

The Contribution of Teachers' Beliefs to Pedagogical Grammar Instruction in English as Second and Foreign Language

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Having background knowledge and past experiences of teaching, a teacher has been equipped with one of the sufficient and essential tools to ensure that his teaching process will be run as he plans. It is generally known as belief. Teaching English to learners as second or and foreign language means teaching the two most important aspects of the language that is vocabularies and grammar. This article deals with one of the aspects in teaching and learning English that is grammar which is of utmost significance in any languages. Teaching grammar means involving pedagogical theories to figure out the most adjustable teaching method to get the learners not only to view the syntactic structures of the target language but also to be aware of its importance and the way to learn it which later on is known as pedagogical grammar. The paper highlights teachers' beliefs that influence their way of teaching in grammar reflected in their grammar instruction. Teaching experiences and some principles are put into a consideration to construct the beliefs contributing to teachers' knowledge of pedagogical grammar instruction. Nevertheless, a teaching approach (Communicative Language Teaching/CLT) is required to be employed in order to ensure that the learners will be able to optimize their language competence by learning the grammar. Therefore, there is a big possibility ahead that teachers will be able to improve their own pedagogical grammar instruction by utilizing their teaching beliefs in their learners' language acquisition process in teaching English as second and or foreign language.

Keywords: Contribution, Teachers' beliefs, Pedagogical grammar instruction, English language.

INTRODUCTION

One way to optimize the way of teaching and learning English as second and foreign language (L2) in a classroom is by implementing L2 pedagogical grammar (Ellis, 2006). Rooted from linguistics theory, psychology of learning and pedagogy of language, pedagogical grammar can be seen as the version of grammar that seeks to find, capture, and describe criteria for language education and structure of language use (Ellis, 2002). In second and foreign language contexts, pedagogical grammar means teaching grammar that involves not only the description of grammar system but also the learning and the use of grammar in real-world contexts (Keck & Kim, 2014). Therefore, approaches concerning to L2 pedagogical grammar do not only inform about learners' and teachers' view of grammar, but also the belief about how important of the grammar is, how

grammar can be learned, and in what ways grammar can or should be taught. In short, L2 pedagogical grammar can also be said that teaching English as second and foreign language which has grammar instruction as its pillar.

Many studies have been conducted concerning the effectiveness of pedagogical grammar instruction viewed from its influencing factors, such as students teachers' perception of grammar teaching, students teachers' point of view in understanding English grammar concept, students teachers' attitude, students teachers' perspective of the importance of grammar, students teachers' grammatical awareness, students teachers' background knowledge, and others. For instance, a study conducted by Zaki & Usmani (2015). Deploying longitudinal multiple-step data collection method, they tried to figure out the factors causing the presence of faulty language development of the learners, the reduced motivation and interest of the learners in learning, the negative attitude of the practitioners (the learners and the lecturers) that led to ineffective and misaligned of grammatical concept and activities that caused failure in achieving learning goal. The result of the study showed that lack of grammatical awareness owned by the learners and the lecturers, unclear of scope and grammar instruction, gaps in lecturers' knowledge and the grammar instruction are the main causes of the problems encountered.

Another studies focused on belief about constructed perception about pedagogical grammar as well. Almazloun (2018) researched factors constructed learners' perception about pedagogical grammar during English for Academic Program (EAP) Program in Canada. Implementing a qualitative research approach, Almazloun found the answer of his research questions were the learners have strong beliefs in constructing their own perception on how should be taught grammar pedagogically by their lecturers and the inclusiveness of grammar and its instruction were the core to the learners' understanding about grammar. Then, another study explored teachers' beliefs in pedagogical grammar in Malaysia (Yusof et al, 2019). The result of the study showed that background experience of learning grammar greatly influences teacher's belief in teaching pedagogical grammar.

Focusing on certain skill of L2's language competence, particularly in writing skill, Effendi et al (2017) and Omar (2019) investigated factors causing learners' problems in writing. While Effendi et al found the problems encountered by the learners are caused by their mother tongue, their social aspects, the lecturers' aspects, the teaching method applied by the lecturers in teaching, and the timing, Omar more focused on the importance of pedagogical grammar in writing context. Omar's study emphasized through his result that the problems of his learners were more due to their lack of grammar knowledge which yielded on their low level of grades and achievement. Both studies suggested that more effective teaching methods are advisable and encouragement to learners' motivation.

Based on the studies mentioned previously, it can be noticed that pedagogical grammar are researched less based on its practice and process than it should be, especially on its instruction itself. Theoretical sources are, indeed, required in applying the most suitable and adaptable grammar instruction decision for teachers for its powerful influence as asserted by Borg (1999) that the revealing of the impact of selection of accurate teaching teachers' theories in grammar on

their grammar instruction is truly useful in enabling the teachers in instructional context. Reaching effective instruction, a teacher needs to be guided in some particular ways in teaching by having beliefs and understanding that will be explicitly described in a course design (Graves, 2000). Therefore, the purpose of this article is to investigate further the contribution of teachers' belief especially in teaching grammar on pedagogical grammar instruction in English as second and foreign language teaching and learning.

a. Teachers' Beliefs

Based on her experience of teaching practices, Graves (2000) claimed that beliefs are not inevitably that teachers can easily be vivid or are completely cautious of. In order to understand the source of belief, teachers need to look at their past experiences and the beliefs about learning and teaching that enlarges out and accompanies the experience. Beliefs arise from work experience and the discourse of the workplace as well. What the teachers feel constitute success and 'works' in that setting can be perceived to be essential or 'the way things are done'. Making choices is the base of understanding and articulating a teacher's belief in teaching because many questions may be raised by the teacher in making up his choices, such as "*How can I decide to choose?*", "*Did I make the right choice?*", "*What is the right choice that I have to make?*", "*What is the right choice?*", "*Is there any the right choices?*".

Graves (2000) asserts that teacher's belief in teaching means that the role of a teacher about learning based on his assumptions, even though this is the spot in which a teacher sometimes finds something contradicts to what his assumptions are. Teaching for a teacher is a continuum process in which at one side he transfers his knowledge to his students, and at the other side, he negotiates his possessed knowledge, skills, and methods of learning with his students. So it can be said that teaching process viewed as sequence of activities that aim to provide problem-solving approach by actively helping the students in negotiating the knowledge, determining the problems to be solved and using the teacher as the source of gaining language and culture.

Therefore, furthermore, in order to have a systematic and clear view of what a teacher's belief really is, Graves (2000) proposes a framework for articulating belief for teachers. The framework for articulating beliefs is based on teacher's view of language, teacher's view of the social context of the language, teacher's view of learning and learners, and teacher's view of teaching. Explaining more about the views, Graves also provides some examples as can be seen below:

- The view of language

Such as the systematic structure of the language itself (what rules are governed in learned language), meaning-based of the language, as a means of self-expression, as a means of learning about oneself and the world and as a means of getting things done.

- The view of the social context of language

Such as the social contexts influence the use of language such as sociolinguistics matters such as the ways to adapt the language to make it adaptable and fit to the context, sociocultural issues

such as cultural values and customs which may be in harmony or in conflict with the learners' of learners' and teachers' culture, and sociopolitical problems such as the use of language in find the access to work and education field.

- The view of learning and learners

For example, the view of learning as an inductive or a deductive process, the view that learning occurs either in community or individually, learning is viewed as a means for gaining knowledge and skills, and learning is viewed as process of development of metacognitive and critical thinking skills.

Another example for viewing the learners is that they have affective, cognitive and social need, learners receive knowledge or construct knowledge in learning, and learners follow directions in order to construct their own learning.

- The view of teaching

For instance, teacher's view of teaching means a view of transmission of knowledge, the management of learning, learning structures provision, and their teaching view for considering teaching as collaborative process.

Therefore, it can also be said that having a belief means that a teacher is unconsciously triggered to make a decision of how a teaching and learning process he will carries. The reason is because the belief underlies the decision that the teacher makes.

b. Beliefs in Grammar Teaching

As the best indicator of the decision made by individual in teaching a course, beliefs control and lead teacher's mind in his teaching instruction (Uztosun, 2013). Teacher's belief in teaching grammar depends on how a teacher views grammar. In other words, teacher's view related to grammar and the importance of grammar shapes his beliefs in teaching grammar. According to Nazari & Allahyar (2012) concluded based on their conducted study that there are some principles of teacher in teaching grammar as the followings:

- A belief to make all students understand the rules used in English and to make sure that the students comprehend all the rules, such as by covering the understanding of word order, vocabulary mastery, and correct pronunciation.
- A belief that accuracy is more important than fluency, so a principle to make students to be able to use grammar in appropriate ways.
- A belief that important issue regarding with grammar teaching is grammar material that should be interesting.
- A belief that a teacher analyzes his students' competence as an essential way in determining the approach of his teaching.
- A belief that one lesson plan cannot be implemented to all students in the same grade regarding to grammar lesson plan. In other words, flexibility of lesson plan is important in grammar class.
- A belief that error correction is best done by the learners themselves regarding to the error correction.

- A belief that teaching instruction should be done explicitly because teaching transforms not only knowledge but also values.

c. Theories in Grammar Teaching

Theories in grammar teaching assist teachers to cope with instructional contexts. The most current approach in for second and foreign language teaching is based on a principle of focus on meaning and the way language is developed naturally. Communicative and authentic approach is currently employed by teachers to help individuals develop competences in order to be able to use second and foreign language in real and spontaneous practice (Curzo, 2013). Communicative approach has replaced the teaching of explicit grammar for an implicit method in which accuracy is learned naturally by the learners. This idea is supported by Krashen's theory that in second language acquisition formal instruction or grammatical structure is more focused on how human beings to learn by understanding and producing their first language through natural and informal communicative context (Krashen, 2003).

Even though, Krashen's focus is not accordance with the teaching of explicit grammar in second language acquisition, Ellis (2006) has different theory about the importance of explicit grammar teaching in second language acquisition. The cause of breakdown in communication and interfere with an intended message is the deficiencies in grammar. Or in other words, learners do not only speak fluently, but also to speak accurately. Therefore, based on the importance of speaking as standard language that has to be clear and coherent to the recipient, explicit grammar teaching is very important in second language acquisition (Long, 1983; Norris & Ortega, 2002).

Related to previous theories mentioned above, grammar based methodologies have been replaced by communicative approaches that give more importance to fluency than to accuracy (Richard, 2002). Although Richards found a grammar-gap problem in the development of linguistic competence, other theorists such as Norris & Ortega (2002), Long & Robinson (1998), Ellis and Fotos (1999) and Ellis (2006) argue that grammar through its instruction does have a positive and beneficial effect on acquisition, especially at the time grammatical structures are shown in contexts.

In short, based on the theories mentioned previously, it can be asserted that grammar instruction can be implemented in foreign and second language classrooms in the term of to have some particular dominant factors that are highly recommended. The factors, for instance learners' age, proficiency level, learners' need, learners' learning goals (Nassaji & Fotos, 2004).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The importance of language teachers' belief is held by having reflection about their own practices. Their previous teaching practices or experience in teaching unconsciously influences their choice of their teaching strategy. Influenced by experiences and knowledge, a teacher is still obliged to

continuously refer to an approach in teaching and learning as a path that guides him to create effective learning instruction in his class.

For a teacher, as a practitioner and an educator, it is a must to keep himself up-dated with the current English teaching and learning phenomena, especially in real practice. In grammar instruction, it is strongly suggested that a teacher is also required to understand, comprehend, and implement the approach being employed in recent time. Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) refers to learners' competence to communicate by integrating skills, knowledge, and direct experiences values which is also known as *experiential learning* (Astrid, 2011). Teacher's understanding and knowledge of such strategy of learning may become a more effective way in his grammar instruction class. Being aware of some principles in CLT approach generally and experiential learning specifically may assist a teacher to provide another new insight in how a grammar teaching and learning process should be carried out. The principles that he has (his belief) will become a contribution to his way of teaching grammar to his learners or in other words, a valuable input in his pedagogical grammar theoretical instruction.

Communicative competence of the learners is the main goal of this kind of approach. As I always bare in mind, there is no the best strategy or technique in teaching. The most logical thing to say as a practitioner in education, especially in teaching, that the best way to teach learners is the most suitable to them. Hence, in my opinion, any possible input is always available for a teacher to take in to his consideration to choose the strategies in his grammar instruction. The principles of teaching grammar can be considered as the main source and basis of the consideration. The possibilities refer to the variety of approaches, methods and strategies chosen. Although, CLT is the recent approach to foreign language instruction, communicative competence does not mean that there is an empty space of grammar instruction but rather grammar instruction that leads the learners to their ability development to communicate communicatively.

Then, how should we teach the learners the grammar communicatively? In my point of view, teaching grammar cannot be solely limited to teach the system or the rules of it, but also to the grammar reflected in our grammar instruction through communicative tasks or activities. It means that, in teaching, a teacher is not only limited to introduce the grammar items, but also, a teacher gets the learners busy with some exercises, and then to assess them later on to understand their ability to understand the grammar lesson. It can also be stated, that teaching grammar in a teacher's grammar instruction, he needs to collaborate CLT approach with another possible approach to figure out the most suitable and adaptable teaching strategy for his learners.

Furthermore, the teacher's effort in helping their learners to reach the communicative competence will not be stopped by the assessment. Ensuring the achievement of the learners optimally, a teacher needs to take another step in giving the students the opportunity to practice the grammar. Perhaps, the beginning focus of the practice activity may be in form of making sure the learners' language ability accuracy. In my opinion, accuracy is a very crucial factor in communicative competence since mastering language skill means that being able to practice it. In other words, among four (4) skills in English language, productive skills need to be taken into a language practitioner's priority to master, because I believe that practices in form of tasks or

activities should provide the learners every possible opportunities to use the language to communicate effectively.

However, another critical thinking from a teacher's thought to convince himself that another strategy might be more effective and important to apply whenever he faces another condition. Undeniably in Indonesia, English classes are large classes. Facing this kind of challenging fact, a teacher is demanded to find the best solution to overcome such reality. Implementing communicative approach by having the learners to use the language communicatively would be a great problem if a teacher is not able to cope with it. In my opinion, teaching large classes, it is kind of difficult for the teacher to make sure that each learner practices the language optimally. The best way for him is just to do the best that he can do by keep focusing that his grammar instruction filled with a totally communicative experience, for instance by having interactive activities.

For larger classes, another way to make sure that the learners are able to have communicative competence is by having grammar instruction outside the classroom. One thing for the teacher to put in mind is that in conducting such class context, he needs to focus only on one point of grammar side. The reason is to ensure both side, either the teacher or the learners, to master fully the grammar item. A point of simple present tense is as an example. The teacher might create such instruction that his learner or learners might follow it in telling learners' daily activities. Then, later on after the paragraph is done, teacher might instruct his learners to practice his simple present tense routines by practicing the grammar point in and outside the class. The bottom line is dealing with large classes, a teacher is advised to think outside the box little bit because there are still many ways of instruction in teaching grammar to provide the learners with variety of opportunities for productive and communicative language practice.

Speaking of context, a teacher has to be able to adapt his grammar instruction based on his learners' surroundings as asserted by Ellis (2015) said that by raising learners' consciousness or making them aware of the properties of particular grammatical feature by helping them to notice them in some certain way. For example, a teacher assigns his learners to learn about passive sentences. Then, with a science report as an example, learners are instructed to read the text and circle every example of passive voice. Once the learners have been able to identify the passive in the model text, then, the teacher may move on finding the meaning. So, based on the example, it can be noticed that by raising learners' consciousness in completing a grammar task will scaffold the learners in identifying target language feature.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, beliefs of a teacher which is influenced by his teaching practice experiences and knowledge will affect his ability in carrying out his grammar instruction. The beliefs may give impact to his way of his instruction in which the way he perceives all the theories included in teaching grammar. So, there is a possibility that a belief of a teacher may give contribution to

pedagogical grammar theories that a teacher comprehends. Finally, it is strongly advisable that some studies need to be conducted to prove what the writes assumes in this article.

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