

TEACHER'S BELIEFS IN TEACHING READING USING MULTIMODAL TEXT

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Abstract

Teachers are considered to have an important role in transforming schools and classrooms. They have something to do with successful students learning. It is interesting to note that practically exposed to the same material, curriculum, students and environment, teachers conduct their teaching in various ways because English teachers have preconceived ideas or beliefs about the best approach in their teaching. This reflects the effectiveness of their practice. As multimodal text is necessary to be used in this digital era since text can appear in various forms and do not have to always be in writing consisting of rows of letters or characters. Teachers must have sufficient knowledge and understanding about it. Moreover, before the Covid-19 outbreak appeared in this world and affected all areas, especially education, teaching and learning process in the classroom was still focusing on the use of English textbooks that do not involve various kinds of mode. Therefore, the use of multimodal text is helpful to be used during the pandemic where the teaching and learning process has shifted to online learning. This case study aims to reveal a Senior High School English teacher's belief about multimodal text in teaching reading. It also reveals how the teacher apply her beliefs in teaching practices. The findings suggest teacher's personal beliefs about multimodal text and how the use of multimodal text which should be used in the classrooms.

Keywords: Teacher's Belief, Multimodal Text, Teaching Reading

Introduction

It is undeniable that information is communicated in various modes. This is evidenced by the increasing use blogs, websites, slideshows, webinars, media, clouds computing and other connectivity tools that have become almost as common as print-based documents. Most of the content in this tool is visually coded. This means that the reader is not only presented with messages in words but also in pictures, graphics, and other components as a combination of movement and sound as possible added (Chan & Unsworth, 2011). The leap from page to screen and the ensuing changes in the semiotic landscape creates new literacies; Kress (2003) claims that "in the era of the screen and of multimodality some fundamental changes are inevitable as far as forms, functions and uses of writing are concerned" (p. 61). These are different forms of reading and writing through the

different ways of making meaning affect all fields of life, including education.

Technological innovation has changed the way we read, write and think together. People is no longer rely on traditional print-based modes to acquire knowledge and communicate with others. They must navigate multiple multimodal resources, both traditional and digital to gather information and interact with the world around them. Kress (2005) says digital technologies have transformed the way in which texts are produced, distributed, and consumed. Contemporary reading materials in both print and digital formats include a complex interplay of written text, images, and design elements. Such texts can be described as multimodal: they combine different sets of semiotic resources for making meaning, such as language, image, and spatial patterns, and communicate these meanings through

multiple sensory modes and media (Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2003). For example, online news websites often include written articles accompanied by images, video, infographics, and interactive elements to engage and communicate information to readers; business reports may use graphics to summarize complex data or to highlight significant findings; and language learning materials frequently include images and audio to support the comprehension of written text to make meaning more accessible to learners.

Preparing students for times of fast-paced technological advancement and access to multiple sources of information requires teachers have to understand how to help students make sense of them all, as they navigate resources in an increasingly digital world. Helping students read multimodal text seems to not only support their understanding of existing text but can also improve student literacy outcomes (Chauhan, 2017; Larysa, Lysenki, & Abrami, 2014). Multimodal learning can improve students' communicative competence, cultural understanding, and attitudes towards. Furthermore, multimodal literacy is directed to various sources of texts that can produce meaning. Multimodal literacy is an attempt to understand various ways of representing knowledge and making meaning (Jewitt and Kress, 2003). The focus of multimodal literacy is on the design of discourse by investigating the contributions of various semiotic (verbal, visual, and motion) sources that are mobilized through various modalities as well as interactions and integration in the process of text coherence. Multimodal literacy considers how linguistic and visual choices meet text, audience and context objectives, and how those choices work together in the organization and development of information and ideas (Lim & Tan, 2017).

Teachers are considered to have an important role in transforming schools and classrooms. They have to do with successful student learning. It is interesting

to note that practically exposed to the same material, curriculum, students and environment, teachers conduct their teaching in various ways because English teachers have preconceived ideas or beliefs about the best approach to teaching. This reflects the effectiveness of their practice. Teachers' beliefs are thought to have a major influence on their classroom practice. Teachers' beliefs affect the goals, procedures, materials, class interaction patterns, their roles, their students, and the schools they work for (Kuzborska, 2011: 102). Borg (2003: 81) argues that teachers are active, thinking decision makers who make instructional choices by drawing on a practical, personal, and context sensitive network of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs. Teacher confidence also has an impact on classroom practice and teacher professional growth (Kuzborska, 2011: 102). Richardson (1996) says that teachers' practice reflects their beliefs.

Methodology

This research was conducted under the qualitative approach in the form of case study. Yin (2018) defines a case study as an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are unclear, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used, for example, observations, interviews, audio-visual material, and documentary evidence. This research was conducted at senior high school in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia in 2020. The participant was an experienced high school teacher. Concerning the qualitative research methods, this research employed classroom observation and interview to gather the data and to have a full idea about the beliefs and teacher's practice in teaching reading using multimodal text.

Findings and Discussion

- a. Findings
 - 1) Teacher's Beliefs

Related to the teacher's beliefs in teaching reading using multimodal text, the researcher divides some issues to explain the research findings dealing with the teacher's beliefs.

The first issue is what the teacher's definition about multimodal texts. The teacher defines multimodal text as a way of conveying messages with more than one mode. It can be defined as a text that presents information across variety of modes for example picture/ image, sound/ voice, video, gesture, expression, movement and body language. It is summarized from the result of interview.

First, the teacher defined multimodal in general. She said:

“Multimodal is a way, a media of conveying meaning that is not just in form of words or text, we can use any modes to convey meaning or information e.g. through pictures, sounds or voices, colors, expressions, gestures and movements. That is multimodal. Then for the definition of multimodal teaching and learning is a teaching and learning process that involves more than one way to deliver the material. It is not just limited to text, we can use various ways. For example, pictures and sound that frequently used in English teaching.”

Then, the teacher also defined multimodal texts from her understandings.

“Multimodal text is a text to convey the message in more than one mode, for example, when I was explaining poetry. I often teach literature. Poetry is usually only in the form of printed poetry. I have explored multimodal poem as a text and I applied that last semester. There was poetry that was videotaped, so they used the same image with the sound as the back sound that was in line with the content of the poem, so it was integrated.”

The next issue related to teacher's beliefs on the use of multimodal texts in teaching reading is the teacher's reasons to

use multimodal texts. The data shows that the teacher uses multimodal texts because she has concerned that multimodality is needed to be introduced to students in this digital era.

“I think it's technological development. Times have changed, so we get into a world that is multimodal. Many messages are conveyed without words, even only with pictures or with sound as symbols. So, we have to update, otherwise the learning will become bored and not attractive to students. Second, because here it is actually allowed to use a cellphone. You can bring your cellphone to school, actually it can be used, for example browsing for material or sending assignments that are multimodal digital is very easy, right?”

Although, not all of basic competences can be developed in the form of multimodality, she tried to find suitable material in some aspects. She also said that the use of multimodal in teaching English is very useful, teachers can involve many modes, such as images, sounds, videos, gestures, and movements of our bodies to convey messages.

The third issue of teacher's beliefs on the use of multimodal texts in teaching reading is the importance of multimodal texts. The teacher believes that multimodal texts can motivate the students in which teacher should bring something new in the classroom. She believes that multimodal texts can make the students interested to join the learning process. The use of modes in multimodal can be an innovation for teaching English in the class.

Furthermore, the teacher said that the use of multimodal texts is helpful to be used in this condition. Since the teaching and learning activity is online based classroom, she often provides multimodal texts in her teaching activity especially in teaching reading. “It is helpful, especially for distance learning used in current

situation.” The teacher also said that providing multimodality-based material for online teaching can help her to achieve students’ understanding about the material she teaches. “Effective. it helps the students to understand the texts and helps its implementation of distance learning.”

The next issue related to multimodal text in teaching reading is how the teacher believes in teaching reading using multimodal text. It explains how the teacher uses multimodal text in teaching reading in the classroom. The teacher's activities in teaching students using multimodal texts reflect their beliefs. In the previous section, it was stated that the teacher believed that multimodal text was a way of conveying messages with more than one mode. She assumed that multimodal texts, especially in teaching reading, can help students understand messages in text and could also include reading indicators that have to be achieved.

“in reading, we cover that. Multimodal helps in understanding the text, for example, for the vocabulary. It is related to how deliver the material. It can also go to the topic, for example I want a text that discuss something, for example, global warming, so when I shows the video, global warming means that I have targeted the topic ...”

As the teacher said that not all of basic competences can be developed in the form of multimodality, she tried to find suitable material in some aspects. She also said that multimodal texts can be used in some topics, she had used it in some materials in teaching reading.

“It can be used, but I might not be able to do it for all basic competences, because the preparation is a bit complicated. So, it can be used all of them, for example in reading, we provide pictures that provide technical terms, for example what I mentioned earlier. For multimodal, for example, to discuss grammar, you can, in fact there are many media that already

exist on the internet, for example, such as teaching grammar through songs or interesting power points that are multimodal exists. Continue to dialogue, the dialogue is even extraordinary because there are many videos or whatever. So, in my opinion, everything can actually enter multimodal, it can be used for almost all English materials.”

“I use multimodal text a lot for a variety of materials. Some examples:

- a. Report text about technology
- b. Descriptive text (tourist attractions)
- c. Recount text about historical events
- d. Poem
- e. Short story
- f. Analytical exposition
- g. Hortatory exposition
- h. Brochures, pamphlets, leaflets
- i. Letter of invitation
- j. Congratulations (Congratulating Someone in the form of a greeting card)”

The next issue is related to the difficulties of using multimodal text in teaching reading. The teacher said that the difficulties of using multimodal texts in teaching reading is on the preparation of the materials. She stated that it would be easy if teachers just give a text to their students. For teachers that provide different way of teaching that is multimodal, they have to find suitable materials e.g. video, audio that relate to the topic of material. Another difficulty is on the test. The teacher thinks if the test is multimodal, it will spend much time to prepare the test. For example, to prepare reading test that is multimodal, teachers have to find not only such kind of text, but also some pictures and questions that relate to the pictures.

“Preparation, preparation of the presented materials. Actually, it would be very easy if you just gave the text, students read this. But, if we are going to present it in a different way from multimodal, we have to look for the right material, for

example, there is a video explaining about this. The first is the preparation. Second, maybe the test, I have never tried a multimodal test, so I imagine if the test has to be multimodal it also takes quite a bit of time to prepare, because I imagine if the reading text is multimodal it is not just a text, right? Pictures, then there are questions about the picture, etc.”

Second, as the teacher said the difficulty faced by teachers in using multimodal texts in teaching reading is teachers’ motivation to know and learn more about multimodal teaching and learning, especially multimodal texts in teaching reading.

“To overcome the obstacles, what should we do if we are teachers is reading, we must be rich in resources, browse a lot. Actually, that's all. Looking for the suitable material. Everything is provided in the internet, but sometimes it doesn't suitable with the topic. for example, if we want a biographical text, the biographical text is about RA Kartini, if the picture is easy, later looking for the right audio. Something like that.”

2) Teacher’s Practices

Practically, the researcher identifies an interactive relationship between teacher’s beliefs and the practice of teaching reading using multimodal texts. The result of the observation also showed that multimodal text is used well in the classroom. The teacher tended to choose some kinds of multimodal text to teach English, especially reading. The teacher also provided the material in the form of multimodal texts in which involve several modes. In the first meeting, the teacher provided a picture that relates to the topic discussed. Another multimodal material used by the teacher is video that the students can find it individually in YouTube. The teacher also used

Moreover, the objectives of lesson are students are expected to able to identify social functions, text structure, and

linguistic elements in the report text. Through reading activities and multimodal material used, students are expected to be able to analyze topics, the main thoughts of paragraphs, explain explicit and implied information, analyze word references and identify the meaning of words in the report text. The students are actively involved during teaching and learning process.

b. Discussion

Concerning with the result of the previous section, it can be explained theoretically that teacher’s teaching activity in the classroom is influenced by her beliefs. The results show that teacher has strong belief toward the use of multimodal texts in teaching reading reflected to their ways of teaching. At this point, the teacher’s way of teaching depends on how she believes about the definition of multimodal texts itself, what are her reasons in using multimodal texts, how the teacher sees the importance of multimodal texts in general, multimodal texts in teaching reading, and the difficulties of using multimodal texts in teaching reading.

The researcher identifies some aspects that shapes teacher’s beliefs. The identified aspect is teacher’s understanding toward multimodal texts. From the findings, the teacher believes that multimodal text is a way of conveying messages with more than one mode. It can be defined as a text that presents information across variety of modes for example picture/ image, sound/ voice, video, gesture, expression, movement and body language. It is in line with Jewitt and Kress (2003) who said that Multimodal texts present information across a variety of modes including visual images, design elements, written language, and other semiotic resources.

The other aspect that shapes teacher’s beliefs is reasons to use multimodal texts. Since the teacher understands about multimodal learning, the teacher has concerned that multimodality is needed to be introduced to students in this digital era.

Although, not all of basic competences can be used in the form of multimodality, she tries to find suitable material in some aspects. She also said that the use of multimodal in teaching English is very useful, teachers can involve many modes, such as images, sounds, videos, gestures and movements of our bodies to convey messages. It makes multimodal text beneficial to be used in teaching reading to the students. Some of these reasons are in line with Teaching reading in English language learning settings, and in the context of education more generally, is influenced by the purpose of reading and by changes in the nature of the text caused by the impact of digital technology on reading practice (Chan and Zheng, 2017).

Besides identifying teacher's beliefs, the researcher also describes how multimodal text is used in teaching reading. Multimodal text is used well in the classroom. The teacher provided the material in the form of multimodal texts in which involve several modes. The objectives of lesson are students are expected to able to identify social functions, text structure, and linguistic elements in the report text. Through reading activities, students are expected to be able to analyze topics, the main thoughts of paragraphs, explain explicit and implied information, analyze word references and identify the meaning of words in the report text.

Teaching reading using multimodal texts is such a new technique since the needs of students in getting new experience in this digital era. It can help the teacher to improve the students understanding in learning English. Since the use of modes in multimodal can be an innovation for teaching English in the class, the teacher believes that multimodal texts can motivate the students in which teacher should bring something new in the classroom. She believes that multimodal texts can make the students interested to join the learning process. Ganaphaty (2016) suggested that students' reading

difficulties can be motivated with the use of multimodal texts as they are more easily comprehended with the aid of other supporting modes such as visuals and sounds. However, the scenario is the opposite when teachers use print-based texts with focus on textual mode. Multimodal texts enrich students' learning experiences and provide them a wider grasp of knowledge and skills and this is supported by Walsh (2010).

Conclusion

Teacher who is the participant of this research has strong belief toward the use of multimodal texts in teaching reading reflected to their ways of teaching. At this point, the teacher's way of teaching depends on how she believes about the definition of multimodal texts itself, what are her reasons in using multimodal texts, how the teacher sees the importance of multimodal texts in general, multimodal texts in teaching reading, and the difficulties of using multimodal texts in teaching reading.

Multimodal texts are implemented well in the classroom. The teacher provided the material in the form of multimodal texts in which involve several modes. Moreover, the objectives of lesson are students are expected to able to identify social functions, text structure, and linguistic elements in the report text. Through reading activities and multimodal material used, students are able to analyze topics, the main thoughts of paragraphs, explain explicit and implied information, analyze word references and identify the meaning of words in the report text. The students are actively involved during teaching and learning process.

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