

## **A Synopsis of Researches on Teachers' and Students' Beliefs about Language Learning**

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**Abstract:** *This paper is an attempt to provide a brief review of teachers' and students' beliefs about language learning. Language learning scholars have different definitions for language learning beliefs because these beliefs are different in different contexts. Investigating language teachers' and students' beliefs are crucial because they affect language teaching and learning process. Teachers' beliefs influence what they do in the classroom, their practice, their attitude, and their students' belief. Students' beliefs affect their motivation, attitude, achievement, proficiency, anxiety, success, , behavior and language learning strategy use. Some of these beliefs are positive and some of them are negative. According to scholars in the field the negative beliefs should be eliminated because they are detrimental to language learning. This paper reviews the approaches for investigating language learning beliefs, the studies on teachers and students' beliefs, and the nature of teachers' beliefs.*

**Keywords:** *Teachers' beliefs, Students' beliefs, Language learning*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Richardson (1996) defined beliefs as psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are held to be true. Beliefs are central constructs in every discipline which deals with human behavior and learning. Beliefs help individuals to define and understand the world and themselves, and they are instrumental in defining tasks and play a critical role in defining behavior (White, 1999). Foreign language learning is almost certainly the subject of many firm beliefs and convictions among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners and these beliefs almost certainly affect language learning.

The deeply held beliefs that most learners appear to have about second language learning have received a lot of attention in recent years. Researchers have found that second language learners come to the language class with some preconceived beliefs about language and language learning and these beliefs can indicate what expectations the learners have and what actions in their language learning they will take (Horwitz, 1987; Wenden, 1987). It is said that learners' beliefs cause them to approach a specific language learning task differently and account for the individual differences observed even among learners with similar language proficiency (Mori, 1999). As Horwitz (1985, 1987, and 1999) insisted, understanding the beliefs of learners is important because it helps teachers to understand learners' approaches to language learning and learners' use of learning strategies better, so that they can plan language instruction appropriately.

Teacher's beliefs exist on many levels from global to personal and serve as overarching frameworks for understanding and engaging with the world. They can be thought of as guiding principles for teachers that serve as lenses through which new experiences can be understood. Teachers' beliefs guide their decision-making, behavior, and interactions with students and shape their planning and curricular decisions, in effect determining what should be taught and path instruction should follow.

### **2. BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Beliefs about language learning, as well as other cognitive and affective variables, have become an interest of researchers in the field of second language acquisition because of assumptions that "success depends less on materials, techniques, and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom" (Stevick, 1980, p.4). According to Stevick, *what*

*goes on inside* learners, which includes learners' beliefs, seems to have a strong impact on learners' learning process.

Researchers have long claimed that people possess some preconceived ideas about various issues and that these beliefs can influence their understanding of and reactions towards new information. Puchta (1999), for instance, claimed that beliefs are "guiding principles" of people's behaviors. He elaborated that beliefs "are generalizations about cause and effect, and they influence our inner representation of the world around us. They help us to make sense of that world, and they determine how we think and how we act" (pp. 68-69). According to Puchta, people interpret new information and react to it on the basis of preexisting ideas about the particular subject.

Alike, second and foreign language learners do not come to class without ideas about the nature and process of the learning. They have some presumptions about what language learning is and how a second language should be learned (Horwitz, 1987). These preexisting beliefs are claimed to have influential impacts on learner's approaches and behaviors in the learning process (Horwitz, 1987; White, 1999). Some researchers proposed that some beliefs are beneficial to learners while others argue that some beliefs can lead to negative effects on language learning. For instance, Mantle-Bromley (1995) suggested that learners who have positive attitudes and realistic language-related beliefs are more likely to behave in a more productive way in learning than those who have negative attitudes and mistaken beliefs. Similarly, Mori (1999) claimed that positive beliefs can compensate for learners' limited abilities. In contrast, Horwitz (1987) was concerned that some misconceptions or erroneous beliefs may undermine learners' success in language learning.

With these assumptions about how beliefs can affect learners' behaviors and success, researchers in second language acquisition have been investigating learners' beliefs about language learning for more than two decades with the hope that an understanding about the beliefs that second and foreign language learners bring to class may help them design language classes and curricular that accommodate learners' beliefs. In addition, beliefs that can potentially cause negative effects on learners' success in language learning are hoped to be refined.

### **3. DEFINITIONS OF BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Some researchers viewed beliefs about language learning as a part of metacognitive knowledge; however, Wenden (1998) claimed that in second and foreign language literature, these two terms are used interchangeably to refer to the same construct. The term, beliefs about language learning, were not clearly defined by researchers in previous studies. It seems either that the researchers assumed that the term can be understood intuitively or that the construct is too complex to be operationalized. In most studies, the term, *beliefs about language learning*, is used as a known construct without providing further explanation while some studies define the term *beliefs* alone.

Even Elaine Horwitz, one of the pioneer researchers of the studies on beliefs about language learning, did not give an operational definition of *beliefs about language learning* in her articles (Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988). She only refers to "beliefs" using the terms such as *preconceptions* (1985), *preconceived ideas* (1987), and *preconceived notions* (1988) without giving specific descriptions about the construct. In the important statement used to introduce her instrument, the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), which has become one of the most widely used instruments in studies on beliefs about language learning, she used the word *opinions* to refer to beliefs, the construct that the inventory is aimed for. She stated, "The Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory was developed to assess student opinions on a variety of issues and controversies related to language learning" (1987, p.120).

In a number of studies, the definition of *beliefs* alone is provided. Nevertheless, researchers do not seem to have reached the same consensus about the meaning of beliefs. Because of its complexity, it may be difficult to generate a fixed set of meaning or to be defined precisely. Pajares (1992) stated that, "defining beliefs is at best a game of player's choice" (p. 309). Further, he provided that an extensive list of words like the one below can be found in the literature as a reference of *beliefs*:

“attitude, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoires of understanding, and social strategy”(p. 309).

Pajares (1992) pointed out that a confusion researchers have in defining the term *beliefs* is the distinction between beliefs and knowledge; some argue that they are the same whereas others perceive that they are different. Pajares concluded that a distinction used commonly in most definitions is that “Belief is based on evaluation and judgment; knowledge is based on objective fact” (p. 313). Consistently, the definitions used in studies on beliefs about language learning seem to reflect this argument. The followings are some definitions of beliefs used in previous studies:

Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000) defined beliefs as “a set of conceptual representations which signify to its holder a reality or given state of affairs of sufficient validity, truth or trustworthiness to warrant reliance upon it as a guide to personal thought and action” (p. 388). Peacock’s (2001) operational definition of beliefs, adopted from Richardson (1996), is “psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true” (p. 178). Huang (1997) viewed beliefs about language learning as “preconceptions language learners have about the task of learning the target language” (p. 29). Kunt (1997) and Wang (1996) used the terms “opinions” and “ideas” or “views” to refer to “beliefs.” The definitions of beliefs used in these studies project some level of subjective, judgmental value, as suggested by Pajares (1992).

#### **4. APPROACHES TO THE INVESTIGATION OF LANGUAGE LEARNING BELIEFS (LLB)**

To investigate human’s beliefs in SLA, there are several approaches. To Kajala (1995), human beliefs can be investigated through two approaches: the mainstream approach and the discursive approach. In the former, the focus is on describing beliefs as cognitive entities in learners’ mind. The mentioned approach describes beliefs as stable, statable, and fallible. The discursive approach, in contrast, takes into account the function of beliefs and investigates them in talks and writing. The discursive beliefs hold beliefs as socially constructed and variable from one person to another as well as from context to another. Barcelos (2000) divided studies about LLB into three approaches: (a) the normative approach, which infers beliefs from a pre-determined set of statements; (b) the metacognitive approach, which infers beliefs from students’ self-reports and interviews; and (c) the contextual approach, which uses ethnography, narratives, and metaphors to investigate LLB.

The normative approach is associated with its leading figure Horwitz who developed Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) in 1985. In this approach researchers either use the BALLI ( Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Su, 1995) or adapt/modify it (Mantle-Bromley, 1995). Other researchers (Kuntz, 1996; Victori; 1992) develop their own questionnaires for studying LLB. The use of this highly structured questionnaire demonstrated that in the normative approach students’ beliefs are considered rather static and stable mental representations and it is thus, according to Kalaja (1995: 193), not possible to study them directly. But by using questionnaire the researchers can investigate beliefs with large samples and at outside contexts. According to Barcelos (2000) LLB are seen as synonymous with preconceived notions, misconceptions, and opinions. Consequently, in order to help individual language learners to create more realistic goals, reduce anxiety and develop more effective learning strategies these misconceptions need to be identified and rectified.

In metacognitive approach, researchers do not use questionnaires for studying beliefs. Rather, they use interviews and self-reports. In this approach as the name says beliefs are defined as metacognitive knowledge. Most studies in this approach are done by Wenden (1986, 1987). Wenden’s (1986) basic assumption is that learners do not think about their language learning process and are able to articulate some of their beliefs. Wenden (1986) found that learners were able to talk about the language, their proficiency in language, the outcome of their language learning endeavors, their role in the language learning process, and the best approach to language learning. Barcelos (2000) comments that this approach allows students to use their own words, elaborate, and reflect about their language learning experiences, but it fails to explain the functions that beliefs play in students’ contexts. In addition, beliefs are not inferred from actions, but from intentions and statements only.

In the contextual approach, researchers do not employ questionnaire or interview. The basic idea behind this approach is combining different methods to interpret students' beliefs in their contexts. Thus, the perspective is emic. The investigation usually involves classroom observation or other methods that are grounded in students' own interpretive meanings and perspectives (Barcelos, 2000). Kalaja (1995) stresses that within the contextual approach students' beliefs can be seen as socially constructed, emerging from interaction with others, and consequently as non-cognitive and social in nature. Furthermore, in the contextual approach beliefs are indeed considered as dynamic and situated in nature, which implies that different contexts and experiences have an impact on the emergence and construction beliefs (Dufva, et al., 2007). Nevertheless, some studies in this approach still fail to investigate the evolution of learners' beliefs and the interaction between beliefs and actions. Furthermore, because it looks at beliefs in depth, this approach seems more suitable with small samples only and it is time consuming (Barcelos, 2000).

## 5. STUDIES ON LEARNER BELIEFS

Understanding learner beliefs – including beliefs about the time needed to attain fluency, the relative difficulties of languages, the right age to start language learning, the roles of grammar, vocabulary and communication in language learning and other aspects of the learning process – in this context is essential, since it has been noted that successful learners develop insightful beliefs about language learning processes, their own abilities, and the use of effective learning strategies, which have a facilitative effect on learning (Franklin-Guy, 2006; Yang, 1999). On the other hand, students can have 'mistaken', uninformed or negative beliefs, which may lead to a reliance on less effective strategies, resulting in a negative attitude towards learning experiences, classroom anxiety, and negative self-concepts (Frugé, 2007; Horwitz, et al., 1986; Huang, 2006).

At present, the prime data-collection instrument used for researching learner beliefs about language learning is the 34-item Likert-scale BALLI, prepared by Horwitz in 1985 to use on her foreign language teacher training course – she asked her trainees to question their beliefs about language learning. The BALLI has been widely used in different contexts and cultures to evaluate EFL/ESL students' beliefs. For example, in Iran (Ghobadi & khodadady, 2011), China (Zhang & Cui, 2010), Hong Kong (Peacock, 2001), Hungary (Rieger, 2009), Malaysia (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006), Thailand (Fujiwara, 2011), Vietnam (Bernat, 2004). The BALLI has also been used in three fairly large-scale American studies (Horwitz 1988; Kern 1995; Mantle-Bromley 1995). In 1988, Horwitz researched the beliefs of a number of first-semester foreign language learners at the University of Texas: 80 were studying German, 63 French, and 98 Spanish. Answers on some items seemed to differ from commonly held teacher perceptions. Her learners appeared to somewhat underestimate the difficulty of language learning: 43% of them said that if you spent one hour a day learning a foreign language, you would become fluent within two years, and a further 35% that it would take three to five years. Thirty-four percent agreed or strongly agreed that learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words, and 29% that it is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules. Fifty percent believed in the existence of foreign language aptitude, and 35% said that they had that aptitude. Finally, 71% stated that it is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent, while 50% said it is important to practice in the language laboratory.

Horwitz (1988, p.292) proposes that these gaps between teacher and learner beliefs probably result in "negative outcomes" for learners. Horwitz also suggests that a gap between teacher and learner beliefs can lead to reduced learner confidence in and satisfaction with the class and to an unwillingness to participate in 'communicative' activities (p. 290). In her final conclusions, she asserts that:

"Teachers will likely encounter ... many unanticipated beliefs, some enabling and some truly detrimental to successful language learning.. .foreign language teacher can ill afford to ignore those beliefs if they expect their students to be open to particular teaching methods and to receive the maximum benefit from them". (p. 293)

She suggests as an example that if students believe language learning means learning vocabulary and grammar rules, they will spend most of their time memorizing vocabulary lists and grammar rules rather than doing the tasks their teacher plans for them (p. 289).

Kern conducted a similar study with the BALLI in 1995 with 180 students of French as a second language at the University of Berkeley. Kern's conclusions are in the main similar to those put forward by Horwitz in 1988. However, Kern does comment (1995, p.76) that compared to Horwitz's students, his students' beliefs seem to be somewhat more in line with "current thinking in foreign language pedagogy". He also checked learner beliefs twice, at the beginning and the end of one semester, to see if his learners' beliefs changed over time. He found very little change over the whole semester, and concluded that learner beliefs do not automatically change when learners are merely exposed to new methods, and that learner beliefs were "quite well entrenched" (p. 76).

Mantle-Bromley (1995) used the BALLI (with five items omitted) to investigate the beliefs of 208 seventh grade middle school students taking first-year French and Spanish in Kansas. While these students were much younger than the university students used in previous studies and in this study, the results are still of interest and importance, both for comparison and as a measure of the beliefs of younger learners beginning to learn a foreign language. Mantle-Bromley's results indicate, as did Horwitz's and Kern's, that some of her students' beliefs about language learning differed from commonly held teachers' beliefs. It is interesting that her learners underestimated the difficulty of language learning to a greater extent than Horwitz's and Kern's.

Mantle-Bromley's conclusions are similar to those of Horwitz and of Kern. She stresses that teachers need to have a clear understanding of foreign language students' beliefs, because learners with realistic and informed beliefs are more likely to behave productively in class, work harder outside class, and (crucially) persist longer with language study. Finally, she proposes that when student beliefs and performance do not match, they "become frustrated with the class and with themselves" (p. 381) and that certain misinformed "beliefs and expectations may actually prove harmful to their success in the classroom" (p. 383).

Ghobadi and Khodadady (2011) investigated the language learning beliefs of 423 university learners of English in Iran based on BALLI questionnaire. They found that teachers should be aware of learners' beliefs of language learning as well as their own in order to assist less successful language learners to become successful.

In his study of 284 students of English and French in Lebanon, Diab (2006) supported the general contention that different cultural backgrounds, background variables within group and variation in a particular group's belief about learning different target languages are influential factors on learner belief. Findings indicated that learning a foreign language seemed to be related to the political and socio-cultural context.

Bernat (2006) found that the beliefs held by participants in the Australian and American context were similar in all categories. Learners who hold unrealistic beliefs were reported more anxious; and the more proficient learners were reported to have more realistic or positive beliefs. Statistically significant differences were also claimed with respect to gender. Siebert's (2003) findings revealed that males were much more optimistic about their own abilities and the length of time it would take them to learn English, and they were almost twice as likely as females to endorse excellent pronunciation, and more than twice as likely to view grammar learning as the most important part of language acquisition.

Yang's (1999) study examined the relationship between the beliefs of 500 Taiwanese students and their selection of strategies. It was revealed that the students reported a strong sense of self-efficacy about learning English, placed a high value on learning spoken English, on the importance of repetition and practice, and agreed with the notion of various aptitudes for special abilities for foreign language learning. The researcher concluded, as beliefs about language learning can affect the use of strategies, learning strategies may also influence learners' beliefs about language learning. Banya and Chea (1997) found that students with positive beliefs about foreign language learning tended to have stronger motivation, hold favorable attitudes and higher motivational intensity, use more strategies, are less anxious, have better language achievement and are more proficient.

Research on the topic since Horwitz's pioneering study in 1985 has indicated that some of these beliefs are detrimental to student learning (Bernat, 2006; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Bakker, 2008; Horwitz, 1988; Le, 2004; Peacock, 1999). In an extensive study on 428 monolingual Korean and

420 bilingual Korean-Chinese university students, Hong (2006) investigated the relationship between the learners' beliefs and their learning strategy use and also the influence of background variables. Significant influences of the individual variables of academic major and self-rated English proficiency on strategy use and beliefs concerning language learning were found. Hong (2006) declared that a reciprocal correlation between learner's beliefs and strategy use might exist instead of a causal relationship between them.

Brindley (1984) points out that learners' beliefs particularly if they come from an Asian cultural background, are more likely to be these:

- Learning consists of acquiring a body of knowledge.
- The teacher has this knowledge and the learner does not.
- It is the role of the teacher to impart this knowledge to the learner through such activities as explanation, writing, and example.
- The teacher will be given a program in advance.
- Learning a language consists of learning the structural rules of the language and the vocabulary through such activities as memorization, reading, and writing.

## 6. THE NATURE OF TEACHERS' BELIEFS

A primary source of teachers' classroom practices is belief systems – the information, attitudes, values, expectations, theories, and assumptions about teaching and learning that teachers built up over time and bring with them to the classroom (Richards, 1998). It is for this reason that an investigation of teachers' beliefs is necessary in order to gain a better understanding of what goes on in the classroom (Borg, 2001). Green (1971) and Pajares (1992) divided teachers' belief system into core and peripheral beliefs. Core beliefs are stable and exert a more powerful influence on behavior than peripheral beliefs. The study of relationship and in particular of differences or tensions between teachers' beliefs and practices can be enhanced through attention to distinction between these beliefs subsystem (Phillips & Borg, 2009). Shavelson and Stern (1981) suggest that what teachers do is governed by what they think, and that teachers' theories and beliefs serve as a filter through which a host of instructional judgments and decisions are made. Cumming (1989) points out that the kinds of practical knowledge which the teachers use in teaching appear to exist largely in very personalized terms, based on unique experiences, individual conceptions, and their interactions with local contexts. It tends to have a personal significance which differs from prescribed models of educational theory.

Burns (1992) investigated the beliefs of six ESL teachers and identified a core of underlying beliefs that appeared to influence their approach to language teaching and their instructional practices. These beliefs related to:

- the nature of language as it relates to beginning language learning
- the relationship between written and spoken language in beginning language learning
- the nature of beginning language learning and the strategies relevant to language learning at this stage
- learners, their ability to learn, and their ability to learn English
- the nature of the language classroom and the teacher's role within it

Of the latter beliefs, Burns comments that the establishment of positive and nonthreatening classroom "dynamics" was considered to be a crucial element of the language classroom. Teachers saw themselves as having central role and responsibility in facilitating good relationships among students and between themselves and their students. This represents "the mirror image" of the concern with affective learning factors and is viewed as an essential contribution to such thing as building confidence, making learner feel "comfortable" and "at ease," lessening their passivity and helping them to relate positively to each other (p.92).

The extensive literature on teachers' beliefs both in education generally and language teaching specifically, as reviewed by Phipps and Borg (2009) indicates that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning:

- may be powerfully influenced (positively or negatively) by teachers' own experiences as learners and are well established by the time teachers go to university
- act as a filter through which teachers interpret new information and experience
- may outweigh the effect of teacher education in influencing what teachers do in the classroom
- can exert a persistent long-term influence on teachers' instructional practices
- are, at the same time, not always reflected in what teachers do in the classroom
- interact bi-directionally with experience (i.e. beliefs influence practices and practices can also lead to changes in beliefs)
- have a powerful effect on teachers' pedagogical decisions
- strongly influence what and how teachers learn during language teaching education
- can be deep-rooted and resistant to change.

The source of teachers' beliefs or the ways in which teachers actually develop their beliefs is another point to take into consideration. Kindsvatter, Willen, and Ishler (1988) suggest the following sources of teachers' beliefs:

**1. Teachers' experience as language learners.** All teachers have undergone a phase in which they were learners and reflection about how they were taught contribute to forming their beliefs about teaching.

**2. Experience from teaching.** Teaching experience can be primary source of teachers' beliefs, by witnessing how a particular method works for a particular group of students might lead to the beliefs about such a method.

**3. Teachers' own personality.** Some teachers have a preference for a particular teaching method or activity simply because it matches their personality.

**4. Experience from the school, parents, the government, and the local society.** Within a school, an institution or a community, certain teaching styles or methods may be preferred. Furthermore, a method or an approach rooted in a community or a school system for quite some time might be taken for granted as the most effective.

**5. Education-based or research-based principles.** Teachers might derive their belief system for learning principles of second language acquisition research, education or even schools of thoughts such as psychology.

## 7. STUDIES ON TEACHER BELIEFS

Several studies have investigated beliefs about the language learning of both in-service and pre-service teachers. These studies were designed based on the hypothesis that teacher beliefs may influence student beliefs through instructional practices. Johnson (1994) concluded that research on teachers' beliefs share three basic assumptions. First, teachers' beliefs influence both perception and judgment which, in turn, affects what teachers say and do in the classroom. Second, teachers' beliefs play a critical role in how teachers learn to teach, that is, how they interpret new information about learning and teaching and how that information is translated into the classroom practices. And third, understanding teachers' beliefs is essential to improving teaching practices and professional teacher preparation programs.

Two studies compared student beliefs with teacher belief. Peacock (1999) compared the beliefs of 202 students and 45 university ESL teachers, and found several broad differences, notably on Horwitz's two core beliefs about vocabulary and grammar. 62% of students believed that "Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words", but only 18% of teachers agreed. Peacock concluded that students with this belief may focus on memorizing vocabulary lists, to the exclusion of teacher-directed task. He suggested that students may also be very dissatisfied with a teacher who does not emphasize the learning of vocabulary in classroom tasks, materials, and homework. 64% of students believed that "Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules", while only 7% of teachers agreed. It was concluded that students with this belief might focus on memorizing grammar rules, to the exclusion of other tasks. Peacock also proposed that students could become very dissatisfied with a teacher who does not emphasize grammar in, for example, classroom tasks and marking essays.

57% of learners believed that “People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent” but only 18% of teachers agreed. It was concluded that students may blame difficulty, slow progress, and failure on lack of intelligence, leading to further frustration, dissatisfaction, and disillusionment. Samimy and Lee (1997) report very similar findings, though with a much smaller number of subjects (34 students and 10 teachers).

Peacock (2001) did a longitudinal study that investigated changes in the beliefs about second language learning of 146 trainee ESL teachers over their 3-year program in Hong Kong. It was hoped that while trainees might have some mistaken ideas about language learning at the beginning of the program, these beliefs would change as they studied TESL methodology. First-year trainee beliefs about language learning were collected using BALLI and compared with teacher beliefs. Differences were found in three key areas. Developmental changes were subsequently tracked in groups of trainees as they went through their second and third years of study. Disturbingly, no significant changes were found. Conclusions were that considerable efforts should be made to eliminate any detrimental trainee beliefs before they start teaching.

Breen (1991) examined the beliefs about language learning of 63 experienced teachers of second languages undertaking a master’s degree in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Lancaster. Their average teaching experience was 7 years. He theorized that teaching behaviors are based on a “personal conceptualization of the teaching-learning process” (p.215). The subjects were asked to teach their first language to the L1 speakers on the same Master’s course, and keep a written record giving their reasons for why they did what they did as they taught these beginner lessons. Much of their teaching focused on “language as system” (p.230) including grammar, error correction, vocabulary and pronunciation and “a remarkably high proportion [of] the justifications for teaching behavior referred to ... retention in memory and recall of new material” (pp. 223-224). They also spent time on communicative skills: two possible reasons for this that Breen indirectly suggests (p.230) are they were teaching their peers, and that at the time of the experiment they were enrolled in a master’s program that focused on a communicative approach. Breen makes two useful proposals for research on beliefs about language learning and teaching. First, he suggests that investigators ask teachers to evaluate their beliefs on the basis of actual classroom events. Second, he proposes that one route to curriculum change (both in second language and teacher training) lies through the promotion of teacher reflection, particularly by encouraging teachers to make connections between classroom action and personal theory.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The researches on teachers’ and students’ beliefs which have been done up to now clearly show that there may be a significant difference between teachers and students in their beliefs about language learning and between in-service and pre-service teachers, leading to frustration and dissatisfaction. The researchers also indicate that the detrimental beliefs should be eliminated because they negatively affect language teaching and learning process.

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