TEACHER'S BELIEFS IN EFL WRITING INSTRUCTION: A CASE STUDY OF AN ENGLISH LECTURER AT PADANG STATE POLYTECHNIC

[1]Gema Febriansyah, [2]Hermawati Syarif, [3]Yetti Zainil

Universitas Negeri Padang

Corresponding email: gemafebriansyah@student.unp.ac.id

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Teacher Beliefs, Classroom Practices, EFL Writing Explicit Teaching, Experienced Teacher	Investigating a teacher's beliefs in language teaching is something that needs to be explored. Especially in teaching EFL Writing, examining language teacher beliefs is interested because it can be a benchmark for educators on how EFL Writing teaching happens. In addition, teacher beliefs will also help teachers and learners understand the process of learning. There have been many studies on teacher beliefs towards various English language teaching in Indonesia. However, most of these studies discuss teacher beliefs at the high school level. There is a lack of research on teacher beliefs at the university level. This study focuses on teacher beliefs research on EFL Writing teachers at the university student level. This research used a qualitative method with a case study research design. Observation and in-depth interviews are the instruments of this research. The object of the research is an experienced lecturer at Padang State Polytechnic who has been teaching EFL Writing for approximately 11 years. The results of this study show that the lecturer has several teacher beliefs that he believes to be the basic principles in teaching EFL writing. In addition, in the classroom practice, the lecturer used explicit teaching strategy in teaching EFL Writing. Although there are some difficulties faced by the lecturer in his teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher beliefs have been a major area of study for many years. Scholars and education professionals agree that teacher beliefs are an inseparable part of teaching. What constitutes teacher beliefs is still open to debate. Various terms have been used over time to describe teacher beliefs, such as "teacher thinking," "teacher beliefs," "teacher knowledge," "teacher craft knowledge," "teacher image," and "teacher cognition." Kaymakamoglu (2009) classified some of these terms used by different researchers - in 1986, Clark and Peterson referred to it as "teacher thinking," while Pajares in 1992 called it "teacher beliefs." In 1995, Borko and Putnam used the term "teacher knowledge," and Cooper and Mcntyre referred to it as "teacher craft knowledge" in 1996. Black (2002) called it a "teacher image," and Borg labeled it as "teacher cognition" in 2003. Borg (2001:186) stated that teaching decisions are made under the influence of beliefs, and teaching becomes a personal act because beliefs are accepted as true by the individual. Fang (1996) suggested that teacher beliefs can influence classroom practices in both consistent and inconsistent ways. Kagan (1992) noted that "a teacher's beliefs tend to align with a congruent teaching style that is often evident across different classes and grade levels".

The investigation of teachers' views has garnered significant attention from researchers, as these ideas play a crucial role in shaping the advancement of English language teaching and learning. The views held by teachers exert a substantial influence on the principles they adopt within the classroom setting. Individuals engage in actions based on their perception of the validity of their intended course of action. The aforementioned phenomenon is also observed in educational settings where English is being taught. In this context, the role of the teacher is of utmost importance in fostering the development of learners' language ability (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017; Ong, 2011). The aforementioned statement suggests that the teaching techniques of educators have a significant impact on learners' proficiency in English, and these practices are shaped by their beliefs (Clark & Peterson, 1984). Therefore, a strong correlation exists between language proficiency and the views held by teachers. Hence, gaining insight into the ideas held by instructors could potentially enhance comprehension of their instructional methods and, consequently, provide light on the intricacies of their pupils' academic achievements.Teachers' views are derived from a multitude of sources, as evidenced by the works of Gray (2017), Ozer and Akçayoğlu (2021), and Skaalvik (2010).

Research on teachers' belief in language teaching has grown significantly in recent years. Previous studies have looked at the connection between teachers' beliefs and their grammar teaching practices (Basar,2020; Borg & Burns, 2008; Farrel & Yang, 2019) . This includes teachers' declarative knowledge and beliefs about teaching grammar, as well as the relationship between cognition and actual classroom practices. Teachers' beliefs are important to study because they influence teachers' openness to trying new teaching methods (Borg,2003; Said & Chahrazed, 2022). This in turn impacts the quality of instruction provided and student learning. Research shows that teacher cognition involves a complex interplay of teachers' knowledge, perspectives, and thoughts that inform their pedagogical decisions and actions (Borg, 2005).

Of the four language skills, writing is typically the last to be developed for most students learning a foreign language. EFL learners have considered writing to be the most difficult skill to learn (Hsu, 2005). Similarly, many teachers see teaching EFL writing as a major challenge (Hsu, 2005). Research has shown that teachers' beliefs greatly influence their classroom practices (Borg, 2015; Calderhead, 1996; Fives, Lacatena, & Gerard, 2015; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Snider & Roehl, 2007), meaning teachers' beliefs about teaching EFL writing impact how they teach it, which relates to their pedagogical effectiveness. Therefore, understanding what shapes teachers' beliefs about EFL writing is important for teacher trainers in designing programs to prepare prospective teachers to be competent EFL writing instructors. A good understanding of experienced teachers' beliefs and what influenced them regarding writing instruction can help teacher educators better comprehend what contributes to becoming an EFL writing teacher and equip future teachers with solid knowledge and skills to implement writing instruction from day one.

Many studies have been conducted in Indonesia related to teacher beliefs. The average research is conducted at the high school education level (Arifin, 2023; Wafa, 2016; Octaviani et al, 2021). Therefore, it seems necessary to conduct research at the university level of education. In this study, the researcher tries to conduct an in-depth investigation of teacher beliefs and practices towards teaching EFL Writing at Padang

State Polytechnic, Indonesia. The research was conducted by observing a classroom taught by an experienced English lecturer at Padang State Polytechnic who teaches the Writing course. In addition, the researcher also conducted in-depth interviews with the lecturer to gain a deeper understanding of his teacher beliefs.

METHODS
Research Design
This research was conducted using the qualitative method, which means that this research was conducted with in-depth observations and interviews of the object of research. With a case study research design, this research focuses on an object that is used as a source of information to examine teacher beliefs and teaching practices in EFL Writing Instruction. The case study was conducted by conducting classroom observations and in-depth interviews with the interviewees. The researcher used purposive sampling to obtain the sample.

Participant
The participant in this study was an experienced English lecturer at Padang State Polytechnic. He holds a doctorate in language education and has been teaching English at Padang State Polytechnic for approximately 11 years. During his time at Padang State Polytechnic he has taught various English-related courses, one of which is EFL Writing. At the time of this research, which was in the odd semester of 2023, He was teaching EFL writing in 5 classes which means she was teaching to approximately 170 students.

Procedures
The first step of this research was to observe the EFL writing class taught by the object of research. The researcher observed 3 out of 5 classes taught by the object of research. The average observation time per class was 50 minutes out of 100 minutes per class. This observation was carried out to see and understand how the method and style of teaching EFL Writing by the object to his students. The next step is to conduct in-depth interviews with the object of research. The interview was conducted by asking as many as 6 questions which according to the researcher were able to answer how the teacher beliefs in teaching EFL Writing.

FINDINGS
The data from this study were obtained from in-depth observations and interviews. In this section we will present the results of this research. As an illustration, the researcher asked 7 in-depth questions, that are:

1. What are your fundamental principles or beliefs in teaching EFL Writing courses?
2. How do you define successful writing, and how does that affect your teaching methods?
3. What do you think about the importance of feedback in improving students' writing skills?
4. What methods or strategies do you use to teach different writing genres (narrative, persuasive, expository, etc.)?

5. How do you explain the balance between teaching grammar and encouraging creativity in writing?
6. What difficulties do you face in teaching EFL Writing to students?
7. How have your beliefs or approaches to teaching writing in English evolved or changed throughout your teaching career?

From the results of these interviews and observations, the researcher grouped the results of the study into 3 parts, which are: how his teacher beliefs in teaching EFL Writing, How does the lecturer teaches EFL Writing in the classroom, and What are the difficulties faced by the lecturer in teaching EFL Writing.

Based on in-depth interviews on how his teacher beliefs in teaching EFL Writing
The data obtained will be presented in the following table and then explanation of the table will be made:

Table 1 Teacher Beliefs Used by Interviewee

Teacher Beliefs Used by Interviewee	Teacher Beliefs Classification Based on Graves' Theory (2000)			
	View on Language	View on the process of acquiring knowledge	View on the sociolinguistic	View on the act of teaching
Motivation		√		
Teaching Strategy				√
Tasks				√
Learning Environment			√	
Reflection		√		
Assesment				√
Grammar Knowledge	√			

Based on the results of interviews with the object of this research, the researcher found teacher beliefs that became the resource of object' guide in teaching EFL Writing courses. There are at least six beliefs that become the basic principles of the object of this research in teaching EFL Writing. The first one is about motivation, He believes that motivation is the main aspect that must be owned in teaching and learning Writing, especially for EFL teachers and learners. For example, He always writes regularly to motivate himself to teach writing to students. The results of his writing will be used as writing examples for students. So that students will get more concrete motivation in learning to write because students can see directly how to write from the teacher. The second is teaching strategy. He believes that good writing learning requires a good teaching strategy. He uses explicit teaching as a strategy in teaching writing. According to the interviewee, explicit teaching is one of the suitable teaching strategies because the teacher can see the students' progress from each meeting.

The next fundamental belief of the interviewee was about the tasks given to students. According to the interviewee, the tasks given should be challenging tasks and most importantly, tasks that students are able to do. The fourth thing that becomes his

teacher beliefs is creating a good learning environment. Writing is a process of pouring thoughts, so a comfortable environment is the main requirement in learning to write. Furthermore, there is reflection. According to the interviewee, teacher reflection refers to the process by which educators engage in critical analysis, examination and evaluation of his teaching practices, experiences and interactions in the classroom. It involves teachers intentionally taking time to consider and reflect on their instructional methods, student interactions, and overall teaching strategies to improve his effectiveness and student learning outcomes. The last teacher belief is that assessment should be based on student performance. Because according to him, writing is a long series in which the process of assessing a writer's writing cannot only be seen from one writing but must be seen from the long journey of a writer. These are the findings of the researcher on the teacher beliefs of EFL Writing lecturers who are the object of this research.

How does the lecturer teach EFL Writing in the classroom

From the results of in-depth interviews with the interviewees, the researcher found answers to the ways of teaching EFL writing by the interviewees. He believed that teaching writing using project-based learning method is a suitable method for teaching in his class. According to him, project-based learning is able to create a perfect collaboration between teachers and students and students with other students. This is based on his belief that writing at the university student level should be done in a collaborative way, because by collaborating the results of writing can be given feedback by his collaborators. Good writing must go through an in-depth revision process as well. In giving feedback on students' writing, the interviewee uses negative feedback as a way of assessing their writing. According to him, negative feedback can be done by marking the wrong places in students' writing and commenting on their writing. With negative feedback, students will not only know where they went wrong but will also sharpen their critical thinking.

In giving instructions to students. At the beginning of the meeting he will ask students to do pre-writing first, in this phase students will be asked to determine who the reader of their writing is and students will also be asked to think about the topic of their writing based on their observations from the reading material they find. According to him, in vocational education, the topic or idea of student writing must be authentic because the writing produced by vocational students must be writing that has a real impact on the industry. Furthermore, students will start to be told to write a draft of their writing, then make revisions and finally do proofreading to experts.

What are the difficulties faced by lecturer in teaching EFL Writing

Based on the observation in the EFL Writing classroom, the researcher found some difficulties faced by lecturers in teaching EFL Writing to their students. Weakness in writing issues by students became a fundamental problem. The number of grammar mistakes and the lack of vocabulary from the students made the teaching process a little difficult. The researcher saw that the lecturer immediately changed the teaching method from modern method to traditional method in teaching grammar to students. According to him, traditional method is still the most suitable method in teaching grammar.

Because according to him, learning grammar must have sensitivity, while that sensitivity can only be built by direct interaction of students with the grammar.

Another difficulty faced by lecturers is the unequal skills of students in writing. In one class there are still many students who still have low writing skills. So in response to this, the lecturer used the project-based learning method in his teaching. In making groups of students who will make projects, the lecturer will divide groups in which there is a combination of students who are good at writing with students who are less. This method seems effective because students who are lacking in writing will be helped by students who are good at writing because they collaborate and provide feedback to each other.

DISCUSSION

From the results of the research above, we can understand that the lecturer who is the object of this research has several teacher beliefs in teaching EFL Writing that he teaches. The results of these teacher beliefs are not the same in terms of teacher beliefs according to Graves (2000) but researchers can categorize them into teacher beliefs according to Graves (2000) because the core of the beliefs is the same. Beliefs about motivation and reflection can be categorized into The view on the process of acquiring knowledge and individuals engaged in the learning process by Graves (2000) because motivation and reflection are teaching and learning processes that must be followed by language teachers and learners. With motivation, a language teacher can pour ideas to write well and a teacher can also be a good role model because a motivated teacher will be able to transfer his knowledge perfectly. Meanwhile, reflection is a way to evaluate our process of gaining knowledge or transferring knowledge. Reflection is part of the process of understanding self, a language teacher must be able to recognize the results of his teaching because it will also be related to the problem of engagement with learners. Language teachers and learners must be connected to each other to get satisfactory results.

Meanwhile, beliefs about teaching strategies, task giving, and assessment can be categorized into the view on the act of teaching by Graves (2000). As we know in teaching EFL Writing a teacher must have a creative strategy in teaching the course, because Writing is related to creativity so with a creative strategy the creativity of the students can be achieved. While task giving and assessment are important points in the act of teaching, the task given becomes the belief of a teacher who will determine how he/she views the process of transferring knowledge to students. A good teacher will give tasks that can support the acquisition of knowledge from students instead of tasks that contradict the knowledge that students will get. Similar to assessment, the assessment that is aligned with the course being taught is a real belief of the teacher. Teachers must be able to provide assessments that are suitable for the courses they teach so that the assessment process can be a part of the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, beliefs about the learning environment. We can categorize this belief into The view on the sociolinguistic aspects of language. Creating a comfortable and healthy learning environment is the responsibility of a teacher. Especially in teaching EFL Writing, because EFL Writing learners need ideas and creativity to pour them into a writing without a supportive environment a writing is difficult to reach the

point of success. Beliefs towards learning environment is also a belief by the teacher towards the social environment in the teaching and learning process. Teachers must be able to set aside context learning in EFL Writing because context also has an important role in writing. Without a clear context, a writing can have a meaning that deviates from what is intended at the beginning. Learner background context is also a factor that must be considered in language learning, especially EFL Writing, because learners who have different life backgrounds will have different perspectives so that teachers must be able to understand this.

Language teachers' belief in the importance of grammar and vocabulary in teaching Writing is a fundamental principle that a teacher has. This is in accordance with Graves' (2000) theory about The view on language. The English lecturer in this research also expressed the same thing, he said that learning a language, especially in EFL Writing, the ability of grammar and vocabulary mastery becomes mandatory to be understood by learners because mistakes in these Writing Issues will cause significant changes in meaning. So the teacher will pay special attention to this issue. Of course, this will be seen in the teaching and learning process which will emphasize the focus on Writing Issues such as grammar and vocabulary.

In the practice of teaching EFL Writing, it can be seen that English lecturers at Padang State Polytechnic have mastered several methods in teaching. Although there are still some difficulties encountered. For example, in dealing with students' weakness in grammar, lecturers still go back to the traditional method which is quite good but in this age of technology, changes in teaching methods should also be a focus that should be discussed. In teaching grammar as a support subject in EFL Writing, the teacher should be able to adjust the teaching method with the learners. The average age of learners in the EFL Writing class at Padang State Polytechnic is 18-22 years old, which we can categorize into Generation Z. Ryan Jenskin (2017) states that Gen Z has different expectations, preferences, and work perspectives and is considered challenging for organizations. The character of Gen Z is more diverse, global, and has an influence on the culture and attitudes of most people. One thing that stands out, Gen Z is able to utilize technological changes in various aspects of their lives. They use technology as naturally as they breathe. Based on this explanation, we must also adjust the teaching style to this generation, which will certainly be our homework together as educators at every level of education. The object of this research also revealed that, combining traditional with modern methods can be one of the right methods in teaching EFL Writing to today's students.

CONCLUSIONS

English lecturer who is the object of this research at Padang State Polytechnic already has teacher beliefs that he believes as basic principles in teaching EFL writing, at least all the theories of teacher beliefs by Graves (2000) exist in the beliefs of Padang State Polytechnic English lecturer. These beliefs become the fundamental principles that are manifested and visible in the process of teaching and learning EFL Writing in the classroom. He feels, it is important for a teacher to have beliefs about his teaching, with these beliefs the direction of language teaching in particular will look more comprehensive and measurable. Changes in beliefs are also possible because the object

taught by a teacher also changes with the times. Although there are difficulties that occur in teaching EFL Writing, the lecturer still has other alternatives that can condition the situation of difficulties that occur. A big hope comes from the lecturer that writing issues such as grammar and vocabulary should be solved at the elementary to high school level so that at the university student level, the teacher can focus on how to write and develop the ideas of the learners although the teaching of grammar will certainly never end.

REFERENCES

Arifin, S. (2023). Investigating a teacher's beliefs and practices in teaching grammar: A case study of a senior teacher of English in a high school in Jakarta. *Indonesian Journal Of Educational Research and Review*, *6*(1), 195–203. https://doi.org/10.23887/ijerr.v6i1.58943

Bakhtin, M. M. (1973). *Marxism and the philosophy of language.* (L. Matejka & I. R. Titunik, Trans.). New York: Seminar Press.

Başar, S. (2020). Teacher Cognition in Grammar Teaching: A Case Study in a Turkish EFL Context.International Journal of Modern Education Studies, 4(2), 57

Borg, S., & Burns, A. (2008). Integrating grammar in adult TESOL classrooms. Applied Linguistics, 29(3), 456–482. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amn020.

Borg, M. (2001). Key concepts in ELT. Teachers' beliefs. *ELT Journal, 55*(2), 186-188.

Borg, S. (2005). Teacher cognition in language teaching. In K. Johnson (Ed.), *Expertise in second language learning and teaching* (pp. 190-209). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Borg, S. (2015). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice.* New York: Bloomsbury.

Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher, 33*(8), 3-15.

Calderhead, J. (1996). Teachers' beliefs and knowledge. In D. C. Berliner & R. C. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 709-725). New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.

Clark, C. M., & Peterson, P. L. (1986). Teachers' thought processes. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 255-296). New York: Macmillan.

Fang, Z. (1996). A review of research on teacher beliefs and practices. *Educational*

Farrell, T. S. C., & Yang, D. (2019). Exploring an EAP Teacher's Beliefs and Practices in Teaching L2 Speaking: A Case Study. RELC Journal, 50(1), 104–117. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688217730144

Fives, H., Lacatena, N., & Gerard, L. (2015). Teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning. In H. Fives & M. G. Gill (Eds.), *International handbook of research on teachers' beliefs* (pp. 249-265). New York: Routledge

Flower. L. & Hayes, J. R. (1997). A cognitive process theory of writing. In J. Victor Villanueva (Ed*.), Cross-talk in comp theory* (pp.251-275). Urbana, Illinois: NCTE.

Gilakjani, A. P., & Sabouri, N. B. (2017). Teachers' Beliefs in English Language Teaching and Learning: A Review of the Literature. English Language Teaching, 10(4), 78. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n4p78.

Graves, K. (2000). *Designing a Language Course (A Guide for Teachers)*. Boston: Heinle&Heinle Publishers.

Gray, K. (2017). Assessing gains in science teaching self-efficacy after completing an inquiry-based earth science course. Journal of Geoscience Education, 65(1), 60–71. https://doi.org/10.5408/14-022.1.

Hirvela, A., & Law, E. (1991). A survey of local English teachers' attitudes toward English and ELT. Institute of Language in Education Journal, 8, 25-38.

Hsu, J. Y. (2005). *A study of senior high school English teachers' practices and beliefs about writing instruction.* (Unpublished master's thesis). National Sun Yat-sen University, Kaohsiung.

Kagan, D. M. (1992). Implications of research on teacher belief. *Educational Psychologist, 27*(1), 65-90.

Lee, I. (1996). Hong Kong primary teachers' perspectives on ELT. RELC Journal, 27(2), 100-117

Lee, I. (2010). Writing teacher education and teacher learning: Testimonies of four EFL teachers. Journal of Second Language Writing, 19(3), 143-157

Lee, I. (2013). Becoming a writing teacher: Using "identity" as an analytic lens to understand EFL writing teachers' development. Journal of Second Language Writing, 22(3), 330-345. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2012.07.001

Oktaviani, U., Mirizon, S., & Vianty, M. (2021). Teachers' beliefs and classroom practices in teaching content subjects through EMI. *English Review: Journal of English Education, 10*(1), 287–296. https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v10i1.5399

Ong, C. . (2011). Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs about the Teaching and Learning of Grammar. The English Teacher, XL, 27–47. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.2991/assehr.k.200311.013.

Ozer, O., & Akçayoğlu, D. İ. (2021). Examining the roles of self-efficacy beliefs, self-regulated learning and foreign language anxiety in the academic achievement of tertiary efl learners. Participatory Educational Research, 8(2). https://doi.org/10.17275/per.21.43.8.2.

Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(3), 307-332.

Phipps, S., & Borg, S. (2009). Exploring tensions between teachers' grammar teaching beliefs and practices. *System, 37*, 380-390.

Reichelt, M. (2009). A critical evaluation of writing teaching programmes in different foreign language setting. In R. M. Manchón (Ed.), Writing in foreign language context: Learning, teaching and research (pp. 183-206). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Reid, J. M. (1993). *Teaching ESL writing.* Eaglewood cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Research, 38(1), 47-65. doi:10.1080/0013188960380104

Said, A., & Chahrazed, M. (2022). Corresponding author: Arab World English Journal (AWEJ), 13(June), 401–411. https://doi.org/DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no2.27

Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2010). Teacher Self-Efficacy And Teacher Burnout: A Study Of Relations. Teaching and Teacher Education, 26(4), 1059–1069. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.11.001.

Snider, V., & Roehl, R. (2007). Teachers' beliefs about pedagogy and related issues. *Psychology in the Schools, 44*(8), 873-886.

Tseng, C. C. (2013). Exploring teacher beliefs about English talented programs in senior high school: An application of Repertory Grid Technique. English Teaching & Learning, 37(1), 1-42.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* MA: Harvard University Press.