

THE ORIGINS OF INDONESIAN EFL TEACHERS' IDEOLOGICAL BELIEFS ABOUT ENGLISH AND ELT

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ABSTRACT

The last three decades or so have seen a proliferation of studies into second language (L2) teachers' cognition, encompassing their thinking, knowledge, and belief. However, studies are lacking into the origins (or sources) of L2 teachers' beliefs especially ideological beliefs. This paper reports a subset of findings from a study investigating the beliefs and classroom practices of secondary school EFL teachers in Indonesia. Aiming to reveal ideological beliefs about English and ELT held by the teachers and the perceived origins of such beliefs, the paper draws on data obtained from a total of 16 interviews. Data analysis revealed that the teachers held beliefs that reflect several categories of English language ideologies prevalent in the ELT setting. These ideological beliefs were perceived to originate from several factors such as schoolteacher's talk about English, schoolteacher's classroom practice, undergraduate education, graduate education, fellow teachers, colleagues in an English teacher forum, and textbooks used for teaching. The paper concludes with implications for English teacher education programs and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: *Indonesia, English as a foreign language, English language ideologies, teacher cognition, teacher belief, English language teaching*

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching involves publicly visible activities such as actions and behaviours performed in the classroom and mental (publicly invisible) works such as planning and decision making (Burns et al., 2015). These mental works fall within the domain of teacher cognition. Teacher cognition is an umbrella term that encompasses constructs such as teacher thinking, knowledge, and belief (Borg, 2019).

The last three decades have witnessed increasing research into second language (L2) teacher cognition. Regarding studies into teacher beliefs, researchers have examined a range of issues including the influence of an SLA course on pre-service teachers' beliefs (Busch, 2010), pre-service teachers' beliefs about English language learning (Wong, 2010), beliefs and classroom practices among ESL teachers (Farrell & Bennis, 2013), and English teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to learner autonomy (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). Despite increasing research into teacher beliefs, there are areas which have not been much explored and thus require further investigation. One of which is the issue of

teacher ideological beliefs about English and ELT (see Borg, 2003; Burns et al., 2015). This paper aims to add to this understudied area.

According to Kalaja et al. (2016), beliefs about English/ELT held by English (ESL/EFL) teachers can be ideological especially if such beliefs are shaped by (English) language ideologies prevalent within the society. In other words, teachers' beliefs reflect ideologies (Farrell & Bennis, 2013). Looking at an intersection between *teacher beliefs about English/ELT* and *English language ideologies*, this paper uses the term *ideological beliefs about English and ELT* to refer to a belief that reflects a category of English language ideologies embedded within the society especially within the ELT setting.

Previous studies found that teachers hold ideological beliefs about English/ELT (Henderson, 2017) and such beliefs, to varying degrees, affect their classroom practices. It is therefore crucial to understand the nature of teachers' ideological beliefs including the origins of such beliefs. Based on a subset of data from a larger research project examining the beliefs and instructional practices of EFL teachers in Indonesian secondary schools (Agustin, 2021), this paper seeks to contribute to the literature by answering these questions: (1) What ideological beliefs about English and ELT do Indonesian EFL teachers hold? and (2) What factors do the teachers perceive to be the origins of such beliefs?

It is stated that "beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining practice and are stronger predictors of behaviour" (Zheng, 2015, 13). Therefore, identifying factors that play a role in shaping/reshaping the formation and development of EFL teachers' ideological beliefs about English and ELT would provide further insight into the underpinnings of EFL teachers' practices. This insight can be used to inform English language teacher education (ELTE) programs in preparing future teachers and providing professional development activities for in-service teachers. Following this introduction section, the paper provides a review of related literature. Then, it presents the method, finding, and discussion section. The paper ends with conclusion and implications for ELTE programs and suggestion for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Viewing teachers' beliefs from a language ideological perspective, this section begins with a definition of English language ideologies. Then, it reviews literature related to the origins of teachers' ideological beliefs about English and ELT.

English language ideologies

To understand English language ideologies, it is essential to discuss the notion of ideology and language ideologies in advance. Views on the nature of ideology vary, resulting in a variety of definitions or meanings. Drawing on Althusser's (2008) conceptualisation of ideology, this paper views ideology as manifested in both proposition and practice. There are criteria that can be used to determine if a proposition is ideological. One of which is that an ideological proposition contains either true or false idea about how we as human beings should relate to reality (Eagleton, 2007). This means that an ideological proposition may be true or false in the sense that it may or may not reflect reality.

Similar to ideology, the concept of language ideologies has been differently conceptualised. In other words, there are many definitions of language

ideologies. Adopting Razfar and Rumenapp's (2012) definition of language ideologies, this paper views language ideologies as "ideas and beliefs about language held by a group of people" (p. 349). Language ideologies "include the very language practices through which our ideas or notions are enacted" (Razfar, 2005, p. 14). Given that an ideology may constitute a false idea, the ideas and beliefs about language held by a certain community may be false (or may not reflect reality). Considering how ideologies inform practices, these false ideas and beliefs may, consciously or otherwise, shape and/or be enacted in language-related practices.

On the basis of the definitions of language ideologies above, this paper defines *English language ideologies* as *beliefs about English and/or ELT which are collectively held by teachers of English*. In the context of English language teaching, there are terms used to categorise distinct types of English language ideologies prevalent in the ELT setting. They include, but not limited to, *instrumentalism*, *standard language ideology*, and *English monolingualism*. The following paragraphs provide the definition of each category of English language ideologies.

The status of English as a language for international communications has led to the spread of what this paper refers to as *instrumentalism* or *instrumental ideology*. This ideology is premised in the idea of English as an instrument for achieving success in this globalised world. People living in Outer and Expanding Circle Countries (Kachru, 1996) believe in the idea of English playing the role of a tool for an upward social mobility (Pan, 2015). They thus view English competency as the key to flourishing in the globalisation era (Pan, 2015).

In addition to instrumental ideology, the field of ELT has seen the spread of standard language ideology. According to Lippi-Green (2012), standard language ideology is "a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions" (p. 67). This ideology is used to "position speakers of different varieties of the same language within a social hierarchy" (Wiley & Lukes, 1996, p. 511). The ideology is dominant and influences literature on teacher education (Wiley & Lukes, 1996) including English teacher education. The spread of standard language ideology explains why some people believe in the idea that there is a standard variety of English.

Another ideology of English commonly discussed in the ELT setting is an ideology concerning the language of instruction or the language that should be used in the English language classroom, that is, the monolingual ideology (also referred to as English-only ideology). It is a "widely held assumption that excluding students' primary languages from the classroom is the most efficient route to English proficiency" (Tollefson, 2007, p. 27). Use of L1, the proponents of monolingual ideology argue, hinders target language learning (de la Campa & Nassaji, 2009). The opponents, on the other hand, note that the English-only ideology is not justified on empirical grounds (Tollefson, 2007).

The origins of teachers' ideological beliefs about English and ELT

As stated earlier, the issue of teachers' ideological beliefs about English/ELT and the origins of such beliefs have not been much explored. Nonetheless, this does not mean that there has not been any research addressing

this issue. Several studies have been conducted and these studies have generated important findings as follows.

The first factor mentioned to be the origin of teachers' ideological beliefs about English/ELT is the activity of learning a foreign language *per se*. Modiano (2001) highlights an ontological impact of learning a foreign language on the learners' cognition (including their belief systems). When learning a foreign language such as English, learners are influenced by ideologies embedded in the target language that they learn (Modiano, 2001).

More recently, Razfar (2010) appears to corroborate the idea of learning experience as a source of teachers' ideological beliefs. Researching teachers' repair practice from a language ideological point of view, Razfar (2010) found that a teacher's English learning experience constituted a factor that shaped the way the teacher viewed and taught English. The teacher's learning experience "contributed to a complex system of language ideologies that shape the way she views and engages with the multiple facets of teaching and learning" (Razfar, 2010, p. 19).

One reason why learning English can be a factor of teachers' English language ideologies is because the textbooks and dictionaries used by the students can be media through which English language ideologies spread. As Kubota (1998) puts it, both textbooks and dictionaries are not neutral; they serve certain social agendas. Textbooks and dictionaries can convey ideological messages such as messages emphasising the superiority of a certain variety of English, its native speakers (NSs), and so on. For example, an ideology promoting the merit of Received Pronunciation (RP), which is mentioned to be the standard form of British pronunciation, is manifested in a dictionary. According to Modiano (2001), Daniel Jones states that RP is understood universally even in the United States of America where there are many variations in terms of English pronunciation. An ideological statement such as this may lead learners to hold the illusion that a certain pronunciation of English is better than another.

Besides language learning, textbooks, and dictionaries mentioned above, little is known concerning other factors from which teachers' ideological beliefs originate. Accordingly, this paper aims to contribute to this understudied area. The following section presents the research methodology comprising the participants, techniques of data collection, and techniques of data analysis.

RESEARCH METHOD

Participants

As mentioned earlier, this paper reports a subset of findings from a larger research project investigating EFL teachers' beliefs and classroom practices in Indonesia. In the project, four high school teachers of English participated. At the time of the fieldwork, the four teacher participants (TPs), that is, TP1 (she/her) and TP2 (she/her) were teaching at a junior high school and TP3 (she/her) and TP4 (he/him) were teaching at a senior high school. These teachers were recruited by means of purposeful sampling, in this case, a network approach to participant recruitment (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In recruiting the participants, some criteria were employed. Only teachers who were working at state schools, had taught English for more than five years, and had relevant educational

qualifications such as S.Pd. (Bachelor of Education) or M.Pd. (Master of Education) were selected.

Data collection

In the larger project, data were collected by means of interviews, classroom observations, and documentation. For this paper, only data obtained from the interviews were used. With each TP, the researcher carried out four interviews comprising one pre-observation interview and three post-observation interviews. Given the number of the participants (i.e., four TPs), this paper draws on data elicited from a total of 16 interviews. All interviews were conducted in a language of their choice. While interviews with TP1 and TP2 were carried out in Indonesian, the ones with TP3 and TP4 were conducted in English. All interviews were audio-recorded.

Data analysis

Data analysis followed a procedure referred to as a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Before commencing the analysis, all the interview data were transcribed verbatim. Interviews carried out in Indonesian were translated into English. In terms of the unit of analysis, each TP constituted the unit of analysis. Commencing the analysis, the researcher content-analysed data from each TP starting from analysing pre-observation interview transcript and then the post-observation interview transcripts respectively. The purpose of this content-analysis was to identify beliefs that reflect a certain English language ideology. When identifying such beliefs, the researcher categorised the beliefs thematically. For example, when a TP seemed to view British English as Standard English, the researcher categorised such a view into standard language ideology. In addition to identifying ideological beliefs that the TPs held, the researcher also attempted to reveal the origins or sources of their ideological beliefs.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Ideological Beliefs about English and ELT Held by the Teachers

Analysis revealed that the TPs held views that reflect instrumental ideology, standard language ideology, ELF ideology, and monolingual ideology as follows.

Instrumental ideology. Some TPs believed in the idea of English mastery as an instrument for achieving success in the globalisation era. T1 noted that globalisation has required Indonesian people to master English not only for living abroad but also for communications with foreigners in Indonesia (T1, pre-interview, p. 5). Emphasising the importance of English, T3 equated English mastery to literacy. "In this globalisation, *buta huruf* [illiteracy] ... is [when] we don't know about English" (T3, pre-interview, p. 9). Formerly, T4 also believed in the idea that people "need English to be success in a global world" (T4, pre-interview, p. 8). However, he claimed that he changed his view.

Standard language ideology. Some TPs held a pro standard language ideological stance. T1 stated that she views British English as preferable, easier to comprehend, and correct and views American English negatively. T1 noted, "British is better. It is more grammatical" (T1, pre-interview, p. 6). T3 preferred British English as a model for instruction. "At the class, British I think. It's ... in a good structure" (T3, pre-interview, p. 11). Viewing American English as casual,

T3 added that teachers cannot teach American English in the classroom (T1, pre-interview).

English as a lingua franca (ELF). No longer believing in the idea of Standard English, T4 reported that his current view had been shaped by the ELF paradigm. He did not longer view a certain English variety as a standard variety, disassociated himself from NSs' norms, and promoted speaking Indonesian-accented English. Among the four teachers, T4 was the only TP who believed in ELF.

Monolingual ideology. T3 and T4 believed in English-only ideology. T3 disagreed with the idea of using Indonesian during English language instruction. Using Indonesian, she noted, reduces students' opportunities to practise speaking English. "If I let them to ... talk about that [in Indonesian] ... they will talk and talk [in Indonesian]. And then, where's the English?" (T3, pre-interview, p. 14). Similarly, T4 viewed using English only in the classroom as the most effective way to promote students' English mastery. "If you want to master English very quickly, we have to use English" during instruction (T4, pre-interview, p. 12).

The Perceived Origins of the Teachers' English Language Ideologies
Several factors the TPs perceived to be the origins of their ideological beliefs include former English teachers, undergraduate and graduate study, colleagues in a professional community, and textbooks used for teaching (Table 1).

Table 1. The summary of perceived origins, the TPs, and English language ideologies the TPs held

Perceived origins		The TPs	English language ideologies the TPs held
Former English teachers	Secondary school teacher's talk about English	TP3	Instrumental ideology
	Private school teacher's classroom practice	TP4	Monolingual ideology
Higher education	Undergraduate education	TP4	Standard language ideology
	Graduate education		The ELF paradigm
Colleagues in a professional community	Fellow teachers	TP1	Standard language ideological stance
	Colleagues in an English Teacher Forum	TP3	Monolingual ideology
Textbooks	Textbooks used for teaching	TP2	Standard language ideology

Former English teachers. The first factor was their own English teachers. Holding a belief that reflects standard language ideology, T3 perceived her secondary school English teacher's talk to be the factor. My teacher said, "English is important ... that with English we can, we can go abroad, and then we, we can interact with other [people] from other countries" (T3, pre-interview, p. 6). Similarly, T4 reported that his belief in English-only ideology had originated from his English teacher, in this case, his teacher's practice of teaching English through

English. T4 perceived what his teacher did as effective and thus thought that English-only instruction is an effective way to promote learning.

Undergraduate and graduate study. Undergraduate education seemed to play a role in shaping the TPs' ideological beliefs. A change in T4's belief about the instrumental role of English was reportedly caused by his undergraduate study. Besides, T4 mentioned undergraduate education as the source of his former belief in Standard English. Interestingly, doing a master's degree appeared to trigger T4 to revisit his pro standard language ideological stance, leading him to believe in the ELT paradigm. T4's case illustrates a central role of ELTE programs in shaping/reshaping a teacher's ideological belief about English/ELT.

Colleagues in a professional community. Colleagues can be sources from which ideologies of English originate. The pro standard language ideological stance that T1 held was reportedly based on what other people within her professional setting said. Similarly, T3's English-only stance was reportedly driven by a promise that T3 and her colleagues made in an English teacher forum (T3, pre-interview). This finding demonstrates that English language ideologies can transfer from an individual teacher to another within a professional community setting.

Textbooks used in the classroom. The last factor was textbooks used in the classroom. T2's preference on British English and orientation to NSs norms were reportedly caused by the textbooks that she used. T2 noted, "in textbooks I found British English more common. ... not so many American words" (T2, pre-interview, p. 7). On that basis, T2 perceived British English as standard English. This finding shows that textbooks can be a factor that influence the way a teacher views English.

All the above-mentioned factors are categorised into two major themes, that is, prior learning experience and professional experience as follows.

Prior learning experience. The first theme is prior learning experience. This theme is based on the findings that some ideological beliefs held by the TPs reportedly originated from two factors: former English teachers and learning experience at university. Previous studies identified prior learning experience as a factor from which teachers' knowledge and beliefs about English language learning and teaching originated (Borg, 2019; Burns et al., 2015; Moodie, 2016). This paper adds that prior learning can also be a source of EFL teachers' ideological beliefs.

The first aspect under former English teachers is secondary school teachers' talk about English. One of the findings illustrates the role of a schoolteacher's verbal expressions of his/her ideological views on English in shaping T3's instrumental ideology. Razfar (2005) states that teachers' discursive practices can index language ideologies. Young (2009) highlighted the role of discursive practices in constructing teacher cognition. Adding to these arguments, this paper emphasises that a schoolteacher's discursive practice can be a factor that shapes an EFL teacher's ideological beliefs about English.

The second aspect under former English teachers is an English teacher's classroom practice. One of the findings demonstrates how an English teacher's instructional practice influenced T4's view on the language of instruction. Razfar (2005) states that, in the classroom, a teacher's ideological belief can be

manifested in the form of talk about language and in language choice. T4's teacher's choice of using English only during instruction appears to be the manifestation of his/her ideological belief about English. Thus, this paper highlights that a former teacher's language choice during instruction can be a source of an EFL teacher's English-only ideology.

Still regarding prior learning, the other factor mentioned by the TPs was undergraduate and graduate education (ELTE programs). Previous research provided evidence on how ELTE programs shape teachers' knowledge and beliefs about English language learning and teaching (Burns et al., 2015; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). This paper illustrates how ELTE programs shaped a TP's ideological beliefs about English/ELT.

Professional experience. The second major theme is professional experience. This theme is based on TS's perceptions about the role of colleagues in a professional community and learning/teaching resources in shaping their ideological beliefs. The findings showed that T1's pro standard language ideological stance and T3's pro monolingual stance respectively originated from their fellow teachers and colleagues in an English Teacher Forum. Johnson (2009) states that "teachers' knowledge and beliefs are constructed through and by the normative ways of thinking, talking, and acting that have been historically and culturally embedded in the communities of practice in which they participate" (p. 17). This paper adds that people within a community of practice (e.g., fellow teachers & colleagues) can play a role in shaping a teacher's ideological beliefs about English/ELT.

Regarding learning/teaching resources, the finding illustrated that T2's pro standard language ideological stance appears to be shaped by the textbooks that she used for teaching. Modiano (2001) states that teachers' beliefs that reflect standard language ideology (e.g., a belief in the idea of British English as a Standard English) can be traced back to, among other things, books published internationally. Similarly, Tollefson (2007) notes that teaching resources are indeed "instrument of standard language ideology" (p. 30). Books present an illusion, that is, an illusion of learning a standard language as the target of L2 instruction (Tollefson, 2007). Drawing on T2's case, the finding reported in this paper supports the idea of learning/teaching resources (i.e., textbooks) as the media through which standard language ideology spreads, shaping the way a teacher views English

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Drawing on a subset of findings from a study into EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in Indonesia, this paper has presented ideological beliefs held by four Indonesian EFL teachers and the perceived origins of such beliefs. To summarise, the teacher participants (TPs) held different categories of beliefs that reflect English language ideologies prevalent within the ELT setting such as instrumental ideology, standard language ideology, ELF ideology, and monolingual ideology. In terms of the sources, prior learning experience (e.g., former English teachers) and professional experience (e.g., colleagues in a professional community and textbooks used in the classroom) were mentioned to be the perceived origins of their ideological beliefs.

On the basis of the role of the above-mentioned factors in shaping/reshaping the teachers' ideological beliefs, this paper highlights the following two points for ELTE programs to take into account. First, pre-service teachers entering the programs bring with them different types of beliefs rooted in their secondary education. Therefore, ELTE programs need to facilitate pre-service teachers to reflect on their ideological beliefs to raise their awareness of such beliefs. Given that an ideological belief may contain a false idea and this idea can be manifested in practice, having pre-service teachers reflect on their beliefs is essential to anticipate any practical manifestation that is potentially harmful to student learning. Second, in-service teachers keep changing their ideological beliefs. Among the factors included graduate education and colleagues in the profession. This means that teachers educators should assume essential role in changing teachers' ideological beliefs. When organising professional development activities for in-service teachers, teacher educators need to encourage reflection among in-service teachers to reveal ideological beliefs that they hold, identify potential benefits and drawbacks of such beliefs in relation to student learning, and educate them to utilise their ideological beliefs for the best interest of the students.

This study, as mentioned above, only presents findings regarding EFL teachers' ideological beliefs and the origins of such beliefs. To add to the findings presented here and develop this line of research, future studies may need to explore the following issues. The first is the issue of how EFL teachers' ideological beliefs shape their instructional practice in the context of onsite and online learning. The second issue worth investigating is the issue of how verbal/practical manifestations of teachers' ideological beliefs in the classroom affect student learning.

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