

TEACHERS' BELIEFS IN DEVELOPING ENGLISH MATERIALS FOR VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: January 2021 Revised: February 2021 Published: April 2021	<i>This report is part of a larger study concerning teachers' belief towards materials development and their effectiveness in professional development (PD) in Indonesia. This case study attempted to explore how the Indonesian teachers' beliefs towards materials development for vocational school students in Indonesia. Seven out of thirteen English teachers of vocational schools in Indonesia are involved in this project and were interviewed and observed. They are developing materials for vocational schools. Findings show that teachers believed that they had some considerations to check what has contained the textbook's development. Their beliefs were influenced by some factors such as experience, needs, situation, students' interest, students' ability, workshop, and references. Also, the teachers' deficient time and different views were two major problems faced by the teachers when conducting materials selection and analysis—implications for how teachers' perception toward English materials development in vocational schools.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, teaching materials are considered the most important components that influence English learning and the teaching process. Teaching materials can take a variety of forms, including textbooks, workbooks, teachers' resource books, realia, and various audio-visuals (Brown 1995; Albiladi, 2018; Haerazi et al., 2018). However, textbooks are influential tools that help students to recognize and learn about society; and provide the means for achieving educational aims (Ebrahimi & Sahragard 2017; McConachy, 2018). Tok (2010) argues that since English teachers use textbooks in their class, they have the right to be involved in the process of evaluation in order to provide the relevant textbook for their specific student group. Therefore, the textbook is among the most important resources utilized to achieve the aims of a course which are based on the learners' needs (Litz, 2005; Setyono & Widodo, 2019). To achieve the principal objectives of learning a second/foreign language, teachers should select the most appropriate textbooks that adjust the criteria, teachers' and learners' specific situations, and their purposes and needs (Safitri & Tyas, 2019).

One essential consideration in making the most effective teaching learning process is the teachers' perceptions towards materials development. Teachers' perceptions have the same meaning as teachers' beliefs, which are personally-held convictions about the subject matter teachers teach, their roles of responsibility, their students, the curriculum, and their classroom (Pajares, 1992). They guide teachers in their practice and are derived from sources such as experience and personality (Donaghue, 2003). Barcelos (2003) also notes that language teachers' perceptions influence what the teachers do in the classroom. Thus, the teachers must be aware of what they perceive and believe when conducting their classroom

practices and in their professional growth. This means that teachers' perceptions are the basis for teachers to form a judgment or make decisions.

Teachers' beliefs play an important role in education, an open system that receives inputs and information from the environment and cyclically uses them (Kucukaydin & Gokbulut, 2019). The educational research that has been done on teachers' beliefs over the last decade has examined their educational beliefs, which includes school, student, learning, and teaching (Van Driel, Bulte, & Verloop, 2007). The beliefs of individuals are shaped through their interactions and personal actions in their social environments and their knowledge, and the belief systems adopted by teachers may differ from one discipline to another (Hancock & Gallard, 2004)

In contrast with it, teachers are passive and no opinion as an educator in Indonesian education toward English materials in the learning process. As a result, this study provides the results of a single-case study of these teachers belief would complement previous studies and add to the academic and professional understanding about teachers beliefs regarding Indonesian teachers develop English materials in Vocational Schools. Moreover, the teachers' belief could decide the materials which suit the students' needs. This contextualized case study can enrich feedback in the teachers' belief toward developing English materials in Indonesian vocational schools. The English materials must be suitable for the students' needs of Indonesian vocational schools to prepare them for future work in International workplaces.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This is a qualitative case study reported on some preliminary findings of a larger project on the maritime English teacher in Indonesian Vocational School. The case study model is based on Yin (2015), that aims to scrutinize an up-close, in-depth, and detailed delineation of the teachers' beliefs and practices in developing maritime English materials for Indonesian Vocational Schools.

Subject

Data of the study were interviews with 7 English teachers, in English teachers who teach English at the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades in three Indonesian vocational schools, participated in this study. The sample consisted of five females and two males. All the teachers agreed to participate in the study voluntarily. It was felt that the teachers who had taught more than five years had more comprehensive teaching experience. It was hoped that the more experience the teachers had in teaching, the more their perception about how Indonesian teachers develop maritime English materials as well as creating syllabi from their own materials would be present. The subjects were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. These interviews lasted for 20-30 minutes. The interview data were transcribed then analyzed with a typical method of qualitative content analysis.

Table 1
Subjects' general information

Participants	Age	Educational background	Gender	Year of maritime English teaching
Teacher 1	32	Bachelor of English language education	Female	7
Teacher 2	33	Bachelor of English language education	Female	8
Teacher 3	37	Bachelor of English language education	Male	12
Teacher 4	33	Bachelor of English language education	Male	8
Teacher 5	31	Bachelor of English language education	Female	6
Teacher 6	32	Bachelor of English language education	Female	7
Teacher 7	35	Bachelor of English language education	Female	10

Instruments

For the purpose of this study, the data collection instruments were questionnaires and interviews, however this study only focuses on the interview data. The subjects were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. These interviews lasted for 20-30 minutes. Interviews were done in the participant's first language (L1), and excerpts used in the results were translated into English by the researcher. The interview data were transcribed then analyzed qualitatively.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analysed by using the Interactive Model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). This type of interview data analysis is divided into four parts, namely data collection, data reduction, data displays, and drawing conclusion and verification. The phases of data analysis are presented in Figure 1

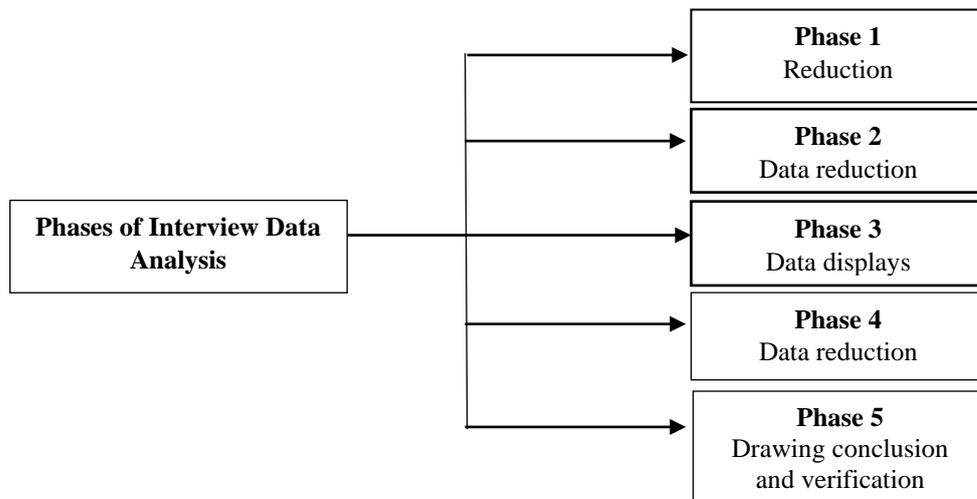


Figure 1. Phases of Data Analysis

The following is a cross-case analysis conducted by a researcher performing data collection on the case. Consequently, the research produces research findings, the researcher doing data collection, and resulting in research findings; cross-case analysis researchers by combining and comparing research findings. At this stage of the analysis of this case, the researchers also match data with facts, if there is a mismatch in the correction data will be returned in a way back in the previous phase, cross-case analysis results of later researchers found cross-case findings, the results of the analysis of these cases later became substantive theory, and concluding.

Checking the validity of the data in this study was conducted over four test criteria of validity of data namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. A test of credibility in this research was conducted to do triangulation data or sources and triangulation methods. This research was conducted with five stages, namely: introduction research context; the establishment of a research context; implementation; examination results and checking the validity of data; and the final stage as the report writing.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The data analysis reveals that teachers gave feedback on how textbook evaluation must be appropriate to the educational aims, that is closely linked to students' needs. Brown (1995) and Cunningsworth (1995) suggest that it is essential in evaluating any textbook to determine whether or not its inherent methodology will reinforce the institutional aims as well as

conform to the classroom context. The new maritime English materials were written based on the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach.

The interviews also emphasized that in developing a material, one should pay attention to the physical characteristics of textbooks such as the layout, organization, skills, topics, exercises, and activities. Rubdy (2014) adds that developing a material includes methodology, content, format, layout, and design features of the material or textbook.

The aims and methodology are shown in the findings that teacher 1, teacher 5, and teacher 6 all described the teachers' beliefs that textbook evaluation and selection were a process in which the teachers identified the textbook and chose the best textbook that fit their students' needs in the maritime workplace. They believed that textbook evaluation and selection were important in order to find develop a textbook to be used by the students. Teacher 3 suggested that:

Teachers should ensure that careful selection is made and that material is selected closely so that it reflects the needs of the students and the curriculum. It is because in order to Maritime English textbook must appropriate with the students needs' to prepare their work in maritime workplace.

Teacher 2 also shared her opinion that communicative language teaching (CLT) was a method applied in the textbook in vocational schools. She said:

Maritime English textbook must tends to focus on both accurate and fluent communication, the promotion of integrated language-skills practice, and the inclusion of topical themes, grammatical structures and functions, as well as lexical development. The textbook also must appropriate to the goal of establishing communicative competence in production and comprehension.

In terms of layout and design, the criteria mentioned by the teachers were physical appearance (layout, design, colours, and pictures), language aspect, topics, variety of activities and exercises, arrangement, availability, materials equipment (CD), and price. Teacher 4 noted that:

In my opinion, evaluation of in developing a textbook, one should pay attention to the physical characteristics of textbooks such as the layout, organization, skills, topics, exercises and activities.

The results of activities and tasks show that the teachers follow the sequence of materials and activities in the textbook. Teachers 1, 2, and 7 added that they organized the use of materials in the textbook based on the lesson plan they had made, its objectives and students' needs. Teacher 5 pointed out that the teachers considered the instructions in the textbook must simple. She said:

They try to organize the instructions in order to reach the objective of each lesson. Therefore, the instructions in the textbook is too simple.

Besides, she added that both the length of the text and teaching approach must be considered by the teachers. Materials and instructions should stimulate and build up students' critical thinking. In addition, there were three aspects covered that concerned the teachers' interpretations of the textbook including the textbook's appropriateness to students' and teachers' needs, the textbook's relevance to the syllabus and examinations, and the difficulty in using the textbook. The teachers believed that the textbook they used was attractive and interesting for students and culturally acceptable.

Teacher 3 explained that:

I added or deleted materials from other sources when the textbook's coverage was inadequate. Textbook may contain too much or too little for language activity. Whole units may have to be dropped, or perhaps sections of unit throughout the textbook were omitted. When I found a task or activity that was not suitable for the students' need, I made an adaption by modifying exercises or activity.

The results of interview data regarding language type and content of the textbook/materials development were gained by asking the teachers to consider whether the language utilized in the materials was realistic and authentic. Teacher 6 said:

The purpose of Maritime English subject has always been to provide the students with communication skills that they could use later on in maritime workplace.

Teachers 1, 2, 3, and 4 also commented that the textbook had been recommended or approved by the authorities. They suggest that the textbook had good quality exercises for examination preparation. However, what the textbook provided was not enough to prepare the students to pass the exam. The teachers acknowledged that they used supplementary worksheets to give a greater variety of exercises to their students. Teacher 5 also added that:

The teachers require little or not too heavy preparation before using the textbook. It is because the textbook they use is accompanied by good audio CDs, supplementary materials, and teachers' guide.

Discussion

Teachers' perception cannot be separated from the factors that influence the perception itself. There are seven factors that influence teachers' perception towards developing English textbook derived from the interview. They come from personal experience, needs, students' interest, students' ability, situation, workshop/training, and references. Moreover, being motivated and being interested is closely related. It can be assumed that people will be motivated when they are interested. Related to the finding of the research, students' interest is considered as factors that affect teachers' perception. The teachers found that the indicators of being interested in subject matter are whether students actively take a part in the learning process.

The interviews also emphasized that in developing a textbook, one should pay attention to textbooks' physical characteristics such as the layout, organization, skills, topics, exercises, and activities. It is in line with Rubdy (2014), Haerazi et al., (2018) and Munandar & Ulwiyah (2012) who suggests that, in the textbook development, developers must emphasize on the methodology, content, format, layout, and textbook design features. This influences how English teachers as users in implementing the textbooks. Therefore, the contents and its organization are essential because of that reason.

In the case of how teachers design and develop materials or textbooks, the findings describe all English teachers involved in the selection process while the school allow English teachers design and develop English textbook as teaching materials in the learning process. The teachers take part in each step of the procedure to develop materials, including selecting English materials or textbooks from offline and online resources (Amerian & Khaivar, 2014).

The interviews also showed that teachers affirm that the English textbooks must contain integrated language skills and types of language to prepare the students in their international workplace. Therefore, a multi-skills syllabus is chosen. It is because the syllabus in question covers and integrates both productive (speaking and writing) and receptive skills (listening and reading) (Swan, 1985; Harmer, 2010; McDonough & Shaw, 1997). Regarding the

linguistic aspect, the teachers consider language applied in the book has been realistic and authentic. Language type must be at the right level or of the right type for the students. The teachers should also check whether the progression of a new language was both logical and appropriate for students.

In general, the teachers are relatively satisfied with their textbook choice. The given response is grounded on the fact that the textbook has been recommended and approved by the authorities. The subject and content of the textbook are relevant to the current curriculum and appropriate to the students' needs (Shin et al., 2011). The development of materials also requires little and no time-consuming preparation. Moreover, the materials are accompanied by an appropriate file, glossary, and teachers' guide (Ahmed, 2017).

However, teachers mentioned that there should be cooperation among teachers to contribute and be responsible for all steps of the textbook design and development process. Through being cooperative with one another, a more careful review of the materials was still possible. While using the materials, the teachers should have the ability to adapt to the appropriate materials with what was available and to deliver the instruction as creative as possible to make the students interested and motivated in language learning (Mitsalina, 2015). The teachers must also observe the textbook evaluation in ESP Textbooks including authenticity, topics/themes, texts and contexts, knowledge and language, tasks or activities, representations of participants and social practices, and pedagogical prompts (Widodo, 2016). This observation was particularly needed in order to ensure that the English textbook was appropriate to the students' needs in the maritime workplace. The result of the study will provide an area for further research in the area of the vocational school English curriculum so that the development of textbooks, classroom teaching, and, in particular, assessment can be revised further to accommodate the needs of the vocational school students.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the teachers' perceptions towards developing English materials or textbooks in the learning process, to investigate teachers' experience in selecting, analyzing, organizing, interpreting, and integrating maritime English textbooks to maritime English class, and to discover the problems that arise while selecting, analyzing, organizing, interpreting, and integrating English textbook to the lesson. It can be concluded that (1) the teachers believe that textbook evaluation is important to make sure that a suitable textbook is chosen; (2) teachers' perceptions towards the use of textbooks are influenced by several factors namely personal experience, need, situation, students' ability, students' interest, workshop/training, and references; (3) the teachers take part in each step of the textbook selection process and (4) there are two major problems faced by the teacher when conducting textbook selection and analysis: a lack of time and different views among teachers. Management of time and the cooperation among the teachers in textbook selection were cited as primary strategies to solve these issues. They also try to make the instruction as creatively as possible to make the students interested in and motivated in teaching and learning activity.

Therefore, it is recommended that the school provides sufficient time for teachers to conduct selection and provide the training for teaching materials development to gain the teachers' capability to select, adapt, and use teaching materials. The teachers have to actively participate in any training or course about teaching materials and have more cooperation with their colleagues to ease the burden, exchange information, and expand teaching repertoire. They should also increase their ability and knowledge of making supplementary materials and adapting materials. This case study also might suggest further research in the area of the vocational school English curriculum so that the revision results of English materials and assessment further to accommodate the needs of the vocational school students.

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