

# Students' and Teachers' Beliefs on English Language Teaching: A Study in One Islamic Boarding School

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## Abstract

This study was done to find out (1) whether there was a significant difference between students and teachers belief in one Islamic boarding school in Palembang, (2) the teacher beliefs on English language teaching in Islamic boarding school in Palembang, and (3) students' beliefs on English language teaching in one Islamic boarding school Palembang. This study employed a mixed method research design. Participants for collecting quantitative data were 55 students and 1 teacher, meanwhile the participants for qualitative data were 6 students and 1 teacher. In order to collect the quantitative data, questionnaire was used, and for qualitative data, interview was used. These instruments were used to find the difference of beliefs between students and teacher on English language teaching. From this study, it was found out the difference beliefs between students and teacher on English language teaching toward communicative language strategy and target language use. Moreover, from the interview results, the differences between students and teachers' beliefs in communicative language strategies and target language use were also found.

**Keywords:** English language teaching, teachers' beliefs, students' beliefs

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## Introduction

English is one of the most spoken languages in the world and widely accepted as a foreign language in many parts of the world. English is a language that is widely used and spoken in every parts of life, such as: the arts, sciences, human sciences, travel, and social sciences. Furthermore, Crystal (as cited Marzulina & Putra, 2017, p.186) states that, English can be a priority foreign language teaching in a country. Besides, Pim (2013) said English nowadays is also considered a powerful language in the world to transfer information and communication technologies for those in the very early stages of education. Therefore, English is international language and with English language it can make human being easier to get more information and knowledge in the proses of learning (Erlina et al., 2019; Erlina et al., 2020; Maimunah et al., 2019; Mukminin et al., 2018; Nazurty et al., 2019).

English is the foreign language in Indonesia. English subject must be taught to the students from elementary school until higher education, so the students are easy to understand and to interact in various aspects of life by using English (Habibi, Sofwan, & Mukminin, 2016; Marzulina et al., 2019). As state by Mustafa, Kirana and Bahri (2017), in Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language starting from high school to university. They assert that most high schools offer two classes of English a week every semester throughout the two levels of high schools, i.e. junior and senior high schools, which take three years for each. For undergraduate university level, only two credits are offered (Astrid et al., 2019; Marzulina et al., 2019; Soma, Mukminin, & Noprival, 2015).

Teachers and students have important role in teaching and learning process at the classroom (Astrid et al., 2019; Marzulina et al., 2018). According to Peacock (2001), teacher as a manager can create environments, which provide opportunities to learn and change in behavior, in which pupils are well managed and motivated for learning. In addition, Zang and Ciu (2010) said teacher's role is a facilitator (or should be), the student's role is to take given information or instructions and coordinate that task for himself or group members. Therefore, each of them has a role in the teaching and learning process. One of the elements that need attention in the success of the teaching and learning process is belief. According to Bandura, beliefs more than truth guide our goals, emotions, decisions, actions, and reactions (as cited in Fives & Michele, 2015, p.7). Another study, Richarson explained that beliefs can be defined as psychologically held understanding, premises, and propositions about the world that are felt to be true. In addition, White argue that beliefs help individuals to define and understand the world and themselves, and they are instrumental in defining tasks and play a critical role in defining behavior. Therefore, beliefs help people to understand themselves and about the world that are felt to be true

Teacher is one who is directly involved in the formation and development of intellectual and students personalities. According to Li Xu (2012), teachers' beliefs are important for understanding and improving educational process. In addition, Ta'amneh (2015) said that teacher's belief is also considered a powerful of strategies to overcome challenges in teaching and influence student motivation. Indeed, teachers' belief influences educational process and students' motivation. Teachers' beliefs influence how teachers make decisions or act in a classroom. According to Altan (2012), successful language learning and teaching, such as are some of the teachers' beliefs about pronunciation, error correction, and the time required to become proficient in a foreign language. In addition, Nemser and Floden teachers' beliefs have an important role in shaping instruction because there is a lack of consensus about the best practice based on objective evidence (as cited in Ta'amneh, 2015). In other words, teachers' beliefs are important concept in understanding their instructional practices. Furthermore, learners also play an important role in learning to be an effective learning occurring in the classroom and learners should be able to foster a sense of belief in themselves and their teacher. According to Brown teachers and researcher have noted that both teachers' and students' beliefs and attitudes should have a room in the process of language learning and teaching (as cited in Ganjabi, 2011, p.53). When teachers and students do not have beliefs, it will affect the effectiveness of the language teaching in the classroom. So the different beliefs between teachers and learners towards to English language teaching can negatively influence teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Based on informal interview with six students of eleventh grade and two teachers of Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Aulia Cendikia Talang Jambe Palembang about English language teaching, many students said that the teaching of English would be effective if the teachers used English conversations in the classroom and if the teachers used media such as picture, music to make learning to be more fun and effective. In addition, teachers said that effective English teaching could be increased if students were more independent by not depending too much from school facilities. They could be more creative by reading or finding other support materials for example, from the internet, the English community, and others. There were some previous related studies. First, Ganjabi (2011) found there was difference between the beliefs of Iranian students and teachers regarding different aspects of language learning such as grammar teaching, error correction, culture, target language use, computer-based technology, communicative language teaching strategies and assessment. Second, Brown (2006) showed there were some difference appeared between students' and teachers' perception about effective foreign language teaching. In addition, Ta'amneh (2015) also conducted the study that showed there was a harmony between teachers' and students' beliefs about the process of

teaching and learning vocabulary concerning rote learning, using multimedia using technology and dictionary and asking for help. However, there was no harmony between their beliefs about the process of teaching and learning vocabulary regarding guessing and contextualization. From the above statement, it is important to analyze the effective English teaching to know differences between students' and teachers' beliefs on effective English language teaching. Therefore, I am interested in conducting a study entitled Students' and Teachers' Beliefs on English Language Teaching: A Study in One Islamic Boarding School in Palembang. The problems of the study have three problem: (1) Was there any significant difference between students' and teachers' beliefs toward English language teaching of the eleventh grade students Islamic boarding school Aulia Cendekia Palembang?, (2) What were the teachers' beliefs toward English language teaching in Islamic boarding school Aulia Cendekia Palembang?, and (3) What were the students' beliefs toward English language teaching of the eleventh grade students Islamic boarding school *Aulia Cendekia Palembang*?

## Literature Review

### *Nature of beliefs*

Some researchers do not define in detail the learning of language beliefs, beside that Vibulphol (2004) said the term beliefs about language learning, were not clearly defined by researchers in previous studies. In a number of studies several different research opinions on the meaning of beliefs, Because of its complexity, it may be difficult to produce a fixed set of meaning or precisely defined. According to Hermans and Keer (2008) defined beliefs as a set of conceptual representations which store general knowledge of objects, people and events, and their characteristic relationships, while according to Richarson beliefs can be defined as psychologically held understanding, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true, in another word belief is something that you cannot see or touch but it is something in your mind that you feel true and belief also influenced the way we think (a cited in Raths and Amy 2003).

### *Teachers' and students' beliefs*

Beliefs have a great influence, teachers and students will be serious about giving lessons and learning in language learning and teaching as they may be factors affecting the learning and teaching process. In learning and teaching language, the role of learners and teachers' beliefs about language learning in general have been studied because of the influence on attitudes and beliefs of teachers about language learning gets a lot of attention in the literature and to understand What motivates the actions of teachers. Teachers are strongly influenced by their beliefs and closely related to their values, their views of the world, to their understanding of their place. Altan (2012) revealed that teacher in this study hold a variety of beliefs about language learning, some of which may constitute an impediment to successful language learning and teaching, such as some of their beliefs about pronunciation, error correction, and the time required to become proficient in a foreign language (p. 481). In addition, according to Ganjabi (2011), the teachers also put strong emphasis on the communicative activities and the timing of error correction. Constructively, students tend to agree or disagree on this issue that they prefer to focus primarily on grammatical material caused by inappropriate ideas about the value of communication and communicative activity. These findings support the general contention that language teachers may hold certain beliefs about language learning that may have an impact on their instructional practices.

### *Definition of English language teaching*

Definition of language teaching is part of effective language teaching, according to ko James (2013) state effective language teaching to achieve good teaching, good knowledge, proper

use of well-chosen questions, to engage learners, and to consolidate understanding is an important feature (p. 2). Some good schools suggest, they:

- 1) Establish consistency in teaching and learning across the organization.
- 2) Engender a culture of professional debate and development lesson observation.
- 3) Rigorously monitor and evaluate what they are doing
- 4) Prioritize the teaching of literacy, especially in a child's early years
- 5) Focus on the needs, interests and concerns of each individual learner.

In summary, to build and teach effectively requires support from other aspects not only from teachers but also institutions. The effectiveness of teachers generally refers to the focus of student outcomes and teacher behavior and classroom processes that encourage better student outcomes. Thus, institutions must create good teacher behavior to encourage students to get better results.

## Methods

### *Research design and participants*

In this study, I used mixed method with embedded design. Creswell (2012) defines that embedded design is a design to collect quantitative and qualitative data where one form of data used as a supportive to other data form. In quantitative study, I analyzed data from questionnaire. However, in qualitative study, the data from the interview were identified to measure student teacher's beliefs on English language teaching. This study used mixed method study, so there were two sampling techniques. First, for the quantitative study, I used total sampling technique because I was involved 1 teacher and 55 students of eleventh grades students and then I was given the questionnaire to all participants. Second, for qualitative study, I chose the participants by using purposeful sampling. Creswell (2012) argued that purposeful sampling is the researchers intentionally choose or select individuals and the place to learn as research or understand as a central phenomenon. The standard that was used in choosing the participants of the study and place was based on whether they were information rich or not. The participants were students that consist of 6 students and 1 teacher to give their belief about English language teaching. The participants were chosen based on the English teacher's information and student's score who got high, medium, and low achievement in the English class.

### *Data collection*

First, the research instrument that was used in this study was questionnaire. Questionnaire is an investigation by asking some questions in a written form. Zohrabi (2013) said that Questionnaires are doubtless one of the primary sources of obtaining data in any research endeavor. I used the questionnaire that is distributed to the sample to know their beliefs about English language teaching. The questionnaire that is used in this study is adapted from Brown (2006). It used *Likert* scale. Second, the research instrument that was used in this study was interview. I used semi-structured interview to gain additional information. I used semi-structure interview to get the information more deeply from the interviewee. In addition, according to Creswell (2014), there are four types of interview such as, one-on-one interview, focus group interview, telephone interview, and electronic Email interview. In this research, I used one-on-one interview type and the participant was free to choose the language that was used (English or Indonesian). One-on-one interview is the way the interviewer getting the data by asking one interviewee at a time (Creswell, 2014; Mukminin, 2012; Mukminin, 2019). Audio record was used to record the interview. There were 7 questions and the interview was end after the interviewee finished answers the questions.

## Results

### ***Analysis of significant differences between students' and teachers' beliefs on English language teaching***

In analyzing difference students' and teachers' beliefs on English language teaching, I used English language teaching questionnaire adopted by Brown (2006). Both of the data was analyzed by using regression analysis. SPSS 20 was used in this study. Therefore, after I collected the data from students' and teacher beliefs response toward English language teaching, I used SPSS 20 to measure the normality and linearity. After the data distribution was normal and linear, I used regression analysis to see if there was significant influence between students and teachers belief on English language teaching. Finally, I made the interpretation about the result to answer the research question number one.

### ***Analysis of students and teachers beliefs on English language teaching***

In this study, there were six steps of analyzing qualitative data by Cresswell (2012), they were: first, I organized and prepared the data analysis. This involved the data of interview by using audio recording. Second, I read or look at the data. In this step, I transcribed the interview by using audio recording. Third, I began detailed analyzing with coding process. The process of coding involved identifying text segments, placing a bracket around them, and assigning a code word or phrase that accurately described about the meaning of text segment. Coding process was resulted from the interview data. Fourth, I used coding process to generate a description about the setting as well as a theme for analysis. I described detail information from the phenomenon based on the interview result and generate codes for this description. Fifth, I would advance of how the description and themes represented in qualitative narrative to convey the findings of analysis. I mentioned about the phenomenon or chronology event and convey the description of information about each participant. Finally, a final step of data analysis, I made interpretation of findings the data or meaning the data. I described a review of the major findings and how the research questions are answered. I compared or contrast the personal view with the literature, gave the limitations of the study and gave the suggestions for future research.

### ***The result of significant difference between students' and teachers' beliefs on English language teaching***

The result of English language teaching questionnaire revealed that there were 3 difference beliefs of students and teacher about English language teaching from 24 items in questionnaire. 3 items showed p value was less than equal to 0.05. Item 7 showed 0.02 that it was lower than 0.05. It means that there significant difference between students' and teacher's beliefs on English language teaching should not use Bahasa in the English language classroom. Item 15 showed 0.01 that it was lower 0.05. It means that there significant difference between students' and teachers' beliefs on English language teaching should not use predominantly small group or pair work to complete activities in the class. Item 24 showed 0.04 that it was lower 0.05. It means that there was a significant difference between students' and teachers' beliefs on English language teaching should use activities where students have to find out unknown information. The results of questionnaire can be seen in table 1:

**Table 1.** Result of significant difference between students' and teachers' beliefs on English language teaching

Questions	English Language Teachers Should	Significant Different Sig (2 tailed)
7	English language teaching should not use Bahasa in the English language classroom.	0.02
15	English language teaching should not use predominantly small groups or pair work to complete activities in class	0.01
24	English language teaching should use activities where students have to find out unknown information from classmates using English.	0.04

### ***Result of teacher beliefs on English language teaching***

After collecting the data to explore the teachers' beliefs on English language teaching by using interview, I found that there were some teachers' beliefs on English language teaching. The description would be explained as followed:

*The Important of Linguistic Skill:* First question of interview, I asked the teacher about "English language teaching must not assess the ability of language production? Such as speaking and writing well grammatically?". In this question, I wanted to know teacher belief about grammar production. Based on teacher's answer, I could know that the teacher beliefs grammar is very important to assess students speaking and writing.

*Teacher Judgment:* Second question of interview, I asked the teacher about "In English teaching, should correct the students immediately after they made the mistake in speaking?". In this question, I wanted to know teacher beliefs about error correction. Based on teacher's answer, I could know that the teacher beliefs that they did not correct the students immediately when they made the mistake.

*English Practice:* Third question of interview, I asked the teacher about "Should English language teaching use Bahasa in English class?". In this question, I wanted to know teacher beliefs about target English use. Based on teacher's answer, I could know that the teacher beliefs that the students should use English language in English classroom.

*Culture:* Fourth question of interview, I asked the teacher about "Should English teaching devote as much time to the teaching of culture as to the teaching of language?". In this question, I wanted to know teacher beliefs about culture. Based on teacher's answer, I could know that the teacher beliefs that English teaching should devote much time to teaching culture.

*Facility:* Fifth question of interview, I asked the teacher about "Should English teaching use technology such as internet, CD room, email?". In this question, I wanted to know teacher beliefs about technology. Based on teacher's answer, I could know that the teacher beliefs that technology is important, but in English language teaching they can use books.

*Technique:* Sixth question of interview, I asked the teacher about "English teaching should use small group or pair work to complete the activities in class?". In this question, I wanted to know teacher beliefs about communicative language teaching strategies. Based on teacher's answer, I could know that the teacher beliefs about the individual task is better than small groups.

*Teachers Assessment:* Seventh question of interview, I asked the teacher about "should English teaching base at some part of students grades on their ability with classmate successfully in English language?". In this question, I wanted to know teacher beliefs about assessment.

Based on teacher's answer, I could know that the teacher will give students score if they interact with classmate successfully in English language.

### ***Result of students beliefs on English language teaching***

After collecting the data to explore the students' beliefs on English language teaching by using interview, I found that there were some students' beliefs on English language teaching.

*The important of linguistic skill:* First question of interview, I asked the students about "English language teaching must not assess the ability of language production? Such as speaking and writing well grammatically?". In this question, I wanted to know students belief about grammar production. Based on student's answer, I could know that the students' beliefs grammar is very important to assess students speaking and writing.

*Teachers judgment:* Second question of interview, I asked the students about "In English teaching, should correct the students immediately after they made the mistake in speaking?". In this question, I wanted to know students beliefs about error correction. Based on student's answer, I could know that the students beliefs that the teacher did not correct students immediately when they made the mistake.

*English Practice:* Third question of interview, I asked the teacher about "Should English language teaching use Bahasa in English class?". In this question, I wanted to know students beliefs about target English use. Based on student's answer, I could know that the students beliefs that they used Bahasa in English class.

*Culture:* Fourth question of interview, I asked the students about "Should English teaching devote as much time to the teaching of culture as to the teaching of language?". In this question, I wanted to know students beliefs about culture. Based on student's answer, I could know that the students' beliefs about the English teaching should devote much time to teaching culture.

*Facility:* Fifth question of interview, I asked the students about "Should English teaching use technology such as internet, CD room, email?". In this question, I wanted to know students that technology is important.

*Technique:* Sixth question of interview, I asked the students about "English teaching should use small group or pair work to complete the activities in class?". In this question, I wanted to know students beliefs about communicative language teaching strategies. Based on student's answer, I could know that the students beliefs about small group should complete activities in class.

*Teachers Assessment:* Seventh question of interview, I asked the students about "should English teaching base at some part of students grades on their ability with classmate successfully in English language?". In this question, I wanted to know students beliefs about assessment. Based on student's answer, I could know that teacher should give score based on students' ability

### **Discussion**

Based on the findings of questionnaire and interview, there are seven aspects that relate to English language teaching (grammar teaching, error correction, target language use, culture, computer based technology, communicative language teaching strategies, assessment). I concluded that little difference students and teacher belief on English language teaching. It can be seen from the answers of the students and teacher who dominantly answered the items agree in almost all of the items given to ask these aspects and they perceived very good. Comparing students' and teachers' responses revealed that the teachers put strong emphasis on the target language use. They agreed more strongly than did their students that students do not allow to use their native language in the classroom while the students prefer to no always use English in the class. In line with ACTFL statement that recommends language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90%) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and when feasible, beyond the classroom.

Furthermore, research found that using target language in the classroom greatly increases students' exposure to the target language especially in foreign language classroom when the target language is not heard outside classroom context. Another reason, using target language in classroom can help students to receive more comprehensible input which lead to more complex language structures. So, students do not only learn about the language but also learning through the language. Besides that, using target language in the classroom can provide a source of modeling for students both in regards to the production of the language and the attitude towards the language. If teacher able to show proper use of the language daily, students can use the teacher as a model for production. In the other hand, students prefer to use target language only in the beginning of the class. The reason can be students prefer to use native language more in the classroom activities because sometimes when using English the idea that they have cannot be delivered appropriately as they use their native language. Furthermore, to communicative English language teaching strategies the students strongly agree to use predominantly small groups or pair work to complete activities in class but the teacher disagree to use predominantly small groups or pair work to complete activities in class, the teacher prefers if students work on the questions individually, stated Brown (2006) foreign language teachers should not use predominantly small groups or pair work to complete activities in class. Finally, in communicative language teaching strategies categories as noted previously, teachers seemed much more convinced of the need for foreign language students to participate in a meaningful exchange of information during class. When asked about information-gap activities (Item 24) or activities where students have to find out unknown information from classmates using the foreign language teachers' responses resulted in significant differences from students.

## Conclusion

As stated above that this research was intended to explore eleventh grade students' and English teacher beliefs in MA Ponpes Aulia Cendekia Palembang. It came out that there were some differences between the students' and teacher's beliefs about English language teaching. The significant difference had noted in 3 items that categorized as communicative language strategies and target language use. Teachers put strong emphasis on communicative language teaching strategies, target language use and while the students preferred to grammar teaching and minimum target language use. Furthermore, based on the result of interview concerning teacher's beliefs on English language teaching, I found that there were some differences in terms of beliefs among students. First difference is target English use, the teacher agreed if English language teaching should use English language in the classroom. Second, difference was communicative language teaching strategies, the teacher agreed if English language teaching should not use small groups or pair dominantly in complete the activities in the class because the teacher had difficulty to find their abilities.

Third, based on the result of students' belief on English language teaching was analyzed by using interview, I found that there were some difference beliefs between teacher. First, difference was target English use, the students agreed if English language teaching should use Bahasa and English language in the classroom. Second, difference was communicative language teaching strategies, the students agree if English language teaching should use small group or pair dominantly in completing the activities in the class because it will make them easier to understand and it will make them share information to other classmates.

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