Teachers' Beliefs Regarding Their Roles in Teaching English Listening Online: A Story from Two University Teachers in Indonesia

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Abstract. Beliefs are part of cognition that significantly determine what and how teachers do in their classroom. This study employed a case study to investigate university teachers' beliefs regarding their roles in teaching English listening online. We involved two English listening teachers teaching at a university in Indonesia. The instruments used in this study were an interview and observations. The thematic analysis result of this study reveals that the two teachers have different beliefs about their roles in teaching English listening online. Teacher A believed that she should play roles as a facilitator, a manager, and a motivator. In contrast, teacher B stated that in online listening teaching, the roles he played were as an instructor and a counsellor. In addition, teacher A's beliefs align with her teaching practice, while teacher B's beliefs are incongruent with his teaching practice. Some factors contribute to this mismatch. Finally, recommendations are made for the betterment of online listening instruction.

Key words: belief; online instruction; listening.

INTRODUCTION

Corona virus 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic, which firstly emerged in Wuhan at the end of 2019, has changed the world dramatically. The impact of this pandemic is tremendous. This virus has been infecting many people quickly. This condition forced the government to release new policies for decreasing the spread of this virus, starting from social distancing, lockdown, and shutting down public places, including schools. This pandemic does not only cause health problems but also other aspects of life worldwide. In Indonesia, for the educational sector, following other countries, which suspend their classes (Moorhouse, 2020), since March 17th, 2020, the government (The Minister of Education and Culture of Republic Indonesia) has announced that schools in all levels and universities must be carried out online for areas that have many Covid-19 affected patients (Mendikbud, 2020). Because of the increasing spread of this virus and to maintain the health of students, teachers, and all educational staff, online learning is still running now.

The sudden change of teaching and learning platforms because of this pandemic requires teachers and students to adjust many things. One of the changes of instructional aspects that teachers need to consider deals with their roles in online instruction (Creasman, 2012). Pritchard (2007) argued that "The creation and maintenance of supportive, exciting and enjoyable learning experiences depend critically upon the role of the teacher" (p.121). In addition, Ragan (n.d) asserted that for online learning, the role of the teacher is more significant than ever before. No face-to-face interactions result in more difficulties for students to learn. In traditional classrooms, students are helped by verbal and non-verbal communication when interacting with their teachers and other students, while in online learning, the features of such communication are missing. Lack of guidance from e-teacher and interesting interactions will decrease students' motivation to learn, even more for subjects considered difficult for students to learn, like listening subjects.

Many studies conducted in offline classroom contexts report that students think listening is the most difficult subject to learn (Bingol et al., 2014; Gilakjani &Sabouri, 2016; Hwaider, 2017; Rahimirad & Moini, 2015). We have not found any studies dealing with this issue for online classrooms, but we assume that the case would be the same. Listening is considered the most difficult skill to learn due to linguistic (vocabulary, syntactic structure, pronunciation, accent, intonation) and non-linguistic aspects (environment, speed of the speakers, anxiety, etc.) (Hwaider, 2017). Therefore, teachers need to play their roles very well to create effective learning for students. They must perform roles, which can enhance students' engagement in the lesson and increase their motivation in learning.

The roles teachers play in their classrooms are

influenced by their beliefs. Teachers' beliefs are very significant in leading the teachers to manage their classes. A lot of studies' findings regarding teachers' beliefs reveal that beliefs give a significant role in determining what and how teachers teach in their classes (Baker, 2013; Basturkmen, 2012; Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Farrell & Ives, 2014; Farrell & Yang, 2017; Graham et al., 2014; Macalister & Nation, 2010; Nguyen, 2019). Even though studies regarding teachers' beliefs have been abundant, previous studies regarding teachers' roles in teaching English listening online are still hard to find. Therefore, it is advantageous to conduct a study to investigate teachers' beliefs regarding their roles in online teaching listening. Information about teachers' beliefs is crucial to improve the effectiveness and success of their instruction. It is "a necessary precursor to making suggestions for how to address any gaps in teachers' pedagogical understanding and practice, and offering practical activities for addressing those gaps" (Santos & Graham, 2018, p.2). In other words, understanding teachers' beliefs and their actual practice are essential for both teachers and teacher programs. For teachers, it is helpful to make them aware of roles they have performed during their online teaching practice and hopefully will help them evaluate their instruction. Then, for teacher programs, it gives advantages for them to design and develop better online teacher programs. The information also might help them to determine suitable professional programs for the teachers.

METHOD

Research goal

We employed a case study approach in this study to discuss in-depth information about teachers' beliefs regarding their roles in teaching listening online. A case study was chosen since we want to focus on exploring teachers' experience regarding roles they have performed to get a good understanding of the case (Stake, 2006). Moreover, a case study allows researchers to explore a current phenomenon in depth using various data resources (Yin, 2018).

Sample and Data Collection

The participants of this study were two English university teachers teaching listening online. In this study, we used observations and an interview to obtain the data. Observations were conducted for seven meetings in Teacher A's class and eight meetings in Teacher B's class by joining online platforms the participants used

when teaching listening online. The observations for teaching using the Zoom application were recorded automatically using a feature of the Zoom application and then transcribed using Google Automatic Speech Recognition and checked manually by one of the researchers. Meanwhile, non-audio data were recorded by taking screenshots of all interactions happening in the platform used, i.e., Whatsapp, and by signing up LMS used by one of the participants.

For the interview, one of the researchers in this study conducted it after all observations took place. All data were collected after the participants agreed to take part in this research. The interview was conducted using the Zoom application since the participants lived in different islands, and it was not possible for the researcher to do a face-to-face interview in the covid-19 pandemic situation. The Zoom application was used since it has been reported to be effective for interviews (Gray et al., 2020). To discuss in detail the teachers' beliefs regarding their roles in teaching English listening, we use the following research questions to guide this study:

1) What are teachers' beliefs about their roles in teaching listening online?
2) How do teachers implement their roles when teaching English listening online?
3) How do teachers' beliefs compare with their practice?
4) Are their beliefs and practice already in accordance with what the literature says about teachers' role in online teaching?

Analyzing the Data

All collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis proposed by Braun & Clark (2006). The analysis covers six stages, namely "familiarizing oneself to the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report" (pp. 16-23).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we present the findings as answers to the four research questions.

1. What are teachers' beliefs about their roles in teaching listening online?

Based on the interview result, the first participant (teacher A) believed that in teaching listening online, a teacher should perform as a facilitator, a motivator, and a manager. She said that the role of an online teacher should be in line with the goal of the learning. The first role is as a

facilitator. The teacher should be able to facilitate students' learning. Another role that teachers should play is as a motivator. She stated that online learning is not easy for both teachers and students because it is very new for them. She thought that online learning was stressful for both of them. Thus, she believed that teachers should be able to maintain students' engagement by motivating students to keep learning even though they were not able to interact face-to-face. Besides, she also believed that teachers should be able to manage their classes well. In other words, she believed that teachers also should be able to play their role as a manager. She asserted that online listening teachers should pay attention to their classroom management, such as managing the time and online interactions. She confirmed that even though she believed that teachers should perform some roles when teaching English listening online, she was aware that she had not performed all roles she mentioned well. She realized that the preparation she had done was not enough since teaching online was new for her.

Meanwhile, the second participant (teacher B) believed that roles an online teacher should perform were as an instructor and a counsellor. As an instructor, an online teacher should give materials for students and tell students what they have to do when having the class. Furthermore, he believed that an online teacher also should be able to be a counsellor for his/ her students. He realized that teaching and learning online was difficult. Students might have many problems when studying listening online. Therefore, he permitted his students to tell him about their problems in learning listening online. He said that he was happy to be a counsellor for his students.

2. How do teachers implement their roles when teaching English listening online?

Based on the result of the observation, it is found that teacher A performed her role as a facilitator by providing students with videos for students to listen to and worksheets for students to answer. She believed that by giving such activities, students would be able to learn listening online autonomously. She usually gave a Zoom link and listening materials (videos and worksheets) before the class began. Those were posted on the Whatsapp group so that all students were hoped to get well prepared before the meeting started. In the learning and teaching process, she facilitated students to learn by having a discussion with her students about materials she had given. She usually asked students about students' understanding of the materials she gave and about students' difficulties when listening. As a motivator, she often advised the students to keep learning even though the learning condition in covid-19 pandemic time was much different from that before the covid-19 pandemic spread widely in Indonesia and the world. At the end of her meeting in her class, she said:

"Oke, guys… thank you so much for join this e…this room for tonight. E…I, I, I , I really sorry, really not maksimal for tonight, banyak juga mungkin ada yang keluar masuk Zoom jadi inilah awal difficulties in online learning- nya ya. And mudah-mudahan kita tetap enjoy menikmati pelajaran online. yah dinikmati saja baik buruknya ya. oke kalaupun mau... If you want to keep practice your listening skill e…listen everything either it is news, movies, or music in English so that your…you will be familiar with the word, new word in English by listening. Keep practicing in your listening seems that your vocabulary will automatically add also bertambah and your pronunciation will be better ya. Jadi semakin banyak mendengar improve your vocabulary and your pronouciationnya will be better ya. Jadi, semakin banyak mendengar it will improve your vocabulary and your pronunciationnya. (Okay, guys. Thank you so much for joining this room tonight. I am really sorry for not being able to teach you optimally. It seemed that many of you could not follow the class fully because of a low internet connection. Many of you were in and out. Well, this is the beginning of the difficulties of online learning, but I hope we can keep enjoying online learning. Just enjoy it whatever the situation is, the good and the bad one. If you want to keep practicing your listening, you can listen everything; you can listen to news, movies or English music so that you will be familiar with the words. You can learn new words from listening. By keep practicing listening you can improve your vocabulary mastery and improve your pronunciation)".

As a manager, she prepared her class before the meeting began by first communicating with the students about the time they should have their class. Actually, all courses, including the schedule of listening course, have been arranged by the secretary of the English Education program. However, in reality, she often could not teach based on the scheduled time because of

some reasons. Therefore, she often rearranged the schedule with the students. After she had the agreement with the students, then she posted the Zoom link, listening materials, and the worksheet to the Whatsapp group. To manage her online listening class, at the first meeting, she provided some rules students needed to obey when online listening learning was running. She said that sometimes the rules were just the rules, and she should understand it since she believed that online learning was not easy.

When the class was about to start, she asked students to fill the attendance list and then checked students' attendance when the Zoom meeting began. She asked the students to switch on the camera and then started the lesson by greeting and brainstorming, then followed by sharing the screen for videos and asked students to listen to them again. After listening, she mediated discussion regarding answers of questions related to videos they had watched. She encouraged students to answer by calling students' names one by one and gave feedback right away after the students answered the questions. The meeting was ended by advising students to keep practicing listening.

For teacher B, being an instructor was the first role that he believed he should perform. In his class, using Whatsapp only, he usually started his class by asking students to fill the attendance list. He commonly offered students to play a game right away after students filled in the attendance list, as we can see in the following extract.

> Teacher : 7 more people have not yet attended through the barcode. Wanna play game?
> Student A: yes, Sir
> Student B: boleh, sir (okay, Sir)
> Teacher: Game Seen and Heard.

Giving games before starting the lesson can be done to attract students' engagement. However, unfortunately, the games were not fit to the topics of the lessons and spent much of the lesson time. The listening materials (videos and the questions) were given at the end of the meeting after finishing playing the game. In other words, giving the materials was done as a closing of the meeting. He commonly just instructed his students to watch and listen to videos he sent and asked students to answer questions following the videos outside the class time. In addition, the students were asked to upload their answers through a voice note on the Whatsapp group in the next meeting. There was no discussion

regarding the answers of the questions. The following extract show how he instructed his students to do the assignment.
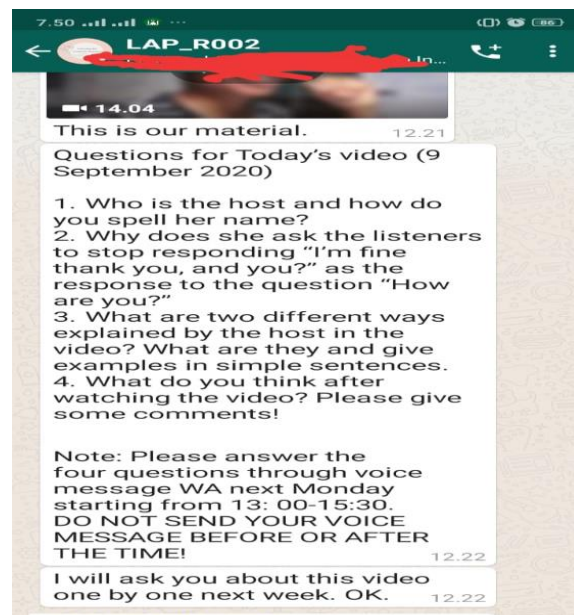
Figure 1. Instructed his students to do the assignment.

In the teaching and learning process, he sometimes gave tips on how to speak English. Tips he gave commonly dealt with using English in general, as we can see in the following extracts, screenshots of the Whatsapp group conversations.
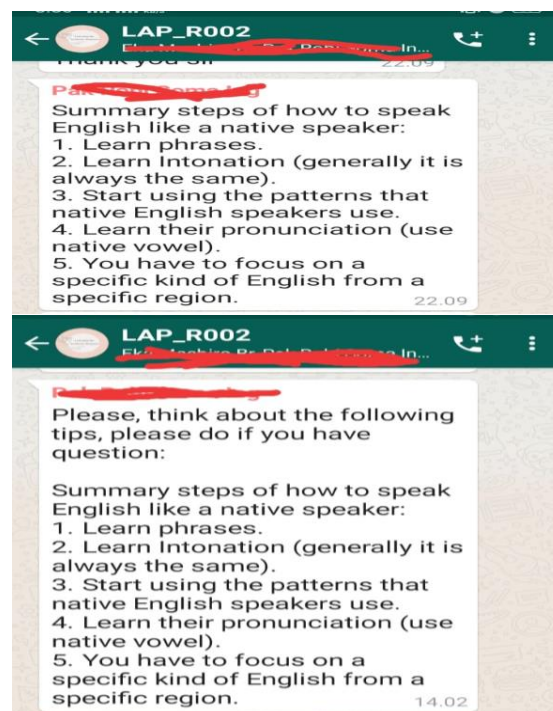
Figure 2. WhatsApp group conversations in English

3. How do teachers' beliefs compare with their online teaching practice?

Based on the description of teachers' beliefs and practices in the previous section, we see that some beliefs are in line with their practices, while some others are not. Teacher A has performed her role as a facilitator, motivator, and manager. According to Lamy & Hampel (2007), a teacher who is a facilitator is the one who is not just transferring knowledge but taking part in the teaching and learning process by facilitating students' learning and guiding them through their learning. Teacher A had tried to facilitate students' learning by sending in advance materials students needed to have before the class began to make sure that all students would be able to access the materials. She did that because she realized that the teaching and learning process using the Zoom application sometimes did not run smoothly due to the internet connection and other technical problems. In the teaching and learning process, she also facilitated students with a discussion regarding listening materials (videos) they had listened to and answers of questions that followed the videos. She stated that she had tried to prepare her instruction well, but she believed that what she had done was not enough. She realized that her online listening instruction still had many weaknesses, and she was eager to learn more about online teaching.

Meanwhile, for teacher B, what he stated about beliefs regarding teachers' role in online instruction mismatches with his teaching practices. As an instructor, he just posted videos and some questions via the Whatsapp group. The students were just required to listen by themselves outside the class and posted the answers of the questions in the next meeting with a very limited discussion regarding the materials. Most of the time he used in his class was to play games with the students and talked other things outside the listening materials he gave. In the interview, he stated that he believed that an online teacher also should play a role as a counsellor. Carril et al. (2013) noted that teachers who are counsellors are those who "suggest measures to enhance performance, provide guidance based on student needs, offer advice, suggestions and clarify doubts, and motivate the student" (p. 470). However, the observation data reveals that such activities to prove that he is a counsellor in teaching online listening are very limited. He ever suggested to students how to understand native speakers, but overall what he sometimes delivered was more about how to understand English in general. Regarding listening skills, he seldom taught students how to listen well and what strategies students need to have to be better listeners. Data from the observation also show that he seldom asked students about their difficulties in understanding the listening materials he gave. It seems that teacher B taught online listening without clear guidance. This might be the case because teaching listening is something new for him, moreover for teaching it online.

4. Are their beliefs and practice already in accordance with what the literature says about teachers' role in online teaching?

The roles of a teacher in online learning are challenging. Some of the challenges are how to give clear guidance for students, keep students engaged in the teaching and learning process, and evaluate student learning. Therefore, Ragan (n.d) argued that the role of the teacher is more crucial than ever before. In addition, Buzetto-More (2007) asserted that teaching using online platforms must be different from that of traditional classroom and that "the teacher role shift from lecturer to that course developer and, once a course is in session, the course facilitator" (p. 6). Other roles an online teacher needs to perform are as an advisor, a subject expert, a discussion participant, and an organizer. An online teacher should be flexible in performing those roles in accordance with the context of the teaching and learning process (Buzetto-More, 2007). As a facilitator, an online teacher may take several functions such as preparing learning materials, delivering online instruction, and supporting students to learn (Ni Shé, et al., 2019). Furthermore, Alvarez, et al. (2013) outlined several roles that online teachers usually carry out, namely planning role/ a designer (being able to plan, organize, lead, and control a course), social role (building students' relationships with the teacher and other students), cognitive role (dealing with mental processes of learning, guiding and evaluating student learning).

From the literature, we see that the role of a teacher in an online environment is complex. An online teacher is not only required to transfer knowledge, but also to manage the course, facilitate, and guide students to be able to reach the goal of the learning. Teacher A has performed some roles as suggested by the literature, even though the implementation in her instruction was not optimal. This might be understood since teaching online was novel for her, and she has

never joined a training regarding how to teach listening online yet. What she ever had was only training about how to teach online, and it was only once with a short duration.

Meanwhile, teacher B has not carried out roles as expected for teaching listening online. It might be the case because of some reasons. First, teaching listening was new for him, even more for teaching it online. Second, he basically does not like to teach listening. He said that teaching listening was not his choice. He did it just because he was mandated by the program to teach listening. Finally, he also admitted that he had very little knowledge about how to teach listening and how to teach it online.

CONCLUSION

This article has provided an account of the beliefs and practices of two university teachers in Indonesia in teaching English listening online. The research findings confirmed that teachers believed that they should perform some roles when teaching English listening online. They believed that just being an instructor, meaning just transfer knowledge, was not enough when teaching listening online since they thought that online learning was not as smooth as offline learning. They believed that an online teacher should understand students' difficulties in learning and provide guidance for students as a counsellor or a motivator. However, some of the teachers' beliefs are incongruent with their teaching practices, specifically for the practice of teacher B. Some factors contributing to this mismatch are lack of knowledge on teaching listening and online instruction, lack of experience, and lack of motivation. Therefore, we recommend that teacher programs be more selective in determining which teachers to teach what subjects and provide sufficient trainings regarding teaching English listening online for teachers to help teacher teach online listening effectively.

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