EXPLORING BELIEFS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS TOWARD ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Research has repeatedly shown that pre-service teachers have well well-established beliefs about teaching which have been formed on the basis of their own learning experiences. These beliefs strongly influence their professional development and how pre-service teachers interpret and acquire information from their teacher education courses. This paper presents the results of a small research conducted on 11 pre-service teachers' beliefs toward English as an international language (EIL) before and after joining World *Englishes* class in order to detect any changes in the nature of these beliefs. 4 major areas of EIL namely (a) the role of English as an international language, (b) the best variety, (c) the use of the students' mother tongue in English classrooms, and (d) the best teacher of English were highlighted in this study.

Keywords: pre-service teacher, teacher education, beliefs, English as an international language

Introduction

The fact that English is now the major international language in intercultural communications, business, science, technology, and other areas is indisputable. It is also the most widely learned second or foreign language in many countries; and it makes the number of second and foreign language speakers far exceed the number of the first language speakers of English. In 2003, for example, the number of English speakers according to Crystal (2003) reached approximately 1,500 million only 20% of which are the native speakers of the language. In 2008, this number had been revised upwards again in the direction of 2 billion. In fact, within 25 years, the number of speakers of English had moved from a fifth to quarter to a third of the world's population (Crystal, 2008). In 2070, Graddol (1999) claimed that the projected number of English speakers would be nearly 10 billion.

This situation has resulted in remarkable demand in English language teachers, which has also led to an increase in the number of non-native English language teachers. In Indonesia, for example, approximately 3,047 non-native English language teachers were employed at formal schools in 2011 and 3,442 teachers in 2012. The number keeps increasing due to the growing number of Indonesian students who study English at formal schooling. In 2013, for example, Indonesia needs approximately 3,733 new English teachers and 4,130 new teachers in 2014 (**Yahya, 2011).**

Matsuda and Matsuda (2001) state the fact that the majority of English teachers in the world are not native speakers of English. Some of these teachers learned English as children; others learned it as adults. For some, English is their third or fourth language; for others, it is the only language other than their

mother tongue that they have learned. As there is an increase in the number of non-native English teachers, accordingly there is also an increase in the number of non-native English language speakers as pre-service teachers joining Department of English Language Teaching at universities all around the world. This is because for non-native English teachers, pre-service education is often seen as the start of teacher preparation program or in other words the first step in the professional development of teachers. Wilke (2004) says that such education often exposes pre-service teachers to new perspectives as well as prepares them in knowledge and skills.

In many universities, programs for pre-service EFL teachers still tend to focus on the inner circle. This might be because people had some long-established assumptions such as (a) students need to learn the English of native speakers, (b) the native speakers should serve as the model and standard, (c) American or British culture should be taught, and (d) communicative language teaching is the best way to teach the language (Brown, 2012). However considering the fact that English now is considered as the international language and that non-native speakers outnumber native speakers, work should be done to create pre-service teacher programs that focus spirit of English as an International Language (EIL). Pre-service teachers need to be informed that a language program should incorporate the promotion of intercultural competence, an awareness of other varieties of English, multilingualism in the classroom, instructional materials that include both local and international cultures and the adoption of socially and culturally sensitive teaching methodology (McKay, 2012).

The English Education Business Program of the English Department of Petra Christian University Surabaya also updated its curriculum to incorporate

the EIL principles by offering some new subjects such as *World Englishes*, *Education Policy*, *Current Issues in Global Education* and *Intercultural Teaching & Learning* and by "slipping-in" the EIL principles in other subjects such as *Spoken English* in which pre-service students are introduced to varieties of English or in *Language Teaching & Learning* in which they are asked to critically evaluate various teaching approaches. New subjects such as *World Englishes* whose scope is not limited to the inner circle are offered cause such courses are likely to result in a "world view . . . [that is] more consistent with the sociolinguistic realities of the spread of English as an international language" (Brown and Peterson, 1997, p. 44). The principles of EIL are also integrated in other courses so pre-service students will be aware of the current landscape of English. By introducing the EIL issues as the content of the course or peripherally, it is hoped that pre-service students will develop a favorable attitude towards EIL.

The implementation of the revised curriculum started in the 2nd semester of 2011/2012 (February – August 2012). I was assigned to facilitate *World Englishes* course which aimed to enable the students to consider past, present, and future varieties of the English languages. Attention was given to the historical, political, and sociocultural issues associated with the globalization of Englishes and on the ideological underpinnings of debates about nativization, standardization, identity, and ownership. Students were required to attend 14 consecutive meetings.

There were 11 pre-service students of Batch 2010 registered for this course. As none of the topics discussed are covered in the first two years of their university study, these students had never come across the relevant concepts before. In addition, these 11 pre-service teachers had been immersed in the

traditional EFL classrooms since they were in elementary level. As the concept of EIL was new for these students, I was interested to observe the prior beliefs of these pre-service teachers and wished to ascertain to what extent the exposure to the relevant concepts influenced their prior beliefs. Therefore the present study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What sorts of beliefs do pre-service teachers have at the beginning of the course about (1) the role of English as the international language, (2) the best English variety, (3) the use of students' mother tongue in the EFL classrooms, and (4) the best English language teacher.

2. Do these pre-service students' initial beliefs change at the end of semester?

3. How do these pre-service students welcome the EIL principles in their future pedagogical practices?

Attention was given to (1) the role of English as the international language, (2) the best English variety, (3) the use of students' mother tongue in the EFL classrooms, and (4) the best English language teacher because these areas are closely related to the native-speaker paradigm (see Hassall, 1996 and Matsuda, 2003) and are widely addressed in Indonesian context nowadays.

Another reason why I was interested to observe these students' beliefs was because the literature portrays that beliefs play a central role on guiding teachers' instructional behavior. Teachers' beliefs can powerfully shape what teachers do (Pajares, 1992 and Borg, 2011). Beliefs form "the bedrock of teachers' intentions, perceptions, and interpretations of a given classroom situation and the range of actions the teacher considers in responding to it" (Chapman, 2002, p. 180). Johnson (1994) also states that (1) teachers' beliefs influence perception and judgment, (2) teachers' beliefs are reflected in classroom

practices, and (3) teachers' beliefs should be understood with a view to improving teaching practices and teacher education programs.

In the context of language teacher education, beliefs are seen to be a key element. Borg (2011) states that teacher education is more likely to have an impact when it is based on an understanding of the beliefs these pre-service teachers hold. Kagan (1992, p. 85) has suggested that beliefs "may be the clearest measure of a teacher's professional growth". Therefore most of the research available on the impact of teacher education on language teachers' beliefs has been conducted in pre-service contexts.

Studies highlight that pre-service students carry with them some strong ideas and beliefs. These beliefs are formed during the "apprenticeship of observation" which refers to the years these students have spent sitting in the student desk prior to entering a teacher education program (Lortie, 2002). In other words, pre-service teachers' beliefs are formed through many years of exposure to educational practices and can be traced back to early experiences, from primary education up to tertiary level.

Furthermore, pre-service teachers use their previous educational experiences to interpret the input provided in their teacher education program (Kagan, 1992). The majority of pre-service student-teachers who start their education program, for example, view teaching as telling or lecturing-that is, directly transmitting information to a passive learner (Torff, 2003).This is because they are exposed to such lecturing style during their school years.

Scholars have found that pre-service teachers' prior beliefs brought to a teacher education program significantly impact what and how pre-service teachers learn. Prior beliefs can function as filters for processing experiences and knowledge (Borko and Putnam, 1996). Prior beliefs are also related to

motivation constructs and to pre-service teachers' academic performances and achievement (Pajares, 2003). Prior beliefs may hinder their ability to see the relevance of their teacher education program as well because the existing beliefs may be incompatible with their new learning in their teacher education program (Borko and Putnam, 1996). However a strong sense of confidence built on positive prior learning will expend a higher level of energy to work through the difficulty (Pajares, 2003).

To change prior beliefs of pre-service teachers on language education program is a challenge. Borg (2011) has in fact observed that some studies such as Borg (2005), Peacock (2001), and Urmston (2003) report no changes in the pre- and post-course beliefs of pre-service teachers. In contrast, other studies such as Clarke (2008), Mattheoudakis (2007) and Busch (2010) provide evidence of change in student teachers' beliefs during language teacher education (cited in Borg, 2011). A research done by Minor et.al. (2001) also showed that at the end of the semester of their observation, the beliefs of 84 pre-service teachers observed had moved to be more in line with the instructor that is to have a more progressive orientation.

Does instruction impact pre-service teachers' beliefs? A study by Liu and Fisher (2006) reported that belief change could be promoted in variable ways (as cited in Borg, 2011). Pre-service teachers involved in Minor et.al. (2001) 's study, for example, were required to complete a variety of assignment including a written critique of an article from a refereed education journal, an individual presentation, a group presentation, reflections of reading assignments, active participation in class activities, exams, and the development of a professional portfolio. At the end of the semester, their prior beliefs changed.

Having read all of the review of literature and considered the nature of the *World Englishes* course taught at my university and 11 pre-service teachers registered for this course, I became interested to observe the beliefs that these pre-service teachers had at the beginning of the course, to see whether there were any changes on their initial beliefs, and to find out how these 11 student teachers perceive the EIL principles in their future pedagogical practices. The focus would be on (1) the role of English as the international language, (2) the best English variety, (3) the use of students' mother tongue in the EFL classrooms, and (4) the best English language teacher.

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were 11 student teachers registered for the *World Englishes* course of English Education Businness program of Petra Christian University Surabaya. All of them were Indonesians in their early twenties and in their 5th semester. There were 10 female students and 1 male student.

Procedure

This study was conducted in the 2nd semester of 2011/2012 (February – August 2012). The course itself was conducted for 14 meetings in which each meeting lasted for 2 hours. Each meeting was conducted once per week. All the names mentioned in this paper were pseudonyms. The research mainly adopted a qualitative approach. Dörnyei (2007) addressed several reasons for choosing this type of research namely: the research uses small sample size of participant, the data analysis is done with words, and it is concerned with subjective opinions.

Classroom discussions and reflective papers of the students were used to collect data.

In order to answer the first research question which aims to explore the prior beliefs, at the beginning of the semester, the pre-service teachers were required to write what they know about English as an international language, the best English variety, the use of students' mother tongue in their language classrooms, and the best English language teacher. They were asked to reflect upon their personal teaching and learning experiences and beliefs and explicitly provide examples. These reflective papers were not meant to be research papers and the students were not expected to do any additional reading. The paper was written in English and the participants submitted their reflective papers at the beginning of the second meeting. For answering the other research questions, I employed the online and offline classroom discussions and students' final reflective papers.

For the purpose of online classroom discussions, I set up a closed Facebook group. All students were members of this online group and some participated in the thread of discussions quite actively. Ongoing throughout the class meetings, the pre-service teachers and I always had (offline) classroom discussions in which I asked my students some questions related to the issues of EIL so that I knew what their before-course-perceptions were.

Then I asked each participant of this study to share their initial beliefs with each other, and together overview and examine the present EIL situation. During the discussions, I took notes on some interesting points of views that my students expressed. I also asked the participants to note down if listening to the classroom discussion had sparked some ideas and they felt their prior beliefs needed revision. All online and offline discussions were mainly conducted in

English though some Indonesians occurred occasionally. At the end of the course, the students were once again asked to revisit their personal beliefs and write their reflections towards the 4 major issues highlighted in their *World Englishes* class. They also got an additional task, i.e. to think about how they would apply their EIL beliefs in their future classrooms.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data gathered from the participants' reflective papers and classroom discussions were then analyzed through content analysis as proposed by Cresswell (2011). The first step that I took was to explore or to obtain a general sense of the data. Then I started the process of coding the data according to the categories relevant to the research questions. After that I tried to interconnect the categories and report findings to the research questions. By doing these, I could identify the teachers' beliefs related to (1) the role of English as the international language, (2) the best English variety, (3) the use of students' mother tongue in the EFL classrooms, and (4) the best English language teacher. I could also find out the participants' opinions on how to implement EIL pedagogy in their classrooms.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study would be presented in accordance with the research questions. Thus I would start with the findings on pre-service teachers' initial beliefs related to the following areas: (1) the role of EIL, (2) the best English variety, (3) the use of students' mother tongue in the EFL classrooms, and (4) the best English language teacher. For each major area, there would also be some discussions on the participants' (un)shifting beliefs and proposed pedagogical implementations. All the names mentioned below were pseudonyms.

The Role of English as the International Language

At the beginning of the course, all of the participants of this study had similar beliefs about the role of EIL. English was seen as a global language, a lingua franca, a medium of communication, a very important language in this globalization era. No further comments were provided probably because at the beginning of the semester these pre-service teachers were not aware of the changes that had happened to English.

At the end of the course, all students still had the same beliefs of the importance of English. But now they were aware of the changes in the uses and users of English. The following comments illustrate this:

> *Before I joined the World Englishes class, I felt there was only one kind of English and there was no difference. But now I know that the issue of English as an international language is more complex than I thought (Henny, Final Reflective Paper).*

> *When we talked about the role of EIL, I thought that we only talked about varieties. However, I found out that, we did not just talk about varieties but we also examined more specific components and issues in English teaching including the implementation of such EIL pedagogy in classrooms (Setiawan, 14th meeting).*

All participants of this study also believed that the teaching of English nowadays should acknowledge the EIL pedagogy, for example by having more local (non-native) speakers to teach English, by acknowledging the role of

students' mother tongue and other varieties of English. These beliefs were written on their reflective papers and expressed on our last class meeting.

The Best English Variety

The analysis of the reflective papers made at the beginning of the semester showed that all participants of the study believed that American English and British English were the best varieties of English. It is not surprising. According to Farrell and Martin (2009), when someone uses the term "English", his/her interlocutors are likely to assume that he is referring to British or American English because "the English that exists in such places as Africa, Asia, the West Indies, the Philippines and Singapore is not *real* or *standard* English" (p. 2).

Some participants considered British English better than American English because they believed that English was "born" in England. Some student teachers also considered British English as the best variety because it was considered more elegant than the American English. The following were some of their comments:

> *British English is the best and the standard one. I believe that the English language itself comes originally from England as both names are similar (Via, Initial Reflective Paper).*

> *[British English is the best cause] there is no slang in British English (Rosa, 3ʳᵈ meeting)*

> *British English is more difficult to understand meaning that people who speak it are more intelligent (Ida, 4ᵗʰ meeting).*

The majority of the participants though considered American English as the best variety. This was because of the influence of America in people's lives nowadays so Indonesians were more familiar with this variety. As these two student teachers said,

> *For me American English is the best because listening to American English is much easier than listening to British English (Dina, Initial Reflective Paper).*

> *In fact, in Indonesia, we are more exposed to American English. There are many movies, books, and novels are from USA. Thus many people use American English (Fefe, 3rd meeting).*

Interestingly, it was also found that some EFL teachers in Indonesia preferred to teach American English in their classrooms. As one of the pre-service teachers shared,

> *Once my teacher corrected the word "colour" I wrote on my test. She said it had to be "color" without the letter "u". She then said that if I used the letter "u", that was British English not American. Almost in every lesson, my teachers rarely mentioned British English. Thus, I think American English is the standard one. I know that there is British English but I do not really pay attention to it since I do not use it in school. (Mita, 3rd meeting).*

Nevertheless after having a series of discussions at *World Englishes* class, all pre-service teachers changed their beliefs. At the end of the course, none of them considers American or British English as the best varieties. They have come to acknowledge the existence of other varieties of English. Following quotes taken from the written reflective papers and the classroom discussions illustrate their new beliefs:

> *When I joined the World Englishes Class, I learned that actually English itself is formed from many other languages. The word like "dog" which I believed as the word in English, actually came from different language. This knowledge washed out my prejudice that British English was the original and the Standard English (Via, Final Reflective Paper).*

> *I have learned that that there are many varieties in this world, not only the American and British English. Even in Britain itself, people in Liverpool have different kind of English compared to the variety used in Manchester. American and British English are popular because of their power (in politic and economic) and the huge number of the users (Fefe, 14th meeting).*

> *Other varieties of English are something that we should keep since every variety reflects the unique local culture that needs to be preserved. I learn not to judge which one is better than other (Kristin, 4th meeting).*

When asked how to bring their new beliefs into the classroom, all participants in general stated that they would use American/British English while

introducing non-American/British-English varieties to their students. The American and British English were still necessary as these were the common international varieties widely used by the English speakers. As a participant wrote in her reflective paper,

> *It is not because American English is better than other variations, but it is because American variety is used widely in the world. In my opinion, in other to be able to communicate with other people in the world, our students have to know both local variety such as Singaporean English or Indian English as well as the international variety such as American English (Via, Final Reflective Paper).*

Another reason was because these varieties were written and published in dictionaries so learners could find the references easily. As Ida commented,

> *I think it is still necessary to use American and British English in classrooms because only American and British English can be found in dictionaries. But I will not force my students to use American dictionaries only. They can refer to other dictionaries (Ida, Final Reflective Paper).*

Some participants also mention the aspects of accent and pronunciation during 4th-classroom- discussions. They were in the opinion that which accent to be used is not really important cause *"accent is part of our identity" (Dila)*, *"it is difficult for our students to imitate foreigners' accents" (Rosa/Silvi)*, and *"the most important aspect is mutual understanding" (Henny/ Ida/Fefe)*.

To acknowledge both the international and local varieties, a student-teacher proposed the following classroom activities,

I will teach my students by using American English but I plan also to introduce other varieties of English. I should show them some videos of people using Singaporean English or Canadian English. So that they also know the other varieties of English existing in this world and later they can choose which varieties should be used in particular contexts. (Fefe, Final Reflective Paper).

It is an intriguing discussion when people try to decide which variety of English should be taught in EFL classroom. If, for instance, only Singlish is taught in Singapore, it might not be problematic for Singaporeans because Singlish is intelligible to them. However, teaching Singlish only might limit the learners' ability to communicate with other speakers as Singlish is unintelligible to English speakers outside of Singapore (McArthur, 2004; Farrell and Martin, 2009). Nevertheless teaching inner circle varieties only might be problematic as well because it does not acknowledge the development of other varieties in the world.

Thus, the appropriate way, according to Mckay (2002, p. 128) is "to be culturally sensitive to the diversity of contexts in which English is taught and used". To this, Renandya (2012, p. 19) gave an example: "When teaching a group of business people from Thailand who have business dealings with business people from Singapore, it makes sense to include teaching materials that depict features of Singapore English commonly used by Singaporeans in business settings". Exposing learners to different Englishes, just like what Fefe

had suggested, might be beneficial for learners as this can add the learners' knowledge and develop their positive attitudes towards other varieties of English.

The Use of Students' Mother Tongue in the EFL Classrooms

The pre-service teachers had similar beliefs about the role of the mother tongue before and after joining the *World Englishes* class. They did not change their prior beliefs. They now, in fact, were more convinced that the students' mother tongue should be allowed in EFL classrooms for some reasons such as explaining instructions and concepts.   The reflections below illustrated why the pre-service teachers held such point of view:

My first language (Indonesian) is completely different in terms of structure, pronunciation, etc compared to English. I believe learning a language which is very different from our first language is not easy. The pronunciation may be too difficult. The sentences written on the textbooks published by American publishers such as McGill and Penguin Books are probably hard to understand especially if the readers are still in their elementary or pre-intermediate level. This is the time for the mother tongue or first language to come as a helper. Helper here means a bridge for students to understand the message or ideas easily. I am not saying that the teachers who use their students' native language do not have enough English competence to explain in English. However I believe that when the explanation is given in the mother tongue, students will understand it better (Mita, Intial Reflective Paper).

How could we teach in English for people who do not have any or who have little experiences with English before? Of course they will not

understand what we are talking about. At the end, the learning process will be useless. So it is better to use Indonesian for explaining difficult concepts or ideas (Sonia, Initial Reflective Paper)

In sharing their (prior) beliefs related to the use of students' mother tongue, all participants mostly referred to their learning experiences in secondary school education when their English teachers did not allow the use of the native language. Their prior 'painful' learning experiences had actually shaped their beliefs towards the use of the mother tongue. The following comments by the participants bear testimony to this belief:

When I was in senior high school, my teacher kept forcing us to speak in English. It is fine for some of my friends because they have already had an ability to listen and speak in English. But it was a burden for me and some other friends. Such burden led us think that English was hard to learn. We became lazy to learn English. (Henny)

I believe that mother tongue is still important because they [students] are not the native speakers of English. When I was in my first year of Junior High School, I had a teacher who explained everything in English. Almost all students in this class did not really understand about the instructions and explanations provided so we began to ask many things. But then we found some difficulties in asking questions because we were not fluent enough, had many language errors, and did not have many English vocabularies. At the end, our English teacher allowed us to ask in Bahasa Indonesia. So in my opinon, the use of mother tongue is needed

for some cases, such as giving instruction or explaining some difficult
subjects (e.g. grammar) because it helps the students to understand more
about the lesson. (Rosa)

However, all participants also stated that the use of mother tongue should
be done with caution for it to be effective. For instance, teachers used their
students' native language only when they had to give instructions and explain
difficult concepts. Fewer mother tongues should be used when teachers met
students with high level of proficiency to avoid over-reliance. This point of view
can be detected in the comment below:

For beginners, it is okay if teachers use their mother tongue as much as
possible so their students easily understand the instruction or concept
easily. But for advanced learners, teachers should reduce the use of their
mother tongue. (Setiawan, 8th meeting).

When they became teachers in the future, these student-teachers stated
that they would use students' mother tongue in their language classrooms. The
following utterances reaffirm this finding:

When I become a teacher, I will use mother tongue in my classroom but
not all the time because if I only use mother tongue, my students will not
be able to speak in English. I will use mother tongue for example to
explain something that my students do not understand although I explain
it two or three times (Rosa, Final Reflective Paper).

When I teach later, I will let my students speak in Bahasa Indonesia in some circumstances. I will not make them feel frustrated because of the language barrier. I want them to understand the materials, yet I want them to be able to speak in English. So, if they ask me about the materials, I will apply code mixing between Indonesian and English to answer their questions (Fefe, Final Reflective Paper),

It is interesting to note the participants of this study were against the use of English-only-policy since the beginning of the semester. Recent studies indeed show that arguments against using students' native language in classroom can easily be refuted. There are empirical evidences to support the claim that monolingual tenet is a fallacy. A study done by Storch and Wigglesworth (2003), for example, shows that students' mother tongue can give students "cognitive support" during language analysis and in the completion of cognitively demanding tasks. Moreover it allows students to work at cognitively higher levels and may be a "normal psychological process" (p.768).

The participants of this study mentioned that they would not discourage the use of students' mother tongue. However it is important to note that the students' mother tongue should be used selectively and not be seen as an easy option (Hawks, 2001). The use of the mother tongue should be limited or controlled. The higher the level of proficiency of the students, the use of students' mother tongue should be reduced.

The Best English Language Teacher

At the beginning of the semester, when the participants were asked to write down what they think about the best English language teacher, they all claimed that the best teacher was native speaker of English meaning someone

from the inner-circle counties. They had this belief because native speakers were born with the language so it was assumed that native speakers could become "perfect" English teachers because they taught their own language.

> *In my opinion, the best teachers of English are native speakers of English because they have this language as their mother tongue. They can become the best teachers because they are able to pronounce all words correctly and to explain the grammar rule. (Yuni, Initial Reflective Paper)*

> *I believe that the best teacher of English is the native speaker of English (American, British, Australian). They speak using that language everyday so automatically they know that language well. Sometimes when I see a native speaker, I think I can learn many things from them about their language even though they are not language teachers (Sonia, Initial Reflective Paper).*

> *I believe that the best teachers of English are 'white' people. English is their language so they know it better than any other speakers. Many course advertisements in magazine or in newspaper also claim that they have white people as their language teachers. That is why I think that the best English teachers are white people (Setiawan, Initial Reflective Paper).*

There has been a long-standing myth in ELT that native English language speakers automatically make for better teachers. Thus despite the facts that the majority of ESL/EFL teachers in the world are non-native English-speaking

teachers, these teachers are still considered less credible and less competent teachers than their native counterparts. This is what Philipson (1992) calls as the native-speaker fallacy where native teachers are often judged based on their own skill in using the language, not on the basis of their specialized knowledge or their teaching ability (Johnston, 2003).

In reality, as Medgyes (1994) has observed, non-native teachers have some strengths in EFL classrooms: effective providers of learning strategies, better anticipators of language learning difficulties, being sensitive to language learners' needs, and facilitators of language learning as a result of a shared mother tongue. According to Mahboob et.al. (2004), native speakers are not better teachers than non-native speakers. Proficiency, educational background and teaching skills are the points that should be taken into account.

Over the course of the semester, my student-teachers had some discussions on the native-speaker fallacy as proposed by Philipson (1992). At the end of the semester, they apparently had changed their prior beliefs. All participants now consider anyone can become good language teachers as long as they have knowledge and skills in teaching English. Some student-teachers even said that non-native speakers were better in some cases because they knew better about their students, could acknowledge local cultures in their teaching, could speak in the students' mother tongue, and learnt English for more than 10 years so they knew the language system very well. The following remarks illustrate the paradigm shift of these pre-service teachers:

> *Even though native speakers use English every day; most of them cannot clearly explain the rules or convention of the language. In my opinion,*

the best teacher is someone who knows his/her teaching material well and can explain it clearly to his/her students (Ida,8th meeting)

To become an English teacher, someone needs to master the language and the skills of teaching the language. What will happen if a native speaker who does not know how to make a well-organized writing teach writing as a subject? So I think in this case, it is better to employ a non – native teacher who understands how to make a well-organized writing (Via, Final Reflective Paper)

Overall, all participants now had more confidence as non-native speakers who would become language teachers in the future. One of the participants (Mita) wrote in her reflective paper, "*In my future class, I will teach English confidently even though I am not a native English speaking teacher. This is because now I know that non-native teachers have some benefits over the native teachers*". Another participant (Sonia) stated in our 8th class meeting, "*Everybody can be a good English teacher too as long as he/she has fulfilled all requirements needed*".

Some participants who would like to open English courses in the future also say that they would choose language teacher who had good knowledge and skills on language and teaching. All said that the issue of nativeness would not influence their decision.

In general, nowadays, non-native teachers are beginning to see themselves and to be viewed by others as equal partners in the ELT profession. At some schools, native- and nonnative-English-speaking teachers even collaborate with each other. This kind of positive attitude and confidence has to

be continuously developed by the participants of this study. As non-native speakers who will become teachers of English, they need to improve their professional knowledge and skills continuously. Qualified teachers can surely contribute in meaningful ways to the field of ELT.

Conclusion

At the beginning of course, 11 pre-service teachers involved in this study had some prior beliefs which were not in line with the development of EIL. However at the end of the course, these pre-service teachers did change their points of view. This might happen because the participants' beliefs were taken into account from the very beginning so I, as the instructor, knew my students' prior beliefs and the *World Englishes* course could be structured in order to best align these beliefs with the pedagogical practices and knowledge they would need to learn in *World Englishes* class.

Another possibility was because the pre-service teachers themselves were required to observe their beliefs at the beginning of the course so they became aware that they held intuitive beliefs about teaching and learning formed on the basis of their experiences as learners and that sometimes these beliefs were not in line with the development of ELT. In addition, throughout the course and at the end of the semester, these pre-service teachers had systematic opportunities to articulate their beliefs. Classroom discussions and reflective assignments, as applied in this study, were some of the techniques that could assist pre-service teachers in examining their beliefs, reflecting on them and detecting possible fallacies.

The results of this study suggest administrators or teachers of teacher education program pay attention to the issues of pre-teachers' beliefs. By taking

pre-service teachers' beliefs into account from the very beginning, teacher education courses could be organized in order to change prior beliefs which are not necessary for pre-service teachers' future teaching careers.   If student-teachers' beliefs are ignored, teacher education courses might have little chance of effecting change in their students' prior beliefs. At the same time, pre-service teachers should also be asked to find out and examine their own prior beliefs. Detecting incongruence within one's beliefs and comparing and evaluating them can be very important springboard for belief and general conceptual change.

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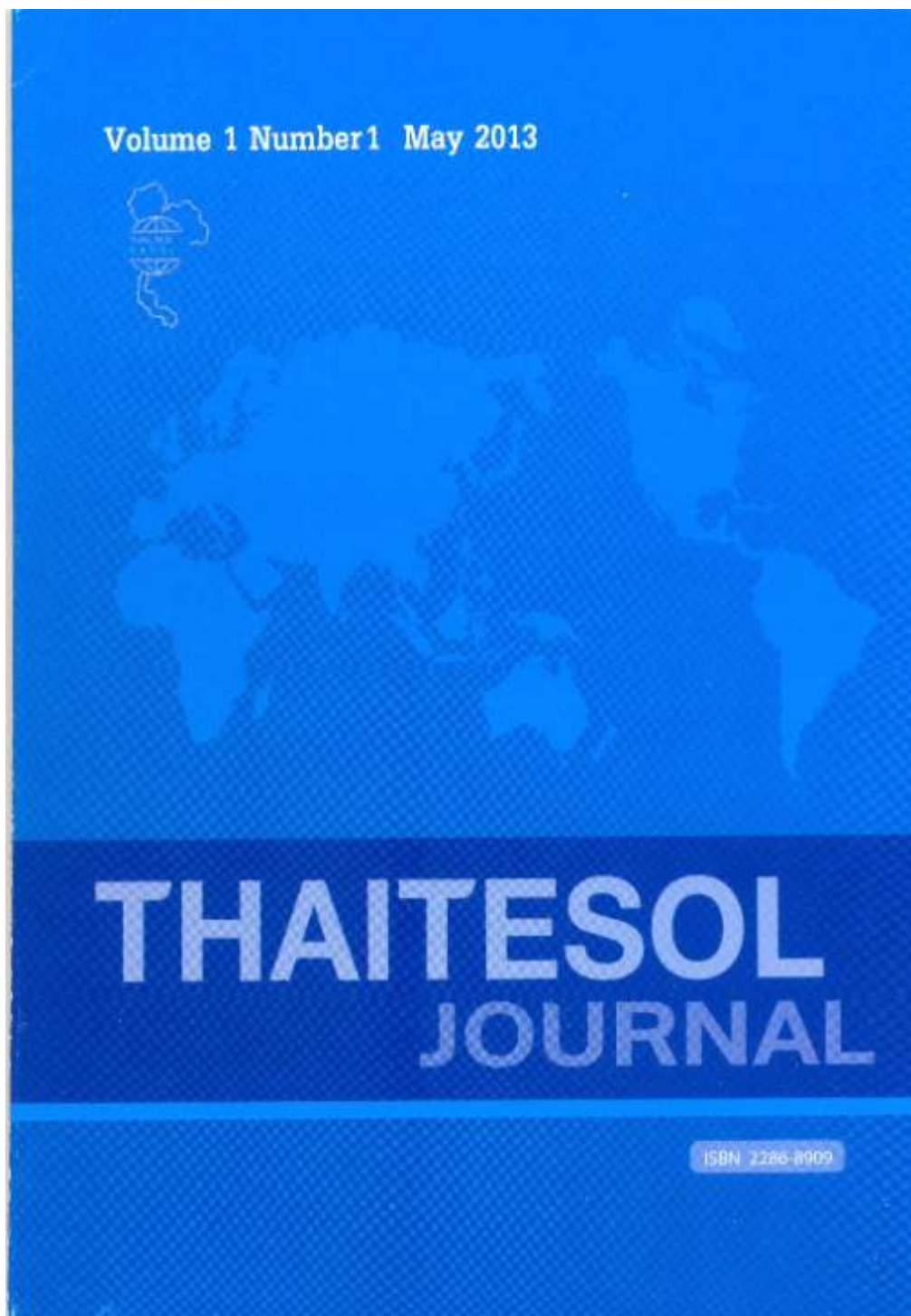
Thailand TESOL Organization
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