

TEACHERS BELIEFS ON MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE BASED ENGLISH TEACHING FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

Multiple intelligences theory asserted that human intelligence is not only measured by standardized IQ test on verbal and mathematical ability. However, this theory assumed that human intelligences contains of nine types of intelligences showed by each individual. By recognizing the different type of intelligences, it will help to know the different style of learners. Starting from this point, many teachers who understand the differences in learning among the students, they started to implement this theory for their instruction in order to improve the quality of teaching. This study was aimed to explore the teachers' beliefs about the use of multiple intelligences based English teaching for young learners. The researcher used descriptive qualitative design to explore the teachers' beliefs on the use of multiple-intelligences based English teaching for EFL young learners. This study was conducted in one of the elementary schools in Surakarta, which implemented multiple intelligences theory as a system in their instruction process. Two teachers were chosen to participate in this study and data was collected through the interview. The finding revealed that teachers' beliefs on multiple intelligences theory based English teaching for young learners are a best strategy to be implemented in current teaching and learning process at their school. They believed that multiple intelligences system enhance the students' achievement. They also realized the importance of the multiple intelligences theory based English teaching to improve their instruction.

Keywords: *teachers' beliefs, multiple intelligences, and English teaching for young learners.*

INTRODUCTION

Today, one of the popular teaching methods is Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. This theory believes that human intelligences are not only measure by traditional IQ test in verbal and mathematical ability. However, this theory defines that human intelligence is the human ability to solve the problems and to create valuable products by using its ability in real life situation not only by IQ and by aptitude tests, which based on verbal ability and computational skills (Hoerr, 2000, p.3). Furthermore, this theory is adapted by the Educators to develop a method in language teaching and learning.



Hoerr (2000, p.5) proposed that the multiple intelligence (MI) approach for education field focuses on student-center learning model in which all the teaching learning processes are adapted and modified to fit the students' need for learning. This concept believes that all students have the same value to have opportunities to develop their multiple intelligence ability in maximum manner. These opportunities will help them to reach the success in their life based on their field expert (Harmer, 2007, p. 90; Chatib, 2013, p. 107; Hoerr, 2000, p. 3; Armstrong, 2009, p. 5).

One of the primary schools in Surakarta offers a multiple intelligence system as the basic approach to be taught for its students. Multiple intelligences system becomes an approach for English teaching learning process and all of the compulsory subjects. This approach is the basic paradigm for the whole teaching and learning process in the school. Therefore, every step in the instruction refers to the multiple intelligence system.

In implementing multiple intelligence system a teacher, become a significant role to perform the instruction. He or she becomes a facilitator and a stakeholder to educate the students. Therefore, teacher's knowledge and beliefs contribute much for teacher's action in the classroom. According to Fauziati (2015, p. 53), teachers' beliefs play a significant role for classroom practice because what teachers do in the class reflects what they believe about it. Teachers' beliefs influence what teachers will say and do in the teaching practice. Additionally, Richards and Lockharts (1996, as cited in Bedir, 2010) stated that teachers' knowledge and beliefs provide the underlying framework or scheme which guides the teachers' classroom action (p.5208). Those beliefs will give impacts to the students' learning progress. Thus, teachers beliefs investigated in this research deal with their beliefs on multiple intelligences based English teaching for young learners in the classroom.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher's Beliefs

Richardson (cited in Hofer & Pintrich, 1997, p.112) states that beliefs are thought of as psychologically-held understandings, premises or propositions about the world that are thought to be true. Moreover, Canh and Barnand (2009, p.247) states that the relationship between teachers' beliefs and instructional practices has increasingly attracted educational researchers' attention. In general, research on teachers' thought processes is based on the three major assumptions: (1) teaching is largely influenced by teacher cognition, (2) teaching is guided by teachers' thoughts and judgements, and (3) teaching constitutes a high-level decision-making process (Sabiq, 2013, p.13). Moreover, Bingimlas & Hanraham (2010, p. 418) state that belief affects teachers practice. It influences teachers' action during classroom activities. Therefore, the teacher is behaving in a manner based on such beliefs they have.

Furthermore, Woods (1996, p. 184) points out that teachers beliefs is a basic model of planning and decision making in the teaching learning process. He, then, proposes the notion of BAK (belief, assumption, and knowledge) as the image of decision-making process. In arranging the planning and decision making for instruction, Woods considers teachers' beliefs, assumption, and knowledge as the important roles that affect teachers' decisions process. This assumption is in line with Fauziati (2015, p. 53) who states that belief is fundamental functions to guide people's thinking and action. Additionally, Borg & Busaidi (2012, p.6) state that teacher belief can powerfully shape both what teachers do, and, consequently the learning opportunities learners receive.

Furthermore, it shows how language teachers conceive what they do, what they know about language teaching, how they think about their classroom practice, and how that knowledge and those thinking processes learn through formal teacher education and informal experiences as their actions in the teaching learning process (Freeman & Richards, 1996, p. 1). In conclusion, teachers' beliefs are teachers' decision-making or teachers' conviction process about their view on the teaching and learning process, which is reflected on their action on it.



The Nine Kinds of Intelligences

At the beginning Gardner (1999, p.41) proposed that all human owned at least seven areas of intelligence, each related to a specific area of the brain. Recently, he has added eight and ninth intelligences, and he continues to research other possible intelligences (Gardner: 1999, P.47). According to Armstrong (2009, p.6) Gardner described different types of intelligences as follows:

1. **Linguistic Intelligence** refers to the sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals.
2. **Logical-mathematical Intelligence** refers to the capacity to analyze problem logically, carry out mathematical operations and investigate issues scientifically.
3. **Musical Intelligence** refers to the skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns.
4. **Spatial Intelligence** refers to the potential to recognize and manipulate the patterns of wide space as well as the patterns of more confined areas.
5. **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence** refers to the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems or creating products.
6. **Naturalistic Intelligence** refers to the expertise in the recognition and classification of the numerous species (flora & fauna) of his or her environment. This intelligence has to do with the potential to think about and understand the natural worlds. It is the ability to recognize and classify plants and animals and other aspects of your environment.
7. **Interpersonal Intelligence** which refers to a person's capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, desires of other people, and to work effectively with others.
8. **Intrapersonal Intelligence** refers to the capacity to understand oneself, to have an effective working model of oneself (including one's own desires, fears and capacities) and to use such information effectively in regulating one's own life.



9. **Existential intelligence**, which refers to the capacity to think about cosmic and existential issues from our existence ad role in the universe to the nature of life, death, bliss and tragedy (Fleetham, 2006, p.33).

Multiple Intelligences in Educational Context

Hoerr (2000, p.1) stated that the theory of intelligence, first come from psychology field, begin to attract enthusiasm of the educators after its emersion. Multiple intelligences (MI) theory became a new innovation approach to use students' strengths to help them learn. He also mentioned that through MI, students can develop their skills and activities to learn and solve the problems in schools and classrooms. Furthermore, the paradigm of being smart will be broaden on its meaning in which not only based on the score of a test but being smart is determined by how well students learn in a variety of ways.

According to Linse (2005, p.197) multiple intelligences theory become an essential part for teachers of young learners because it can be a framework to look at children's' strengths in teaching learning process. By multiple intelligences theory, teachers can develop learners' strengths in the ways they learn to comprehend the lessons. Therefore, it is hoped to help teachers to identify the students' learning style through their strength of dominant intelligences. When students develop their intelligence as the door to learn material, it will be beneficial in understanding the lesson easily. For example, for the bodily kinesthetic learners, the teachers may include dance to English-language songs for vocabulary learning.

Pritchard (2009, p.35) mentioned some consideration in planning multiple intelligences for teaching and learning process as follows "In planning for multiple intelligences teachers consider the range of activities related to the content of the lesson and the intended learning outcomes which will give a range of opportunities to the children's different intelligence strengths".

In conclusion, multiple intelligences based English teaching believes that everyone is smart. The students are expected to have hopes and expectations for themselves. Then, the students' achievement can be improved as measured by any standardized or informal tests. Furthermore, MI based English teaching



significantly influence students and teachers to create their positive self-development and intellectual potential. I hope that by using MI based instruction, it can open the door to experience success in multiple ways when students grow older.

Teaching English for Young Learner

Teaching English to young learners introduces children to learn one of international languages outside their mother or national languages. Children are at golden opportunity and ideal period to learn English. Cameron (2001, p.1), stated “Children can always do more than we think they can; they have huge learning potential, and the foreign language classroom does them a disservice if we do not exploit that potential”. Therefore, it can be concluded that learning language in the early age is good for children whether it is in first stage or in second stage.

Moreover, teaching English to young learners is different from that to adolescence or adult learners in its techniques, strategies, activities, children background knowledge and motivation. Some differences can be seen from the enthusiasm of children in learning because they cannot save their motivation to do some difficult task and lose their motivation quickly. He also stated that significant differences come from the linguistic, psychological and social development of the learners in which young learner teachers’ need to manage carefully the language will be taught and classroom activities will be done for them. According to Linse (2005, p.2) the young learners have basic physical and psychological needs than that of teenagers or adult learners, therefore the teachers’ should prepare well the attractive instruction. Additionally, they should offer well care to meet the young learners needs which is hoped it can make the children to pay more attention on their learning process.

METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate teachers’ beliefs in implementing multiple intelligences in one of Elementary school in Surakarta, Indonesia in a very deep understanding, this research will use descriptive qualitative as its research methodology. Moreover, the interview is used as the instrument of collecting the



data. The participants of this study were two experienced teachers of English. The teachers have been teaching for more than four years by using multiple intelligence system for their instruction. Thus, it can be assumed that they are capable to implement multiple intelligence system in English learning process. Moreover, in analyzing qualitative data, the researcher used 3 steps, those are: organizing and familiarizing, coding and reducing, and interpreting and representing (Ary et al, 2010:481).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first data is about the participants' definition about multiple intelligence approach. The data are gained from the interview process to two English teachers who were teacher VA and teacher DY. They were asked about their comprehension about multiple intelligence approach in language teaching for young learners. The results reveal various teachers' responses of MI definitions according to them. Teacher VA defines multiple-intelligence as a method in learning to improve students' achievement by developing students' potential based on students' multiple intelligences theory. Those definitions are mention below:

"Multiple intelligences mean that all the learning which is compounded by the children is different. So learning that is related to multiple intelligences is how we improve and develop through the abilities or potential of each child, namely learning techniques or methods there, we are required to be able to improve, develop children's potential according to their abilities"

In line with the statement given by teacher VA, teacher DY defines multiple intelligence as teacher's ways to teach students based on their intelligences they have.

"In my opinion MI (multiple-intelligence) is the way to teach students based on their intelligences way. Based on their intelligence, the skills that they have like their talent. Every student has their own intelligence like logic-math, kinesthetic, and so on"

In this research, the researcher also interviewed the school headmaster to prove the information about multiple intelligence system used in this school.



Those statements above also supported by the school headmaster definition about MI. The headmaster defines MI as a theory that deepens about students intelligences which is believed that each student has their own intelligence. The headmaster explained that multiple intelligence system that used in this school means the strategy used by the teachers in teaching the students based on students' tendency of their intelligence. It is because the students' tendency of their intelligence will show the students learning style. Therefore, the teacher will prepare material & strategy in the classroom based on students' learning style. Those statements are mentions below:

"MI is a new applied science that is developing in Europe, actually if I see it myself, if we want to see it from an Islamic perspective, actually since the time of the Prophet there was already. So because MI is actually a strategy, a learning strategy. The meaning of multiple intelligences means that every child has more than one multiple intelligences, so they vary in percentage, different in composition. Now if I look at academics, I see it, MI itself is, if I complete it, it is a definite plural intelligence, every child has a variety of intelligences. But if we apply it, we use this MI as a strategy, approach strategy so we prepare the material according to the children's intellectual tendencies. If he is intelligent in linguistics, he teaches mathematics, teaches art using linguistics. Children who are intelligent naturalists, for example, teach Indonesian, then take themes related to nature, children will like it. So this effect actually goes to eagerness, what is the favorite, the suitability in learning.

The second issue related teachers' beliefs on the use of MI in language teaching for young learners will explain about teachers' reasons and importance about it. The data are gathered from interview process by asking the teachers about their reasons using MI for instruction process and the importance of it. The data from teacher VA indicates that her reason using MI in teaching English for young learners because it is an approach system chosen by the schools foundation. Despite, the previous reason she also agree to run MIS (multiple intelligence system) in her class.

Additionally, this system also gives her a new paradigm how to improve her quality of teaching. Where, this system appreciates each students learning



style which are showed from students' tendency of their intelligence. Therefore, the teaching learning process will be in fun, easy and appreciate each individual's way to accept the material. She expects that all students can comprehend the material well. In multiple intelligence system, the school does not hold a test to accept the students; everyone can enter the school as long as the acceptance quota of new students is sufficient. She explained:

"Here it is true that when children enter the school they are not tested academically but they were observed from their psychology, abilities, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and their habits. And from there why we used MI, because we believed that the children were diverse, usually students who applied for schools entrance they were academically tested because they were academically educated. However, in this case is different. There are so many types of children that are not well academically, we expect they just sitting quietly listening to conventional learning, but it does not go like that. That is why we need to combine using MI so that the children who have potential not just visual tokens, kinesthetic tokens can all be flat and can receive material well"

In addition, Teachers DY describe that the reason of using MI in language teaching for young learners is come from the school system. The system tries to see the students as an individual that has a different intelligence. Therefore, in the teaching and learning process, the teacher cannot teach them conventionally because of their different intelligence and their different learning style. By MI, teachers have to make sure that the way of her teaching is appropriate with the way of students learning style which is showed from the students' tendency of their intelligences. She argues that the teacher must adjust to students, not the students who adjust to the teacher. Those explanations are mention below:

"Because every student has different intelligence. All of them are not only linguistic talented or math-logic talented. So, we have to make sure that the way of teaching is with students' intelligence. We must adjust to students not students who must adapt to us. It is a more humane approach and more in for pleasant learning. Therefore, the child is not feel burdened"



Moreover, the teacher also believes that MI can be one of the good solutions to teach students in fun and easy ways because MI will make students easy to understand about the materials and enjoying the learning process. She also said that the students should not be burdened in the teaching learning process. Such as an example when there is a student with kinaesthetic intelligence and his or her learning style by movement activities but the teacher only teach him or her by reading and writing activities without involving any movement activities. Then, those students will not understand the material entirely. She confirms that:

"So MI will make children have better understanding, easy to understand and easy to get points. The second the students do not feel bored and burdened. Imagine if a kinaesthetic child likes to move but he is only told to sit quietly, right? "It will make students easy to understand the materials and the students can enjoy the learning process."

Furthermore, related to the previous statement from two English teachers the writer also asked question to the headmaster about school's reason using multiple-intelligence system as their base approach. Then, the headmaster stated that school foundation think MI can be a best strategy for current teaching learning process to be implemented in an institution. It is hoped by using MIS the school will apply a humanist approach for the students. It means that the teachers will teach students adjust to their learning style, in this case the students' learning style showed by the tendency of the students' intelligences. Therefore, in MIS students' intelligences become an essential part according to this system. Additionally, there were always observations to probe students' intelligence to find out their learning style in each semester. Those explanations are mention below:

"The main reason is, we know that the children is growing and the science is always dynamic. So this situation requires us to use the right strategy in teaching. Currently, we feel that MIS is the most appropriate strategy at the moment, it does not mean there will be nothing else because science is dynamic not static. Now we understand that MIS is the most appropriate strategy to be implemented in an educational institution. Why? Because by using this concept, this system, schools



are more humanizing children. Why we called it like that? Because, later, the teacher will teach the children according to their learning style. Well, that's why we use this system.”

Dealing with teachers' responses above, it can be seen that the teachers believes to use MIS in the teaching learning process are in the same comprehension. They believe it is a best strategy to be implemented in current teaching and learning process at their school. They also believed that by MIS teaching learning process will be fun and easy ways. Moreover, fun learning in the classroom will make students easy to understand about the materials and enjoying the learning process. Therefore, they will learn without any burden or any forces. Expectedly, this process will make their understanding about the material stay longer in their long-term memories.

According to Shearer (2018, p.6) “multiple intelligences theory provides a broad map of the software of the mind that is aligned with cognitive science and general intelligence”. In line with this, in general, the finding of the study showed that teachers believe the multiple intelligences gave a good contribution to the teaching learning process. Furthermore, Dolati et al (2016) proposed that multiple intelligences helps students to learn lesson more effectively.

In addition, relate to the knowledge of multiple intelligences in meaning, the study showed that teachers understand the definition of it and its implementation. On the other way in Dolati and Tahriri's study (2017), the teacher did not even know about the multiple intelligences theory and did not try to implement it in their English classes. They study also revealed that the negligence of the multiple intelligences based instruction may cause harms to learners (Dolati and Tahriri, 2017). In better context, by providing multiple intelligences in the classroom context will help them to learn better, especially in learning English.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the findings of this study are expected to be a source for the teachers to renew their beliefs about the students' ability. Moreover, this study is expected to give a contribution for English teachers to explore and enhance their



teaching quality. Teachers are also expected to create teaching strategies creatively by realizing students' different learning style.

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