



An Ethnographic Study on Beliefs and Attitudes of Some Brazilian Teachers of English

 Flávio Almeida dos Anjos,¹

 Denise Chaves de Menezes Scheyerl,²

¹Recôncavo of Bahia Federal University (UFRB), *Brazil*

²Bahia Federal University, *Brazil*

Corresponding Author: Flávio Almeida dos Anjos

Phone: +75981857430

e-mail: flaviusanjos@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Many specialists agree that beliefs have a powerful impact on teachers practices. However, it should be taken into account that their attitudes affect their practices as well. This paper is about English language teachers' attitudes and beliefs. The objective was to share some data from an ethnographic research developed with a group of high school English teachers from Brazil. The research data ratified our hypothesis of the existence of a relationship between belief and attitude, what, to us, until then, was a gap in the studies of Applied Linguistics. Although initially we had in mind the idea that attitudes could generate beliefs, we verified that attitudes are part of beliefs as well as they are personal, contextual, and incidental, what we explain in this paper. The data were collected through an interview and a questionnaire, which made it possible, based on the teachers' statements, to figure out how beliefs and attitudes operate and converge. That is why a study as this is relevant since it can contribute to the field so that teachers can understand even better their pedagogical settings..

Keywords: Beliefs; Attitudes; English; Teachers.

1. Introduction

In the pedagogical setting, several elements, which are intrinsically related with it, go unnoticed. Elements such as feelings, attitudes and beliefs, almost always, are not taken into account by teachers. It happens that the understanding of these elements may offer teachers a more accurate view of the process. In this perspective, researches on beliefs and attitudes have been done around the world (Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003; Bernart; Gvozdenko, 2005; Garbauio, 2006; Barcelos; Vieira-Abrahão, 2006; Alonso; Fogaça, 2007; Gabillon, 2012; Barcelos; Kalaja, 2013, Gao, 2014; Connors; Halligan, 2015; Utami, 2016; Allport, 1954; Gardner, 1985; Walker et al. 2004; Mackenzie, 2010; Anjos, 2018). Many of them have focused on understanding teachers' practice in classroom and how they evaluate their own actions, in the educational setting. However, what has been produced are data which bring these elements separately. Differently, this paper presents some data of an ethnographic research, with six English teachers, from Brazil, which points to the relationship between

belief and attitude. Thus, this study had as main goal to figure out teacher's beliefs and attitudes and how they converge and to what extent they are related.

To understand this relationship, it was necessary to look for both elements in the data participants provided us with. Thus, we have now a very clear idea on how they are related. A study as this one can be useful in the sense that it offers, to those interested in the topic, fundamental information concerning how teachers realize their practices and the pedagogical setting where they work; how they evaluate and understand the scenario they are part of.

Therefore, to figure out beliefs and attitudes it is necessary to recognize they are related, what, initially, may cause conceptual confusion, and, because of this, we agree with Barcelos (2006) about the fact that beliefs are not easily distinct from knowledge, because it is difficult to distinguish them from other aspects, such as knowledge, motivation etc. Barcelos (2015) also writes about a gap in Applied Linguistics when studies have not focused on understanding the relationship among beliefs, identities and emotions, for example. In this line of thought, we also believe in the existence of a gap, in Applied Linguistics, to explain the intrinsic relationship between belief and attitude. That is why it is proper the question: what comes first: beliefs or attitudes? What we will reflect about later.

It is important to say that this study made it possible to understand how complex the teaching/learning process is, where several elements, such as beliefs and attitudes operate, many times together, though invisible to those who are part of this setting. In the next section, it is briefly shared some conceptions of beliefs and attitudes, so that it is possible to understand both.

2.Literature Review

This study has as focus to reflect on English teachers' beliefs and attitudes. This section briefly shares some concepts and viewpoint of both. To a better understanding, first, we reflect on beliefs and later on attitudes.

Thus, beliefs have been studied by several specialists (Xu, 2012; Barcelos, 2001; Dutra & Oliveira, 2006; Housseni & Purmandnia, 2013; Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2012) who have tried to understand the complexity of the learning/teaching process. These scholars have agreed with the fact that beliefs have an influential role in the way teachers conduct their practices. Because of this, they have researched about beliefs, in the attempt to figure them out, aiming at getting better results in classroom.

They have first established the conceptions of belief as a start point. In this perspective, we are going to do the same. Barcelos (2006) argues that beliefs are ways of thought, ways of realizing reality, which have a powerful impact on the teachers' practice. She also thinks beliefs are opinions and ideas learners and teachers might have, concerning the teaching/learning process. Barcelos (2001) states as well that beliefs are personal, contextual and incidental. For her, beliefs have origin in our experiences, in the culture and in folklore and they can be inconsistent and contradictory.

According to Borg (2001), beliefs are a kind of "true element", a mental state, which has as content a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual who supports them. Borg (2003) also perceives beliefs in a cognitive perspective and uses the term 'teacher cognition' to make reference to the cognitive dimensions about what teachers know, believe and think which influence their professional lives. She states:

The general picture to emerge here then is that teachers' prior language learning experiences establish cognitions about learning and language learning which form the basis of their initial conceptualisation of L2 teaching during teacher education and which may continue to be influential throughout their professional lives. (Borg, 2003, p. 88)

In this perspective, to understand beliefs teachers hold is not always an easy task, due to their complexity. That is why researching teacher's beliefs about language and learning and teaching has been a challenging task. (Barcelos, Kalaja, 2013). To understand them, a possible path is to identify their origins. About this, Xu (2012) mentions that

beliefs are closely related with teachers' values, world views and the understanding they have of their places in the world. But how beliefs articulate themselves in the English language teaching/learning context? This understanding stands for a central point to the pedagogy to teach English (Houssenini & Pourmandnia, 2013).

For Kumaravadivelu (2012), beliefs deeply affect the way teachers teach. For him, beliefs work as a kind of guide so that teachers define, select and organize the information that will be introduced to the students. However, he argues that there are signs that beliefs have a potential to lead teachers to take a particular attitude in their daily teaching practice, even when they know this way is not the best one. He states that beliefs structure teachers' thought and action:

They [beliefs] are imbued with strong emotional attachments, and as such they play a crucial role in shaping one's thought, expression, and action. Therefore what individuals think, say and do may be taken as a reflection of their beliefs. This is true of teachers as well. (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 60)

For Utami (2016), what makes teachers' practice be different is their beliefs. This author points that in the English language teaching, specifically, beliefs on how the language should be learned and taught is a significant factor, what makes teachers involve different strategies, materials, media and evaluations:

Furthermore, it has become widely recognized that the teachers' pedagogical beliefs play a central role in their teaching practices where these beliefs are manifested in the teaching methods, in choosing the subjects and activities, decision-making, and evaluation. (Utami, 2016, p. 136)

For Xu (2012), teachers have strong beliefs about the role of education, about individuality in the academic performance and about what is right and wrong in classroom. Thus, teachers, when arrive in classroom, do not act only based on the knowledge they have about their subjects, that is to say, only based on the contents which they are going to teach to their students; their beliefs get in the scene, even before they arrive in the classroom. The construction of teaching and learning beliefs is something that goes with teachers even before they deepen in practical issues of this process.

This way, beliefs are more influential than the knowledge teachers hold (Xu, 2012). Thus, for Utami (2016), what teachers do in classroom is ruled by what they believe and these beliefs, often, work as a filter, through which instructional judgments and decisions are made. For this researcher, these beliefs are formed based on personal, cultural and historical experiences.

Concerning attitudes, social psychology is the area which better reflects on them. Allport (1954) is one of the pioneers to theorize on attitudes, when he elaborates the notion that 'attitude' is a neural and mental state of readiness, structured by an individual's experience, which plays a dynamic influence on the answers this individual might have, concerning objects and the situation with which he is confronted with. Gardner (1985) is the one who introduces a theoretical framework which sheds light on how attitudes work, specifically in the language teaching/learning setting. He is the one, who perhaps, best expressed notions which make it possible to understand attitudes, mainly when he elaborates a theoretical framework that shows the relationship among attitudes, motivation, orientation and identity. This researcher defines 'attitude' as an evaluative reaction towards a referent, towards something or somebody, based on beliefs and opinions an individual might have on this referent. Thus, 'attitude' is about the way the teacher evaluates his/her practices, the learners, the textbook and the language he/she teaches. But although Gardner (1985) did not have as focus the study of beliefs, he mentions the term, when defining attitudes, leaving a possible clue about the relationship between attitude and belief, which should be investigated.

Anjos (2018) defines 'attitude' as an excessively favourable or unfavourable position towards something or somebody. This reasoning was expanded and he reaches the conclusion that 'attitudes' have a strong relationship with motivation and demotivation to learn a language. The latter factors generate the former one, in a cause and effect relationship, which involves other contextual factors. But now, we can realize the notion that, besides these factors, beliefs might influence our attitudes and vice-versa.

Made these points clear, we try in this path, to diagnose any kind of relationship between teachers' attitude and belief. Although Borg (2001) mentions the definition of beliefs as having an evaluative feature, one can not miss the point that 'attitudes' are evaluative by nature, so that one can not confuse the terms. Concerning this, Connors and Halligan (2015) also mention that beliefs are 'a propositional attitude'. They define, this way, beliefs as attitudes. So, were these researchers confusing the terms? However, in the course of their reflections, they explain that beliefs can be distinguished from other cognitive representations, such as memory, knowledge and attitudes. They highlight that beliefs do not need to have an evaluative component, what is an essential feature of the attitudes.

After readings and reflections, we assume that beliefs might be anchored in attitudes, since an individual might believe in something based on what he evaluates. Relating this assertion with the English language teaching/learning context, this means that teachers, for instance, might believe how better learning can be consolidated, based on their previous evaluation. However, the evaluative construction, regarded as a premise, is what constitutes as beliefs. This way, beliefs are formed historically and socially from an attitude. First, an individual evaluates (judges) something/somebody. Next, he decides whether he is going to take this evaluation as a truth, what will guide the actions of this individual ahead, as a conduct code. Thus, for Connors and Halligan (2015), beliefs are described as ontological representations of the world and they embrace the primary convictions about events, causes, objects, that people use and accept as true.

In this perspective, teachers might acquire and hold several beliefs over life in their professional trajectories, such as about the language they teach, about their students and their teaching practices. If we assume that beliefs concern our perceptions, our ways of seeing and realizing the world and its phenomenon (Barcelos, 2006) and attitudes, they ways we judge things, that they are our evaluative reactions toward a referent (Gardner, 1985), we can also agree with the fact that teachers' beliefs influence their perceptions and the judgements on the context they act. (Dutra & Oliveira, 2006). In other words, initially, it seems that not only attitudes might originate beliefs, but beliefs might generate new attitudes as well.

About this, Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) also question about the origin of beliefs and they argue that we have little knowledge on the psychological mechanisms involved in the creation of beliefs, what, according to these researchers, are product of a series of internal and external factors to the individual.

From this point we started questioning ourselves concerning the elements which possibly were behind attitudes and beliefs, because if we take as a starting point the notion that there is a cause and effect relationship in both side, what, in fact, forms teachers' beliefs and attitudes? This question was with us from this moment on and as it was of our interest to investigate this issue as well, we were with it in our mind, what we try to answer later, based on the data of this study. But before, we briefly describe, the methodology, the research participants and the data collection instruments.

3. Method

3.1. Instruments and Data Collection

This study was based on the tenets of ethnography. Thus, it takes into account the fact that to understand beliefs and attitudes, it would be necessary to investigate a culture. In its etymological term: 'cultural description'. Therefore, analysis categories were created to investigate the data. It is relevant to say as well that this research was anchored in the qualitative paradigm, since the analysis was built linked with what it was understood from the current literature on the themes. To obtain the data, a questionnaire and a free interview were applied with six English teachers, from Recôncavo of Bahia, Brazil. These teachers have different backgrounds. Next, there is some information in this respect:

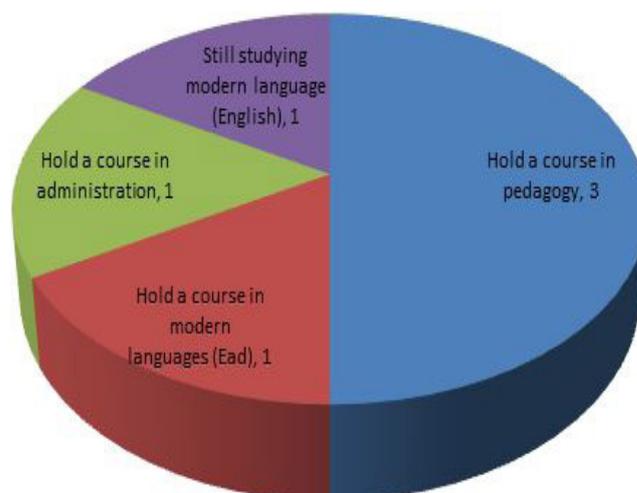


Figure 1. Teachers' background

4. Results and Discussion

This research was properly protocolled at Plataforma Brasil, as the current academic formalities require, and it had approved opinion by the Ethic Committee, from the Recôncavo of Bahia Federal University (UFRB), which number of certification is (CAAE) 03849718.2.0000.0056. The proceedings adopted in this research obeyed the ethic criteria concerning research with human beings, according to the resolution CNS N° 466 de 2012.

To analyze the data of this research, it was elaborated the following categories of analysis based on Borg (2002): a. Attitudes and beliefs about the teacher, b. Attitudes and beliefs about language and learning languages and c. Attitudes and beliefs about teaching. Before sharing the data, we make some considerations concerning the relationship between belief and attitude.

Concerning attitudes, Mackenzie (2010) discusses as well about a particular case related with the definition, which coincides with other concepts in the social psychology area, such as 'beliefs', 'opinion', 'value', 'habit', 'ideology' etc. For this reason, it is important to explain the conceptual differences between 'belief' and 'attitude'. Thus, for Gardner (1985), for instance, beliefs might develop an attitude, that is to say, first, an individual believes in a premise, to evaluate later a certain situation, a factor or somebody. In this perspective, it is possible to say that there is a fine line between belief and attitude. However, up to what point is it possible to realize when one ends and the other starts?

In this perspective, based on what we have verified thus far, we postulate that beliefs and attitudes might occur in an integrated manner, and that the analysis of the answers to the research questions will allow to identify the threshold between one and the other. If we state, for instance, "learning English is difficult", in this sentence is both the belief and the attitude. That is why, many times, it may be difficult to determine the threshold between one and the other. Thus, on the one hand, what it is possible to say is that there is the possibility that attitude and belief be expressed simultaneously, since, in the previous sentence as example, "difficult" expresses both an evaluative reaction (attitude) and it is part of a premise (belief). On the other hand, we understand that, somehow, attitude may precede a belief, that is why, in part, we disagree with Gardner (1985), when he generalizes, upon stating that 'attitude' is an evaluative reaction, elaborated based on the beliefs an individual might have. A belief might even generate an attitude. However, not always this might happen, because the reverse might happen as well. Besides that, we started understanding attitude as an integrating factor of beliefs, that is, the former is in the later.

Then, we believe that Gardner (1985) should have explained this issue in this perspective, not letting gap for generalizations or an understanding in a one-way. Thus, we have in mind that belief is a way of thinking which can activate an attitude, and attitude, that, by its turn, is an evaluative reaction, reinforces, ratifies the belief.

Therefore, we share the data of this research, explaining teachers' beliefs and attitudes, when necessary, in the same block. To facilitate the identification of them, when necessary, we put in brackets, what we understand as belief and attitude in the participants' answers. However, we point out that in some moments this identification was not possible, in face of the information gathered did not make possible. We also signal both belief and attitude together, because they occurred simultaneously in some moments.

The data will be shared based on the categories mentioned and discussed in different moments of collection, that is, from the different instruments used: the interview, the questionnaire and the teachers' diary. What will be presented in the next sections was elaborated based on the qualitative assumption. Let us start with the questionnaire.

4.1 The questionnaire data

Next, we share some data of this study which emerged from the questionnaire. The data are presented based on the categories already mentioned. First, the category "attitudes and beliefs about the teacher".

a) Attitudes and beliefs about the teacher

One of the first questions we used, aiming at understanding their beliefs and attitudes, was: *How do you feel teaching English?* P1 reveals to feel herself satisfied (attitude) as an English teacher. This self-evaluation, according to her, is anchored in an inspiration to become the English teacher her high school teacher was for her. In this sense is that we agree with Barcelos (2006), when this researcher points out that beliefs are always anchored in something, such as people who were significant to us. What allows us to say that, in fact, beliefs and attitudes establish a relationship, since, based on this answer, it seems to me that the belief that her English teacher "knew everything in English", activated in P1 the desire to be a teacher and, consequently, she evaluates herself satisfied concerning her performance. Next, we share P1's answer to this question:

P1: [I feel myself] fulfilled, because I love teaching English and I remember that in my adolescence I had a desire to be just like my teacher, because she knew "everything" in English.

P2 evaluates his performance as a teacher as 'difficult' (attitude) and ascribes to this the number of students per class, because the classes are overcrowded, and the lack of interest of some learners (belief). What we could realize from this is that the teacher's attitude has a relationship with the logistic factors, what allows us to say that these logistic factors influence in the development of attitudes.

P5 seems to feel himself abandoned, without support to conduct his teacher task, when he reveals that, besides thinking that the material is improper, he does not have "any kind of support" and he asserts that "teachers lack resources". This attitude of P5 ratifies what Walker *et al* (2004) say on the fact that teachers' negative attitudes emerge when they are without support to teach and they face the challenge to work with the English language.

P6, although, had revealed to love the English language, upon evaluating his performance, said to have attitudes of 'discomfort' and 'insecurity', in some moments, what he believes to happen because of his limited knowledge (belief). Here we ratify the notion we raised before, on the fact that attitudes may trigger beliefs, since the fact of feeling discomfort and insecurity lead P6 to believe in this based on the knowledge limitation. Next, it is P6's answer:

P6: I love teaching the English language. But, sometimes, I feel myself uncomfortable, that is a bit insecure, since I feel myself limited.

Another question we used, aiming at diagnosing and understanding beliefs and attitudes, was: *In your point of view, what would be the good English teacher profile?* This question automatically brings a belief, though incomplete, whose answers generate evaluative reactions. Next I present some data with my interpretations.

P1 holds the belief that to be a good English teacher one should teach it in different ways, to

make the process pleasureable and not mechanic, what configures a positive attitude towards the learning process. Next, we share P1's answer to the mentioned question:

P1: I understand that the teacher is the knowledge facilitator. Thus, a good English teacher is that one who seeks several ways to teach students, in a pleasureable way and not mechanic.

This leads us to say, initially, that it seems 'attitude' may lead to a 'belief'. However, on the other hand, we understand, based on this question and answers, that attitude may be expressed in the belief, integrating it.

For P2, the good English teacher profile is that one who introduces the language to the students (belief) in both contextualized and reflective ways (attitude); the one who does not teach the language systematically, ruled by rigorousness. But P3 assures that the good English teacher is that one who works recreationally (belief/attitude). Here what draws my attention is the fact that the teacher starts her statement with the verb "believe", ratifying the notion that beliefs are truth constructs, which one joins (Garbuio, 2006). Next, P3's answer to the question:

P3: I believe that a good English teacher should work in a playful way, with games, dialogs, songs, etc.

P4 answers this question based on qualifiers: 'creative' and 'democratic' (attitudes). However he also highlights that this professional should instigate on learners the desire to learn more the language. This allows us to say that for P4 it is the teacher's duty the role to activate learners' motivation, so that they can be engaged in the learning process.

For P5, the good English teacher profile (belief) can be summed up in working the contents relevantly (beliefs), highlighting contextualization and learners inclusion in this setting as well. P5's beliefs aligns with the one of P2, since both articulate their beliefs on the good English teacher profile, based on the contextual factor.

And P6 holds the belief that the good English teacher (belief) should be agile and should, together with students, build knowledge, promoting opportunity so that they can feel confidente. Next, we share P6's answer:

P6: A dynamic teacher, who builds together with students, open space so that they feel comfortable.

Next, we share some data concerning the second category: attitudes and beliefs about teaching.

b) Attitudes and beliefs about teaching

It was of our interest to try to figure out the data concerning beliefs about teaching and because of this we used the question: *For you, how would be a good English class?*

P1 believes that a good English class takes place when all students take part, with interaction and participation (belief), which can be materialized through questions and contributions. P2 believes that a good English class happens when the participation of all students is noticeable (belief) and when students are interested (attitude).

P3 believes that a good English class needs an agile teacher (beliefs/attitude), whose knowledge is a *sine qua non* condition to activate learners' motivation.

For P4 and P5, a good English class is dynamic (belief/attitude). Thus, we ratify our understanding on the relationship between belief and attitude, based on P4 and P5's answers, considering attitude as a integrating factor of belief as well, that is, it is in the belief. The next example explains this:

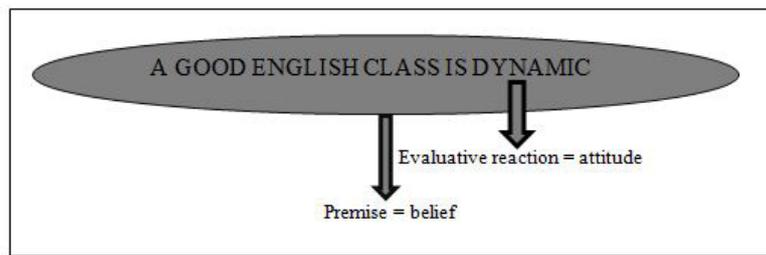


Figure 2. The relationship between belief and attitude

P5 highlights that these classes should be contextual. In this perspective, P6 also believes that a good English class should approach learners' reality (belief), so that they can feel part of that context.

After these interpretations, it is possible to state that P1 and P2 expresses her beliefs about what would be a good English class based on the student body, that is, according to the students' reaction. Next, we share their statements:

P1: I conclude that a class was good when I realize students's participation in its entirety. So, a good English class should have interaction and participation, questions and contributions.

P2: When all learners took part and show interest.

P3, about the same question, expresses his belief based on the teacher. Next it is his statement:

P3: With a dynamic teacher, who had knowledge necessary to encourage the student, motivating him.

And P4, P5 and P6's beliefs, about this as well, are based on the class itself, in the teaching approach, in the learning setting itself. Next, I share their staments:

P4: Very dynamic.

P5: A dynamic class, with meanings concerning contents and the social context.

P6: A class that was closer to the learner's reality. Where he feels himself part of that universe.

Based on these data it is possible to state, with reasonable certainty, that the answer to the question, we asked on what would be behind beliefs, are, among other things: the teacher, the perception about the students and the learning contexts, with its approaches.

Next, we share my interpretation based on the second category: attitudes and beliefs about the language and learning languages.

c) Attitudes and beliefs about the language and about learning languages

We also asked them: *Do you believe it is possible to learn English at school?*

P1 holds the belief of impossibility to learn English at high school. She argues that, though she believes learners will learn the linguistic structures, they will need an extra course, indeed, to learn the language. Thus, it is possible to state that P1 ascribes a discredit attitude to the basic education, concerning the learning of English, putting in check her own professional performance, since she works in this educational sphere. Next, it is P1's statement about this:

P1: No. I believe that in classroom learners will learn the linguistic and grammatical structures as whole. However, I believe that courses for conversation will be more indicated to learn a foreign language.

P2 has belief and attitude similar to P1, because she says that to learn English, at high school, changes are needed. P3 believes in this possibility. However, she says that only the basic of the language will be learnt, what makes it possible to say that she does not believe as whole that it is

possible to learn English at high school.

P4 simply believes it is possible to learn English at high school and he thinks this issue in a relatively way, since he conditions the possibility to learn English, at high school, to the quality of the process (belief). Thus, P5's belief is not permanent (Barcelos, 2006), because it might change and his attitude seems to originate this belief, since he evaluates positively this possibility, though conditionally.

And P6 believes in the possibility to learn English at high school (belief), however he judges to be difficult (attitude), because it requires, according to him, discipline and dedication on the part of both the teacher and the learner.

We asked them as well: If there is, which is the biggest problem that impedes the English language teaching/learning process, in the places where you teach it?

P1 believes that the initial contact with the language is the biggest problem (belief) to the learning consolidation, what, according to her, makes the process difficult (attitude). However, she says that, little by little, she realizes that students get closer to the language and this ceases to be a problem.

P2, P3 and P5 say that the biggest problem is the lack of a proper teaching material, contextualized as well as technological resources (belief). P4, who is an English teacher in rural areas, also believes that the lack of teaching materials and technological resources is the biggest problem to the learning consolidation (belief), which, because of the distance from the center, do not reach the rural area and makes the process difficult (attitude). Based on that, we can say as well that the beliefs have a contextual feature, they are the result of teachers' experience in the context they work (GABILLON, 2012). Next, it is P4's answer:

P4: the community where I work is called Opalma, district of cachoeira town, and with this the difficult of material and technological resource it gets more difficult.

P6 thinks the great number of students per class is the biggest problem to the learning consolidation (belief), what, according to him, exceeds the number of forty. Besides that, he mentions improper environments (attitude), where the heat converges to the lack of concentration, and the high number of students per class impedes the teacher to teach properly to all students.

Later we asked: How do you think your students learn better?

P4 says that dynamic and participative classes (attitude) is what make students learn better (belief). P1 holds a similar belief, when she says that her students learn better through playful activities, such as songs and games (belief). P1's belief seems to be quite simplist and it limits the learning process to songs and games. Although this view is a reality in many contexts, it is necessary to understand that the teaching/learning process is much more than a mere distraction moment, but it is also a reflective, an action and an awareness moment.

For P2, his students learn better listening and repeating, with the use of contextualized contents (belief). She understands language as mechanism of communication and expression.

For P4, his students learn better through dynamic and participative practices (belief). And P5 conditions a better learning of English to the quality of teaching materials to be used (belief).

We finish here the data discussion based on the questionnaire and next we share some data from the interview.

4.2 The Interview

Interview is one of research instruments that better allows the researcher to know a social reality. The reliability of the data lies, among other things, in the spontaneity with which the participants of a research answer the questions, somehow, to certain extent, unexpected. Barcelos (2006) characterizes interview as primary tools to investigate beliefs and she says that they are beneficial because they allow clarification and avoid ambiguities. For Vieira-Abrahão (2006), interview is an instrument that better suits to the qualitative paradigma, since they allow rich interaction and personal answers. Based on that we interviewed the teachers. Next, we share some data from the

interview aligned with the same categories mentioned.

a) Teachers' attitudes and beliefs

Another question used, aiming at getting answers within category one, was: *How do you feel when your students fail?*

P2 reveals to feel sad when his students failed in English and he holds the belief this should be seen in different perspectives, with the intention to find out the reason of failure, whether it is in him or in the student. Next, we share his statement:

P2: I get... little sad and I evaluate myself, but significatevely through a reflection... where was the fault, if it was in the teacher... Sometimes, I am able to identify that some students, because of their deficiency of base, because I have many students like this, who comes with a deficiency of base, of literacy, and he doesn't have a correct interpretation of the text, because it was a deficiency of base. In some students, I am able to identify because of their behaviours, he didn't get to follow the class, he didn't have a good performance, and I analyse some that I realize as well that they have intelligence potential and they learn the things and suddenly, there was some failure, so this is an evaluation from different views to understand where the fault was.

P1 evaluates that when this takes place, she gets quite angry and she holds the belief that this attitude happens because, although she plans the evaluations, many students neglect. Next, it is her statement:

P1: I get quite angry, because, in fact, I pursuit the best way to develop my charging methodologies, in terms of grades, of values and, many times, [the students] neglect, mainly concerning homework, seminars and, normaly, they fail because of this, I don't disapprove much in exams.

P5 evaluates that when his students fail in English, he feels himself incoherent with the pedagogical proposal and with this it is implied that his belief that his effort to teach was in vain. Here it is his statement:

P5: I feel as if everything I did had no meaning, it wasn't worth doing that, mainly because of neglect on the part of them [students].

We also asked them: *In which aspect, actually, do you think you have to improve?*

P2 affirms that he needs to improve his methodology. His belief is anchored in the fact that more than twenty years he has taught English focusing on grammar. Next, it is his statement:

P2: In the methodologies, I need to change my methodologies, because it has been the same I have followed for years, and I have been teaching English a little more than twenty years, with a major focus on grammar, and I am already readapting myself, following Clill tenets, to get a change.

P5 holds the belief that he needs to improve his reading habilities. Although it was not possible to verify the reason of this belief, I suspect that he may not have a satisfactory level concerning this ability, what denotates his attitude about this issue. Here it is his statement:

P5: I think I need to develop more the reading habit.

b) Attitudes and beliefs about teaching

Intending to find answers that meet this category 'attitudes and beliefs about teaching, we asked them: *What do you think about your classes?*

P2 evaluates himself 'satisfied' with his classes, since he is applying a new approach with his students, with texts, which the topics are of their interest, and because of this, he holds the belief that his classes are good. However, he revealed that to have heard from some students that his classes were repetitive and boring, what, by its turn, has made him reflective, what elicits change of practices. Next, it is his statement:

P2: My classes... ahh, there are days I feel even satisfied, I feel that the class is

working, sometimes even when I put this in practice, because I am trying to make this adaptation, that is a text, a curiosity, something that they feel more pleasure to look for, because they feel it is new, they feel it is something interesting within that context, that, at the same time, shows the English language and they don't stay stuck only in the language, but also in the theme the text approaches. So, when the class is in this perspective, it works well. But there is class like this, there are some students who say ah! Teacher this is tiring, this is repetitive. And this makes the teacher reflect. Actually, it is necessary to renew always, it is necessary always a new thing.

P5 evaluates that his classes are interesting or quite interesting. However, she holds the belief that other classes need to be improved, although it was not possible to verify the reason. Next it is P5's answer:

P5: I classify my classes hum..., I cannot generalize all of them, but I evaluate some as interesting, some quite interesting and others, I need to improve them.

We also asked if they thought *it is difficult to teach English*. P1, initially, said no (belief). However, he admits that the difficulty lies in the effort so that students understand that the language is not difficult, what is his attitude towards the teaching of English:

P1: Not much, because, sometimes, the difficult is so that students can understand, but try to show them that the language is not something so difficult, it is inserted in everyday life, in many ways.

P5 believes to be difficult to teach English. This attitude is related with the lack of teaching materials to support the process, what, according to him is a *sine qua non* condition so that the pedagogical work goes well:

P5: Yes! Its a contact with a new language, isn't it? Different of everything you did, once again harping on the same string, you need specific material for that, and we don't have it, you need a pedagogical support for that as well, and we do not have it. So, when there is nothing, so, it is even difficult, because you will have to search out. If you don't want your classes with your students always complaining of the same thing, not to stay with the same old thing, so you have to search. Once you have an structure within the classroom, with all this support, the work, of course, will go well.

c) Attitudes and beliefs about language and learning languages

We asked them if they believe *it is possible to learn English at high school*. P1 holds the belief that the regular school is only a initial motivation to learn English and she ascribes to the language courses the role to lead the students to the oral expression mastery, signiling to be the best place for that, what ratifies her attitude towards this learning context in detriment of the regular school. Thus, it seems to us, that, somehow, P1 does not give credit to her own performance as an English teacher, since she believes the place to learn this language is in the language courses:

P1: I believe that at school it is only a way so that they can feel motivated, but I believe that courses, as they work more with conversation, it is the best place so that they can speak the language.

P2 believes his students learn better when he prepares contextualized classes, with texts that provoke reflection, which include the learners. He aligns this with the pronunciation practice:

P2: [...] Through reflective texts, many times, related with their contexts, their realities, so that when there is a translation, they can understand their livingness within that reality, within that context, and highlighting pronunciation and asking them to speak as well, because I always say to learn it is necessary to speak, because it is a language and we learn it by speaking it.

For P5, his students learn better with activities of their interest, which information contemplate a local perspective. He aligns this to the textual genres:

P5: Generally I create strategies, taking something of their interest, working with information of the community, using some texts of differet types, such as newspapers,

some written, some interview, report, things like that.

We finish here the data analysis and next we present our final considerations.

5. Conclusion

Studying beliefs has been a very supportive practice which has shed light to the way teachers act in classroom, that is, why they act in the way they act. Studying attitudes has been very enlightening as well, in the sense that these studies have undertaken reflections which point to better ways to understand the educational setting. However, studying both beliefs and attitudes together is much more complex.

As we mentioned, we intended to find out some kind of relationship between belief and attitude and in this lies the originality of our work. Many have written about beliefs or attitudes, but we have not found any research, until now, which has focus on both in the setting we researched. That is why we consider our research complex and enlightening as well.

Therefore, to put our research in practice, we created, based on Borg (2002), categories of analysis. These categories were found in the teachers' statements, which ratified our hypothesis of the existence of a relationship between belief and attitude.

To give the right credits, it is relevant to mention that Gardner was the person who gave us the insight to follow this path, because when he defines attitudes as "an evaluative reaction an individual might have, based on the beliefs and opinions he has", he provided us a clue to start my own research. He was saying there is a relationship between belief and attitude, which, to my mind, still needed to be explained. We undertook this task and we reach three conclusions, first, is that an attitude might generate a belief and second, a belief might generate more attitudes and third, an attitude, once generated, might be incorporated to the beliefs, integrating them.

We have to say as well that by owning these data, our idea is not simply to describe teachers' beliefs and attitudes, but to provide the scientific/academic community with them, so that Applied Linguistics can contribute with the educational field, marking its role as an area which sheds light to problems involving language.

We could not finish this paper without sharing our own concept of beliefs. Based on this research, we conclude that beliefs are, in fact, ways of perceiving cognitively people and events which surround us, and that is why they are in an abstract plane. But they are materialized through our actions, through our attitudes, via speech. That is to say, beliefs are manifested from an evaluative reaction, for this reason this evaluative reaction is an integral part of beliefs. We conclude saying as well that beliefs and attitudes affect teachers' practice, when they evaluate what they do, how they do, the context where they work, according to the way they perceive these things, that is why these elements are contextual and incidental.

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