

Original Article

Tracking Modifications of Iranian EFL Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs in Interaction between a Pre-Service Teacher Training Program and Teaching Practices

Parisa Etela¹, Hossein Saadabadi Motlaq^{1,}, Saeed Yazdani¹*

¹Department of English, Bushehr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bushehr, Iran

Submission date: 14-01-2023

Acceptance date: 08-04-2023

Abstract

Recently, the sources of teachers' beliefs and modifications in their beliefs have received special attention; therefore, this longitudinal study investigated Iranian EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs. The study attempted to track possible alterations in pedagogical beliefs after participating in a two-year teacher training program and following teaching practices. Through convenient sampling, the researchers selected 24 Iranian EFL teacher students who had teaching experiences of 3-10 years at Islamic Azad University; Shiraz Branch. They collected the required data through a teacher belief questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The results of both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that teaching practices made a unique influence on the modifications in teachers' pedagogical beliefs. In other words, the results emphasized the power of teaching practice in any modification in teachers' beliefs over theoretical teaching. These findings have important implications for teacher educators who seek to modify teachers' beliefs during teacher training programs.

Keywords: Changing Attitudes, Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Teacher Beliefs, Teacher Development, Teaching Practice, Teacher Training Program

* Corresponding Author's E- mail: saadabadimh@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Teachers employ different types of conceptual organization and meaning when they want to teach (Crichton & Templeton, 2013). In any educational system, teachers' pedagogical beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and assumptions about different dimensions of language teaching have significant impacts on their educational judgments (Philips & Borg, 2009). Beliefs are intangible systems that assist teachers to understand the environments around them (Donaghue, 2003). Borg (2003) argued that the EFL teachers' beliefs generated from sources like teachers' own schooling as young learners, personality, and teacher training programs influence the acceptance and understanding of new approaches, methods, and related techniques and activities; therefore, they play a significant part in teachers' development. Regarding the nature of this notion, Kagan (1992) suggested that EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs are often implicit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, and provide a basis for action. In confirmation, Jensen (2019) argued that personal or shared experiences are the main sources of their constructions. He explained that they can be constructed of shared knowledge in social and cultural communications within groups (Richards, 2013). Bråten and Ferguson (2015) argued that these beliefs guide teachers' thinking and behavior. Sanger and Osguthorpe (2013) claimed that the most important feature of these beliefs is that they are established deeply and firmly.

In taxonomy, EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs are systems in that some pedagogical beliefs are central and others are marginal (Crichton & Templeton, 2013). Central beliefs are said to be steady and apply a more dominant power to teaching behavior. It is generally believed that the most central teachers' pedagogical beliefs are those that are formed based on teachers' schooling as young learners (Decker et al., 2015; Ng et al., 2010). However, there is no sufficient evidence in the literature about what kinds of pedagogical beliefs are central, what kinds of pedagogical beliefs are marginal; or whether they are stable or changeable, flexible or even convertible. For instance, Mattheoudakis (2007) explored the effect of the teacher training program on EFL instructors' pedagogical beliefs changes and found that teachers' pedagogical beliefs are stable and they have a low impact on belief development. In contrast, Moussay et al. (2011) found that teacher training programs will lead to EFL teachers' beliefs modification called "development through efficacy". In addition, it is generally believed that teachers perceive a need to fulfill the wide-ranging roles of instructors, organizers, consolers, and facilitators in teaching and learning environments; however, as Correa et al. (2008) argued these notions are social and culture-

dependent. It means that the exact interpretation of these roles requires a full description of the particular context in which these roles should be applied (Philips & Borg, 2009). Moreover, teachers have diverse roles in various learning and teaching environments; therefore, these differences might influence their decisions and educational judgments differently.

Iranian universities appear to wander in their points, applicants' determination, course content, and the presentation strategy embraced in their teacher training courses. To be more definite, every college runs its TTC and doesn't support the TTCs held in different foundations. As an outcome, college graduates need to go to a few TTCs in various universities while applying for education in English. Unfortunately, despite the basic significance of assessing teacher training courses, there is a deficiency of examination in the space of teacher training overall and in Iranian EFL contexts, specifically, exploring the substance of these courses, contrasting them and global courses, or assessing them to check whether they arrive at their goals (Ganji et al., 2018; Sadeghi & Richards, 2015).

Reviewing the related literature reveals that few studies considered, but several debates have been raised. Some arguments have been raised towards the stability or flexibility and culture or context-dependence of the notion of EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs; therefore, this particular study investigated the modification of teachers' pedagogical beliefs after participating in a two-year teacher training program.

2. Literature Review

In recent decades, considerable attention has been paid to teachers' pedagogical beliefs modification, and collaborative reflection on teaching. Teacher educators and program developers expect that teachers' participation in teacher training programs provides an extraordinary with them to ponder over the significance of their own pedagogical beliefs (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016; Mellati et al., 2013). Using effective tools that facilitate any change or modification in teachers' beliefs in teacher training programs has become an increasingly significant issue in teacher education literature (Alavi et al., 2022; Hynds et al., 2011). A review of the related literature revealed that teachers' pedagogical beliefs play a key role in teaching and learning effectiveness. However, some scholars argued that teachers' beliefs are stable and resisted any change or modification (Crichton & Templeton, 2013; Mellati et al., 2022). They stated that teacher training programs have no impact on

teachers' prior beliefs and identified seven factors that could be considered crucial for successful outcomes of teacher training programs: environment (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2013), resource (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005), membership (Awenowicz, 2009), mutual purpose (Bråten & Ferguson, 2015), communication (Durksen et al., 2017), process (Sykes et al., 2010), and structure (Jensen, 2019). They asserted that consequent teacher training programs might not have any significant impact on their early beliefs (Rienties et al., 2013).

In contrast, some scholars believed that courses in teacher training programs and particular treatments that exclusively address disadvantageous pedagogical beliefs can facilitate changes in teachers' beliefs or can be effective in the change process. In other words, the inflexibility of beliefs has been questioned by several studies that tracked changes in student teachers' beliefs (Polat, 2010; Tanase & Wang, 2010). They have suggested EFL instructors be inclined to change their early pedagogical beliefs during teacher preparation programs in which their ineffective beliefs are purposely addressed. It is possible to observe some changes in teachers' beliefs when they are addressed and challenged by pedagogical treatments (Philips & Borg, 2009). Successful teacher training programs are important as they engender real changes in teachers and their pedagogical beliefs (Hynds et al., 2011). Teacher training programs create courses for teachers that help them to overcome some of the challenges they encounter in language classrooms. During the program, teacher educators seek to modify and change inappropriate pedagogical beliefs (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016; Tanase & Wang, 2010). They particularly attempt to find impressive factors that lead to modifications in instructors' beliefs. The nature of this change is complex and multifaceted (Pearce & Morrison, 2011). A modification can take place in teachers' self-awareness, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, understanding, and educational judgments (Richards, 2013).

These scholars argue that any development and alteration in teachers' beliefs is not an effortless and unprompted procedure. However, it might be the result of an intricate interaction between teachers and teaching settings in which different individuals such as colleagues, teacher trainers, learners, and supervisors are often involved. Any alteration begins through formal and informal discussions, providing and receiving feedback (Hynds et al., 2011; Mellati et al., 2015). All of them highlighted four ways that teacher educators have to help teachers to change their beliefs. They can improve teachers' understanding, teaching, and educational circumstances, and can alleviate the influence of stressful factors

(Pearce & Morrison, 2011).

In addition to the teacher training program, teachers' pedagogical beliefs are affected by teaching practices, teaching context and culture, and the kinds of tasks they focus on. Teaching practice as a prevailing factor in teacher beliefs' modification is another significant factor that established pedagogical beliefs (Tanase & Wang, 2010). In other words, the quality of teaching is a fundamental factor that contributes to modifications in EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their subsequent practices which are shaped by factors such as working conditions, public support, and students' interests (Polat, 2010). It has even been suggested that established pedagogical beliefs may be the most obvious channel of a teacher's professional development (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2013). Mattheoudakis (2007) tracked changes in EFL teachers' beliefs in Greece and found that ELT teachers' teaching practices did not modify their earlier beliefs. EFL teachers' teaching practices just reveal the realities of the classrooms and help them to assess their pedagogical knowledge and their personal pedagogical beliefs. Similarly, several studies have confirmed that any modification in teachers' pedagogical beliefs is a challenge (Moussay et al., 2011). They recommended that teachers' beliefs not modify to a great extent during their teacher training courses. It is acknowledged in some studies that prior teaching beliefs influence teachers' understanding and subsequent practices and largely work as filters to new pedagogical beliefs (Donaghue, 2003).

In the last two decades, a review of related literature has offered contradictory findings about stability or change in teachers' pedagogical beliefs in teacher training preparation courses. In more than twenty studies (Mattheoudakis, 2007; Moussay et al., 2011), the verification of both modification and constancy in EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs can be found. From culture to culture and from context to context, special findings provided by teacher training programs vary significantly (Hynds et al., 2011; Sykes et al., 2010). Numerous factors influence teachers' beliefs that are different in time, environment, nature, and even in kind of influenced pedagogical beliefs. Various studies have attempted to explain the structure of teacher training programs and the impact of such programs on teachers' pedagogical beliefs (Polat, 2010; Tanase & Wang, 2010).

These studies and similar ones considered factors such as culture, experience, gender, situation, technology, instruction, and the context of teachers' beliefs (Tanase & Wang, 2010), the existing findings of these studies are multifaceted, and there is no general

agreement about the impacts of teacher training programs on teachers' pedagogical beliefs. Considering all these intervening factors in a research study is somehow impossible; however, more studies are required to deepen teachers' knowledge about their pedagogical beliefs and sharpen their awareness about the most significant factors in any change in beliefs. More research is required to highlight the latent layers of this multifarious phenomenon; therefore, this particular study attempted to follow possible alterations in pedagogical beliefs in a two-year teacher training program and investigated the effects of teaching practice on EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs.

To investigate the stability and change in pedagogical beliefs, three interrelated research questions guided this study:

1. Does participation in a two-year teacher training program (one year of theoretical teaching & one year of practical teaching) have any statistically significant impact on Iranian EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs?
2. Which is the best predictor of possible teachers' pedagogical changes in a two-year teacher training program: participating in a one-year program of teaching theoretical foundations or a one-year program of practical teaching?
3. What are teachers' attitudes toward the impact of teachers' teaching practice involvement on their pedagogical beliefs?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design and Context of the Study

The researchers of this quasi-experimental study chose a mixed-methods design to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. In the two-year teacher training program, teachers became familiar with new approaches, methods, and techniques for effective teaching. Teacher educators updated teachers' knowledge by teaching how to employ technology and technology-based materials in the classroom, how to teach language more effectively, how to manage learners' diversity in the classroom, how to provide information for the learners, how to deliver feedback in the classroom, and finally how to assess learners' abilities. Some of the textbooks that they studied in this course were as follows: Richards and Rodgers (2014), Richards et al. (2002), Ellis (2003), Dudley-Evans et al. (1998), Gilmore (2012), Ur (2012), Harmer (2001), Long (2005), Brown and Abeywickrama (2004), and Bachman and Palmer (1996).

In the first two semesters, teacher students studied these sources to deepen their theoretical information about language teaching. They studied and presented some parts of these sources in their classrooms. In the next year and the following two semesters, they practiced what they learned from the sources in the actual environment of the classroom. They taught their classmates the content they learned in the first two semesters. Finally, they would be able to develop effective language-teaching environments. In this two-year program, teachers learned how to deal with diversity and other problems that were probably faced in their language classrooms. In sum, the first year of this particular teacher training program provided teachers with comprehensive knowledge about different theories of teaching and learning as well as teaching techniques and classroom procedures. In the second year, teachers learned how to teach through actual teaching practices. Teachers practiced the acquired knowledge from the first year of the educational program.

3.2. Participants

Twenty-four student-teachers that had participated in a teacher training program were invited to this study. They were selected through availability sampling. From the beginning, the nature and purpose of the research project were provided with written information. All participants could withdraw their participation at any time; therefore, they participated in this study voluntarily. All of them were insured that their names would be kept in severe confidence. Based on the ethnographic questionnaire, the ages of participants were in the range of 25 to 40 (45.8% under 30 & 54.2% 31-40) and all of them were male. Their teaching experiences ranged from 3 to 10 years in Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch (45-8% 3-5 years and 54.2% 6-10 years of teaching experience) and their field of study was English Language Teaching.

Table 1.

Demographic Background of the Participants

No. of Teachers	24
Gender	14 Females & 10 Males
Age range	25-40
Major	TEFL
Universities	IAU, Shiraz Branch
Academic Years	2018-2020

3.3. Instrument(s)

To check teachers' pedagogical beliefs before and after the program, the researchers used a teacher belief questionnaire, and to collect in-depth information about the possible modifications in teachers' beliefs, they used semi-structured interviews.

3.3.1. Teacher Belief Questionnaire (TBQ)

The first instrument that was employed in this study was the Teacher Belief Questionnaire (TBQ): A researchers-made questionnaire that was developed to prompt teachers' beliefs and attitudes. The questionnaire was developed based on the program's contents. It means that the questions highlighted the content of the teacher training program. The researchers collected some foremost notions about language teaching from some researchers' works, such as Awenowicz (2009) and Lin (2010) to develop the questionnaire. The first version of the TBQ questionnaire contained 63 items that had face validity, which means that there was a close relationship between its content and its appearance; therefore, every teacher considered it as a teacher belief questionnaire noticeably. Three specialists in ELT checked it for its content validity and reliability. Then, the researchers revised it according to the experts' comments, and it was piloted with 50 instructors. The researchers conducted Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation to ensure its construct validity. The results showed that 23 items should be omitted. The last version of the questionnaire had 40 Likert-scale items. The questionnaire checked mainly EFL teachers' beliefs about teacher and student interaction, language teaching process, language assessment, teachers' function, classroom design and management, and parents' involvement. Finally, the researchers piloted the questionnaire with 45 instructors of the analogous participants. The reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.74 ($r = 0.74$).

3.3.2. Semi-Structured Interview

The second instrument that was employed in the present study was a semi-structured interview. To add more information to the questionnaire data and to trace possible changes in their beliefs, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with six participants; the researchers administered these 30-minute face-to-face interviews to verify the results of the questionnaire and to explore teachers' pedagogical beliefs and expected modifications or changes. The questions of the interview reflect the categories of the questionnaire. To

address the validity of the interview questions, the questions were exposed to experts' opinions first. To assure reliability, the researchers used Nvivo software, version 12Pro, and Cohen's Kappa coefficient. The results indicated the number of agreements per total number of coding decisions was .91, which indicated excellent agreement.

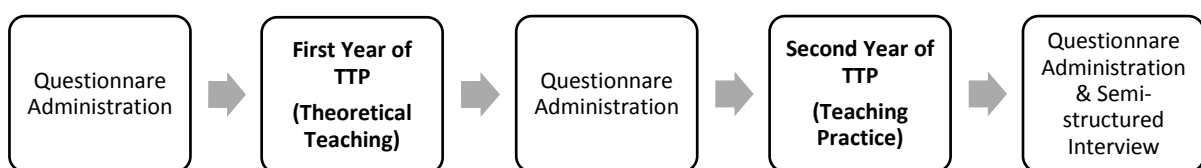
3.4. Data Collection Procedure

In this quasi-experimental study, to determine possible alterations in pedagogical beliefs the following procedure was conducted: 24 student teachers (N=24) were invited to participate in this study. They enrolled in M.A. courses in TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch. The questionnaire was administered three times during the study. The researchers wrote clear instructions in the questionnaire to avoid misunderstandings. The first time, it was administered at the beginning of the study to elicit teachers' initial beliefs or to measure the knowledge of the EFL teachers about teaching in the first place. The second time of questionnaire administration was after one year of the program. During this year, teachers were exposed to knowledge that was related to learning and teaching theories and teaching procedures and techniques. In this phase, the researchers attempted to investigate the changes in teachers' pedagogical beliefs after one year of theoretical teaching. The third and last time of questionnaire administration was at the end of the study.

The second year of the program was dedicated to teaching practices. In this phase, the researchers tried to determine changes in teacher beliefs after one year of teaching practice. In addition to conducting the teacher belief questionnaire, the researchers conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews with six participants. The interviews were designed to encourage reflection, add more information to the questionnaire data, and trace possible changes in their beliefs. They conducted the interviews at the end of the study.

Figure 1.

The Procedure of Conducting the Teacher Belief Questionnaire and Semi-Structured Interview



3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS software, version 24. Prior to the analysis of the results Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk were run to ensure the normality of the obtained data. Then, the researchers used ANOVA to answer the first research question and standard multiple regressions to answer the second research question. The qualitative data were teachers' answers to the interviews. To analyze the qualitative data and answer the third research question, the researchers implemented Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis which were familiarizing with data, generating initial data, searching for themes, revising themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. To be sure about the reliability of the codes, the researchers used intercoder reliability that showed the value of .84, $r = .84$ which was a satisfactory value.

4. Results

The researchers conducted data analysis and tested the research questions. To answer the first research question and to check the modifications in teachers' pedagogical beliefs, the researchers conducted one-way repeated measures ANOVA. The results of this analysis were presented in the following table.

Table 2.

Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs Modification in a Two-Year Teacher Training Program

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	Wilks' Lambda	.071	143.663 ^a	2.000	22.000	.000	.929
	a. Exact statistic						
	b. Design: Intercept; Within Subjects Design: Time						

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to assess the impact of two different interventions (teaching theory & teaching practice) on participants' scores on the TBQ, across three time periods (before the study, after one year of theoretical teaching, and after one year of teaching practice). There was a significant difference between teachers' pedagogical beliefs at different times, Wilks' Lambda = .071, $F(2, 22) = 143.6$, $p = .000$, multivariate strong eta squared = .92. The findings of this study confirmed what Durksen et al. (2017) and Eldor and Shoshani (2016) found in their studies that an effective teacher training program can modify or even change teachers' beliefs. However, to understand the contribution and the degree of the variables in these changes the second question was raised.

To answer the second research question, the researchers conducted standard multiple regressions. The results of this analysis are presented in the following tables.

Table 3.

Prediction of the Control of Theoretical Teaching and Teaching Practice as Two Variables on Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs' Modification

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
dimension0	1	.919 ^a	.844	6.684
a. Predictors: (Constant), Second time, First time				

Standard multiple regressions were used to assess the ability of two control measures (theoretical teaching & teaching practice) to predict modifications in teachers' pedagogical beliefs. The results indicated that the two control measures explained 82 % of the variance in teachers' pedagogical beliefs, Adjusted R Square = .82.

Table 4.

The Comparison of Theoretical Teaching and Teaching Practice and Their Contributions

Model	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)		2.078	.050		
First time	.067	.271	.789	-.524	.681
Second time	.855	3.445	.002	.377	1.526

Table 4 represents the results of the evaluation of the independent variables. The results show that the largest beta coefficient is .85, which is for the second time the questionnaire administration (after one year of teaching practice). This value means that teaching practice makes a unique influence on the elucidation of the modifications in teachers' pedagogical beliefs. The beta value for the first time of the questionnaire administration (after teaching theoretical foundations) was largely lower than the first time (.06), indicating that teaching theoretical foundations made less of a unique contribution to changes in teachers' pedagogical beliefs. It means that the teaching of theories of learning along with teaching practice or the actual teaching experience stimulates and modifies teachers' beliefs. Two themes emerged around teachers' pedagogical beliefs and teaching decisions as a result of the course: a) initially, teaching theories of learning and teaching had a small impact on teachers' pedagogical beliefs; and b) a teacher training program along with

teaching practice had significant effects on teachers' pedagogical beliefs. Contrary to the findings of Mattheoudakis (2007), the study demonstrated the significant impact of the teacher training program on teachers' beliefs. These findings go beyond previous reports, highlighting the priority of teaching practice over theoretical teaching in any modification of teacher training programs.

4.1. Qualitative Data Analysis

The collected data in the interviews were converted into transcripts or texts. The researchers selected open coding to code the transcribed texts. Here are presented two major coded concepts about changes in teachers' pedagogical beliefs after participating in a two-year teacher training program:

4.1.1. The Filtering Role of Prior Beliefs

The results of the interviews that were conducted at the end of the teacher training program confirmed the quantitative data. It is very interesting to notice that based on the data obtained from interviews, teachers in the first year of the training program absorbed those beliefs that were similar to their prior knowledge and beliefs. Three teachers stated in the interviews:

In the first year, we get familiar with the roots of our beliefs. It is so interesting we find that our prior beliefs about language teaching are somehow correct and we are in the right direction. We follow beliefs that we think are correct (Teachers number 1, 2, & 5 stated these statements in their interviews, but in different words).

Therefore, understanding teachers' previous beliefs are crucial, especially for teacher educators. They can employ these prior beliefs as a foundation to establish more effective pedagogical beliefs. As these beliefs are not established, teacher educators would be able to adapt, modify, and establish them while employing updated materials and tools in an appropriate training program.

Furthermore, in the interviews teachers stated that their personal beliefs were both a filter and foundation of new knowledge. "Some teachers are eager to support their knowledge and beliefs even if they are inappropriate. This bias can ruin every program; therefore, teacher educators should know more about the psychological characters of teachers in every program" (Four teachers stated the same concept but in different words; teachers numbers 1, 2, 4, & 5).

The filtering role of prior beliefs, therefore, has a potentially critical impact on teachers' learning during every teacher training program. Prior beliefs can affect learning in two important ways. It might support simplifying education by creating a foundation for learning and mediating the legitimacy of explanations to complications or impede learning when developing conflicting views from those prior beliefs. However, some parts of the program were controversial for teachers; the teachers accepted just those beliefs and tasks that were analogous to their previously established beliefs.

I did not enjoy the course, as the teacher educator focused on approach, method, classroom activities, and tasks that were not compatible with my set of beliefs. I do not accept some of them at all. I practiced some of those techniques in my classrooms and found them ineffective and inappropriate for our context. But, some of them were practical as I did in my classrooms. In addition, contextual factors, such as the curriculum, time constraints, and assessment play a key role in teachers' decisions in actual teaching contexts (Teachers number 3, 5, & 6 stated the same concept but in different words).

In the interview, a teacher argued, "*The most important factor that influenced my beliefs was teaching practice*". According to the results of this study, teacher beliefs were resistant to change in the first year of the teacher training program. Even if they alter or modify in the first year of the teacher training programs subsequent teaching practice would change them significantly. These statements show that theoretical teaching without teaching practices has little or no impact on teachers' beliefs modification. Therefore, teachers do not accept new beliefs and prefer to follow their previously established beliefs. In line with the ideas of Sanger & Osguthorpe (2013), it can be concluded that firmly and deeply established beliefs about teachers' schooling are hard to change.

4.1.2. The Role of Teaching Experiences

One interesting point in the interview was that those teachers who had more than five years of teaching experience were insisting on their previous pedagogical beliefs. They argued that they corroborated the effectiveness of their beliefs in actual classrooms and no teacher training program can change them.

I tried my beliefs in actual classrooms and modify them in real practice. Besides, I tested various teaching methods and localize them for my specific teaching context.

I know that methods and strategies that are appropriate in one educational context are not adequate even for another approximately similar context (Teachers number 3 & 6 stated in their interviews; these teachers had more than five years of teaching experience).

In contrast, the inexperienced teachers (those who had less than five years of teaching experience) considered teacher educators as a model. The way teacher educators acted in the classroom, the method, strategies, and materials have influenced their beliefs to a large extent.

Prior to this course, I thought that teachers were the only sources of knowledge in the classroom; therefore, they ought to be professional and always ready in the classrooms, but in this course, I experienced effective teacher-student interactions. Teachers and students can learn from each other simultaneously. Students will learn better if they have responsibility in the classroom. This course expanded my knowledge and modified my pedagogical beliefs. We as teacher-students learn teaching theories more effectively when they support with appropriate teaching practice (Teachers number 1 & 2 stated in their interviews).

5. Discussion

Approximately, all of the inexperienced teachers stated that they encountered situations and realities in their classrooms that they had not faced before, particularly during the second year of the teacher training program that was dedicated to teaching practices. However, those who had teaching practice before the program resisted any changing in their set of beliefs. The findings showed that when teacher educators targeted teacher beliefs, they can be modified or even changed when the theoretical points follow the practical phase. The results are consistent with those of Polat (2010) who have found that it is possible to observe some changes in pre-service teachers' beliefs because of given pedagogical treatments. Training courses in teacher training programs and special treatments that specifically target disadvantageous beliefs can facilitate modification and alteration in teachers' beliefs.

This aspect of the research suggested that in targeting pedagogical beliefs two important kinds of beliefs should take into account: beliefs that are shaped in teachers' schooling period and beliefs shaped in their teaching experiences. These beliefs are resistant to any change; therefore, it can be concluded that some beliefs remain stable and unchanged.

This finding is compatible with Rienties et al. (2013), Awenowicz (2009), and Moussay et al. (2011) who argued that EFL instructors have steady pedagogical beliefs; these beliefs are not easy to change; many reasons lay behind this stability. They argued that teachers' beliefs did not change much during teacher training programs; since they often follow their central beliefs when they develop their lessons (Richards, 2013), they think about the classroom activities they will employ in their classrooms. However, any modification or change does not inevitably mean doing something quite different or turning to completely new or contrasting beliefs; it can be either a change in awareness. The main point is that the process of change is time-consuming and not immediate or complete and unquestionably some changes occur over a long period. The findings of the present study demonstrated that only those targeted pedagogical beliefs changed or modified that follow by teaching practice.

The discoveries of the current study confirm the view that a teacher training program along with appropriate teaching practice has a significant impact on teachers' pedagogical beliefs; while few of those beliefs were stable throughout the program, most of them modify slowly after two years of the teacher training program including both teaching theories as well as teaching practice (Tanase & Wang, 2010). In contrast to Mattheoudakis (2007), the results of the current study indicated that teachers' engagement has a significant impact on the alteration of their beliefs. Instructors' teaching practices revealed the classroom realities to them, helped them test their new beliefs and knowledge, became aware of their individual beliefs, and altered inadequate ones (Ng et al., 2010; Rienties et al., 2013).

These results are also in agreement with Polat's (2010) findings that singular actions pointing to definite teacher beliefs might be operative in the modification process. The findings of interviews stressed the critical role of prior beliefs when teachers enter teacher training programs. They influenced the development of new understandings or reinforced existing pedagogical beliefs. Teachers' prior beliefs are the foundations of new knowledge and beliefs. The same as Crichton and Templeton (2013), the findings revealed that teachers' prior beliefs took two roles in the program. They were both a foundation of new knowledge and an obstacle to new understandings. An important point that emerged from the two interview sections was that there is a gap between teaching theories and teaching practice. This finding is consistent with Sykes et al. (2010) who argued that teacher training programs should create a substantial and reproductive association with practice.

The findings of interviews also indicated that contextual factors, such as a prearranged curriculum, time restrictions, and tests, determine how teachers can perform in agreement with their pedagogical beliefs. The finding is a confirmation of what Philips and Borg (2009) found and that instructors directly corrected learners' mistakes; they believed elicitation was appreciated in theory but time-consuming and not applied in their contexts.

6. Conclusions

The study investigated the impact of two different interventions (teaching theory & teaching practice) on participants' scores on the TBQ, across three time periods (before the study, after one year of theoretical teaching, and after one year of teaching practice). It found that an effective teacher training program can modify or even change teachers' beliefs. However, standard multiple regressions were used to assess the ability of two control measures (theoretical teaching & teaching practice) to predict modifications in teachers' pedagogical beliefs. The results indicated that the two control measures explained 82 % of the variance in teachers' pedagogical beliefs. The findings showed that the largest beta coefficient is .85, which is for the second time the questionnaire administration (after one year of teaching practice). This value means that teaching practice makes a unique influence on the elucidation of the modifications in teachers' pedagogical beliefs. The beta value for the first time of the questionnaire administration (after teaching theoretical foundations) was largely lower than the first time (.06), indicating that teaching theoretical foundations made less of a unique contribution to changes in teachers' pedagogical beliefs. Two themes emerged around teachers' pedagogical beliefs and teaching decisions as a result of the course: (a) initially, teaching theories of learning and teaching had a small impact on teachers' pedagogical beliefs; and (b) a teacher training program along with teaching practice had significant effects on teachers' pedagogical beliefs. In addition, the results of the interviews showed that understanding teachers' previous beliefs are crucial, especially for teacher educators. Teacher educators can employ these prior beliefs as a foundation to establish more effective pedagogical beliefs. Moreover, the experienced teachers highlighted the effectiveness of their actual classrooms in shaping their pedagogical beliefs and stated that no teacher training program can change them.

These findings have important implications for teacher educators who seek to modify teachers' beliefs during teacher training programs. The findings are likely to enrich

knowledge in understanding how successful teacher training courses were in shaping and tracking changes in teachers' beliefs. They begin to define important sources of information that teachers must consider when they enter any teacher training program. The three fundamental actions that a teacher-educator could take are determining teacher-student's prior beliefs and their sources (childhood experiences or teaching experiences) at the outset of the course; focusing specifically and explicitly on inappropriate pedagogical beliefs during the course, especially those beliefs derived from childhood experiences or teaching experiences; and supporting every new belief in the course with adequate teaching practices.

The study corroborated that considering teachers' teaching practice in modifying teachers' beliefs is an important factor that establishes and fixes teachers' beliefs. Focusing on teaching practice and teaching adequate classroom management rules and strategies would enable teacher educators to create an effective teaching environment for teachers in programs. More longitudinal studies are required to approve the conclusions of the current study in other educational contexts. The study showed that numerous factors such as cultural background, prior experiences, and individual differences have been thought to determine or influence teachers' beliefs. Future studies can investigate these important factors and their impact on teachers' pedagogical beliefs.

References

- Alavi, S. M., Dashtestani, R., & Mellati, M. (2022). Crisis and changes in learning behaviors: Technology-enhanced assessment in language learning contexts. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 46(4), 461-474. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1985977>
- Awenowicz, M. A. (2009). *The influence of beliefs and cultural models on teacher candidates' professional identities and practices*. Pittsburgh.
- Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice: Designing and developing useful language tests* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press.
- Bernat, E., & Gvozdenko, I. (2005). Beliefs about language learning: Current knowledge, pedagogical implications, and new research directions. *TeSL-ej*, 9(1), n1.
- Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching*, 36(2), 81-109. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444803001903>
- Bråten, I., & Ferguson, L. E. (2015). Beliefs about sources of knowledge predict motivation for learning in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 50, 13-23. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.04.003>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2004). *Language assessment, principles, and classroom practices*. White Plains, Pearson Education.
- Correa, C. A., Perry, M., Sims, L. M., Miller, K. F., & Fang, G. (2008). Connected and culturally embedded beliefs: Chinese and US teachers talk about how their students best learn mathematics. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 140-153. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.11.004>

- Crichton, H., & Templeton, B. (2013). Collaboration or confrontation? An investigation into the role of prior experiences in the completion of collaborative group tasks by student teachers. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(1), 84-96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2012.678487>
- Decker, A.-T., Kunter, M., & Voss, T. (2015). The relationship between quality of discourse during teacher induction classes and beginning teachers' beliefs. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 30(1), 41-61. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-014-0227-4>
- Donaghue, H. (2003). An instrument to elicit teachers' beliefs and assumptions. *ELT Journal*, 57(4), 344-351. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/57.4.344>
- Dudley-Evans, T., St John, M. J., & Saint John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge university press.
- Durksen, T. L., Klassen, R. M., & Daniels, L. M. (2017). Motivation and collaboration: The keys to a developmental framework for teachers' professional learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 67, 53-66. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.05.011>
- Eldor, L., & Shoshani, A. (2016). Caring relationships in school staff: Exploring the link between compassion and teacher work engagement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 59, 126-136. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.06.001>
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford university press.
- Ganji, M., Ketabi, S., & Shahnazari, M. (2018). English teacher training courses in Iranian private language institutes: Issues and options. *Issues in Educational Research*, 28(2), 367-384.
- Gilmore, A. (2012). Materials evaluation and design in language teaching - Ian McGrath, Materials evaluation and design for language teaching. In N. Harwood (Ed.), *English language teaching materials: Theory and practice*. (2012/02/24 ed., Vol. 45, pp. 250-262). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444811000607>
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. Longman publication.
- Hynds, A., Sleeter, C., Hindle, R., Savage, C., Penetito, W., & Meyer, L. H. (2011). Te Kotahitanga: a case study of a repositioning approach to teacher professional development for culturally responsive pedagogies. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(4), 339-351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2011.614684>
- Jensen, A. (2019). Fostering preservice teacher agency in 21st-century writing instruction. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 18(3), 298-311. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ETPC-12-2018-0129>
- Kagan, D. M. (1992). The implication of research on teacher belief. *Educational Psychologist*, 27(1), 65-90. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep2701_6
- Lin, H.-C. (2010). *A case study: An ESL teacher's beliefs and classroom practices in grammar instruction* [Kent State University]. http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=kent1291249869
- Long, M. H. (2005). *The second language needs analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mattheoudakis, M. (2007). Tracking changes in pre-service EFL teacher beliefs in Greece: A longitudinal study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(8), 1272-1288. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.06.001>
- Mellati, M., Alavi, S. M., & Dashtestani, R. (2022). Reduction of errors in writing assignments: A comparison of the impact of peer, teacher, and mixed feedback. *Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 10(4), 152-166. http://journalscmu.sinaweb.net/article_143927_1bff08fc039cf2b5ca201dd1eab1df74.pdf
- Mellati, M., Fatemi, M. A., & Motalebzadeh, K. (2013). The relationship between Iranian ELT instructors' beliefs about language teaching and their practices in real classrooms. *English Language Teaching*, 6(4), 126-133. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n4p126>
- Mellati, M., Khademi, M., & Shirzadeh, A. (2015). The relationships among sources of teacher pedagogical beliefs, teaching experiences, and student outcomes. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 4(2), 177-184. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.4n.2p.177>
- Moussay, S., Flavier, E., Zimmermann, P., & Méard, J. (2011). Pre-service teachers' greater power to act in the classroom: analysis of the circumstances for professional development. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 34(4), 465-482. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2011.587117>
- Ng, W., Nicholas, H., & Williams, A. (2010). School experience influences pre-service teachers' evolving beliefs about effective teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(2), 278-289. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.03.010>
- Pearce, J., & Morrison, C. (2011). Teacher identity and early career resilience: exploring the links. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(1), 48-59. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2011v36n1.4>
- Philips, S., & Borg, S. (2009). Exploring tensions between teachers' grammar teaching beliefs and practices. *System*, 37(3), 380-390. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2009.03.002>

Research in English Language Pedagogy (2024)12(2): 261-279

- Polat, N. (2010). Pedagogical treatment and change in preservice teacher beliefs: An experimental study. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 49(6), 195-209. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2011.02.003>
- Richards, J. C. (2013). Curriculum approaches in language teaching: Forward, central, and backward design. *Relc Journal*, 44(1), 5-33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688212473293>
- Richards, J. C., Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge university press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge university press.
- Rienties, B., Brouwer, N., & Lygo-Baker, S. (2013). The effects of online professional development on higher education teachers' beliefs and intentions towards learning facilitation and technology. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 29, 122-131. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2012.09.002>
- Sadeghi, K., & Richards, J. C. (2015). Teaching spoken English in Iran's private language schools: Issues and options. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 14(2), 210-234. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ETPC-03-2015-0019>
- Sanger, M. N., & Osguthorpe, R. D. (2013). Modeling as moral education: Documenting, analyzing, and addressing a central belief of preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 29, 167-176. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2012.08.002>
- Sykes, G., Bird, T., & Kennedy, M. (2010). Teacher education: Its problems and some prospects. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(5), 464-476. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002248711037580>
- Tanase, M., & Wang, J. (2010). Initial epistemological beliefs transformation in one teacher education classroom: Case study of four preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(6), 1238-1248. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.02.009>
- Ur, P. (2012). *A course in English language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.