
FACTORS INFLUENCING TEACHERS' BELIEFS ON THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS TO TEACH LISTENING

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ABSTRACT

This research describes factors that influence teachers' beliefs on the use of authentic materials to teach listening. This issue points out on what factors that shape their beliefs on authentic materials which are considered as good media to teach listening and support the learning and teaching practice. Two English teachers who constantly use authentic materials for listening skill are as the subject of this research. Observation, questionnaire and interview are administered to gain the data. The data are analyzed by using interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman. The result shows that factors influencing teachers' beliefs are: a) challenging points of authentic materials; b) easy access to authentic materials; c) the availability of the materials; d) students' interest; e) workshop/training and personal experience. The result implies that some factors on using authentic materials have shaped teachers' beliefs.

Key words: *Influence, belief, authentic materials, teaching listening*

INTRODUCTION

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 are resistant to change. Therefore, teachers need to teach students in their ways by using understandable teaching materials since what they do in the class affected the students learning process.

In Indonesia, English has been taught in every level of education. English is learnt as foreign language that support students to use English for communication. There are four skills that must be learnt by students; listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the classroom, students listen carefully and attentively to lectures and class discussions in order to understand and to retain the information for later recall. In a language classroom, listening ability plays a significant role in the development of other language arts skills. When students first learn a language, they generally listen to the words several times before they are able to recognize

and pronounce those words. In short, listening skill plays a significant role in communication and in language learning (Dunkel, 1991; Rost, 1990) and is perhaps "the most fundamental language skill" (Oxford, 1993: 205).

In many cases, listening skill is considered as difficult skill to learn by senior high school students. Some reasons beyond this statement are the students are not accustomed to listen sounds in English produced by native speaker. They are provided with the material in the form of created materials that purposely produced to teach listening. By this condition, the students are not interested in the materials given by teachers. due to being uninterested, the students are not motivated in learning English. One of the way to minimalize the students' problem in listening is by providing them with authentic materials. These materials are inexpensive because the teachers do not need much money to get the materials. Besides, the access to the materials is quite easy because they can be obtained from many sources.

It is considered important to investigate some factors that may affect teachers' beliefs on the use of authentic materials to teach listening. Borg (2003: 94) comments that factors such as parents, principals' requirements, the school, society, curriculum mandates, classroom and school lay-out, school policies, colleagues, standardized tests and the availability of resources may hinder language teachers' ability to carry out instructional practices reflecting their beliefs. The study of teachers' beliefs is rarely found in senior high school level. Moreover, in this level, students are expected to build up a good mindset about what they had learnt during learning English. It seems to be crucial since the students learning English in this level will affect their English skills in the future.

METHOD

Method used in this research is a qualitative case study. Merriam (1998: 27) reveals that a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or social unit. The researcher aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon by concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity (the case). The case study focuses on holistic description and explanation. Yin in Merriam (1998: 29) adds that case

study is a design particularly suited to situations in which it is impossible to separate the phenomenon's variables from their context. Since the data of this research appeared in words rather than numbers, the data are collected through some variety of ways (observation, interview, questionnaire, and document analysis). Miles and Hubberman (1984: 21) propose the interactive model of data analysis to analyze the data that is in form of words. Therefore, the variables in this research are analyzed by using interactive model that consists of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The participants in this research were two English teachers namely teacher Fr and teacher Sy. Teacher Fr is 36 years old. He has been teaching for 10 years. He just accomplished his master degree in 2014. Teacher Sy is 32 years old. He has been teaching for 6 years. He is still working for his thesis. Thus, by considering the purpose of this research, the subject of this research are the teachers that handle each class especially in the tenth grade to gain a more variative data. In conducting the research, the researcher follow some procedures as a guidance, they are: a) constructing instruments including questionnaire, note, and recorder, b) collecting data, c) analyzing data, d) reducing data, e) displaying data and f) verifying and concluding data. Besides giving questionnaire, the researcher recorded the teaching and learning process occurred in the classroom which focus on how teachers handle the class. Data were collected through observation, questionnaire and interview and were analyzed by using Interactive Model proposed by Miles and Huberman (Miles and Huberman, 1984: 21-22).

Finding and Discussion

1. Teaching Using Authentic Material is Challenging

The data taken from interview describes that one from two participants believes that teaching using authentic materials is challenging. The belief system of the teacher is reflected during the interview section. Teacher Fr confirms his beliefs on the interview.

“Challenging. Authentic material is challenging. For me, teacher is a motivator. Jadi buat `saya guru adalah motivator. Kalau kita datang selalu membawa barang baru buat mereka itu luar biasa. Itu aja. kalau kita masuk kelas itu bagaimana cara memotivasi anak. seng paling abot itu kan guru kan itu ya

mbak. memotivasi siswa”. [“teacher is a motivator. When a teacher comes to the class, she/he should bring something new for the students. It can make the students motivated. The challenging part of teaching by using authentic materials is how the teachers motivated the students since giving motivation is not that easy”. (Interview/teacher Fr/1/2/7)]

Teacher Fr describes that teacher is a motivator. Motivating students to be interested in learning English is challenging to him since giving motivation is not that easy. Thus, he points out that teaching listening by using authentic materials is challenging becomes factor that affects his belief.

In the same way, Berardo (2006:64) mentions that selected authentic materials will:

- have positive effect on students' motivation
- give authentic cultural information
- expose students to real language
- relate more closely to students' needs
- support a more creative approach to teaching

2. Easy Access to Authentic Materials

Accessibility is the second factors that affect the teachers to use authentic materials. The data taken from questionnaire and interview describes that the easiness to the access of authentic materials is the factors they use it. The data from the questionnaire show that the teachers take authentic materials from some sources. Teacher Fr adopts authentic materials from internet, mass media, audio recording and video recording. The two teachers agree that authentic materials are quite accessible. The result from the interview supports the teachers' belief toward the accessibility to authentic materials.

“So far, selama ini saya nggak kesulitan karena mungkin di rumah materialnya sudah banyak banget. Jadi tinggal bongkar-bongkar. Authentic material itu mudah. Tinggal browsing di internet, trus browsing-browsing. Yang jelas aksesnya mudah”. [“So far, there is no such obstacles to get the materials since I have it all at my house. I just need to find it out. Not that difficult to find

since I can browse from the internet. Moreover, the access to the internet is very easy". (Interview/Teacher Fr/1/2/8)]

On the other hand, teacher Sy looks for authentic materials from internet. He confirmed:

"Ya kita tinggal cari dari internet saja kan banyak banget". ["There are a lot of materials taken from the internet". (Interview/teacher Sy/2/2/10)]

The development of technology enables them to search any authentic materials from the internet since the internet connection itself can be easily obtained from their mobile phone, WiFi in the school or other media to connect to the internet that provides unlimited resources. It is supported by Harmer (2007: 303) who states that authentic materials cover wide ranges of ideal sources of materials for extensive listening. That is why the more we pay attention to authentic materials, the better and easily we will find listening in the Macro strategies of post method that promote learner autonomy.

Easily accessible websites can help students to find relevant authentic materials. The role of the learner as provider in this case is important, because in the day to day learning/teaching the exposure to authentic materials can make the task more interesting and motivating. Toward this, students can learn English inside or outside the classroom. They can learn English at home which then lead them to be an independent learner. Authentic materials keep students informed about what is happening in the world around us so they have educational value. "Extracting information from a real text in a new/different language can be extremely motivating, therefore increasing students' motivation for learning by exposing them to "real" language" (Guariento and Morley, 2001).

3. The Availability of Equipments

The third issue of the research about factors that affect teachers' beliefs is the availability of equipments. The data are obtained from questionnaire and interview which result that the equipments support the teaching and learning in the classroom. The specific equipments provided in the classroom are summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Equipments

Equipments	Teacher Fr	Teacher Sy
OHP		
Computer/Laptop	√	√
LCD	√	√
Koneksi Internet	√	√
Video player		√
Audio player		√
Lingkungan sekolah	√	√

From the questionnaire, teacher Fr notices that the equipments that support his teaching are laptop, LCD, internet connection and school environment. While teacher Sy notices Laptop, LCD, internet connection, video player, audio player and school environment are equipped at school. Both teachers indicate that the mentioned equipments affect their beliefs in teaching. The teachers believe that these tools enable them to teach listening. Since the materials are in the form of audio-visual material, the equipments are quite helpful.

4. Students' Interest

The next factors that clearly affect teachers' beliefs on the use of authentic materials are students' interest. The data from the questionnaire show that the students are getting enthusiastically to learn English in the classroom. The teachers believe that when they have to teach the class, they have to bring something new that attract the students' interest toward the material being learnt. At this point, students feel like they are facilitated by any materials that originally taken from native speaker. The teachers identify that the students are interested in authentic materials since they actively involve the teaching and learning

process. Besides, the interview done to student show that she is motivated during learning English through authentic materials, especially song. She confirmed:

“Lebih enak lagu. Ya kan soalnya lebih asyik dan bisa sekalian refreshing. Saya bisa jadi lebih bisa fasih ngomongnya, bisa terbiasa dengan kata-kata Bahasa Inggris gitu” [“More interested in song. It is more fun and is as refreshment. I can speak more fluently, I am used to hear vocabulary produced by native speaker”]

From this point, students’ interest is considered as factor that affect teachers’ beliefs. Being motivated and being interested is closely related. It can be assumed that people will be motivated when they are interested. In short, being motivated comes after being interested. As Melvin and Stout (1987: 44-56) found an overall increased motivation to learn in students, as well as a renewed interest in the subject matter when students used authentic materials for the study of culture in the language classroom. Related to the finding of the research, students’ interest is considered as factors that affect teachers’ belief. The teachers found that the indicators of being interested in subject matter are whether students actively take a part the learning process. It can be said that when students actively involved in teaching process, they unconsciously motivates themselves in learning the subject matter.

5. Workshop/Training

Teacher Sy considers workshop as factor that affect his belief. He believes that since attending the workshop when he was a college student, he got experience on how to teach students in a good way, how to conduct good teaching and learning at the classroom and how to apply any methods in the class. He believes that the workshop gave benefits to him until he correlated his teaching method by using authentic material. He describes that his knowledge works with authentic materials. Borg (2011) asserts that teacher education is more likely to have an impact on teachers’ practices when it is based on an understanding of the beliefs teachers hold. This understanding of beliefs is necessary at all levels of teaching pre-service teachers, new teachers and older teachers more set in their teaching practices.

6. Personal Experience

Both teachers (teacher Fr and teacher Sy) agree that personal experience is the factor that affect their belief. Teacher Fr has teaching experience for 14 years. During 14 years, he identifies the changing of rule in teaching English in which listening materials involved in national examination in 2003 has brought him to a consideration that authentic materials is the helpful material that can help him. From this point, he describes that his past experience affects his belief.

“Dulu awalnya, awal-awal listening dipakai di SMA itu belum ada mbak. Belum ada buku yang pakai listening. Ya pertama kali diterapkan ujian nasional di tahun 2003 itu kita kan hunting material kan untuk listening. Kita ngumpulin buku-buku itu. Saya dulu cari kayak misalnya active listening, task listening, ya kan termasuk itu penggunaan encharta dan ensiklopedia”. [“Listening skill was not used in senior high school before 2003. Since national examination in 2003 required listening skill, I find out listening materials from books, active listening, task listening, encharta kids and enciklopedia”. (Interview/teacher Fr/1/2/2)]

Teacher Sy also points out that his teaching experience affects his belief. By having 4 years experience in teaching, he keeps renewal his teaching style, including the materials that he uses. He indicates that his experience has just shaped his belief.

The finding is supported by Richardson (1996: 102-119) who highlights three major sources of teachers belief; personal experience, experience with schooling and instruction and experience with formal knowledge both school subjects and pedagogical knowledge. It includes teacher’s educational background and their beliefs during learning. It can be explained that each teacher has differences on educational background, on how long they have been teaching, on who is being taught, where they teach, what they teach, etc. These kind of experiences are personally experienced by each teacher. Teachers will teach different students with different ability in different method/technique/materials with different tools in different era year to year. Teachers need to update their teaching method/technique/materials since students have different needs by the

changing of year. Thus, it can be assumed that teachers' personal experience has affected their beliefs.

CONCLUSION

Teaching practice in the classroom is the real act of teachers' beliefs. The selection of teaching materials comes into the consideration of the teachers. Why the teachers use certain materials lies as the factor that influences their beliefs. Thus, some factors influencing teachers' beliefs are teaching using authentic material is challenging, easy access to authentic materials, the availability of the equipments, students' interest, workshop/training and personal experience.

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