

Spoken Language Teaching: What Do Teachers Believe in?

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Abstract

This paper is a qualitative case study that aims to explore beliefs and practices of four English lecturers, by focusing on two components related to content knowledge of spoken language teaching, namely spoken forms (grammar and vocabulary), and interactional skills. It also aims to see how their held beliefs influence their teaching practices. To fulfil this purpose, four English lecturers teaching communicative English subject, contextualized in one polytechnic in Malaysia, were purposively selected as participants of the study. The data were gathered through interviews, non-participant classroom observation, as well as collection of relevant documents. The Atlas t.i. program was used to manage the data and thematic analysis was applied in data analysis. Generally, the findings indicate that the participants viewed the knowledge about spoken form as a relevant exposure to students, but it should not be the focal attention of the lesson. They also believed that interactional skills could be acquired through frequent speaking practices, and these beliefs are consistent with their teaching practices. The data also revealed some misconceptions about certain concepts in spoken language, and the teaching of the components in focus is found to be limited. This indicates a lack of depth content knowledge among the lecturers in these specific areas, hence recommendations for appropriate trainings and professional development programs are made to facilitate teachers to be more well-informed with their pedagogical decisions in classroom. In conclusion, this study illuminates the salient role of content knowledge among practicing teachers, as it potentially affects their teaching practices.

Keywords: interactional skills, spoken forms, spoken language teaching, teachers' beliefs

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