

Pre-service Primary English Teachers' Beliefs about Language Teaching and Their Teaching Style Preferences

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore the pre-service primary English teachers' beliefs on language teaching and their teaching style preferences. 42 pre-service primary English teachers were asked to do the surveys and their responses were analyzed. The results show that there is a difference between the pre-service teachers' beliefs and their teaching style preferences. It is argued that pre-service training program should be provided for the pre-service teachers to develop qualified English teaching skills they need.

Keywords

Beliefs on language teaching, teaching styles

Introduction

The present study is designed to investigate pre-service primary English teachers' beliefs about English language teaching and their teaching style preferences. It is argued that the teachers' beliefs affect their teaching practice. Their beliefs affect their teaching attitudes, teaching methods and, finally, learners' development. According to Horwitz (1987), the formation of teachers' educational beliefs in language teaching/learning process will influence indirectly on forming effective teaching methods and will bring about the improvement of learners' L2 learning. In this context, the present study explores the pre-service teachers' beliefs of language teaching and their teaching style preferences and tries to give feedback on their beliefs while they are receiving pre-service teaching program for their future professional development.

1 The study

For the purpose of the study, 42 pre-service primary English teachers were asked to do the

survey on their beliefs about language teaching skills and their teaching style preferences, and their responses were analyzed.

1.1 Survey 1: Beliefs on English Teaching Skills and Teaching Style Preferences

First, the pre-service teachers were asked to respond to the survey consisting of 17 items, adopted from Park and Lee (2000) and Kim (2009). The survey consists of two parts. In part 1, they responded to each item asking how important they believe each skill is as part of qualification of English teachers. In part 2, they responded to each item asking how often they are likely to use each skill in their teaching practice.

1.2 Survey 2: Beliefs on English Teaching Techniques

Next, the pre-service teachers were asked to respond to the survey with 41 items, adopted from Ehrman (1996). They responded to each item asking how important they think each technique is in teaching English to primary school students.

2 Results

Table 1 shows the results of the first part of the survey: beliefs on English teaching skills. The top 10 skills out of 17 skills are as follows.

Table 1: How Important Do You Believe Each Skill Is?

Give smooth, systematic lesson	5.74
Maintain a lesson objective consistently	5.72
Interact with students	5.56
Modify language according to students' proficiency	5.43
Respond appropriately	5.27
Provide enough opportunities to	4.98

practice	
Check understanding	4.65
Use various, balanced activities	4.33
Run appropriate group activities	4.26
Provide nonverbal clues to give comprehensible input	4.21

Next, the results of the second part of the survey—teaching style preferences—are presented in Table 2. It shows the top 10 preferred skills out of 17 skills.

Table 2: How Often Are You Likely To Do?

Maintain a lesson objective consistently	5.11
Use various, balanced activities	4.87
Provide enough opportunities to practice	4.65
Check understanding	4.55
Run appropriate group activities	4.23
Stimulate students' motivation and interest	4.22
Provide nonverbal clues to give comprehensible input	4.10
Correct error and provide feedback	4.04
Maintain appropriate pace	4.02
Use materials efficiently	3.98

Lastly, Table 3 shows the results of the second survey: the top 10 techniques the pre-service primary chose out of 41 ones.

Table 3: How Helpful Do You believe Each Technique Is in teaching English in Primary English Classroom?

T breaks up into smaller groups to talk	4.56
Ss interview L2 speakers and report on the interviews	4.53
The class takes field trips to places where they can use the language outside the classroom	4.51
Ss do role-plays, simulations, and skits in class	4.37
Ss read a lot of sentences, finding and correcting the mistakes	4.28
Classroom exercises involve use of hands (drawing, pointing, construction)	4.21
Ss select an article of interest to them to read in class, guessing the meanings of unknown words	3.67
T explains grammar in L1, with examples and a handout	3.53
Ss use audio materials in class or at home	3.47
Ss study alone	3.31

3 Conclusion

Two significant things were found from the results of two surveys are as follows. First, there is a difference between pre-service primary English teachers' beliefs on English teaching skills and their teaching style preferences. They are not likely to use four skills out of the top 10 which they believe are important: giving smooth, systematic lesson, interacting with students, modifying language according to students' proficiency, responding appropriately. What it implies that they need to develop those skills. The other finding is that pre-service primary English teachers believe that communicative activities, interpersonal activities, inductive instruction, multi-sensory techniques are helpful for teaching English to primary school students. Based on the findings, it is argued that pre-service training program should be provided for the pre-service teachers to recognize the difference between their beliefs and their teaching style preferences and develop qualified English teaching skills they need to.

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