



RESEARCH PAPER

Teachers' Beliefs and Practices of Teaching English as a Second Language

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ABSTRACT

The research explored the correlation between teachers' beliefs and practices of teaching English as a second language to elementary classes. The relationship was explored regarding three areas, i.e. beliefs and practices about content, pedagogy, and assessment. Three objectives were formulated to determine secondary school teachers' beliefs and practices. The researcher formulated nine research questions, three research questions against each objective. The researcher developed two instruments for data collection. The first questionnaire was on teachers' beliefs about teaching English (QTBTE) and the second was about English teachers' teaching observation schedule (ETTOS). Therefore, the researcher selected the sample in two ways-Sample for the survey to collect data on beliefs through QTBTE and a sample for observation (to collect data on practices through ETTOS). Results revealed an insignificant relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices.

Keywords: Second Language, Teachers' Beliefs, Teachers' Practices, Teaching Profession

Introduction

The studies on teachers' beliefs and practices regarding EFL in the last two decades proved a lack of integration (Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020). Teachers' beliefs play an important role in students' second language learning and have an impact on students' achievement inside the classroom. It is important to explore teachers' beliefs towards classroom teaching as research has demonstrated that teachers' beliefs regarding teaching English, bound teachers' to approach differently towards language learning inside the classroom. Freeman and Freeman (2003) reported that a teacher must know his/her teaching beliefs to improve the practice of teaching. Johnson (1992) claimed that all teachers come to the job with pre-established beliefs in language teaching, which assist them to make practice; a teacher must know his/her teaching beliefs to improve the practice of teaching. Calderón et al. (2011) reported that teachers who go through the same training program focus on different language approaches. Moreover, the role of leaders' moral Authority is critical in developing teachers' beliefs (Ishaque & Zaman, 2022; Ishaque et al., 2018).

National Education Policy (1998-2010) has viewed that, access to education improves the quality of elementary education. The quality of teachers at the elementary level should be enhanced. Teachers should be trained in a way that they brought changes in their teaching styles and they should be provided training about i.e. learner-oriented teaching, active learning, critical thinking, creativity, and highly interactive, learner-centered teaching. They should be trained towards innovative methods of teaching in the classroom. Few studies also recommend measuring the role of emotions as an additional variable in the relationship between the beliefs and practices of EFL teachers (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017).

In Pakistan, there are a lot of categories with school systems that have a variety of learning goals, objectives, and assessment procedures regarding English subjects. Teachers

take different concepts differently and use different teaching methodologies in their classes. Therefore, these differences in teachers' beliefs are the main source of motivation to conducting this study, which explores teachers' beliefs, and their classroom practices regarding teaching English. It further finds out the correlation between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices regarding teaching English. However, teachers in Pakistan are not by choice but more are by chance and this is a possible reason for their reluctant behavior in doing proper practices in classrooms (Arshad et al., 2022). The present study deals to explore the relationship between Elementary level school teachers' (teachers who are teaching in secondary schools at elementary level classes) beliefs of teaching English as a second language i.e. (content beliefs, pedagogical beliefs, and assessment beliefs) and practices of the same beliefs in the classroom.

The English language is the language of International communication and no doubt, the language of technology all over the World. Over the last decade, research on teaching regarding language learning has provided evidence that teachers' beliefs influence their teaching during classroom practices. To make language learning to be more effective, there is a great need to explore the relationship between what the teachers believe and what they bring into the language classrooms. Moreover, the failure rate in English in Pakistan at matriculation, intermediate, degree level, and even competitive exams is very alarming. Many students give up their studies due to their fear of English (Gillani et al., 2012).

This reality may persuade the researcher to uncover the English language learning process by exploring the relationship between the teachers' beliefs and practices of teaching English as a second language. The researcher intended to explore whether the beliefs of English teachers are a hurdle in English language learning in elementary classes or if some other factor is contributing in this regard. Therefore, by conducting the present study researcher wants to find out a possible relationship between teachers beliefs and practices of teaching English as a second language in Pakistani context.

Literature Review

Primarily the concern of the present study was to explore the established relationship between two variables i.e. teachers' beliefs and their practices. A study was conducted at the elementary level to find out the relationship between two variables. Moreover, the researcher has tried to go through an adequate amount of previous work done by other researchers in the field of the English language. Previous work was viewed in different directions around language, to see the further possible gaps for conducting research in language. By reviewing the previous literature researcher got the initial idea for the present study and made the framework of the study in the Pakistani context. Following is some reviewed literature done by other researchers that provided the base for the present study.

Beliefs

Richardson (1996) explored that three things are combined to make teachers believe. These three things are the bases of their beliefs. There are three bases of teachers' beliefs i.e. teaching experience, experience as students, and knowledge of content during their teaching job. Gao (2014) said that we can learn about beliefs through teachers' classroom observation. It provides deep insight into teachers' beliefs in actual classroom practice. Observation is a tool to know about teachers' behavior regarding teaching. Teachers' beliefs are like knowledge, which affects their classroom activities. There are many categories of teachers along with different beliefs. Some of them have sound knowledge of teaching but they do not present that knowledge in the classroom. Many researchers in the field of teaching have explored that beliefs in the classroom are strong but practices are weak (Mansour, 2008).

Classroom Practices

All the classroom activities, which are designed to present the classroom material by the teacher, are known as classroom practices. These practices may include all the related techniques, methods, and strategies. Classroom practice makes a sound environment in the classroom for the implementation of the assessment process. Research contributed to the claim that teachers come to class with a contrast of their thoughts whereas the teachers' practices provide the base of the learning process in the classroom (Cotton, 1995).

It is investigated that beliefs and practices have interdependency with each other, but it is observed that practices and beliefs are sometimes looked contrast, and influence each other. Teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their classroom practices greatly influence each other and affect language learning. It also investigated in a study on the bases of some pre-established hypotheses that teachers are inconsistent with beliefs and practices (Judson, 2006).

The Impact of Teachers' Beliefs on L2

The development of Communicative Language Teaching started around 1960, as a reaction to the partial failure of previous approaches towards language learning. No doubt, the communicative language approach has become the most appealing language approach viewed that grammar is not as important as communication in the language learning process. They pointed out that grammar is the basic element in language teaching. Students need to get a basic understanding of grammar to communicate easily in a wide range of contexts. Grammar should give a clear comprehension to communicate in the language process. Communication toward language teaching is a very healthy approach, to use language in different situations and contexts. Shavelson and Stern (1981) stated that, Despite all the debate about language it is said by many researchers that teachers are responsible to make learners able to use language in daily life practices.

English Language Learning and Teaching in Classrooms

The teacher and learner are the two most important stakeholders in the language learning process. Language could be learned only when these are equally active in the classroom. It means that language-learning responsibility is a sharing process. Both teacher and student are involved in such a process.

Quist (2000) reported that teachers and students could not make progress in language until they interact with each other in the classroom environment. It is the process of mutual communication that enables the student to learn a language quickly. These are the students and teachers inside the secondary school who design their activities in language-learning classrooms. They discuss the subject; find difficulties and re-shape the content to make it practical in language learning.

Material and Methods

Design of the Study

The present study is descriptive because the pre-existing phenomenon, regarding teaching English as a second language i.e. teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices have been tried to explore by conducting the particular study. The data were collected through two instruments i.e. Questionnaire on teachers' beliefs about teaching English (QTBTE) and another instrument i.e. English teachers' teaching observation schedule (ETTOS). The data on teachers' beliefs and practices were collected to find the correlation between teachers' beliefs and practices. The researcher intended to explore the relationship

between teachers' reported beliefs and their actual classroom practices to see the possible relationship between beliefs and classroom practices.

The target population of the study was all the teachers teaching English at elementary classes in secondary-level schools, serving in public secondary schools situated in the jurisdiction of District Gujrat. The accessible population of the present study was all the public female schoolteachers in Tehsil Gujarat who were teaching English in elementary classes in secondary schools.

According to the school education department (SED) policy, two teachers are serving in every secondary and elementary school to teach the English language. There were 56 total secondary schools in Tehsil Gujrat, hence 112 teachers to teach English at elementary level classes in secondary schools were serving in Tehsil Gujrat. The researcher conveniently, selected 100 teachers (two from each school) from 50 schools who were teaching English to elementary classes in secondary schools to maximize the study for the survey and for collecting data through the questionnaire on teachers' beliefs about teaching English (QTBTE). The one reason to drop the 6 schools out of 56 schools (12 teachers, two from each school) in the study was that the 50 schools were sufficient to collect data for the survey. And the second reason was to drop the 12 teachers as the researcher may not reach those areas.

Sample for observation Researcher selected randomly 20 teachers, out of hundred (100) teachers, teaching English to elementary classes in secondary schools and conducted 40 observations i.e. (two observations of each teacher) and collected data on the English teachers 'teaching observation scale (ETTOS). The researcher used an observation scale twice so that the practices under investigation can be tabbed as occur in classrooms. Observing teacher practice again and again is a hectic task on the one hand while on the other hand interference in the teachers' teaching again and again creates a typicality and they performed consciously. Hence, the researcher limited her observation to two times not more than two times.

For data collection, the researcher used two instruments:

1. Questionnaire on Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching English (QTBTE)
2. English Teachers' Teaching Observation Scale (ETTOS)

The first instrument was a questionnaire to measure secondary school teachers' beliefs regarding English language teaching whereas the second instrument was an observation schedule to measure the teachers' classroom practices. Teachers' beliefs and practices were measured against three objectives each objective was addressed with research questions and each research question was followed by a number of items in each instrument of the study. There were a total of twenty-four items on beliefs. Similarly, twenty-four items were included regarding their practices, which were measured through observation.

The two instruments i.e. Questionnaire on teachers' beliefs about teaching English. (QTBTE) and ii. English teachers 'teaching observation scale (ETTOS) was developed and validated through expert opinion. All the faculty members of the Department of Education, University of Gujrat were requested to give suggestions about the language of items and clarity of statements of instruments. The instruments were validated through expert opinion and suggestions were revised. All Experts supported the researcher in the improvement of instruments. The validity of both research instruments i.e., teachers' questionnaire and teacher observation schedule were ensured.

Results and Discussion

Results in this section are reported based on descriptive and inferential statistics particularly using Pearson correlation.

Table 1
Mean Values of Teachers' Beliefs on Three different Dimensions

Dimensions of Beliefs	N	Mean	SD
Content beliefs	100	34.74	3.32
Pedagogical beliefs	100	34.18	3.48
Assessment beliefs	100	34.7	3.03

Table 1 displays teachers' beliefs on three dimensions i.e. content beliefs, pedagogical beliefs, and assessment beliefs. Values related to each dimension reflect teachers' beliefs on related dimensions. The mean score on three dimensions is interpreted as:

Factor -1: Mean score on content beliefs

In the above-shown table teachers' beliefs on factor one (content beliefs) regarding teaching English as a second language to elementary classes are reported. It shows that content beliefs value= (M=34.74) whereas=(S.D = 3.2), The given mean value of 34.74 is near the upper value of the pre-established range that is between 8-40. It indicates that teachers have strong knowledge regarding content beliefs as they reported on a very true level of choice.

Dimension 2: Mean score on pedagogical beliefs

Teachers' beliefs on factor two (pedagogical beliefs) regarding teaching English as a second language to elementary classes are reported. It shows that the value of the pedagogical belief is (M=34.18) whereas (S.D=3.49) The given mean value of 34.18 is near the upper range of the pre-established mean range that is between 8-40. It indicates that teachers are very true regarding pedagogical beliefs.

Dimension 3: Mean score on assessment beliefs

Teachers' beliefs on dimension three (assessment beliefs) regarding teaching English as a second language to elementary classes are reported. It shows that assessment beliefs value is=(M=34.70, SD=3.03) The given mean value is 34.70 whereas the mean range is between 8-40 indicating that teachers of public female schools, teaching English to elementary classes are "very true" regarding their assessment beliefs.

Table 2
Mean Values of Teachers' Practices on Three Different Dimensions

Dimensions of Practices	N	Mean	SD
Content practices	20	13.27	2.82
Pedagogical practices	20	11.32	1.54
Assessment practices	20	13.07	1.47

Table 2 displays teachers' practice on three dimensions i.e. content practices, pedagogical practices, and assessment practices. Values related to each factor reflect teachers' beliefs on related factors. The mean score on three factors is interpreted as:

Dimension1 Mean score on content practices

In Table 2, teachers' practices on dimension one (1) i.e. content practices regarding teaching English as a second language to elementary classes are reported in comparison with Table 3 which shows data regarding beliefs. It shows that the content practices value is

($M=13.27$) whereas the $(S.D = 2.82)$ the given mean value is 13.27 whereas the mean range is between 8-40 indicating that teachers never make practice against their reported beliefs.

Dimension 2 Mean score Pedagogical practices

In Table 2, teachers' practices on dimension two (2) i.e. pedagogical practices regarding teaching English as a second language to elementary classes are reported in comparison with Table 1 which shows data regarding pedagogical beliefs. It shows that pedagogical practices value is $(M=11.325)$ whereas $(S.D=1.549)$ the given mean value is 11.32 whereas the mean range is between 8-40 indicating that teachers never make practice against their reported beliefs belonging to pedagogy.

Dimension 3: Mean score on assessment practices

In Table 2, teachers' practices on dimension one (3) i.e. assessment practices regarding teaching English as a second language to elementary classes are reported in comparison with Table 1 which shows data regarding beliefs. It shows that the value on assessment practices $(M=13.07)$ whereas $(S.D=1.471)$. The given mean value is 13.07 whereas the mean range is between 8-40 indicating that teachers never make practice against their reported beliefs on assessment.

Dimension-wise Correlation

Factor 1 Correlation between content beliefs and content practices is shown in the following tables.

Table 3
Correlation between Content Beliefs and Content Practices

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Pearson r	p-value
Content Beliefs	20	34.74	3.32	0.406	.076
Content Practices	20	13.28	2.83		

Table 3 shows the relationship between content beliefs and content practices determined by applying Pearson r. value of pearson $r = 0.406$ is significant at $\alpha = 0.1$ as $p = 0.076 < \alpha = 0.1$. hence it is concluded that there exists a positive relationship ($r = 0.406$) between teachers' content beliefs and their content practices teaching to elementary classes serving in secondary schools of tehsil Gujrat. The value of Pearson $r = .406$ shows the medium relationship between teachers cont beliefs and their practices according to the criteria stated by Cohen (1981).

Dimension 1: Correlation regarding content beliefs and content practices

In Table 3, the correlation value is, $r = 0.406$ is insignificant because $p = .076 > 0.05$. This means that there is no relationship between content beliefs and content practices of teachers who are teaching English as a second language to elementary classes because the P value is greater than .05 which indicated an insignificant relationship between the two variables. It also showed the gaps between reported beliefs and observed practices on the factor (.1) content beliefs and content practices.

Dimension 2: The correlation between pedagogical beliefs and pedagogical practices is shown in the following table.

Table 4
Correlation between Pedagogical Beliefs and Pedagogical Practices

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Pearson r	p-value
Pedagogical beliefs	20	34.18	3.46	0.111	.641
Pedagogical practices	20	11.33	1.55		

In Table 4 the value of correlation is, $r=0.111$ is insignificant because $p=.641$. $>=0.05$. This means that there is an insignificant relationship between pedagogical beliefs and pedagogical practices of teachers teaching English as a second language to elementary classes because the p-value is greater than .05 which shows the insignificant relationship between the two variables. This shows the gaps between reported beliefs and observed practices on factor two that is regarding pedagogical beliefs and pedagogical practices.

Dimension 3: The correlation between Assessment beliefs and Assessment practices is shown in the following table.

Table 5
Correlation between Assessment Beliefs and Assessment Practices

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Pearson r	p-value
Assessment belief	20	34.70	3.033	0.267	.256
Assessment practices	20	13.075	1.471		

Dimension 3: Correlation regarding assessment beliefs and assessment practices

In Table 5, the correlation value is, $r=0.267$ is insignificant because $p=.256$. $>=0.05$ means that there is an insignificant relationship between the two variables, This means that there is a very low relationship between pedagogical beliefs and pedagogical practices of teachers teaching English as a second language to elementary classes because the P value is greater than .05 so there is insignificant relationship between two variables. This shows the gaps between reported beliefs and observed practices on factor two that is regarding pedagogical beliefs and pedagogical practices.

Discussion

The present study highlighted the teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices against three dimensions i.e. (i) content beliefs and content practices (ii) pedagogical beliefs and pedagogical practices (iii) assessment beliefs and assessment practices. The results have been discussed on these three factors in the following ways.

The value of correlation on dimension three (assessment beliefs) shows that teachers have gaps in practices and reporting beliefs. So it is highlighted that teachers have an insignificant relationship between their practices and beliefs. Many studies conducted in different countries also have the same results. Previously done studies reflected the same result regarding teachers' beliefs and practices to teach English in different classes as the researcher has explored in the Pakistani context.

A Case study conducted at Ming Sing University of Science and Technology in 2010 showed that teachers' beliefs and practices were different. This was such a case study, which used micro-examination to explore the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in English language classrooms. This study closely observed the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in the language classroom. Researchers observed teachers' practices against their grammar instruction beliefs in the classroom. Results of the study showed that teacher's beliefs and classroom practices in grammar Instruction were entirely different.

Bai and Yuan (2019) explored the relationship between the beliefs and practices of sixteen non-native teachers of English. The results of the study claimed that the teachers are

well aware of the importance of the subject and subject matter knowledge but they use to remain ill-prepared before joining the classroom.

Silva (2016) conducted a study on three Brazilian internship teachers. In this study, he explored teachers' beliefs in English language classrooms and observed their beliefs regarding English language teaching in the ESL classroom. The researcher explored how teachers' beliefs and practice regarding professional knowledge affected their teaching. Teachers' beliefs were explored through a questionnaire and in the second phase, they were observed against their practices. Results of the study reported that teachers were different in what they said and what they did in actual classroom situations

Another study conducted by Er (2013) that was about reading. Researchers explored teachers' beliefs regarding English language reading and observed the teachers' practices according to their reported beliefs. The practices observed in the classroom were not generated by their beliefs. Gaps were found between beliefs and practices. They reported a weak relationship between beliefs and practices regarding English language reading. Classroom practices were not the result of what they had beliefs regarding. De Smet (2012) on secondary school teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices regarding lesson plans conducted a study. The researcher explored the factors i.e. planning, preparations, students' motivation, and classroom management. The researcher observed the said beliefs in an actual classroom. The existing practices were observed ineffective.

Kaivanpanah (2019) conducting a study was about the role of grammarian English language teaching. The researcher explored the possible gaps and relationships between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the role of grammar in English language teaching. The results of the study explored that the teachers performed in different ways. They were clear about the role of grammar in English language teaching but their pedagogical practices were not according to those beliefs. The study proved that teachers had firm beliefs on different aspects of English language teaching but they did not perform better. A study was conducted by Erkmen (2014), in Turkey on teachers' beliefs and practices of grammar teaching regarding focusing on meaning. According to this study worldwide, curricula motivate teachers towards communicative approaches in language learning over the years. It is clear to all that the success of any curriculum is dependent on teachers. Therefore, grammar instruction in language classrooms is an important issue that needs to be investigated. However, this study explored the teachers' beliefs at the elementary level. A questionnaire was given to 108 teachers and a focus-group interview was also conducted, study investigated Turkish English language teachers' beliefs and practices a serious clash was found between beliefs and practices.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted to explore the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their practices at secondary schools in District Gujarat. The classroom practices of a few teachers were according to their reported beliefs whereas the teaching practices of the majority of them were totally against what they have reported. Their classroom practices were not in accordance with their actual beliefs. It proved that the majority reported their beliefs at a higher level but their practice in the classroom was against their beliefs. Most teachers were observed with typical and conventional English language practices were conventional. They were busy with old methods and stress was given to textbook reading. No activities and new methods of English language were found in classrooms. The teachers delivered content in typical manners in language classrooms.

Descriptive analyses were made between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice and data presented in table forms reflected that teachers' beliefs are strong towards content, pedagogy, and assessment. The mean score value on content beliefs showed the teachers' trend toward conventional teaching approaches. Data also showed that teachers'

pedagogical beliefs are at a higher level but the classroom practices were weaker about reported beliefs. The higher mean score value on the third factor that is assessment showed teachers' were strong in assessment beliefs but observed weaker against assessment practices. Moreover, all three factors i.e. content beliefs, pedagogical beliefs, and assessment beliefs, were on the highest level determined that teachers in their beliefs were on extremes whereas the mean value regarding practices showed that teachers on practices were far away in respect of their beliefs. Evidence showed that teachers' beliefs and practices that were teaching English at the elementary level were entirely different concerning beliefs. The data value on the relationship between content beliefs and content practices showed that the relationship was insignificant because entirely different relationship values on teachers' practices and content beliefs were observed. What they said and what they performed and did, were so beyond. The research questions formulated at the initial level in chapter one on relationship regarding content were proved insignificant. The value of the correlation between pedagogical beliefs and pedagogical practices also showed insignificant because there was the very low and insignificant relationship between pedagogical beliefs and pedagogical practices of teachers teaching English to elementary classes were observed. This showed the gaps between reported beliefs and observed practices on factor two that is regarding pedagogical beliefs and pedagogical practices. Teachers needed to build their capacity towards practices. The research questions formulated at the initial level in chapter one on relationship regarding pedagogy was proven insignificant

The correlation value showed an insignificant relationship between assessment beliefs and practices. Data on both variables showed that teachers do not practices according to their beliefs. Data indicated that practices of teachers who were teaching English as a second language to elementary classes needed better guidance towards pedagogy as they frequently showed quite different tendencies towards practical mode. The research questions formulated at the initial level in chapter one on the relationship regarding assessment were proved insignificant. Moreover, insignificant correlations were observed that indicated teachers use traditional methods in language classrooms.

Recommendations

Following are the recommendations based on the results and conclusion of the study regarding teachers' beliefs and practices of teaching English to elementary classes. A planned mechanism of monitoring may be developed by the education department to transform teachers' beliefs into practices Teachers' practices may need to be better different in English language teaching by providing language training conducted by the head of the institution. Teachers may be convinced towards different teaching-learning theories by the subject specialist to equip themselves with innovations in the field of teaching. Mentoring programs may be arranged by the school education department (SED) to improve the pedagogy, assessment techniques, and content delivery in language Classrooms.

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