

PRE-SERVICE TESL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES ON THE USE OF DRAMA ACTIVITIES AS STUDENT-CENTRED APPROACH TEACHING STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the beliefs and practices of pre-service TESL teachers on the use of drama activities as student-centred approach. There were four pre-service TESL teachers involved in this study. They took Plays and Drama for Young Learners course before. This qualitative study analysed the data gathered through observation, interview, lesson plans as well as survey form. The results of the study reveal that the participants believed drama activities are fun activities and allow students to learn in an effective ways. Drama activities could also enhance students' creativity and help the students develop interpersonal skills. However, it was found out that only one participant conducted role play and another three did not employ any drama activities at all during practicum. They claimed that students' low proficiency level, classroom management, students age and time-constraint were the reasons they did not carry out the activities. In addition, they were not confident of conducting the activities as they did not really know their students. Teacher-centred approach was employed in conducting drama activities and other activities in teaching English to primary ESL students.

Key words : Drama Activities, Beliefs, Student-centred Approach, Challenges

INTRODUCTION

The government of Malaysia strongly believes that education can shape the development of the economy and human capital. “Education remains the best guarantee for the future success of both the student and for the country” Government Transformation Programme (GTP) Annual Report (2013 p.102). Hence, the government has placed a lot of emphasis on education in order to nurture the younger generation who will contribute to nation building in the future.

The aspirations of the country can be realized through teachers in schools as well as pre-service teachers who are still undergoing training either at the local universities or at Teacher Education Institutes (TEI). The MoE believes that the knowledge and skills pre-service teachers gain in their teacher education can lay a solid foundation for them to become quality teachers. “The Malaysian education system aspires to ensure that every student in every school in every state achieves their full potential. Each and every school leader, teacher, parent and the community has an important role to play in ensuring that the young people in their charge are moving towards these aspirations” (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013, Chapter p.2).

Nonetheless, the aspirations of the country can only be realized through quality education. Dato’ Seri Hishamuddin (2009) in his forward in Standard Guru Malaysia reinforced that the development of quality human capitals depends on quality education (cited in Bahagian Pendidikan Guru, 2009). However, for the country to have quality education, it hinges on quality teachers. “the only way education is going to change is if the classroom teacher makes it happen” (cited in Chrism-Conway, 2007 p.4). According to Shishavan (2010), for the students to learn effectively and for efficient learning to take place in the classroom, it depends highly on the teachers and the actions the teachers take in with them to the classroom. Teachers as well as pre-service teachers are responsible to design activities suitable to students and to ensure that students are engaged in their learning process. Therefore, by employing a student-centred approach, students are fully engaged in what they want to learn through various teaching strategies and learning activities.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Teachers in schools are expected to employ the pedagogical principles outlined in the curriculum such as learner-centred lesson, integration of new technologies as well as fun, meaningful and purposeful activities (Bahagian Pembangunan Kurikulum, 2010). It is clearly stated in the syllabus that one of the underlying principles of the curriculum teaching is learner-centred and fun and meaningful activities. For pre-service teachers, practicum is the platform for them to implement what they had learned during their teacher training. **Based on** researcher observation and experience in supervising pre-service TESL

teachers' teaching, it was found that the student-centred approach was not fully employed by pre-service TESL teachers in their teaching.

The activities commonly carried out by the pre-service TESL teachers were singing songs, games, reading aloud, reading comprehension, blank filling and others which did not require students to be independent nor challenge their thinking thus offering students' direct experience and deep understanding of the lesson. It was also found out that the most common activities were filling in the blanks. Some of the activities were quite dull and boring. While teaching, pre-service TESL teachers did most of the talking in the classroom and students just listened and answered simple questions asked by the teachers. Students were not given opportunities to speak. Fun activities were rarely employed and the teaching was more to using a teacher-centred approach.

An informal discussion with my colleagues confirmed researcher's observation that pre-service teachers did not fully employ a student-centred approach in teaching English.

“Pair work or group work did take place in the classroom but the activities were not challenging enough. The students worked together to complete the task which required them to fill in the blanks with the answers prepared for them” (Lecturer A).

“The pupils enjoyed singing the song. They had fun. The activity could help them to improve their pronunciation. However, it was like drilling activity when the teacher took out some words from the lyrics and the pupils were required to fill in the blanks with the correct words or phrases” (Lecturer B).

The practices of the pre-service TESL teachers were contradicted with what is stated in the English language curriculum for primary schools that requires the teacher to engage the students in their learning through a student-centred approach and fun learning. It was also discovered that pre-service TESL teachers did not use any drama activities as teaching strategies for a student-centred approach in teaching English language. Drama activities was one of the activities suggested for a student-centred approach during their training. During their practicum, it was noticed that the activities conducted were not interesting enough. The pre-service TESL teachers did not use puppets, role play or any other drama activities taught to them to make their English lessons fun and engaging. Most of them preferred to give exercises which only required the students to answer questions prepared on the worksheets. They did not implement drama activities in the classroom even though they have learned

about drama activities during their training. Therefore, a research was conducted to explore the issue.

RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to find out pre-service TESL teachers' beliefs about the use of drama activities as student-centred approach in teaching English to primary ESL students. In addition, it aims to explore how their beliefs influence the choice of strategies when teaching English in primary ESL classrooms.

RESEARCH QUESTION

- 1) What are pre-service TESL teachers' belief about the use of drama activities in teaching English in primary ESL classroom?.
- 2) How do pre-service TESL teachers' beliefs influence their choice of teaching strategies for primary ESL classrooms?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers shoulder the responsibility of making the majority of decision regarding classroom management and practices in the foreign language classroom. All teachers have their own beliefs about their work, their students, subject matter, roles as well as responsibilities. Teachers' belief system can influence the decision the teachers make and the actions they take in the classroom. Professional development and classroom practices of teachers are influenced by their educational beliefs (Zheng, 2009). According to Mitchell (2005), a study on teachers' beliefs is important as beliefs can drastically influence behaviour "Research has shown that beliefs influence the decisions teachers make about their classroom practices, how teachers interpret new knowledge, and how they implement new techniques" (p.25). "Teachers' "beliefs" about teaching play a crucial role in the way they formulate goals and define the tasks of teaching. To the extent that such beliefs are ignored, the systems of practices they guide or make sense of will be correspondingly opaque (Nespor, 1985 p.3). However, the study of pre-service teachers' beliefs is also important. According to Pajares (1992), understanding the belief structures of pre-service teachers is crucial to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices as the beliefs the teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments. This will later affect their practices in the classroom.

Understanding teachers' beliefs is an important concept to understanding teachers' thoughts, changes and practices. Thus, the roles of teacher beliefs as a determinant of teachers' practices have received increasing attention among researchers over the last several years, and a substantial body of evidence has emerged during this time suggesting that teacher beliefs drive instructional pedagogy (Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2002).

The way of teaching can be improved if teachers hold different beliefs about language teachings. Teachers could employ constructivist or student-centred approach such as drama activities which could fulfill the characteristics student-centred approach. The use of drama activities in the classroom by teachers can be regarded as employing a method belonging to constructivist approach (Sungurtekin, Onur', Bagceli, & Sadioglu, 2009).

STUDENT-CENTRED APPROACH VERSUS STUDENT-CENTRED APPROACH

According to Killen (2003) teachers who employ the teacher-centred approach direct the activities of the students and the main focus is on academic achievement. Dalton (2008) asserted that the teacher-centred approach discourages students' participation in the teaching process; it enforces students' silence, solitary work, and permanent placement in an orderly arrangement of furniture, usually in rows and columns. As the aim of teaching is to ensure the students get the information disseminated, the common forms of teaching of this approach include lectures and demonstrations and students' attention is directed on the textbook. In addition, handouts, power point slides, internet, stories or videos can be another way of delivering the knowledge. Teachers can check students' prior knowledge through pre-tests, brainstorming or surveys.

The student-centred classroom is characterised through the absence of rote learning, working in silence (most of the time), providing students with facts and a lot of information (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). In the student-centred classroom, the teachers focus on students and their needs during the teaching and learning process. The focus is shifted from teachers to students; from teaching to learning. In the student-centred classroom, teachers emphasize on students' construction of knowledge through their involvement in activities. Teachers organize activities that focus more on the students and also which promote independent learning, group discussions and student meaning-making (Teo et al., 2008). According to Aspalila (2011), in a student-centred classroom, students "are able to choose their own projects, work at their own individual pace and be able to show excitement about learning new things" (p.34). Students are no longer the mere listeners and passively accepting knowledge transmitted by the teachers in a teacher-centered classroom.

Students have new roles whereby they will be actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Thus, students create their own ideas in learning as they do not receive complete information directly from the teachers. Besides, when students engage themselves in projects, they work in groups with students who might be from other cultures, different background and different abilities from them. Therefore, they are able to gain knowledge about the cultures of their group members while still actively engaged and participating in group activities.

DRAMA ACTIVITIES AS TEACHING STRATEGIES

Drama is not a new strategy to be used for language teaching and learning. The belief that drama might be an effective tool for language teaching and learning cannot be denied (Alima, Mohd, Siew, & Adlina, 2012). Drama activities adopt the concept of a constructivist or a student-centred approach in teaching and learning process. According to Fleming (2011) drama is largely concerned with experience by the participants, regardless of any function of communication to an audience and tells a story which consists of characters in conflict and in action. In other words, persons who involved in drama will have the experience of imitating other characters using different functions of communication.

Drama activities are the activities that do not demand the students to perform in front of the audience. According to Abdullah (2008), drama activities encompass imitating, mimicking and expressing through any necessary means including gestures and verbalisation. The intention of conducting drama activities is for the students to learn language through imitating, mimicking and also gestures of the characters.

According to Ashton-Hay (2005) drama is an influential and beneficial teaching strategy which can be utilised in many ways in the contemporary classroom to provide active, constructivist learning. Drama is highly regarded as an effective and valuable teaching strategy because of its unique ability to engage reflective, constructive and active learning in the classroom as well as enhancing oral skills development. In addition, Saebo (2009) stated that drama was strongly influenced by the constructivist concept; that is, constructing own knowledge while learning. When teachers use drama activities as a teaching strategy, teachers actually allow students to create their own experiences related to the subject matter, as an integrated part of their learning process. This offers students direct experience and a deep understanding of the lesson.

A drama classroom is a very good platform for the teachers to apply communicative language teaching and this is very helpful especially to the ESL students. Using drama activities as teaching strategies can help the students to acquire the skills needed in their everyday conversation. Drama can help to improve listening and speaking skills of the students. As students practise role

play or other drama activities, they become more familiar with the language needed for the roles that they play. For instance, a student who play the role of a customer at the wet market would enable him to use the language needed to ask for the types of fish, the price and how to bargain. In doing role play, students not only practice the language which could enhance students' pronunciation (Dundar, 2013) but also non-verbal skills. They need to use correct gestures as well as facial expressions while conversing with the fishmonger. This is confirmed by Lin (2009) that drama activities help to improve both verbal and non-verbal skills of the students and not only the tools to explore the content of the lesson. Dundar (2013) also stated that drama activities help to reinforce proper use of grammatical structure and enhance vocabulary practice among students.

This practice is affirmed by Furthermore, students acquire fluency as well as the correct way of pronouncing words, intonation, rhythm, and stress in performing readers' theatre. Morris (2011) supported the claim and stated that drama activities such as reader's theatre help to maintain and improve oral reading rates and prosody for second grade students. The students enjoy doing reader's theatre and when they can even ask for extra reader's theatre time and that indicates their motivation and interest in reading and doing the activity.

By learning literature through drama, students learn about other cultures which are different from their own. Ashton-Hay (2005) noted that students' understanding of cultural similarities and differences become more obvious through drama activities. Students can feel the differences when they become different characters and be in different settings. By engaging in drama activities, students are actually learning by doing and drama as a make believe activity can make them understand the content better.

According to Katz (2000) a learner involved in a drama activity will be called upon to practice several thinking skills such as: inventing, generating, speculating, assimilating, clarifying, inducing, deducing, analyzing, accommodating, selecting, refining, sequencing and judging. Thinking skills relate closely to the widely used Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. Since drama makes constant demands on a person's imagination, it develops a learner's ability to think more effectively.

CHALLENGES IN EMPLOYING DRAMA ACTIVITIES

Students' English proficiency level is another challenge for teachers to adopt the student-centred approach in their teaching. The student-centred approach encourages independent learning among students and students are expected to develop their own knowledge and not to depend on teachers to provide the information for them. However, this is quite challenging for teachers when students are not able to understand the text they read. Students' low proficiency

level is identified as a constraint in employing the student-centred approach in an ESL classroom (Kumar, 2016; Orafi & Borg, 2009; Wanchai, 2015). The idea of carrying out student-centred activities such as drama and other communicative language activities with low proficiency students would take up more time and this would be an obstacle to students' participation in classroom activities.

A study was carried out by Radzuwan, Vethamani and Shireena Basree (2010) at 18 selected rural schools in Kelantan, Malaysia to find out how the teachers taught literature to less proficient Form one and Form two students. The results of the study indicated that the teachers employed the teacher-centred approach in teaching literature to their students. The teachers only explained and spoon-fed their students with information. Teachers did not carry out any activities such as drama activities which involved speaking despite the request made by the students to have speaking activities conducted in the class. Another finding was that English Literature was taught in the mother tongue, Malay, to those less proficient students. This was due to teachers' perception that students' proficiency level was low and it would be difficult for students to understand English. Therefore, teachers resorted to merely providing information to students to ensure students gain enough information on the literary texts studied. The intention was for the students to develop understanding on the subject matter so that they can be prepared to take tests.

Self-confidence can be a hurdle for teachers to employ student-centred approach in teaching. Some teachers were not confident to apply the approach in teaching. Therefore, they tend to choose certain elements which they think belong to student-centred approach. This is proven by Naruemon (2013) in his study on pre-service teachers teaching practice. The result shows that pre-service teachers were found to be lack of confidence in employing student-centred approach in teaching and are not willing to take the risk. As a result, they were only willing to incorporate a few elements of student-centred approach such as group work in order to provide opportunities for students to assist and learn from each other. Besides, teachers feel that they are not prepared to take the risk of looking silly in front of students and perform in front of a group. Looking and feeling silly is a big barrier for teachers and students (Royka, 2002). In using drama activities as a student-centred approach, teachers need to guide students of how to perform. If students have problems to act as animals and make the sounds of the animals, teachers need to guide the students by showing the action of the animals. This makes the teachers feel like being silly in front of the students.

Students' attitude can be another obstacle that teachers have to face in employing student-centred approach. Students' lack of interest and confidence (Kumar, 2016) can be a barrier for the teacher to conduct student-centred activities such as drama. The reason is drama activity, specifically role playing is too emotionally demanding because the task is performed in front of others.

Sometimes students' shyness may hinder their performance in any drama activities. This is proven when (Putri, Lestari, Pd, & Hum, 2017) did a study on five pre-service teachers' use of role play in teaching speaking. The pre-service teachers highlighted the challenge that they had to face when students were reluctant to take part in the activities. Some of the students were not willing to present their role play in front of the class. Worse still, some did not want to do role play at all. They were very passive and silent in the classroom. Most of the pre-service teachers agreed that students' unwillingness to participate was a challenge in teaching speaking.

Another important issue of using drama as a teaching technique brings another challenge for the second language teacher. Using drama as a student-centred approach in teaching involves students moving away from the routine of doing work only at their seats. With a student-centred approach, lessons are more open ended and unpredictable. Conducting drama activities entail students working in pairs, discussing with their peers and this would make the class a little chaotic; thus, classroom management such as controlling the class could be another challenge for the teachers. Kumar (2016 p.122) noted that: "*Students in a student-centred classroom have the opportunity to work in pairs or groups. Discussion among students within the group is common and this makes the students quite 'free' and students show a disciplinary problem when they are engaged in various techniques of the student-centred method*". With younger learners the enthusiasm and exuberance produced by engaging in activity like drama can turn into problems of indiscipline (Dodson, 2000; Zafeiriadou, 2009). Hence, teachers can face problems in managing the class specifically in quite a large class (Kaymakamoglu, 2018).

Another issue pertaining to using a student-centred approach to teaching such as drama activities in ESL classroom was the time-constraint factor. The teachers admitted that they had to use the teacher-centred approach due to time constraint. They claimed that they had inadequate time to deliver the fixed content as the student-centred approach required more teaching time. Putri, Lestari, Pd, & Hum (2017) highlighted in her study on the use of role play as a strategies in teaching speaking skills by the pre-service teachers in Indonesia during their practicum. The pre-service teachers asserted that in carrying out role play, the biggest challenge that they faced was a lack of the time. Pre-service teachers stated that drama activities such as role play took up a lot of classroom time and students did not have enough time to present their role play in the limited time. The pre-service teachers claimed that they needed more time in conducting role play with their students.

The size of the class is another factor which hinders the teacher from conducting student-centred activities such as drama activities in an ESL classroom. Sato (2001) affirmed that class activities and interaction for the pair and group work cannot be fully monitored by the teachers as they face difficulty in controlling the class when there are too many students to attend to

simultaneously. Too many students in the class may contribute to disciplinary problems.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed qualitative research which apply observation, interview as well as document analysis as data collection methods. A very simple survey was also conducted to gather some information from the participants of this research regarding drama activities. The survey form were given twice; before they went for practicum and after they finished their practicum. There were four pre-service TESL teachers who took part in this research. They were Fakri, Dzul, Muzammil and Amin (pseudonyms). All of the participants were twenty two years old and they did not have any teaching experience. During their practicum, they taught at two different primary schools in a rural area of district Z. They did their practicum for four weeks. Fakri and Dzul were teaching together in school A and Muzammil and Amin were teaching at school B. When they were at IPG, they learned drama activities from the “Plays and Drama for Young Learners” course before they went for their practicum. During the course, they learned six drama activities namely puppetry, mask, readers’ theatre, hot seat, role play and dance drama.

FINDINGS

The finding of the research will be discussed according to the research questions, 1) What are pre-service TESL teachers’ belief about the use of drama activities in teaching English in primary ESL classroom? 1) How do pre-service TESL teachers’ beliefs influence their choice of teaching strategies for primary ESL classrooms?

2) What are pre-service TESL teachers’ belief about the use of drama activities in teaching English in primary ESL classroom?

Based on the pre-practicum 1 survey, it was found that the participants believed that they enjoyed learning drama activities in the course. In addition, they also admitted that they gained knowledge of how to use drama activities in teaching English. All of the participants claimed that the course is relevant to them as future teachers.

“The course teaches teachers how to conduct an effective learning technique to ESL learners using drama” (Fakri, pre-phase 1 survey).

“We get experience on how to organize and what to do before teaching the students in the schools in the future” (Dzul, pre-phase 1 survey).

“The course provides me knowledge about drama techniques and drama activities” (Muzammil, pre-phase 1 survey)

“The course helps him to attract students to read English story book” (Amin, pre-phase 1 survey).

Fakri, Dzul and Muzammil admitted that they would use drama activities during their practicum phase 1 as they claimed that drama activities were fun activities.

“I would use role play and puppet as those drama activities were fun and could enhance students’creativity” (Fakri, pre-phase 1 survey).

“Role play involves group of pupils to role play together and this will make the lesson become interesting and thus make them learn in an effective way” (Dzul, pre-phase 1 survey).

“The activities involve all the pupils. Besides, it can develop interpersonal skills as they work in groups” (Muzammil, pre-phase 1 survey).

“Pupils can enjoy the lesson instead of doing a boring activities in class” (Amin, pre-phase 1 survey).

However, Amin would not consider using the activities while teaching. Amin confessed that he was afraid he could not carry out the activities the way the activities were supposed to be carried out. Amin explained: *“I afraid that the activity will not run as I expected”* (Amin, pre-phase 1 survey).

The findings also revealed that all of the pre-service TESL teachers admitted that they would let their students to work in groups. However, they would decide on the group members. Fakri and Amin were concerned about class control while Dzul and Muzammil reported they preferred having mixed-ability students in a group.

“I dont want to get messy and out of control” (Fakri, pre-phase 1 survey)

“I need to make sure there will be mixed ability in the group and not just smart or low ability pupils in one group” (Dzul, pre-phase 1 survey).

"I want to make sure that the group members consist of different abilities. This is to make sure the clever one can help his not so clever friend" (Muzammil, pre-phase 1 survey).

"So that the classroom control runs smoothly and pupils can just sit in group without any disturbance" (Amin, pre-phase 1 survey).

All of the pre-service TESL teachers except Fakri would not mind having a noisy classroom where the students can laugh and move around. The reasons given were to ensure that the students are comfortable in doing their learning activities.

"It would be better for the pupils to learn in a comfortable environment because it will help them to learn in an effective ways" (Dzul, pre-phase 1 survey)

"They have opportunity to communicate with their friends and ask questions to the teacher. However, the teacher needs to state the class rules at the beginning of the lesson" (Muzammil, pre-phase 1 survey)

"For group discussion and something that is related to the lesson" (Amin, pre-phase 1 survey)

However, Fakri preferred to have very quiet classroom where the pupils listen to him and sit still at their places. He wanted to make sure his students get the knowledge that he tried to deliver to them. He said:

"When giving lesson, its important to make sure they get it first what you want to deliver to them" (Fakri, pre-phase 1 survey).

Based on the results of pre-phase 1 survey, it was found that pre-service TESL teachers were quite positive about using drama activities as teaching strategies. However, their choice of teaching strategies used during their practicum were not aligned with their beliefs.

- 2) How do pre-service TESL teachers' beliefs influence their choice of teaching strategies for primary ESL classrooms?

During practicum, each participant was observed three times. During observation, the researcher focussed on the types of teaching strategies employed and how they employed the strategies. In order to get more information about teaching strategies that the participants used, the lesson plans

written by Dzul, Fakri, Muzammil and Amin were referred to. The analyses of the data from classroom observations and lesson plans revealed the teaching practices of the participants in teaching English to Malaysian primary school students.

The findings showed that only Muzammil employed drama activities which he claimed to be role play. Muzammil employed role play twice. It was on day three and day thirteen of his practicum. However, during observation, it was noticed that Muzammil prepared the dialogue for the students. He gave each student a dialogue which was printed on an A4 paper. Students were given roles and they practised their roles in their groups. While performing the role play, the students just read the dialogue directly from the given text. They were not required to memorize the dialogue either. Muzammil stated that his purpose of using this kind of role play was to give the opportunity to his students to act in front of the class. Therefore, they can develop their confidence level and learn in a fun environment. During the interview he asserted that:

*“I taught year 4 students, I think they have the courage to read and perform in front of others. They can role play the characters in the dialogues”
(Muzammil, Post-practicum 1 Interview).*

However, Muzammil admitted that he prepared the dialogues due to his students' poor proficiency levels and he wrote the dialogues for the students. Students just read the dialogues and they were not asked to memorise the dialogues as they would not have enough time to memorise them within the time allotted. Muzammil only allocated thirty minutes for the role play activity. He added that he also wanted to correct students' pronunciation. When I asked about his students' reactions, he replied:

*“The students were very interested. Ninety percent of them were able to do the activity while another ten percent were shy and not confident”
(Muzammil, Post-practicum 1 Interview).*

Nonetheless, Muzammil observed that his students had shown some improvement the second time he carried out the activities. Muzammil claimed that the first time he did role play with his students, they were not confident. He had to show them where to stand as some students were leaning against the wall. Muzammil had no problem the second time when he carried out the activity as the students were able to understand his instructions.

From my observation and analysis, the other three participants, Dzul, Fakri and Amin did not carry out any drama activities at all. However, Fakri claimed that he employed a drama technique 'freeze' during the transition between the presentation and practice stage. Fakri reported that he used the

freeze technique to attract the attention of students before he could proceed to the next activity as his students were very active. Fakri stated:

“I used freeze to make them looked at me and listen to my instructions” (Fakri, Post-practicum 1 Survey)

“During the transition, I used freeze activity to attract attention. No drama activity per se and it (Freeze) didn’t involve any use of language among the students” (Fakri, Post-practicum 1 Interview).

During the interview Dzul admitted that this this practicum was his first experience of teaching in the real classroom with real students and so he felt diffident. Dzul needed to build his self-confidence. He mentioned:

“I did not use any drama activities. I need more time and need more experience with the students. I need to know my students better before I could use the activities. I need to be more confident in dealing with the pupils, to control the class” (Dzul, Post-practicum 1 interview).

On the other hand, Fakri reported that he feared implementing drama activities as he was worried of failure. He stated that:

“Drama activities need commitment from both teacher and students. What fears me is if my activities are not interesting enough and students easily get bored with the activities” (Fakri, Pre-practicum 1 Survey).

In addition, Amin confessed that he did not implement any drama activities during this practicum as preparing a lesson consisting of drama activities would consume a lot of time. Amin stated that:

“Drama takes a lot of time for preparation. Furthermore, a one hour lesson is not enough to carry out drama activities” (Amin, Post-practicum 1 interview).

The short duration of practicum (1 month) was one of the reasons given by him. Amin explained in detail his reasons. He said that:

“I didn’t have the courage to use any drama activities during my first practicum because the practicum was only one month. I think I will use drama in the next practicum as I have longer time” (Amin, Practicum 1 Interview).

Moreover, as Amin did not really know his students, he was afraid that his class would be out of control and the students would not be able to understand the content. Amin asserted that:

“I did not know their level of proficiency and I was afraid that I could not control the class”.

“I have no intention to use drama activities because I taught year 2 and year 3 students. Year 2 or year 3 students would take more time to do drama activities. For me, if I want to use drama activities, the students should be in year 5 or year 6. Their proficiency level is better”.

Although Dzul, Fakri and Amin did not employ any drama activities, they were found to employ other interesting strategies. During the observation it was found that Dzul, Fakri, Amin and also Muzammil employed various strategies such as songs, jazz chants, puzzles, reading aloud and many others. When I analyzed their record book and analysed the strategies that they used to teaching for one whole month I found that they only used a few strategies as some strategies were used repeatedly. The strategies employed by the participants are shown in table 1.

Table 1 : Strategies Employed by Research Participants

No.	Participants	Number of lessons	Strategies
1.	Dzul	17	Asking questions, reading aloud, crossword puzzle, writing, action song, performing action song, coloring, games-word search, silent reading, reading comprehension, words memorization, group reading aloud, blank filling, making collage, worksheet, rearrange sentence strips, sequence the events, worksheet.
2.	Fakri	20	Asking questions, matching, words identification, rearrange stories, colouring, writing, jazz chants, drawing, reading aloud, language games, dictation game, copying words/steps into the worksheet/exercise book,
3.	Muzammil	16	Asking questions, role playing, explanation, singing song, rearranging jumbled up sentence strips, reading aloud, blank filling, word puzzle, reading

			comprehension, language games, spelling, worksheet
4.	Amin	15	Asking questions, demonstration, explanation, reading aloud, jazz chants, poem recitation, rearrange sentence strips, reading comprehension, action song, memorising games, language games, worksheet

The table above depicted the strategies used by the participants in teaching English to their students. The list of strategies in the table showed that Dzul, Fakri and Amin did not use any drama activities that they learned during the course in teaching English. Various strategies other than drama activities were employed by all the participants. However, most of the strategies employed are not categorized as student-centred activities. For example, the use of action songs as teaching strategies. The activity looked interesting and the students were very excited in doing the activity. When Muzammil decided to use action songs, he just asked his students to sing the song with actions guided by him. The students followed his actions. For the activity in the production stage, Muzammil just took out some of the words and then he asked the students to fill in the blanks. The process of recall and choosing the words to fill in the blanks took place during the teaching and learning process. The activities carried out by the students did not require them to think critically and develop their own knowledge. Even though Muzammil claimed that he used drama activity such as role play, the way he conducted the activity was still teacher-centred.

From the observations of the pre-service teachers' lessons, the activities that required students to do in groups were prepared by the teachers. The teachers planned the activities and structured the flow of the activities and even chose the group members. Teachers had full control of the students' activities and movements. As what Muzammil said before, the dialogue for role play was prepared by him. Students were not required to prepare their own dialogue. As for Amin, he asked his students to rearrange the sentence strips to make a story. The students just needed to memorize and understand the story in order to ensure they rearranged the sentence strips correctly. Other than to make sure students have fun in learning English, the teachers' intention of using action song was more to introduce the vocabulary and to teach pronunciation to the students. The pre-service teachers did not include any drama activities in their lessons. In conclusion, all the observed lessons were teacher-centered lessons with the teacher controlling the students' learning.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show that drama activities were not the four participants' choice of strategies in teaching English. The participants believed that drama activities such as role play and puppets are fun activities. and it can

also enhance students' creativity. As drama activities can be carried out in group, they believed that can help the students to learn in an effective ways as well as develop their interpersonal skill. However, most of the participants did not employ drama activities in teaching English to the students. Only one participant, Muzammil employed a role play. However, his purpose of using the role play was to teach pronunciation and not to help improve the speaking skill of the students. Indeed, it was not a role play. According to Killen (2003) a role play is a form of acting in which the general role of players is defined but they do not have scripts to follow. In a role play, students need to play their roles by communicating with other characters in group.

It was also found that there were discrepancy between participants' beliefs and their practices. The results show that Dzul, Fakri and Amin had no confidence in using a student-centred approach such as drama activities to teach due to students' proficiency level, age and time constraint. Amin felt that his students were young and were not proficient enough to carry out challenging activities like drama. Even though Muzammil chose role play as one of his teaching strategies, he probably had no confidence too like the other three pre-service teachers. And that might be the reason why he prepared the dialogue for his students. In addition, the short duration of practicum 1 which was only four weeks could be another obstacle to employing a student-centred approach such as drama activities.

Additionally, the findings of the research also revealed that the teaching strategies employed by the participants were not compliant with the requirement of the MoE which is to use a student-centered approach in teaching. Most of the pre-service TESL teachers' choice of teaching strategies in teaching English belong to a teacher-centred approach. Demonstrations, explanations, reading aloud, memorizing, games, spelling, copying words and filling in the blanks are all teaching strategies categorized as teacher-centred. The observations also indicate that only a one-way communication took place in the classroom.

Teachers explained and demonstrated the steps in doing the activities while the students listened attentively to the teachers. Teachers stressed more on teaching vocabulary using a teacher-centred approach. Fun activities like action songs, jazz chants, language games, role play were used in very simple ways and were not challenging enough for the students. For example, action songs used together with music were mainly to teach vocabulary and pronunciation and to make students more interested to learn English. Basically, students were required to sing, pronounce words in the lyric and do the actions correctly. Filling in the blanks with correct words in the lyrics of the action song was another example of exercise which only tested students' understanding and memorising ability.

The pre-service teachers did not fully implement a student-centred approach in teaching English to the primary school students. Only certain

characteristics of student-centred approach could be identified in the participants' teachings such as fun learning, group work and hands-on activity. But the activities chosen still required the pupils to memorize and did not stimulate the students' thinking, thus promoting understanding.

CONCLUSION

The result of the study reveals that pre-service teachers' beliefs were not aligned with their practices. Therefore, with such finding, teachers' beliefs should be taken into consideration in the effort to change their teaching practices" (Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher & James, 2002). Pre-service teachers' beliefs need to be examined while they are still in training as "the foundation of one's sense of effective teaching rests on the experience of being taught" (Hopper, 1999). Allen (2002) also suggested for pre-service teachers' prior beliefs to be modified and reconstructed for professional growth, so that pre-service teachers' beliefs could frame or reframe their sense of quality teaching. Their beliefs can either be challenged or nurtured throughout their teacher training (Minor et al., 2002). "Whether or not it is ethical and even effective to target beliefs as a major outcome of successful teacher preparation, current reforms implicitly support belief change as central to improving quality and equality in teaching and learning" (Tatto & Coupland, 2003). This can help teacher educators to obtain information about what are pre-service teachers' beliefs and see how their beliefs have affected their choice of their teaching strategies during their teaching practice. Therefore, it can inform the teacher educators whether the beliefs that they hold can help to facilitate pedagogic shift which can lead to quality teaching.

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