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Zehra Gabillon

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A Synopsis of L2 Teacher Belief Research

Zehra Gabillon

e-mail: zehra.gabillon@upf.pf

Laboratoire EA Sociétés Traditionnelles et Contemporaines en Océanie, Université de la
Polynésie Française, Tahiti

Correspondence: Zehra Gabillon Université de la Polynésie française, BP 6570, 98702 Faa'a
Tahiti, Polynésie française

A Synopsis of L2 Teacher Belief Research

Abstract

This state-of-the-art article gives a synopsis of research conducted on L2 teacher beliefs. The first part of the paper presents a brief historical overview of the conceptualizations and terms used in L2 teacher beliefs. The second part of the paper provides a panorama of diverse research studies that looked into the relationships between L2 teacher beliefs and various L2 related inquiries in diverse contexts. The paper concludes arguing for a need for further research to investigate interrelationships between L2 teacher and L2 learner belief systems and their influence on learning.

Keywords: L2 teacher beliefs, teacher cognitions, teacher perceptions, pedagogical beliefs, teacher thinking, metacognitive knowledge, hidden agenda

A Synopsis of L2 Teacher Belief Research

Introduction

Researching teacher beliefs is proved crucial in comprehending schemes teachers' use when implementing their teaching. Teachers' beliefs and their impact on teaching and learning have been a significant issue for educational inquiry for a quarter of a century. Research conducted in foreign/second language (henceforth L2) teacher beliefs has looked into teacher beliefs in diverse L2 teaching contexts. Such studies have sought to understand L2 teacher belief systems and complex relationships between these beliefs and various educational issues. In this state of the art paper, the author presents a synopsis of teacher belief research by referring to both the teacher education and L2 teacher belief literatures. The literature concerning L2 teacher beliefs is extensive and the studies that are presented in this article represent only the tip of the iceberg. The terms used in L2 teacher belief research vary depending on the theoretical standpoints taken and the domain these terms originate. Thus for the sake of consistency and uniformity, in this paper the term 'L2 teacher belief' is used as an umbrella term to cover all other conceptualizations.

In the first part of the paper, the author outlines the evolution of the 'teacher belief' concept in relation to the approaches and theoretical standpoints employed in teacher education programmes. The brief historical overview presented in this first part focuses primarily on issues concerning when, how, and why teacher beliefs gained importance. This first part also presents different terms used in L2 teacher belief studies. In the second part of the paper, the author looks into the L2 teacher belief studies by grouping them under five main categories. The grouping was done by taking the research phenomenon investigated as basis. The conclusion part suggests some queries for further research to investigate interrelationships between L2 teacher and L2 learner belief systems and their subsequent influence on teaching and learning.

2. A Historical Overview of L2 Teacher Beliefs

2.1. *Influence of the behaviourist view on teacher education*

From the 1960s to the late 1970s, the period which behaviourism dominated foreign and second language teaching, L2 teaching was considered as a skills-based profession. During this period, teachers were not considered as having 'mental lives' and teacher education programs consisted of prescriptive techniques (Freeman 2002; Tsui 2011). In teacher education programmes teacher trainers determined the desirable teaching behaviour by carefully shaping teaching skills. Freeman (2002) explained that until the mid 1970s teachers were viewed as performers and skill learners who were reciting other people's ideas. The primary aim of teacher education programmes was to make sure that teachers had mastered the content knowledge they were expected to teach (Johnson 2006). Thus, teacher education programs focused mainly on classroom methodologies, teaching techniques, and theoretical principles. Freeman (2002) stated that before the 1970s, teacher education research was based on process-product paradigm, which assumed that teaching is a linear activity. This paradigm viewed teacher behaviour as the cause and student learning as the effect. It underestimated the role of individual differences and teacher beliefs. From this perspective, L2 teaching was viewed as merely mastering the linguistic content and sets of isolated teacher behaviours (Showler 2000).

2.2. *Influence of the cognitivist view on teacher education*

In the late 1970s, the notion that teaching is not simply the transmission of knowledge but also involves norms and beliefs started to be accepted. However, the real change in teacher education programmes began in the 1980s with the paradigm shift from the behaviourist view to a cognitivist view. This paradigm shift called for the employment of an approach whereby student teachers build their own philosophies of teaching and become aware of their own learning processes. Freeman (2002) stated that the years from the 1980s to 1990s were significant in reconceptualization of teachers' practices and their mental lives. He maintained that during this period the fact that teachers' have complex mental lives was fully accepted. The teacher education field thus started to realize that teacher trainers must inquire into teachers' cognitive worlds and personal teaching practices in order to understand how language teachers learn to teach. With the developments of research in cognitive psychology, in the early 1990s interest in teacher belief research received notable attention (Freeman 2002) and it gained impetus in the late 1990s.

Freeman (2002) acknowledged the 1990s up to 2000s as the period of consolidation as regards the changing views of teacher teaching and thinking processes. He noted that, during this period of consolidation, research paradigms shifted to the postmodern perspective, which viewed teachers' thought processes as highly context dependent. From this postmodern perspective, teachers' way of thinking was considered to be the function of their backgrounds, experiences and their social contexts (Freeman 2002; Hall 2005; Flores & Day 2006). This viewpoint emphasized that each teacher understands and perceives his/her classrooms realities differently from others. Borg (2003) viewed the same period (from 1990 to 2000) as the decade of change as regards L2 teacher cognition. He revisited the research done on language teacher cognition and listed sixty-four research studies from the 1970s to 2002, forty-seven of which were conducted after 1995.

2.3. Influence of sociocultural views on teacher education

Although the cognitive perspective still dominates research in most aspects of foreign/second language domain, for the last two decades, some scholars have taken a turn towards sociocultural orientations (Johnson 2006; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). From the sociocultural standpoint teacher learning and thinking is viewed as social, situated in physical and social contexts (Johnson, 2006). This new epistemological orientation has been increasingly establishing new paradigms in the second/foreign language teaching and having a notable impact on research done in this field. The L2 literature provides us with many studies taking this new epistemological stance in L2 learner belief research (e.g. Alanen 2003; Aro 2012; Dufva 2003; Kalaja 2003; Negueruela-Azarola 2011; Yang & Kim 2011). However, compared to the L2 learner belief research, the L2 teacher belief research has relatively fewer studies that have employed sociocultural orientations (e.g. Borg 1998a, 1998b; Farrell 1999; Johnson 2006, 2009).

2.4. L2 teacher belief terminology

The L2 teacher belief literature provides us with diverse terminology that different scholars used to define the teacher belief concept. In the 1980s, with the paradigm shift from behaviourist perspective to cognitivist perspective, scholars looked for new terminology to explain the notions that emerged with the change in theoretical standpoints.

According to the mainstream educational literature Philip Jackson was the first to mention that teachers have mental lives in his book called '*Life in classrooms*' (1968) and he coined the term 'hidden curriculum' to explain the notion that teaching involves norms, beliefs, and socially approved knowledge. According to Philip Jackson, the hidden curriculum consists of implicit values and principles that the teacher acquires through the process of schooling. The educational

literature provides us with different terms and explanations of the same phenomenon. Freeman (2002) referred to this issue as ‘teachers’ mental lives’ and ‘hidden agendas’. Freeman stated that teachers’ mental lives (teacher’s beliefs, attitudes, and their interpretation of official theory) represent the hidden side of teaching. Biggs (1994) explained this notion by using the terms ‘*espoused theory*’ (teachers’ theoretical knowledge about teaching) and the *theory-in-use* (what teachers actually do). Biggs claimed that teachers, influenced by their beliefs, interpret and modify the official theory (i.e. official curriculum) to adjust it to their beliefs. To refer to the same notion the terms ‘public theory’ and ‘private theory’ are also used (Ainscough 1997).

In the L2 teacher belief literature, the above-mentioned notions are used under different labels. Often, researchers who studied L2 teacher beliefs have used different labels to refer to similar notions or they have used the same label to refer to different concepts. For instance, Simon Borg who has widely published on L2 teacher beliefs used the term ‘personal pedagogical systems’ (1998c) to refer to L2 teacher beliefs, a year later he used the term teachers’ theories (Borg 1999b) and he used ‘teacher cognition’ (Borg 2003a, 2003b, 2006) to refer to the stores of beliefs teachers hold about themselves and their teaching practices. He later used the term teacher beliefs to refer to the concepts mentioned above (Borg 2011a, 2011b).

Borg (2003a, 2003b) reviewed L2 teacher belief studies which were carried out from the 1970s until the year 2001 and listed the following terms: Borg (1998c) personal pedagogical systems; Breen et al. (2001) pedagogic principles; Burns (1996) theories for practice; Crookes & Arakaki (1999) routines, Freeman (1993) conceptions of practice; Gatbonton (1999) pedagogical knowledge; Golombek (1998) personal practical knowledge, image; Johnson (1992b) theoretical beliefs; Johnson (1994) Images; Meijer et al. (1999) practical knowledge; Richards (1996) maxims; Richards et al. (1992) culture of teaching; Richards et al. (1998) pedagogical reasoning; Sendan & Roberts (1998) personal theories; Spada (1992) specific pedagogical knowledge; Woods (1996) BAK (i.e. **B** standing for beliefs, **A** for assumptions, and **K** for pedagogical knowledge).

Since the 2000s the L2 teacher belief terminology has been regrouping under more commonly accepted and used terms. The term ‘belief’ seems to be gaining wider recognition among the L2 researchers. The author searched the Google scholar database and has listed the most commonly used key words in L2 teacher belief literature since 2004:

a) teacher beliefs (e.g. Altan 2012; Basturkmen et al. 2004; Borg 2011a, 2011b; Borg & Al-Busaidi 2012; Gabillon 2005, 2007, 2012a, 2012b; Lacorte & Canabal 2005; Mattheoudakis 2007; Phipps & Borg 2009; Underwood 2012 etc.)

b) teacher cognitions (e.g. Baker 2013; Borg 2006; Brown 2007; Ellis, E. M. 2006; Feryok 2010; Lantolf & Johnson 2007; Saito & Van Poeteren 2012 etc.)

c) teacher perceptions (e.g. Brown 2009; Chacón 2005; Dippold 2009; Griffiths 2007; Llurda 2005; Mackey et al. 2007 etc.)

d) pedagogical beliefs (e.g. Borg 2011a, 2011b; Chacón 2005; Gatbonton 2008; Johnson 2006 etc.)

e) teacher thinking (e.g. Sercu & Bandura 2005; Johnson 2009 etc.)

3. Research Methodologies Used in L2 Teacher Belief Research

Research studies conducted in L2 teacher beliefs have used diverse research methodologies depending on their theoretical standpoints and the phenomena they intended to investigate. Studies conducted in L2 teacher beliefs have looked into different aspects of L2 teacher beliefs and incorporated theories from various disciplines. These studies depending on their theoretical standpoints have used both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and made use of different research instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, diary/journal entries, meta-talk (explicit talk about grammar), field notes, written logs, group meetings, individual meetings, group discussions, classroom observations, video recordings and so forth.

Research into L2 teacher beliefs can be broadly divided into two main groups as regards the methodologies and approaches they have employed: a) approaches based on mainstream cognitive orientations; and b) approaches based on sociocultural orientations (Alanen 2003; Johnson 2006, 2009).

The majority of the studies conducted on L2 teacher beliefs employed the mainstream cognitive approaches as research orientations. Research studies that used cognitive orientations have considered the belief construct as an internal autonomous property of the mind, and investigated L2 teachers' 'higher order representations' (i.e. beliefs that the individual is aware of, conscious about) to understand the types of beliefs the teachers had. Many of these studies used questionnaires and interviews as research instruments.

The L2 belief studies that employed sociocultural orientations emphasized the importance of the context and individual differences. This new perspective has resulted in a paradigm shift toward more qualitative research approaches (Johnson 2009). The researchers who employed sociocultural research paradigms carried out research in naturally occurring settings and sought for deeper understanding of the phenomena and the participants' lived experiences. From this perspective, qualitative research orientations such as case studies, narratives, diary studies, life stories, and action research studies have been considered more appropriate to explore teachers' thinking and their teaching contexts (Johnson 2006).

4. A Synopsis of Research on L2 Teacher Beliefs

In this paper the researcher has grouped the research conducted in L2 teacher beliefs under five main inquiry domains according to the phenomena they investigated: a) the studies that investigated the relationship between L2 teacher beliefs and their classroom practices; b) the studies that investigated L2 teacher beliefs as a source for teacher awareness and professional growth; c) the studies that investigated L2 teachers' beliefs about educational innovation; d) the studies that investigated the nature of L2 teacher beliefs; e) the studies that investigated discrepancies between teachers and learners' L2 beliefs.

4.1. The studies that investigated the relationship between L2 teacher beliefs and their classroom practices

The relationships between L2 teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices have been one of the most investigated L2 teacher belief research inquiries. Research done in various L2 contexts, has attempted to understand what beliefs guide L2 teachers' classroom practices (e.g. Johnson 1994; Tercanlioglu 2005). The majority of the L2 Teacher belief studies that investigated relationships between teachers' beliefs and their actual classroom practices aimed at discovering possible links between teacher beliefs and classroom practices (see Basturkmen, Loewen, & R. Ellis 2004). Such studies have been mainly concerned with how theoretical recommendations are interpreted and reflected in teachers' classroom practices (see Borg, 1999b). Many studies that investigated the links between L2 teacher beliefs and classroom practices have discovered very

complex relationships between teacher beliefs and classroom practices. Many of these studies concluded that there could be discordances between the teachers' stated beliefs and their actual classroom practices. Only a few of these studies were able to find direct correlations between the teachers' stated beliefs and their classroom practices.

For instance, Basturkmen's *et al.* (2004) study looked into the relationship between three teachers' stated beliefs about and practices of focus-on-form in ESL communicative lessons. The study intended to explore the teachers' stated beliefs about focus-on-form practices and their actual implementation and management of focus-on-form during their communicative teaching lessons. The results Basturkmen *et al.* obtained illustrated some inconsistencies in the teachers' stated beliefs. The research findings indicated a weak relationship between the teachers' practices and stated beliefs regarding focus-on-form.

Similarly, Kennedy and Kennedy (1996) compared a teacher's stated attitudes with her observed attitudes towards error correction. Their observation illustrated that there was discordance between the teacher's expressed attitude towards error correction and her actual behavior in classroom. The authors concluded that the attitude and behavior relationship is more complicated than what people usually think of. Inspired by Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) they explained that attitude is not the immediate antecedent of a person's behavior. Using Ajzen's model they explained that the individual's behavior is determined by his/her intention and that the intention formation is the outcome of the interplay between, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Furthermore, they maintained that each of these three elements, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control are influenced by beliefs.

In the same vein, Breen's *et al.* (2001) study discovered inconsistencies in the principles the teachers adopted and in their classroom practices. In their study, they looked into 18 ESL teachers' beliefs as regards their classroom practices and the underlying principles directing these classroom practices. The main objective of the study was to help the teachers to be aware of the relationships between their teaching principles and classroom practices. To obtain the data the researchers used qualitative/interpretative research methodologies such as classroom observations following teacher interviews and elicitation techniques. The objective of using these research tools were to help teachers describe their classroom practices and help them explain the rationale and the pedagogical beliefs guiding their classroom practices. Their research findings showed that besides the existence of diverse teaching principles and their consequent practices, some commonly shared principles were also associated with different types of practices. Moreover, the results illustrated that a teaching practice, which was commonly used by the majority of the group members, was based upon diverse principles. However, Breen *et al.* stated that a closer examination of the whole group data revealed some regular patterns between these teachers' practices and their underlying schemes.

Chacón's study (2005) has found strong relations between a group of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perceived competence and their strong sense of self-efficacy about their teaching practice. She claimed that teachers' perceived capabilities to teach have a direct impact on their teaching practices. The findings also indicated that the teachers' efficacy for instructional strategies was higher than their efficacy for management and engagement. Chacón, (2005) noted that the connections between the teachers' self-efficacy and their perceived English language proficiency highlighted the perceived importance of content knowledge. Thus, she concluded that EFL teachers' perceived competence in English leads them to build a strong sense of self-efficacy about their teaching practice.

4.2. The studies that investigated L2 teacher beliefs as a source for teacher awareness and professional growth

Most scholars have viewed teacher beliefs as resources for self-reflection and self-development (see Borg, 1998b; Farrell, 1999). Day (2006) claimed that coping with the demands of teaching is a continual process of analysis of one's own beliefs and practices and this reflective process leads to self-development. Thus, the idea that L2 teachers' beliefs could be used as a source for teacher reflection in teacher development practices has instigated a number of research studies.

Borg's study (1998b)--data based teacher development-- perceived teacher reflection as a major source for professional growth and based his methodological assumptions on this principle. In this particular research study, Borg's aim was to help the teachers uncover their own beliefs using research activities (see Borg, 1998b). Thus, he used authentic teaching data as part of a teacher development course to sensitize teachers to the role their beliefs played in their teaching and to help them discover how their own practices were shaped by their beliefs. He called this teacher development activity 'data-based teacher development'. He claimed that using authentic teaching data provided teachers with mirror image of their teaching and provided ideal platform for self-reflection and professional growth.

Breen's *et al.* (2001) study looked into ESL teachers' beliefs as regards their classroom practices and the underlying principles directing these classroom practices. The main objective of the study was to help the teachers to be aware of the relationships between their teaching principles and their classroom practices. To obtain the data the researchers used qualitative/interpretative research methodologies such as classroom observations following teacher interviews and elicitation techniques. The objective of using these research tools were to help teachers describe their classroom practices and help them explain the rationale and the pedagogical beliefs guiding their classroom practices.

Farrell (1999) investigated three experienced EFL teachers' reflections regarding their classroom practices. Farrell viewed teacher reflection as 'teachers' learning through a critical analysis of their own beliefs about teaching and learning'. He argued that reflective teachers take more responsibility for their actions. Farrell used various kinds of research tools such as field notes, written logs, group meetings, individual meetings/observations, participants' written reaction-journals, and written artefacts. His data analysis showed that the teachers' discussions centred mainly on their personal theories and their problems related to their teaching. He also discovered that these three teachers used group meetings for critical reflection.

4.3. The studies that investigated L2 teachers' beliefs about educational innovation

For the last decade, language teachers' beliefs as regards educational innovation have received the utmost attention and the research in this area seems to have gathered momentum. The foreign language teaching field has renewed itself continually because of the constant emergence of new ideas, educational innovations and new research paradigms. To cope with these dynamism and innovations L2 teachers have been expected to keep up with these changes. Thus understanding L2 teacher beliefs have been viewed crucial as regards implementing innovation. It is widely argued that consulting teachers' beliefs when testing or implementing an educational innovation strengthens the sense of ownership and supports professional growth (Carless, 2003; G. Ellis, 1996; Todd, 2006). Recent L2 research studies have explored teachers' beliefs before testing educational innovation and planning language instruction. In some contexts, L2 teacher beliefs and teachers' understanding of innovation have been investigated indirectly under the topic of 'testing an innovation'. In such research studies teacher beliefs have constituted subsequent research outcomes. Some other research studies, on the other hand, based their

assumptions on the significant role teacher beliefs played in the success of such innovations and consulted teachers' beliefs before implementing innovation (see Todd, 2006).

Carless (2003) stated that most of the time teachers are asked to implement educational innovations developed by external agents who are not always familiar with local teachers' viewpoints and their teaching contexts. He noted that implementing an innovation is a demanding matter that requires change and adaptation. Thus, he argued that unless teachers' perspectives are taken into account, implementing something new might be unwelcome (Carless, 2003; Todd, 2006). Todd sustained that obtaining information on teachers' beliefs when introducing an innovation helps manage change and encourages an ongoing teacher development.

Todd's (2006) study illustrated how consulting teachers' belief could affect the form of the intended innovation. The study 'continuing change after the innovation' reported on a group of teachers' beliefs about a task-based curriculum innovation. The aim of his study was to help the teachers reveal their beliefs about the innovation they were implementing. He called this type of innovation as bottom-up innovation. Todd noted that contrary to top-down approaches bottom-up innovation requires involvement of the teachers. The findings of the study illustrated that the originally planned 'strong' version of the task-based learning model was modified and 'weakened' because the teachers believed in the effectiveness of the explicit teaching of linguistic forms and assessment through formal exams. Similarly, Zheng & Borg (2013) investigated three secondary school teachers' beliefs about the implementation of the Task-Based Learning in their classrooms. This qualitative research study discovered that each of these three teachers interpreted and implemented the principles of task-based learning in accordance with their beliefs (understanding) and the contextual factors (e.g. large classes)

Many teacher belief studies have indicated that reforms in education do not always receive immediate acceptance. Underwood's (2012) study drew upon the Theory of Planned Behaviour to anticipate the impact of the Japanese national curriculum concerning the integration of English grammar teaching with communication-oriented teaching. The research results obtained indicated that the teachers believed the adoption would be hindered because of their belief that communication-oriented grammar teaching would fail to prepare the students for competitive government examinations. They perceived that people have negative attitudes towards this innovation and the social pressure was in favour of rejecting the reform. Some teachers also reported that their resources concerning time and teacher training would not be sufficient to prepare them for such a reform. Similarly, Zhiwen & McGrath's study (2011) showed how much the success of an innovation depended on teachers. The study investigated the teachers' beliefs about the information and communications technology (ICT) related teacher development in the context of a national reform of 'College English Teaching' in China. The study examined teachers' attitudes towards the reform that favoured the integration of ICT in classroom teaching and self-access learning. The L2 teachers were expected to modify their classroom practices to adapt to the requirements of the reform. Although originally the majority of the teachers expressed positive attitudes towards ICT use in English teaching and the national reform, their perception of insufficient support and training reversed their belief in the success in the reform. The research results revealed a change in the teachers' attitudes towards the ICT use in English teaching and the national reform because they believed to have limited ICT skills.

4.4. The studies that investigated the nature of L2 teacher beliefs

Many L2 belief research studies that attempted to understand the types of beliefs L2 teachers hold about language learning have used Horwitz's (1988, 1999) Beliefs about Language

Learning Inventory (BALLI) (e.g. Kern, 2008; Mattheoudakis, 2007; Peacock, 2001a; Tercanoglu, 2005). The majority of these studies investigated pre-service L2 teacher beliefs. Many of these L2 teacher belief studies sought to understand what types of beliefs pre-service L2 teachers hold, whether these beliefs are functional or correspond to the recent views about language learning/teaching and whether teacher education programs have any influence on these beliefs (e.g. Altan, 2012; Borg, 2011; Mattheoudakis, 2007; Peacock, 2001a).

Peacock's (2001a) longitudinal study sought to view if pre-service L2 teachers' beliefs about L2 learning would change over their 3-year teacher education program. The study based its assumption on the idea that teachers' initial '*mistaken ideas*' could change through the course of their teacher education programmes as they studied TESL methodology. Peacock (2001a) proposed that it is important to work on mistaken trainee beliefs from the very beginning because they could influence teachers' teaching and their future students' language learning irrevocably. He collected first-year trainee beliefs about language learning by using Horwitz's Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI). This longitudinal study provided some evidence of stability of beliefs. In this study, Peacock (2001a) discovered that the trainees had three key beliefs about language learning that differed from experienced ESL teachers' beliefs and these beliefs changed very little over their three years training. He observed that, during their third year there were still too many trainees that still believed that learning a second language means learning a great deal of vocabulary and grammar rules, and that people who speak more than one language well are very intelligent. In the same vein, Mattheoudakis' (2007) longitudinal study investigated pre-service Greek EFL teachers beliefs about learning and teaching. The study sought to investigate the influence of the 3-year teacher education program and the teaching practice on the student teachers' beliefs. The results suggested that there is a slow but steady development in the student teachers' beliefs during their education. However, the results indicated low impact of the teaching practice on the student teachers' beliefs.

Tercanlioglu's study (2005) attempted to understand what beliefs pre-service teachers had about L2 teaching and whether these beliefs were related to one another. She used Horwitz's Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) to collect data. She analyzed the data obtained by using quantitative analysis procedures: descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations, Pearson correlations analysis, and ANOVA.

Numerous studies conducted in diverse teacher education programs obtained different results concerning the types of beliefs the L2 teachers had. This drew scholars' attention to the role played by contextual factors and prior experiences.

4.5. The studies that investigated discrepancies between teachers and learners' L2 beliefs

L2 literature provides us with numerous, experiential and empirical evidence on the existence of discrepancies between learner and teacher beliefs (See Gabillon, 2012 for an overview). The studies that have searched discrepancies between teacher and learner beliefs took place in various teaching contexts and focused on diverse teaching/learning issues. Numerous studies have looked into discordances between learner and teacher perspectives (e.g. Bloom, 2007; Canagarajah, 1993; Hawkey, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 1991; McCagar, 1993; Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Peacock, 1998, 2001b; Ruesch, Bown & Dewey, 2012).

Some scholars attributed discrepancies between learning and teaching perspectives primarily to cultural differences and prior teaching/learning experiences (e.g. Canagarajah, 1993; Kumaravadivelu, 1991). For instance, Canagarajah's (1993) research, which investigated learner resistance, clearly demonstrated that language learners could be unsatisfied with the teaching methods used in their language classroom and might react to it by showing resistance to

participate in the language activities. Canagarajah noted that the students often disregarded learner-centered and activity-oriented classes but attended classes that dealt with the grammar points overtly. He also explained that the students were reluctant to participate in the role-play or other interactive activities. He explained that the learners showed resistance to engaging in learner-centered learning activities and tried to draw classroom interaction towards a teacher-centered form. Bloom's teacher-research project (2007) demonstrated similar results as Canagarajah's study. The study investigated thirteen adult language learners' reactions towards non-traditional language classroom. Her research findings suggested that the students preferred a more teacher-centered approach and the conflict between teacher and learner expectations created tensions in the classroom. She stated that these tensions developed because the course did not meet the learners' expectations.

Some studies sought to discover discordances between learner and teacher perspectives concerning innovation or learner-centred language learning practices (e.g. Bloom 2007; Hawkey 2006; Peacock 1998, 2001b). Hawkey (2006) investigated a group of English language teachers' and learners' perceptions of communicative language learning/teaching in their classes. Although the data indicated that both the teachers and the learners had an overall agreement on merits of communicative teaching and learning, the findings of the study suggested notable differences between learner and teacher perspectives on the importance of grammar and pair work in their classes.

Some other studies looked into discrepancies between L2 learner and L2 teacher beliefs by focusing on some common L2 issues such as teacher and learner beliefs about oral language instruction (e.g. Cohen & Fass 2001), teacher and student role expectations (e.g. McCargar 1993), error correction, grammar teaching (e.g. Schulz 2001), use of L1 in L2 classrooms (e.g. Levine 2003) and so forth. A number of research studies have shown that discrepancies between teacher and learner perspectives have negative effects on learners such as learner resistance (Kumaravadevelu, 1991; McCargar 1993), frustration (Horwitz 1999), unwillingness to participate, and dissatisfaction (Bloom, 2007; Canagarajah, 1993; Hawkey 2006; Mantle-Bromley 1995; Peacock 1998, 2001b). Thus, results obtained from such studies have obliged the scholars in the field to seek ways to bridge the gap between the teacher and learner perspectives.

5. Conclusion

Research conducted in L2 teacher beliefs has provided us with invaluable insights on L2 teacher beliefs and the important role beliefs play in teachers' classroom practices. However, so far only very few of these studies have looked into relationships between L2 teachers' vs. L2 learners' beliefs and their consequent influence on learning. Although there have been a number of studies that focused on discrepancies between teacher and learner beliefs only small number of these studies investigated how such discrepancies might affect learners' learning. I believe that more research is needed to unravel the complex interactions between L2 teacher and L2 learner beliefs and the reflection of these beliefs on teachers' classroom practices, and finally their possible effects on learning. In order to be able to have better insights about interactions between L2 teacher and L2 learner beliefs we need to try to find answers to the following queries:

How do L2 teachers' beliefs influence their students' beliefs?

How do L2 students' beliefs and expectations influence L2 teachers' beliefs and their subsequent classroom practices?

How do L2 teachers' beliefs influence their classroom practices? How do these practices affect learning?

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