

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING IN VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS: BELIEFS AND PRACTICES



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Abstract: This article analyzed the relationship between the beliefs of teacher trainers and their educational practices in virtual learning environments. Methodologically, it is a case study. Two university teachers in Mozambique were interviewed, and their Moodle profiles were analyzed. The results revealed that not all teachers' practices in training align with their beliefs.

Keywords : Beliefs; Educational Practices; Virtual Environment.

FORMAÇÃO DE PROFESSORES DE LÍNGUAS ADICIONAIS EM AMBIENTES VIRTUAIS: CRENÇAS E PRÁTICAS

Resumo: Este artigo analisou a relação entre crenças de professores formadores e suas práticas educacionais em ambientes virtuais de aprendizagem. Metodologicamente, é um estudo de caso. Foram entrevistados dois professores de uma universidade em Moçambique e analisados seus perfis do Moodle. Os resultados mostram que nem todas as práticas dos professores formandos são coerentes com as suas crenças.

Palavras-chave: Crenças; Práticas Educacionais; Ambiente Virtual.



FORMACIÓN DE PROFESORES DE LENGUAS ADICIONALES EN AMBIENTES VIRTUALES: CREENCIAS Y PRÁCTICAS

Abstract: En este artículo se analiza la relación entre las creencias de los profesores formadores y sus prácticas educativas en ambientes virtuales de aprendizaje. Se trata de un estudio de caso desde el punto de vista metodológico. Para ello, se entrevistó a dos profesores de una universidad de Mozambique y se analizaron sus perfiles en la plataforma Moodle. Los resultados muestran que no todas las prácticas de los profesores en formación son coherentes con sus creencias.

Palabras clave: Creencias; Prácticas Educativas; Ambiente Virtual.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Despite the difficulty of studying beliefs due to differing understandings of the term (Barcelos, 2004; Pajares, 1992), numerous studies on teachers' beliefs and educational practices have been conducted. Currently, these studies focus not only on traditional educational beliefs and practices but also on teachers' beliefs and practices in teacher education for additional languages in virtual learning environments. However, most of these studies tend to focus on teachers' beliefs and practices in language teaching (for example, Aloud, 2022; Hakim, 2020; Mohsen; Shafeeq, 2014; Wang, 2021). Some research has examined the beliefs of teacher educators or their practices in teaching professional skills in virtual learning environments. Furthermore, recognizing that teachers' belief systems stem from their educational and cultural contexts (Cortazzi; Jin, 1996), no research has been conducted in the Mozambican context to understand teacher trainers' beliefs and educational practices in additional language teacher training processes in virtual environments.

Thus, to contribute to the body of research on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their educational practices, this study aims to analyze the relationship between teacher trainers' beliefs and their educational practices in additional language teacher training processes in virtual learning environments, specifically the Moodle¹ environment, answering the following questions:

- What beliefs does the teacher trainer have about the use of the Moodle platform in teaching and learning languages and professional skills?
- How do the teacher trainer's beliefs about using the Moodle platform in teaching and learning languages and professional skills relate to their experiences?
- What practices characterize the teacher trainer on the Moodle platform in teaching language and professional skills?

To achieve the proposed objective and answer the initial questions, we conducted a case study on two professors from a Mozambican university. The professors responded to an interview, and we analyzed their profiles on the Moodle Distance Education (EaD, as it is called in Brazil and hereafter) platform.

¹ Moodle is an Internet-based learning management system (LMS). It has features that can be used for both additional language teaching and teacher training, namely: Forums, Journals, Glossary, Chat, Task, Link and BigBlueButton (for video lessons).

This article presents and discusses concepts and previous studies on teacher beliefs in general and the beliefs of additional language teacher educators and their educational practices in particular. The research methodology is also explained in this section, along with an analysis of the data.

2 TEACHERS' BELIEFS

The variety of terms and definitions associated with the concept of beliefs can complicate its investigation (Barcelos, 2004; Pajares, 1992). For example, the following terms are used: judgments (Khader, 2012; Pajares, 1992; Raymond, 1997); personal premises, propositions, and perceptions (Richardson, 1996); ideas, views, and arguments (Khader, 2012); subjective emotions (Pehkonen; Pietilä, 2003); subjective and social knowledge (Furinghetti; Pehkonen, 2002; Pehkonen; Pietilä, 2003); and information, attitudes, values, expectations, theories, and assumptions (Richards, 1998). The confusion in the definitions centers on the distinction between beliefs and knowledge (Pajares, 1992), although Lewis (1990 apud Pajares, 1992) believes this distinction is invalid and unnecessary, arguing that the two constructs are synonymous and that all knowledge originates from belief, and that, even when learning comes from personal discovery, individuals begin by trusting their senses, intuition, and the laws of nature and logic.

Furinghetti and Pehkonen (2002) and Pajares (1992) offer simplified methods for distinguishing belief from knowledge. Knowledge is objective, official, and accepted by a community, while belief belongs to an individual's subjective knowledge. Both can be described with probabilities: knowledge is valid with a probability of 100%, while the validity of a belief is less than 100% (Furinghetti; Pehkonen, 2002). Belief is based on evaluation and judgment, while knowledge is based on objective facts (Pajares, 1992).

Due to previous understandings, teachers' belief systems are considered to involve judgments about teaching and learning (Khader, 2012), which presupposes subjective knowledge about what constitutes good learning, how to teach, and the role of textbooks (Cortazzi; Jin, 1996); judgments about the nature of the subject (Raymond, 1997); how students learn; the role of the teacher in the classroom; students' ability levels; what students expect to learn; and the relative importance of content (Cronin-Jones, 1991).

Teachers' belief systems are rooted in the educational or cultural context of their society (Cortazzi; Jin, 1996) and are based on observation or logical reasoning (Khader, 2012). Factors

influencing the formation of teachers' beliefs include previous school experiences (as a student, previous teachers, teacher training courses, and previous teaching experiences); immediate classroom situations (students, subject content, and time constraints); social norms of teaching (the school environment, curriculum, fellow teachers, and parents); beliefs about the subject (the nature of the subject, learning the subject, and teaching the subject); and teaching practices (tasks, discourse, environment, and assessment) (Raymond, 1997).

Beliefs can be classified into two types: deep beliefs and surface beliefs.

[surface beliefs] are defined as self-reports of seemingly objective statements from teachers about their philosophies of learning and instruction. They represent isolated relatively decontextualised samples of teacher's view-point. [Deep beliefs] can be described as personal philosophy of education to which a teacher is both intellectually and effectively committed. This kind of belief would be strongly defended if challenged and not easily shaken even in the face of disconfirming evidence (Kaplan, 1991, p. 426).

Some research supports the idea that teachers' beliefs guide their desires and actions (for example, Aloud, 2022; Cronin-Jones, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Kaplan, 1991; Veloso; Walesko, 2020; Wang, 2021), while other research has found no significant correlation between teachers' beliefs and actions (for example, Bisland; O'Connor; Malow-Iroff, 2009; Khader, 2012; Van Zoest, 1994). Several reasons have been identified for the lack of correlation between teachers' beliefs and practices, including "having to adapt to a specific methodology, the use of certain textbooks, or the demands of the school" (Leal; Barcelos, 2021, p. 242, translated by us).

2.1 Beliefs and Practices of Additional Language Teacher Trainers in a Virtual Environment

Studies by Hakim (2020) and Mohsen and Shafeeq (2014) examined teachers' perceptions of using Blackboard² in English instruction. These studies revealed that teachers believe Blackboard improves the teacher-student relationship and enhances the effectiveness of English instruction. Hakim (2020) surveyed 80 English teachers and found that most believe Blackboard can improve language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Group discussions enable teachers to construct sentences, and vocabulary and grammar exercises help them understand grammatical structures and language usage. Digital information and communication platforms provide language

² Blackboard is a web-based learning management system (LMS) similar to Moodle.

exposure, and group conferencing and chatting develop English communication skills. It is worth emphasizing that these studies focused on teachers' beliefs about using Blackboard in English teaching, not on the relationship between these beliefs and their practices.

On the other hand, research by Aloud (2022) and Wang (2021) focuses on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their practices on the Moodle platform. Wang's (2021) study of four Chinese language teachers revealed that their use of the platform generally aligns with their pedagogical beliefs. Wang (2021) noted that teachers maintained traditional teaching methods on the Moodle platform that were consistent with their beliefs. Although encouraged to use technology-based collaborative learning activities, teachers preferred one-way (teacher-student) teaching. Similarly, Aloud (2022) found that the beliefs of five Saudi English teachers about online corrective feedback in Moodle speaking classes were consistent with their practices. All of the teachers believed that online corrective feedback was essential for improving their students' English and that output-based strategies were more effective than input-based strategies because they encouraged self-correction. Observations of these teachers' practices showed that they corrected most of their students' errors and that output-based strategies were used more often than input-based strategies.

In their study of 22 interns from a Bachelor of Arts program, Veloso and Walesko (2020) analyzed the beliefs and practices of teacher trainers. The study revealed that teacher trainers believed that teaching practical remote teaching skills was difficult because it required psychological, pedagogical, and technical preparation, which entailed many hours of research, study, and planning. The trainers' practices included creating and promoting language courses for the interns to teach remotely to the university community, monitoring the interns in these courses, and holding weekly feedback meetings.

3 METHODOLOGY

This case study was guided by an interpretivist perspective and a qualitative approach, because, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), the central effort in this type of research is to understand the subjective world of human experience. It involved two teacher educators (Chianta and Galé)³ of a Bachelor's degree in English Teaching, offered online through the Moodle virtual

³ Chianta and Galé are pseudonyms of the two trainers participating in the research.

learning environment, at a public university in Mozambique. Chianta has been training English teachers since 2020 but had never worked with Moodle prior to this experience. She taught English V in the first semester of 2022. Galé taught English Didactics I in the first semester of 2021. She had previous experience with Moodle as a master's student and as a professor at another university. These professors were included because they are the only ones involved in this study (English Language and English Didactics) who teach online at the university. The others (two in English Language and four in English Didactics) do not teach online. Chianta is a 37-year-old female with a master's degree. Galé is a 30-year-old male with a master's degree.

Data on Chianta and Galé were generated through an analysis of their Moodle platform profiles and semi-structured interviews. The analysis of their Moodle platform profiles was conducted to determine their educational practices. The analysis of Chianta's profile focused on the Moodle platform resources used to teach language skills, class focus, interaction patterns, techniques and activities used, the role of the teacher, and learning assessment. The analysis of Galé's profile focused on the Moodle platform resources used to teach practical teaching skills, class focus, interaction patterns, strategies for teaching practical teaching skills, the role of the teacher, and learning assessment.

The interviews assessed Chianta and Galé's beliefs about (i) using the Moodle platform to teach and learn additional languages and professional skills and (ii) how previous experiences shaped their beliefs about using the platform for language and professional skill development. The interviews also involved stimulated recall questions, in which respondents were shown some of their Moodle practices and asked to comment on them.

The data were processed through content analysis (Bardin, 2011)⁴, which involved three stages: the first stage, pre-analysis, involved quickly reading the interview transcripts and Moodle profiles to capture general ideas; the second stage, exploration of the material, involved segmenting the units of analysis; and the third stage, processing and interpretation of results, involved making inferences and cross-referencing between experiences, beliefs, and practices. The data analysis was based on the hypothesis that teachers' beliefs determine their educational practices.

⁴ Bardin (2011) proposes three phases: pre-analysis, exploration of the material and treatment of the results - inference and interpretation.



4 DATA ANALYSIS

This section first presents data related to participant Chianta, a teacher trainer in English V and then the data relating to the participant Galé, teacher trainer of the English Didactics discipline I. The analysis focuses on the beliefs of teacher educators, the relationship between their beliefs and their experience, and the relationship between their beliefs and their educational practices.

4.1 Chianta's Beliefs

Chianta's theory of additional language learning is based on two aspects: exposure and practice. Chianta believes that effective learning occurs when learners are exposed to and immersed in environments where the target language is used, and when they have the opportunity to practice using the language. In the distance education modality, however, this exposure and practice are more effective when they occur through synchronous oral interaction. The following excerpts, spoken at different points in the interview, illustrate these beliefs⁵:

(A) [...] we use WhatsApp, because on WhatsApp we can make calls... so, I make calls and go to give my [synchronous oral] class. Or I even use Google Meet. When it's like that, it's easier. Maybe what should happen in Moodle is that... we should work more on the [synchronous oral] class.

(B) [...] where BigBlueButton ⁶works, that will be of added value, because that would really be a virtual classroom, where students can present seminars

Chianta believes that good English teaching should focus on both the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), as well as on aspects of the language such as grammar, vocabulary and functions.

Chianta finds teaching English on the Moodle platform very challenging because, although the platform has features like BigBlueButton and Chat for synchronous interactions, it is difficult to get all participants to interact at the same time. Chianta believes BigBlueButton creates the best

⁵ Translated by us and adapted to be as legitimate as possible with the interviewees' speech.

⁶ *BigBlueButton* is an application integrated with the Moodle platform for synchronous video lessons. This application allows video calls to be made within the platform.



conditions for language exposure and practice, as seen in excerpt B, although Chat and Forum also facilitate this. The teacher can facilitate student-to-student interaction through work groups and teacher-to-student interaction, as illustrated in excerpt C:

(C) [...] we can create groups where students can interact... and also, in chats and forums, a student can create a topic within the topic where the teacher posted it. And the teacher can also get involved in the students' interaction

Chianta believes that even when using the Moodle platform without BigBlueButton, teachers have the option of using it as an auxiliary resource to send files and receive work from students. With Chat and Forum, however, it is only possible to use techniques and tasks involving more theory than practice. Therefore, teachers can only assume the roles of controller, moderator, tutor, and model.

Excerpt (D) illustrates Chianta's beliefs regarding the possibility of assessing students' language skills on the Moodle platform:

(D) Yes, it is possible... because through what the student wrote, [...] we can assess grammar, coherence, cohesion, relevance [...]. We can also assess reading [...] we can ask some questions and the students will answer those questions, no way! [...] we'll see how they understood the text. Now, in listening, [...] we can send an audio file and the students will listen to it, and we also asked some questions based on the audio they heard [...] but, now, thinking about sending audio files, we can come up with a topic, [...] talk, for example, about pollution in Nampula. [...] and we can tell them to make an audio file, for example, five minutes long. [...] Send it to us on Moodle and we can also assess the student's speech.

Regarding learning assessments, Chianta believes that writing can be evaluated on the Moodle platform by focusing on grammar, cohesion, coherence, and content relevance. She also believes that reading comprehension can be assessed by providing students with texts and questions. She believes oral skills can also be assessed using the Moodle platform. For example, listening comprehension can be assessed by sending students an audio recording with questions. Students would then have to listen to the recording and answer the questions. The same procedure can be applied to oral production, where students can be asked to record a speech on a given topic and send it to the teacher. However, Chianta believes that she would have great difficulty carrying out these activities efficiently, as most of her students lack proficiency with the Moodle platform and other technological resources. She believes this is one reason why few students participate in Moodle activities, as shown in excerpt (E).



(E) [...] perhaps in these trainings, distance learning should ensure [...] that everyone is covered by the training, [...] And even the students [...] the students who participate [in the classes] are the same. And if you ask others, sometimes it's not even a Megas problem; it's a problem of mastering the platform. And perhaps this is one of the things that makes the assessments actually written, when it's in Moodle, because if we say do speaking, some people will say: "I can do it , but I won't know how to send the audio."

Relationship between experiences (both professional and life) and Chianta's beliefs: The root of Chianta's belief that good learning occurs when learners are exposed to the target language and given opportunities to practice could not be determined. However, inferences drawn from the interview reveal that her other beliefs are all rooted in her experience as a distance education teacher trainer, as indicated in excerpts (A), (B), (E), and (F).

In her experience using the virtual learning platform to teach English, Chianta encountered events that shaped her beliefs about training teachers to use the Moodle platform, as indicated in excerpt (F). For example, she believed that teaching English on the Moodle platform was a very challenging task due to the frequent absence of students from chat and forum sessions, difficulties using the Moodle platform and other technological resources, the poor functioning of the BigBlueButton feature, and the interactive nature of the chat and discussion forums.

(F) It's a big challenge, because, speaking of my students, not all of them [...] are able to be together at the same time. It's a bit difficult to interact with all the students at the same time. And... We work with Moodle [...] we ended up using WhatsApp, because Moodle has had problems, sometimes doing live classes, using BigBlueButton, [...] Or I even use Google Meet.

Many of the events Chianta experienced gave rise to other beliefs. The frequent absence of students from chat and forum sessions led her to believe that exposure to and practice with the target language are more effective when mediated by synchronous oral interaction and that the BigBlueButton resource is superior. The written nature of interaction in chat and forum resources reinforced Chianta's beliefs that exposure to and practice with the target language are more efficient in BigBlueButton and that chats and forums are only useful for theoretical activities and tasks. Finally, Chianta's students' difficulty using different technological resources, including the Moodle platform, led her to believe that she could only assess her students' reading and writing skills. She also believed that she would find it difficult to assess her students' oral comprehension and production skills, as these skills involve tasks such as receiving and uploading audio and video files to the Moodle platform or sending them to the teacher trainer (see excerpt E).





Reflections on the relationship between educational practices and Chianta's beliefs: in Chianta's Moodle profile, it was found that she only used the discussion forum and several online texts, some with grammar and vocabulary exercises and others without. It was also found that, in the only discussion forum created, Chianta made no contributions or provided feedback. In the interview, she responded that feedback, both on the discussion forum and on the online texts, was provided via Google Meet and WhatsApp video calls (as shown in excerpt A). According to her beliefs, effective learning only occurs when learners are exposed to the target language and given the opportunity to practice. This exposure and opportunity are most effective when delivered through synchronous oral interaction. This aligns not only with these beliefs, but also with the idea that the Moodle platform is only useful for sending and receiving files and assignments and for conducting theoretical activities.

Chianta's Moodle Platform profile revealed that she assessed learning through writing compositions and letters. During the interview, she mentioned that oral production and comprehension skills were evaluated via Google Meet. These assessment practices align with her belief that the Moodle platform can only assess students' writing skills and completion of theoretical assignments without BigBlueButton.

Finally, it was found that Chianta used the discussion forum and asynchronous exercises. These educational practices conflict with her belief that asynchronous written language exposure and practice are ineffective. Another aspect that conflicts with her beliefs is that she did not create any groups on the Moodle platform despite believing it is possible to create groups where learners can interact.

4.2 Galé's Beliefs

Excerpt (G) summarizes Galé's beliefs:

(G) [...] it is not enough, for example, to just use theory, to say that to teach writing we should do this, this and this, without, however, translating it into practice. [...] one of Moodle's shortcomings, we study the theory, but, in the meantime, we do not see the students practice it.

Galé believes that acquiring effective professional skills involves assimilating a body of theoretical knowledge and being able to translate that theory into classroom practice. However, Galé



believes that the Moodle platform can only facilitate the development of theoretical knowledge in the distance education process for additional language teachers. Therefore, at least a quarter of the course time should be reserved for a practical component offered in person. Galé also believes that the Moodle platform is inherently limited to theoretical work. Consequently, teachers can only introduce topics for student discussion via chat. The teacher would facilitate the discussion and provide feedback at the end. This belief also applies to assessment, as it is impossible to evaluate students' classroom practices. It is only possible to evaluate their theoretical knowledge of how to do something.

For Galé, training English teachers through the Moodle platform is quite challenging, as it requires financial costs, preparation and implementation time, as well as adequate training for both the teacher trainers and the learners.

Relationship between Galé's experiences (both professional and life) and beliefs: Galé entered the course with most of her beliefs about teaching and learning practical additional language teaching skills, which she uses on the Moodle platform, already established. Not even the training he received in his first year as a teacher trainer changed his initial beliefs.

(H) [...] the training was good, but it wasn't that exhaustive. As for me, I didn't have many difficulties, because I had already been using it as a student and teacher [...]

Her previous experiences as a teacher trainer, first as a master's student and then as a distance education English teacher, influenced her belief that, in the process of training additional language teachers through the Moodle platform, it is only possible to work on theoretical knowledge, not on practical additional language teaching skills (excerpt G). Therefore, it is also not possible to assess students' practical skills in the classroom. In her previous experiences, the Moodle platform was not used as the primary means of instruction. It was used for sending files and receiving assignments.

(I) [...] I was able to use Moodle as a Master's student, but I didn't use it as the main learning tool [...] The experience was kind of good, as the professors left the work and it was our mission to review it [...]

In this course, where she is a teacher trainer, Galé experienced events that shaped her beliefs about the challenge of training English teachers using the Moodle platform, as well as events that reinforced the beliefs she had built from previous experiences about the impossibility of assessing practical skills in teaching additional languages. Galé highlighted, on the one hand, the financial costs

she had to bear and learners' complaints about the cost of internet access when using Google Meet; on the other, she highlighted the extensive workload required to prepare and execute the activities.

(J) And I couldn't use the video classes component because there was an avalanche of complaints, especially regarding the issue of megabytes from students [...] it's an issue that entails costs and... time, too.

Reflections on the relationship Between Galé's educational practices and beliefs: Galé used the Moodle platform to submit texts that later guided interactions in a discussion forum and three chat. The predominant interaction patterns were teacher-student and student-student, in which the teacher initiated the interactions with a topic and the students contributed their own contributions. Galé acted as a mediator in the discussions in the forums and chats. We did not identify any assessment of professional skills. Learning assessments consisted of assignments and tests with questions about theoretical knowledge of English teaching. All of these educational practices identified during access to the Moodle platform are consistent with her belief that, in the process of training additional language teachers using the platform, it is only possible to work with theoretical knowledge.

Although Galé believes that good learning of practical teaching skills involves assimilating theoretical knowledge about how to teach and being able to translate theoretical knowledge into classroom practices. An analysis of Galé's profile reveals that, on the Moodle platform, Galé did not work on practical teaching skills, only theoretical knowledge.

5 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study examined the relationship between two Mozambican teachers' beliefs and their educational practices in Moodle-based teacher training for additional languages. We hypothesized that teachers' educational practices are determined by their beliefs.

Based on the descriptions of the two participants, this study concludes that most teachers' practices align with their beliefs. This finding is consistent with studies that claim teachers' beliefs guide their desires and actions (Aloud, 2022; Cronin-Jones, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Kaplan, 1991; Veloso; Walesko; 2020; Wang, 2021), there are circumstances in which teachers use educational practices inconsistent with their beliefs. This corroborates studies finding no significant correlation between teachers' beliefs and actions (Bisland; O'Connor; Malow-Iroff, 2009; Khader, 2012; Van



Zoest, 1994).

Teacher trainers' educational practices were found to be consistent with their beliefs in both participants studied. For example, Professor Chianta believes that effective additional language learning occurs through exposure to and use of the target language. Furthermore, in virtual learning environments, exposure to and use of the target language are effective when they take the form of synchronous oral interaction. Consequently, on the Moodle platform, despite the shortcomings of BigBlueButton, Professor Chianta exposed learners to the target language. Learners practiced the language by interacting via Google Meet and WhatsApp video calls. She also used these platforms to provide feedback from the discussion forum and the online texts and tasks she posted on Moodle.

The same thing happened with teacher Galé. She believes that training additional language teachers on the Moodle platform only involves theoretical knowledge. On the Moodle platform, teacher Galé only covered theoretical knowledge and posted discussion topics in forums and chats. She didn't assess practical teaching skills, only the assimilation of theoretical knowledge about English teaching, taking into account written assignments and tests. These results are consistent with those of Aloud (2022), in which teachers believed that online corrective feedback was essential to improving their students' English. They also believed that output-stimulating strategies were more effective than input-providing strategies because they encouraged self-correction. In practice, these teachers corrected most student errors, and output-stimulating strategies were used more often than input-providing strategies.

Veloso and Walesko (2020) also found similar results. The teacher trainers who participated in Veloso and Walesko's (2020) study believed that the role of teacher trainer of practical remote teaching skills was not an easy task, as it required psychological, pedagogical, and technical preparation, which required many hours of research, study, and planning. In practice, they behaved consistently with their beliefs, engaging in the creation and promotion of language courses to be offered remotely by interns to the university's internal community and monitoring the interns' progress in these courses, holding weekly feedback meetings.

The use of educational practices that are inconsistent with their beliefs, as identified in both case studies, corroborates the idea of superficial beliefs (Kaplan, 1991). These beliefs are easily shaken and can be changed, regardless of whether they imply a change in practices. Deep beliefs, on the other hand, are strongly defended if challenged and are not easily shaken, even in the face of conflicting evidence. This is what was observed in the studied cases: teacher Chianta believes that



using forums and chats, it is possible to create groups and threads in which students interact with each other, and in which the teacher can participate. However, teacher Chianta did not create any groups; she only created a forum and did not participate in or provide feedback on the trainees' discussions. Furthermore, Chianta believes that asynchronous presentation and writing practice on the Moodle platform are ineffective. Nevertheless, she used a forum and shared online texts with exercises.

The idea of superficial beliefs (Kaplan, 1991) is not the only concept that helps explain the use of educational practices that are inconsistent with one's beliefs. Leal and Barcelos (2021, p. 242, translated by us) mention other reasons, such as "having to adapt to a specific methodology, the use of certain textbooks, or the demands of the school," and therefore, institutional and/or contextual factors. This attempt to adapt to the context may be one of the factors that led Chianta to use the discussion forum and asynchronous exercises, despite her lack of belief in their effectiveness. In an interview, Chianta stated that the trainees complained about the cost of internet and had difficulty using some Moodle resources for synchronous interaction. The same happened to Galé, who, at one point, believed it was possible to work on practical teaching skills using Google Meet, but due to a series of complaints regarding internet costs and the use of Google Meet, she had to give in to the trainees' complaints. Galé, in an interview, asserted that even for the teacher trainers, the institution did not create internet facilities.

In both cases, it is evident that the beliefs of teacher trainers are rooted in experience. Chianta developed her beliefs when she started teaching in an English teacher training course on the Moodle platform. Galé developed hers based on experiences as a student and a distance education English teacher on the Moodle platform. These results corroborate those of Cortazzi and Jin (1996), Khader (2012), and Raymond (1997), who concluded that teachers' beliefs are rooted in their educational and cultural contexts and are based on observation or logical reasoning. Various variables influence this process, including students, previous teachers, teacher training courses, previous teaching experiences, time constraints, the school environment, the curriculum, fellow teachers, students' parents, the nature of the subject, assignments, discourse, assessment, and others.

CONSIDERATIONS

This study has implications for teacher training in general, and specifically for the training of additional language teachers in courses offered through virtual platforms in Mozambique or similar

contexts. First, the data analysis reveals that some teacher trainers' beliefs are inconsistent with the existing body of knowledge⁷ about additional language teacher training practices in courses offered using virtual learning environments, which can lead to inappropriate practices. For instance, Galé believes that practical skills cannot be developed in virtual learning environments. However, with the support of teacher trainers, it is possible to create language courses offered to trainees in their local areas (Veloso; Walesko, 2020). Record the classes offered in these courses, upload them to the Moodle platform, and discuss these classes' practices in chats or forums (Veloso; Walesko, 2020). Another implication is that the training offered at the beginning of the semester to new or struggling teachers seems to fail to change the beliefs of teacher trainers. Galé continued to work with the beliefs he formed during her initial experiences with the Moodle platform, and Chianta formed her beliefs based on her experience. This suggests that negative experiences can shape beliefs about phenomena, even if they conflict with existing knowledge. For example, she came to believe that forums and chats are not efficient ways to expose trainees to the language or give them practice, because it is not possible to have all the trainees interact in real time. She believes this occurs because the trainees do not have mastery of the Moodle platform.

These analyses highlight the need for continued study of teachers' and trainees' beliefs to contribute to our understanding of the conditions necessary for belief transformation. Including courses or topics on additional language teaching methodologies and teacher training on virtual learning platforms in teacher training courses (both in-person and online) is a possibility that should not be overlooked.

Raymond's (1997) study indicates that immediate classroom situations, such as students, course content, and time constraints, influence the formation of teachers' beliefs. In this regard, the material conditions created are part of the immediate situation of a virtual learning environment. Analyses of data from two participants suggest that management's lack of internet access influenced Galé's belief that training teachers on virtual learning platforms like Moodle is challenging and costly. This underscores the importance of establishing conditions conducive to beliefs that support teacher training.

⁷ Knowledge differs from belief since it is based on objective facts, official and accepted by a community, while belief belongs to the subjective knowledge of the individual and is based on personal evaluation and judgment (Furinghetti; Pehkonen, 2002; Pajares, 1992).



However, this study has two limitations. First, teacher Galé was interviewed by telephone. This may have prevented an in-depth exploration of the issues. Second, it was not possible to fully observe Chianta's educational practices in Google Meet and WhatsApp classes. For future research, we suggest studying the actions of teacher trainers across all platforms, such as Google Meet and WhatsApp, as well as the processes involved in changing the beliefs of teacher trainers and those in training.

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