Exploring Pre-service Teachers' Beliefs about Language Teaching and Learning: A Narrative Study[1]

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Abstract

Pre-service English teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching delineate how they plan, design, and perform in the classroom. The objective of this article is to report pre-service teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching and how those beliefs continued, changed, or disappeared once pre-service teachers faced English classes. This narrative study was implemented in an undergraduate program in language teaching with fifteen pre-service teachers. Data were collected using observation tasks and autobiographical narratives. The findings show they construct their beliefs based on their previous experiences as learners; most beliefs are maintained after the practicum with some changes and others appear when teachers face new situations in the classroom.

Resumen

Las creencias sobre enseñanza y aprendizaje de los docentes de inglés en formación describen como ellos planean, diseñan y se desempeñan en el salón de clases. El objetivo de este artículo es reportar cuáles son las creencias sobre enseñanza y aprendizaje de los docentes de inglés en formación antes y después de su primera práctica docente. Este estudio narrativo fue implementado en un programa de Licenciatura en enseñanza de lenguas con 15 docentes en formación. Los datos fueron recolectados usando tareas de observación y narraciones autobiográficas. Los resultados muestran cómo los docentes en formación construyen sus creencias basados en experiencias pasadas como aprendices, la mayoría de éstas se mantuvieron después de la práctica con algunas variaciones y otras aparecen en el momento de enfrentar nuevas situaciones en el salón.

Introduction

Beliefs are an essential part of a teacher's identity considering they contribute to constructing a self-image as a teacher. Additionally, they play an important role in teacher performance since most of the actions and decisions made in the classroom are based on what teachers believe about teaching and learning.

According to our experience as teacher advisors in a language teaching program at a private university in Bogotá, Colombia, before pre-service teachers started their first teaching practicum, they usually critiqued and gave their opinions about how the class should be carried out in the tutoring sessions or in the reflective activities. This situation made us think about what their initial teaching and learning beliefs were, and if they were evident when pre-service teachers were teaching.

Those critiques and opinions came from the observations carried out with teachers in private or public schools as part of the initial activities of their teaching practicum. Then, they planned and taught 3-4 hours of classes a week, and at the end of each week, they kept a journal in which they reflected on their own performance and on student attitudes during the classes.

Knowing what pre-service teachers believe about teaching and learning, on one hand, allows teacher advisors to rethink the content and activities developed in the language and didactic classes to expose pre-service teachers to more meaningful teaching models and promote higher reflection on what they are doing in class. On the other hand, when pre-service teachers are conscious of their beliefs, they may have a more critical view of their own practice and the different theories about language teaching and learning.

The main aim of this article is to show pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning English before their first teaching practicum and how those beliefs continued, changed, or disappeared once pre-service teachers faced English classes. To do this, in this article some previous studies regarding teaching and learning beliefs are analyzed, then a definition of those beliefs is given, followed by an explanation of

the methodology implemented during the research. Finally, the most important beliefs about teaching and learning are presented and discussed.

Literature Review

Pre-service Teachers' Identities

When pre-service teachers start their training, they have an image of the kind of teacher they would like to be. Gu and Benson (2014) and Wenger (1998) coincide in referring to that self-image as identity. Identity is not an isolated entity that is exclusively built by the individual alone, Wenger (1998) points out it is a social phenomenon, which is constructed and transformed thanks to the interaction and collaboration with other members of the different communities pre-service teachers are part of, such as family, colleagues, students, tutors, among others. Accordingly, Barcelos (2015) affirms that all the actions pre-service teachers are involved in during their time at the university, help them construct their identities. Consequently, people are not the only ones who influence pre-service teachers' identities.

Gu and Benson (2014) concluded that knowledge about the subject area plays an important role in who they are as teachers. In this case, the curriculum that language teaching programs offer and the activities implemented by pre-service teachers may influence the vision of who they are as language teachers. For example, if they are exposed to communicative approaches and theories, modern methodologies, and innovative activities, they expect to replicate these in their practice and include them in their teaching repertoire. In contrast, if they usually experience and learn mainly about traditional methodologies and activities to language teaching, they would probably continue replicating those updated practices and their self-image would be as a teacher who mainly cares about teaching grammar.

Finally, Gu and Beson (2004) and Kalaja (2015) coincide in considering beliefs as a fundamental part of the construction of identities, since each pre-service teacher lives unique experiences which contribute to form opinions and ideas about the language, teaching, and learning. This shows even pre-service teachers' identities can share certain characteristics that make them members of a specific community. Beliefs make identities unique and special in each individual, having in mind the opinions they have about their profession, depending on the experiences lived as language learners and teachers.

Pre-service Teachers' Beliefs

Díaz Larenas et al. (2013) affirm that beliefs are contradictory and messy ideas that emerge from every teaching experience. It means beliefs are constantly in (re)construction and are confronted in every decision and action teachers make in this classroom.

Besides, beliefs cannot be limited only to ideas, Vera Rodríguez et al. (2018) suggest values, experiences, and goals are also part of the system of beliefs. Each one of these elements influences the way pre-service teachers see themselves as teachers and the decisions they make. Even if pre-service teachers share certain beliefs that make them become part of a specific community, they will never be exactly the same, because each one feels and lives experiences differently, and creates different opinions about language and teaching.

However, beliefs can be negotiated through the interaction with people from the communities they belong to during the teaching practice, because they are not static. On the contrary, they are dynamic and can be adapted or transformed depending on the situation or decision they must make in the classroom. Additionally, those beliefs include ideas and opinions about different issues regarding language teaching, such as curriculum, technology, educational models, assessment, etc. The present study focused on beliefs about learning and teaching, having in mind that during the first year of practice pre-service teachers receive more training on how to teach and how to guarantee students' learning, that contribute to their teacher cognition.

Beliefs about Language Teaching

According to Kalaja et al. (2015) and Richards and Lockhart (1996) teaching beliefs are related to conceptions about what effective teaching is. They include methodologies, resources, and activities and roles assumed in the language teaching classroom. These beliefs make teachers self-reflect about what they do in the classroom (Díaz et al. 2013) and make decisions about their practicum.

Kissau et al. (2014) and Graves (2000), hold the position that language teachers' beliefs are influenced by their personal experience as L2 learners. Likewise, Vera Rodríguez et al. (2018) concluded that sources such

as personal factors and experiences with teaching methods also contribute to constructing the beliefs pre-service teachers have.

In this sense, teachers tend to teach in the same way they were taught since they are likely to reproduce the practices of their learning experiences (Bailey et al., 2001; Cota Grijalva & Ruiz-Esparza Barajas, 2013). These experiences can be materialized in formal and informal educational contexts (Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Solar & Díaz, 2009). Also, beliefs can have long-term consequences: "The more intense the belief is, the greater the resistance to change it" (Díaz et al., 2013, p. 86). However, they indeed may change depending on an individual teacher's awareness in a particular moment, the intensity and the type of the belief (Díaz et al., 2013; Fives & Buehl, 2016), which in turn directly affects the way teachers conceive teaching.

Beliefs about Learning

Regarding beliefs about learning, Richards and Lockhart (1996) propose that these beliefs are based on the teachers' expectations about the language learning process, i.e., what content to learn and how to do it, which may affect and be replicated in their next teaching experiences. In the same way, Graves (2000) affirm beliefs about learning come from teachers' training, teaching experience, or their experience as language learners. In addition, the vision each teacher possesses about learning ends up influencing the attitude towards learning, and in the same direction to teaching (Gabillona; 2013, Inceçay; 2011, and Pereyra & Alvarez; 2013). Therefore, teachers will develop their teaching practicum based on what they think about L2 learning.

Tagle Ochoa et al. (2014) suggest that initially, pre-service teachers may have two beliefs of what teaching a language is. One belief focuses on considering teaching as the transmission of knowledge, while the second one centers its attention in a communicative perspective, which means that teaching is considered a process of interaction, communication, and active participation. These two beliefs may suggest that in some cases, if pre-service teachers experienced, as language learners, traditional methodologies, they may believe that using those can be the most effective way to teach a foreign language. Or, on the contrary, as Pajares (1992) points out, they would believe that they do not want to replicate those methodologies and consider they would be better teachers than the ones they observed since they would use modern methodologies and resources.

Thus, pre-service teachers' identities are strongly related to their beliefs about teaching and learning, and that is the reason why it is relevant to understand the way these beliefs may be influenced by the teaching practice and the different experiences faced along the process.

Theoretical Framework

Beliefs from a Sociocultural Perspective

Beliefs are understood from a sociocultural perspective. According to Wood (2003) beliefs are assumptions situated in social contexts that constantly evolve as a result of social interactions. In this sense, beliefs have their origin and evolution in social life. For Johnson (2009) the construction of beliefs is historically and culturally mediated by a specific form of thinking, talking, and acting of a community. This suggests beliefs are the image of experiences and thoughts which are accumulated that then become part of the teacher's cognition.

Beliefs are not static; on the contrary, they are constantly shaped by the practices (Borg, 2018; Nguyen, 2019), the teaching and learning knowledge acquired in the teaching training, and the interaction with teachers and students. Moreover, Barahona (2014) concluded in her study that teacher beliefs are shaped and reshaped through the learning activities in which they learn to teach, since their previous experiences as language learners encourage and their current role as learners of teaching help them to develop concepts about language and teaching.

However, these changes cannot be instantly perceived; they need to pass through a process of internalization, which means moving from an initial interpersonal process to an internal one, where beliefs are appropriated and/or reconstructed (Johnson, 2009). Likewise, Borg (2006) suggests that at the beginning of teacher training, pre-service teachers can make few changes in their beliefs about effective teaching, but they can reorganize them or add new ones

Cabaroglu and Roberts (2003 cited in Borg, 2006) concluded that when beliefs suffer changes, they are reordered in order of importance. Another name is given to the belief or it adopts an opposite meaning to the initial belief. As a consequence of these changes, the teacher's cognition is built, reconstructed, accommodated, or reorganized (Borg, 2006). For its part, Yuan and Lee (2014) identified six processes of change of beliefs; confirmation, realization, disagreement, elaboration, integration and modification; these processes of change demonstrate the importance that the teaching practicum has in the construction of pre-service teachers' cognition.

Shaping Beliefs about Teaching and Learning as Learners of Teaching

From a sociocultural perspective, beliefs about learning and teaching are shaped and determined mainly by the specific situations in which learning occurs and the contributions of other members of the academic community (Johnson, 2009). This suggests the knowledge pre-service teachers build about teaching and learning is more a collective than an individual construction, and in the practice, this knowledge becomes the first source to teach and understand students' learning.

Numrich (1996, cited in Borg, 2006) points out the situations lived by pre-service teachers as learners possess a great source of positive and negative experiences which provide teaching strategies that may be adopted as part of their teaching repertoire. Nevertheless, as those teaching strategies become from empirical learning and experiential knowledge, Johnson and Golombek (2011) and Borg (2018) affirms that misconceptions or misunderstandings about teaching and learning can occur and inadequate beliefs are shaped.

In order to detect those misconceptions and misunderstandings, it is essential to explore and know what pre-service teachers' teaching and learning beliefs are, and based on them, language teaching programs and teachers trainers can support and develop pre-service teacher's knowledge and move them from everyday concepts to scientific ones; this is what Johnson (2009) called conceptual development. To achieve this, everyday concepts acquired through experiences as language learners are moved to formal theories about language teaching to become scientific concepts through a dialogic mediation (Johnson, 2009) with peers and experts who help them to verbalize their concepts.

Methodology

This study employed qualitative research because the purpose was to explore and understand a problem or phenomenon (Creswell, 2015); in this case to identify and understand language learning and teaching beliefs. To go deeper into the beliefs, a narrative study was adopted because pre-service teachers wrote about individual experiences, feelings, opinions, etc., (Bolívar, 2002; Creswell, 2015), as well as reflected on what they know, think, and how they make decisions in the classroom (Cortazzi, 1993 as cited in Creswell, 2015). Besides, Johnson (2009) affirms narratives capture complexities from the teaching practice and give a holistic view of human experiences.

Participants

The pre-service teachers selected for the study were between 7th and 8th semester from an undergraduate program in English language teaching in a private university in Bogota, Colombia. Initially, 20 students were invited to participate voluntarily in the study, but only 15 accepted, 4 men and 11 women between 18 and 22 years old. In order to identify every student a number from 1 to 15 was assigned to each one (S1, S2…).

As the participation was voluntary, the professor in charge of the "Teaching Practicum 1" class did not assign any grade to the observations or autobiographies; the researchers, who were part of the program staff but were not responsible for the course, invited the participants to participate in the research and explained the importance and benefits for their training of observing teachers from another perspective and writing their autobiographies. They guaranteed the information provided would be confidential. Fifteen pre-service teachers completed the observation tasks and the autobiography before the teaching practice; however, only 11 wrote the autobiography after the practicum; the others decided not to continue participating in the research project. Only the data from students who completed both autobiographies were analyzed.

These pre-service teachers were enrolled in the course called "Teaching Practicum 1". It is a theoretical and practical course, which is taken once the pre-service teachers have finished and approved the six English language levels, the theories and approaches course, and done their social responsibility practice. The last one is a space where pre-service teachers learn about different vulnerable communities and how to develop

social projects with them. Here, they have a first approach to language teaching with people from vulnerable communities such as immigrants, children in poor conditions, etc.

The teaching practicum course lasts a semester, and, one of its main characteristics is the continuous reflection about teaching practice done in journals and in-class activities. During the course, pre-service teachers learn and reflect on beliefs, learners, the class syllabus, and school curriculum. Also, they are assigned to a private or public school, where for the first two weeks, they must observe the classes of one or two language teachers in kindergarten, primary or secondary level. During the observations, they usually observe the methodology, resources, materials, classroom environment, and students' behavior. Once they finish observing, they must plan and teach the content assigned for the language teacher in charge of the course. It is important to clarify that the teacher in charge of the teaching practicum 1 course only focuses on the theoretical part of the course and guaranteeing pre-service teachers develop the reflective activities. A tutor is assigned to each pre-service teacher to check their weekly lesson plans and ensure the activities planned fixed a communicative approach and are appropriate for students' age and level.

Instruments

Two instruments were applied in two different moments of the research: Autobiographical narratives and observation task. (See Figure 1)
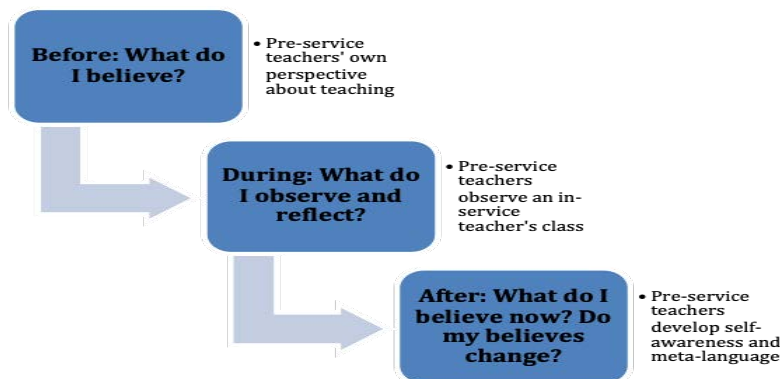
Instruments applied before the teaching practicum	Instruments applied after the teaching practicum
1. Observation tasks 2. Autobiographical Narrative	Autobiographical narrative

Note: These are the instruments implemented in two different moments of the teaching practicum

Figure 1: Data collection instruments implementation

Initially, two observation tasks were implemented before pre-service teachers started their practicum. This instrument allowed pre-service teachers to observe experienced teachers in action and ask themselves about their perspectives regarding teaching and learning. They were designed using the three moments for an observation proposed by Wajnryb (1992); before, during, and after; the questions for each moment were designed by the researchers. (See Appendix 1)

In the first moment, pre-service teachers reflected their beliefs based on their experiences as learners and trainees. Next, as part of the activities of the Teaching Practicum 1 course, pre-service teachers were asked to observe the teacher assigned in a private or public school in kindergarten, elementary or secondary level for two weeks. While they were observing they answered questions in order to identify elements for the teaching and learning process. Finally, once they finished each observation, pre-service teachers were asked questions in order to contrast and reflect on what they observed and believed. In this way they could contrast their beliefs with what teachers do in the classroom (see Appendix 1). The following graph summarizes the purpose of each observation section.

Before: What do I believe?
- Pre-service teachers' own perspective about teaching

During: What do I observe and reflect?
- Pre-service teachers observe an in-service teacher's class

After: What do I believe now? Do my believes change?
- Pre-service teachers develop self-awareness and meta-language

Note: Purpose of each section of the observation tasks

Figure 2: Observation tasks

Once pre-service teachers observed the classes, they wrote autobiographical narratives, aiming to explore the expectations and previous experiences as language learners and trainees that evidence beliefs about language teaching and learning. Some questions were designed to guide the narrative and to examine exactly the beliefs required. (See Appendix 2)

After the participants finished their first teaching practicum, they wrote the second part of their autobiographical narrative. They wrote experiences lived in the classroom and reflected, contrasted, and evaluated the beliefs they held before the first practicum.

Data Analysis

The information obtained was analyzed using the software for the analysis of qualitative data Atlas.ti. Initially, inductive codes (Johnson & Christensen, 2008) regarding teaching and learning were identified from the autobiographies before the practicum and the observations tasks (e.g., social commitment, innovation, the methodology used, promoting meaningful learning, etc.). Then, they were contrasted with the autobiographical narratives after the teaching practicum–in order to discover the process of change they have suffered. Finally, those beliefs which evidenced a process of confirmation, modification or integration before and after the teaching practicum were selected (Yuan & Lee, 2014) .The following figure summarizes the beliefs pre-service teachers have about learning and teaching.
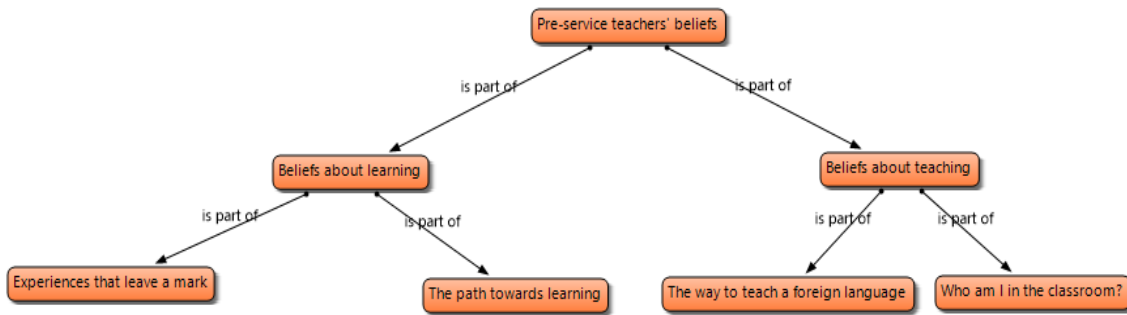

Note: View of Atlas.ti codes.

Figure 3: Learning and teaching beliefs

Findings

Beliefs about Learning

Two main aspects were identified. The first one relates to the positive and negative experiences pre-service teachers had when learning a foreign language; it was called *Experiences that leave a mark*. The second one named *The path towards learning* highlights the elements pre-service teachers considered essential in the learning process.

The first aspect is displayed in the following figure that shows the way pre-service teachers' beliefs changed when they had the opportunity to be in charge of teaching English to the course assigned.
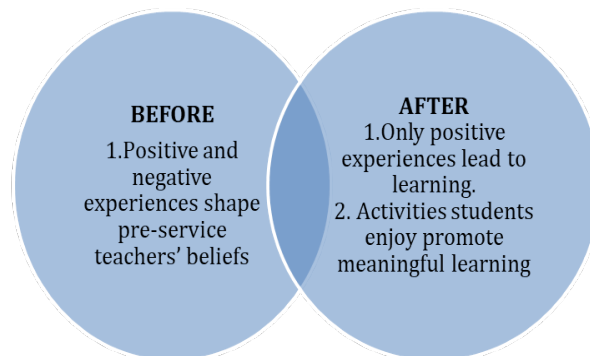
Note: Learning beliefs before and after the teaching practicum

Figure 4: Learning beliefs: Experiences that leave a mark

Concerning the beliefs before the practicum, positive and negative experiences influenced pre-service teachers' thoughts about how they see themselves as teachers. Positive experiences are perceived as meaningful and enriching practices to replicate because they promote motivation towards learning. To illustrate this, Student 8 stated:

> *This experience made me feel really happy, when I could share with others the poem that I wrote with such effort, it was something positive for me, because it helped me believe in my abilities, increase my confidence and made me understand that everything that one proposes can be achieved. So, it was an experience I want to repeat.* (Student 8: Autobiographical narrative before the practicum)

On the contrary, pre-service teachers tend to avoid negative experiences, as they related bad memories caused by traditional lessons or boring activities which do not contribute to the good development of the learning process. As an example, S8 wrote:

> *I had to take private lessons and study autonomously, and after hard work, I did not fail the subject. I think that the teacher had a negative influence on me. She made me perceive English as the worst subject and made me feel I was not capable of learning. I think I did not learn anything, she just showed me the kind of teacher I should not be, I would not like to use her methodology in classes, neither imitate her attitude nor the way she corrected mistakes.* (Student 8: Autobiographical narrative before the practicum)

After the practicum, pre-service teachers maintained the strong belief that only positive experiences generated by the inclusion of joyful activities led to learning. Consequently, most of the pre-service teachers included activities that allow their students to participate actively promoting enjoyment, fun, and meaningful experiences in the lessons they planned for their practice.

Taking into account the aforementioned, it can be said pre-service teachers believe the promotion of positive experiences through motivating and appealing activities is necessary to offer a pleasant environment for their students, and in this way, to ensure they are learning. In other words, they confirm their belief about the close relationship between positive experiences and learning.

Moreover, pre-service teachers confirmed their belief about the kind of teachers they do not want to be and the activities they do not want to repeat, specifically, the ones that generated negative experiences as their previous knowledge, needs and interests were not taken into account. They were perceived as passive individuals who were only recipients receiving information.

Regarding the second aspect, The path towards learning before the practicum, pre-service teachers believed different elements should appear during the lessons to promote the learning of a foreign language. After the practicum, some of the elements mentioned were the same, while others changed and were complemented with other important factors to bear in mind when learning a foreign language. The following figure describes the elements proposed before, after in both moments of the teaching practicum.
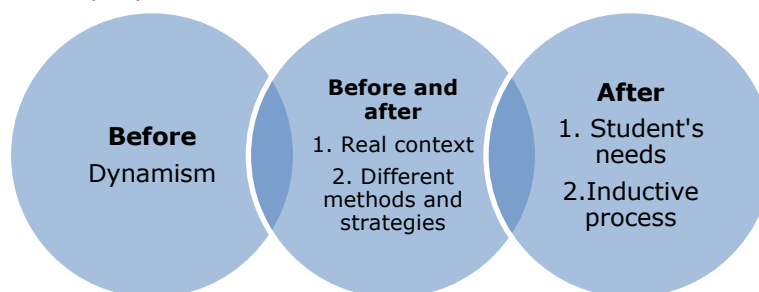
Note: Learning beliefs before and after the teaching practicum

Figure 5: Learning beliefs: The path towards learning

Before the teaching practicum, pre-service teachers believed a dynamic lesson, the inclusion of real context and the implementation of learning strategies, methods, and different activities were essential in the learning process. Regarding the dynamism inside the class, S8 affirmed: "I think that the foreign language should be learned in a dynamic way, in a good environment where the learners can feel comfortable and not judged if they make a mistake". (Student 8: Observation task 2)

In regard to the inclusion of real context to make the process easier, S4 stated:

> *I think that it should be learned under natural conditions, with vocabulary that we normally use and without confusing grammar. In my case, I learned better when I had to use the vocabulary in a real context. I remember that*

> *in the school I was so confused when the teacher introduced a new topic using the name of the grammar topic, but later I did a course in an institute that helped me to understand better using a conversation with partners, immerse in real situations like in a restaurant, airport, museum, etc. (Student 4: Observation task 2)*

According to pre-service teachers' beliefs, real situations promoted in the classroom are an effective way to make easier learning processes. For them, it is really important to design activities that allow students to interact among them using the language being immersed in real and meaningful contexts.

Last but not least, pre-service teachers proposed the implementation of different learning strategies, approaches, and methods. To illustrate this, S3 wrote

> *During my learning process, I have experienced many learning strategies that involve different approaches such as total physical response, inductive approach, conductive approach, deductive approach and association, and cognitive strategies. I believe that during my teaching practicum I could use some of these approaches and strategies to teach English as a foreign language because those approaches and strategies have as goal one effective and productive learning process. (Student 3: Observation task 2)*

After the practicum, it was evident that for pre-service teachers the implementation of different learning strategies, activities and methods was still one important element to promote learning. This belief was maintained and the following excerpt is a clear example of the previous affirmation, "During my practicum, I have used different strategies such as the inductive and deductive approach, these strategies have allowed me to know my student' English level and, through open questions, I can tell if they have understood the topic" (Student 4: Autobiographical narrative 2)

As another example to support the same idea S9 wrote:

> *Other strategies are games such as hot potato, role play, songs (highlighting), body language explanations, tales, realia method, imaginary situations, flashcards, workshops, posters, and commands. These are some activities included in my warm-ups which are really helpful in the learning process, likewise, the use of visual aids and a lot color provide me a new insight about their learning process. (Student 9: Autobiographical narrative 2)*

It was noticed that pre-service teachers did not clearly differentiate between the concepts of strategy, method, and activity, probably because of the lack of exposure they have had in the field, they tend to favor their own experiences as learners. However, it is interesting to analyze that no matter the name given to the concept, they were focused on helping their students to learn.

They also maintain the belief about the inclusion of real context to provide real and more natural scenarios for practicing the language. S3 affirmed "I believe that promoting learning in a real context make students perceive this process as productive and motivating" (Student 3: Autobiographical narrative after the practicum)

Pre-service teachers kept the belief that real situations provide students with enough opportunities to practice and improve their performance in a foreign language. What is more, all of them think that including different resources to enrich their lessons and make the learning process easier is essential.

In contrast, there were two elements not previously included before the practicum that reshaped the idea about what is necessary to learn a foreign language. The first element necessary to be mentioned was the importance of considering students' needs and interests to plan the lessons. The second element was the way of perceiving learning as an inductive process, and not as a deductive process. In the upcoming section, some examples of these new elements are included.

The following example shows the way pre-service teachers understood the significance of including students' needs and particularities to create the lesson plans for their classes. S5 highlighted in her narrative:

> *She realized that her pupils learned in a different way as she thought in the first sessions. Some students learned with audiovisual tools, other ones had learned with specific methods as TPR, and few ones were interested in producing at the end of each class their materials. However, the most important thing as she had planned since the first class the use of language in a real context was vital to provide a meaningful learning experience. Children enjoyed following instructions; they loved pupils, tales. Young learners had an audiovisual learning style, reason why, S5 had to design different materials as pupils, poems, posters, videos, worksheet, etc. (Student 5: Autobiographical narrative after the practicum)*

Accordingly, as pre-service teachers started to gain experience with the students, they noticed the relevance of bearing in mind their pupils' needs and particular characteristics at the moment of planning and implementing the lessons. The better they know their students the better lessons they plan, because these are based on what they like and need. Pre-service teachers believe the inclusion of these elements guarantees a successful learning process.

To continue, the second element mentioned is related to the perception of learning as an inductive process rather than a deductive process. For that, S10 stated, "teachers should create a new context or curriculum where students are involved to live new experiences of learning and provide students the different pedagogical tools to achieve the creation of a new process as well of learning" (Student 10: Autobiographical narrative after the practicum).

Regarding the excerpt, it is clear that learning is perceived as a process in which learners should be able to discover and build the knowledge using the tools given by the teacher, in other words, learning is an inductive process. This view contrasts the old-fashioned way of "learning as the process of applying received knowledge – a deductive process." (Stevick, 1998 cited in Graves, 2000, p. 42).

Beliefs about teaching

Two main beliefs about teaching English were identified; the first one called who am I in the classroom, makes emphasis on the teachers' roles, and the second belief named the way to teach a foreign language describes some characteristics the methodologies teachers should implement. Although these beliefs became evident before and after the practicum, some changes in the essence and characteristics of them emerged once the pre-service teachers lived new experiences in their practicum.

The first belief Who am I in the classroom? is related to the different roles pre-service teachers assume in the classroom; they may vary according to the situation or activity developed. Two main roles are believed as the most important ones: facilitator which appears before and after the practicum, and manager only came out after.
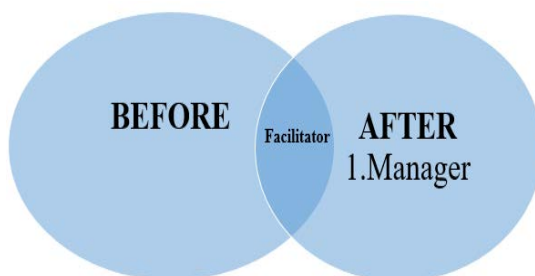
Note: Teaching beliefs before and after the teaching practicum

Figure 6: Teaching beliefs: Who I am in the classroom?

Regarding the role as a facilitator, this refers to how pre-service teachers help students to discover their ways of learning and working independently (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). This would indicate facilitating materials, activities, and strategies which contribute to students' learning.

This role was identified in the observation tasks before the practicum, when the pre-service teachers reflected on the importance of providing materials to facilitate language learning.

> *Students are responsible for their learning process, and the teacher is just a guide who motivated them. Teaching a foreign language must include a set of tools, materials such as, realia, which facilitate pupils' understanding. (Student 5: Observation No. 3)*

After the practicum, this belief was maintained and, in some cases, became stronger, because they went beyond materials, and started to include learning strategies to facilitate students' learning. This was evidenced in S13 autobiography who wrote:

> *Finally, I have used the metacognitive strategy: organizing time, this has been very useful in the development of my classes since in this way students can regulate their own learning process and also begin to create habits. In addition, I have used the cognitive strategy: taking notes and it has also been very useful because students take notes on the recommendations I have given them to take the ICFES exam and in this way they already have to review and remember what we saw in class. (Student 13: Autobiographical narrative after the practicum)*

Moreover, they realized teaching is not a massification process, in which the same strategies can be implemented to all students; they recognized each student as a unique individual with specific learning styles, background and needs. In this sense, the strategies they propose to facilitate their learning are thought for the learning requirements of everyone as the case of S10

> *There are always cases where it is necessary to help the student who has not understood the subject very well.[…] The main objective is that students know how much they have learned or if they reached the different achievements that were established at the beginning of the course.* (Student 10: Autobiographical narrative after the practicum)

Turning to the second role, manager, it represents the responsibility teachers have in organizing the classroom environment and student's behavior (Richards & Lockhart, 1996), to develop the activities in an effective and organized manner. Before pre-service teachers began their practicum, they were not conscious of the importance of having good classroom management techniques, classroom routines or strategies to control discipline.

Nevertheless, when the pre-service teachers were in charge of the classes assigned to them, they were aware that being a teacher requires them to put in practice activities and strategies to maintain a good rapport such as attention grabbers and songs and started to implement them. The narratives after the practicum revealed that the pre-service teachers recognized the tiring and challenging task of maintaining order and calm in the classroom. S7 expressed the lack of strategies to capture the students' attention. However, they recognized the need to present themselves as authority to the students, without losing charisma and the closeness with them.

> *When they ask me what kind of strategies I had used during the practice, I answered ironically, the one that is more viable to control forty boys, who go on screaming and forming the worldly hustle. Little devils running from one side to another, without stopping, with unlimited energy, and who do not cease their activity of being children.* (Student 7: Autobiographical narrative after the practicum)

Some pre-service teachers tried to capture the attention of their students using strategies such as songs, activities, or assigning roles, which would allow them to improve the quality of the environment and have control over student behavior. "To control disciplinary aspects I created a pass to go to the bathroom in order and with a turn, also taught a song to get their attention, reduce noise and increase concentration" (Student 5: Autobiographical narrative after the practicum)

The second belief called *the way to teach a foreign language* is related to teaching effectively the language. Two main beliefs were identified (see figure 5): The first one, inductively and meaningfully, appeared before and after the practicum, while the second one, communicatively and productively only after it.
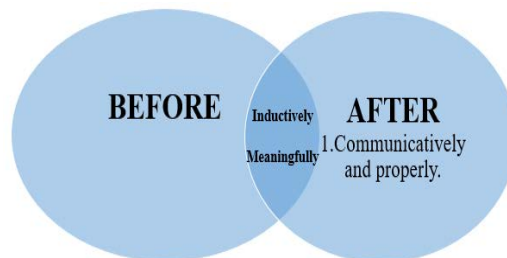
Note: Teaching beliefs before and after the teaching practicum

Figure 7: Teaching beliefs: The way we teach a foreign language

Regarding the belief about teaching the language inductively and meaningfully, some "traditional" experiences lived by the pre-service teachers as language learners evidenced they recognized that "traditional methodologies" contribute little to the learning of a foreign language, and that the best way to learn is when the activities are meaningful for students' lives, and current teaching trends are implemented such as flipped learning, mobile learning, content-based learning and so on. For example, the autobiographical narrative written by S9 before the practicum evidenced this belief:

> *When I was studying in my high school in 2006 I had bad experiences with the English language, all the didactics and methods used by my teachers were totally ancient and non-attractive it was boring and uninteresting because of traditionalism and the low level of my teachers. (Student 9: Autobiographical narrative before the practicum)*

This was also evidenced in the observation task No. 3 when they observed schoolteachers and they focused on practicing the language forms without any context:

> *This method was used in the classrooms when teachers started to present the topic and made a short explanation. Then after in practice they gave them sentences, they have to make three sentences, and, in production, they have to make [sic] the activity as a homework.*(Student 12: Observation task 3)

Additionally, the autobiographical narratives before the practicum, showed pre-service teachers believe that teaching must be inductive; that is, it is students themselves who discover the form and use of grammatical structures. This was evidenced in the S3 observation task No. 3: "I believe that the method that would best apply to the teaching of English is inductive because it compromises [challenges] the student better."

Also, this belief was evidenced after the practicum, when pre-service teachers tried to use topics as the point of departure of the classes, instead of grammar or vocabulary items. In that way, the activities may be more meaningful for students, because they used themes related to students' interests. That is the case of S4 who wrote:

> *I noticed that there is still a trace of grammatical time and it took me a while to change them, to avoid touching that subject in class is difficult for me, so I followed the advice of my tutor and try to make a class where nothing of present perfect or simple present was mentioned, but rather I used activities so that they interpreted in context the topic that we were going to study, so my beliefs were confirmed, I consider that if it is better to teach from a more contextualized, more natural and avoid so many confusions with rules and conditions.* (Student 4: Autobiographical narrative after the practicum).

The second belief found about teaching a language was evidenced only after the teaching practicum. This belief refers to teaching the language communicatively and productively, and it means that pre-service teachers promoted activities where their students interact and try to use the language in real contexts rather than only teaching language forms. It was evidenced in S4 autobiographical narrative: "In the same way I like to promote the use of L2 in the classroom by means of role-playing games or real situations because in this way my students have the opportunity to use the English language in a real context, allowing them to learn in a more didactic way". Even though it was evidenced in most pre-service teachers, some of them still believe that it is highly important students learn the structure of the language rather than to communicate, as S8 expressed: "I introduce them to the whole vocabulary, while the students repeat after me, I really enjoy their participation and I was impressed because they got the meaning and the pronunciation of the fruits".

This last belief shows the structural view of language pre-service teachers have, and how traditional methods to language teaching are settled in their system of beliefs, and even they know the importance of promoting communication and meaningful learning, the activities proposed in class still, evidenced they worried for having complete and control of the language form and structure.

Discussion

The findings reveal some general characteristics of language teaching and learning beliefs. First, pre-service teachers believe strongly in the functional view of language, and the need to promote meaningful activities in the language class. Indeed, pre-service teachers' beliefs about learning show a connection between the learning process and motivation, in the sense learning is more efficient and occurs when students have fun and enjoy the lessons. According to Borg, (2006) pre-service teachers' motivation to learn enabled them to overcome inadequacies in teaching; learning was facilitated by a positive classroom environment, this is the reason why most of the lessons planned intended to promote motivation among learners.

Regarding this, Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, and Perry (2002) (as cited in Gill & Hardin, 2015) state that "having fun is an important part of learning. Teachers ought to increase students' enjoyment and positive affect surrounding learning as these are not incidental "niceties", but key components in effortful cognitive processing and self-regulated learning" (p. 240). As analyzed, some of the activities proposed by pre-service teachers were created with the purpose of increasing motivation, making the learning process easier, and providing positive experiences. Conversely, the second feature displays there is still a tendency to believe that language teaching is centered on explaining and practicing the structures of the language. For Vera Rodríguez et al. (2018), this shows the structural vision that pre-service teachers have about language since teaching focuses on teaching grammar and vocabulary. Additionally, this belief shows pre-service are highly

exposed to methods where the main purpose is to use language accurately, thus they tend to replicate them as they consider this method is appropriate for learning.

Finally, pre-service teachers' beliefs evidence a humanistic view of language teaching (Arifi, 2017), having in mind, they not only worry about the cognitive development of their students, but they are also concerned about the individual and emotional characteristics of each student. In this sense, pre-service teachers may contribute to a more positive attitude towards learning and encourage students to develop learning strategies and develop their language competence.

The findings also display some beliefs can be only constructed thanks to the experiences and interaction with members of the school community, while others are the result of their previous experiences as learners. For example, elements of classroom management only become part of their system of beliefs when pre-service teachers must face discipline problems, manage the time, create routines, etc. One reason for this is, as learners they are not probably conscious of the importance of having appropriate classroom management for teaching until they face students' bad behaviors. They comprehend the importance of implementing strategies to control the class. Nevertheless, it does not mean pre-service teachers believe they are the authority in the classroom, who decide what to do and how to do it.

On the contrary, we can discuss that the beliefs set in previous experiences as learners tend to continue during the teaching practicum and shape the image of the type of teachers they want to be, especially those beliefs which come from positive learning experiences since they mark the way language teachers should teach and face situations in the classroom. Those experiences are the ones they want to replicate without taking into account the current theories about the learning process. In accordance with Johnson (2004) pre-service teachers' instructional decisions during a practicum are based on images of teachers, materials, activities and classroom organization generated by their own experiences as L2 learners. In the same line of thought, it can be said that pre-service teachers avoid specific instructional strategies on the basis of positive or negative experiences of these respective strategies as learners (Numrich, 1996).

Regarding this, Vera Rodríguez et al. (2018) affirm pre-service teachers take their experiences as learners as a resource for teaching, considering they have not got enough experience as teachers, and they are overwhelmed with all theories studied in their teaching training.

Nevertheless, when pre-service teachers are exposed to traditional methodologies and activities during their language learning process, they may believe those are appropriate for language teaching, since they are used by experienced teachers. In this sense, some beliefs are difficult to rebuild when the experiences show they are applied by teachers who think those methodologies and activities are suitable for teaching English in that context.

All in all, we can discuss that the changes in pre-service teachers' beliefs were characterized in general by the addition of new constructs, the reorganization of the existing structures to accommodate these, and the adoption of new or old beliefs due to the different situations and experiences in the context where they developed their teaching practicum. Cabaroglu and Roberts (2003) (as cited in Borg, 2006) called these changes "reordering: rearrangement of beliefs regarding their importance; re-labelling: renaming a construct reversal: adoption of opposite of previous belief." (p 54).

Conclusion

The present study shows language teaching and learning beliefs appear or may be confirmed and remodeled once experience as language learners and learners of teaching is gained. However, those beliefs which are constantly reinforced through their experiences as learners tend to last, appear in the teaching practice, and become part of their teacher's cognition. The problem arises when those beliefs are the result of experiences where unsuccessful teaching practices or traditional methodologies are implemented and become part of their cognition, because they tend to replicate them.

This confirms teacher advisors and teaching programs must encourage meaningful learning of teaching experiences to enrich pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices. In this sense, they ought to constantly reconsider and reflect on the methodologies and activities implemented in the language classes, and the model of teaching education implemented in the program.

The major limitation of this study is addressed to the autobiographies. The process of writing was demanding for some of the participants since they did not feel comfortable writing or they thought they were not good at it. As a result, they did not conclude their participation in the project.

Based on the aforementioned, further research should focus on two aspects; on one hand, to analyze the pre-service teachers' experiences and learning of teaching gained in learning communities; on the other hand, promote in those communities, reflective activities that contribute to their teacher's cognition. It may be interesting to use ICTs and virtual learning communities, having in mind pre-service teachers' have a great variety of alternatives to reflect and express their experiences, thoughts and beliefs.

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Appendix 1

Observation tasks: Beliefs about learning and teaching

Beliefs about Learning	Beliefs about Teaching
BEFORE 1. How do you think a foreign language should be learnt? 2. What kind of learning strategies have you experienced in your learning process? Which ones? Would you promote them during your teacher practicum? 3. What roles are students and teachers expected to assume in the learning process?	**BEFORE** 1. How do you think a foreign language should be taught? 2. What roles are foreign language teachers expected to assume in the EFL (English Foreign language) classroom? 3. What kind of teaching methods/approaches/strategies have you experienced in your learning process? Which ones? Explain them. Would you promote them during your teacher practicum? 4. What resources have your teachers used? Which ones? How did the teacher use them? Were they effective or not? Why? 5. Based on your beliefs what are the qualities of a "good" foreign language teacher?
DURING Answer the following questions. Describe in detail what you observe (notes) and write a deep reflection. Do not describe the class again. 1. Which activities promote the learning of the foreign language in the classroom? How? 2. How is the foreign language learning evidenced during the lesson? 3. What kind of learning strategies were implemented during the lesson? 4. What were the roles of the students and teacher during the learning process?	**DURING** Answer the following questions. Describe in detail what you observe (notes) and write a deep reflection. Do not describe the class again. 1. Which activities were developed to teach a foreign language in the classroom? 2. What was the role of the teacher during the lesson? 3. What kind of methods/approaches/strategies were implemented during the lesson? Mention and differentiate 4. What resources were used by the teacher? 5. What are the qualities of the teacher you observed?
AFTER Before you respond to the following questions, go back to the "Before" section and check your answers to make contrast. 1. Were your beliefs about the way a foreign language should be learnt confirm or alter? Why? 2. Were your strategies and the ones observed during the lesson similar, did they differ? How? 3. Were any of your beliefs about the roles of students and teachers during the learning process	**AFTER** Before you respond to the following questions, go back to the "Before" section and check your answers to make contrast. 1. Were your beliefs about the way a foreign language should be taught confirmed or altered? Why? 2. Were any of your beliefs about the role of the teacher during the learning process confirmed or altered? 3. Do you agree with the way the methods/approaches/strategies were implemented by the teacher? Why? 4. Were the methods/approaches/strategies mentioned in the "Before" stage and the ones observed during the lesson similar? Did they differ? How? 5. Would you like to use the same resources in your teaching practicum? Would you use some others? Which ones? 6. What qualities you would like to have to be what you consider a "good" teacher?

Appendix 2

Guidelines for Autobiographical Narrative before the Practicum

You are almost ready to start your professional practice. There are many events and people that you have lived and known to become the preservice teacher you are now. We would like to know the experiences, people and situations that have had impact on you. Write your autobiography as it was a story .

Guidelines

- Write your story in English or Spanish
- Your autobiographical narrative should not only be descriptive. It must show a good level of reflection towards the different situations you are describing.
- Be sure all the required aspects below are fully covered, you do not need to write them in order.
- length is not a problem, feel free to write as much as you want, but be sure you express all your feelings and thoughts about your experience.

Information to include in your autobiographical narrative

1. Give a title to your story.
2. Describe the most remarkable teachers and professors you have had (school/university): characteristics, the way they influenced you (positively or negatively), what you learnt from them, What you would imitate or not from them.
3. Describe meaningful language learning situations or activities you experienced (positive or negative). Write how you felt and what you think of them. Would you repeat them? why? if they were negative, how would you make them better?
4. Think of the way you have learnt English. What resources have teachers used? How have you learnt vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and the language skills?
5. Do you think the teacher used an appropriate methodology? why? why not? Would you use it?
6. When did you decide to become a language teacher? why? Write if someone influenced you, how did you make the decision? was it a right decision?
7. Write what you think about teaching a language, what approaches/methods/strategies you would like to use, what changes you think you can do in the language teaching profession.
8. What is the most rewarding aspect of teaching for you?
9. What were your perceptions of the teaching profession before you started your career?
10. Based on your school and university experiences, what changes have you noticed in the EFL (English as a foreign language) teaching profession?
11. Finish your story describing the qualities you would like to have to be what you consider a good teacher.

Guidelines for Autobiographical Narrative after the Practicum

You finished your first professional practice. Now, we would like to know if could do all you wanted and expected before your first teaching experience.

Before writing the last part of the story, read and reflect about the observations you did and the first part of your story you wrote before your professional practice

Along your story respond the following questions or statements

Think about the beliefs of English as a powerful language. Are they the same now? Explain.

- Describe if your beliefs about the advantages that English offers were confirmed or altered? Why?
- Explain if the attitudes you have (as a teacher) towards the language in the classroom are the same your previous teachers had or are they different? Why? Which ones?
- Describe the way you promote the use of the L2 in the classroom? Is it different from the way your previous teachers did it?
- Describe the way your students are learning the foreign language. Is it similar to the way you learnt it? Could you affirm that is the best way to learn? Are you promoting positive experiences for your students' learning process? Which ones?
- According to the way you are promoting learning, can you notice if your beliefs about the appropriate way of learning were altered or confirmed?
- Could you teach the language using the materials, resources and methodologies you considered appropriate to promote learning? If not, what obstacles impeded it? Are they the best way to teach a foreign language? Were they innovative? Does this way to teach confirm your initial belief about teaching?