Investigating Teachers' Personal Visions and Beliefs: Implications for Quality in Language Teacher Education

Adeosun A. O. and Maduekwe A. N. **University of Lagos, Nigeria.**

Abstract

Visions and beliefs are assumed to always shape his/her perception, attitude, focus and performance. The growing influence of constructivism in teacher education and the increase in the amount of research into teacher cognition has put the notion of beliefs and vision into central focus such that it is fast becoming a dominant paradigm in ESL (Brunner 1996). Teachers should be aware of their vision and belief systems, reflect on them and determine the extent to which their actions are in keeping with existing beliefs about language learning and teaching. This study therefore attempts to establish the extent to which the beliefs of in-service teachers of English Language influence their training input, pedagogical decisions and quality of teaching practice. The study made use of an initial Likert-Scale questionnaire containing teachers' belief statements about self, language, teaching and learning processes, their students and their professional training. With stratified randomized sampling technique, a survey was conducted on three hundred respondents selected from different levels of English Education Sandwich Students. Interview schedule as well as classroom observation were also employed to poll the respondents' beliefs and visions and how these might be currently reflected in their academic work, readings and impact on their performances and quality of teaching output. Data gathered were analyzed using different but intersecting statistical methods. Results showed that some existing beliefs change in the course of training and practice while some beliefs do not change but are strengthened.

Introduction

Many teacher education programmemes aspire to improve current practice. Teacher educators are confident that no matter how effective current practice might be in some schools or in some classrooms, it offers room for improvement. However, the most teacher education programmemes often find it difficult to achieve their aspiration of improving current practice of teaching (Adegoke 2003). The question is "Why aren't they more successful?" Kennedy (1997) attributed this state of affairs in part to the beliefs that candidates and teachers bring to teacher education. Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) noted that the period prospective language teachers spend as pupils in the classroom shape their beliefs. These conservative beliefs remain latent during formal training in pedagogy and become a major force once the candidate is in his or her own classroom. Such beliefs might be a product of their upbringing, a reflection of their life experiences, or a result of socialization processes in schools. Nevertheless, teachers and teacher candidates have strong beliefs about the role that education can play, about explanations for individual

variation in academic performance, about right and wrong in a classroom, and so on. Kennedy (1997) asserts that these beliefs are used to evaluate the new ideas about teaching that teachers and teacher candidates confront in their methods classes. Those teachings that agree with their beliefs are recognized and characterized as "what's new?" while teachings that challenge their beliefs are dismissed as theoretical, unworkable, or even simply wrong. Bruner (1996) also argued that most people have acquired what he called a "folk pedagogy" that reflects certain "wired-in human tendencies and some deeply ingrained beliefs" (p. 46). This view leads to his proposing what he called a new and even revolutionary insight that teacher educators, "in theorizing about the practice of education in the classroom, had better take into account the folk theories that those engaged in teaching and learning already have" (p. 46).

These teaching and teacher efficacy concepts have led to the examination of beliefs, attitudes and emotions that basically guide the work of individuals and account for individual differences in teaching effectiveness. Teacher beliefs have been disguised under a variety of headings – opinions, attitudes, preconceptions, personal epistemologies, perspectives, conceptions, principles of practice, orientations (Kagan 1992, Pajares, 1992). Upon entering teacher education programmemes, most pre-service teachers would have already possessed a well-developed set of beliefs (Joram and Gabriele, 1998). These beliefs and attitudes are constructed based on cultural and personal beliefs, some of which may be long standing, stable, deeply entrenched and resistant or difficult to change (Kagan, 1992). Both pre- and in-service teacher-education candidates bring with them a wide range of experiences, opinions, beliefs and considerable informal knowledge of learning and teaching processes, and of psychological concepts related to classroom teaching and learning (Dart, Bouton-Lewis, Brownlee and McCrindle, 1998). These beliefs, according to Pajares (1992) can be related to teachers and students, student learning and methods of instruction, curriculum, and schools as social institutions.

Beliefs are defined as personal constructs that can provide an understanding of a teacher's practice (Richardson, 1996). People use the word belief in a variety of ways. Pajares (1992) noted that:

> …Defining beliefs is at best a game of player's choice. They travel in disguise and often under alias—attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertories of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature. (23)

Beliefs not only affect how people behave but what they perceive (or pay attention to) in their environment. Contrary to the old saying "seeing is believing," it is more likely that "believing is seeing." When people believe something is true, they perceive information supporting that belief. Beliefs alter expectations. People perceive what they expect to perceive.

Teacher beliefs constitute one of the dimensions of teacher cognition, an inclusive

concept for the complexity of teachers' mental lives (Ajeyalemi and Busari, 1989) which has become a well-established area of analysis in second language (L2) teaching and learning. In particular, teacher cognition refers to the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching what teachers know, believe, and think (Borg 2003a: 81). Knowledge about teaching may be influenced by personal experience (educational, and social background); experience with schooling and instruction; and experience with formal and pedagogic knowledge. Teachers' beliefs result from the relationship between (a) the values, goals, and assumptions that teachers have about the content and development of teaching, and (b) the understanding of the social, cultural, and institutional context where teaching takes place. (Ajeyalemi, 2002). Finally, teacher thinking involves the guiding principles or assumptions that teachers articulate in relation to their classroom work (Breen et al. 2001). Nespar (1987) describes some characteristics of teacher beliefs as sometimes containing assumptions about the existence of entities beyond the teacher's control or influence; including conceptualizations of ideal situations that differ from reality; relying heavily on affective and evaluative components; deriving much of their power from memories of specific events; and not opening to critical examination or outside evaluation.

Research on teachers' beliefs and practices has examined a number of issues, among them the nature of grammar teaching as teachers perceive it (Borg, 2003b); thinking and actions of experienced teachers (Breen et al. 2001); different perceptions about communicative language teaching (Salomone, 1998); influence of the social, psychological and environmental realities of the school and the classroom (Obebe, 2002); and the degree to which constructs such as the Standards for Foreign Language Learning may affect the beliefs and practices of Foreign Language teachers (Allen 2002).

Some belief systems of language teachers
Pre-service and in-service language teachers' beliefs have been explored by a number of studies. Kennedy (1997) noted that teacher candidates bring to their professional schooling the belief "that they already have what it takes to be a good teacher, and that therefore they have little to learn from the formal study of teaching" (p. 14). Whitbeck (2000) also opined that pre-service teachers, upon entering their preparation programmeme, hold a simplistic view of the teaching profession. They believe that language teaching is easy and that teaching merely involves transmitting information (Feiman-Nemer et al., 1989). Some have described their views of the profession as one which is telling and nurturing, and hold parent-like practices (Feinman-Nemser et al., 1989). Many pre-service teachers enter the programmeme with high confidence in their ability to perform well in the profession (Richards and Killen, 1994). Language teachers were also found to believe that motivating one's students and being warm and personable were primary characteristics of good teachers (Collins, Selinger, and Pratt, 2003. Maintaining interest and control are signs of an effective teacher (Joram and Gabrielle, 1998). When a class is under control, teaching is lecturing which should be the main task of a teacher (Wubbels, 1992). The majority of knowledge about teaching will come from practice in the field through trial and error when they enter the classroom (Joram and Gabrielle, 1998). A 'teaching personality' is more important than cognitive skills or pedagogical or subject-matter knowledge. This is in line with the cultural myth that teachers are born, not made. While some students enter college of education to learn the 'tricks of the trade", others believe they are 'born

teachers' (Whitbeck, 2000). Good teaching is related to content knowledge and the ability to convey that knowledge to others (Powell, 1992). Some courses in teacher education are inconsequential or insignificant. They do not expect to get much from their education (Joram and Gabriele, 1998). They will learn through trial and error when they enter the classroom. and are less interested in what they perceive to be theory and more interested in practical approaches (Wilkes, 2004). They believe that they will learn a "series of tricks" that can be easily replicated from the academic content to the school context. (Wideen, Smith, and Moon, 1998). They would be good teachers without any preparation (Mertz, 1991).

Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework for this study is hinged on Brophy and Good (1974) cited in Fang (1996) who argued that a better understanding of language teachers' belief system or conceptual base will significantly contribute to enhancing educational effectiveness. Belief systems are described as dynamic in nature, undergoing change and restructuring as individuals evaluate their beliefs against their experiences (Thompson, 1992).

The importance of language teachers' beliefs within teacher education rests within the constructivist's conception of learning and the reflective approach to teaching. A constructivist holds that beliefs are thought of as critical in terms of what and how the student teacher makes sense of their learning in the teacher education programmeme. Pre-existing beliefs are so influential that attempts to change teaching styles are ineffective, unless these beliefs are directly questioned (Johnson, 1988).The earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter (Pajares, 1992). As a result, pre-service teacher education may find itself competing with previously established beliefs that play an active role in the acquisition of new knowledge (McLean, 1999). Individuals' prior educational beliefs about language teaching are augmented by the stability of such beliefs and their resistance to change (Joram and Gabriele, 1998), resulting in important implications in pre-service teacher training.

The Social Reconstructionist tradition attempts to help language education students deconstruct their own prior knowledge and attitudes, comprehend how these understandings evolved, explore the effects they have on actions and behaviour, and consider alternate conceptions and premises that may be more serviceable in teaching. Critical analysis and structured reflection on formal course knowledge and everyday practical experience are incorporated. A constructivist approach seeks to connect theory to practice and views the student as "thinker, creator, and constructor." Integral to a constructivist theory of learning is creative problem solving. Teachers take responsibility for assessing and solving problems not with mechanistic "cook book" recipes, but by asking "What decisions should I be making?", "On what basis do I make these decisions?", and "What can I do to enhance learning?"

The Reflective Teaching approach also underlies the professional knowledge bases. These knowledge bases are centreed on knowledge of self, knowledge of content, knowledge of teaching and learning, knowledge of pupils, and knowledge of context within schools and society. Preparation for working with diverse populations in an ever-changing cultural and global context requires teachers who are knowledgeable, caring, and responsive. What might teachers gain by identifying their current beliefs? There are

many benefits, including identifying sources of conflict and frustration, pinpointing beliefs based on outdated or erroneous information, and increasing behavioral flexibility. Because teachers cannot help but teach what they believe, self-reflection will help them understand how their beliefs influence the taught, learned, and implicit curriculum. The essence of reflexive approach in language classroom is outlined by Palmer (1994) " When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are. I will see them through a glass darkly, in the shadows of my unexamined life—and when I cannot see them clearly, I cannot teach them well. (35)"

Statement of problem

It is argued that the introduction of language curricular with their associated teaching practices have failed because the beliefs, views and attitudes of teachers have been ignored. Yet, Shuck (1997) reported that language educators do not realize the power and the tenacity of teachers' beliefs and attitudes and in a way does not sufficiently recognize the influence of these beliefs on their learning and teaching. (p. 530). Though researches have made significant advances in establishing the connection between language teacher beliefs and educational practice, most researches concentrated on the belief systems of pre-service teachers only. The question is "what about the belief systems of in-service teachers?" Apart from this, Peacock (2001) reports that there is still a shortage of research that investigates beliefs of language teachers that can be related to a number of factors such as language, learning, experience, age, and academic performance. This study focuses on the issues raised by examining the belief system of in-service teachers who have come for professional development programmeme through sandwich courses. It aims to examine: (1) the extent to which teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) possess beliefs about second language learning and teaching consistent with the major theoretical explanations in the field of ESL; (2) the extent to which these beliefs are associated with academic performance and classroom instructional practices; and (3) perceptions of ESL teachers about the contextual variables in ESL classrooms that influence those practices.

Specifically, the following research questions were provided answers to:what belief constructs do in-service teachers have about self, language learning, teaching processes, the ESL curriculum, their students and their professional training? Are there relationships between the belief constructs? Are the belief constructs independent of gender, level, teaching experience, academic performance, and teaching efficacy? What is the implication of these on effective and quality teacher education programmeme?

Methodology

The study is a descriptive survey where data collected included information from the following sources: a questionnaire exploring their belief systems, unstructured written interviews, and descriptive data on the teachers' academic performance as well as their teaching practice scores.

The questionnaire was a belief inventory questionnaire adapted from Horwitz (1987)'s Belief About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) which was modified to suit the specific context of the study. It consists in a quantitative self-report questionnaire that investigated forty-eight statements categorized under six belief constructs: selves, ESL, language learning, teaching processes, their students and professional training and re-

training. These were ranked on a 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. It was revalidated with a Coefficient Alpha of 0.74. (Horwitz's BALLI was 0.78). Only 500 and 600 level students (totaling 100 participants) were interviewed. The CGPA and teaching practice scores of the same group were used. This is because they have spent between five and six years on the programmeme and the study believes the exposure would have given them ample time to evaluate their beliefs. They are also the only groups that have been exposed to teaching practice in the course of their training.   The unstructured written interview was used to explore further their belief systems, changes and modifications (if any) in such beliefs and the reasons for the changes. Teachers' Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) served to establish how their beliefs are moderated in their academic performances, while their teaching practice scores were used to explore the links between their belief systems and instructional/pedagogical practices and efficacy.

Three hundred Sandwich ESL Education Students of University of Lagos were stratified and randomly selected from the six levels of the programmeme (100-600). Fifty students were randomly selected from each level. The sandwich programmeme is designed to upgrade teachers' professional and pedagogical knowledge through training and certification and it is always an intensive five-six year programmeme executed during summer vacations. The sample consisted of 77 males and 223 females, with teaching experiences ranging between 0-5 years (32%), 6-10 years (33%), 11-15 years (12.7%) above 15 years (4.7%) while 17.7% had no teaching experience. Those with teaching experience teach English Language and Literature at pre-primary (17.3%), lower basic (29.7%), upper basic (16.3%), and post basic (19%) levels. Their ages range between 21-30 (33.3%), 31-40 (49%), 41-50 (17%), 51-60 (0.7%) years.

The questionnaire and interview schedule were administered during the current session. The interview schedule was limited to one hundred teachers because of manageability of data and restricted to 500 and 600 level students because they are deemed to have acquired enough training and experience against which their belief systems can be explored, moderated and substantiated by instructional theories and practices. To determine their professional competence, the same groups' scores in the last teaching practice exercise were used. The questionnaire was however administered to the whole sample (three hundred respondents). Quantitative analysis of data such as descriptive statistics was computed to summarize the teachers' beliefs while ANOVA was used for gender, experience, level, academic performance and teaching practice differences.

Results

The analyses that are reported on in this section include descriptive statistics for and correlations among the major study variables, as well as analysis of variance. All significance tests used an alpha level of .05. The first research question determines in-service teachers' belief constructs about self, language learning, teaching processes, the ESL curriculum, their students and their professional training. This is shown through descriptive statistics. The means and standard deviations for the major study variables are shown in Table 1. It is interesting to note the means for the beliefs about each of the belief construct: self concept (32.04), language learning (24.62) teaching processes (24.98) English language (24.98) professional training (23.98) learners (21.32). Self-concept, with its highest mean score

supports (Pajares, 1996) notion that the study of self-efficacy in education has brought to light the importance of not only considering the ability level of an individual but the individual's belief that they will succeed on a task. Self-efficacy has even been shown to contribute a direct effect to performance that is equivalent to general ability itself.

Table 1: *Means and Standard Deviations for Study Variables*

BELIEF CONSTRUCTS	N	MEAN	SD
Self concept	300	32.04	7.49
Language learning	300	24.62	7.51
teaching processes	300	24.98	10.97
English language	300	20.52	4.94
professional training	300	23.98	5.54
Learners	300	21.32	6.45

The second research question asked to what extent there were interrelationships between self concept, language learning, teaching processes, ESL curriculum, learners and professional training. The study predicted significant relationships between each of these major constructs due to the overlap in what they proposed to measure. Using Correlation Analyses the findings showed partial support for this hypothesis through the use correlation analysis. Analyses at the construct l Pearson's correlations are shown in Table 2 with coefficient alphas for each construct/variable. There was correlation between self concept and language learning, teaching processes, learners, while there is negative correlation between self concept and academic performance. There were also correlation between English Language and language learning, learning processes, and professional training. Surprisingly, no relationship was found between teaching practice and any of the constructs. This was particularly surprising given that teaching practice is at the heart of professional training. This may be due to the fact that most pedagogical approach to teacher education are theoretical in nature.

Table 2: Correlations among Major Study Variables.

	Self concept	language learning	teaching processes	English language	Professional training	learners	academic performance	teaching practice
Self concept	1	.373(**)	.295(**)	.079	.004	.148(*)	-.301(**)	.107
language learning	.373(**)	1	.831(**)	.251(**)	.060	.361(**)	.340(**)	-.004
teaching processes	.295(**)	.831(**)	1	.294(**)	.037	.343(**)	.260(**)	.032
English language	.079	.251(**)	.294(**)	1	.366(**)	.224(**)	.161	-.057
Professional training	.004	.060	.037	.366(**)	1	.057	.022	-.090
Learners	.148(*)	.361(**)	.343(**)	.224(**)	.057	1	.151	-.094
academic performance	-.301(**)	.340(**)	.260(**)	.161	.022	.151	1	-.055
teaching practice performance	.107	-.004	.032	-.057	-.090	-.094	-.055	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The third question intended to investigate if levels of training, teaching experience and class taught have any significant influence on the belief constructs. These are determined through Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and shown in tables 3, 4, and 5.

Table 3: ANOVA table for class/level differences.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self concept	Between Groups	7153.355	5	1430.671	43.632	.000
	Within Groups	9640.165	294	32.790		
	Total	16793.520	299			
Language learning	Between Groups	7516.388	5	1503.278	47.156	.000
	Within Groups	9372.292	294	31.879		
	Total	16888.680	299			
Teaching processes	Between Groups	19270.906	5	3854.181	67.649	.000
	Within Groups	16750.011	294	56.973		
	Total	36020.917	299			
English language	Between Groups	346.193	5	69.239	2.920	.014
	Within Groups	6970.594	294	23.710		
	Total	7316.787	299			
Professional training	Between Groups	39.326	5	7.865	.252	.939*
	Within Groups	9168.621	294	31.186		
	Total	9207.947	299			
Learners	Between Groups	663.566	5	132.713	3.310	.006
	Within Groups	11786.421	294	40.090		
	Total	12449.987	299			

Table 4: *ANOVA table for differences in teaching experience*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self concept	Between Groups	292.208	4	73.052	1.306	.268*
	Within Groups	16501.312	295	55.937		
	Total	16793.520	299			
Language learning	Between Groups	155.328	4	38.832	.685	.603*
	Within Groups	16733.352	295	56.723		
	Total	16888.680	299			
Teaching processes	Between Groups	288.212	4	72.053	.595	.667*
	Within Groups	35732.704	295	121.128		
	Total	36020.917	299			
English language	Between Groups	149.496	4	37.374	1.538	.191*
	Within Groups	7167.290	295	24.296		
	Total	7316.787	299			
Professional training	Between Groups	126.864	4	31.716	1.030	.392*
	Within Groups	9081.083	295	30.783		
	Total	9207.947	299			
Learners	Between Groups	36.521	4	9.130	.217	.929*
	Within Groups	12413.466	295	42.080		
	Total	12449.987	299			

Table 5: *ANOVA table for differences school level taught*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self concept	Between Groups	13.916	3	4.639	.075	.974*
	Within Groups	15111.914	243	62.189		
	Total	15125.830	246			
Language learning	Between Groups	43.378	3	14.459	.254	.858*
	Within Groups	13811.528	243	56.838		
	Total	13854.907	246			
Teaching processes	Between Groups	111.493	3	37.164	.312	.817*
	Within Groups	28948.976	243	119.132		
	Total	29060.470	246			
English language	Between Groups	164.991	3	54.997	2.245	.084
	Within Groups	5951.908	243	24.493		
	Total	6116.899	246			
Professional training	Between Groups	152.786	3	50.929	1.586	.193*
	Within Groups	7800.809	243	32.102		
	Total	7953.595	246			
Learners	Between Groups	26.504	3	8.835	.218	.884*
	Within Groups	9843.933	243	40.510		
	Total	9870.437	246			

While Table 3 indicated no significant differences among the different class levels of trainees (100-600 levels) except for professional training, Tables 4 and 5 showed significant differences in teaching experience and school level taught respectively, for all the belief constructs. These showed that beliefs about self concept, language learning, teaching processes, ESL, professional training and learners were varied according to teaching experience as well as the school level taught, while class levels of the trainees showed only a significant difference on professional training.

The response to the written interview was able to establish changes in the beliefs of the teachers. Of the one hundred participants who were interviewed (500 and 600 levels), 86% confessed that their earlier beliefs about the constructs have changed, 2% agreed that the beliefs have been slightly modified, while 5% noted that those beliefs were rather reinforced. Some of the beliefs changed include:

Beliefs about Learners: exposure to courses in psychology and human development has enabled them understand individual differences and therefore made them more patient and approachable to their students. They are also able to recognize that as teachers, 'they can learn with and from their students', that learning goes beyond the classroom- 'it occurs anywhere, anytime' and 'results from multidimensional experiences'. Many also commented on the need for learners to be independent, self-directed, and responsible for their own learning.

The nature and of teaching ESL: courses and theories in content and pedagogy of teaching has changed belief that ESL is rather complex, difficult and tasking, grammar is difficult and cumbersome:, and improved their understanding of ESL skills and structure, except that of speaking skills where they believe that 'it is impossible to achieve a near native pronunciation'. They are also able to recognize that 'all skills and aspects of English are important and reinforce each other' rather than undue concentration on grammar and vocabulary building. Also against the belief that English language proficiency consists in speaking 'big grammar', they are able to recognize that effective communication thrives on 'simple, meaningful conversation and being understood by one's audience'. It was also noted that language learning is communication and should be practical, relevant, out of class needs and should be instrumental to attaining other goals- 'teaching ESL involves varied and multidimensional experiences and activities. Their training is also perceived as worthwhile as it has made them develop competencies that were otherwise absent in their practice. This has made them develop 'teaching confidence'. Against the belief that lazy and untrained people can teach, they now see teachers as 'hardworking, goal oriented and well focused personalities' and who have undergone specific period of formal training.

Implications for Effective Teacher Education Programmeme
Past research has shown that teachers' own beliefs and visions represent important concepts held by individuals who enter the teaching profession. These concepts are complex in nature yet they form a critical construct in teacher education. The challenge for the language teacher education programmeme would be to uncover many of the teachers' beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning and understand how these teachers' beliefs interact with the content and pedagogy of the existing programmeme and the extent of what and how they learn (Kagan, 1992, Pajares, 1992, Wubbels, 1992). Having acknowledged the importance of teachers' beliefs, constant deliberate attempts should be made by teams of educators, researchers and administrators to map out an authentic multi-prong approach to develop top quality teacher education programmeme.

Although current research efforts have attempted to better understand the pre- and in-service teachers' beliefs, it should focus more on helping the teachers to be more aware of their own beliefs and other associated factors and make them understand how own beliefs can influence their learning while they are in teacher education programmeme (Pintrich,1990). Such research efforts would certainly value-add them as individuals who not only learn how to teach, more importantly they become more aware of their own dispositions towards teaching. Hopefully this would contribute to their being and becoming effective educators in schools.

Our 21st century classroom should model the development of intellectual skills by drawing upon the tenets and practices of constructivism, critical pedagogy and reflective practice. An efficient teacher education programmeme should focus on developing competencies that will enable teachers create in their students a durable yearning for learning because effective competence education cannot be possibly static.
Perhaps there is a worthwhile need to review each of the existing academic programmemes with a view to reinforcing and enriching their inherent values for engendering balanced students' empowerment. This is to ensure opportunities to acquire levels of knowledge, analytic, manipulation, communication, creative and life skills as well as ethical, moral,

and civic values needed for a productive life (Adegoke 2003). This, as a matter of fact, is the whole essence of language, and in general, humanity education in the era of globalization and technological advancements.

Recommendations

All teacher training courses both pre-service and in-service should include a systematic beliefs/reflection strand which acknowledges teachers' existing beliefs. Added to this, the language curriculum should include specific tasks that help trainees make their own beliefs explicit and to reflect on, question and explore their beliefs. Trainees need to build sufficient confidence and self esteem to be able to try out new ideas. Also, their teaching context needs to be conducive to their trying out new ideas. Awareness is a prerequisite for belief change, so one important challenge for trainers/educators is to increase trainees' self-awareness. Another challenge for the teacher education institution would be to keep abreast of research, practices and issues in teacher education in overseas and local contexts. In the era of globalization and information communication technology, teacher education programmeme demand a technology-based approach -- e-teaching, e-learning, e-testing, motivated and highly inspiring, confident language teachers.

Conclusion

The study reveals that the participants' beliefs appear to have changed, contrary to the literature which claims that beliefs cannot be easily modified. It seems the participants have learned a great deal and had been influenced by the system, the programmeme and some other psychological variables beyond the realm of this paper such as motivation, stress and timing, etc.

In the final analysis, it is crucial that trainees are encouraged to develop a positive attitude to English Language classroom activities as Brumfit (1984) stated: "Beliefs, visions, attitudes and motivation and language aptitude are important because they influence the rate at which second language material is learned" (80)

The trainees are the index of quality and the hub around which quality revolves. Without a sustained learners interest, sympathetic support and good management style, there can never be genuine quality in teacher education. Beyond quality in language teacher education, the fundamental step in developing the management process remains developing a vision of the future. Visions of the future in essence create aspirations involved in achievable goals and objectives in the short, medium and long-term in English as Second Language (ESL) teacher education classrooms.

References

Adegoke, K.A (2003) *Curriculum Theorizing for Competency*. An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the University of Lagos on Wednesday 20th August, 2003.

Adeyemi, A. M. (1995) *Curriculum Change and Innovation: Impact on Science Curriculum* Projects. Lagos Dentechet Publishers

Ajeyalemi, Duro (2002) *Capacity Building in the Sciences: Imperatives for Teacher Education in Nigeria.* An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the University of Lagos, Nigeria

Ajeyalemi Duro and Busari, O. O (1986) *Factors Associated with Under-Achievement in O'Level Chemistry -An investigation into Classroom Processes, Teacher and Pupil Opinions.* Proceedings of the 27th Annual Stan Conference, Owerri, August,250-256

Allen, L. Q. (2002) "Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs and the Standards for Foreign Language Learning". *Foreign Language Annals* 35, 518-529.

Borg, Simon. (2003a) "Teacher Cognition in Language Teaching: A Review of Research on What Language Teachers Think, Believe, and Do." *Language Teaching* 36, 81-109.

Borg, Simon. (2003b) "Teacher Cognition in Grammar Teaching: A Literature Review." *Language Awareness* 12, 96-108.

Breen, Michael P. (2002) "From a Language Policy to Classroom Practice: The Intervention of Identity and Relationships." *Language and Education* 16, 260-283.

Breen, M.P. Bernard, H. Marion, M. Oliver, R, and Thwaite, A. (2001) "Making Sense of Language Teaching: Teachers' Principles and Classroom Practices." *Applied Linguistics* 22, 470-501.

Brumfit, C. (1984) Communication Methodologies in Lanaguage Teaching. Cambridge University Press.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The Culture of Education.* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Dart, B.C., Boulton-Lewis, G.M., Brownlee, J.M. and Mccrindle, A.R. (1998). Change in Knowledge of Learning and Teaching through Journal Writing. *Research Papers in Education,* 13(3), 291-318.

Feiman-Nemser, S., Mcdiarmid, G.W., Melnick, S.L. and Parker, M. (1989). *Changing Beginning Teachers' Conceptions: A Description of an Introductory Teacher Education Course.* East Lansing, MI: National Centre for Research in Teacher Education, Michigan State University.

Holt-Reynolds, D. (1992). Personal History-Based Beliefs as Relevant Prior Knowledge in Coursework. *American Educational Research Journal,* 29, 325-349

Johnson, K. (1988). Changing Teachers' Conceptions of Teaching and Learning. In Calderhead. J. (Eds.) *Teachers' Professional Learning.* Lewes: Falmer, Pp. 169-95.

Joram, E. and Gabriele, A. (1998). Preservice Teacher's Prior Beliefs: Transforming Obstacles into Opportunities. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 14(2), 175-191.

Kagan, D. M. (1992). Implications of Research on Teacher Belief. *Educational Psychologist,* 27(1), 65-90.

Kennedy, Mary M. (1997). *Defining an Ideal Teacher Education Programme* [Mimeo]. Washington, DC: National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Mclean, V. S. (1999). Article 1, Chapter 2. In Richard Lipka and Thomas Brinthaupt (Eds.), *The Role of Self in Teacher Development.* Albany: State University Of New York Press.

Mertz, N. T. and McNealy, S. R. (1991). *Cognitive Constructs of Pre-Service Teachers: How Students Think About Teaching Before Formal Preparation*. Paper Presented At The Annual Meeting of The American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

Nespar, J. (1987). The Role of Beliefs In The Practice of Teaching. *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 19, 317-328.

Obebe , B .O (2005) Social Studies: *The Study of Ourselves and Our Environment.* University of Lagos , Inaugural Lecture Series.

Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' Beliefs and Educational Research: Cleaning up a Messy Construct.

Review of Educational Research, 62(3), 307-333.

Powell, R. (1992). The Influence of Prior Experience on Pedagogical Constructs of Traditional and Nontraditional Preservice Teachers. *Teaching And Teacher Education,* 8 (3) 225-238

Richards, C. and Killen, R. (1994). *Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of the Problems of Education Conference* 1994. Retrieved August 27, 2007 http://www.aare.edu.au/94pap/richc94312.Txt

Richardson, V. (1996). The Role of Attitudes and Beliefs in Learning to Teach. In   J. Sikula (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (2nd Ed., Pp.102-119). New York: Macmillan.

Salomone, A. M. (1998) "Communicative Grammar Teaching: A Problem for and a Message from International Teaching Assistants." *Foreign Language Annals* 31, 552-66.

Schunk, D.H. (1996). Goal and Self-Evaluative Influences During Children's Cognitive Skill Learning. *American Educational Research Journal*, 33, 359-382.

Thompson, A (1992) teachers beliefs and concepts?: a synthesis of research. In Grouws (ed.) handbook of research on mathematics teaching and learning. Pp127-146. new york- Macmillan

Whitbeck, D.A. (2000). Born to be a Teacher: What am I Doing in a College of Education? *Journal of Research in Childhood Education,* 15(1), 129-36.

Wilke, R. (2004). *How Content Area Influences Choice of Instructional Methods: An Examination of one Component of Preservice Teacher Belief.* Unpublished Master's Thesis, The Florida State University, College of Education, USA.

Wubbels, T. (1992). Taking Account of Student Teachers' Preconceptions. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 8, 137-150.

Wideen, M., Mayer-Smith, J. and Moon, B. (1998) A Critical Analysis of the Research on Learning to Teach: Making the Case for an Ecological Perspective on Inquiry. *Review of Educational Research,* 68, 130-178

Zeichner, Kenneth M., and Tabachnick, B. Robert. (1981). Are the Effects of University Teacher Education 'Washed Out' by School Experience? *Journal of Teacher Education,* 32(3), 7-11.