

Implication of research on teacher belief

[Profession](#), [Teacher](#)



Teachers' beliefs can be understood as the assumptions that teachers hold about their students, classroom, subject matter, and school context (Kagan, as cited in Yuan; Lee, 2014). These beliefs can be stronger than knowledge in determining how teachers will behave in the classroom, since these beliefs are rooted in our culture; they start to form early in life, and they are resistant to change (Williams and Burden, 1997).

Proposed research problem

The beliefs of EFL teachers about the use of L1 in the teaching of English as a foreign language to teenage learners in public educational institutions.

Research statement

Undoubtedly, beliefs are an important issue in every area that is related to human behavior and learning (Ajzen, 1988). To Xu (2012), this is so because beliefs are involved in helping individuals make sense of the world, influencing how new information is perceived, and whether it is accepted or rejected.

In addition, beliefs color memories with their evaluation and judgment, and serve to frame our understanding of events. For their part, McLeod and McLeod (2002) state that beliefs help people make sense of the world around them, which means that what people understand and know is defined and affected by means of what they believe is true, necessary, desirable, or recommendable.

When it comes to teachers' beliefs, different authors claim that they have a greater effect than the teachers' knowledge on planning their lessons, on the

types of decisions they adopt, and on classroom practice. Not only do teachers' beliefs play a key role in teachers' classroom practices and their professional development, but also they influence teachers' real behaviors towards their learners (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Pajares, 1992; Li, 2012).

Similarly, Kuzborska (2011) maintains that teachers make decisions about their classroom teaching regarding beliefs they have about language teaching and learning. She emphasizes that teachers' beliefs have a great impact on their aims, procedures, their roles, and their learners. For their part, Phipps and Borg (2009) state that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning are affected by their own experiences as learners and act as filters through which they explain new information, take teaching decisions, plan instructional practices, and define what and how they teach.

On the other hand, the role of the students' first language (L1) and its influence on the target language (TL) has long been a controversy. To some authors, the TL should be the only medium of communication, because the foreign language is best learned and taught through the language itself.

For them, the avoidance of the L1 would maximize the effectiveness of learning the TL because maximum exposure to TL guarantees greater levels of acquisition and command. Additionally, they claim that the use of MT may obstruct the learning of LT due to language interference (Cook, 2001; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Other authors, however, claim that the use of L1 can be helpful in most classroom activities, such as learning new vocabulary items, explaining complex ideas, studying grammatical rules, or studying cultural elements.

Moreover, a judicious and well-planned use of the students' L1 can give positive results in reducing anxiety, demotivation, and identity alienation. In fact, most EFL teachers and students often resort to L1 during the learning and teaching process. Consequently, it is important to study and understand what teachers believe about the use of L1, how they use it and to what extent it can become a teaching resource in the EFL classroom.

Problem formulation

In virtue of the above, the present research proposal seeks the recognition of the beliefs of teachers about the use of the first language (L1) in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) in public educational institutions; concretely, it attempts to understand the basic nature of those beliefs. Consequently, this proposal aims at answering the following research questions:

Primary research question

- What do teachers believe about the use of L1 in the teaching of English as a foreign language to teenage learners in public educational institutions?

Secondary research questions

- What types of beliefs do teachers have about the use of L1 in the teaching of EFL to teenage learners in public educational institutions?
- What characteristics do teachers' beliefs about the use of L1 have in terms of nature and purpose?

In regards to the previous research questions, the proposal aims at achieving the following objectives:

General objective

- Identify the beliefs that teachers have about the use of L1 in the teaching of English as a foreign language to teenage learners in public educational institutions.

Specific objectives

- Recognize the types of beliefs that teachers have about the use of L1 in the teaching of EFL to teenage learners in public educational institutions.
- Characterize teachers' beliefs about the use of L1 in terms of nature and purpose.