Chapter 9
Beliefs on English Language Teaching Effectiveness in Moroccan Higher Education

Amina Ichebah

Abstract Recent research has shown the importance of teachers' beliefs and cognition in the ELT classroom. It is generally acknowledged that beliefs serve as teachers' personal agendas that guide and influence their classroom pedagogical practices. Given their powerful nature, beliefs have a great impact not only on what teachers do and the types of decisions they make but also on their perceptual knowledge and by extension on their professional growth. The purpose of the present study is twofold: (1) to investigate Moroccan EFL teachers' and students' beliefs about teaching effectiveness, and (2) to explore the degree of divergence between Moroccan EFL teachers' and students' perceptions. Twenty-two Moroccan EFL university teachers and 187 students from different universities in Morocco took part in the present study. All participants completed a 30 five-Likert-scale questionnaire covering several features of teaching effectiveness. The findings revealed a significant overlap between what the participants believe to be effective teaching and conceptions of teaching effectiveness discussed in the literature. The results also brought to light interesting areas of divergence between teachers' and students' beliefs. The chapter concludes with recommendations for research and teaching.

Keywords Teachers' beliefs · Students' beliefs · Teaching effectiveness

9.1 Introduction

Scholarly interest in teachers' beliefs emerged relatively late in education studies. Teacher cognition was established as an independent area of research only in the 1970s in parallel to the shift from behaviorist to psychological/cognitive perspectives on teaching and learning (Borg, 2009; Farrell & Bennis, 2013). It evolved from a narrow focus on teacher judgment and decision-making in the beginning to a more profound exploration of teacher beliefs and knowledge in the 1980s. It has subsequently broadened its scope and ambition to encompass "teacher cognition in the context of pre-service and in-service teacher education," which "contributed in

A. Ichebah (✉)
Faculty of Education, Mohammed V University in Rabat, Rabat, Morocco
e-mail: a.ichbah@um5s.net.ma

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2020

H. Belhiah et al. (eds.), *English Language Teaching in Moroccan Higher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-3805-6_9

a significant way to developing understandings of the process of teacher learning" (Kennedy, 1991, cited in Borg, 2009, p. 2). Since then, teacher beliefs or cognition has occupied a central position in the field of English language teaching and specifically in teacher education and training combined with new conceptualizations such as teaching effectiveness and the practitioner's knowledge base (Reagan & Osborn, 2002). Sources of teachers' experiences and knowledge have also attracted the attention of researchers in an attempt to understand the various belief systems that shape teaching and learning processes in the EFL classroom (Johnson, 2001).

Despite significant progress, and given the multidimensional nature of beliefs, research is still needed to help practitioners and teacher educators build more fine-grained understandings of beliefs about language learning and teaching and tailor existing ones to meet pedagogical and educational requirements. This study is, therefore, an attempt to explore the belief systems of EFL university teachers and students with regard to aspects of teaching effectiveness. The chapter begins with a brief account of teachers' and students' beliefs, followed by a brief review of teaching effectiveness and how it has been conceptualized in the literature. The methodology and results are then presented. A discussion of the results follows with special reference to participants' beliefs about the aspects of teaching effectiveness and the areas of convergence and divergence in their beliefs. The chapter concludes with a sketch of pedagogical and research implications.

9.2 Teachers' Beliefs: An Overview of Research

The past three decades have witnessed remarkable interest and developments in the area of teacher cognition (Bell, 2005; Borg, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2012; Brosh, 1996; Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Johnson, 2001, 2006; Li & Walsh, 2011; Macalister, 2012; Schulz, 1996). This body of research strongly suggests that beliefs are the most powerful hidden force shaping teachers' decision-making and classroom behavior. Borg (2012) defines beliefs as what "language teachers think, know and believe" (p. 11). He further specifies that "a belief is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behavior" (2001, p. 186). Teachers' decisions and practices are thus a reflection of the way they think and feel. Richards and Rodgers (2001) concur by asserting that "all classroom practices reflect teachers' principles and beliefs, and different belief systems among teachers can often explain why teachers conduct their classes in different ways" (p. 251). This particular conception of beliefs makes "emotion" a vital element in teachers' decisions and practices. It is not narrowly limited to the "ideational" (knowledge and thinking) but extends its focus to include "constructs such as attitudes, identities and emotions , in recognition of the fact that

these are all aspects of the unobservable dimension of teaching" (Borg, 2012, p. 11). Emotion, like cognition, constitutes an integral part of teachers' beliefs and should not be excluded as a fundamental dimension of teachers' professional lives (ibid., p. 12). What this highlights is the centrality of the subjective dimension of teaching, be it conceptual or emotive. It is worthy to note as well that beliefs are not simply "mental" entities. They inform and shape pedagogical practice.

The literature on teacher cognition provides ample evidence on the tight relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom pedagogical practices (Andrews, 2003). Findings also highlight the significant impact of beliefs on teaching and learning outcomes (Borg, 2003; Richardson, 1996) and on teachers' change process and professional development (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). The relationship between belief and practice can also be characterized by tension. Research shows that teachers can be unaware of the belief systems underlying their thoughts and behaviors (Farrell, 2007). Teachers' beliefs may equally sharply diverge from their actual classroom practices. This may happen not necessarily because of lack of awareness or unethical behavior but may occur owing to "the specific contexts in which [teachers] work" which represents "a complex and dynamic system in which physical, temporal, cognitive, social and cultural factors interact to provide affordances for, or constraints on, the practical application of beliefs about teaching and learning, which in turn influence what teachers believe and know" (Bernard & Burns, 2012, p. 3). Belief and action are not mechanically related. They are mediated by contextual and environmental conditions.

Beliefs about teaching are actively constructed. They emerge from experience and in interaction with knowledge and context. Entwistle and Walker (2002), in a review of relevant research, conclude that "conceptions of teaching […] are built up from knowledge, experience and associated feelings, often over substantial periods of time" (p. 36). An effective study of teachers' beliefs then calls for mediation between teachers' background (knowledge, experience, and beliefs) and the environment where they continuously act and interact (Johnson, 2006). Experience, training, and professional development, awareness about their roles, interaction with the surrounding environment and professionals' "imposition of authority" have a major influence on teachers' "beliefs and knowledge" (Bernard & Burns, 2012, pp. 2–3). Because teaching and learning are constructed actively in context, "unpeeling the complexities of the interaction of cognition and classroom action requires deep engagement with the conditions operating in the environment" (ibid., p. 3). That beliefs are deeply embedded in the context of learning and teaching relevantly foregrounds the constructivist and sociocultural perspectives that underlie the construct of "beliefs." Borg (2011) affirms that "it is now accepted in LTE that how and what teachers learn is shaped in no small way by their prior experience, knowledge and beliefs" (p. 218). It follows then that teachers' beliefs are actively constructed in relation to context and professional practice. Metacognition regarding beliefs becomes paramount for professional development. Teacher growth and learning are tied to the process of reflecting on the content and adequacy of beliefs: "conceptual change only begins to take place if the existing conception is felt to be inadequate or incomplete" (Entwistle & Walker, 2002, p. 36). But this can happen only when practit ioners

are conscious of their beliefs. What motivates conceptual change, I would argue, is the result of awareness of the power of beliefs, reflection on one's practice and contextual constraints and environment, and a commitment to effectiveness and professional growth. This makes it clear that metacognition is key to teacher learning, effective practice, and professional development.

The study of teachers' beliefs, however, remains incomplete if students' perceptions about teaching (and learning) are not adequately considered in conjunction. Several studies have emphasized this convergence/divergence dichotomy. Berry (1997) and McCargar (1993) report a clear mismatch between teachers' knowledge and assumptions about language or language learning issues and students' perceptions and expectations. Kern (1995) has examined teachers' and students' beliefs about language learning. The study, however, revealed inconsistent findings documenting areas of convergence and divergence as revealed by the two levels of analysis that were incorporated. Schultz (1996) specifically studied US foreign language student and teacher beliefs about focus on form instruction in language learning. The findings suggest that the students somehow favored focus on form instruction while teachers exhibited preference for a communicative approach. Schultz (2001) replicated the same study in Colombia and, interestingly, reached the same results. Brown (2009) showed that "the teachers' and students' perceptions of ideal teaching practices (…) demonstrated disparate beliefs, for which the norm was difference and the exception was consensus" (p. 54). Teachers and students, strikingly, held almost opposing perceptions concerning grammar teaching, error correction, and communicative teaching.

Learning and teaching are co-constructed processes where various and sometimes contradictory expectations and assumptions interact. Savignon and Wang (2003) contend that "classroom realities that contradict learner expectations about learning may disappoint them and thus interfere with the attainment of desired learning outcomes" (p. 226). Students also contribute greatly to the realization of teaching acts; what they "think, believe and know" about instructional processes does have an impact on engagement and outcomes. Although students' beliefs about teaching and learning may not be as sophisticated as the perspectives of professionals, the dissonance, however, that may exist between what teachers and learners believe as effective may lead to "lack of student confidence in and dissatisfaction with the language class" (Horwitz, 1990, p. 25). More rigorous research is still needed in this area to satisfactorily explore how this dissonance may negatively affect students' achievement and to suggest potential procedures for developing adequate beliefs about classroom-related issues. Student training and consciousness-raising can be appropriate tools to bring about belief alignment and should be incorporated as an integral part of pedagogy and reflective practice (Brown, 2009). Such a focus is equally essential for teaching effectiveness, to which I now turn.

9.3 Teaching Effectiveness

Teaching effectiveness is a difficult concept to define and measure (Tuckman, 1995). Effectiveness is conceived differently according to various theorizations of teaching and learning as illustrated historically by the "pendulum swings" of different teaching philosophies and methodologies. Additionally, effective teaching is hard to grasp simply because of the complex and multidimensional nature of teaching, which is affected by a wide array of factors. Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) point out that "there is considerable debate as to whether we should judge teacher effectiveness based on teacher inputs (e.g., qualifications), the teaching process (e.g., instructional practices), the product of teaching (e.g., effects on student learning), or a composite of these elements" (p. 340). Linking teaching effectiveness to students' learning outcomes is another problematic issue. Evaluation systems affect what counts as effective teaching. Most of the time, teachers behave in the classroom according to assessment standards that they have to abide by and not necessarily according to their personal beliefs and convictions. Effectiveness, in this case, is judged in relation to meeting those standards (Tuckman, 1995). In addition, quite apart from pedagogy, second language acquisition research has made it sufficiently clear that motivation, attitude, aptitude, and individual differences affect second language learning. Social variables also shape learning. School achievement is determined by a variety of home, social, and developmental factors that go beyond pedagogy (Travers, 1981). Teaching effectiveness then occupies one node in a complex system that comprises factors related to: teaching and the teacher, learning and the learner, instructional materials and activities, assessment techniques, and the context and environment where these factors interact and overlap. There is agreement that teaching effectiveness should encompass a broad range of attributes. This view finds an expression in the practitioner's "knowledge base" as the underlying determinant of teaching effectiveness. What constitutes this knowledge base of the language teacher has been a focal point of interest for many researchers.

Research reveals particularly interesting perspectives on what constitutes the basis for effective teaching. The primary focus of most researchers has been on general pedagogical, content and contextual knowledge. Knowledge about learners, teaching and learning theories, principles and techniques of classroom management, assessment procedures, curriculum (materials and programs) and educational philosophies, contexts, and purposes form the main components of the teacher knowledge base (Grossman & Richert, 1988; Shulman, 1987). Richards (1998) identified similar components but added two other elements that essentially shape all other aspects namely pedagogical reasoning and decision-making skills. Reagan and Osborn (2002), though they consider the components cited above as ideal and somewhat simplistic, agree on the importance of these components and consider decision-making capacity as the real-world task of the teacher. They highlight the part of the teacher as a decision-maker by pinpointing the variety of contexts and issues s/he responds to while performing his/her role as a teacher (p. 21). They

further state that what underlies this “reflective, rational, and conscious decision-making” process is the teacher’s “ability to justify his or her decisions and actions in the classroom” (ibid.). Awareness here is concretely one of the main components of good teaching. Being able to justify one’s decisions and actions necessitates a considerable degree of general pedagogical knowledge and rational thought, especially that “the act of teaching is a situated activity and it is much more difficult to have a set of objective criteria that can be applied across all contexts and cultures” (Tsui, 2005, p. 169). Yet, this technical view of teaching should not brush aside the art-craft dimension of language teaching which, besides the theory-philosophy and science-research dimensions (Zahoric, 1986), represents an essential component of professional growth. Personality is another variable that may prove to be as vital as academic qualifications and professional training. For Penner (1992, p. 45), “one who teaches effectively teaches not only his subject but himself. Personality is that part of the teacher’s self which he projects into every classroom activity, thereby affecting and conditioning every learning situation” (in Brosh, 1996, p. 127).

Other conceptualizations of the knowledge base of the language teacher cast light on several practical dimensions of teaching effectiveness. The literature suggests that these dimensions have an immediate influence on teaching. As König et al. (2011) state, the practitioner’s knowledge base includes pedagogical competence, classroom management, adaptability, and assessment. They conclude that teachers are effective if they have “acquired general pedagogical knowledge allowing them to prepare, structure, and evaluate lessons (‘structure’), to motivate and support students as well as manage the classroom (‘motivation/classroom management’), to deal with heterogeneous learning groups in the classroom (‘adaptivity’), and to diagnose and assess student achievement (‘assessment’)” (p. 192). Relatedly, Brosh (1996) views teaching effectiveness as the outcome of several factors related to the communication and interaction processes in the classroom. These relate to teacher–student interaction styles, teaching methods, planning and organization, interest and attention in the class, and importance of teacher’s personality. Effectiveness is also attributed to the ability to create a positive classroom environment, which is “conducive for student learning and motivation” (Fraser, Aldridge, & Soerjaningsih, 2010, p. 21). Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) propose a conceptually similar framework to teaching effectiveness including instructional delivery, student assessment, learning environment, and the teacher’s personal qualities. Teaching effectiveness is thus a multidimensional construct involving various forms of knowledge, personal attributes, and practical capabilities. The aspects of teaching effectiveness comprised in this study build on these conceptions and theoretically emphasize the beliefs underlying this system. Students’ assessment was initially included as part of this framework but was not considered because of limited space.

9.4 Methodology

The study investigates and compares Moroccan EFL university teachers' and students' beliefs about different aspects of language teaching which was informed by research findings about what characterizes effective teaching. Two main objectives were identified as the main focus of the study. The first relates to a general exploration of teachers' and students' beliefs about teaching effectiveness; the second looks into areas of divergence between teachers' and students' beliefs. Two research questions were addressed in this regard:

(1) what are Moroccan EFL university teachers' and learners' beliefs about teaching effectiveness?
(2) to what extent do Moroccan EFL university teachers' beliefs diverge from their learners' beliefs about teaching effectiveness?

The study followed an exploratory research design. To tap into participants' perceptions about different aspects of teaching, the questionnaire was considered an appropriate instrument for data collection. Though some researchers express concern about the validity and reliability of questionnaires, Mackey and Gass (2005) state that the latter "allow researchers to gather information that learners are able to report about themselves, such as their beliefs and motivations about learning or their reactions to learning and classroom instruction and activities—information that is typically not available from production data alone" (pp. 92–93). The questionnaire was constructed with reference to principles of questionnaire design described by Dornyei (2007). It consists of items that were generated based on teaching effectiveness research as well as on instruments employed by researchers investigating the same area namely Brown (2009) and Bell (2005). The questionnaire includes 30 five-Likert-scale items, ranging from strongly agree on one end to strongly disagree on the other with a "neutral" option in the middle. The use of closed items was motivated by the fact that "closed-item questions typically involve a greater uniformity of measurement and therefore greater reliability" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 93). They also yield data that can be reliably quantified and analyzed. Primarily the questionnaire items focused on teachers' knowledge about general pedagogical practices, about learners, and about their own roles as language teachers (see appendix for more details about the content of the questionnaire).

The participants of the study consisted of teachers and students. Twenty-two Moroccan EFL university teachers from different universities in Morocco completed the questionnaire. In terms of gender distribution, 45.5% are female and 54.5% are male. They were all above 30, and their teaching experience ranges from 7 to 20 years (or above). As for professional development, a number of teachers stated that they frequently (40.9) or occasionally (54.5) take part in professional development activities. Table 9.1 presents a summary of teachers' background information in terms of items, categories, and percentages.

Table 9.1 Teachers background information

Item	Category	Percentages
Age	30–39	18.2
	40–49	63.6
	50–59	18.2
	60+	1.2
Gender	Female	45.5
	Male	54.5
Teaching experience	1–6	–
	7–13	54.6
	14–19	36.3
	20+	9.1
Professional development	Frequency	40.9
Activities: frequency of attendance	Occasionally	54.5
	Rarely	4.6
	Never	–

As for students, they were 187 comprising 57.5% females and 42.5% males. Their age ranges between 22 and 26; they were all third year university students majoring in English (Table 9.2).

The participants were administered the questionnaires via the Google email system. Teachers were personally requested to take part in the study after explaining to them the rationale and objectives motivating this piece of research. They were also requested to share the link with their students who showed consent; this facilitated the process of data collection from students and increased response rates. The questionnaire incorporated an introductory section, which explains the purpose and context of the study. In order to ensure complete anonymity, respondents were not asked to provide any personal information (e.g., name, email address, phone) that would reveal their identity. Participation was voluntary and no informant was coerced to fill out the questionnaire.

Table 9.2 Students background information

Item	Category	Percentages
Age	20–24	78.3
	25–29	13.3
	30–34	8.4
	35+	–
Gender	Female	57.7
	Male	42.5

9.5 Data Analysis and Discussion

The aim of this study is to identify teachers' and students' beliefs about the aspects of teaching effectiveness as described in the literature. What follows is a presentation of the results, which were based on descriptive statistical analysis. The latter includes the percentages and mean scores drawn from the analysis conducted on teachers' and students' responses to both questionnaires.

As a first approximation, the results indicate that teachers' and students' beliefs about effective teaching tend to conform to a more communicative student-centered model. This resonates with previous research, which views teaching effectiveness as the outcome of several factors related to the communication process in the classroom (Brosh, 1996). Both teachers and students believe that effective teaching occurs when grammar and vocabulary are taught in context within a meaning and form-focused framework, when learning strategies are highlighted and learner needs accommodated. Teachers and students also believe that effective teaching occurs when there is substantial exposure to the target language through interactive tasks, when pair/group work is employed, when teachers use the target culture, technology, self/peer-assessment, and humor to facilitate and enhance learning. There also seems to be a consensus that the teachers' maintenance of order and discipline in the classroom and good teacher–student rapport are vital to effective teaching. Overall, both teachers and students believe that the majority of the aspects included in the questionnaire represent effective teaching practices. The table in the *appendix* features participants' overall belief systems about teaching effectiveness.

The *first research question* explored teachers' and students' beliefs about different aspects of teaching effectiveness. The answer to this question, as indicated by the results presented in the appendix, shows that the way teachers and students think about classroom instruction and interaction is borne out by the literature (Brosh, 1996; Fraser, Aldridge, & Soerjaningsih, 2010; Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). It seems very likely that teachers hold effective beliefs and are aware about effective teaching practices. This suggests that these teachers' pedagogical practices are theoretically informed and may have been acquired as part of training, professional development, and/or reflection. Another issue that emerges from the results is the extent to which beliefs match actual classroom practice. While it may be true that teachers are aware of the dissonance that exists between their beliefs and practice due to impositions of various kinds (Tuckman, 1995), further research is critically needed to explore the degree of harmony/dissonance between teachers' beliefs and practices.

The convergence found in both teachers' and students' beliefs about the previously mentioned aspects is significant. However, in their response to the items targeting *error correction, mother tongue use, teachers' authority and involvement in students' personal life, lecturing, and exam-oriented teaching*, teachers and students hold divergent perceptions. As stated in the theoretical part, the dissonance between teachers and students' beliefs may "disappoint" learners and may lead to unsatisfactory learning outcomes (Savignon & Wang, 2003). The diagram below highlights these differences in terms of mean scores (Fig. 9.1).

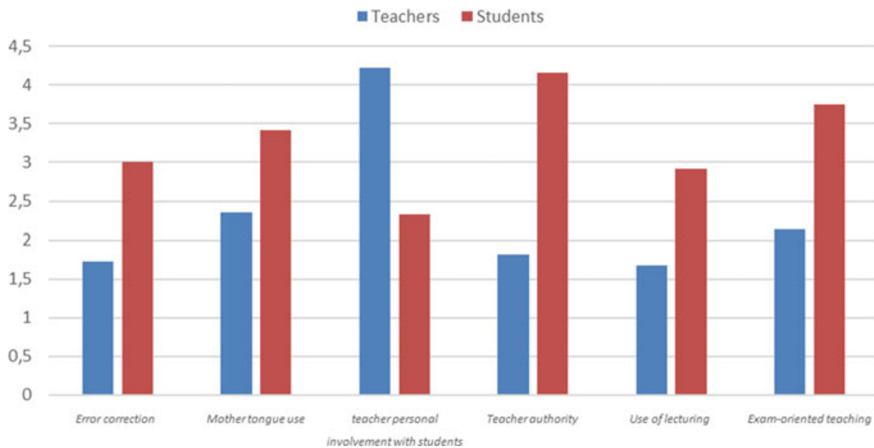

Fig. 9.1 Areas of divergence in teachers' and students' beliefs

The following section will present and discuss these items, which answer *the second research question on areas of divergence* in participants' beliefs.

Both teachers and students favor *grammar instruction and error correction*. This finding accords with previous research especially regarding experienced teachers' perceptions (Borg, 2003). The majority of teachers, as shown by their responses on the items related to grammar instruction, follow an inductive approach. This is manifested in their use of real-world context for illustration before presenting and explaining rules and structures and using implicit feedback. Also, teachers strongly agree on the use of exercises to practice new grammatical structures. This seems to contradict their stated endorsement of the communicative approach and implicit grammar instruction. This contradiction can be appreciated if teachers follow an integrative approach to grammar teaching that combines both explicit and implicit instruction.

As for students' beliefs about grammar teaching, the majority seem to share similar beliefs as those revealed by teachers with regard to the type of instruction and implicit error correction. However, an interesting number of students (see item 1 in Appendix table) hold conflicting beliefs about error correction compared to teachers. While the majority strongly agree on implicit correction (73.9%), 46.7% favor explicit error correction—a practice that teachers do not deem effective. This supports the findings obtained by Schulz (1996, 2001) who found that students, as in the present study, favored focus on form instruction while their teachers believed in the effectiveness of a more communicative approach. This highlights the importance of studying learner differences and their preferred learning styles. How teachers respond to errors is also crucial as it may influence students' motivation, engagement, and achievement. Other things being equal, Berry (1997), McCargar (1993), and Bell

(2005) similarly reported divergence in students' and teachers' beliefs about issues related to language teaching and learning. Clearly, attitudes and perceptions vary according to the range of teaching and learning contexts and backgrounds. Yet, as Borg (2003) concludes, there is almost broad consensus among students in favor of "formal instruction and regular, explicit correction, (…) compared to teachers' less favorable attitudes towards these aspects of language teaching" (p. 105). This remains unsettled especially when considering how and when teachers give feedback.

Use of the mother tongue was included as an important aspect of teaching effectiveness. Both teachers and students are divided as to the effectiveness of using the mother tongue. In fact, overall, the findings suggest that teachers' dominant position, as opposed to students, is one of rejecting the use of the mother tongue as an indicator of effective teaching. This stance runs against increasing evidence that mother tongue use has a facilitative role in language acquisition (Canagarajah, 1999; McKay, 2003; Phillipson, 1992). It also contradicts recent findings, which show that learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds when employed for different pedagogical purposes, facilitate the learning process, (Ziegler et al. 2015) and "celebrate students' complex multilingual identities" (Seedhouse & Jenks, 2015, p. 221). This contradiction becomes more striking when seen in relation to teachers' responses to the item stating that the effective teacher "builds on students' background knowledge and experience when presenting new material (reading, vocabulary …)." Nearly all teachers agree on this item. Probably teachers draw a clear division between "mother tongue use" and "background knowledge and experience." That mother tongue use continues to be a divisive issue, despite major developments in SLA and ELT pedagogy, is indeed an interesting finding.

There are equally divergences with regard to *teacher authority and rapport*. While teachers believe that they need to share with students their personal concerns and help them overcome emerging problems (item 26), students do not express the same opinion. From a similar perspective, in their response to item 30, they strongly agree that the teacher should demonstrate authority by acting as the only decision-maker in the classroom as opposed to the majority of teachers who disagree with this item. Here, students' perceptions about the way the teacher should behave in the classroom are significant in that it contributes to the perpetuation of a conventional classroom culture which depicts the teacher as the sole source of authority. This is corroborated by students' disagreement with the item asking about teachers sharing with students their personal concerns and their agreement with the item stating that "the effective teacher establishes order and discipline in the classroom." Students appear to be more conservative and perceive the teacher purely through his or her academic role as the ultimate source and guarantor of order. Whether teachers' open attitude reflects a deep commitment to democratic and dialogic pedagogy requires further scrutiny.

In the same vein, students also believe that the effective teacher is the one who uses *lecturing* as the main teaching style. Jarvis (2006) states that "teaching has traditionally been associated with the idea that there is a truth proposition (knowledge) or an accepted theory that can be disseminated through the agency of the teacher"

(ibid., p. 28). Students, in our context, still believe in the teacher as the ultimate authority on knowledge who imparts truth and wisdom. This may undermine active learning given that lecturing tends to "cast the learner in an entirely passive role" (Griffin, 2006, p. 74) especially didactic lecturing, which involves no reciprocity or reflexive dialoguing. This also reveals that students may be insouciant to the potential drawbacks of lecturing (passive, rote learning, boredom, short attention span …) (ibid.) and to the importance of meaning co-construction through negotiated interaction and critical reflection. Curiously, their perceptions in a sense contradict their stated beliefs about classroom interaction, which revolve around the negotiation of meaning and active autonomous learning. One interpretation may be that students possibly favor an integration of both interactional and traditional styles of teaching or, as Griffin has it, "mixed-mode teaching and learning systems" (ibid., p. 75).

Concerning *exam-oriented teaching*, in their response to the item stating that "the effective teacher focuses primarily on themes/structures students will be tested on in final examinations" (item 29), the majority of teachers (68.2%) express disagreement and 22.7% hold a neutral position while only 9% agree. Students conversely agree with a percentage of 67.6%, favoring instruction that prepares them for final examinations. Instead of promoting a healthy pedagogy that aims at academic, social, psychological, and personal development, the whole enterprise is reduced to proficiency/product-oriented evaluation. There is overriding preoccupation with the end product while the process becomes merely a means to an end. The teachers' pedagogy conversely seems to be more focused on the process of learning and teaching rather than on examinations, though some of their practices (sharing with the students the materials they use in class; see item 16 in Appendix table) may encourage passive learning. This instrumentalist view of learning on the part of students may be largely a result of a high-stakes testing and educational culture. The broader culture equally places emphasis on grades and hence social and economic worth is assigned to high achievers. The challenge is to rebuild an educational culture where learning and education are valued as intrinsically good and transformative, where assessment becomes a means to that not an end in itself.

Based on the discussion above, a number of controversial points seem to follow. Classroom interaction is seen as a practical instrument to achieve specific learning goals more than a dialogic relationship to build a more humane educational environment. Similarly, the classroom is perceived as a formal setting for academic development and the teacher is cast as the transmitter of knowledge and guarantor of order and discipline. The mother tongue is believed to be an impediment to learning rather than a resource. Examinations for students assume a central position and determine the learning process. These points indicate a set of unresolved tensions related to the role of the teacher, classroom environment, and pedagogical practice, hence the value of investigating beliefs.

9.6 Implications for Research and Pedagogy

Although it has limitations (small scale: small sample, one single instrument, specific conception of teaching effectiveness), the study yielded interesting outcomes. The first major finding is the significant overlap between what the participants believe to be effective teaching and conceptions of teaching effectiveness discussed in the literature. It also revealed interesting areas of divergence between teachers' and students' beliefs. The overall results show the complexity of beliefs, which opens vast possibilities to explore the dynamics of English language teaching and learning. The findings thus point to the need to investigate more specifically how various conceptions of teaching effectiveness affect different features of teaching and learning using triangulated methodologies and multidisciplinary approaches.

In addition to suggesting venues for future research, this study also offers a number of pedagogical implications. First, it is necessary to understand the vitality of beliefs in shaping learning processes and outcomes and start questioning these systems in relation to students' beliefs and expectations. Second, professional development activities should target teachers' self-efficacy and the way they perceive their roles in the classroom. Teachers are recommended to consider the linguistic and cultural resources learners bring and reflect on how these resources can be used to facilitate learning. They should also explicitly explain their assessment approaches to students and highlight the importance of process over product (exams). Their pedagogical practices will of course reflect the way learners will understand examinations. Third, the areas of dissonance discussed above underscore the importance of raising students' awareness about learning/teaching-related issues. This was also emphasized by Horwitz (1988) and Brown (2009) and further stressed as crucial for attaining "desired learning outcomes" (Savignon & Wang, 2003). Finally, teachers need to negotiate with students their preferences for specific modes of content delivery in the classroom (lecturing, dialogic interaction …) in order to create a most auspicious environment for learning.

Appendix

Summary of Questionnaire Results

Items	Teachers						Students					
	SA	A	N	SD	D	Mean	SA	A	N	SD	D	Mean
1. Corrects students explicitly after they make a mistake in speaking	4.5	9.1	–	27.3	59.1	1.72	14.5	32.2	10.8	25.3	17.2	3.01
2. Uses the mother tongue in the classroom to facilitate understanding/learning	4.5	21.8	10	32	31.6	2.35	32.2	20.4	20	12	15.4	3.42
3. Teaches students to use various learning strategies (i.e., self-evaluation, repetition, imagery …)	77.3	22.7	–	–	–	4.77	–	65.6	34.4	–	–	3.65
4. Raises students' awareness of new vocabulary items, their meaning, and use	77.3	18.2	4.5	–	–	4.68	–	75.6	24.4	–	–	3.75
5. Considers students' learning styles when selecting and presenting course materials	72.7	18.2	9.1	–	–	4.63	31.7	47.2	21.1	–	–	4.10
6. Uses computer-based technologies (Internet, CD-ROM, videos, email) to teach English	50	45.5	4.5	–	–	4.45	48.9	36.7	14.4	–	–	4.34
7. Teaches grammar by giving examples of grammatical structures before explaining rules	40.9	36.4	9.1	13.6	–	4.18	30	46.7	14.4	8.9	–	3.67
8. Is responsible for students' learning outcomes/achievement	22.7	40.9	27.3	9.1	–	3.77	12.8	37.2	35.6	14.4	–	2.84
9. Uses group/pair work in class	68.2	31.8	–	–	–	4.68	40.5	42.8	16.7	–	–	4.31
10. Uses real-world context for illustration before presenting grammatical structures	59.1	36.4	4.5	–	–	4.54	35	45.6	19.4	–	–	4.15
11. Uses activities where students have to find out unknown information from classmates using English	18.2	68.2	13.6	–	–	4.04	34.4	47.8	–	17.8	–	3.98
12. Exposes learners to English as much as possible	68.2	31.8	–	–	–	4.68	55	35	10			4.45
13. Raises students' awareness to how learning takes place	50	40.9	4.5	4.5	–	4.36	36.7	44.4	18.9	–	–	4.17
14. Uses humor to create a pleasant learning environment	59.1	40.9	–	–	–	4.59	60.6	30	9.4	–	–	4.51

(continued)

(continued)

Items	Teachers						Students					
	SA	A	N	SD	D	Mean	SA	A	N	SD	D	Mean
15. Establishes order and discipline in the classroom	50	50	–	–	–	4.5	36.1	45	18.3	–	–	4.15
16. Shares with students the materials s/he uses in class (notes, lecture summaries, slides, handouts …)	50	36.4	9.1	4.5	–	4.31	45.1	38.9	15	–	–	4.26
17. Teaches the language primarily by having students complete interactive activities rather than grammar-focused exercises in the classroom	45.5	36.4	13.6	4.5	–	4.22	38.9	44.4	16.7	–	–	4.22
18. Creates opportunities for students to evaluate their own work and that of their classmates	59.1	36.4	4.5	–	–	4.54	38.9	51.1	10	–	–	4.28
19. Uses exercises to practice new grammatical structures	54.4	40.9	4.5	–	–	4.49	36.7	53.9	9.4	–	–	4.27
20. Allows learners to select their own topics for discussion	40.9	45.5	13.6	–	–	4.27	44.5	36.1	19.4	–	–	4.25
21. Builds on students' background knowledge and experience when presenting new material (reading vocabulary …)	81.8	18.2	–	–	–	4.81	36.1	43.3	20.6	–	–	4.15
22. Engages learners in activities that enhance interaction and negotiation	77.3	22.7	–	–	–	4.77	51.1	38.9	10	–	–	4.41
23. Teaches students to use strategies to improve their vocabulary learning (i.e., memory devices or creating a mental image of the word)	68.2	31.8	–	–	–	4.68	51.1	38.9	10	–	–	4.41
24. Encourages learners to express and discuss their needs and preferences for language learning	31.8	54.5	13.6	–	–	4.17	45.6	41.6	12.8	–	–	4.07
25. Corrects students indirectly when they make oral mistakes	40.9	50	4.5	4.5	–	4.27	39.4	37.8	13.9	8.9	–	4.07
26. Shares with the students their personal concerns and help them overcome emerging problems	40.9	40.9	18.2	–	–	4.22	12	12	8	33.9	34.1	2.33
27. Uses lecturing as the main teaching style	–	–	9.1	50	40.9	1.68	10	25.1	23.3	29.4	12.2	2.91

(continued)

(continued)

Items	Teachers						Students					
	SA	A	N	SD	D	Mean	SA	A	N	SD	D	Mean
28. Teaches the foreign language culture to ensure effective learning	22.7	68.2	9.1	–	–	4.13	26.6	45.6	27.8	–	–	3.98
29. Focuses primarily on themes/structures students will be tested on in final examinations	4.5	4.5	22.7	36.4	31.8	2.13	31.3	36.3	8.7	23.7	–	3.75
30. Demonstrates authority by acting as the only decision-maker in the classroom	4.5	–	13.6	36.4	45.5	1.81	37.7	40.6	21.7	–	–	4.16

SA Strongly agree, *A* Agree, *N* Neutral, *SD* Strongly disagree, *D* Disagree

References

Andrews, S. (2003). "Just like instant noodles": L2 teachers and their beliefs about grammar pedagogy. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 9*(4), 351–375.

Barnard, R., & Burns, A. (2012). *Researching language teacher cognition and practice: International case studies*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Bell, T. (2005). Behaviors and attitudes of effective foreign language teachers: Results of a questionnaire study. *Foreign Language Annals, 38,* 259–270.

Berry, R. (1997). Teachers' awareness of learners' knowledge: The case of metalinguistic terminology. *Language Awareness, 6,* 136–146.

Borg, S. (1998). Teachers' pedagogical systems and grammar teaching: A qualitative study. *TESOL Quarterly, 32*(1), 9–38.

Borg, M. (2001). Teachers' beliefs. *ELT Journal, 55*(2), 186–188.

Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in grammar teaching: A literature review. *Language Awareness, 12*(2), 96–108.

Borg, S. (2006). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice*. London: Continuum.

Borg, S. (2009). *Introducing language teacher cognition*. Retrieved September 22, 2017, from http://www.education.leeds.ac.uk/research/files/145.pdf.

Borg, S. (2011). Language teacher education. In J. Simpson (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 215–228). London: Routledge.

Borg, S. (2012). *Learner autonomy: English language teachers' beliefs and practice*. London: British Council.

Brosh, H. (1996). Perceived characteristics of the effective language teacher. *Foreign Language Annals, 29*(2), 125–136.

Brown, A. V. (2009). Students' and teachers' perceptions of effective foreign language teaching: A comparison of ideals. *The Modern Language Journal, 93*(1), 46–60.

Canagarajah, S. (1999). *Resisting English linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dornyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. New York: Oxford University.

Entwistle, N., & Walker, P. (2002). Strategic alertness and expanded awareness within sophisticated conceptions of teaching. In N. Hativa & P. Goodyear (Eds.), *Teacher thinking, beliefs and knowledge in higher education* (pp. 15–40). Springer.

Farrell, T. S. C. (2007). *Reflective language teaching: From research to practice*. London: Continuum.

Farrell, T. S. C., & Bennis, K. (2013). Reflecting on ESL teacher beliefs and classroom practices: A case study. *RELC Journal, 44*(2), 163–176.

Fraser, B. J., Aldridge, J. M., & Soerjaningsih, W. (2010). Instructor-student interpersonal interaction and student outcomes at the university level in Indonesia. *The Open Education Journal, 3,* 21–33.

Griffin, C. (2006). Didacticism: Lectures and lecturing. In P. Jarvis (Ed.), *The theory and practice of teaching* (pp. 73–89). London: Routledge.

Grossman, P., & Richert, R. (1988). Unacknowledged knowledge growth: A reexamination of the effects of teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 4,* 53–62.

Horwitz, E. K. (1988). The beliefs about language learning of beginning university foreign language students. *Modern Language Journal, 72,* 283–294.

Horwitz, E. K. (1990). Attending to the affective domain in the foreign language classroom. In S. Magnan (Ed.), *Shifting the instructional focus to the learner* (pp. 15–33). Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Jarvis, P. (2006). Teaching styles and teaching methods. In P. Jarvis (Ed.), *The theory and practice of teaching* (pp. 28–38). London: Routledge.

Johnson, K. (2001). Teacher learning in second language teacher education: A socially-situated perspective. *Brasileira de LingUistica Aplicada, 1*(l), 53–69.

Johnson, K. E. (2006). The sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly, 40,* 235–257.

Kern, R. (1995). Students and teachers' beliefs about language learning. *Foreign Language Annals, 28,* 71–92.

König, J., Blömeke, S., Paine, L., Schmidt, W. H., & Hsieh, F.-J. (2011). General pedagogical knowledge of future middle school teachers: On the complex ecology of teacher education in the United States, Germany, and Taiwan. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(2), 188–201.

Li, L., & Walsh, S. (2011). "Seeing is believing": Looking at EFL teachers' beliefs through classroom interaction. *Classroom Discourse, 2*(1), 39–57.

Macalister, J. (2012). Pre-service teacher cognition and vocabulary teaching. *RELC Journal, 43*(1), 99–111.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum.

McCargar, D. F. (1993). Teacher and student role expectations: Cross-cultural differences and implications. *Modern Language Journal, 77,* 192–207.

McKay, S. L. (2003). Toward an appropriate EIL methodology: Re-examining common ELT assumptions. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 13*(1), 1–22.

Pajares, M. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(3), 307–332.

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reagan, T. G., & Osborn, T. A. (2002). *The foreign language educator in society: Toward a critical pedagogy*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Richards, J. C. (1998). Teachers' beliefs and decision-making. In J. C. Richards (Ed.), *Beyond training* (pp. 65–86). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richardson, V. (1996). The role of attitudes and beliefs in learning to teach. In J. Sikula (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 102–119). New York: Macmillan.

Savignon, S. J., & Wang, C. (2003). Communicative language teaching in EFL contexts: Learner attitudes and perceptions. *IRAL, 41,* 223–249.

Schulz, R. A. (1996). Focus on form in the foreign language classroom: Students' and teachers' views on error correction and the role of grammar. *Foreign Language Annals, 29,* 343–364.

Schulz, R. A. (2001). Cultural differences in student and teacher perceptions concerning the role of grammar instruction and corrective feedback: USA-Colombia. *Modern Language Journal, 85,* 244–258.

Seedhouse, P., & Jenks, C. J. (2015). International perspectives on ELT classroom interaction: Introduction. In P. Seedhouse & C. J. Jenks (Eds.), *International perspectives on ELT classroom interaction* (pp. 1–9). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Shulman, L. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review, 57*(1), 1–23.

Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., & Grant, L. W. (2011). What makes good teachers good? A cross-case analysis of the connection between teacher effectiveness and student achievement. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(4), 339–355.

Travers, R. M. W. (1981). Criteria of good teaching. In J. Millman (Ed.), *Handbook of teacher evaluation* (pp. 14–22). London: Sage Publications.

Tsui, A. B. (2005). Expertise in teaching: Perspectives and issues. In K. Johnson (Ed.), *Expertise in second language learning and teaching* (pp. 167–189). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tuckman, B. W. (1995). Assessing effective teaching. *Peabody Journal of Education, 70*(2), 127–138.

Zahoric, J. A. (1986). Acquiring teaching skills. *Journal of Teacher Education,* (March-April), 21–25.

Ziegler, G., Durus, N., Sert, O., & Family, N. (2015). Analysing ELT in the European Arena: Multilingual practices. In C. J. Jenks and P. Seedhouse (Eds.), *International perspectives on ELT classroom Interaction* (pp. 188–207). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Amina Ichebah holds a doctorate in education studies. She teaches at the Faculty of Education at Mohammed V University in Rabat. Her research interests include ELT methodology, teacher education, curriculum design, program evaluation, and critical pedagogy.