

The Relations between Vietnamese EFL Students' and Teachers' Language Learning Beliefs

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By

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**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

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I dedicate this book to my parents with love and gratitude.
You are the greatest factor contributing to my academic accomplishments

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ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language
LLB: Language learning belief
NT: Native English speaking teacher
NNT: Non-native English speaking teacher
NS: Native speaker of English
NNS: Non-native speaker of English
PES: Private English Schools

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

T	Teacher
L	Learner (not identified)
LL	several learners at once or the whole class
L1, L2	an identified learner
<u>Word</u>	Speaker emphasis
((...))	Actions/body languages
(.)	Very short untimed paused
(2.0)	Interval between utterances
...	Utterances between degree signs are noticeably quieter than surrounding talk
[...	
[...	overlap utterances
↑	Marked shifts into higher pitch in the utterance following the arrow
<i>Italic</i>	Inaccurate pronunciation
[th]	Pronunciation

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationships between foreign language learning beliefs and preferences of 2 Vietnamese learners and beliefs and practices of 2 Native English speaking teachers in a private English school in Vietnam. The learners were not satisfied with learning English in public schools and had many expectations on the course and the teachers while the teachers had to make their learners pleased. Beliefs were reviewed as determinations of actions; beliefs entail knowledge, values, and attitude, and relate closely to identity and experience. The researcher adopted an interpretivist paradigm and three qualitative methods: Repgrid interview, Stimulated recall interview, and The COLT as an observation schedule. The interview data was coded inductively with content analysis method to build up the subjects' beliefs and belief systems. Then, the systems were compared to find the relationships between their beliefs. To see how their beliefs related with learning preferences and teaching practices, the researcher analysed what they said and made use of the video record of their classroom activities; besides, the teachers' beliefs were compared with the timing calculation of the activities in their classes. The results showed that beliefs about language learning affected strongly the participants' preferred ways of teaching and learning and there were tight matches between the teachers' beliefs and actions in class. There were influences of beliefs of the teachers and learners on each other, they were not direct influences but through their interpretations of the classroom events. However, the influences from the teacher were much clearer. After the course, the learners' preferences and beliefs about some learning activities were changed and became more reflective. They also started to recognize the benefits of different ways of learning English. Meanwhile, the teachers' interpretation of their learners' expectations, learning preferences, and levels strongly affected what and how they taught.

Key words:

beliefs, actions, preferences, native teacher, foreign language learning

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background and problem

"Vietnam's linguistic history reflects its political history." (Denham, 1992, p. 61). Foreign interventions and the subsequent use of foreign languages (FL) as the national or official language overwhelmed most of the nation's 4000-year history. Vietnam not only longed and fought to find its own national language, but also had to use FL for national development (Do, 2006). Until the twentieth century, the nearly simultaneous, direct involvements in Vietnam of powers such as China, France, Japan, the Soviet Union, and the United States exerted various profound influences on language attitudes, language change, and language choice and use (Do, 2006). Therefore, Vietnam's language education has been directly influenced by its relationships with China, France, Russia, and the US (Wright, 2002). However, under centuries-long Chinese domination, Vietnamese culture and education include a strong Confucian heritage.

When Vietnam's open-door policy came into existence in 1986, for the first time the country witnessed a new change in diplomatic relations with the call for cooperation with every nation regardless of political differences. The adoption of a free, market-oriented economy helped attract a considerable number of English-speaking visitors and business people to Vietnam (Denham, 1992). Social demands have forged the emergence of English as the language for broader communication and cooperation. English has thus gained its role as the main FL taught and used in the country (Do, 2006; Wilson, 1993a, b). As a result, private English schools (PESs) have been mushrooming to serve this increasing demand.

In Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), as recorded by HCMC Education and Training Department, from 2008 to 2009, the number of PESs jumped from 166 to 207 and the number of language learners increased from 659.200 to 721.824, accounting for 63% of the total number of learners in the private educational sectors (Nhan Dan News). Teaching in these private schools is primarily designed to develop communicative competence, with few curricular demands and pressure of examinations. When students are treated as customers, and the market in English

education becomes more competitive, then serving learners' beliefs and expectations becomes the goal of PESs. These PESs can choose their own up-to-date teaching materials and types of assessment in order to attract good business in English language provision. Many of these courses taught by native English-speaking teachers (NTs), operate in the evenings, teach both adults and children, and offer a communicative approach and training for international assessment (IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC) of the four macro skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Different from public schools, learners at PESs are normally much freer to choose when and what program to study, and have the right to change class or complain when they are not pleased with their classes. In this environment, NTs can teach in small classes with up to fifteen students in each, and are given much power to choose the methods they want to teach, but the primary requirements for them are satisfying the learners' expectations, maintaining their attendance rate during the course, and ensuring a high rate of re-registration for the next course. Besides, the payment for them is definitely much higher than for their Vietnamese counterparts.

Meanwhile, in the public sector, the main FL is English, though other languages such as French and Chinese are also offered in some schools. English is taught as a compulsory subject in more than 10 school years from secondary to university level. Besides, the primary grade students in some developed areas have had to start learning English very early in recent years. According to the Ministry of Education and Training's statistics (2006), 67% of students in lower secondary schools and 86% in upper secondary schools study English for at least three hours a week, and time for English class is even higher when they go up to tertiary level. During their time at university, non-major students of English are normally required to have 200 hours of English. However, the outcome is still not as good as the authorities, educators, and learners expect (Utsumi & Doan, 2009). In the public schools, there are overly crowded classes, poor equipment, controlled teaching materials, and many inadequately trained teachers (Le, 2011). Despite the need for oral communication skills, teacher-centred, book-centred, and grammar translation methods are still widely used and the students are still receiving knowledge of English directly from their teachers (Denham, 1992; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Le, 2002; Tomlinson & Bao, 2004; Pham, 2005; Sullivan, 2000; Le & Barnard, 2009). In addition, the public curriculum is exam-driven, being geared to the written examination of grammar, reading and translation (Denham, 1992). Perhaps, with such exam-driven instruction and teacher-centred method, the students may achieve high grades in examinations, but fail to communicate effectively in real-life situations, and feel

embarrassed, confused, and lacking in confidence when communicating (Hoang, 1999; Hoang, 2000; Le, 2011). Besides, because of institutional hierarchies and the lack of learner feedback policies, the students have never articulated or accounted for their learning difficulties (Tomlinson & Bao, 2004).

In such a context, Vietnamese learners seem to believe that they should be taught in another way, not to pass exams (Tran & Baldauf, 2007; Utsumi & Doan, 2009; Le, 2011) and an increasing number of them are likely to go to PESs for extra English class with the expectations to be taught in "magical" ways, with opportunities to learn with native English-speaking teachers to improve their English. Sahin (2005) noticed this tendency by stating that NTs are becoming models of good language teachers in non-English-speaking countries because of their fluency and accuracy in their mother tongue, and employing NTs has become the only standard way to solve the shortage of qualified English teachers; having an NT "has become a trump card for schools that are in competition with other schools to attract more students" (p. 31). Therefore, tuition fees paid for such classes are very high, especially in classes with 100% of the class by NTs.

A large number of learners of different ages, social backgrounds, and linguistic competences are seeking ways of learning/teaching to satisfy their common expectations and communicative goals in language learning, rather than simply deciding to switch to an environment that suits their individual learning styles, strategies, or practices. Thus, it seems that learners are evaluating traditional ways of teaching/learning as insufficient and have their own beliefs about how English should be learned and taught. Consequently, a study into language learning beliefs (LLBs) in this context will make an interesting angle from which to examine what happens to learners and NTs in an *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) setting when the students are exposed to more communicative ways of teaching, when they learn with high expectations without being under compulsory curriculum constraints. Meanwhile, there is strong pressure for the NTs, who were trained to teach communicatively but have no experience in EFL learning, to accommodate to learners' beliefs about how they learn, and how they should be taught.

1.2 Context of the Study

AMA (approval to use the real name for academic purpose was gained from the school) has its origin in AITMA (American Information Technology & Management Association dating back to the 1960s in the

USA). Vietnam was one of its first destinations with the foundation of American Academy Vietnam (www.ama.edu.vn).

As advertised on the website, in 2010, AMA signed a contract with Cleverlearn HCMC, one of the leading English training schools in Vietnam, to provide training materials and management procedures for the improvement of English teaching in 6 branches of Cleverlearn HCM. Courses officially delivered in the curriculum include: Summer Fantasy, CleverKid (English for children), CleverTeen (English for teenagers), General English, Business English, IELTS, and TOEFL iBT. AMA has become official partner of British Council, Cambridge Vietnam, TESOL Global, Cambridge ESOL of Michigan University, Ton Duc Thang University, HCMC University of Medicine, RMIT University Vietnam, and St. John International University.

AMA has over 80 teachers, and the criteria for teacher recruitment are that teachers must be highly experienced and knowledgeable about EFL students and have TESOL or Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) certificates. Besides, the teachers are advertised as being patient, dedicated, and have a passion for the educational career. After being recruited, a teacher can teach the given course book and the syllabus in the ways he/she prefers as long as the learners get on well with the class. However, as advertised, the teaching method of the school aims to give students more time to interact with native teachers, break through communication barriers such as shyness or hesitation, develop language skills, especially listening and speaking, and practice pronunciation with NTs. In addition to correcting grammatical and writing errors, the school also ensures that the teachers emphasize on-the-spot memorisation and practice, resulting in the fastest and clearest outcomes from each session. For learning facilities, each AMA branch provides a Movie room with modern projector, screen and sound system, learning center with a library of updated course books, reference books, materials, CDs and VCDs for students, Lab room with computers installed with English learning software for the optimal benefits of students. Each classroom is equipped with an LCD, a computer, a CD player, an air conditioner; and there are from ten to fifteen separated chairs (a small individual desk is attached in each chair to allow mobility) arranged in a horseshoe layout in each class.

From the policies and facilities, it can be inferred that the school is trying to provide an interactive learning environment, encouraging communication in language class, and is ready to please the needs and preferences of different learners. The current learners of AMA are various, from young learners, teenagers, to adult learners; they can be still students or have a job. Coming to the school, firstly, they discuss with the school's

consultants their personal needs, then they are arranged to take a placement test, and they are assigned to a class based on their needs, their test results, and their available time.

1.3 Research Aim/Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between students' and their native teachers' LLBs in PESs. My study of LLBs will focus on understanding the interrelations between teachers' and learners' beliefs in the setting of a PES in HCMC, Vietnam; and AMA was chosen as the fieldwork (see section 3.8 for the rationale).

I examine the learners' beliefs and preferred ways of learning, how they might influence their teachers' beliefs and ways of teaching, and how the teachers' beliefs might affect their practices and in turn influence the learners' beliefs and learning preferences. Besides, this study also investigates whether and how learners change their preferences and expectations, and therefore either adjust or suspend their beliefs as a result of participating in the class.

1.4 Research Questions

The general question addressed in this study is: What is the relationship between Vietnamese students' beliefs and preferences and native English-speaking teachers' beliefs and teaching practices in a PES in Ho Chi Minh City?

This question can be answered by addressing these specific questions.

1. What are the learners' beliefs? How do these beliefs influence their preferred ways of learning?
2. What are the teachers' beliefs? How do these beliefs inform their ways of teaching?
3. How and to what extent do the teachers' beliefs and ways of teaching influence the learners' beliefs and preferences?
4. How and to what extent do the learners' beliefs and preferences affect their teachers' beliefs and ways of teaching?

1.5 Importance/Value of the Study

Practically, the study's result is intended to help private schools in Vietnam and other similar contexts to enhance their competitiveness in the market and serve their learners better. In addition, the results will be

universally available for EFL teachers to have a raised awareness of the nature and effects of the relationship between teachers' and students' beliefs.

Theoretically, this empirical study will contribute to the current literature by relating not only teachers' with learners' beliefs but also teachers' beliefs with their on-going practices.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

Actions: In Activity Theory (Leont'ev, 1974), actions are goal-directed behaviours and activities; they are conscious as a person holds goals in mind (Dickinson, 1985; Nardi, 1996). This implies that reflective thought initiates and controls the actions. However, in line with Broadbeck (1963), *action*, as I use it in this study, is an umbrella term to cover both conscious and goal-directed behaviours derived from experience following training or self-development (Dickinson, 1985; Leont'ev, 1974; Nardi, 1996), and unreflective automatic behaviours learned through socialization (Ajzen, 1991; Dickinson, 1985; Leinhardt & Greeno, 1991); both are also referred to as "practices" (Johannessen, 1988; Reckwitz, 2002).

Attitude: Definition of attitude and how it is related to value and beliefs are presented in section 2.1.3.

Beliefs: Pajares (1992) defined belief as an "individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do" (p. 316). In section 2.1.1 there is a discussion on the similarities and differences between beliefs and knowledge.

Communicative language teaching (CLT): Brown (1994) noted that CLT is based on a broad theoretical position about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching. CLT can, from a multidisciplinary perspective, be seen to derive from linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and educational research (Savignon, 2007), and this broad theory has generated many ways of understandings, descriptions, and uses.

Canale and Swain (1980) contended that communicative competence comprises grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Savignon (2002) emphasized that CLT puts the focus on the learner: "Learner communicative needs provide a framework for elaborating program goals in terms of functional competences" (p. 3). She proposed five components of a communicative curriculum that includes language arts, language for a purpose, personal second language (L2) use, theater arts, and beyond the classroom. Breen and Candlin (1980, p. 98) set out the essentials of a communicative

classroom that "becomes the meeting place for realistically motivated communication-as-learning, communication about learning, and meta-communication".

Overall, the common agreement is that there is a need for meaningful communication that supports the language learning process, and thus, classroom activities should focus on learners' real communication. Some of its main principles are use of authentic language in the classroom tasks, cooperation among students, emphasis on context and meaning, and emphasis on learning-centered activities and teacher's coaching role (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Richard & Rodgers, 2001).

Constructs: Constructs are personal interpretations and assessments of the environment (Coshall, 2000). They are "the discriminations which a person makes" (Fromm, 2004, p. 145). Kelly (1955) and Fransella and Bannister (1977) describe that a construct emerges when a person makes sense of a way that two or more things are alike and thereby are different from a third or more things. Hence, each construct involves two poles, one at each end of its dichotomy.

Declarative and procedural knowledge

Johnson (1996) and Lightbown and Spada (2006) noted that *declarative* knowledge is *knowing that* and *procedural* knowledge is *knowing how*. I employed the former term to describe the participants' perceptions of the roles of acquiring vocabulary and grammar and the latter one to refer to their beliefs about the competence in the four macro skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.

English as a Foreign Language: "The role of English in countries where it is taught as a subject in schools but not used as a medium of instruction in education nor as a language of communication (e.g. government, business, industry) within the country" (Richards *et al.*, 1992, p. 123-124)

Element: If constructs are an individual's opinions or ideas about a particular aspect of reality, then the entities that they hold these opinions about are referred to as "elements" (Fransella & Bannister, 1977). In other words, elements are nouns and verbs: specific people, objects, events or activities (Stewart & Stewart, 1981) that an individual uses to interpret and assess his/her environment. In my study, elements are classrooms activities collected by myself and elicited from the participants.

Expectation: *Expectation* in this study is defined as desires or wants of language learners. *Expectation* is a form of belief (Gardner, 1988; White, 1999; Barcelos, 2000; Bordia *et al.*, 2006) as it is also based on a person's previous language learning experience, goals, and needs, and may influence how individuals react, respond, and experience in practice

(White, 1999; Barcelos, 2000). Bordia *et al.* (2006) reviewed the literature and noted that there are some significant similarities between consumer expectations and those of language learning. When students spend a substantial sum of money on learning English, they want the acquired knowledge to meet certain goals; based on their goals, students would expect to learn certain aspects of the language more than others (White, 1999).

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), "Grammar Translation is a way of studying a language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating texts. It hence views language learning as consisting of little more than memorising rules and facts in order to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the foreign language" (p. 5). Some characteristics of this method are that reading and writing are the major focus, words are taught through bilingual word lists and memorisation, sentence is the basic unit of practice, accuracy is emphasized, and grammar is taught deductively.

Knowledge: Knowledge is "undefeated justified true belief" (Lehrer & Paxson Jr, 1969, p. 225) that, like scientific concepts, formulas, objective facts, requires general or group consensus regarding the validity and appropriateness (Abelson, 1979; Goodman, 1988; Woods, 1996). A discussion of beliefs and knowledge will be conducted in section 2.1.1.

Language learning beliefs: In section 2.2.1, different terms and definitions for LLBs are listed and related.

Language learning strategies: Language learning strategies are specific actions (Cohen, 2003; Oxford, 2003; Wenden, 1986a) that "a student chooses to deal with a specific learning task in the light of its perceived demands" (Entwistle *et al.*, 1979, p. 368). Strategies are recognized as subsets of learning styles (Cohen, 1996; Rossi-Le, 1995; Schmeck, 1988), learning styles influence the strategies a learner uses (Brown, 2000). Ehrman *et al.* (2003) noted that "learning styles and learning strategies are often seen as interrelated. Styles are made manifest by learning strategies." (p. 315). Nevertheless, strategies differ from learning styles in that they are more teachable (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), and deal with specific conscious actions (Cohen, 2003; Oxford, 2003; Wenden, 1986a).

Language learning styles: Language learning styles are "cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment" (Keefe, 1979, p. 4).

Language learning preferences: Learning preferences are "an individual's propensity to choose or express a liking for a particular instructional technique or combination of techniques" (Sadler-Smith, 1997, p. 52)

Language teaching styles: Language teaching style can be defined as "the sum total of instructional activities, techniques, and approaches that a teacher feels most comfortable using when he or she is in front of a class" (Cooper, 2001, p. 301)

Native English speaker (NS): In section 2.3.2, there are definitions of a NS.

Native English-speaking teachers (NTs): Based on the definitions of a NS, *a native English-speaking teacher*, in my study is defined as a teacher of English who uses English as a native language and was born, grew up, and was educated in an environment where English was the mother tongue.

1.7 Conclusion and Overview of Chapters

In chapter 1, I introduce the research rationale, my objectives, and the research questions. I argue that it is significant, especially from a practical perspective, to study the relationship between learners' and NTs' beliefs in the context of private schools in Vietnam.

Chapter 2 is the literature review, which discusses the nature of beliefs and LLBs, and their relations with other psychological concepts, as well as teachers' and learners' beliefs about language learning. In this chapter I also summarize critically previous studies into LLBs in the light of their purposes, methods, and results. Chapter 3 is the detail of my research design, chapter 4 offers my results, chapter 5 represents discussion, interpretation of the findings, and chapter 6 is the conclusions and implications.

CHAPTER TWO

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The recent interest in examining LLBs is reflected in a number of studies (Barcelos, 2003; Barkhuizen, 1998; Bernat, 2008; Borg, 2006; Horwitz, 1988). As the literature reports that beliefs can both facilitate and hinder the effect of teaching on learning (Barcelos, 2003; Bernat 2008; Kern, 1995; Pajares, 1992), an awareness of beliefs is crucial to language classroom pedagogy (Bernat, 2007, 2008). However, defining beliefs is not a simple task. *Belief* is a "messy construct" (Pajares, 1992) that is used interchangeably in the literature with *pedagogic principles* (Breen *et al.*, 2001), *theories for practice* (Burns, 1996), *personal theories* (Sendan & Roberts, 1998), *conceptions of practice* (Freeman, 1993), *images* (Johnson, 1994), or *maxims* (Richards, 1996), or *BAK* (Beliefs, Attitudes, Knowledge) (Woods, 1996). There are considerable overlaps among the terms in that they highlight the personal nature of cognition, the role of experience and identity, and the way in which actions and cognition are mutually informing (Borg, 2006). However, there is an assumption that beliefs are the best determinants of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives (Dewey, 1933; Rokeach, 1968). In this section, firstly, I discuss the nature of beliefs, and then I conduct a brief literature review of the LLBs of students and teachers.

2.1 The Nature of Beliefs

2.1.1 Beliefs and Knowledge

The main confusion with the concept of beliefs revolves around the distinction between knowledge and belief (Pajares, 1992). Beliefs are propositions (Borg, 2001; Woods, 1996); a belief is a "mental state which has as its content a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding it, although the individual may recognize that alternative beliefs may be held by others" (Borg, 2001, 186), so disagreements can be

accepted (Abelson, 1979; Nespor, 1985; Woods, 1996) and thus beliefs often come with evaluations and affective components connecting to self-identity (Abelson, 1979; Nespor, 1985; Pajares, 1992; Woods, 2003). In addition, compared to knowledge, beliefs rely more on episodes of personal memory, images from past events, and experience (Abelson, 1979; Goodman, 1988; Nespor, 1985); beliefs are "forms of thought that are not based on evidence but on opinions, traditions, and customs" (Barcelos, 2000, p.33). However, beliefs are relatively static and less dynamic compared to knowledge that can be changed more easily through well-grounded arguments. When beliefs change, according to Nespor, it is more likely to be "a matter of a conversion or gestalt shift than the result of argumentation or a marshalling of evidence" (p. 321). Moreover, beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in terms of being predictors of actions (Nespor, 1985; Pajare, 1992).

Despite the differences, knowledge is an inevitable integral component of beliefs (Borg, 2006; Hickman, 1998; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968; Wenden, 1999; Woods, 2003). First of all, this can be seen when a belief becomes identical and commonly known through the socialization process which socially and culturally differentiates one group of people from others. Belief and knowledge together then turn into a shared belief called a "cultural belief" (Gardner, 1988; Greif, 1994). Pajares (1992) asked "what truth, what knowledge, can exist in the absence of judgment or evaluation?" (p. 310). Sharing this view, Barcelos (2000) and Hickman (1998) noted that beliefs must be seen in connection with knowledge. Woods (2003) conceptualized knowledge as beliefs with the greatest consensus, the greatest demonstrability, and the least personal identification. Dewey (1983) pointed out that if we discard beliefs as separated from knowledge and from our way of acting, we will be missing important aspects that beliefs bring with them. Hence, we cannot separate knowledge from beliefs and from our actions (Dewey, 1906, 1983), and in this study, knowledge and beliefs are seen as interrelated.

2.1.2 Beliefs and Actions

According to Bandura (1997), beliefs are the best indicators of the decisions people make and people tend to act according to their beliefs. Clusters of beliefs form action agendas (Ajzen, 1991; Pajaras, 1992). Williams and Burden (1997) affirmed that even if a person acts spontaneously or unconsciously, "such actions are nevertheless prompted by a deep-rooted belief that may never have been articulated or made explicit" (p. 56). When we make up our mind what to do, based on beliefs

we form an intention, with such intention we move to act (Aune, 1990). However, in fact, a person's beliefs both shape and are shaped by actions (Barcelos, 2003; Borg, 2006; Haney *et al.*, 2002; Nardi, 1996), or more exactly, by his/her assessment of the result of his/her actions (Haney *et al.*, 2002). From these evaluations, a person may adjust, adapt his/her actions, and change his/her attitudes, and/or beliefs. Barcelos (2000) claimed that it is not a cause-effect relationship but a relationship where understanding contextual constraints helps understanding beliefs. As Tabachnick and Zeichner (1986) noted, "greater consistency between belief and behaviour was the result of an interactive process between individuals and organizational constraints and encouragements." (p. 95). Hence, a person's actions are not necessarily in accordance with his/her beliefs (Richards *et al.*, 2001; Woods, 1996).

2.1.3 Beliefs, Values, and Attitudes

An attitude is "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manners" (Rokeach, 1968, p. 112). It is "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). While an attitude is a "predisposition to like or dislike" (Krosnick *et al.*, 2005) and represents a person's degree of positive or negative view or judgment, positiveness and negativeness are the two sole variables of a value. Values are "abstract ideas" and "deeply rooted beliefs" that represent a person's ideal models of conduct (Rokeach, 1968). Concepts of values such as truth, beauty, freedom, happiness, etc. are different from person to person (Rokeach, 1968); one person may value beauty as the most important, others may value truth, or freedom. In the literature, attitudes and values are characterised as types of beliefs (Pearson *et al.*, 2003; Rokeach, 1968); to believe, as Dewey (1906, p. 113) noted, is "to ascribe value, impute meaning, and assign import".

2.1.4 Beliefs, Belief System, and Beliefs Change

Seeing beliefs outside of a broader *belief system* is unwise and unproductive (Pajares, 1992). It means that we may not be able to conceptualize beliefs exactly without putting them in a belief system. Rokeach (1968) defined a belief system as "an organization of beliefs varying in depth, formed as a result of living in nature and in society" (p.

10). According to Rokeach, the belief system, in any particular area, is formed of the five following types of beliefs.

- **"Type A: Primitive beliefs, 100% consensus"**: The most central beliefs that are learned by direct encounter with the object of beliefs, reinforced by a unanimous social consensus. These beliefs constitute basic truths, have taken-for-granted characters, and are nearly impossible to change.
- **"Type B: Primitive beliefs, Zero consensus"**: Similar to type A but its maintenance does not seem to depend on its being shared with others; they are ego centered and internally formed.
- **"Type C: Authority beliefs"**: "An expanding repertoire of primitive beliefs ... when the believer discovers at any moment that a particular belief he had heretofore believed everyone else believed ... is not shared by everyone" (p. 9). This forces the believer to go through a discrimination involved in determining which authorities to trust and which not to trust.
- **"Type D: Derived beliefs"**: Trusted facts derived from authority sources.
- **"Type E: Inconsequential Beliefs"**: Arbitrary matters of taste.

In this system, beliefs are ordered along a "central-peripheral dimension"; each belief carries with it three components: *cognitive component* (represents a person's knowledge), *affective component* (affects positive or negative evaluation on the object of belief, or the belief itself), *behaviour component* (leads to some actions when it is suitably activated) (Rokeach, 1968). The earlier a belief is incorporated the more difficult it is to alter, the more resistant it is likely to change (Kane *et al.*, 2002; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968).

Although most beliefs are resistant to change (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003; Rokeach, 1968; Woods, 2003), changes in more central beliefs will "produce greater changes in the rest of the belief system than changes in less central beliefs" (Rokeach, 1968, p. 23). Changing can occur during communication, in learning, in problem solving, etc. when the events do not meet a person's expectations and/or newly received indisputable facts contradict his/her current beliefs (Politzer & Carles, 2001; Harman, 1986).

Beliefs change is "the process by which a rational agent makes the transition from one belief state to another" (Elio & Pelletier, 1997, p. 420). Kuhn's (1970) and Posner *et al.* (1982) theorized the change as "conceptual change" when one conceptual worldview is assimilated with or accommodated by another (Kuhn, 1970; Posner *et al.*, 1982). In their

arguments, for a belief to be changed, contradictory information must be integrated and the individual must be dissatisfied with his/her existing beliefs. "Assimilation" happens when new information is incorporated into existing beliefs in the belief system. If a person is unable to assimilate the new belief, "accommodation" takes place, the existing belief is replaced or reorganized, and thus, "accommodation" requires a more radical effect. Hence, beliefs change can be called the *restoration* or *revision of consistency* in the belief system (Harman, 1986). However, distinguishing between assimilation and accommodation seems not to be helpful, especially when the purpose is measuring or tracking changes in beliefs. Studies have shown that change is neither necessarily to be immediate, complete, and quantifiable nor to give up a belief (Freeman, 1989). Change is more comprehensively to alter its *degree* (Politzer & Carles, 2001) or its *structure* (Borg, 2006; Sendan & Roberts, 1998) - the manner in which it functions in the belief system.

2.1.5 Beliefs are Contradictory

Beliefs are naturally and internally contradictory (Barcelos, 2003; Dewey, 1933; Peirce, 1878; Rokeach, 1968). Beliefs look both ways (Dewey, 1906); "to disbelieve a proposition is to believe its contradictory" (Stout, 1891, p. 449). Dewey (1933) defined belief as forms of thought that "cover all the matters of which we have no sure knowledge and yet we are confident of to act upon and also the matters that we now accept as certainly true, as knowledge, but which nevertheless may be questioned in the future" (p. 6). Thus, beliefs can be "blind", "unreasoned", or can be the results of tutoring, or reflecting on experience.

As Barcelos (2000) and Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996) pointed out, beliefs both resist and are open to changes. Pintrich *et al.* (1993) (in Barcelos 2000) called beliefs conceptions. On the one hand, current conceptions potentially constitute a momentum that prevents those conceptions from changing, but they also provide frameworks that an individual can use to interpret and understand new, potentially conflicting information (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996). Besides, conflicts might occur, especially when new beliefs are not consistent with a person's experience, or when one does not have enough time to evaluate new beliefs (Dewey, 1933). Dewey (1933) named such conflict a *split* – a case when acceptance of a belief and refusal of its logical consequences come together. This notion is important for inferring beliefs from actions as "no one can use two inconsistent mental standards without losing some of his mental grip" (Dewey, 1933, p. 138). A person might pretend to get on well