, 2001). It means that when people have beliefs consciously or not they will do or decide something according to what they think. The quality of education depends on the good teachers. Teachers are very influential in language teaching cause the way teachers act in class is determined by what they believe. According to Gilakjani & Sabouri, some researches indicated the superb effect of teacher education on changing instructors beliefs. Consequently, it will have deeper expertise in the specific changes for English language teaching, it is miles important for teachers to have deeper expertise in their beliefs. (Gilakjani, P., & Sabouri, N., 2007). Therefore, teachers need to form a belief that can improve learning systems. It is will have an impact on the teacher's treatment in teaching.

Teachers' beliefs seem to play a main role in the teaching and learning process. It was supported by Zaenul Wafa, in his research about "Teachers beliefs and classroom practices of English teaching" the results of the study showed that most teacher beliefs were consistent with teaching in the class, namely beliefs about learning objectives, syllabus, instructional material, classroom techniques, teachers' roles, students' roles, and

*Corresponding Author: Siska Oktawidya Wati, e-mail: siskaoktawidyawati@student.unp.ac.id

Authors' Contribution: a-Study design; b-Data collection; c-Statistical analysis; d-Manuscript preparation; e-Funds collection.

assessment but he also found there was discrepancy namely teachers' beliefs about classroom procedures (Wafa, Z, 2018). The results of the study showed that most teacher beliefs were consistent with teaching in the class, namely beliefs about learning objectives, syllabus, instructional material, classroom techniques, teachers' roles, students' roles, and assessment but he also found there was discrepancy namely teachers' beliefs about classroom procedures. The study of teachers' beliefs forms part of the process of understanding how teachers conceptualize their work which in turn is needed to understanding teachers' practices and their decisions in the classroom. Each teacher has a different belief in the teaching and learning process, although they had the same goals. It is referred to as a teacher's teaching belief and considered with the curriculum.

1. Teachers' Belief

Given the crucial position teachers' beliefs play in teaching, the people may ask what the term belief means. Pajares defined belief as an individual judgment that can only be established from a lot of understanding of what human being say, aim, and do. Pajares (2015) In line with Pajares, Larenas defined belief as "interpretation of experience and as mental and affective constructions of experience are integrated into schemata. Any simple proportions inferred from what a person says or do, capable of being preceded by the phrase, 'I believe that.'¹¹ Borg defined belief as a mental state which has as its content a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding it, although the individual may recognize that alternative beliefs may be held by others.

The overall definition about belief implies that belief is something considered true according to someone. Furthermore, Borg defined teachers' beliefs as teacher's pedagogic belief, or those beliefs of relevance to an individual's teaching. Later on she defined teacher's belief as "what the teachers think, know, and believe. Pajares defined teachers' beliefs are thought to have a profound influence on their classroom practices. An understanding of this relationship is important for the improvement of teachers' professional preparation and the successful implementation of new curricula. To sum up, teachers' beliefs in teaching-learning context are what teachers hold to be true in teaching learning process and they influence any of decisions made by the teachers in real classroom practices. Beliefs are propositions individuals consider to be true and which are often tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, provide a basis for action, and resistant to change. It means, teachers' beliefs in teaching-learning context are what teachers hold to be true in teaching learning process and they influence any of decisions made by the teachers in real classroom practices.

Based on explanation above, It could be concluded that belief in teaching and learning activity should be owned by the teacher, and belief that are held by the teacher must have the purpose to achieve learning goals. Therefore the teacher should aware their belief as educator and they should understand what teachers will do in classroom activity. Beliefs are important aware because it is a form of teachers professional development. If the teachers how good belief and good classroom practices in the classroom, it can influence toward student achievement

2. The Important of Teacher's Beliefs

Breen, M (2012) conveys the importance of study on teachers beliefs namely: (1) to identify the guiding principles that teachers reflect exclusively in the classroom practice, (2) the teachers' beliefs is going to assist the teachers to see how the teachers understand teachers' pedagogical knowledge and (3) to depict the teachers perspectives and how the beliefs demonstrated in the practices. The important of teachers' beliefs are affirmed by some initial theorist of teachers' beliefs. Chu as cited in Nien claims that no doubt that teachers' beliefs played an important role in the whole teaching process and decision making in the classroom (Chu, Yu-wei. 2010). Richards & Lockhart (2014) stated it is necessary for instructors to examine personal beliefs and thoughts about teaching, which can assist them to understand how to manage teaching tasks and reflect personal beliefs

clearly.¹⁶ Therefore the teacher's belief is very important to know how the teacher's thinks and perceptions about managing the class well, which is very influential in education.

Teachers' beliefs provide a source of experientially based professional know how that may serve as a focus both for initial teacher education and to promote reflective practices in ongoing teacher development. 3) Any educational innovation has to be accommodated within a teacher's own frameworks of teaching principles. Increased awareness of such frameworks in specific contexts can inform curriculum policy and planning in relation to any innovation. 4) Conversely, beliefs may result in the emergence of new teaching principles which produce grounded alternatives to the accepted wisdom passed on by methodologists who may be far removed from actual classrooms. Teachers' beliefs are affirmed by some initial theorist of teachers' beliefs. Chu as cited in Nien claims that no doubt that teachers' beliefs played an important role in the whole teaching process and decision making in the classroom.¹⁵ Richards & Lockhart stated it is necessary for instructors to examine personal beliefs and thoughts about teaching, which can assist them to understand how to manage teaching tasks and reflect personal beliefs clearly.¹⁶ Therefore the teacher's belief is very important to know how the teacher's thinks and perceptions about managing the class well, which is very influential in education.

3. Aspects of Teachers' Beliefs

Richards & Lockhart provide guidelines for the investigation of teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, namely: beliefs about English, beliefs about teaching, beliefs about program and curriculum, beliefs about language teaching as profession. Beliefs about English. Teachers' beliefs about English may sometimes represent stereotypical impressions; these beliefs do express realities which may influence classroom practices. Teachers' beliefs about English often influence attitude in teaching too. These beliefs can be clarified by considering questions like these: (1). why do you think English is an important language? (2). do you think English is more difficult to learn than other languages? (3). what do you think the most difficult aspects of learning English are (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation)? (4). which dialect of English do you think should be taught (e.g., British, American, other)? (5). do you think it is important to speak English with native-like pronunciation? (6). how does English sound to you compared to other languages you know? (7). what attitudes do you think your learners associate with English? (8) Do you think English has any qualities that make it different from other languages?

Beliefs about Learning Teachers' beliefs about learning may be based on their training, their teaching experience, or may go back to their own experience as language learners. These beliefs represent answers to questions such as these: (1) How do you define learning? (2) What are the best ways to learn a language? (3) What kinds of exposure to language best facilitate language learning? (4) What kinds of students do best in your classes? (5) What kinds of learning styles and strategies do you encourage in learners? (6) What kinds of learning styles and strategies do you discourage in learners? (7) What roles are students expected to assume in your classroom?

Beliefs about Teaching. Teachers' beliefs about teaching reflect everything they do in the classroom. The actual practices of teachers are often reflected by their beliefs. Interviews with the teachers about their teaching yielded quite different answers to the following questions: (1). how do you see your role in the classroom? (2). how would this be apparent to a visitor? (3). what teaching methods do you try to implement in your classroom? (4). what teaching resources do you make use of? (5). how would you define effective teaching? (6). what is your approach to classroom management? (7). what are the qualities of a good teacher?

Beliefs about Program and Curriculum the beliefs of program and curriculum used by the school are very important. Any languages teaching program reflects culture institution as well as a collective decision and beliefs of individual teacher. The use of program and curriculum will influence the beliefs of teachers. Central questions concerning teachers' beliefs about the programs they work in hence include: (1). what do you think are

the most important elements in an effective language teaching program? (2). what do you think the role of textbooks and teaching materials in a language program should be? (3). how useful do you think instructional objectives are in teaching? (4). how do you decide what you will teach? (5). to what extent is your teaching based on your students' needs? (6). what is your attitude toward assessment in a language program? (7). what changes would you like to see in your program?

Beliefs about Language Teaching as a Profession Professionalism of teacher is concerned with the language teaching and language teaching organization. The professionalism of teachers about their work depends on their working conditions, their personal goals and attitude, and the career prospects available in their community. A good belief on language teaching will profit for the professionalism of teacher. Teachers' beliefs about professionalism can be explored through questions such as the following: (1). how would you characterize English teaching (or the language you teach) as a profession? (2). what changes do you think are necessary in the language teaching profession? (3). what kind of training do you think language teachers need? (4). what kinds of professional development activities best support teaching? (5). what kind of support for professional development is available at a school you are familiar with? (6). what is the most rewarding aspect of teaching for you? (7). do you think language teachers should be evaluated throughout their careers? If so, what form should this evaluation take?

Basically, teachers beliefs are one important element for understanding and improving the educational process. The study of teachers' beliefs is part of the process of understanding how teachers conceptualize their work. This is used to understand how teachers approach their work; like the ideas or perceptions, they have about teaching at school. It is important to understand teachers' beliefs and principles in carrying out their strategies in teaching. English is one of the subjects taught in middle school. The latest government policy states that English is one of the subjects starting at the junior high level. There are four Basic English skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. On the other hand, students must also understand the aspects of language. Aspects of language are grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Williams said Grammar is the formal look at the structure of a language and describes how words match collectively in meaningful constructions (James, D. Williams. 2005). It means grammar is a description of the structure of a language and how language units such as words and phrases are formed into sentences. Teachers must prepare how they will teach English especially teaching grammar to students who may have just become familiar with foreign languages.

The writer did observation at SMP N 1 Harau. The observation was conducted with 2 English teachers. Based on observation the writer found that English teachers only taught brief on teaching grammar in the classroom. Generally, this often happens in Indonesian education. Therefore, the writer wants to see how the teacher's beliefs in teaching grammar, On the other hand, Thornbury, S. (1999) explained there are three approaches to teaching grammar. In general, they are teaching grammar from rules (deductive approach), teaching grammar from examples (inductive approach), and teaching grammar through text. It can be seen that teaching grammar is a teacher's way to make the students understand the rules of grammar. It means, there are certain rules in teaching grammar that the teacher must apply to students in the class. Based on the background above there is a phenomenon that occurs in the field, the English teachers only teach briefly about teaching grammar in so the students are finding difficulties to form correct language. Cause of that, the writer wants to fully understand what English teachers do in teaching grammar by understanding what they believe.

METHOD

The researcher used descriptive qualitative method. According to Arikunto descriptive method is focuses on describing situations and conditions to be explained in the research report. Then, Creswell state qualitative research is a means for exploring, and understanding

the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. So descriptive qualitative is measurable, actual and very accurate research methods because the results were described in great detail. Then, the results are presented in the form of research reports based on the fact.

Besides, the researcher was design of descriptive method which is a method of research that attempts to describe and interpret the objects by reality and fact. It means that descriptive qualitative method is a kind of research that focuses on the description and no numerical data. Which, this method used to find out what teacher's beliefs about grammar teaching in the classroom. The subjects of this study were two English teachers who were experienced in teaching English at SMPN 1 Harau. The instruments used are interview, field notes, and documents. The technique of data analyses used the Mile and Huberman model.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section is presented based on the data of this paper, the writer used the results of interviews and Documentation. The writer conducted an interview by 2 English teachers who were experienced in teaching. Furthermore, the writer has seen how the teacher practices in teaching. In the documentation data, the writer used lesson plans and syllabus that have been made by the teacher. In the interview data, writer had interviewed English teachers about their belief in teaching English.

Table 1. Data display (The data of interview).

No	Aspects	Indicator
1.	Beliefs about English	a. The teacher's belief in English expresses Reality which can influence practice and attitude in the classroom.
2.	Beliefs about learning	b. Teachers' beliefs about learning based on Their training, their teaching experience, or may go back to their own experience as language learners.
3.	Beliefs about Teaching	c. Teachers' beliefs about teaching reflect Everything they do in the classroom. The actual practices of teachers are often reflected by their beliefs.
4.	Beliefs about the program and curriculum	d. Any languages teaching program reflects Culture institution as well as a collective decision and beliefs of individual teacher.
5.	Beliefs about language teaching as profession	e. The professionalism of teachers about Their work depends on their working conditions, their personal goals and attitude, and the career prospects available in their community.

The writer had displayed the data summary in the form of table above. In the following data below, the writer showed the interpretation of each data that was gotten from those interview that displayed in the table form of the data display above. This section will display the result of open-ended interview related to the first research question,

teachers' beliefs in teaching grammar. There are six beliefs investigated: (1) grammar is important, (2) lesson plan, (3) teaching method, (4) Teaching resources, (5) classroom procedure, and (6) Teachers' and learners' roles. From the open-ended interview transcript, the findings of the teachers' beliefs in teaching grammar are:

Table 2. Representation of Teachers' Beliefs in Teaching Grammar

Beliefs	English Teacher 1	English Teacher 2
1. Beliefs in the Grammar is the important of teaching grammar	foundation for us to develop language.	Beginning of learning English is from the structure of grammar.
2. Lesson plan	Make a lesson plan based on the syllabus and prepare it before teaching in the classroom.	Make a lesson plan Based on the syllabus and prepare it before teaching in the classroom.
3.a Teaching method	Lecture method	Inquiry based learning (IBL)
.b Teaching approach	Teaching from examples.	Teaching grammar from rules.
4. Classroom procedure	greetings, teaching material, closing	Preteaching, context, closing
5. Source of Teaching Materials	Book, worksheet, internet.	Book, worksheet, internet.
6.a Teachers' roles	The role of teacher Is as Facilitator, leader, and motivator.	The role of teacher is as a facilitator, motivator, and partner.
b Learners' roles	Students are the actor and object of teaching process. The students are required to be active.	The students are Object and partner for the teachers

This section discusses research findings that have been conducted by writer based on the results of interviews and documentation. It is accompanied by an explanation from the point of view of theoretical understanding. The writer uses the theory from Richard & Lockhart about teachers' beliefs. From the description of the results in the previous section, it can be concluded that the way teachers teach students is based on what they believe. In this study, there are six factors that influence the way teachers teach. But, the researcher also found that the teacher's practice was not in accordance with teachers beliefs.

1. Grammar is Important

The English teachers have beliefs in teaching grammar, it can be seen that the first point concerns the beliefs of two teachers about the importance of teaching grammar. As mentioned in theory, Richard emphasises that teachers' beliefs are a part of the process of understanding how teachers conceptualized their work. Teacher 1 has become teacher for 17 years and she belief that grammar is important as a fondation in learning English'. One teacher has become teacher for 20 years and her beliefs that the importance of grammar is an

important as the first step to learning English. Teacher 2 believes that teaching grammar is a foundation for developing language, she said grammar must be taught to students, at least they understand the basics of grammar.

Meanwhile, teacher 1 believes that grammar is important. She stated that grammar is the first step to learning English. It is about how students making correct sentences. From the findings above, both teachers believe grammar is important as a foundation and the first step to learning English. It is related with the theory, according to Richard & Lockhart Teachers' beliefs about English may sometimes represent stereotypical impressions; these beliefs do express realities which may influence classroom practices.

2. Lesson plan

A good teacher is a good planner. It is about how the way teachers can determine a success of teaching learning process. The lesson plan is one of the factors in the belief of English teachers in teaching grammar, which to make a lesson plan base on syllabus. Brown suggests the important elements of a lesson plan such as goals, objectives, materials and equipment, procedures, evaluation, and extra-class work. Teachers lesson plan, which was given to the researcher, was actually a different thing with class application. The planning was not represented in classroom activity. In their lesson ching grammar will influence the way to conceptualize teaching in the classroom activity. In their lesson plan, they stated that used the Curriculum 2013 which has some steps, they are observing, questioning, associating, experiencing, and communicating. Teacher 1 said the lesson plan as a guide in teaching English. Both teachers implement lesson plans based on the Merdeka curriculum. In SMPN 1 lesson plans are very noticed, the proof is that the Ministry of Education always requests the results of lesson plans that have been made by the teacher. Therefore, they always make lesson plans at every class meeting. The statement above can be concluded that both teachers have confidence in teaching grammar based on the applicable curriculum.

3. Teaching Method

In Merdeka Curriculum, inquiry-based learning is used as the basis of the School-Based Curriculum. In the second discovery the teacher uses the method when teaching in class. NH teacher argues, she uses varied methods related to the material. While, the ET 1 teacher believes focused the inquiry based learning method based on the curriculum. However, they are used the presentation, practice, and produce (PPP) methods. It means that the lesson plan and practice is difference. While, in the Merdeka curriculum consists of observing, questioning, associating, experiencing, and communicating. Uddin state the most of the teachers' method is not like with the practice in class. In teaching grammar the two teachers have adopted the approach suggested by Thunbury in his book, there are two approaches in teaching grammar. There are teaching grammar from rules and teaching grammar from examples. Teaching grammar from rules (TGFR), it explains material from general to specific whereas teaching grammar from examples (TGFE) explains material from specific to general. In the observation, NH teacher used the approach from general to specific and DA teachers used the approach from specific to general. That means both teachers have confidence in the grammar teaching approach.

4. Teaching Procedure

The teachers states to use the procedure in the Merdeka curriculum. The learning steps applied by the teacher are pre teaching, context, and closing. It means they are consistent with the procedures in the curriculum. The teachers have a mismatch of their methods of teaching grammar based on the applicable curriculum. However, in the approach and procedure, the two teachers are consistent with the curriculum. This point discusses curriculum issues which in Richards and Lockhart's theory in Fauziati provide guidelines for investigating teacher beliefs about teaching.. Teacher NH stated that she applied the lecture methods and used Teaching grammar from examples (TGFE). While, Teacher DA stated that she used the IBL method and apply Teaching grammar from rules (TGFR) Approach. In practice, teacher 1 used the Presentation, Practice, and Produce (PPP) step which is not a representation based curriculum. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between the stated

beliefs and the practice. The following result is in line with Abadi and Marztan's work which was stated in their work that teacher tend to put less attention for supporting students in their preparation for teaching than they actually do it in the classroom.

5. Instructional materials Practice

Teaching resources are tools that support teaching and learning in the classroom. it is useful for the teacher in presenting the material. Therefore every school must provide teaching resources such as books or worksheets. Teaching resources available at SMP 1 Harau are books and worksheets. But both teachers say, sometimes they change the material that is easier for students to understand. Therefore the school has provided computers and internet networks so that teachers have facilities to develop the material. Besides, the teacher is also active in attending seminars and training on the curriculum. It is one to support the teacher's process of teaching. at this point lies in Richard&Lockhart's theory of beliefs about teaching and beliefs about teachers profession.

Conclusion

This paper is a descriptive analysis of English teachers' beliefs about teaching grammar. The purpose of this study is to describe what teachers believe about how do English teachers' practice on grammar teaching. The writer have conducted the research by using three instruments; interview and documentation. Based on observations and interviews with the two teachers, the researcher concluded that each teacher had their respective beliefs in the teaching concept. It is about how teacher belief is consistent with practice. In the interview results, the researcher found five factors that formed the teacher's confidence in teaching grammar, namely the importance of grammar, lesson plans, teaching methods, teaching procedures, the sources of material, and teachers & students roles. However, not all factors are implemented by the teacher. After the researcher observed the two English teachers at SMPN 1 Harau, both teachers were consistent with their belief practices, namely: teaching objectives, teaching approaches, teaching resources, and the teachers and students roles. And there are also differences found in the practice of beliefs, namely teaching plans, class procedures, teaching methodology and media.

References

- Borg, M. (2001). Key concepts in elt teachers' beliefs. *Elt journal*, 55(2), 186-188
- Breen, M. P., Hird, B., Milton, M., Oliver, R., & Thwaite, A. (2012) Making sense of language teaching: teachers' principles and classroom practices. *Applied Linguistics press*. 22(4), 470-501.
- Brown, H. Douglas. (2007). *Language assessment: Principles and practices*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Bown, H, Douglas. (2000). *Principles of language learning & teaching*. New York: Longman.
- Chu, Y. (2010). Teachers' Beliefs in Teaching English for Kids at a Kindergarten: A Case Study of Students. *Department of applied English*, 7(10), 122-141.
- Fauziati, E. (2015). *Teaching English as a foreign language: Principle and practice*. Surakarta: Era Pustaka Utama.
- Gilakjani, P. G. & Sabouri, B. S. (2007). *English language teaching: A review of literature* Canada center of science and education, 10(4), 78-86
- Halliday & Matthiessen. (2016). *Introductory to functional grammar: fourth edition*. An Hachette UK company
- Mudjia, R. (2017). Triangulasi dalam penelitian kualitatif. Diakses dari <https://uin-malang.ac.id/r/101001/triangulations>.
- Pajares, M. F. (2015). Teachers' beliefs in educational research: Cleaning up a Messy Construct. *Review of educational research*, 62(3) 307 -332

Articulating Beliefs: A Comprehensive Analysis of English Teachers' Perspectives on Grammar Teaching

Richard, Jack C. Teaching English as a foreign language. Cambridge : Universitas Press.

Thomas, S. C. (2013). Farrell. Conceptions of grammar teaching. A case study of teacher's beliefs and classroom practice. Department of Applied Linguistics, 9(2), 1-13

Thornbury, S. (1999). How to teach grammar. England: Pearson education limited.

Uddin, Efekhar. (2014). Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs and its Reflection on the Practice in Teaching Writing in EFL Tertiary Context in Bangladesh. Journal of Education and Practice. Volume 5, No. 29.

Wafa, Z. (2018). Teachers' beliefs and Classroom practices of English teaching (A case study at MTS N Jekerto) Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

Suharsimi, A. Prosedur penelitian, Yogyakarta: PT. Reineka Cipta

Xu, L. (2012). The role of teacher's beliefs in the language teaching-learning process. Finland: Academi publisher manufactured, 2(7), 1397-1402