

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



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Chapter one discusses the background of the study including a short review of related previous studies, statement of the problems, the purpose of the study, theoretical framework, significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the study

As English becomes the world's lingua franca, the need for English language learning increases simultaneously, as a result English courses are growing rapidly all over non-English speaking countries and specifically Indonesia. The rapid growth of various English courses thus creates a tight competition amongst schools and English courses, every school is trying to give the best offer for English teaching and learning to their clients. In order to do so, it is important that teachers at these courses are able to give the students the best language learning experience. Teachers play a central role in delivering lessons and providing lesson materials in class and in order to continue enriching the teachers' methods of teaching English courses nowadays provide teacher trainings and expect a certain qualification for their teachers.

EF English First is one of the English courses in Surabaya that is quite recognized in Surabaya. **EF English First**, which is a part of **EF Education**, has

had forty years of English teaching experience. **EF Education** itself was established in 1965 in Sweden by Bertil Hult. After forty years of English teaching experience, EF has developed its own teaching methodology. It is an eclectic methodology that focuses on building students' confidence and communicative ability. Amongst the methods and approaches that are available in the English language teaching, EF, among others, uses the communicative approach, the lexical approach, task based learning, Total Physical Response and the Presentation, Practice and Production technique.

The approaches mentioned above are all integrated within the **Efekta System**. The **Efekta System** is a system that is designed by **EF Education**. Teachers working in **EF English First** are all familiar with the methods used in the **Efekta System**, as trainings are held periodically on various subjects and for teachers' skills enhancement. It was interesting to find out the beliefs of the teachers in **EF English First** as they have all started from different backgrounds. This study on teachers' beliefs took place in one of the **EF English First** schools. It was done specifically in **EF English First Klampis Surabaya School** with its very own teachers as participants. The school has five Non Native English Speaker Teachers (NNESTs) and five Native English Speaker Teachers (NESTs). The participants were three NNESTs and three NESTs who has had more than two years experience. These two types of teachers were chosen instead of just studying one type because unlike some other English courses that provides NESTs only or NNESTs only, **EF English First** provides both NESTs and NNESTs in the school. They teach students together hand in hand. Each level starting from level

four up to level ten is taught half by an NEST and half by an NNEST. Each level consists of twenty four face to face meetings with the teacher, therefore NESTs teach twelve classes and NNESTs teach the other twelve classes. The amount of teachers' experience was chosen because it is a time when a certain belief has already been developed in the teachers' mind in oppose to first year teachers.

Teachers' teaching behaviour is somewhat affected by their beliefs in language learning and teaching. Teachers have their own sets of belief that affects the way they deliver materials and manage the class. Richards (1998) defined teachers' beliefs as the "information, attitudes, values, expectations theories and assumptions about teaching and learning that teachers build up overtime and bring with them to the classroom". Those beliefs come from teachers' experience as language learners, experience from teaching, teachers' own personality, expectations from school, parents, government, local community and education based or research based principles. Thus realizing it or not each teacher has their own set of beliefs as to how they conduct the class and their teaching approaches. Concurring with this is the study done by Ng and Farrel (2003) which suggests that what the teachers say and do in the classroom is somewhat governed by their belief. Therefore the teachers' belief systems and their application in classroom activities are important to know as it affects the way students learn in English.

When it comes to the teaching and learning of a language, the teaching and learning of grammar becomes unavoidable. It is undebatable as to the significance of grammar in a language. Language is constructed of grammar, as Richards, Platt and Weber (2003) stated "grammar is a description of the structure of the

language and the way in which units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language” (qtd. in Thornbury, 1999). Both Thornbury (1999) and Larsen-Freeman (2001) agree that grammar is more or less a description of the rules that lead to the order of words in a sentence (syntax) or the formation of words (morphology). It is gathered that grammar is the way sentences are formed in a language, consequently making grammar an important part of language learning. Therefore grammar becomes a substantial matter in the teaching and learning of English.

This study aims at analyzing how teachers view and teach grammar in their class and to see whether the teachers beliefs in teaching grammar are congruent with or divergent from their actual classroom practice. When a teacher holds a certain belief, it is held because it is thought to be the best way to deliver the lessons and achieve the lessons’ objectives. Therefore the teachers’ beliefs and the actual classroom practice need to be congruent. As stated by Farrell (2004), it is important that teachers “.....are teaching in a manner that they have intended.” This way, teachers are able to know whether what they have intended to do has been successfull in the classroom; Therefore, teachers can provide oppurtunities for students to learn more effectively.

A few studies have been done on teachers’ beliefs and the actual classroom practice. According to a research by Chavez (2006) in a Nicaraguan University setting, he found that there were divergence between the teachers’ beliefs and their actual classroom practice. The teachers believed in the Audiolingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching but in class reality they used the

Grammar Translation Method. A similar study by Lim and Farrel (2005) in a Singaporean school setting also put forward the divergence between the teachers' beliefs and the actual classroom practice. Mohamed (2006) did a study of 197 secondary school teachers in the Maldives to find out about the teachers' beliefs and their instructional practice. She then worked with fourteen of these teachers in their professional development to see how their beliefs can change. The result was there were divergence between the beliefs said and the actual classroom practice. As for change, out of the fourteen teachers, only two of them managed to change their teaching style according to the taught technique.

Although this research was not done to compare NESTs and NNESTs, it is most likely that the comparison between the two comes up during the study. For that reason studies about NESTs and NNESTs are included. There has been various studies done in the field of English Language Teaching of the NESTs teachers and NNESTs concerning the teaching of grammar and their teaching behavior in general.

As some researches have proven, non native teachers are more concerned about teaching grammar than native speakers. According to Medgyes and Benke (2006), their research in Hungary of the differences in teaching behaviour between native and non-native speaker teacher as seen by learners showed that non native teachers are thought to be better at explaining grammar, helping with grammatical problems and are able to teach learning strategies more effectively. The research showed that native speakers of English teachers, though they serve perfect models in speaking and are more relaxed and lively in the way of teaching

but, they are not good at grammar explanations and often times a communication gap is created between the native speaker and the student. Having mentioned so, the main concern of this research is to find out the beliefs of teaching grammar of both native and non-native speakers and how those beliefs are practiced in the classroom. In the writer's own experience, Native speakers tend to be able to put language in a better context of usage for a specific language point as they know the kind of natural situations that the language point would most probably occur. However, they are unable to build a firm base of the language point in order for the students to be able to use it accordingly. The non-native teachers on the other hand are much more able to build that strong grammar base through controlled practice and drilling because they are much aware of the students' needs and can emphasize, but they tend to be unable to put the language point in the proper context for usage. However, this cannot be generalized, although there are native teachers who are very lineant in the accuracy of grammar, as long as it does not impede the flow of communication, there are some who are very much concerned about accuracy and drilling, it becomes of high importance in their class. Despite all that Arva and Medgyes (1994) also did come to the conclusion that NESTs and NNESTs in general have their own weaknesses and strenghts in teaching a foreign language, in this case, English.

Hopefully, exploration of teachers' beliefs in teaching grammar and their classroom practice can help identify the different areas that teachers need help in to improve their teaching performance in class and also be able to fill in the gaps that are needed for teacher development to better suit the needs of the students in

general and specifically in **EF English First**, where the study took place. Other than that it is also essential that the teachers are aware of the beliefs they are operating from, as Pajares (1992) explains, “exploring teachers’ beliefs is essential to improve teachers’ professional development and teaching practice.”

1.2 Statements of the Problem

This research was done to know how teachers viewed and put the teachings of grammar in their lessons. How those beliefs were formed and also to see whether their beliefs are congruent with or divergent from the actual classroom practice. In doing so there is a need to explore the teachers’ beliefs in teaching grammar and their actual classroom practice. Following are questions that will be focused on throughout the research:

1. What were the teachers’ beliefs in teaching grammar?
2. Why have they formed such beliefs in teaching grammar?
3. How were the actual classroom activities related to the beliefs?

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study are as follows:

1. To find out the teachers’ beliefs in teaching grammar.
2. To find out the reasons for such formation of beliefs in teaching grammar.
3. To find out how those beliefs are related to the classroom activities.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the two approaches used by teachers to teach grammar which is the inductive approach and the deductive approach. The deductive approach focuses on explicit explanations of grammar rules; whereas, inductive approach is about students' own discovery of grammar rules.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1. The results of the study will be beneficial to the teaching of the English grammar in **English First** as it will give some insights at how the teaching of grammar can be improved. Through the understanding of beliefs and the management of knowledge teachers will be able to provide the best technique of teaching to benefit the student's context and needs.
2. The results of the study can also be used as a basis for further study in teachers' beliefs.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The qualitative research is done in one English language course, **EF English First Klampis, Surabaya** specifically, with native and non-native English teachers of that particular school who has had more than two years teaching experience as participants of the study. The participants will be three native and three non-native experienced teachers of **EF English First Klampis Surabaya**.

Teachers will be interviewed about their beliefs and their classes will be observed to see how those beliefs are implemented in class. Beliefs in this matter

is only constricted on beliefs in teaching grammar as it is thought to be an important aspect of TEFL in Indonesia in oppose to other various aspects of language learning such as a focus on a specific language skill. Beliefs which signifies a form of knowledge to a certain degree. Knowledge which teachers have received about teaching grammar, whether it is through formal education, trainings, or personal teaching and learning experience. The knowledge that teachers have taken into account as being important and influential in their teachings are those that somewhat affects the formation of their beliefs.

Due to the time limitation the research will not be a research of all the English courses in Surabaya. Consequently the results of this research may not be a reflection of teachers beliefs in general as it is only done in one school.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Teachers' beliefs according to Borg's (2000) definition is "A proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behavior". Beliefs signifies a form of knowledge to a certain degree. Knowledge which teachers have received about teaching grammar, whether it is through formal education, trainings, or personal learning and teaching experience. The knowledge that teachers have taken into account as being important and influential in their teachings are those that somewhat affects the

formation of their beliefs. This definition of belief will be used in the study in its relation to teaching grammar.

2. Grammar according to Richards, Platt and Weber (2003) is "...a description of the structure of the language and the way in which units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language.
3. Native Speaker Teachers of English according to Davies (2005) are those who has childhood language acquisition, intuitions about idiolectal grammar, intuitions about the standard language grammar, discourse and pragmatic control, creative writing performance and a unique capacity to translate and interpret into the L1.
4. Non-native speaker teachers of English are those whose native language is not English.