

# STATED VS. ENACTED BELIEFS: LOOKING AT PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL BELIEFS THROUGH CLASSROOM INTERACTION

**Alberto Fajardo**

*Docente asociado, Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación, Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. Mailing address: Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, Sede Central Tunja, Boyacá-Colombia Avenida Central del Norte 39-115. Email: albertofac@yahoo.com*

## ABSTRACT

This article explores the relationship between pedagogical beliefs and classroom practice. Two Colombian pre-service primary school language teachers in the final stage of their five-year training programme were the research participants. Interview and classroom observation were the methods used, and content analysis was the analytical approach. It is argued in this study that by comparing the stated beliefs (as articulated in interviews) and enacted beliefs (as manifested in classroom interaction), it is possible to gain a fine-grained understanding of the relationship between beliefs and teaching practice. The findings suggested that while there were significant cases of coherence between beliefs and classroom action, there was also evidence of some incongruent relationships.

**Keywords:** teacher education, pedagogical beliefs, classroom interaction

## RESUMEN

Este artículo explora la relación entre el conocimiento pedagógico y su práctica en el salón de clase. Dos maestros en formación en lenguas extranjeras en la escuela primaria en el último año de formación docente fueron los participantes en la investigación. Entrevistas y observaciones de clases fueron los métodos de recolección de datos utilizados, mientras que el análisis del contenido fue el enfoque analítico. Se discute en este artículo que la comparación entre las creencias pedagógicas planteadas (tal y como se manifiestan en la entrevista) y la forma como estas se materializan (tal y como se articulan en la interacción en el salón de clase), es posible lograr una mejor comprensión de la relación entre las creencias y la práctica docente. Aunque los resultados sugieren relaciones de coherencia importantes entre las creencias y la acción docente, también hay evidencias de relaciones incongruentes.

**Palabras clave:** formación docente, creencias, interacción en el salón de clase

## 1. Introduction

Although the notion of teachers' beliefs has been explored in the literature of teacher education in the last three decades, there is no clear explanation of what this term entails. Thompson (1992) proposed the study of teachers' conceptions as an alternative field of research that covers "a more general mental structure, encompassing beliefs, meaning, concepts, propositions, rules, mental images, preferences, and the like..." (p. 130). In spite of an increasing research interest in the last decade in the field of teachers' beliefs (Johnson, 1994; Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000; Peacock, 2001; Santagata, 2005; Blay & Ireson, 2009) a consensual definition is still elusive. Pajares (1992) noted that

the term 'belief' is complex in nature and meaning, and he defined it as 'an individual's judgement of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgement that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do[...]'. (p. 316)

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Over the last decade, the study of teachers' beliefs has explored several areas: learning, learners, teaching, decision making, and subject matter, among others. Although the term 'beliefs' prevails in the literature of teacher education (Pajares, 1993; Johnson, 1994; Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000; Peacock, 2001; Santagata, 2005; Gonzalez, 2008), notions such as pre-service teachers' knowledge (Viera, 2006), pedagogic thinking (Borg, 2005), pedagogical beliefs (Allen, 2002), or perceptions (Fajet, Bello, Leftwich, Merler, & Shaver, 2005; Da Silva, 2005; Ryan & Healy, 2009) create more than a sense of terminological confusion since, while some terms appear to overlap, differentiating them precisely is problematic. Under the label of teacher cognition these terms are now generally defined as "what teachers know, believe and think" (Borg, 2006, p. 2).

Knowledge and beliefs are considered to be intertwined, even though some scholars locate the former as more factual while the latter are regarded as ideological and attitudinal. Nevertheless, "In the mind of the teacher, components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions are inextricably

intertwined" (Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001, p. 446). This study adopts the label of "teachers' systems of knowledge and beliefs" as an inclusive term that implies the connection between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices, an area that has been relatively under-researched (but see, for example, Da Silva, 2005; Garton, 2008; Gonzalez, 2008; Blay & Ireson, 2009; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Li & Walsh, 2011). In addition, this term allows the dimension of what student teachers know, believe and do in the classroom to be represented. This article aims to explore pre-service primary school language teachers' pedagogical beliefs by investigating whether or not what they think about teaching and learning (their stated beliefs articulated in interviews), corresponded to what was observed while teaching young learners in the classroom (their enacted beliefs manifested in classroom interaction).

It is generally accepted that prospective teachers come to a teacher education programme with already well-grounded beliefs about teaching and learning which are resistant to change (Pajares, 1992). However, Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000) tested this assumption with twenty students at the University of Reading, UK, and the findings revealed that "only one participant's beliefs seemed to remain unchangeable..." (p. 392). This study even introduced the concept of belief reversal, in which teachers seemed to adopt a new belief that contradicted a former one.

A similar interest was expressed by Peacock (2001), whose 3-year longitudinal study engaged 146 trainee teachers at the City University of Hong Kong. The study aimed to investigate if mistaken ideas about language learning that student teachers brought with them when entering a teacher education programme would change as a result of studying teaching methodology. The findings showed non-significant changes in their pre-existing beliefs, but despite an apparent confirmation of beliefs as inflexible and resistant to change, Peacock highlighted the need to work

on those mistaken conceptions. This conclusion implicitly empowers the role of teacher educators not only to encourage change in teachers but to avoid possible detrimental effects on learning. But if teachers' beliefs are inflexible, how do these beliefs correspond to classroom practices?

The relationship between what teachers know, believe and do has captured scholars' attention in the last decade. One study considered this field in terms pre-service teachers' beliefs specifically (Da Silva, 2005). Four further studies shed some light on this area even though their participants were in-service teachers (Garton, 2008; González, 2008; Blay & Ireson, 2009; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Li & Walsh, 2011).

Da Silva (2005) investigated how pre-service language teachers' perceptions about teaching the four skills related to their pedagogical practice. This study relates closely to the present research as it collected data from the teaching practicum – a 144-hour course in the last semester of the teaching preparation programme. By using a multi-method approach, data were collected via observation reports, lesson plans, video-recorded lessons, and recall sessions. It is important to note here that Da Silva used the concept of perceptions rather than, for example, beliefs or cognition, although the definition used includes a broad view of various interchangeable terms common to recent theoretical confusion, as mentioned previously. The findings suggested two characteristics of pre-service teachers' knowledge: theoretical and experiential. While the theoretical knowledge resulted from their teaching preparation programme, the experiential knowledge arose from direct and previous participation and observation experienced throughout their lives as learners.

The levels of coherence found between what teachers believe and do in the classroom vary widely. While some research findings indicate that there is a close link, other studies imply a rather different reality. For example, Garton (2008) indicated a consistent degree of correspondence between beliefs and classroom practices in two

Italian teachers. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, and the study strengthens the widely accepted view that experiential knowledge informs professional practices more than theoretical knowledge (Johnson, 1994; Peacock, 2001; Pajares, 2002).

Gonzalez (2008) examined the connection between teachers' beliefs about communicative competence and classroom practice. Two language teachers working in extension language courses at the National University in Colombia were the research participants, and the findings suggest that, in spite of their lack of clarity about communicative competence, there was a coherent connection between their stated beliefs and what they planned to achieve in the language classroom. Gonzalez' study is significant as it was the first to approach this research area in Colombia.

Phipps and Borg (2009) observed and interviewed three teachers over a period of 18 months in Turkey. The study aimed to examine the way they taught grammar and the beliefs that underpinned their classroom actions. The researchers highlight the fact that research in this area has adopted various negative terms such as "incongruence, mismatch, inconsistency, and discrepancy" (Phipps & Borg, 2009, 380), and they suggest instead the term *tensions*. This is defined as 'divergences among different forces or elements in the teacher's understanding of the school context, the subject matter, or the students' (Freeman, 1993; cited in Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 380). The findings indicate that the teachers' beliefs about teaching grammar did not always correspond with their classroom practices, and that tensions at the level of presenting, practicing, or doing oral work were identified. Moreover, the researchers highlight the issue that core beliefs seem more consistently to inform teachers' classroom practices. They also felt it important to look at teachers' beliefs beyond merely understanding their levels of correspondence with classroom practice. Phipps and Borg (2009) rather propose the need to "explore, acknowledge and understand the underlying reasons behind such tensions..." (p.

388). This perspective opens new possibilities for future research in the field of teacher cognition.

Li and Walsh (2011) explored the relationship between beliefs and classroom interaction in a novice and an experienced secondary school teacher in China. By using interviews and classroom observation data, the researchers assessed whether or not the participant teachers' stated beliefs about language teaching and learning were in accord with what they did in the classroom. The findings suggested that beliefs and classroom actions were not always convergent.

What else, then, can be learnt about pre-service teachers' beliefs by looking at classroom practice? What does classroom interaction tell us about pre-service teachers' beliefs? Several things should be mentioned. Firstly, it is generally accepted that classroom interaction is a key matter for second language acquisition (van Lier, 1996; Ellis, 2000; Walsh, 2006). At face value, this argument may suggest the study of interaction while the question of how to use interaction to study beliefs remains unresolved. Nevertheless, as has been noted in this article, teachers' pedagogical beliefs are vitally connected to classroom interaction. Put simply, understanding teachers' beliefs necessarily entails looking at the interactional tasks that lie at the centre of foreign language teaching and learning.

Secondly, if interaction lies at the heart of classroom action, the way a teacher maintains the flow of the conversation, creates opportunities for language learning, provides feedback or plans the achievement of learning goals entails making decisions which have to be based upon her/his pedagogical beliefs. The foreign language classroom is, without any doubt, a scene where interaction regulates most of its functions. The features that characterise its complex structure and organisation open a door to conceptualise the correspondence between beliefs and classroom practice, the focus of this study.

Finally, the language classroom becomes the natural professional scenario for understanding

the nature of pre-service teachers' pedagogical beliefs. Although theories, beliefs, or attitudes seem rooted in a person's mind, or even biologically in nature, they are inextricably connected to context. Consequently, the meanings of "teacher" and "teaching" are significantly mediated in the institution or the classroom where the teacher works on a daily basis. Put simply, a way to explain beliefs is by describing and explaining some of the actions undertaken in the language classroom.

In summary, there are at least three reasons for exploring the correspondence between pedagogical beliefs and classroom practice. First, pedagogical beliefs may be mirrored through classroom interaction; second, interaction, which comprises most of the actions taken in the language classroom, is constructed upon beliefs; third, the language classroom becomes the natural scenario to explain pedagogical beliefs.

## 2. The Research Area in Colombia

This section examines the contribution of Colombian scholars and researchers in the field of pre-service teachers' beliefs by introducing a general overview of studies and investigating the systems of knowledge and beliefs described therein. This overview is mainly based on material published in the most influential Colombian journals in the last decade.

Research in the area of teachers' beliefs has been relatively scarce in Colombia. Colombian scholars have made outstanding progress in related areas, such as language teaching and learning, skills development, autonomy and bilingualism. However, the interest of this study is to focus on the Colombian contribution to framing an understanding of teachers' beliefs starting with studies that have included the terms "knowledge" or "beliefs" in their titles.

Teachers' systems of knowledge and beliefs are referenced in four articles published by three local scholars and one overseas researcher. Piñeros and Quintero (2006) built up theoretical connections

from the concept of the changes that resulted from experiential and academic knowledge in undergraduate student teachers' monographs. Gonzalez (2008) examined the connection between teachers' beliefs about communicative competence and classroom practice. The findings suggested that, in spite of a lack of understanding of communicative competence, the participating teachers' classroom practice indicated a high level of congruence. This was the first reference in the Colombian research context to establish a direct connection with one of the research questions in this study.

Schuldz (2001) conducted a cross-cultural study aiming to compare American and Colombian students' and teachers' beliefs about the role of grammar instruction and corrective feedback in foreign language learning. The findings indicated a significant level of agreement in the two contexts concerning the benefits of these strategies. This article was published by an overseas researcher in an international language journal. This general review shows that Colombian research in the area has been scarce.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Context

The study was conducted with two Colombian pre-service teachers. The group of participants were two female final year students in the Foreign Language Programme (FLP) at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC). The research participants were pre-service primary school foreign language teachers in their final training stage – the teaching practicum. They were teaching in public primary schools, each with comparable groups of students. Pseudonyms have been assigned to protect their identities: Laura Palacios and Susan Caicedo.

Laura Palacios was 23. She taught a mixed class of year 4 and 5 in a public school. She had four classes with over 130 students in total. The classroom was barely equipped, with only a white board. Desks?

Chairs? Do you want to comment on Laura's teaching experience, since you reference Susans? Even just to clarify that she has no previous experience?

Susan Caicedo was 22. She taught a mixed class of year 4 and 5 in a public school. She had four classes with over 140 students in total. She had previous teaching experience with children and adolescents. She spent a year in the USA as a Spanish language assistant.

#### 3.2 Aim and Research Questions

The overall aim of this exploratory study is:

- To interpret the connection between pre-service teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices.

To recap, the focus of this study is to look at the correspondence between pre-service teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices. To do this, the study addresses the following research questions:

- What are the research participants' pedagogical beliefs about foreign language teaching and learning in primary school?
- To what extent are pre-service teachers' pedagogical beliefs manifested in their classroom interaction with young learners?

#### 3.3 Data Collection

A qualitative case study was chosen to investigate the connection between beliefs and classroom practice. The data used in this study were collected over a fourth-month period in 2010, during the final year of the participants' five-year primary language teaching degree in Colombia. Two methods of data collection were used: interview and classroom observation.

A semi-structured interview was scheduled two weeks before the teaching practicum started. This was split in two parts and lasted a total of 45 minutes. The first part included family

history, aspirations, and learning experiences, for example. This interview also explored professional dimensions of student-teachers' experience such as choosing teaching as a profession, expectations of and motivations to pursue a teaching career, among other questions. The second part transcended the question-answer model and became more of a professional dialogue. There were interesting outcomes, which were professionally addressed, discussed or reflected upon. Topics included the school environment, short and long term professional goals, motivation and beliefs about teaching and learning (see appendix B for the interview guidelines). The conversation was carried out in Spanish, since this was believed to promote the flow of the conversation and to represent a spontaneous tool for the expression of meaning.

Interviews were chosen as the best tool for exploring the research participants' pedagogical beliefs. This decision was supported by the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed, and that it is "generated between humans, often through conversation..." (Kvale, 1996, p. 11). To investigate this, interviews were deemed the most suitable tool. The dialogues were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

Lesson observation was also used as a research method. Each student teacher was video-recorded twice: once during the third week teaching and once during the tenth week. Each recording lasted 60 minutes. These recordings were then transcribed (see appendix A for transcription conventions).

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The data gathered were analysed following the methodological procedures of content and conversation analysis. These two approaches have developed fundamental theoretical foundations and applications in qualitative research (Neuendorf, 2002; Krippendorff, 2004). The process of data analysis focused on themes that were manifested in the data, being fundamentally

concerned with what the text said and described: its visible and obvious components (Konrachi, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002). The resulting texts were read several times to gain a sense of them as a whole unit. The transcripts were returned to the research participants for data authentication prior to data analysis, and any changes suggested were incorporated. The analysis followed the principle of letting the text talk and not attributing meaning that was not reflected in the data. Interpretation was then supported with textual evidence.

Excerpts were coded to fit into a set of categories identified from the research questions. Each theme was coded using NVIVO 8. By comparing the participating teachers' stated beliefs from the interview data with what was later observed in the video-recorded lessons, the present author assumes that a more fine-grained understanding of the relationship between beliefs and classroom practice can be gained. At the same time the study might help to explore whether classroom interaction data can enhance understanding of pedagogical beliefs.

### 3.5 Findings

The comparison between the pre-service teachers' beliefs, as expressed in interviews, and the description and analysis of an extract of their video-recorded lessons are presented in this section. Although beliefs and classroom interaction are not necessarily interconnected, the main interest in this study lies in tracing whether or not beliefs and classroom practice coincide. To do this, data for each teacher are presented in turn.

#### *Teacher A, Laura Palacios*

In excerpt 1 (a) below from the interview data, Laura Palacios commented on her beliefs about foreign language learning. She argued that learning a language is a matter of making meaning (*constructing meaningful ideas*). She went on to support her pedagogical beliefs with reference to learners' exposure to complex linguistic structures

rather than isolated vocabulary (*that is what is normally taught in primary school*). Although it is not known how she could assess what primary language teachers were formerly or are currently doing, Laura did exhibit pedagogical awareness about doing more than teaching vocabulary (*I don't like teaching vocabulary*). She not only underlined the principles of language learning but explained how these could be achieved (*by taking active part in the class*). Laura's pedagogical knowledge also informed her understanding of the positive impact of peer work on language learning and an emphasis on learners' responsibility for their own learning (*because that is their learning*). When she was challenged about her understanding of classroom management and organisation (*and what about if this causes noisy disturbances?*), she exhibited a well-grounded pedagogical awareness of the need to gain control of the classroom and emphasised that learning entails active interaction and communication (*moving around talking to each other arguing with each other*). She appeared to have a clear idea of the role of a teacher beyond assuring discipline and control of learners' behaviour (*that kind of a mess does not bother me*). The data here show clearly that, despite her situation as a pre-service teacher, Laura exhibited a deep understanding of the meaning and function of foreign language teaching and learning. However, were these beliefs reflected in her language classroom? Excerpt 1 (b) sheds some light on this.

Excerpt 1 (a):

R: Researcher    LP: Laura Palacios

167. R: What is the best way to learn a foreign language?

168. LP: The idea is by constructing meaningful ideas; by (*pause*) using complex structures, complete sentences, because we cannot expect learning through vocabulary and vocabulary only, which is what is normally taught in primary school. I don't like teaching vocabulary.

169. R: And how can pupils achieve it?

170. LP: By taking active part in the class. By peer and team working. I mean doing things by themselves, because that is their learning.

171. R: And what about if this causes noisy disturbances?

172. LP: There should be an organisation obviously. I am not against having control. All I am saying is that learning a language is a question of moving around, talking to each other, arguing with each other. That kind of a mess does not bother me=

173. R: It does not bother you=

174. LP: =No, not at all

(Interview: 00: 12':11").

Laura's classroom practice offers an interesting opportunity to explore whether or not beliefs about promoting meaningful communication matches with classroom interaction in practice. In excerpt 1 (b) from data in the video-recording of lesson 1, Laura used the first 17 turns in the vignette of the lesson observed to make sure that students understood the meaning of *happy* and *sad*. She used flash cards to ensure this; despite assuming that the pupils already knew the meaning "yo sé que todos has escuchado esta palabra" (I am sure you have all heard this word before). Laura went on to repeat the word *happy* (turns 11 and 16), asking if they knew its meaning (turn 03). This was first confirmed by S1 (turn 04) and then by S2 (turn 05). Laura then went through the same pedagogical move with the word *sad* (turns 07 to 10), also reinforcing pronunciation (turns 11 & 17). She then judged that the pedagogical goal had been accomplished 'OK' (turn 18) and embarked upon a new pedagogical and interactive mode. It is apparent from the limited data presented here that, in the first part of this vignette of her class, Laura emphasised learning vocabulary over interaction, which appears to contradict her stated beliefs in the interview.

The second part of the vignette of the class reveals a more interactive manoeuvre. Laura decided to take advantage of the previous achievement to move towards a more communicative use of the foreign language. She took an extended turn to get the message across (turns 19 to 23 and 26 & 27), before again falling into an emphasis on knowing the language item “¿cómo dicen ‘yo’?” (how do you say ‘I’?) and “¿cómo dicen yo soy?” (how do you say ‘I am’ ) (turns 28 & 29). Although the teacher created a good opportunity for Sebastian to use the target language “¿cómo dices una frase para contestarme eso?” (how do you answer) (turn 21), she then narrowed this down and clearly signalled what he should say “¿Cómo me dirías en inglés: ‘estoy feliz’” (how would you say in English, “I am happy”). Although two failed attempts followed to answer Laura’s enquiry using the mother tongue “yo estoy feliz” (I am happy) (turns 24 & 25), she became aware of Sebastian’s inability to respond appropriately, so she turned to another student “are you happy Johan?” (turn 27). After a 1.7” pause, she realised Johan was also not able to accomplish the pedagogical goal, and decided to provide a structural key to help him complete the interactional event. It is interesting to note that Laura aimed for knowledge about the language “¿Cómo dices *yo*?” (how do you say *I*?) and “¿Cómo dices *yo soy*?” (how do you say *I am*?) as a strategy to help the student succeed. The data give an important insight into the incongruence between stated and enacted beliefs. Laura chose to prioritise knowledge of language —grammar and vocabulary— over the *meaningful ideas* referred to in the interview.

*Excerpt 1 (b):*

The teacher (T) stands at the front of the class. She is delivering a lesson of English to a mixed fourth year group. Students (Ss) are organised in six rows. The topic of the lesson is a review of the verb *to be* – present simple. T shows flash cards to Ss.

- 01. T: ↑happy (0.4) #T shows a flash card#
- 02. yo se que ↑todos has escuchado esa palabra

((*I am sure you have all heard this word before*))

- 03. ↑happy (0.4) what’s ↑happy (0.5)
- 04. S1: feliz (0.6)  
((*happy*))
- 05. S2: ↑feliz=  
((*happy*))
- 06. S3: (xxxxxxx) (0.8)
- 07. T: and (.) ↑sa::d (0.5)  
#T shows a flash card#
- 08. Ss: and (0.2) sa::d (0.7)
- 09. T: ↑sa::d
- 10. SS: sa:::d
- 11. T: and ↑ha::ppy  
#T writes on the white board#
- 12. S3: ha::ppy=
- 13. S4: es como una i  
((*that is something like an ‘e’*))
- 14. T: ↑sa::d (0.4)
- 15. Ss: sa::d=
- 16. T: =sa::d and ↑happy (0.3)
- 17. Ss: sad and happy (0.4)
- 18. T: listo (2.7)  
((*OK*))
- 19. si yo le pregunto algo (0.6) Sebastián (2.1) en español  
((*if I ask something, Sebastian in Spanish*))



20. yo te pregunto Sebastián estas fe↓liz  
 ((*I ask you Sebastian, are you happy?*))
21. ↑cómo dices una frase para contestarme eso  
 (1.2)  
 ((*how do you answer*))
22. en español (0.5) yo estoy feliz (1.5)  
 ((*in Spanish, I am happy*))
23. ↑cómo me lo dirías en in↓gles=  
 ((*what would you say in English*))
24. S2: =↑yo estoy feliz (0.9)  
 ((*I am happy*))
25. S3: yo estoy [feliz  
 ((*I am happy*))
26. T: [are you ha↓ppy (0.6)
27. are you happy Johan (1.7)
28. ↑cómo dices (1.2) ↑yo:: (0.7)  
 ((*how do you say, 'I'?*))
29. cómo dices soy (0.2) o estoy  
 ((*how do you say, 'I am'?*))
- (Video-recorded lesson 1: 00:12':10")

In excerpt 2 (a) below from data in the interview, Laura showed awareness of the kind of teacher she would like to be. She expressed a clear rationale for the use of managerial classroom skills as a principle of the teacher's authority. These core principles in Laura's pedagogical knowledge offered a coherent explanation of how she foresaw herself as a language teacher. Although she highlighted the importance of combining control of the class with friendly and understanding relationships with students (somebody who is close to them, who understands

their needs), Laura also expanded on her beliefs about the meaning of being a teacher, and placed herself beyond the narrow function of delivering linguistic knowledge (not only restricting myself to teaching a grammar lesson on the whiteboard). But how were such well-grounded pedagogical beliefs aligned with what Laura did while teaching English to young learners? The answer to this is explored in excerpt 2 (b).

*Excerpt 2 (a):*

318. R: Listen, Laura. What would you like to be, I mean, what is that professional image that helps you think, you will be a good teacher [of languages?
319. LP: [Oh. It is a mixture.
320. LP: It is a mixture of things. The teacher, I would like to be, is a teacher who gains control of her class; who possesses classroom management skills; somebody who is a friend of her students, but at the same time exercises authority in the classroom; somebody who is close to them, who understands their needs; who listens to what they wish to learn; what they want from the lesson. That is what I wish the most. That is the kind of teacher I would like to be, and not only restricting myself to teaching a grammar lesson on the whiteboard. I mean a real lesson, an authentic lesson

321. R: Right

322. LP: That is what I would like to be.

(Interview: 00:30':58")

Although it is clear that beliefs may not be easy to identify and that they are not necessarily transmitted directly into observable classroom behaviour, excerpt (b) below provides another opportunity to explore the relationship between believing and doing. Laura's pedagogical focus becomes relevant in the first turn in this extract. She asked a question "¿Cuál fue el primero?" (what was the first one?) which prioritised the learning

goals of the lesson – identifying vocabulary about animals. This pedagogical orientation seemed to dominate most of the interactional moves of the lesson (see, for example, turns 04, 06, 07 and 11). Students seemed to interpret this teaching purpose and responded accordingly “rabbit rabbit rabbit”(turn 03). Although one student introduced a more communicative strategy “Uy profe nos sobraron tres” (ooh teacher we have three left) (turn 02), Laura insisted on her learning goal and used turn 04 to maintain the pedagogical direction of the lesson “Ey, déjeme” (hey, hold on). As the student insisted in his observation that “profe, profe nos sobraron tres” (we have three left) (turn 05), the teacher paid attention to him “te sobraron más tiritas” (you have some strips left) and then used her turn to return to the pedagogical focus of the lesson “ahora no nos pongamos a hablar de tiritas” (do not talk about strips now) (turn 07). The students seemed greatly engaged in the task and responded according to the teacher’s enquiry (see turns 08 and 10). Although S4 made another attempt to capture the attention of the teacher through an unfinished enquiry “profe, profe” (teacher, teacher) (turn 09), Laura ignored him entirely and rather used her turn to re-gain the focus of the lesson by asking another student “Julián dilo” (Julian, say it) (turn 11). The data here clearly show how Laura’s beliefs about gaining control of the class and managing classroom interaction were congruent with classroom practice.

Laura also expressed a belief in the need to maintain friendly relationships with students. The last part of excerpt (b) sheds some light on how she put this belief into action in the classroom. The interactional sequence from turn 12 onwards seems to confirm her beliefs about maintaining a relaxed and friendly atmosphere in her relationship with pupils. The teacher shows no concern about noticeable mistakes in pronunciation (see turns 12, 14 and 17) and, rather than correcting them, lets them pass, despite them being noted by the pupils who reacted with hilarity (note laughter in turn 14). It is also worth

noting that S5 voluntarily nominated himself to carry on with the task. This may suggest a sense of rapport and confidence between the teacher and pupils. When S9 mispronounced the word *sheep* (turn 18), the teacher invited him in a gentle tone of voice to be aware of his mistake “Alejo, ¿en serio?” (Alejo, really?). As other students confirmed Alejo’s pronunciation mistake “no::: no:::” (turn 20), Laura took another turn to reformulate the question in an attempt to help the student to overcome it “¿En serio?; ¿es eso lo que quieres decir?” (Really? Is that what you want to say?). It may be important to note here how the teacher used several strategies, including a change in tone of voice and two personal invitations, to achieve language improvements. This shows that there was congruence between Laura’s stated and enacted beliefs: what she stated as a core teaching belief in terms of maintaining a close and friendly relationship with students was certainly manifested in what she did in the language classroom.

*Excerpt 2 (b):*

The teacher (T) is delivering an English lesson to a mixed four year group. The topic of the lesson is “animals”. Students (Ss) are organised in 5 rows. The teacher stands at the front of class. Ss are following her actively. Pupils are fulfilling a written matching task.

01. T: ↑cuál fue el prime↓ro (0.2)

((*what was the first one?*))

02. S1: ↑uy profe nos [sobraron tres

((*ooh teacher we have three left*))

03. Ss: [rabbit [rabbit rabbit]

04. T: ↑e::y [déjame

((*hey, hold on*))

05. S1: ↑profe profe nos sobraron tres (0.8)

- ((*teacher teacher we have three left*))
06. T: te sobraron más tiriritas  
 ((*you have some strips left*))
07. ahorita no nos pongamos [a hablar de tiritas  
 ((*do not talk about strips now*))
08. S3: [pig rabbit rabbit [duck
09. S4: [profe profe  
 ((*teacher teacher*))
10. S3: pig [(xxxx) (0.7)
11. T: [Ju↑lian (0.6) dilo=  
 ((*say it*))
12. S4: chIp (0.6)
13. S5: yo quiero pasar  
 ((*I want to do it*))
14. S6: chIp #laughs#
15. S7: cat [duck
16. Ss: [cat duck (0.3)
17. S8: dock (0.3) chep dug (0.6) y pig=  
 ((*and*))
18. S9: chIp (0.5)
19. T: en ↑serio Ale↓jo (0.3)  
 ((*really?*))
20. Ss: no:::: [no::::
21. T: [en ↑serio  
 ((*really? Is that what you want to say?*))
- (Video-recorded lesson 2: 00:05':36").

The analysis of the data in the two previous excerpts from classroom observation suggests two kinds of relationships between belief and action. While excerpt 1 showed an incongruent relationship between Laura's stated beliefs from the interview and her actions in the classroom, excerpt 2 displayed a closer connection. This suggests both the complex nature of teachers' beliefs as well as a sense of how beliefs are not always mirrored in classroom actions. Data from the second teacher, Susan Caicedo, are now examined.

### *Teacher B, Susan Caicedo*

The interpretation of data from teacher B offers several insights as to the connection between stated beliefs and classroom action. In excerpt 3 (a) from the interview data, Susan Caicedo shared certain beliefs about the use of the foreign language in the classroom. It seems clear from the data collected that she was able to state a well-grounded understanding of second language learning. She started by quoting a general belief about the frequent use of the target language as a principle of language acquisition (see turns 87 to 89). Although Susan did not specifically mention the source of this belief, she also provided further information about how the use of English in the classroom is expected to promote, for example, vocabulary and practical language learning. However, Susan appeared to understand what this process entails with young learners (I can't put a child into a situation where English is spoken all the time). She supported her belief about the negative effects that the use of English in the classroom might have on a learner's motivation (he would probably not like to talk again). Susan then positioned herself as a language teacher and displayed a pedagogical foundation for second language acquisition (turns 95 to 102), which includes the use of teaching strategies such as *body language* or the mother tongue as another resource. She finally concluded that the best way is to not use the mother tongue. But to what extent was this belief mirrored in Susan's classroom actions? Excerpt (b) sheds some light on this.

Excerpt 3 (a):

R: Researcher SC: Susan Caicedo

86. R: How important is the use of English in the classroom?

87. SC: It is believed that I should speak in English all the time during the lesson for students to learn vocabulary, and expressions and stuff like that. But I can't put a child into a situation where English is spoken all the time and if he doesn't understand he would probably not like to talk again because I don't know=

88. R: =What to do then?

89. SC: Ah, OK. The idea is that kids are able to understand everything I say progressively. Something like, for example, if I say: take your notebook out; if they don't understand me, they don't understand me so then I use body language. If they were still not able to guess what it means, I would say to them 'saquen el cuaderno'.

((*take the notebook out*))

But the best thing is not using Spanish.

(Interview: 00:09':47").

But to what extent was this belief mirrored in Susan's classroom actions? Excerpt (b) sheds some light on this. Susan's stated belief that the foreign language should be used in the classroom became explicit in this vignette of the lesson observed. From data in the video-recorded lesson 1 in excerpt 3 (b) below, the teacher posed a question to the class, making a great pedagogical effort to help students decode the meaning. It is important here to note that she divided her question into three parts, each one separated by pauses to allow time for students to get the message (*so (0.5) what time (0.7) do you have breakfast (1.7)*). By the same token, body language and changes in intonation were also used in her pedagogical strategy. After a 1.7" pause without a reply, the teacher then

extended her turn providing more information in an attempt to get an appropriate response (turn 02). This second attempt contextualised the learning task a bit more (for example I have breakfast). A 0.4" pause at the end of the turn was allowed with the intention of encouraging students to accomplish the interactional goal. As Susan was aware of their lack of understanding, her next communicative manoeuvre displayed a new pedagogical strategy, including re-stating her previous utterance "I have breakfast" (Turn 03), as well allocating a 0.7" pause to encourage the students' understanding. It is also worth noting here that miming was used one more time as a guessing resource. The teacher continued in turn 04 to create another opportunity for learning, which is manifested in the pauses allocated. Susan then reformulated the question "so what time do you have breakfast" (turn 05) followed by a 3.6" pause for a response. The teacher did not give up, and rather extended her turn reformulating the question one more time and allocating time for an interactional exchange "what time do you have breakfast" (turn 06). As no response was prompted, Susan provided a sample of an appropriate answer to the question "I have breakfast at seven o'clock" (turns 07 and 09), which seemed to work this time as it provoked two interactional turns by S1 (turn 08) and S2 (turn 10). As the teacher noted that students were not able to respond to the question in the way she expected, Susan then nominated a student to respond (Jonathan what time do you have breakfast). As two students failed to provide the appropriate response, the teacher then used the mother tongue to check the reason for their lack of understanding "¿No entendemos lo que nos dice el dibujito?" (We don't understand what the picture tells us. Do we?) (turn 14). This vignette of the lesson clearly shows a congruent relationship between beliefs as a stated and as classroom action. Excerpt 3 (b) confirms that the belief about using the target language in varied pedagogical strategies should not restrict the use of the mother tongue as a valid resource. But are beliefs and classroom practice always in accord? Excerpt 4 explores this question.

Excerpt 3 (b):

The teacher (T) stands at the front of the class. The topic of the lesson is “what is the time”. She is delivering a one-hour lesson to a mixed 4<sup>th</sup> year group. The students (Ss) are organised in six rows. T shows flash cards to Ss and asks them questions.

01. T: so (0.5) ↑what time (0.7) do you have breakfast (1.7)  
#T mimes eating#
02. for example ↑i have breakfast (0.4)
03. i have breakfast (0.7) #T mimes eating#
04. at (0.4) at (0.1) six (0.2) o'clock (1.0)
05. so what time do you have breakfast (3.6)
06. ↑what time do you have break↓fast (3.5)
07. ↑i have break[fast  
#T points to herself#
08. S1: [twelve (0.4)
09. T: at seven [o'clock (0.3)
10. S2: [twelve o'clock (1.5)  
#T chooses one student to answer the question#
11. T: Jonathan what time do you have break↓fast (4.6)
12. S3: three (0.4)
13. S4: break (0.2) ↓fast
14. T: no entendemos el el lo que nos dice el dibujo↓to  
*((We don't understand what the picture tells us. Do we?))*

(Video-recorded lesson 1: 00:08':15”).

Susan believed in language teaching as an opportunity to emphasise personal values. In excerpt 4 (a) below from the data in the interview, she stated a clear understanding of what she considered to be a fundamental purpose of teaching (*to place a strong emphasis on personal*

*values*). She constructed a coherent discursive representation of the meaning of language teaching (see turn 372), in which she showed full awareness of promoting, for example, respect for others as a fundamental principle of education (*before learning to write anything or learning how to say something in English*). By the same token, her belief about language teaching did not exclude teaching about the language. In fact, she included teaching skills (*learning to write anything*), vocabulary (*how to say something*), and grammar as salient domains in the teacher's role.

Susan also believed that teaching about the language could be easier once the teacher has created a learning atmosphere based on respect for one another. Although no further insight into this concept was gained due to the limitations of the data collected, this issue deserves further research. The teacher then expanded on some other factors that in her opinion constitute the foundations of teaching, for example, *being loved by her students*. She then clarified the meaning of this statement. Being loved, according to her, essentially entails contributing to students' lives as much as being 'academically' good. In what ways was this belief reflected in Susan's classroom practice? This connection is explored in excerpt (b).

Excerpt 4 (a):

371. R: What would you expect that your students get from you as a language teacher?
372. SC: Uhm. I would like that my students before learning to write anything or learning how to say something in English, maybe they would rather learn hm (pause) to value that we have to respect a classmate, a parent, a teacher, I mean to place a strong emphasis on personal values. I think that working like that, teaching how to say something like grammar or something like that will be much (pause) much easier.
373. R: And what would you not like to do as teacher?

374. SC: Uhm. (*pause*) I don't know. (*pause*) I wouldn't like to be a teacher who is not loved by her students (*pause*) but neither I would like to be a teacher who is just pretty cool. I mean somebody who is just a nice person but doesn't contribute to students life at all. I would like to be a good teacher, not only academically, but a teacher who contributes to students' lives.

(Interview: 00: 33':25").

Excerpt 4 (b) displays another side of Susan's classroom practice. From data in video-recorded lesson 2, the teacher repeated the word *purple* three times in a clear pedagogical attempt to help students catch both meaning and pronunciation. The rise in intonation in the last word signalled a question that was answered by S1 (turn 02), who nominated himself *morado* (purple). This overlapped with the group's confirmation *morado* (purple) (turn 03). Despite the fact that the students displayed sufficient knowledge in previous turns, the teacher insisted in reformulating the same question (what colour is purple?). Two students responded straightforwardly *púrpura*, *morado* (purple) (see turns 05 and 06), which was then confirmed by the teacher (turn 07). Students went on fulfilling the colouring task. There were two self-allocated turns, one by S4 [*inaudible*] (turn 08), and another by S5, which did not provoke any interactive exchange "alcen la mano" (raise your hand)(turn 09). This was followed by a 0.3" pause. Then the teacher happened to notice misbehaviour when a student threw a pencil at a classmate which she caught in mid-air. Susan then accomplished a specific pedagogical manoeuvre in order to sort out this contextual situation "Jorge no vuelva a hacer eso, ¿bueno?" (Jorge, do not do that again. Do you understand?) (turn 10). It is worth noting the special emphasis within her statement through two pauses as well as stressing the term *do not*. This seemed to indicate the importance of the situation and how the teacher took advantage of it in order to focus on personal values. Although the incident could have ended with recriminations about Jorge's lack of respect, Susan extended her turn by asking him in a pleasant tone to behave

more appropriately, which included standing up and giving the pencil back to the other student "te levantas y se lo entregas" (stand up and give it to him) (turn, 11), as well as allocating some time to make sure Jorge did as she demanded (note the 0.4" pause here). As Jorge attempted to avoid the teacher's suggestion, she then reiterated her instruction putting more emphasis on the command "ven, ven y se lo entregas" (come here, come here, give it to him) (turn 13). Susan did not give up until Jorge did as required (see the long 7.0" pause allocated to this action). The teacher even ignored S6 (see turn 12) in a clear demonstration that the teaching of values was a priority at that moment. Then the lesson went on normally (*OK did you finish that word*). This vignette of the lesson confirmed Susan's belief that language teaching significantly entails the strengthening of personal and social values. She took the responsibility for raising the learner's awareness of appropriate social behaviour and used some valuable lesson time in order to focus on good manners and respect. The data here clearly show a cohesive relationship between beliefs and classroom practice. At face value, Susan's beliefs were certainly mirrored by what she did in the classroom.

Excerpt 4 (b):

The teacher (T) is delivering a two hour lesson to a mixed 4th year group. The topic of the lesson is 'The alphabet'. She stands at the front of the classroom. Students are colouring on a Sheet. They are organised in 6 rows.

01. T: ↑purple (.) purple purple ↑is (0.6)

02. S1: púr[pura

((purple))

03. Ss: [morado

((purple))

04. T: ↑what colour is ↑pur::ple

05. S2: púrpura

- ((purple))
06. S3: morado (1.0)
- ((purple))
07. T: mora↓do
- ((purple))
08. S4: (xxxxxxxx)
09. S5: alcen la mano (0.3)
- ((raise your hand))
- # a student throws a pencil to a classmate.
- The teacher catches it in the air #
10. T: ↑Jorge (0.3) no vuelvas a hacer eso (0.4)  
bue↓no
- ((Jorge, do not do that again. Do you understand?))
11. te levantas y se lo entregas (0.4)
- ((stand up and give it to him))
12. S6: (xxxxxx) (0.3)
13. T: ven ven se lo entregas (7.0)
- ((come here come here, give it to him))
- # a student stands up comes to the teacher and takes the pencil back to his classmate #
14. ↑OK did you finish that ↓word  
(Video-recorded lesson 2: 00:14':37").

#### 4. Discussion

This paper has considered whether or not what two pre-service teachers thought about teaching and learning—their stated beliefs— corresponded to what they actually did while teaching English to young learners—their enacted beliefs—. The gathering of data from interviews followed by

observations of classroom interaction allowed the researcher to substantiate the claim that an important step forward in understanding teachers' beliefs is to establish a comparison between beliefs as concepts and in action. The findings showed that, while there were significant cases of connection between beliefs and classroom practice, there was also evidence of incongruent relationships between the two.

Laura Palacios claimed that language teaching should emphasise meaningful communication over isolated vocabulary learning (excerpt 1a), despite the fact that observation of her language classroom manifested that the teacher prioritised learning about the language (excerpt 1b). Although this teacher displayed a well-grounded understanding of the relevant theories and principles concerning language teaching and learning, her classroom practice did not always coincide with her stated beliefs. However, this might be explained by the fact that Laura was experiencing the transition between being a student of teaching to becoming a teacher, or by contextual factors such as still being under teaching supervision.

The findings also provide evidence that the use of classroom managerial skills was at the centre of Laura's belief system. This included the notion that the use of appropriate managerial skills was crucial for authority and control in the classroom (excerpt 2a). Rather than being conceived as hermetic and unidirectional, these skills were believed to be combined with a well-balanced sense of pupils' friendship and understanding. An observation of a lesson (excerpt 2b) showed a congruent connection between her stated beliefs and Laura's practice in the language classroom. This finding is in line with similar phenomena described in the literature (see for example, Book, et al., 1983; cited in Walls, et al., 2003). It is argued that prospective teachers are at times more concerned about pupils' behaviour rather than their academic achievement. This could have led Laura Palacios to prioritise gaining control of the group over the achievement of pedagogical goals.

The findings provide evidence that Laura's beliefs were fundamentally oriented towards second language teaching and learning. Important insights were gained into her understanding of second language pedagogy. This includes the fact that learning another language entails exposing the learner to meaningful language, as well as strengthening classroom managerial skills as a principle of teacher authority. Because these core principles did not entirely match what the what Laura did in the language classroom, it is apparent from the limited data presented here that beliefs and classroom practice may not always align.

It is important to note that it is beyond the scope of this study to judge the the relationship between stated and enacted beliefs, but rather to attempt to examine how beliefs are used to construct professional practice. Since it is widely accepted that beliefs inform professional practices and that they are resistant to change (Peacock, 2001; Pajares, 2002), disagreement arises concerning what teacher education can do in order to overcome misconceptions about teaching and learning.

If there were misconceptions, for example, about communicative competence (González, 2008), teachers might mistakenly emphasise particular learning goals and tasks in the classroom. Teacher education has the social obligation to transform such a reality. The debate around how inflexible beliefs are and what the role of education is in changing them challenges many previous research findings about teachers' beliefs. Phipps and Borg (2009: 338) set a positive tone, proposing the need to look at teachers' beliefs beyond merely understanding their levels of convergence with classroom practice. Instead they propose the need to "explore, acknowledge and understand the underlying reasons behind such tensions" Beyond questions of the existence of tensions between stated and enacted beliefs, a significant step forward in teacher education research should be the exploration of the reasons for such tensions.

On the other hand, Susan Caicedo demonstrated

a well-grounded understanding of second language teaching and learning. This included principles concerning the use of the target language as a fundamental route for the acquisition of vocabulary and contextual language learning (excerpt 3a). It is worth noting that she shared beliefs about using a more linguistically oriented approach. An observation of her classroom practice displayed a cohesive relationship between beliefs and classroom dynamics (excerpt 3b). Due to the limitations of the data presented here, no further evidence can be provided here of Susan's understanding of the extent to which the mother tongue could be used. The results suggested that beliefs significantly guided Susan's actions in the classroom.

The findings have also identified beliefs concerning the purpose of education. Susan Caicedo stated that a fundamental role of teaching was to place a strong emphasis on personal values (excerpt 4a). A congruent connection was observed between her pedagogical beliefs and the interactional directions adopted in the language classroom (excerpt 4b). This was manifested when Susan changed the direction of the lesson in order to tackle one pupil's misbehaviour. She not only forced him to act more kindly with a classmate but also warned him not to do it again. Although it could be argued that this situation is simply unavoidable in a primary school classroom, and that any teacher might have behaved in the same way, it is evident from the limited data collected here that the teacher exhibited a clear understanding of her role as primary language teacher. Evidence of similar findings has been reported elsewhere (see for example, Reeves & Kazelskis 1985; cited in Walls et al., 2002).

It has been argued in the literature on teacher education that foreign language teachers play distinct teaching roles (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Walls, et al., 2002; Borg, 2006). It is claimed that teachers follow methodological principles, for example, which are different to those of teachers in other subjects. Since language teachers' main goal is represented in the process of learning another language, attention is placed on developing communication skills. These entail,



for example, the use of specific interactional strategies, as well as particular means and methods of instruction. This claim emphasizes the role of language teachers mainly from the perspective of teaching the target language. However, little research has been undertaken in order to interpret other important characteristics of primary school language teachers.

Although the main concern in this study is the relationship between stated and enacted beliefs, Susan's emerging capacity to understand the social purpose of language teaching seems vital. This provides insight into the political dimension of teaching, a promising area of research that emerges in the context of linguistics rights, the politics of pedagogy, post-colonialism and resistance (Pennycook, 2010). Borg (2006, p. 13) argued that language teaching is a political activity, and went on to explain that it "has a dimension of power, and control, inducting learners into ways of thinking and being which reflect those of the target language..." (p. 13). Teaching values, as reflected in the data, might indicate the need to overcome the paradigm which sees language teaching as primarily concerned with developing skills. Johnston (2003) asserts that, although teaching values is not completely ignored in the literature on teacher education, attention to it has been very restricted. He went on to argue that:

The moral dimension of teaching has rarely been talked about, and most of the time teachers are not consciously aware of it; yet there is a great need to uncover and examine the values that inform teaching, in the interests both of the professional development of teachers and of the practice of language teaching [...]. (p. 1)

In summary, this section has presented two general topics for discussion concerning the connection between stated and enacted beliefs. These include beliefs about language teaching and learning and the purpose of education. The findings of this study generally coincide with those of the majority of similar studies, and where this was not the case plausible explanations for such differences have been given.

## 5. Conclusion

It is widely claimed that what teachers do in the classroom is significantly informed by their beliefs of teaching and learning (Pajares, 2002). While plenty of evidence suggests that teachers' beliefs inform their classroom practice (Garton, 2008; González, 2008; Blay & Ireson, 2009; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Li & Walsh, 2011), the connection between stated and enacted beliefs among pre-service teachers has been less conclusive (but see Peacock, 2001; Da Silva, 2005). Teachers' pedagogical beliefs are closely connected to classroom interaction, yet the understanding of teachers' beliefs necessarily entails looking at the interactional processes that lie at the centre of foreign language teaching and learning. Consequently, the language classroom becomes a scenario for understanding the nature of pre-service teachers' pedagogical beliefs. This study argues that teachers' pedagogical beliefs are intimately related to classroom interaction. The findings are locally and contextually tuned and further generalisation should be exercised only with great caution.

Further research into the relationship between pre-service teachers' beliefs and classroom practice could be undertaken. An important step forward in this field would involve the identification of the sources of beliefs, while intervention could tackle possible misunderstandings concerning language teaching and learning. The present study has also provided important insights into pre-service teachers' theoretical and experiential knowledge. Research in this field which acknowledges what teachers already know is also needed in the context of teacher education.

These research findings could be used to introduce changes into the curriculum of language teacher education. Therefore this could integrate the knowledge of pre-service teachers, identify the sources of such knowledge and facilitate the deconstruction of personal theories through a conscious process of discussion, reflection and theoretical exploration. This may contribute to transforming pre-established social and cultural images of what a teacher knows and does.

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# Appendix A

## Transcription conventions<sup>1</sup>

T: teacher

S : student (not identified)

S1: S2: etc. identified student

[ ] overlap between teacher and learner or interviewer and interviewee

= turn continues, or one turn follows another without any pause

James, Nicholas capitals are only used for proper nouns

# # description of events noted by the researcher

((**no, this is not**)) translation from Spanish

:: colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound

(0.2) numbers in parentheses indicate silence by tenths of seconds

(.) micro pause

↑↓ shifts into especially high or low pitch

(xxxxx) unintelligible speech

word underlining indicates stressed syllables

<sup>1</sup> The transcription system is adapted from Johnson (1995) and ten Have (2007).

# Appendix B

## Guidelines for the semi-structured interview

### Part A: Personal Dimension

Who are you?

Family history: relatives, childhood memories, family links to teaching.

Personal background: pastime activities, motivations, aspirations.

Education background: learning experiences, favourite subjects, memories of learning, teachers and schools images, learning atmosphere and achievements.

### Part B: Professional dimension

Why did you choose teaching as a professional choice?

Who helped you to make the decision?

What are some of your memories of those moments when you decided to apply for a teaching programme?

What are some of your short/long term goals as a teacher?

How do you link language teaching with the future of children and the country?

How do you see the future of teachers in Colombia?