

外语课堂互动中的英语教师信念和
课堂行为关系研究 (英文版)

A STUDY ON ENGLISH TEACHERS'
BELIEFS AND THEIR PRACTICES DURING
FOREIGN LANGUAGE
CLASSROOM INTERACTION

王小慧 ◎著



四川大学出版社

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

外语课堂互动中的英语教师信念和课堂行为关系研究:
英文版 / 王小慧著. —成都:四川大学出版社,
2016. 5

ISBN 978-7-5614-9459-2

I. ①外… II. ①王… III. ①英语—教学研究—英文
IV. ①H319.3

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2016) 第 093815 号

书名 外语课堂互动中的英语教师信念和课堂行为关系研究(英文版)

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出 版	四川大学出版社
地 址	成都市一环路南一段 24 号 (610065)
发 行	四川大学出版社
书 号	ISBN 978-7-5614-9459-2
印 刷	四川永先数码印刷有限公司
成品尺寸	148 mm×210 mm
印 张	8.125
字 数	280 千字
版 次	2016 年 5 月第 1 版
印 次	2016 年 5 月第 1 次印刷
定 价	28.00 元

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前 言

在高考英语改革和大学英语教学模式变革的大背景下，外语教师的专业发展面临新的挑战，他们的教学模式需要及时更新和调整。因为英语教学改革的核心是教学模式的改变，而教学模式的改变不仅仅是教学方法和教学手段的转变，而是教学理念的转变。英语教学不能单纯被看作教师掌握语言学和元语言学知识，使用教学方法，掌握教学理论和原则，而是应以学生为中心，既传授语言知识和技能，更注重培养语言实际运用能力和自主学习能力，并且倡导终身学习的理念。转变教学理念就是要重新定位教师角色，转变固有教学思想，即转变教学信念。由此可见，对作为教师一切教学行为之指导的教学信念的研究十分必要。外语教师的信念研究在外语教师，特别是新手外语教师的专业发展中起着关键的作用，它能使我们得到科学而符合实际的教学理念，从来自于教科书、教学研究专家的脱离实际教学情景的理论下摆脱出来。

在中国外语教学课堂互动中，70%的课堂话语活动都是“教师提问—指定学生回答—学生回答问题—教师提供一定的反馈”。可见，课堂提问是课堂互动的启发步，它是课堂互动中最为关键的一步，它不仅是组织课堂教学的工具，而且也为学生提供了参与课堂互动和语言实践的机会，对外语课堂教学的效果具有重要的影响。同样，语言教师的课堂反馈在课堂教学中也起着

重要的作用，它既是学生有效输入的一部分，又能促进学生目标语的输出。研究表明，只提供肯定反馈会导致一些错误的语言形式长时间存在于中介语种，导致固化，致使学习者到达某一阶段后无法进一步提高。而修正性反馈能帮助学习者进行认知对比、调整假设，加速语言规则和知识的吸收。它不仅令学习者意识到他们自身的二语水平和目标语之间存在着差距，并且提供机会让他们修正自己的语言假设，从而提高自身的语言水平。可见，在外语教学中，课堂提问和课堂反馈是课堂互动中最为关键的步骤。它不仅是组织课堂教学的工具，而且也为学生提供了参与课堂互动和语言实践的机会，对外语课堂教学的效果具有重要的影响。要改善课堂互动中的教师的教学行为，我们首先需要帮助他们以口头和行动的方式使他们所持的信念明示化。然而，纵观国内的外语教师教学信念研究，不难发现我国外语教师教学信念的研究起步相当迟，学者们大多运用文献法对外语教师信念的概念及内涵进行概括总结，研究对象也主要集中于大学英语教师，缺乏对基础教育的中小学，特别是小学英语教师教学信念的研究。仅有的一些实证研究也多多是运用问卷调查法研究宏观信念，几乎很难找到针对小学英语课堂某一教学环节的教师教学信念的个案研究，对英语教师教学信念和教学关系研究不足，对导致这种关系的原因也没有剖析。

基于上述原因，本书以中学和大学英语教师及英语学习者为研究对象，聚焦于中学和大学英语教师的课堂互动环节，通过两项个案研究，分别展示了：（1）中学英语教师在课堂互动中关于高层次问题提问的信念及具体课堂教学行为，并发现了影响中学英语教师进行高层次问题提问的课堂情境因素；（2）大学英语教师口语修正性反馈信念和行为及二者间的关系。希望本书能为今后我国中学和大学英语课堂互动方面的教学实践提供参考和借鉴，为我国的英语教学研究提供理论依据，以优化我国中学和

大学英语教师的课堂提问、课堂反馈，完善英语教师的教学信念，提高新手外语教师培训和在职外语教师进修水平，促进英语教师的专业发展，从而使广大英语教师在当前高考英语改革和大学英语教学模式变革的背景下能够实行符合实际的创新性课程计划，提高课堂教学效果，高效完成教学目标和任务，使英语学习者加快目标语的习得。

本书分为八章。第一章为导论，阐述了本研究的背景、目的和意义。第二章为理论框架，介绍了认知主义理论、人本主义理论、社会建构理论和教师教学的隐形理论。第三章对教师信念进行了界定，指出外语教师信念的作用并综述国内外外语教师信念研究状况。第四章介绍了本研究的总体设计。第五章和第六章分别记录了本研究的两项个案。个案一探讨了中学英语教师对课堂高层次问题的提问信念和课堂教学行为间的关系，分析了影响中学英语教师进行课堂高层次问题提问的因素；个案二探讨了大学英语教学中教师口头修正性反馈信念和课堂行为间的关系，分析了大学英语教师信念和教学行为相冲突的具体原因。第七章就两项个案研究得到的研究结果进行了讨论，得出外语教师在课堂互动中的教学信念和行为间的一致或冲突的关系，并分析其原因。第八章为结论，总结了本研究的主要发现及其对外语教学理论和实践上的意义及启示，并指出本课题进一步的研究方向。

在本书的撰写过程中，作者搜集了大量的相关参考文献，综合分析了国内外学者对外语教师教学信念的相关研究成果。并对其中一些观点进行了借鉴和引用；西北师范大学武和平教授对本书中的研究设计给予了真诚的指导；还得到了陇东学院周进年老师的鼎力相助；特别值得一提的是四川大学出版社同仁的大力支持，在此一并表示衷心的感谢。由于时间仓促，加上作者水平有限，书中难免有一些错误和不妥处，在此恳请读者和业内专家、学者和同行给予批评指正，以便今后对本书作修订和完善。

本书由“陇东学院著作基金项目”和“甘肃省高等学校科研项目（2013A-114）”“甘肃省高等学校科研项目（2003A-115）”资助出版，特致谢忱！

王小慧

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Abbreviations

CFE	Corrective Feedback Episode
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as Foreign Language
ELLS	English Language Learners
ELT	English Language Teaching
EPS	English for Specific Purpose
ESL	English as Second Language
HOQ	Higher-Order Questioning
I-R-F	Initial-Response-Feedback
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LOQ	Lower-Order Questioning
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
NS	Native Speaker
S	Student
SLA	Second language Acquisition
SPSSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
T	Teacher
TL	Target Language

Chapter I

Introduction

Within both general education and second language teaching field since the 1960s, there has been a movement away from teacher-dominated modes of learning to more learner-centered approaches. In fact, under the influence of this movement, of unquestionable importance for language learning has been the development in recent years of learner-centered models of education. This can be seen from the fact that while books and articles concerned with learner are in abundance, there is still little research on what the teacher brings to the process of second language education. However, this “learner-centeredness” movement does not deny the importance of the teacher, nor imply that there is no role for the teacher in a learner-centered classroom, on the contrary, it leads to a reexamination of traditional teacher’s roles, for even the so-called innovative methods still require teachers to carry out particular roles in the classroom in order to facilitate the language learning processes and the method is designed to activate. Similarly, learner autonomy is a welcome goal for education, but it does not mean the absence of the teacher in the learning process. For language teachers, “there is a new, more evolved role which can be, if in some ways more challenging, also more exciting and fulfilling” (Arnold, 2000). There are also clear

signs today that the importance of the teachers' role in the language learning processes has not diminished. This can be seen in some of the publications on teacher' professional development (Richards and Freeman, 1996; Woods, 1996) .

At present, college English teaching and College Entrance English Examination is ongoing reform and innovation in China. In order to improve college English teaching quality, the education administration decided to reform from the aspects of curriculum setting, teaching models, test and evaluation. There is no doubt that most English teachers are facing new challenges, especially renewing teaching conception and mastering modern teaching approaches etc. Richards (2001) considered that the top-down reform cannot make sure the implemented curriculum reform produce virtual effect. Tsui (2003) and Zheng (2005) found that English teachers are the practitioners, decision-makers and reformers. The teacher must understand how and why change is needed. To what extent the teacher accepts change will influence how effective classroom teaching reform will be. In the end of 2005, when taking parting in the 3rd annual seminar of Asia English teacher association in Beijing, Freeman, an American famous expert in language teaching, pointed out: "Only when we put out our research focus on teachers, can we say, we will achieve a change on English teaching reform essentially." Therefore, it is important to research English teachers, who are the key figures in college English teaching (Wang Xiaoqun, Zheng Xinmin, 2005) .

Within the field of second language (L2) teaching there is always a gap in the research agenda for L2 teaching due to a lack of attention to the teachers' beliefs teaching (Borg, 1998a, 1998b; Burns, 1996; Farrell, 1999) . Given the fact that non-native EFL teachers face

different challenges than those teachers whose subject matter, English is their own first language, non-native EFL teachers whose social and cultural backgrounds in which they teach the target language are different, their beliefs that language teaching may not be similar to those of native speaker ESL teachers. It is, therefore, critical that this research gap should be filled.

It is necessary to uncover teachers' beliefs and practices regarding teaching to gain insights into why they favor a particular strategy. Such an understanding will contribute to the attempts to narrow the gap between theory and practice. For example, Borg and Burns (2008) conclude that "formal theory does not play a prominent and direct role in shaping teachers' explicit rationales for their work" (479). The reasons given for how and why conscious teaching was taught were based mostly on teachers' perceptions of their own experience as teachers and learners (Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers, 1997). This justifies the need to gain insights into the beliefs that underpin teachers' actual practices in the classroom. Those insights will help researchers to be more aware of the contextual situatedness of teaching and teacher learning. Without those insights, it is hard to devise appropriate professional development approaches that can contribute to the improvement of the classroom life.

It seems that although teachers of English hold beliefs about the value of communicative language teaching (CLT) but show reluctance to genuinely practice it, as their main focus is language skills and the text book. Consequently, the students are not able to use English communicatively, as they are expected to undertake and learn grammatical rules and to do grammatical exercises in the text books. The focus on mastering and rote learning of skills and applying them in

examinations have eventually eroded communicative competence of the students. Now the question is that how English should be taught, so it can result in maximum accuracy and confidence regarding FL/SL development. This calls for an understanding of the teachers' attitudes and beliefs, as they are the agents of implementation of various teaching approaches in language learning for improvement, as it is believed that reform and change cannot be successful without teachers' beliefs being oriented towards that.

Evidently, teachers are resistant to change and reinterpret the top-down change through the lens of their own knowledge and beliefs about the intended change, their students and their teaching. Comparing beliefs with knowledge, Nespor (1987) claims that while knowledge is conscious and often changes, beliefs may be unconsciously held, and are often tacit and resistant to change. According to Borg (2012), what teachers do is important, but if we want to understand what teachers do, if we want to promote change, we also need to look at their beliefs. In order to change teachers, they should be helped first by making their beliefs explicit in talk and action, then challenged in the light of theory (raise to consciousness the nature of personalized theories which inform their practice, Burns, 1992) and research (to address the research difficulty under the circumstance where teachers limit their feedback to a single type in a real classroom, Ellis, 2009) through critical reflection (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

As the classroom teaching largely unaffected by the development in theory and research, always hard to understand the full meaning of theory without experience and difficult to resolve the tensions between teaching in the best ways possible and teaching to cover the

curriculum content, so at this point the question of relationships between thought and action becomes crucial. In this regard Borg (2006) supports what Nespor (1987) stated that: teachers' beliefs play a major role in defining teaching tasks and organizing the knowledge and information relevant to those tasks. But why should this be so? Why wouldn't research-based knowledge or academic theory serve this purpose just as well? The answer suggested here is that the contexts and environments within which teachers work, and many of the problems they encounter, are ill-defined and deeply entangled, and that beliefs are peculiarly suited for making sense of such contexts.

Chaudron (1988) pointed that English Language teaching research was still staying at the behaviorism research paradigm of "process-product", that is the research theme mainly is about effective teaching practice, learning effect of active learning and interaction between teacher and students until the 1970s. Freeman (2002: 4) pointed that the reason why English language teaching research is backward to the mainstream education research is English language teaching only being considered as the ability of mastering linguistic and meta-linguistic knowledge, applying teaching approach and mastering teaching theory and principle. The key problem, teacher's teaching cognition is ignored.

The process of teaching comprises two major domains: a) teachers' thought process, b) teachers' actions and their observable effects (Clark & Peterson, 1986). English teachers' teaching is affected by many factors. The most direct factor is teachers' internal beliefs (Borg, 2003; Tsui, 2003; Woods, 1996). It is not the teaching method, but the teacher who makes teaching effect different, that is to say, it is teachers' belief that really decides teacher's

practice, because teacher's belief affect more on teacher's practice than teacher knowledge (Pajares, 1992).

Currently, English language instruction at the university level in China produces students who have studied English for a long time, yet have low proficiency. Regarding the importance of English learning in China, it is significant to study English teachers' beliefs in order to guide their language teaching. This will result in improvement of classroom teaching efficiency and will allow teachers to take full advantage of available resources. At the same time, studying different cases on teachers' beliefs, we can provide college English teachers with teaching forum for communication and reference, and make known that it is important for college teachers not to ignore the influence of their beliefs on teaching and the importance of reflection in their professional development. Then we can provide evidence for the professional development of college English teachers, teacher training, course book edition and curriculum reform. Altogether, here are four main reasons why this kind of undertaking is important:

1) Identifying the beliefs that teachers articulate in relation to their classroom work can complement observational studies by enabling research to go beyond description towards the understanding and explanation of teacher action.

2) Such beliefs have been seen by several researchers in the field of foreign language education as a source of experientially-based professional "know how" that may serve as a focus both for initial teacher education and for reflection in ongoing teacher development. (Flowerdew et al.1992; Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Freeman and Richards, 1996)

3) Any innovation in classroom practice, from the adoption of a