

Belief Change of Indonesian EFL Pre-Service Teachers during Teaching Practicum

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ABSTRACT

This study explores belief change among five Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers during a teaching practicum, with particular attention to sociocultural influences (e.g., interactions with mentors, students, and the school environment). Using a qualitative design, the study collected data through semi-structured interviews conducted before and after a 40-day practicum and through classroom observations. The participants were seventh-semester students (aged 21–22) from the English Language Education Department of private university in West Jakarta, Indonesia who completed their practicum at public junior high school in West Jakarta. Data were transcribed, translated where necessary, and coded using Cabaroglu and Roberts' (2000) belief-change categories. Findings indicate that all participants displayed patterns of belief change across the practicum. The most frequent coding outcome was no change (34%), followed by consolidation/confirmation (32.7%) and pseudo change (20.3%). No instances of re-labeling were identified across participants. These results suggest that while practicum experiences can reinforce and reshape certain beliefs, a substantial proportion of pre-service teachers' beliefs remain stable, highlighting the need for structured mentoring and reflective opportunities during practicum.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' beliefs play a central role in shaping pedagogical decisions, classroom behaviors, and the ways teachers interpret students' learning needs (Yuan & Lee, 2014). In the context of pre-service teacher education, beliefs influence choices of approaches, techniques, classroom activities, and even how teachers evaluate learners (Qiu et al., 2021). Because beliefs guide decision-making in teaching, understanding how these beliefs develop during school-based

practice is critical for improving teacher preparation programs.

Teaching practicum is often the first sustained opportunity for pre-service teachers to experience real classroom complexity. However, this transition from coursework to practice can be challenging. Pre-service teachers may face miscommunication with mentors or students, mismatches between lesson plans and classroom realities, and limited learning materials, all of which can pressure them to reconsider what they previously

believed about “good teaching.” It can change their belief. The change affects their way of teaching in the class. Prior studies highlight that trust and communication within practicum teams can shape the quality of mentoring relationships, and difficulties in placement or supervision can influence pre-service teachers’ professional learning and beliefs Danyluk et al., (2021). From a sociocultural perspective, belief change is not only an individual cognitive process; it is also mediated through participation in a community of practice and shaped by interactions with mentors, students, colleagues, and the broader school culture. Sociocultural aspects in practicum include involvement and communication with other members in the school setting as well as collaborative work with mentors. Such interactions may strengthen, challenge, or reshape pre-service teachers’ beliefs as they negotiate expectations and adapt to context-specific demands. Although earlier research has examined pre-service teachers’ beliefs and changes during practicum, the findings consistently suggest that belief development varies across individuals and is closely connected to contextual constraints and social relationships in schools.

Given the importance of practicum as a site of professional learning, this study investigates belief change among Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum by using a sociocultural lens and the belief-change categories proposed by Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000). The study focuses on five seventh-semester pre-service teachers from private university who conducted their teaching practicum at public junior high school in West Jakarta. This study

addresses the following question “To what extent do pre-service teachers’ beliefs change during the teaching practicum?”

2. METHOD

This research utilized a qualitative approach to investigate the transformations in pre-service teachers’ beliefs during their teaching practicum, grounded in a sociocultural framework and the belief change processes established by Cabaroglu & Roberts (2000). As defined by Creswell (2018), qualitative research involved exploring and understanding the meanings that individuals or groups attributed to social or human problems. Consequently, this study provided a unique perspective on how these teachers’ convictions developed through sociocultural interactions during their field experience.

The participants consisted of five pre-service teachers from the English Education Department. They were in their seventh semester at a university in West Jakarta, Indonesia, with an age range between 21 and 22 years. These individuals conducted their teaching practice at public junior high school in West Jakarta from November to December 2024. Each participant managed a class of approximately 30 students during the observation period.

During the qualitative investigation, the pre-service teachers engaged in a process designed to identify shifts in their pedagogical beliefs. They responded to identical sets of questions concerning belief changes and sociocultural factors. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews, requiring each participant to answer individually based on their personal knowledge and professional convictions.

The study employed two primary instruments for data collection. The first was a semi-structured interview, which consisted of two sessions: one held before the 40-day practicum and another following its completion. Both sessions utilized 60 questions. The second instrument comprised classroom observations, which occurred after the participants had taught their initial lessons. These sessions were recorded on video using an established interview protocol and classroom observation sheets.

Data collection proceeded in distinct phases. In the initial stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the participants' foundational beliefs prior to the practicum. Each session lasted roughly 30 minutes. In the second stage, the same format was applied to examine how those beliefs evolved after the 40-day teaching period. This second round of interviews focused on the participants' developing sociocultural perspectives, allowing for a profound exploration of their professional journey.

Classroom observations were carried out simultaneously to evaluate actual teaching activities. These observations served to verify whether the participants' expressed beliefs aligned with their practical knowledge and sociocultural awareness in a school setting. The extent of the belief changes was then analyzed using the eleven categories of belief change proposed by Cabaroglu & Roberts (2000).

The researcher gathered primary data by recording the interviews and creating transcripts, which were subsequently translated to identify

patterns in the participants' teaching philosophies. Classroom observations were coded and categorized thematically to support the findings. Following these procedures, the researcher identified the specific category of belief change for each participant and compiled the results according to the standards set by Creswell (2018).

Finally, the data was organized by categorizing the interview responses into eleven specific levels: awareness, consolidation, elaboration, addition, re-ordering, re-labeling, linking up, disagreement, reversal, pseudo change, and no change. All qualitative data was analysed through a systematic process of categorizing, coding, and calculating the frequency and percentage of occurrence based on the framework provided by Cabaroglu & Roberts (2000).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The participants of this study were five pre-service teachers in their seventh semester at a university in West Jakarta. These individuals, aged 21 to 22, each managed a class of 30 students with an equal distribution of gender. The collective data revealed that the most frequent outcome was "no change," accounting for 34% of the observed beliefs, followed closely by "consolidation" at 32.7% and "pseudo change" at 20.3%. Other categories, such as awareness, elaboration, and disagreement, showed significantly lower percentages, while "re-labeling" was not experienced by any of the participants. Data could be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Pre-service Teachers' Believe Change

Belief Change	MR	KI	RP	NF	WG	Average
Awareness	3,3%	8%	1,7%	13,3%	1,7%	5,7%
Consolidation	60,0%	13,3%	36,7%	16,7%	36,7%	32,7%
Elaboration	3,3%	0,0%	1,7%	6,7%	0,0%	2,3%
Addition	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	3,3%	0,0%	0,7%
Re-ordering	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	1,7%	0,0%	0,3%
Re-labeling	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Linking up	3,3%	0,0%	0,0%	3,3%	0,0%	1,3%
Disagreement	1,7%	1,7%	1,7%	0,0%	5,0%	2,0%
Reversal	1,7%	0,0%	0,0%	1,7%	0,0%	0,7%
Pseudo Change	6,7%	20,0%	16,7%	11,7%	46,7%	20,3%
No Change	20,0%	56,7%	41,7%	41,7%	10,0%	34,0%

3.1. Teacher MR

MR's belief profile was dominated by consolidation/confirmation (60%), followed by no change (20%) and pseudo change (7%), with smaller portions of awareness/realization, elaboration/polishing, and linking up (3% each), and disagreement and reversal (2% each). MR developed awareness of learner differences, noting that some students were kinesthetic while others focused better with visuals: "some students... move kinesthetically... others focus more when given visuals."

Observation aligned with this belief as he used PowerPoint and a web-based game (Kahoot) to engage both groups. He also confirmed his prior belief in technology use: "a teacher must be effective in applying technology..." and reported applying it in practicum, which was supported by consistent projector and Kahoot use. Some claims were less consistent with observation (e.g., managing harsh language), but his rejection of physical punishment remained stable: "physical punishment is useless."

3.2. Teacher KI

KI showed the highest no change (56.7%), followed by pseudo change (20%), consolidation/confirmation (13.3%), awareness/realization (8%), and a small portion of disagreement (1.67%). She became aware of

quiet/shy learners but reported difficulty acting on that awareness: "I could identify it, but... I still didn't apply it... I didn't know how to deal with this shy and quiet student."

Classroom observation supported this pattern, as she tended to interact mainly with active students while others received limited attention. KI also reinforced her belief that technology supports learning: "we also need to use technology in learning..." and used Kahoot during practicum, which appeared to increase student engagement. However, her claims about clear instruction and multitasking were not consistently reflected in observation, including moments of content confusion corrected by students. Her intention to become a teacher remained stable.

3.3. Teacher RP

RP's dominant categories were no change (41.7%) and consolidation/confirmation (36.7%), followed by pseudo change (16.7%), while awareness/realization, elaboration/polishing, and disagreement each appeared minimally (1.7%). RP showed awareness of individual differences, stating: "I always adapt... with learning styles and interests." Observation supported this through spontaneous questioning routines that encouraged confidence and participation. She also confirmed

her belief in respectful, supportive classroom interaction: “I try to create a safe space for students to express their ideas,” reflected in praising responses and using applause. A shift occurred in her stance on “right answers”: “the most important... they understand the concept,” and observation showed she prioritized participation over correctness. Pseudo change emerged in extracurricular involvement, she endorsed teacher participation but did not join while observation suggested situational constraints, including technology disruption that affected lesson flow. Her belief about being patient and attentive remained consistent across interviews and practice.

3.4. Teacher NF

NF’s most frequent outcome was no change (41.7%), followed by consolidation/confirmation (16.7%), awareness/realization (13.3%), pseudo change (11.7%), and elaboration/polishing (6.7%), with small traces of addition and linking up (3.3% each) and rare re-ordering and reversal (1.7% each). NF showed strong awareness of varied student preferences: “some prefer playing, some like taking notes and some want to listen or watch videos,” and observation aligned as she combined explanation, video, and game-based tasks. She also reinforced values-based teaching and daily-life relevance, often giving brief advice and contextual examples. Her elaboration/polishing was visible in growing confidence with technology and gamification: “I apply gamification integrating technologies” supported by lively in-class games. NF reversed her earlier emphasis on memorization, shifting to repeated sentence practice rather than asking

students to memorize. Pseudo change appeared when she claimed she could support shy students, but observation suggested limited follow-up when reluctance occurred.

3.5. Teacher WG

WG showed the highest pseudo change (46.7%), followed by consolidation/confirmation (36.7%), with smaller portions of no change (10%), disagreement (5%), and awareness/realization (1.7%). His awareness emerged from student feedback: “my students commented I was hands off...just giving assignments,” which was consistent with observation showing brief explanations and uneven engagement. Although he reported valuing student opinions, observation indicated he often focused on one student, contributing to perceptions of favoritism. A notable disagreement concerned physical punishment: he initially justified it, but later withdrew after social consequences: “they talked about me behind my back, so I did not do that again.”

Observation recorded a punitive incident that reduced classroom enjoyment. WG also displayed pseudo change in career intention, shifting from wanting to be a teacher to not wanting it after practicum, aligning with observed challenges in classroom management and rapport-building.

The research identified distinct patterns of professional growth across the five participants during their teaching practicum. For instance, Teacher MR demonstrated a high level of consolidation, particularly in his successful integration of technology through platforms like Kahoot to engage diverse learning styles. In contrast, Teacher KI and Teacher RP

both experienced significant "no change" and "consolidation," maintaining their professional goals and appreciative teaching styles despite the challenges of the classroom. However, "pseudo change" was a recurring theme, particularly for Teacher WG, who struggled with classroom management and eventually shifted his career aspirations away from teaching after facing the realities of student discipline.

The qualitative data from interviews and observations highlighted how sociocultural factors mediated these changes. For some teachers, like NF, the realization of students' diverse characteristics led to an "addition" of new strategies, such as gamification and video-based learning. Meanwhile, others faced "disagreement" or "reversal" when their initial theoretical assumptions such as the effectiveness of rote memorization were challenged by the actual engagement levels of their students. The discrepancy between what teachers planned (their beliefs) and what they actually did (their practice) was often caused by the immediate pressure of maintaining order or dealing with technical failures.

The findings of this study, which emphasized the prevalence of "no change" and "consolidation," differ from previous research by Yuan & Lee (2014), where more dynamic shifts like integration and modification were more dominant. This suggested that for many Indonesian pre-service teachers, the practicum serves more as a validation of their existing beliefs rather than a catalyst for radical change. The occurrence of "pseudo change" aligns with the findings of Debreli (2016), where theoretical beliefs often clashed with practical realities, leading teachers

to adopt temporary or "fake" changes to survive the classroom context.

Sociocultural aspects, including the influence of mentors and student behavior, played a vital role in shaping these pedagogical shifts. As noted by Taimalu & Luik (2019), a teacher's expertise and confidence in technology significantly dictate how digital tools are actually used in a classroom setting. This study reinforces the idea that teaching quality is not just a matter of individual skill but is deeply embedded in the social and institutional environment of the school. Ultimately, while some pre-service teachers successfully expanded their skills, others relied on traditional methods to bridge the gap between their ideals and the complex classroom environment.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined five EFL pre-service teachers' belief change during a teaching practicum through a sociocultural lens. Overall, the findings indicate that belief development after the practicum varied across participants, yet the most frequent outcome was no change (34%), followed by consolidation/confirmation (32.7%) and pseudo change (20.3%), suggesting that many beliefs remained stable or were reinforced, while a substantial portion reflected inconsistencies between stated beliefs and enacted classroom practices. These patterns imply that practicum experiences may function more as a space for testing and strengthening existing beliefs than for producing deep belief reconstruction.

Further investigation is needed due to limitations noted in the study. In particular, the analysis process was challenging to manage and did not examine more deeply the factors

shaping belief change, and the researcher was unable to include reflective journals to triangulate interview, observation, and sociocultural data. Building on this, and observations).

future research is recommended in adding data sources to strengthen the evidence base and enhance trustworthiness (e.g., adding reflective journals alongside interviews

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