

**BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING ENGLISH HELD BY
STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN TEACHER
EDUCATION IN LAO PDR**

Athithouthay Chatouphonexay



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ความเชื่อเกี่ยวกับการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาและอาจารย์สาขา
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Thesis Examining Committee

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anchalee Wannaruk)

Chairperson

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Channarong Intaraprasert)

Member (Thesis Advisor)

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bouasavanh Keovilay)

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(Prof. Dr. Sukit Limpijumnong)

Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs
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(Dr. Peerasak Siriyothin)

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ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ โดยนักศึกษาสาขาศึกษาศาสตร์ในประเทศสาธารณรัฐ
ประชาธิปไตยประชาชนลาวที่เรียนและไม่เรียนวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเป็นวิชาเอกและอาจารย์ที่สอน
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ของนักศึกษาและอาจารย์ในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูล คือ
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จากการตอบแบบสอบถามของนักศึกษาและอาจารย์ คือ สถิติเชิงพรรณนา และ การทดสอบ
ไค-สแควร์ ผู้วิจัยใช้การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลที่ได้จากการสัมภาษณ์
นักศึกษาและอาจารย์ ผลการวิจัยพบว่า นักศึกษามีความเชื่อว่าการพูดซ้ำๆ และฝึกอย่างเอาใจใส่
ในห้องเรียนเป็นสิ่งสำคัญ พร้อมกันนี้นักศึกษายังเชื่อว่ายุคปัจจุบันคนลาวเชื่อว่าการเรียน
ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นสิ่งสำคัญ นักศึกษายังถือว่า มัลติมีเดีย เป็นองค์ประกอบที่เป็นประโยชน์อย่างยิ่ง
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สำหรับอาจารย์ที่สอนภาษาอังกฤษ การวิจัยพบว่า อาจารย์มีความเชื่อว่าการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ
ด้วยตนเองนอกห้องเรียนมีประโยชน์อย่างยิ่ง ที่นักศึกษาพูดซ้ำๆ และฝึกอย่างเอาใจใส่
ในห้องเรียนเป็นสิ่งสำคัญ นอกจากนี้มัลติมีเดีย เป็นประโยชน์อย่างยิ่งในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษและ
อาจารย์สอนเป็นทรัพยากรบุคคลที่ดีที่สุดในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ

จากการศึกษาครั้งนี้ ยังพบว่าความเชื่อเกี่ยวกับการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาแตกต่างกัน
อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางด้านเพศของนักศึกษา โปรแกรมศึกษาศาสตร์ และสาขาวิชาเอก ส่วนความ
เชื่อเกี่ยวกับการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษของอาจารย์ พบว่ามีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ คือ
ประสบการณ์สอนภาษาอังกฤษ และระดับชั้นของการสอน นอกจากนี้ นักศึกษาและอาจารย์มีความ
เชื่อเกี่ยวกับการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ ที่เหมือนและแตกต่างกันในบางประเด็น

ATHITHOUTHAY CHATOUPHONEXAY : BELIEFS ABOUT
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STUDENTS' BELIEFS/TEACHERS' BELIEVES/TEACHERS' TRAINING
COLLEGE/TEACHER EDUCATION

The present investigation aims to explore: (1) beliefs about learning English held by students and teachers in teacher education in Lao P.D.R., (2) variation patterns of students' beliefs about learning English related to their gender, teacher education program, and major, (3) variation patterns of teachers' beliefs about learning English associated with their teaching experience, and level of teaching, (4) the existence of similarities and differences of beliefs held by students and teachers, and (5) the strong beliefs in learning English. In order to achieve these research objectives, a mixed method research was employed. Two sets of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were used to analyze the quantitative data from both students' and teachers' questionnaires and the data obtained through students' and teachers' semi-structured interviews were analyzed qualitatively. The findings revealed that students strongly believe that it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class; they also believe that nowadays Lao people think that it is very important to learn English; and they also regard multi-media as a very useful component in learning English. Further, teachers of English strongly believe that doing a self-study in English outside class is

very helpful for learners; it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class; multi-media is very useful in learning English, and the teacher is the best resource person to learn English. Significant differences were found in beliefs about learning English in terms of students' gender, teacher education program, and major; teachers' teaching experience and level of teaching. In addition, similarities and differences of beliefs about English language learning held by students and teachers were also found.



School of Foreign Languages

Student's Signature _____

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Advisor's Signature _____

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BALLI	Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory
CL	College Level
Dip	Diploma level
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Training
EM	English Major
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
Exp.	Experienced (More than 15 years of teaching experience)
FL	Foreign Language
FoE	Faculty of Education
Inexp.	Inexperienced (1-5 years of teaching experience)
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
Modexp.	Moderately experienced (6-15 years of teaching experience)
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NEM	Non-English Major
NUOL	National University of Laos
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TE	Teacher Education
TTC	Teachers' Training College

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is an introductory section which provides a general background to the context of the present study. It starts off with a brief introduction and a summary of beliefs about language learning held by students and teachers in general and EFL students and teachers in particular. This is followed by statement of the problem, teacher education in Lao PDR, perspectives on foreign language policy in Lao PDR, the definition of the key terms in the present study, and research objectives. Finally, the outline of the thesis is presented.

In recent decades, researchers in the field of second language acquisition have shown great interest in learners' individual characteristics that may affect the learners' success in language learning. Beliefs about language learning have been one of the research focuses. Researchers have found that second/foreign language learners come to the language class with some preconceived ideas or beliefs about language and language learning and that these beliefs can indicate what expectations the learners have and what actions in their language learning they will take (Abraham and Vann, 1987; Holec, 1987; Horwitz, 1987; Wenden, 1987). Therefore, researchers have been investigating the beliefs that second /foreign language learners possess and the factors that are related to learners' beliefs in order to find ways to help learners adjust their beliefs to facilitate and promote their language learning.

A number of studies have been conducted in the past two decades to examine beliefs about language learning of various groups of second /foreign language learners including native English speakers studying foreign languages (Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Mori, 1999), ESL learners (Cotterall, 1995; Horwitz, 1987; Wenden, 1986, 1987), EFL learners (Peacock, 1999; Sakui and Gaies, 1999; Truitt, 1995; Wen and Johnson, 1997; Yang, 1999), and non-native English speakers such as Thai and Vietnamese university science-oriented students (Intaraprasert, 2004), Chinese university students and teachers in the People's Republic of China (Wang, 2008), and Turkish pre-service teachers' language learning beliefs and effects of these beliefs on their teaching practice (Incecay, 2011), and relationships among beliefs in learning English of Thai graduate students in a public university (Suwanarak, 2013).

Furthermore, in some studies, the relationships between learners' beliefs about language learning and factors that may affect language learning success such as motivation, readiness and self-competency, language learning strategies, and anxiety were investigated (Yang, 1999; Peacock, 1999). Besides, some beliefs about language learning have been found to correlate with English proficiency. As cited in Vibulphol (2004), these findings suggest that second language teachers, with an understanding of learners' beliefs about language learning, can help enhance learners' success in language learning two ways: by promoting their students' beliefs that are facilitative to language learning e.g. 'I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English well' 'I have English Language aptitude' and by refining those that are debilitating e.g. 'English is a difficult language' or 'I learn English only to pass the exam'.

As researchers hope to find ways to adjust and refine learners' beliefs, studies about teachers' beliefs have become another interest of researchers in the field and are

the focus of several studies. These studies are based on the assumptions that learners develop their beliefs about language learning from their learning experiences (Horwitz, 1987; Mori, 1999) and that teacher's beliefs influence their classroom practices which, in turn, can affect their students' learning (Johnson, 1992; Richards and Lockhart, 1994).

The studies of teachers' beliefs about language learning generally aim to examine (1) relationships between teacher's beliefs and student's beliefs (Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1999; Samimy and Lee, 1997) and (2) effects of teacher's beliefs on their classroom practices (Burns, 1996; Johnson, 1992, 1994; Smith, 1996). Insights gained from these studies contribute to a deeper understanding of how learner's beliefs are developed.

The studies of teacher's beliefs about language learning include not only in-service teachers but also pre-service teachers. Having taken into consideration the possible effects of teacher's beliefs on their instructional practices which consequently affect learners' learning experiences, some researchers have examined the development of teacher's beliefs during teacher education programs. As found in Horwitz (1985), pre-service second language teachers enter teacher education programs with pre-existing ideas about language and language learning, just like second language learners. Some ideas that the pre-service teachers possess are, for example, (1) 'learning a language is a hard work' and (2) 'spelling is one of the major difficulties when learning a language'. These pre-existing ideas may inhibit their learning of new approaches and techniques in the teacher education programs which can limit their choices of instructional practices (Dole and Sinatra, 1994; Horwitz, 1988). Therefore, it is hoped that pre-service teachers, while they are in teacher

education programs, refine their beliefs about language learning to enhance their own learning and development.

Even though a number of studies have been conducted to examine pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning during their teacher education programs, little attempt has been made to investigate beliefs of ESL/EFL pre-service and in-service teachers. Only a few studies (e.g. Almarza, 1996; Brown and McGannon, 1998; Cabaroglu and Roberts, 2000; Johnson, 1994; Peacock, 2001) focused on ESL/EFL pre-service teachers' belief development during their teacher education programs. Only Peacock conducted his study in an EFL context investigating the development of EFL pre-service teachers' beliefs about language learning over the course of TESL methodology.

In summary, it is clear that both learners' and teachers' beliefs play very important roles in the process of language learning and teaching. However, there is no research work which investigates learners' and teachers' beliefs about learning English as a foreign language in the Lao tertiary context. In other words, no studies have been conducted to investigate or examine the similarities and differences between learners' and teachers' beliefs in this field. This is the reason why the researcher has decided to investigate what beliefs about learning English as a foreign language are held by EFL learners and teachers in addition to a comparison of learners' and teachers' beliefs in order to shed some light on this unexplored area, especially in the context of Lao PDR.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Firstly, as an English language teacher, the researcher has been teaching at the Faculty of Education, National University of Laos to English major university students for over 20 years. From the personal teaching experience, the researcher often finds that a number of Lao students find it difficult to become successful in their English language learning in spite of the fact that they spend a lot of time and money on it in order to improve their language performance. What causes such a situation? What are the reasons for students to have difficulty in learning English? What do students and teachers really think about learning and teaching English? Do students think the same as their teachers do? Are there any misconceptions held by the students? And what beliefs do pre-service and in-service teachers of English hold? As a result of these concerns, the researcher believes that it is appropriate to investigate what happens in this situation. There may be some unexplored reasons which present obstacles for students trying to achieve their goals as EFL teachers. Teachers might also adjust the way they normally teach in order to encourage and help their students to become more successful in learning English. This is the first reason which led the researcher to choose this topic for his research.

In order for a language learner to be successful in his/her language learning , many factors must be taken into consideration, such as beliefs, attitudes, motivation, aptitude, personality, intelligence, and learner's preferences. Each factor has its own effect on language learning success. To a certain extent, language learning is influenced by cognitive factors, such as intelligence, attitude, age and motivation as well as beliefs (Victori and Lockhart, 1995). Having taken all of these factors into account, the researcher believes that learners' beliefs come first when a learner aims

to be successful in language learning since the beliefs that learners develop and hold to be true about their capabilities (Richardson, 1996) and the skills they possess have an immediate impact on their learning behavior (Wen and Johnson, 1997). In other words, understanding learners' beliefs about language learning is essential to understanding learners' attitudes toward language and language learning and their strategy use (Horwitz, 1999). An understanding of learner's beliefs can, therefore, enhance the learning process.

Secondly, according to Cheng (2000), language learning is an extremely complex process, which is further complicated by the learners' individual differences and their different social, political and cultural backgrounds. It is also important to look at the learners' beliefs within their certain cultural context. In the fields of applied linguistics and second language acquisition, researchers have been long on assumptions and short on rigorous empirical research when it comes to Asian learners (Young, 1987; Gu, 2002). Asian learners of English have been reported as reticent and passive learners. They are described as over-dependent on their teachers, reluctant to participate in classroom discourse, unwilling to give responses in class, inclined to rote learning and unable to engage in independent learning (Jones, 1999; Bradock et al., 1995; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Tsui, 1996). These allegations are often associated with the Confucian cultural heritage which values teacher authority (Huang and van Naerssen, 1987; Song, 1995; Oxford and Ehrman, 1995; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996). In a more recent study, Cheng (2000) has concluded that sweeping generalizations about Asian learners are largely based on anecdotal evidence.

Finally, it is widely accepted that language learning is fully situated within a given cultural context (Ellis, 1994). As a result, different cultural backgrounds are one

of the important factors which shape beliefs about foreign language learning (Horwitz, 1987a). While research on learners' beliefs has covered some important areas in the second /foreign language learning in diverse contexts, however, no research has been conducted to explore learners' and teachers' beliefs about English as foreign language learning at the tertiary level in the Lao context so far. Therefore, it is important to explore precisely what beliefs are held by Lao university and college teacher students and their teachers of English in order to fill this gap. To the researcher's expectation, the present research results may shed some light on one aspect of students and teachers' beliefs about English as a foreign language in the Lao context, which is quite different from English as second language learning in other geographical areas.

In sum, the results of this study may shed some light on teachers' instructional practice in the classroom, on learners' learning and also provide guidance on syllabus development and materials revision in the future teacher education in Laos. At least a way can be found to narrow or bridge the gap in beliefs between learners and their teachers.

1.3 Teacher Education in Lao PDR: A Historical Overview

Laos has a very long and rich history where the Lao People's Democratic Republic was established after the abolition of the Lao Monarchy in 1975. It is the poorest and least developed country in the East Asia region, and in early 2000, was ranked the tenth poorest in the world (Tanabe and Keyes, 2002).

Historically, the Lao society has been embedded in a heritage of indigenous cultures, colonialism, socialist revolution and most recently a movement towards a

free market economy. Education in general and teacher education in Laos in particular, has also experienced historical change which is intimately bound up with the changing cultural, social context and the economic environment. The history of teacher education in Laos has long been developed (Amarathithada, 2002).

Before the French protectorate in 1893, the education in Laos was carried out in temples (Wat) by Buddhist monks who performed two tasks of teaching the religion and providing general education in reading, writing, arithmetic, handicrafts and traditional medicine. Teaching was conducted mainly through the lecture and learn- by- heart method. When the French seized power, the practice of this traditional education still continued and gradually proceeded to the new educational system. In 1905, there were only 2 schools throughout the country namely, Luang Phrabang Primary School and Vientiane Primary School (MOES, 2013).

Obviously the French colonists intended to establish the colonial educational system closely patterned on the metropolitan model. Undoubtedly, the aims of education were to serve the colonizers and the elites. As a result, teachers were mostly brought from France. People who had primary education and wanted to become teachers were trained three to six months to teach at the primary school level. The first teacher's training school was established in 1950 under the jurisdiction of the Secondary Education Department. It delivered a four-year program, the first graduates from this institution in 1954 were only five persons and in 1953, four teachers were sent to France for upgrading their knowledge. It is obviously seen that the teacher training in the period of French protectorate was very limited in number. In other words, according to Phonekeo (1996), although the Lao educational system was under

the French control, Laos has a long history of indigenous education which was provided by monks through temple schools.

The National Revolution (1955-1975) witnessed the division of the country into two territories which were governed by the Vientiane Government and the Neo Lao Haksat (Lao National Front). Although they were different in terms of political ideologies, the teacher training was provided in both territories. The training of teachers for primary schools was delivered at École Normale (in Vientiane territory) and teacher training schools (in Neo Lao Haksat territory). Regarding the teacher training for secondary schools, the program was conducted at the Institute of Pedagogy Dong Dok in Vientiane and the Viengxay Pedagogical Institute.

In 1975, the Lao People's Democratic Republic was proclaimed and the country moved towards the socialist regime. The government formulated the educational objectives to democratize education which created the rapid expansion of general education. The high demand for teachers resulted not only in the recruitment of unqualified teachers but also in a sudden and uneven expansion in teacher education (Amarathithada, 2002). Eventually, the two systems of teacher education were amalgamated. The programs of varying duration and with different educational requirements were introduced to meet the local requirements for teachers. The teachers' training schools for pre-schools, physical education instructors, vocational instructors, and arts were established. In 1977, Dong Dok and Viengxay Pedagogical Institutes were united to form the Pedagogical University of Vientiane which comprised nine departments: Mathematics-Physics, Biology-Chemistry, History-Geography, Psychology-Pedagogy, Literature-Linguistics, Political Science, English, French, and Russian. Since the promulgation of the Prime Ministerial Decree No.

50/PM, 9 June 1995 on establishing National University of Laos (NUOL) by amalgamating 10 existing higher learning institutions under the supervision of different Ministries, the Pedagogical University of Vientiane has become the Faculty of Education.

In 1997-1998, there was a rationalization of teacher training subsystem. The number of schools were thus reduced from 41 teachers' training schools to 12; 4 pre-primary and primary teacher training schools; 4 teacher training colleges for both primary and lower secondary teachers; the Faculty of Education, National University of Laos for upper secondary teachers; the Vocational Teacher Training School; the Physical Education Teacher Training School; and the Art Education Teacher Training School. The restructuring of teacher education took place in this period. The old teacher training programs for 5+3 and 8+3 were phased out and the 11+1 and 11+3 were replaced.

Regarding the teacher education systems in Laos, there are different levels as follows:

- System 11+1 : For teaching in primary school level (Certificate)
- System 11+3 : For teaching in lower-secondary level (Diploma)
- System 11+4 : For teaching in upper-secondary level (Bachelor)

Due to the national education reform in 2010 which transformed the general education schooling year from 11 (5 years in primary, 3 years in lower-secondary and 3 years in upper-secondary) to 12 years (5 in primary, 3 in lower-secondary and 4 in upper-secondary), the 11+1; 11+3; and 11+4 teacher education systems were replaced by the new ones which are 12+1; 12+2; and 12+4 respectively.

With respect to teacher education in Lao PDR nowadays, it can be noted that a lot of achievements have been scored in terms of school facilities, instructional materials, curriculum and human resource development. However, according to the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) of Lao PDR (2013), it was found that teacher education is implicated in this low-level of student performance. The following problems predominated in teacher pre-service and in-service education:

- Trainee teachers are themselves trained in an entirely teacher-centered way.
- The approach to reading pedagogy is inadequate: unsystematic and incomplete, and inadequate in time allotment in the course curricula.
- The pre-service curriculum does not make adequate provision for trainee practice. Classes are overcrowded and textbooks are managed by lecture-style teaching.
- Teacher education members of staff capacity to deliver the new curriculum has not been strategically addressed with the majority of staff without Masters Qualifications.
- There is little monitoring information to evaluate the impact of in-service training.

In sum, the history of teacher education in Lao PDR was complex and enduring. The expansion of teacher education did respond to the need for teachers in terms of quantity on the one hand, but it raised the question of quality of teachers and the share of meager resources on the other. This was a big challenge for the Ministry of Education and Sports of Lao PDR to reform teacher education system to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

1.4 Perspectives on Foreign Language Policy in Lao PDR

Historically, Laos was a French colony for many decades, that is, from 1893 to 1945, and French was used as the official language of government and post-primary education. During the colonial period, secondary schools were found only in the capital and provincial centers, and only a very small number of students proceeded to this level, with the majority of the students leaving schools after Pathom 6 (Keovilay, 2004).

In Lao PDR, French is given a status as the ‘first foreign language’ while English is the ‘most important foreign language’ in the school system. The use of these two terms may seem illogically ambiguous and contradictory (Sithirajvongsa, 2004). Logically, the language that is considered the first should be the most important. However, giving the status to French as the first foreign language and to English as the most important foreign language has some implications. Firstly, it implies some diplomatic flexibility in the practice of the Lao Government’s foreign policy which has so far seemed to satisfy both the French and English supporters. The practice of this kind of policy, as noted by Fry (1998), has so far contributed considerably in maintaining the political, social and economic stabilities of the country and secondly, it implies that both foreign languages are given equal value in terms of their diplomatic status.

Awarding French a status as the first foreign language has many implications. Firstly, it signifies the Lao PDR’s status as a member country of the Francophone Agency, which Lao PDR entered in 1992. Membership has required, among other things, the symbolism of having all signs and names of the Ministries and government agencies written in French rather than in English underneath the Lao equivalents. It

also recognizes that the French language is important for the country's education in view of Laos' former connection to the French educational system, and through which a great deal of resources are still available in French. In addition, the Lao PDR still has a good relationship with France which provides economic assistance in many areas of the country's socio-economic development. A very good example of this is the historically official visit of the President of Lao PDR Choummaly Sayasone to France from 20-25 October 2013. And lastly, a number of senior officials including administrators at NUOL still have a strong French language background which is still used on many occasions, especially in contact with French-speaking communities or when working with French counterparts both within and outside the country.

Although French has been given an equal status with English in the school system, English is still considered more 'important' than French in real life. No restrictions are imposed on school students' selection of foreign language between English and French in the school curriculum: they can choose the language they like and which will benefit them more in terms of their current academic activities and their future career. Moreover, as only two foreign languages, French and English, are available in the school curriculum, the use of the term 'the most important foreign language' for English also implies that English is more important than French. In real life, the use of this term is in line with the government policy to promote English both within the educational sector and in the civil service, especially in the areas of international relations, economic cooperation and exchanges, science and technology. Offering English a status as the most important foreign language implies that English is the most needed foreign language for the country's socio-economic development. This phenomenon has echoed with the full membership of Lao PDR of ASEAN in 1997.

Up to now, special attention has been paid by the government to promoting English within the administration, especially for those who will be involved in international activities, most of which function in English. Such a promotion of English is clearly seen in recent government activities, such as the issue of a decree to support the establishment of ELT facilities within various Ministries, provision of financial support in organizing different ELT programs within the civil service, and an increase in the number of private ELT programs across the country.

Regarding teacher education program, the foreign language curriculum is introduced at the university level and the teacher training college level. To be more specific, Faculties of Education of the National University of Laos, Souphanouvong University and Champasak University have conducted English and French programs while all teacher training colleges offer only the English program.

In sum, English is now becoming a globalized language and is widely used in many parts of the world including ASEAN. In the case of Lao PDR, English is widely used and included in the curriculum of both general education and teacher education. Thus, teaching and learning English as EFL is of great benefit to both teachers and students.

1.5 Definitions of Key Terms in the Study

- **Beliefs about English Language Learning**

In this specific study, '*beliefs about English language learning*' has been defined as the preconceived notions or conceptions of Lao learners and teachers about the task of learning and teaching English as a foreign language measured by the

BALLI (Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory) which was developed by Horwitz (1987, 1988).

- **Students**

In this study, ‘students’ are teacher students of English majors and non-English majors entering teachers’ training college (Diploma level) and Faculty of Education (Bachelor level). Students for a diploma level are trained in a 3-year program and they teach English and other subjects at lower-secondary school level upon graduation. Students for a bachelor level are trained in a 4-year program and they teach English and other subjects at upper-secondary school level upon graduation.

- **Teachers**

In this study, ‘*teachers*’ are Lao teachers of English who teach English as a foreign language at teachers’ training colleges and universities in Lao PDR.

- **Teachers’ Training College**

In this particular study, ‘*Teachers’ Training College*’ refers to the teacher educational institution which conducts a 2-year teacher education program to students in 3 major areas: (1) Mathematics, (2) Natural-Social Sciences, and (3) the English Language. The objective of the teachers’ training college is to produce graduates who are able to teach at the lower-secondary level or Mattayom Ton. In most cases, the researcher used ‘TTC’ referring to Teachers’ Training College.

1.6 Research Objectives

The main impetus for the present study on learners' and teachers' beliefs about learning English as a foreign language comes from the lack of serious studies on beliefs in the field of EFL in the Lao tertiary context. Beliefs are viewed as an important construct to be investigated in relation to their subsequent impact on learners' and teachers' behavior. Specifically, the objectives of the research are to explore:

- 1) beliefs about learning English held by students and teachers in teacher education in Lao PDR;
- 2) variation patterns in learners' beliefs about learning English associated with their gender, teacher education program and major;
- 3) variation patterns in teachers' beliefs about learning English associated with their teaching experience and level of teaching; and
- 4) the existence of similarities and differences of beliefs held by students and teachers.

1.7 Outline of the Thesis

In order to achieve the research objectives, the researcher first conducted the related literature review on learners' and teachers' beliefs about foreign/second language learning and research methods which contribute to the present study. The literature review can be seen in Chapter 2. This chapter overviews beliefs about English language learning, which includes definitions, how beliefs are formed, and the main characteristics of beliefs, followed by pre-service and in-service teachers'

beliefs and recent research works. Finally, a comparison between pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs is conducted.

Chapter 3 discusses some general principles of research design which are employed in the present study. It starts off with the introduction and purpose of the chapter, the research questions, sampling and reasons for the choice of subjects, followed by the methods for data collection. Then, it deals with the procedure of data collection. Finally, the analyzing, interpreting and reporting of the data is described.

Chapter 4 deals with the data analysis which includes the results from learners' and teachers' written questionnaires about beliefs in English language learning. In this chapter, the quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. To start with, beliefs about English language learning reported by 962 students and 129 teachers are presented based on the calculation of percentages respectively. Then, variations in patterns of beliefs about English language learning held by students and teachers according to variables are described based on results of the chi-square test analysis. Finally, a comparison of beliefs about English language learning and teaching held by students and teachers in Lao PDR is described.

Chapter 5 deals with the results from the qualitative data i.e. 54 students' and 27 teachers' semi-structured interviews. Content analysis was mainly adopted to analyze the transcriptions. The results of learners' and teachers' semi-structured interviews were presented based mainly on 13 and 11 guided questions (see Appendices 5 and 6) which were related to the eight categories of beliefs about learning English, respectively.

Chapter 6 presents the research findings in response to the 6 research questions. A summary of research findings is presented first, followed by a discussion

of the research findings, and the implications arising from the present investigation of learning and teaching English as a foreign language in the Lao tertiary context. Then, the contributions of the research to the related field are described. Finally, the limitations of the present investigation and recommendations for the future research are discussed, and it is ended with the conclusion of the present study.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher gives an introduction to students' and teachers' beliefs about language learning followed by statement of the problem. Then a historical overview of teacher education as well as perspectives on foreign language policy in Lao PDR are presented. The definitions of the key terms used in the study are defined and the research objectives are also identified. Finally, the outline of the thesis is proposed. The next chapter will mainly focus on the related literature and establish the theoretical framework for the present investigation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RELATED STUDIES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is primarily focused on the theoretical background and existing research works on beliefs about English language learning which contribute to the present investigation. The chapter will begin with the basic assumptions of constructivism, general beliefs, beliefs about language learning in which the definition of beliefs, the formation of beliefs and the characteristics of beliefs are presented. This is followed by pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs in which learners' beliefs, teachers' beliefs and the comparison between learners' and teachers' beliefs are also identified. Finally, recent research works on foreign/second language learning, beliefs in relation to different variables, which focus on EFL pre-service, and in-service teachers' beliefs as well as a comparison between students' and teachers' beliefs is organized according to the main methods or instruments used in each investigation i.e. the research carried out by employing the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI developed by Horwitz, 1987) and the research carried out by employing methods or instruments other than the BALLI.

2.2 Basic Assumptions of Constructivism

Learner's and teacher's beliefs and assumptions about different aspects of language learning are within the framework of a constructivist approach which needs to be clarified in the light of Piaget's theory.

Piaget's theory of the development of cognition is generally considered to provide the theoretical basis of the constructivist approach to cognition in 1930 (Von Glasersfeld, 1995). Piaget's theory is based on the view that the child or individual actively tries to make sense of the world, just as any organism which needs to actively adapt to its environments. Individuals are seen as constructivists-an organism that constructs the knowledge themselves and acts on new objects and events (Meadows, 1993; Flavell, 1987).

Piaget (1970, 1974) studied developmental changes in the process of knowledge acquisition and the organization of knowledge and addressed traditional questions of epistemology: "What is/are the origin (s) of knowledge? How is knowledge acquired and built up? How do we come to know something? Is objective knowledge possible?". These questions gave rise to what is referred to as *genetic epistemology*, a salient characteristic of Piaget's theory. Piaget tried to answer these questions and justify the formation of knowledge by investigating how children do it. Piaget's developmental approach to epistemology is regarded as 'revolutionary' (Von Glasersfeld, 1995) and this approach appears to be what made Piaget different from traditional philosophers who overwhelmingly tended to think of knowledge as the representation of the world or a 'real thing', independent of the knower. Piaget's genetic epistemology can be summarized as follows:

Knowledge is a process rather than state. It is an event or a relationship between the knower and the known...In a sense, people 'construct' knowledge. They have an active part in the process of knowing and even contribute to the form that knowledge takes. Cognitive humans actively select and interpret information in the environment. They do not passively soak up information to build a storehouse of knowledge (Miller, 1993, p. 36).

As Miller (1993) points out, one of the implications of Piaget's theory of knowledge is that knowledge is 'biased' in the sense that knowledge is shaped through experience. A person's mind is not a camera that takes 'actual' pictures of

reality. Individuals bring their own experience and sense to actions and events. Piaget takes the position that as all animals adjust to the environment, humans also develop their unique methods of *adaptation*, which is seen as a basic tendency of the organism (Shaffer, 1988). In Piaget's system, *adaptation* consists of assimilation and *accommodation* which work in a complementary fashion to each other. *Assimilation* is the process by which the person tries to interpret and relate new information to the pre-existing structures of understandings, while *accommodation* is the process of modifying the existing structures in order to account for new experiences. Piaget sees cognitive growth like embryological growth. Therefore, he used several concepts from biology. Another concept Piaget borrowed from biology is *cognitive equilibration* which is basically an attempt to achieve a balance between assimilation and accommodation. Children who are constantly challenged by many novel stimuli and events have to make adjustments between their cognitive structures and environmental events in order to cope with puzzling new experiences and thereby restore *cognitive equilibrium*.

Thus what becomes the central focus of constructivist theory is the idea that human beings are actively involved in the creation of their world and knowledge. Constructivism explains how the individual sets about to create its world. From a constructivist perspective, Von Glasersfeld (1995) argues that cognitive organisms develop attitudes towards their experiences because human beings like certain parts of experience and dislike others. Consequently human beings are inclined to repeat likeable experience and to avoid the ones that are not liked. So knowledge is constructed in relation to what has worked in the past and is assumed to work again. In the discussion of the constructivist approach, Von Glasersfeld (1995) maintains that:

From the constructivist perspective, knowledge does not constitute a 'picture' of the world. It does not represent the world at all-it comprises action schemes, concepts, and thoughts, and it distinguishes the ones that are considered advantageous from those that are not. In other words, it pertains to the ways and means the organizing subject has conceptually evolved in order to fit into the world as he or she experiences it (Von Glasersfeld, 1995, p. 114).

The explanation above suggests that what is called 'facts' in the heads of individuals should not be considered as elements of an observer-independent world but elements of an individual's experience. Knowledge is not dependent on 'truth' but on our experience, which is the reality we live.

A very brief account of Piaget's theory from which constructivism was originated suggests certain implications and relevance for this present research. Firstly, this theory shows how the important role that the learner plays as an individual who is actively involved in constructing meaning, as Williams and Burden (1997) point out that when learners learn a new language, they are, in these terms, actively involved in making their own sense of the language input that surrounds them as well as the task presented to them.

The present study also holds a similar view that the learners is at the centre of learning and actively involved in the process of learning by attending to the new information, constructing and reconstructing meaning and relating new information to the existing one as previously discussed. The most salient feature of Piaget's work is the individual own world and experiences that he/she brings to the task of learning. This feature summarizes a constructivist approach, the aim of which is to understand the ways in which learners try to make sense of their world and construct their own views (Williams and Burden, 1997). We construct what we know on the basis of our own experience. In other words, it is our experience that forms the only world in

which we consciously live. It can be best described by saying that all kinds of experience are unique, in the sense that they are personal, and essentially subjective.

This approach highlights the importance of learners' beliefs as well as teachers' beliefs and views about different aspects of language learning as one of the variables being investigated in this study. In Piaget's discussion of epistemology "knowledge, no matter how it be defined, is in the heads of persons, and that the thinking subject has no alternative but to construct what he or she knows on the basis of his or her own experience" (Von Glasersfeld 1995, p. 1). This suggests a lot in common with our discussion of students' and teachers' beliefs. As mentioned in Chapter I, one of the areas the researcher intended to explore in this study is the learners' (students and teachers) world of language, the knowledge they construct in relation to language, and the experience they make and use as a filter for their knowledge, because learners come to learning task with their preconceptions and world.

A constructivist approach not only strengthens the active role of the learner in language learning process but also highlights the importance of the learners' experiences and beliefs which are discussed below.

2.3 General Beliefs

For the past two decades, some researchers have provided anecdotal and empirical evidence that defines, describes, and sets a framework for understanding beliefs which are described as a central construct in every discipline that deals with human behavior and learning (Ajzen, 1988; Sakui and Gaies, 1999).

Recently, the notion of beliefs has been given much attention by teachers and researchers. It is assumed that beliefs help individuals to define and understand the world and themselves (Abelson, 1979; Lewis, 1990; White, 1999); beliefs are instrumental in defining tasks and play a critical role in defining behavior (Bandura, 1986; Nespor, 1987; Schommer, 1990; Yang, 1999); and beliefs can and should become an important focus of educational inquiry (Pajares, 1992). It can be stated that several research studies reveal that preconceived beliefs about language learning have a profound influence on learning behavior (Cotterall, 1995; Yang, 1999), or even determine learners' attitudes toward language and language learning or his/her motivation, and precondition the learners' success or without success (Kuntz, 1996), and on their learning outcomes (Martin and Ramsden, 1987). In a similar context, Riley (1996, p. 155) points out that beliefs about language and beliefs about language learning "may directly influence or even determine...(a learner's) attitude or motivation or behaviour when learning a language in question". In addition to this, supportive and positive beliefs help overcome problems and thus sustain motivation, while negative or unrealistic beliefs can lead to a gradual frustration and anxiety (Kern, 1995). Because of the effects of beliefs on language learning, it is important to study learners' beliefs. The main reasons are listed below:

First of all, beliefs are guiding principles for learners' behavior and strong perceptual filters which act as if they were true. Language learning seems to be a more intrinsically ego-involving activity than most other kinds of school learning. The success of language learning depends less on materials and techniques but more on what goes on inside the learners' heads (Peacock, 2001). Secondly, it is important that the learners themselves be given opportunities to think about their learning process so

that they can become aware of their own beliefs and how these beliefs can influence what they do to learn (Wenden, 1986a). Finally, if learners hold erroneous beliefs about language learning, this might lead to the deployment of less effective strategies (Horwitz, 1987a). As Cotterall (1995, p. 196) concludes, "...all behaviour is governed by beliefs and experience". This means that the beliefs system learners hold or develop help them adapt to new environments, to define what is expected of them and to act in accordance with those conceptions.

In the language learning environment, "...investigating learners' beliefs about language study is a process of (self-) discovery which involves the learners themselves as much as the teachers" (Tudor, 1996, p. 52). It is very important to make both teachers and learners aware of their beliefs about language teaching and learning because the beliefs held by teachers and learners always "play a central role in learning experience and achievement" (Cotterall, 1999, p. 494).

In the context of the classroom, teachers' beliefs have a significant impact on their classroom practices (Wenden, 1986a; Tudor, 1996). This specific environment is a social setting with its own conventions, norms, and behavior (Breen, 1985). The conventions, norms and behavior derive in part from the deeper and less accessible social and psychological dimensions of the teacher-learner relationship (Tudor, 1996). On the one hand, the classroom practices that the teachers engage in are particularly important because the practices ultimately affect the learners' opportunity to learn, and the beliefs that learners bring with them to the learning situation have been recognized as another significant contributory factor in the learning process and ultimate success on the other (Benson, 2001; Breen, 2001).

For teachers, the insights gained, both in a pre-course needs analysis and during an instructional program itself, by investigating learners' beliefs about language learning can lead to a more effective instructional planning and implementation. For learners, the process of exploring beliefs can in the best circumstances lead to more effective behavior in language learning as well as greater self-knowledge and autonomy (Horwitz, 1987a; Victori and Lockhart, 1995; Wenden, 1998).

Since language learning requires the active involvement of learners (Littlewood, 1996; Richards, Gallo and Renandya, 2001), learners need to learn how to learn, and teachers need to learn how to facilitate the process (Oxford, 1990). As a result, it is necessary for teachers to know their students' beliefs about language learning in order to make a successful learning environment. In other words, the overarching goal of all teaching is to help learners act more independently within a chosen range of domains, such as in the context of language learning. The ultimate goal of teaching is to help learners become more effective and take more responsibility for their own learning (Wang, 2008).

2.4 Beliefs about Language Learning

Beliefs about language learning, as well as other cognitive and affective variables, have become an interest of researchers in the field of second language acquisition because of assumptions that “success depends less on materials, techniques, and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom” and *what goes on inside* learners, which includes learners'

beliefs, seems to have a strong impact on learners' learning process (Stevick, 1980, p. 4). Therefore, it is of great importance to understand what beliefs really mean.

2.4.1 Definition of Beliefs

Beliefs are often mistaken for attitudes, values, judgments, opinions, and ideologies (Pajares, 1992). From this point of view, Pajares (1992) explains that confusion with the concept centers around the distinction between knowledge and beliefs. Nespor (1987) notes that a further distinction between beliefs and knowledge is that while knowledge often changes, beliefs are 'static'.

Currently, there is not a standard definition for what the term 'beliefs' means. In an effort to clarify the meaning of 'beliefs', some definitions have been collected from some researchers. Regarding the definitions from a psychological perspective, Richardson (1996, p. 102) views beliefs as "individual understandings, premises, or propositions held about the world that are felt to be true". Similarly, Harvey (1986, p. 660) views beliefs as "a set of conceptual representations which signify to its holder a reality or given state of affairs of sufficient validity, truth, or trustworthiness to warrant reliance upon it as a guide to personal thought and action".

In the foreign language/second language literature, the term 'metacognitive knowledge' which refers to knowledge about learning, is often used to indicate learners' beliefs (Wenden, 1998; Horwitz, 1987a). However, beliefs are distinct from metacognitive knowledge. The former is value-related and tends to be held more tenaciously while the latter is viewed as factual, objective information, acquired through formal learning (Alexander and Dochy, 1995). Normally, beliefs are viewed as individual subjective understanding, idiosyncratic truths, which are often value-related and characterized by a commitment not present in knowledge. Flavell (1987)

suggests that beliefs about learning are a component of metacognitive knowledge which consists of what learners know about learning, and to the extent a learner has made distinctions.

Language learning beliefs are also defined as learners' "general assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing language learning and about the nature of language learning and teaching" (Victori and Lockhart 1995, p. 224).

In order to distinguish the three terms 'knowledge', 'assumption' and 'beliefs', Woods (1996, p. 195) defines the terms as follows:

"... 'knowledge' refers to things we 'know'-conventionally accepted, it generally means that it has been demonstrated or is demonstrable...the term 'assumption' normally refers to the (temporary) acceptance of a fact (state, process or relationship) which we cannot say we know, and which has not been demonstrated, but which we are taking as true for the time being.....assumptions may also refer to working assumptions: 'facts' that we may know in a large context are not true, but which we will take as being true for the purpose of carrying out an activity....beliefs refer to an acceptance of a proposition for which there is no conventional knowledge, one that is not demonstrable, and for which there is accepted disagreement".

Pajares (1992) expresses the need to distinguish between 'beliefs' and 'knowledge' and explains that knowledge is based on objective fact, while beliefs are based on evaluation and judgment. Further, defining beliefs is at best a game of player's choice. Below is an extensive list of words which can be found in the literature as a reference of *beliefs*:

"attitude, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoires of understanding, and social strategy" (p. 309).

In conclusion, beliefs are subjective ideas about what human beings think is true about the world and about themselves, and are formed through their interaction with the world. These beliefs might be correct or incorrect according to the holders'

attitudes toward the world. As beliefs influence human beings' behavior in their lives, it is necessary to trace back to where these beliefs are from and how they are formed.

2.4.2 How Beliefs are Formed?

How can beliefs be captured? It is a challenging question to ask what learners believe. Peacock (1999) set a question in his interview to ask the participants 'from where did you get your beliefs about language learning?'. He found that it was an effective question since many learners did not seem to know the origin of their beliefs.

In the literature of social and cognitive psychology, it is still a debate to what extent beliefs are not only social and cultural but also mental and individual. In a social and cultural psychology view, beliefs are understandings which arise from an individual's life history and educational experience and which the basis is for value judgments and beliefs are constructed in a social context (Dole and Sinatra, 1994). In the cognitive psychology, some scholars consider beliefs as well-organized schemata and suggest that the formation of beliefs is an individual autonomous act and each belief bears the mark of the individuals. Language learners are seen as active and responsible participants who learn from their own experience, make their own choices and respond to events as the learners perceive them (Williams and Burden, 1997).

Some researchers (e.g. Horwitz, 1985; Roberts, 1992; Kern, 1995) point out that learners' beliefs about language learning originate from their second language learning experience, particularly in grammar translation and in the audio-lingual classrooms in secondary schools. These researchers also suggest that teachers of a second/foreign language probably acquire their beliefs from either their methodology courses or their real teaching.

In his longitudinal study about the Chinese learners in Hong Kong, Peacock (2001) proposes that the Chinese learners may have acquired their beliefs in secondary schools where rote learning and an emphasis on grammar were frequently used as strategies for learning. This viewpoint is similar to that of some other researchers such as Richards and Lockhart (1994), and Ho and Crookall (1995).

Johnson (1996) conducted a qualitative study of beliefs held by four English as a second-language teachers. Beliefs were inferred from teachers' narratives, intentions and instructional practices. One of the most important implications of the findings of this study was that the teachers' beliefs were largely based on images from their formal language learning experience and that these beliefs may have been responsible for the teachers' ineffectual teaching practices.

In sum, few empirical studies have focused on the formation of beliefs of both learners and teachers which provide a deep understanding of beliefs in relation to language learning and teaching. Therefore, it is also very helpful to discuss briefly what sorts of beliefs are held by EFL learners and teachers.

2.4.3 Characteristics of Beliefs

According to Pajares (1992), beliefs are related to knowledge, but are more affective, more idiosyncratic, and more evaluative. They are formed in one's early life and they are self-perpetuating and are not easily changed. Furthermore, Pajares (1992, p. 314) states that "beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do –fundamental prerequisites that educational researchers have seldom followed". In reality, beliefs have also proved difficult to identify and classify in a systematic way (Benson and Lor, 1999).

One of the characteristics of learners' beliefs, as Kern (1995, p. 76) points out, that they are 'quite well entrenched' and do not automatically change when learners are merely exposed to new methods. It has been characterized that some beliefs are more important than others to individuals, and the more important the belief is, the more difficult it is to change. However, if one central belief is changed, other beliefs within this person's system of beliefs are affected (Rokeach, 1968). Another characteristic is identified by Flavell (1987) which is that beliefs are a part of self-knowledge, which includes all that individuals understand about themselves as learners and thinkers, including their learning goals and needs.

In cognitive psychology, beliefs about language learning are viewed as a component of metacognitive knowledge (Wenden, 1998; 1999). According to Wenden (1999, p. 436), metacognitive knowledge is made up of 'a system of related ideas, some accepted without question and other validated by their experience'. Further, beliefs are valued-related and tend to be held more tenaciously. In other words, beliefs are not easily changed in one's life unless some of them are affected by certain events.

In his research, Biggs (1992) suggests that beliefs are always contextualized in relation to some learning tasks or situations. It can be considered that beliefs are not likely to be held by the learners under all circumstances. Rather, they are likely to be held to cope with specific content and contexts of learning. Similarly, Benson and Lor (1999, p. 464) state that "conceptions and beliefs are understood as relational and responsive to context". In other words, beliefs are made manifest in approaches to learning, which can also be analyzed in terms of a quantitative/qualitative distinction.

Besides, beliefs have also been said to “act as very strong filters of reality” (Arnold, 1999, p. 256).

Based on what has been mentioned above, some of the important characteristics of beliefs can be summarized as follows:

- Beliefs are formed in one’s early life;
- Beliefs are not easily changed;
- Beliefs influence belief-holders’ behavior in language teaching and learning; and
- Beliefs influence both perceptions and behavior and they need not be consistent.

To sum up, much has been said in relation to the beliefs namely, definitions of beliefs, how beliefs are formed, and the characteristics of beliefs. Beliefs are described as subjective ideas about what human beings think is true about the world and about themselves, and are formed through their interactions with the world. Beliefs are characterized by being formed in one’s early life and they are not easily changed. Beliefs influence the belief-holder’s perceptions and behavior, and need not be consistent. The following section will focus on pre-service and in-service teachers’ beliefs and past research work.

2.5 Previous Studies on Pre-service and In-service Teachers’ Beliefs

Recently, there has been an increased focus on learners’ and teachers’ beliefs in relation to the nature of language learning and teaching in an attempt to account for individual differences in language learning (Cotteral, 1995; Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Wenden, 1986a). Therefore, beliefs about English language learning have

become one of the most widely discussed topics in the field of both general education and teacher education.

In this section, the focus is on past research works related to learners' and teachers' beliefs. With respect to the section on teachers' beliefs, the importance of teachers' beliefs in language teaching and teachers' beliefs and the process of change will be dealt with. Finally, it will end with a comparison between learners' and teachers' beliefs.

2.5.1 Pre-service Teachers' Beliefs about Language Learning

Based on the findings about the relationships between teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices above, researchers have been interested in investigating how pre-service teachers' beliefs are developed. As suggested by the assumptions about the development of beliefs, researchers assume that pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs with preconceived ideas about learning and teaching that are from two main sources namely: (1) their learning experience as language learners, and (2) experiences from teacher education programs.

Lortie's (1975) *apprenticeship of observation* is a phenomenon that is well known among researchers in the field. He proposed that pre-service teachers started their apprenticeship when they were students, and thus they started developing their beliefs about teaching and learning early from that experience. He found that there is a connection between teachers' current classroom practices and those of their teachers. The findings from Johnson (1994) lend support to this. She found that pre-service teachers' instructional practices were influenced by their experiences from their formal learning. Researchers propose that pre-service teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching may be influenced by the ideas they learned from their teaching

methodology classes or by the experiences they gained during their practice teaching program (Johnson, 1994; Horwitz, 1985; Kern, 1995; Richards and Lockhart, 1996).

However, some researchers argue that beliefs of advanced language learners, like those of pre-service teachers, may not be influenced by the experiences from the teacher education program. Tatto (1998) claimed that “Little empirical evidence exists on the influence of teacher education on teachers’ values and beliefs. Consensus exists that teacher education has little effect on altering teachers’ beliefs” (p. 66).

Considering the complex and idiosyncratic nature of beliefs, Wenden (1998) proposed that beliefs are relatively stable. Similarly, Dole and Sinatra (1994) supported that it is not easy for beliefs to change, especially the *central* change or permanent change in beliefs.

Evidence of the inflexibility of beliefs about language learning was found in Peacock (2001). In an investigation of pre-service EFL teachers in Hong Kong over the course of a three-year teacher education program, Peacock (2001) found consistency in the mismatch between beliefs of pre-service teachers and in-service teachers over the course of the program. This study was begun with the hope that while students’ beliefs about language learning might differ from experienced ESL teachers’ beliefs at the beginning of their program, they would change by the end of the program. However, the 146 TESL students had 3 key beliefs about language learning that differed from experienced ESL teachers’ beliefs and these beliefs changed very little over their 3 years of study of TESL methodology namely, (1) learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words; (2) learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules; and (3) people who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.

Peacock (2001) concluded that beliefs of pre-service teachers “are slow or very slow to change” (p. 181). This is consistent with Kern (1995) who found that beliefs of advanced learners may be more resistant to change, when compared with those of novice learners. He found that the beliefs of his French I students showed some changes over the course of the study program; whereas, beliefs of the French II students were more stable.

However, as suggested by Dole and Sinatra (1994), beliefs may change if learners have gone through a process of critical thinking about the particular subject. Evidence was shown in Peacock (2001). After finding that the pre-service teachers’ beliefs did not change over the course of the regular teacher preparation program, he designed and implemented an instruction package in one of the pre-service teachers’ elective courses. He observed some changes in beliefs of the pre-service teachers after they finished his instruction package, which included five stages:

(1) Trainees were told that some of their beliefs differed from experienced ESL teacher’s beliefs.

(2) Trainees were shown their BALLI results compared with the results from experienced ESL teachers

(3) Trainees were referred to five readings that discussed the benefits of more communicative approaches to teaching ESL.

(4) Classes were divided into small groups and given to discussion topics—“What I learned through the communicative approach” and “What are the pros and cons of the communicative approach?”

(5) Trainees were shown videotapes of two successful ESL lessons in local schools in which the teachers used more communicative approaches.

Peacock's instruction package required the pre-service teachers to think deeply and analytically about topics of communicative approaches. This thinking process might lead to some adjustment of beliefs concerning this approach, as concluded by Peacock (2001).

From what has been mentioned above, given the complexity of beliefs and the accumulation of experiences pre-service teachers have, their beliefs may not change easily. However, evidence was shown that beliefs may change if pre-service teachers are confronted with the new information that was processed through critical thinking. Considering the amount and level of the thinking that pre-service teachers have to do in their teaching practice, the experience they gained from their teaching practice may be influential to the adjustment of their beliefs when compared with the learning experience in the regular classes in teacher education program. The actual experience in the classroom may counteract with or confirm pre-service teachers' pre-existing ideas, especially about what and how a second language should be learned given the current teaching and learning situations, effects of the teaching practice experience on pre-service teachers' beliefs are worth investigating further.

2.5.2 In-Service Teachers' Beliefs about Language Learning

Research interests in beliefs about language learning are not limited to those of language learners. Several studies have investigated beliefs about the language learning of both in-service and pre-service teachers. These studies were designed based on the hypothesis that teachers' beliefs may influence learners' beliefs through instructional practices. As Johnson (1994) concludes:

Research on teachers' beliefs share three basic assumptions. First, teachers' beliefs influence both perception and judgment which, in turn, affects what teachers say and do in classrooms. Second, teachers' beliefs play a critical role in how teachers learn to teach that is, how they interpret new information about learning and teaching and how that information is translated into classroom practices. And third, understanding teachers' beliefs is essential to improving teaching practices and professional teacher preparation programs (p. 439).

Teachers' beliefs represent a complex and inter-related system of personal and professional knowledge. Kagan (1992, p. 85) argues that teachers' beliefs may be "the clearest measure of a teachers' professional growth" that understanding them is "instrumental in determining the quality of interaction one finds among teachers in a given school". The study of teachers' beliefs forms part of the process of understanding how teachers conceptualize their work (Richards, Gallo and Renandya, 2001).

The difference between knowledge and beliefs is that when information (i.e. knowledge) is not available, teachers will rely on beliefs to guide them. Subsequently, a number of further definitions have been developed to deal with the complex area of types of knowledge and beliefs.

In terms of the definition of teachers' beliefs, Basturkmen, Loewen and Ellis (2004, p. 244) define teachers' beliefs as "statement made about their (teachers') ideas, thoughts, and knowledge that are expressed as evaluations of what 'should be done', 'should be that case', and 'is preferable'". Undoubtedly, the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which affect their behavior in the classroom, and the materials and activities they choose for the classroom (Pajares, 1992; Hampton, 1994; Borg, 2001). In his recent study, Gan (2004) suggests that teachers' awareness of learners' positive attitudes toward self-directed learning, and a shared view of learners as metacognitively active seekers of knowledge and skill,

could have a significant impact on their approach to foreign/second language teaching.

It is important to examine language teachers' beliefs as well as to examine how teachers' beliefs are formed. The majority of past research studies show that the most resilient of 'core' teachers' beliefs are formed from the basis of teachers' own schooling as young students while observing teachers who taught them (Clark and Peterson, 1986). These beliefs stem from learners' previous learning experience what Lortie (1975) has called 'apprenticeship of observation'.

Within the domain of teachers' beliefs, there are various types of beliefs which include beliefs about teaching effectiveness (teacher efficacy), beliefs about values, beliefs about teaching and learning, beliefs about learners, beliefs about teachers themselves, and beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowledge acquisition.

Another important aspect of teachers' beliefs is the conception of change in the teachers' teaching practice. Hampton (1994, p.129) suggest that "some of the teachers' beliefs are changeable, but others are impermeable and difficult or impossible to change." Regarding the reasons which result in changes of teachers' beliefs, Richards, Gallo and Renandya (2001, p.55) conclude that "changes in teachers' practices are the result of changes in teachers' beliefs".

The subsequent section will discuss in detail the importance of teachers' beliefs in language learning, pre-service teachers' beliefs in teacher education, and teachers' beliefs and the process of change.

2.5.2.1 The Importance of Teachers' Beliefs in Language Learning

In the long history of mankind, teachers have always been at the forefront of the development of education. Even in a time of advancement in

educational technology with many innovative applications such as Computer-Assisted-Language-Learning, Web-Based education, E-education, Distance education, we still need teachers as these innovations cannot replace teachers. Teachers are actually the key players who determine the success or failure of the educational process (Suwanawongse, 2002).

In the language learning context, obviously, teachers play a very important role. It is, therefore, of great importance to study what teachers believe in teaching. Pajares (1992, p. 307) argues that ‘teacher’s beliefs can and should become an important focus of educational inquiry’. He suggests that beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behavior. It is no doubt that the beliefs that teachers hold directly affect both their perceptions and judgments of teaching and learning, interactions in the classroom, and that these affect their teaching behavior (Clark and Peterson, 1986). Similarly, Mantle-Bromley (1995) concludes that teachers need to have a clear understanding of learners’ beliefs about foreign language learning because learners with realistic and informed beliefs are more likely to behave productively in class, work harder outside class, and persist longer with language study.

McDonough (1995, p. 9) indicates that beliefs can be important incentives for behavior:

“...what we believe we are doing, what we pay attention to, what we think is important, how we choose to behave, how we prefer to solve problems, form the basis for our personal decisions as to how to proceed. An important fact about this argument is that it is not necessary for these kinds of evidence to be true for them to have important consequences for our further development”.

In the language learning context, teachers' beliefs play an important part in the process of language learning. As Williams and Burden (1997, p. 56) put forth:

“Teachers' beliefs about what learning is will affect everything they do in the classroom, whether these beliefs are implicit or explicit. Even if a teacher acts spontaneously, or from habit without thinking about the action, such actions are nevertheless prompted by a deep-rooted belief that may never have been articulated or made explicit. If the teacher-as-educator is one who is constantly re-evaluating in the light of new knowledge his or her beliefs about language, or about how language is learned, or about education as a whole, then it is crucial that teachers first understand and articulate their own theoretical perspectives”

Wen and Johnson (1997, p.40) suggest that ‘the direct effect of belief variables on strategy variables were strong and consistent, reinforcing the view that teachers and materials writers need to be aware of , and sensitive to, students pre-existing assumption about the language learning process’. Similarly, some researchers (e.g. Richards, Gallo and Renandya, 2001; Hampton, 1994) agree that teachers' beliefs strongly affect the materials and activities they choose for classroom as well as determine how they approach their teaching.

2.5.2.2 Teachers' Beliefs and the Process of Change

Although studies on teachers' beliefs have gradually gained prominence, with regard to the issue of teacher change, it still does not receive adequate attention (Cabaroglu and Roberts, 2000; Sato and Kleinsasser, 2004). The term ‘teacher change’ refers to many things, including knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, understanding, self-awareness, and teaching practice (Bailey, 1992; Jackson, 1992). The notion of teacher change is crucial to the field of second language teacher education as it plays a central role in the process of teacher development, and it is multi-dimensional and triggered both by personal factors as well as by the professional contexts in which teachers work (Richards *et al.*, 2001).

Teachers have many beliefs about education, teaching and learning, which come from their experience in the classroom. As a result of teachers enriching their teaching experience, some changes must take place. Some researchers (e.g. Bailey, 1992; Golombek, 1998; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell and Lloyd, 1991; Richards *et al.*, 2001) affirm the notion that changes in teachers' beliefs precede changes in their teaching practice. However, Guskey (1986) examined 52 teachers who participated in teacher development programs and concluded that change in teachers' beliefs 'is likely to take place only after changes in student learning outcomes are evidenced'. Richardson (1996, p. 104) suggests that 'beliefs are thought to drive action; however, experience and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or additions to beliefs'.

Mattheoudakis (2006) conducted a longitudinal study among 66 full-time undergraduates in the School of English at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki through the BALLI questionnaire. This study aimed to track possible changes in those beliefs during a 3-year teacher education program and explores the impact of teaching practice, in particular, on student teachers' beliefs. The results indicated that while there is a gradual and sometimes significant development in student teachers' beliefs during the program, student teachers' engagement in the teaching practice seems to have a low impact on the development of their beliefs.

In sum, as illustrated above, teachers' beliefs are important in the process of language teaching and learning. It is a critical issue to educate pre-service teachers so that they can acquire facilitative or appropriate beliefs in their teaching practice. Furthermore, the changes in the teachers' beliefs are also worth investigating since the beliefs can partly or mostly dominate teachers' behavior in the classroom. In

the next section, a comparison between pre-service teachers' and in-service teachers' beliefs will be discussed.

2.5.3 A Comparison Between Students' and Teachers' Beliefs

In the language learning context, whether teachers and learners believe in the same or different aspects regarding language learning, has become a very important issue recently. Given the significant role that beliefs play in determining behavior, both teachers' and learners' beliefs in relation to language learning are equally important. Undoubtedly, teachers' beliefs influence how they go about teaching, and learners' beliefs influence how they conceptualize their learning and the way they interpret learning within the classroom context.

The empirical studies conducted by Horwitz (1988), Kern (1995) and Mantle-Bromley (1995) all employed the 34-item BALLI to investigate learners' and teachers' beliefs. The researchers compared the similarities and differences between learners' and teachers' beliefs. All of these studies found similar results and reached similar conclusions. According to Peacock (1999), one of the common results is that learners seemed to underestimate the difficulty of language learning and also hold misconceptions about how to learn foreign languages. They also, perhaps, gave more value to 'an excellent accent' than do foreign language teachers. In Horwitz's study, one of the results is that learners believed in the existence of foreign language aptitude, but did not believe that they themselves possessed that aptitude.

Another issue is about learners' beliefs and their performances. As mentioned earlier, Mantle-Bromley (1995, p. 381) proposed in her study that when learners' beliefs and performances do not match, the learners "become frustrated with the class

and with themselves” and that certain misinformed “beliefs and expectations may actually prove harmful to their success in the classroom”.

Following these studies, Peacock (1999) compared the beliefs about English language learning held by 202 university students and 45 EFL teachers in the Department of English at the City University of Hong Kong. Several broad differences were found notably regarding Horwitz’s (1998) two core beliefs about vocabulary and grammar. Firstly, nearly two thirds of learners believed that ‘learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary’, but only one fifth of the teachers agreed. Then, about two thirds of the learners believed that ‘learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules’, while only a small number of the teachers agreed. The third finding showed that about half of the learners believed that ‘people who speak more than one language well are very intelligent’, but only one fifth of the teachers agreed. Finally, Peacock (1999) concluded that learners reported believing that ‘learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary’ may focus on memorizing vocabulary lists, to the exclusion of teacher directed tasks.

Davis (2003) conducted a study on whether beliefs about language learning held by teachers and students coincided or differed. Eighteen full-time teachers of English and 97 students in a Chinese-English translation program participated in this research. The results indicated points of congruence between teachers and students differed in their beliefs in four other areas. Some useful questions were raised, such as, should teachers simply acquiesce in students’ wishes, even though, in their own judgment, they may not serve what they consider to be the best practice of language learning? How do beliefs affect practice? What happens if teachers’ and learners’

beliefs differ, i.e. what is, and what should be, the impact of this difference on practice?

Eslami-Rasekh and Valizadeh (2004) investigated learners' beliefs about different learning activities and the degree of discrepancy between learners' preferences and instructors' awareness of those preferences in foreign language learning. The results indicated that, in communicative activities, there is a significant difference between learners' preferences and instructors' perception of those preferences. Learners' preferences for communicative activities were significantly higher than their instructors' beliefs. The research also showed that instructors are not fully aware of learners' preferences in relation to communicative activities.

In fact, learners' beliefs do not change naturally even if they are exposed to new methods and techniques (Kern, 1995). If learners hold incorrect beliefs about language learning, these misconceptions negatively affect language learning. It may be advisable for EFL teachers to take a more active role in finding out precisely what beliefs their learners hold, and to work towards correcting some of those beliefs (Peacock, 1999).

In her study of investigating learners' and teachers' beliefs about language learning, Horwitz (1988) found some gaps between learners' and teachers' beliefs. These gaps probably result in 'negative (language learning) outcomes' (p.292). This finding is supported by a number of other researchers, such as Mantle-Bromley (1995), Cotterall (1995), and Littlewood, Liu and Yu (1996). In the same study, Horwitz also suggests that gaps between teachers' and learners' beliefs can lead to a reduction in learner's confidence and satisfaction with the class and to unwillingness to participate in 'communicative' activities (p.290). In her conclusion, she argued that

‘...teachers will likely encounter...many unanticipated beliefs, some enabling and some truly detrimental to successful language learning... foreign language teachers can ill afford to ignore those beliefs if they expect their students to be open to particular teaching methods and to receive the maximum benefit from them’ (p.293). According to Horwitz (1988), if learners believe language learning means mainly learning vocabulary and grammar rules, they will spend most of their time memorizing vocabulary lists and grammar rules rather than doing the tasks their teacher plans for them.

To sum up, learners’ and teachers’ beliefs about language learning have played a very important role both in the process and achievement of language learning. BALLI questionnaires were often used or modified for use in a number of studies in order to investigate learners’ beliefs, teachers’ beliefs as well as to compare learners’ and teachers’ beliefs. Interviews are sometimes used by a few researchers in order to triangulate the data from the questionnaire. Most of the research studies have been conducted with native speakers of English learning other foreign languages. Although a few studies were conducted with non-native speakers of English, such as in China , Taiwan , Thailand, Japan, Turkey and Lebanon , etc., very little research work touches on similarities and differences in learners’ and teachers’ beliefs about learning English as a foreign language, in particular, at the tertiary level.

In order to present a clear overall picture of the related studies mentioned in this section, the main research works of learners’ beliefs and teachers’ beliefs about language learning in relation to the present study will be presented in the following pattern:

- Author followed by title of research study
- Purpose of study
- Research questions
- Participants
- Data collection method
- Investigated variables, and
- Data analysis and
- Results

The previous research studies on beliefs about language learning will be presented in a chronological order as follows:

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning

1. Horwitz, E. K. (1988). The Beliefs about Language learning of Beginning University Foreign Language Students.	
Purpose of study	To assess students' opinions on a variety of issues and controversies about foreign language learning
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are common beliefs about language learning of a typical group of beginning university students? 2. What are specific beliefs these students hold?
Participants	80 university students learning German, 63 learning French, and 98 learning Spanish at the University of Texas at Austin
Data Collection Method	The Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI)
Investigated Variables	Three groups of students from target languages
Data Analysis	Descriptive Statistics
Results	<p>The similarities of beliefs among the different target language groups were found. They are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students from the 3 groups support the concept of a language learning difficulty hierarchy 2. The students were also generally optimistic about their own prognosis as language learners

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

2. Kern, R.G. (1995). Students' and Teachers' Beliefs about Language Learning	
Purpose of study	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To compare one group of students' beliefs about language learning with those of their teachers and with those of their peers at another institution; and 2. To examine change in students' beliefs in relation to those of their instructors
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do beginning French students at the University of California, Berkeley, believe about language learning? 2. Do students' beliefs change over the course of one semester of French instruction or do they remain stable?
Participants	288 university students learning French and 12 instructors at the University of California, Berkley.
Data Collection Method	The Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI)
Investigated Variables	None
Data Analysis	Descriptive Statistics
Results	When viewed from a global perspective, the instructors and students appear to have relatively few conflicts in their beliefs.
3. White, C. (1999). Expectations and Emergent Beliefs of Self-instructed Language Learners.	
Purpose of study	To investigate how learners experienced and articulated their experience in a solo distance language learning context
Research Questions	None
Participants	23 beginners of Japanese and Spanish who choose distance learning at Massey University, New Zealand
Data Collection Method	Interviews, open-ended questionnaires
Investigated Variables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-instructed language learning 2. Solo language learning context
Data Analysis	Content Analysis
Results	The learner-context interface , tolerance of ambiguity and locust of control emerged from the reports as central to an understanding of how learners conceptualized the initial stages of the process of self-instructed language learning

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

4. Yang, Nae Dong (1999). The Relationship between EFL Learners' Beliefs and Learning Strategy Use.	
Purpose of study	To investigate the relationship between College EFL students' beliefs about language learning and their use of learning strategies
Research Questions	How are foreign language/second language learners' beliefs about language learning related to their learning strategy use?
Participants	505 University students in Taiwan
Data Collection Method	Questionnaires based on modified BALLI and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)
Investigated Variables	None
Data Analysis	Descriptive Statistics and factor analysis
Results	One of the results is that language learners' self-efficacy beliefs about learning English were strongly related to their use of all types of learning strategies, especially functional practice strategies
5. Cotterall, S. (1999), Key Variables in Language Learning: What do Learners Believe about them?	
Purpose of study	To examine learners' beliefs about sets of factors and encourage learners to adopt autonomous approaches to their language learning
Research Questions	None
Participants	131 learners of English as a second language at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Data Collection Method	A researcher-designed questionnaire
Investigated Variables	Six key variables: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the role of teacher 2. the role of feedback 3. the learners' sense of self-efficacy 4. important strategies 5. dimensions of strategies-related behavior; and 6. the nature of language learning
Data Analysis	Descriptive analysis
Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adding new items based on the factor structure previously identified. 2. Incorporating items designed as a result of a survey of current research in second language acquisition 3. Providing a learner perspective on topics in the SLA literature which researchers and teachers often claim as their domain

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

6. Peacock, M. (1999). Beliefs about Language Learning and their Relationship to Proficiency	
Purpose of study	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To examine if the differences between learners' and teachers' beliefs about language learning affect proficiency 2. To develop hypotheses about the origin of Chinese learners' beliefs about language learning 3. To check the correlation between learner self-rated proficiency and tested proficiency
Research Questions	None
Participants	202 EFL students and 45 EFL teachers in the Department of English at the City University of Hong Kong
Data Collection method	BALLI questionnaire, a comprehensive proficiency test, a semi-structured interview, a self-rated proficiency test
Investigated Variables	Gender
Data Analysis	Descriptive statistics (mean scores, frequencies and standard deviations)
Results	A significant difference by gender in skill at estimating their overall ability, and also their ability in listening and in reading
7. Sakui, K. and Gaies, S.J. (1999). Investigating Japanese Learners' Beliefs about Language Learning.	
Purpose of study	To investigate the value of interview data, to compliment and explain questionnaire data, and to describe the beliefs about language learning of Japanese learners of English
Research Questions	None
Participants	1296 university Japanese students learning English as a foreign language
Data Collection method	Questionnaire and interview
Investigated Variables	Levels of colleges and universities
Data Analysis	Descriptive statistics and Factor analysis
Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Without complementary source of data, learners' responses to questionnaires can be easily misinterpreted as evidence of instrument unreliability 2. Many of the respondents' beliefs about learning English correspond to the distinction which many teachers would make between traditional and contemporary approaches to language teaching and learning

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

8. Cabaroglu, N. and Roberts, J. (2000). Development in Student Teachers' Pre-existing Beliefs during a 1-year PGCE Program.	
Purpose of study	To test student teachers' beliefs on language teaching and learning
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What beliefs do the student teachers hold about learning/teaching a foreign language on entry into the PGCE program? 2. What are the beliefs of the student teachers concerning the roles of a MFL teacher on entry into the PGCE program? 3. What are the beliefs of the student teachers concerning the roles of a pupil in a MFL classroom?
Participants	25 teacher students on the 1997-1998 PGCE secondary courses at the University of Reading, UK
Data Collection Method	Written language learning autobiography, Three in-depth interviews and End-of-course questionnaire
Investigated Variables	None
Data Analysis	The process of analysis followed a sequence of interpretive acts: familiarization, coding, clustering, operational definition, re-organization and testing
Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student teachers' beliefs development is highly variable between individuals 2. Belief development is essentially cumulative and evolutionary in nature
9. Peacock, M. (2001). Pre-Service ESL Teachers' Beliefs about Second Language Learning: A Longitudinal Study.	
Purpose of study	To investigate changes in the beliefs about second language learning of trainee ESL teachers
Research Questions	Do TESL trainees have any beliefs about language learning that differ from experienced ESL teachers' beliefs?
Participants	146 trainee ESL teachers over their 3-year program at the City University of Hong Kong
Data Collection Method	Learner self-report questionnaire based on BALLI, ESL proficiency scores, An instruction package and Class observations
Investigated Variables	Teaching experience
Data Analysis	The use of one-way analysis of variance/Scheffe.
Results	Three key beliefs about language learning differed from experienced ESL teachers' beliefs, and these beliefs changed very little over their 3 years of study of TESL methodology

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

10. Davis, A. (2003). Teachers' and Students' Beliefs Regarding Aspects of Language Learning	
Purpose of study	To explore the similarities and dissimilarities between teachers' and students' conceptions of language learning
Research Questions	None
Participants	18 teachers of English and 97 institute students in Macao, China
Data Collection method	A closed questionnaire
Investigated Variables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Years of study 2. Types of class (day and night)
Data Analysis	Data were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences(frequencies and percentages)
Results	<p>Teachers and students differed in their beliefs in 4 areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The earlier a second language is introduced in schools, the greater the likelihood of success in learning 2. Teachers should present grammatical rules one at a time and students should practice examples of each one before going onto another 3. Students' errors should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits 4. Teachers should use materials that expose students only to those language structures that they have already been taught
11. Eslami-Rasekh, Z. and Valizadeh, K. (2004). Classroom Activities Viewed from Different Perspectives: Learners' Voice and Teachers' Voice.	
Purpose of study	To investigate learners' beliefs about different learning activities and the degree of discrepancy between learners' preferences and instructors' awareness of those preferences in foreign language learning
Research Questions	None
Participants	376 female and 227 male undergraduates, 27 instructors at Texas University, The USA
Data Collection Method	Questionnaires
Investigated Variables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students' major field of study 2. Communicative activities
Data Analysis	The Mann-Whitney U test, which is the nonparametric equivalent of independent sample t-test, was used.
Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In communicative activities, there is a significance between students' preferences and instructors' perception of those preferences 2. Students' preferences for communicative activities were significantly higher than their instructors' beliefs

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

12. Intaraprasert, C. (2004). An Investigation of Beliefs about Learning English by Thai and Vietnamese University Science-oriented Students: A Cross-Cultural Perspective.	
Purpose of study	To examine the learners' beliefs about learning English in Thailand and Vietnam as well as to investigate the similarities and differences of learners' beliefs
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the degrees of the discrete learner belief items about language learning reported being held by science-oriented students learning English at the tertiary level in Thailand and Vietnam? 2. Do the degrees of the learner beliefs about language learning vary significantly according to the cultural context they belong to? If they do, what are the main patterns of variation?
Participants	344 Thai and 319 Vietnamese university students
Data Collection Method	Modified BALLI
Investigated Variables	Nationalities: Thai and Vietnamese
Data Analysis	Descriptive statistics and Chi-Square tests
Results	Similarities and differences in beliefs about learning English responded to by the students from two countries were found. It is concluded that the cultural background of learners has a strong relationship with learners' beliefs in most of the examined aspects.
13. Vibulphol, J. (2004). Beliefs about Language Learning and Teaching Approaches of Pre-Service EFL Teachers in Thailand.	
Purpose of study	To investigate beliefs about language learning during practice teaching of pre-service EFL teachers in Thailand and the relationship between beliefs about language learning and teaching approaches
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What beliefs about language learning do Thai pre-service EFL teachers report having before and after practice teaching? 2. Are there any significant differences between their reported beliefs before and after practice teaching? 3. Are there any relationships between reported beliefs about language learning and teaching approaches?
Participants	42 pre-service EFL teachers. Twenty-seven pre-service teachers were from Chulalongkorn University. Fifteen were from Chiang Mai University.
Data Collection Method	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modified BALLI (42 subjects for First phase) 2. Interviews and Observations (4 for Second phase)
Data Analysis	The use of Spearman's Rho Correlation Analysis
Results	Most Thai pre-service EFL teachers shared similar beliefs about language learning and most beliefs did not change much after their practice teaching.

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

14. Xiuping, Li. (2005). An Analysis of Chinese EFL Learners' Beliefs about the Role of Rote Learning in Vocabulary Learning Strategies.	
Purpose of study	1.To promote a concrete understanding of the concept of RL in the literature 2.To explore Chinese EFL learners' culturally based beliefs about their preference for RL strategies 3.To offer a challenge to widely-held beliefs that Confucian culture is a negative influence on learning
Research Questions	None
Participants	100 Chinese university learners in the northeast area of China
Data Collection method	Questionnaires, interviews, and an English vocabulary test
Investigated Variables	Six factors(Chinese educational/ cultural background; EFL environment; traditional habit; national situation/examination demand; Chinese linguistic background/the way of learning mother-tongue; and failure to try out 'best' strategies)
Data analysis	Descriptive analysis, content analysis and factor analysis
Results	Chinese EFL learners believe that RL strategies are preferable to other memory strategies for learning and memorizing vocabulary. They hold positive beliefs about RL, because they consider RL strategies to be consistent with traditional Chinese culture and values.
15. Mattheoudakis, M. (2006). Tracking Changes in Pre-service EFL Teachers' Beliefs in Greece: a Longitudinal Study.	
Purpose of study	To track possible changes in those beliefs during a 3-year teacher education program and explore the impact of teaching practice, in particular, on student teachers' beliefs
Research Questions	None
Participants	66 full-time undergraduates in the School of English at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Data Collection method	BALLI Questionnaire
Investigated Variables	Practice and non-practice groups
Data analysis	The use of an independent samples t-test.
Results	Student teachers' engagement in teaching practice did not have the expected impact on the development of their beliefs

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

16. Diab R. (2006). University Students' Beliefs about Learning English and French in Lebanon.	
Purpose of study	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To explore the beliefs about language learning of Lebanese English as a foreign language university students 2. To compare their beliefs about learning different target languages, namely English and French
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To investigate within-group variation in these students' beliefs
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the beliefs about language learning in general, learning English and learning French of EFL university students in Lebanon? 2. How do the beliefs about learning English of EFL university students in Lebanon compare to their beliefs about learning French? 3. Are there any statistically significant differences in beliefs among EFL university students in Lebanon related to factors such as gender, major field of study, or language-medium educational background (English vs. French)?
Participants	284 undergraduate students enrolled in English language courses in 3 universities in Lebanon: the American University of Beirut (AUB), the Lebanese American University (LAU), and the University of Balamand (UOB)
Data Collection method	Modified BALLI and a background questionnaire
Investigated Variables	Gender, major field of study and language-medium educational background
Data Analysis	Factor analysis and MANOVA
Results	Findings revealed that the students hold a variety of beliefs about learning English and French, many of which seem to be related to the political and social-cultural context of foreign language education in Lebanon

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

17. Wang, J. (2008). Beliefs about English Language Learning Held by Chinese University Students and Teachers In The People's Republic of China.	
Purpose of study	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To explore beliefs about English language learning held by Chinese non-English major university students and teachers in the southwest of China 2. To explore variation patterns of learners' beliefs about English language learning associated with their gender, field of study and level of language proficiency
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To explore variation patterns of teachers' beliefs about English Language learning associated with their gender, academic degree, and their years of teaching experiences 4. To explore the existence of similarities and differences of beliefs held by Chinese non-English major university students and their teachers
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the percentages of Chinese non-English major university students /teachers reporting discrete beliefs about learning English? 2. Do learners' beliefs about learning English vary significantly with their gender, major field of study, and level of language proficiency? If they do, what are the main significant variation patterns? 3. Do teachers' beliefs about learning English vary significantly with their gender, academic degree, and teaching experience? If they do, what are the main significant variation patterns? 4. Do beliefs about learning English held by Chinese non-English major university students and their teachers of English vary significantly? If they do, what are the main significant variation patterns?
Participants	1214 students and 207 teachers
Data Collection method	Two questionnaires and semi-structured interviews
Investigated Variables	<p>For students: gender, field of study and level of language proficiency</p> <p>For teachers: gender, academic degree, and their years of teaching experiences</p>
Data Analysis	Descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests
Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significant differences were found in beliefs about English learning in terms of students' gender, field of study and level of language proficiency 2. Significant differences were found in beliefs about English learning in terms of teachers' gender, and teaching experience, but with regard to their academic degree, only to some extent.

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

18. Polat, N. (2010). Pedagogical Treatment and Change in Pre-service Teacher Beliefs: An Experimental Study.	
Purpose of study	To address if pre-service English as a foreign language teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of authentic, commercial, and teacher-made instructional materials can be changed after a semester-long pedagogical treatment
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do pre-service EFL teacher beliefs about the effectiveness of authentic, commercial, and teacher-made instructional materials regarding five aspects (pedagogy, program, learner, language, and practicality-related) vary significantly? 2. Did their beliefs change after the structured pedagogical treatment about the effectiveness of these instructional materials? If so, which of the five aspects of these materials did the change occur?
Participants	90 pre-service EFL teachers (Experimental: 45, Control: 45)
Data Collection method	Questionnaires, Semi-structured interviews, and retrospective reflection essays
Investigated Variables	None
Data Analysis	t-tests, multivariate analysis , and interview transcriptions
Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quantitative results indicated that the change in the pattern of results across the five aspects of these materials was significant 2. Qualitative results revealed that some beliefs of participants became more favorable about the effectiveness of some aspects of these materials while others remained unchanged or became less favorable

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

19. Polat, N. (2010). A Comparative Analysis of pre-and in-service Teacher Beliefs about Readiness and Self-competency: Revisiting Teacher Education for ELLs.	
Purpose of study	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To address differences between pre-and in-service teachers' beliefs about their current self-competency and readiness. 2. To examine salient improvements that need to be incorporated into teacher education programs to help content area teachers become more ready for classes with ELLs.
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How different are pre-and in-service teachers' beliefs about their overall self-competency in supporting ELLs in mainstream classes? 2. How different are pre-and in-service teachers' beliefs about different competencies and readiness to support ELLs' language and academic development? 3. After controlling for the personal background (e.g. exposure to linguistic and cultural diversity) and educational factors, do the differences in pre-and in-service teachers' beliefs concerning different competencies and readiness change? 4. How different are pre-and in-service teachers' beliefs about what teacher education programs should do to get pre-service teachers ready to help ELLs in content area classes? 5. What are the gender differences in these beliefs?
Participants	83 in-service and 88 pre-service content area teachers
Data Collection method	Three Questionnaires
Investigated Variables	Types of service and gender
Data Analysis	ANOVA; MANOVA; MANCOVA and descriptive statistics
Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Several significant differences between pre-and in-service teachers' beliefs about self-competency and readiness 2. Some background factors appeared to play a role in mediating some of these differences in beliefs

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

20. Incecay, G. (2011). Pre-service Teachers' Language Learning Beliefs and Effects of these Beliefs on their Practice Teaching.	
Purpose of study	To explore the effects of pre-service teachers' language learning beliefs on their practice teaching
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What beliefs do pre-service EFL teachers' have about foreign language learning? 2. What are the effects of these beliefs on the pre-service teachers' practice teaching?
Participants	Two randomly chosen pre-service teachers were recruited in the study (one male, one female). The two teachers were from two different state universities in Turkey.
Data Collection method	A qualitative approach using a structured interview, philosophy statements, an observation checklist, and the reflective journals of the participants
Data Analysis	Content and Document analysis of the student-generated data
Investigated Variables	None
Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both participants' teachings were greatly affected by their foreign language learning beliefs 2. Some external factors created some divergences between the beliefs and practice teaching

Table 2.1: Previous Research Studies on Beliefs about Language Learning (Cont.)

21. Suwanarak, K. (2013). Relationships among Beliefs, Learning Strategies, and Achievements in Learning English of Thai Graduate Students in a Public University	
Purpose of study	To explore the perceptions of graduate students of their beliefs, strategies and achievement in learning English.
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What beliefs do the graduate students hold about learning English? 2. What learning strategies do the graduate students use for learning English? And 3. What are the relationships among beliefs, learning strategies, and learning achievement of the graduate students?
Participants	220 Thai graduate students in a public university
Data Collection method	Questionnaires and individual interviews
Investigated Variables	None
Data Analysis	Descriptive statistics and content analysis
Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Almost all of the students emphasized that confidence was essential in learning English. 2. Significant correlations between students' learning beliefs and strategies indicate that the beliefs to some extent relate to strategy use in both parallel and inverse ways.

Table 2.1 above summarizes the previous research studies on beliefs about language learning starting from 1988 up to 2011. An overall picture of the research work in this field appears to indicate that most researchers have attempted to describe learners' and teachers' beliefs about language learning. The main target population of the research in this field tends to be university students and teachers.

With regard to the instruments or data collection method, it can be noted that the majority of the researchers have made use of the questionnaire

developed by Horwitz (1988) as the main instrument to elicit the information on learners' beliefs about language learning, the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI). Apart from using the belief questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection, a few researchers have triangulated their methods by using interviews for to elicit information.

To sum up, beliefs about language learning have been in the central focus of research for just over a decade and a growing body of evidence suggests that beliefs about language learning have played a central role in learning experience and achievement among foreign language learners.

2.6 Summary

In this Chapter, the related literature provides an overall picture of recent research on learners' and teachers' beliefs about language learning in the past two decades. It starts with the basic assumptions of constructivism to general beliefs, beliefs about language learning in which the definition of beliefs, the formation of beliefs and the characteristics of beliefs are presented. This is followed by pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs in which learners' beliefs, teachers' beliefs and the comparison between learners' and teachers' beliefs are also identified. Finally, the main research works of learners' and teachers' beliefs about language learning in relation to the present study is summarized. The next chapter will deal with research methodology and the theoretical framework of beliefs about learning English as a foreign language for the present investigation.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide the research methods and design for the present study. It begins with some general principles of research design which were employed in the present study. Then the research questions are raised based on the objectives of the study. This is followed by the theoretical framework, the sampling and reasons for the choice of subjects, including the characteristics of students and teachers as participants, data collection methods, and the beliefs which were focused on in the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews. Then the procedure for data collection is described. Finally, it deals with analyzing, interpreting, and reporting the data.

A research design is obviously a plan for a specific study. It should describe the purpose of the study, the selection of participants, the research instruments, the procedures for data collection followed by the data analysis (Johnson, 1977). It is also important for a researcher to consider the research objectives before choosing appropriate methods. According to Robson (1993), the purpose of any research can be classified as explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory.

For the explanatory purpose, a researcher explores an explanation of a situation or problem. It can be qualitative and/or quantitative. For the descriptive purpose, a researcher describes the profile of persons, events or situations in details. This type of research can be qualitative and/or quantitative. For the exploratory

purpose, a researcher looks for what is happening in order to seek new sights. Usually, this type of research is qualitative.

Besides considering the purpose of research, it is also important to identify the research design. Brown (1988) classifies two main types of research as primary and secondary. A primary study includes a case study, a survey, and an experimental research, the last two being categorized as statistical studies. For the primary study, data is obtained from the basic courses, e.g. a certain population who is learning English in a foreign context. However, the data for the secondary study is obtained through reviewing literature in a given area and synthesizing the works conducted by other researchers.

When it comes with research design, the researcher has to take the most appropriate one into consideration in order to best answer the research questions.

Robson (1993) has suggested the appropriate use of three types of research as follows:

1) A case study: it is appropriate for 'how' and 'why' questions. The focus of the research is on current events. It is widely used to develop detailed, intensive knowledge about a single case or a small number of related cases.

2) A survey study: it is appropriate for 'who, what, where, how many and how much' questions. It is widely used to collect information from a larger number of people with the use of questionnaires or different types of interviews.

3) An experimental study: it is an appropriate choice for 'how and why' questions. The difference from the case study and survey study is that the control of variables and events is necessary. A hypothesis testing is always involved.

The purposes of this study will be to investigate beliefs about language learning held by students and teachers in teacher education in Laos and the

relationship between beliefs about language learning. Due to the complex and unobservable characteristics of beliefs about language learning, the present study will be designed to use both quantitative and qualitative research methods to elicit data for the analysis. According to Patton (2002), each method has differing advantages and disadvantages. A quantitative research method can obtain broad, generalizable findings while a qualitative research method can yield in-depth, detailed information. Therefore, using a combination of both methods allows for triangulation of the data to achieve accurate and reliable findings (Ellis, 1994). By so doing, the researcher will be able to best answer the research questions and optimize the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

3.2 Research Questions

Based on the literature review as well as the available research works on students' and teachers' beliefs about English language learning, the research questions can be identified. The present investigation attempts to describe the beliefs about English language learning held by students and teachers in teacher education in Lao PDR. In order to establish some empirical data on the Lao tertiary context of language learning of students and teachers, the present study has been designed to answer the following specific questions:

1. What are the percentages of students reporting discrete beliefs about learning English?
2. What are the percentages of teachers reporting discrete beliefs about learning English?

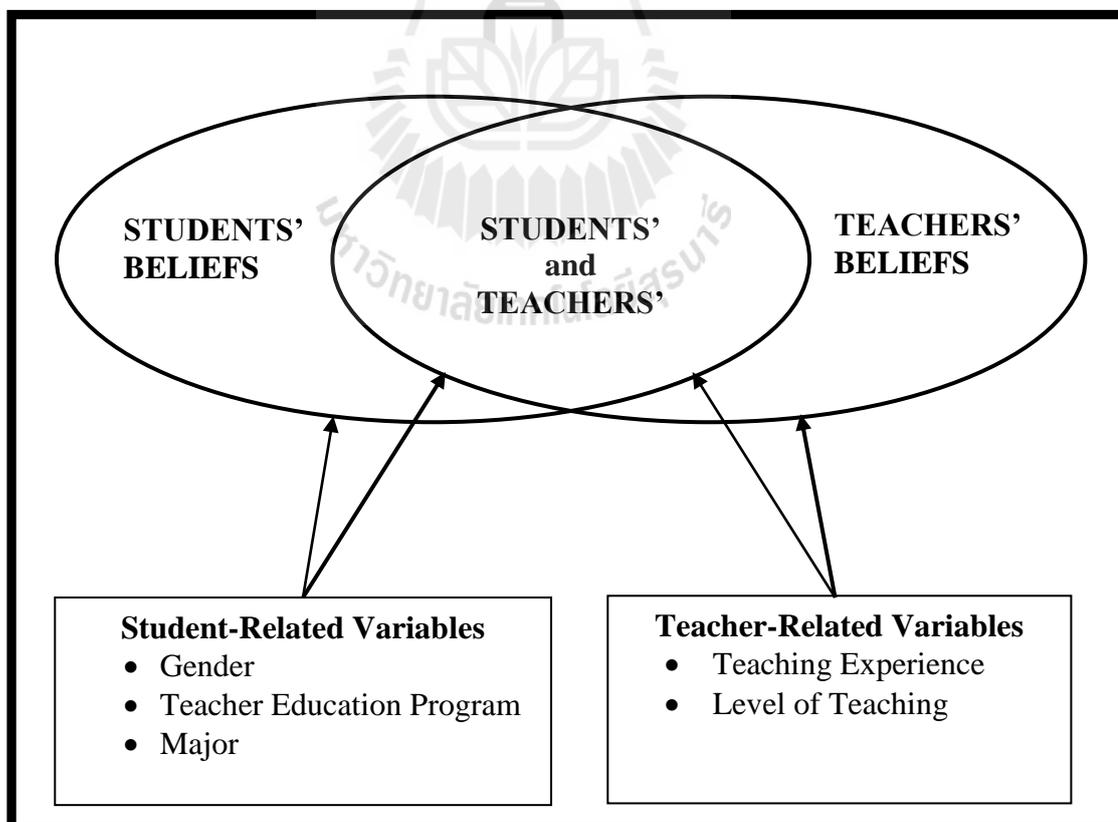
3. Do students' beliefs about learning English vary significantly with their gender, teacher education program and major? If they do, what are the main significant variation patterns?
4. Do teachers' beliefs about learning English vary significantly with their teaching experience and level of teaching? If they do, what are the main significant variation patterns?
5. Do beliefs about learning English vary significantly according to their status i.e. students and teachers? If they do, what are the main significant variation patterns?
6. Why do students and teachers hold particular beliefs about learning English?

3.3 Theoretical Framework for the Present Study

The prime data-collection instrument used for researching teachers' beliefs about language learning is the 34-item BALLI, prepared by Horwitz in 1985 to use on her foreign language teacher training course. The other common approach to develop a questionnaire is to collect responses through a large set of statistical procedures such as factor analysis (e.g. Yang, 1992; Cotterall, 1995; Kuntz, 1996; Mori, 1999).

Recently, a growing body of research work has explored learners' beliefs and strongly supported the shift from a teacher-centered to a more and more learner-centered oriented teaching methodology (e.g. Bailey, 1992; Tudor, 1996). From this point of view, a learner-centered approach requires learners to be independent, autonomous, self-directed and responsible for their own learning (Cotterall, 1995; Richards *et al.*, 2001). This can be implied that the old paradigms such as 'sage on the

stage' or 'chalk and talk and walk' or 'teach as taught' or 'spoon-fed teaching style' will be replaced by the new one which is rooted from the constructivist approach. However, very few research studies have been conducted to examine the similarities and differences of beliefs being held by students and teachers since the traditional learning and teaching methods has recently moved to a more learner-centered method. Keeping these thoughts in mind, the researcher is interested in investigating learners' and teachers' beliefs about learning English as a foreign language in the Lao tertiary context in order to find out to what extent students and teachers hold beliefs on learning which are the same or different ways since teaching-learning has shifted from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach. Based on Wang's framework, Figure 3.1 shows the theoretical framework for the present study.



(Source: Adapted from Wang, 2008, p. 72)

Figure 3.1: Theoretical Framework for the Present Study

Figure 3.1 above illustrates the theoretical framework for the present study. Students-related variables include gender, teacher education program and major. Teachers-related variables include teaching experience, and level of teaching.

Based on the theoretical framework, what beliefs are held by students and teachers have been investigated firstly, and secondly, a comparison between students' and teachers' beliefs has been made. Furthermore, it is assumed that some similarities and differences exist between students' and teachers' beliefs but what these beliefs may be will be explored later.

The implication of Figure 3.1 is that the bigger the overlapping area between students' and teachers' beliefs about EFL, the better. In other words, the more similarities rather than differences of beliefs held between students and teachers, the more successful and satisfying learning and teaching environment the students and teachers will be. Undoubtedly, the gradually narrowing gap between students and teachers will contribute to positive rather than 'negative (language learning) outcomes' (Horwitz, 1988, p. 292).

In the present study, the beliefs about EFL refer to students' and teachers' beliefs about learning English at a tertiary level in Lao PDR. As proposed by Wang (2008), eight specific aspects of foreign language learning beliefs are described as follows:

- (1) The difficulty of language learning
- (2) Foreign language aptitude
- (3) The nature of language learning
- (4) Strategy use
- (5) Motivation and expectations

- (6) The role of the teachers and feedback
- (7) The role of media utilization in EFL and
- (8) The learners' independence

3.4 Sampling and Reasons for the Choice of Subjects

Kane (1983, p. 90 as cited in Intaraprasert, 2004) defines a sample as “a portion of the universe and, ideally, it reflects with reasonable accuracy of the opinions, attitudes or behavior of the entire group.....Further, the result from a sample cannot be expected to be precisely the same as the result obtained from studying the universe. The sample has to be similar to the universe or the population, otherwise, the results of the study are useless”

In terms of an appropriate choice of subjects, some factors were taken into account, such as whether the subjects were suitable for the research, whether they were representative, and how many subjects should be selected (Drew, 1980).

Based on these factors, the present investigation is generally classified as an exploratory research which is intended to use a sample size adequate to serve the objectives. This means it should not be too big to manage or too small to manipulate. In other words, the research participants should be representative of students and teachers in teacher education in Lao PDR. From this assumption, the researcher had decided to select the participants from 3 universities (3 Faculties of Education: 1 in the north of Laos; 1 in Vientiane capital and 1 in the south) and 8 Teachers' Training Colleges. In the Lao context, the locations were selected on the basis of purposive sampling due to the fact that there are only 3 universities out of 5 in Laos that offer the teacher education program for a bachelor level and 8 teachers' training colleges

throughout the country for a diploma level. In the following sections, the characteristics of the student and the teacher participants will be described in detail.

3.4.1 Characteristics of the Student Participants

In this study, three universities were purposively chosen for data collection namely, National University of Laos, Souphanouvong University and Champasak University. The researcher worked with 485 students who enrolled in Faculty of Education of the three universities in which 240 teacher students for English major and another 245 for non-English major from each university ranging from year 1 to year 4. Besides, all eight teachers' training colleges throughout the country were purposively selected namely, Ban Keun TTC, Dongkhamxang TTC, Luang Prabang TTC, Luangnamtha TTC, KhangKhay TTC, Savannakhet TTC, Champasak TTC and Saravane TTC. The researcher selected 477 teacher students in which about 59 students from each TTC who entered English Language Department and other departments ranging from year 1 to year 3. In sum, 962 students were selected as subjects.

Table 3.1: General Information about the Student Participants in terms of

Variables

Gender		TE Program		Major	
Male	472	Bachelor	485	EM	480
Female	490	Diploma	477	NEM	482
TOTAL: 962					

EM: English Major

NEM: Non-English Major

3.4.2 Characteristics of the Teacher Participants

All the teachers in this study were EFL in-service teachers who were teaching English at a tertiary level. In this study the tertiary level means university level and

college level. One hundred and twenty nine teacher participants were selected from 3 universities and 8 teachers' training colleges.

Table 3.2: General Information about the Teacher Participants in terms of Variables

Teaching Experience		Level of Teaching	
Inexp.	57	University	57
Modexp.	59	TTC	72
Exp.	13		
TOTAL: 129			

Note: Inexp: Inexperienced (1-5 years); Modexp: Moderately Experienced (6-15 years);

Exp: Experienced (More than 15 years)

3.5 Data Collection Method

According to Johnson (1977, p. 9), "Research methods are procedures as a researcher follows in attempting to achieve the goals of a study". Hence, the research methods used to investigate learners' beliefs about language learning are procedures a researcher follows in attempting to achieve the goals of a study of learners' beliefs about language learning, i.e. to explore beliefs about language learning held by language learners when they learn a language, especially the target language. At present, no single research method prevails in the field; certain research methods are well established but imperfect (Cohen and Scott, 1996). Each method has both weak and strong points, but whatever method a researcher employs, he or she must take the main purpose of the study into consideration (Robson, 1993). In this section, the main research methods will be identified. The main instruments of the present study include: (1) Written Questionnaires; and (2) Semi-structured interviews.

To explore beliefs about learning English as a foreign language held by students and teachers in Laos, two sets of written questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as the main instruments for data collection. Student and teacher questionnaires were administered in the first step, and student and teacher semi-structured interviews were conducted in the second step of the field work.

3.5.1 Written Questionnaires about Beliefs

In the previous studies, it can be noted that a written questionnaire has been widely used by a number of researchers to elicit learners' beliefs. Written questionnaires are used to elicit learner's responses to a set of questions, and they require the researcher to make choices regarding question format and research procedures (Cohen and Scott, 1996). In addition, written questionnaires typically cover a range of beliefs about language learning and are usually structured and objective in nature. Question items in written questionnaires can range from those simply asking for 'yes' or 'no' responses, or degree of beliefs (e.g. Likert Scales), or to less structured items usually asking respondents to describe or discuss in detail the beliefs about language learning they have held (Intaraprasert, 2004). In this scenario, the respondents had more control over the information included in their responses. The responses to structured questionnaires may be simplistic or contain only brief information about any one belief about language learning. The questionnaires that require the respondents to indicate the degree of their beliefs about language learning, like Likert Scales, are easy and quick to give, provide a general assessment of each respondent's typical beliefs, and may be the most cost-effective mode of learners' belief assessment. They are also almost non-threatening when administered using paper and pencil under conditions of confidentiality (Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995).

Furthermore, written questionnaires enable the researcher to collect data in field settings and the data obtained is more amenable to quantification than that collected through free-form field notes, participant observing journals or the transcripts of oral language (Nunan, 1992). However, some weak points might happen by only using a questionnaire as Benson and Lor (1999) state that questionnaire data gives only a 'snapshot' of learners' beliefs and this might not be sufficient to understand the complexity of learners' beliefs. In other words, the data may be superficial. There is little or no check on honesty or seriousness of responses. More importantly, while analysis may be easy, but time-consuming, interpretation can be problematic (Robson, 1993; Walker, 1985).

The main items concerning beliefs used in this study were modified based on the version of the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI, Horwitz, 1987b), Cotterall (1995) and Intaraprasert (2004). The BALLI was originally developed as 34-point Likert scale items to assess student opinions on a variety of issues and controversies related to foreign language learning (Horwitz, 1988, p. 284). The BALLI has been used widely as a research instrument and as a training instrument in the field of second/foreign language acquisition, as the author intended.

According to Horwitz (1999), although a variety of cultural groups contributed to its development, the BALLI aims at eliciting 'commonly held beliefs'. Therefore, she recommends that research studies on beliefs of a certain cultural group consider identifying and perhaps adding beliefs specific to the respondents. Similarly, Benson and Lor (1999) pointed out that beliefs about learning should not be viewed independently of context. As a result, some items were modified to suit the Lao context in the present study. For instance, item 6 'Thais are good at learning English'

(Intaraprasert, 2004) was slightly changed into ‘Laotians are good at learning English’ (p. 76).

As mentioned above, many items were based on Intaraprasert (2004), such as item 29 ‘Extra-curricular activities enable me to learn English well’ (p. 75).

As a result, 39 items were administered in all. Regardless the different situations between students and teachers, some items were indicated as ‘S’ for students and others ‘T’ for teachers. For example, item 5 ‘I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well’ was modified as:

S: I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.

T: Students believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well.

What follow are the modifications of the BALLI for the present investigation.

The modification consists of 4 categories as follows:

Category 1: Adopted Items with no Modification

Generally speaking, English is the most widely used foreign language in Laos. Therefore, Lao people regard ‘a foreign language’ as English. The adopted items with no modification were used in both students’ and teachers’ questionnaire. They are:

1. S/T: It is easier for children than adults to learn English.
2. S/T: Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn English.
3. S/T: English is a difficult language.
4. S/T: A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.
5. S: I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.
T: Students believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well.

7. S/T: It is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent.
8. S/T: It is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well.
9. S: I should not say anything in English until I can say it correctly.
T: Students should not say anything in English until they can say it correctly.
10. S/T: People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning English.
11. S/T: It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.
12. S: I can improve my English if I often chat with English native speakers.
T: Students can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers.
13. S: It is OK to guess if I do not know the meaning of a new word in English.
T: It is OK to guess if students do not know the meaning of a new word in English.
14. S: I have English language aptitude.
T: Students have English language aptitude.
15. S/T: Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items.
17. S/T: Women are better than men at learning English.
18. S/T: If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of such mistakes later on.

19. S: I feel shy or uncomfortable when I speak English in front of other people
T: Students feel shy or uncomfortable when they speak English in front of other people.
20. S/T: Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.
21. S: I would like to learn English so that I can make friends with foreigners.
T: Students would like to learn English so that they can make friends with foreigners.
22. S/T: It is easier to speak than to understand English.
23. S/T: Multi-media is very useful in learning English.
24. S/T: Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.
26. S: If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.
T: If students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job.
27. S: Only a native speaker can teach me to speak English very well.
T: Only a native speaker can teach students to speak English very well.
28. S: Without a teacher, learning English is impossible for me.
T: Without a teacher, learning English is impossible for students.
29. S: Extra-curricular activities enable me to learn English well.
T: Extra-curricular activities enable students to learn English well.
31. S: I would like to have friends from the foreign country.
T: Students would like to have friends from the foreign country.
33. S/T: It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.

34. S/T: It depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English.
35. S: I learn English only to pass the exam.
T: Students learn English only to pass the exam.
37. S: The teacher is the best resource person for me to learn English.
T: The teacher is the best resource person for students to learn English.
38. S/T: Doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful.

Category 2: Slightly Changed Items

Because the present study is intended to explore beliefs about learning English in the Lao context, it is necessary to replace 'Thai' as described in the modified version of BALLI of Intaraprasert (2004) with 'Lao' in order to avoid misunderstandings. The slightly changed items are identified as follows:

6. Thais are good at learning English.
S/T: Laotians are good at learning English.
16. It is important to repeat and practise a lot.
S/T: It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.
25. It is very important to learn English through translation from English into Thai and Thai into English.
S/T: It is very important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.
32. Thais can learn and communicate in English.
S/T: Laotians can learn and communicate in English.
36. A teacher should speak Thai as much as he/she can while teaching.

S/T: A teacher should speak Lao as much as he/she can while teaching.

Category 3: Deleted Items

It can be stated that the following items are unnecessary in the present study because they are too specific. Therefore, these items were replaced by additional items with the same numbers. The deleted items include:

- 30. My students need to learn English and use it for communication.
- 39. It is very useful to learn English extra at language centers.

Category 4: Additional Items

The items were added to explore students' and teachers' beliefs in relation to the eight aspects in the present study. They are stated as follows:

- 30. S/T: Nowadays Lao people think it is very important to learn English.
- 39. S/T: It is important to practise English in the language laboratory.

In order to have a clear picture of beliefs about learning English, the 39 items in the questionnaire were classified based on 8 major areas as follows:

1. The difficulty of language learning (Items 3, 5, 22 and 33)

- (3) English is a difficult language.
- (5) I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.
- (22) It is easier to speak than to understand English.
- (33) It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.

2. Foreign language aptitude (Items 1, 2, 6, 10, 14, 17, 27, and 32)

- (1) It is easier for children than adults to learn English.
- (2) Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn English.
- (6) Laotians are good at learning English.
- (10) People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning English.

- (14) I have English language aptitude.
- (17) Women are better than men at learning English.
- (27) Only a native speaker can teach me to speak English very well.
- (32) Laotians can learn and communicate in English.

3. The nature of language learning (Items 8, 11, 15, 20, 24 and 25)

- (8) It is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well.
- (11) It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.
- (15) Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items.
- (20) Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.
- (24) Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.
- (25) It is very important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.

4. Strategy use (Items 7, 9, 13, 18 and 19)

- (7) It is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent.
- (9) I should not say anything in English until I can say it correctly.
- (13) It is OK to guess if I do not know the meaning of a new word in English.
- (18) If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of such mistakes later on.
- (19) I feel shy or uncomfortable when I speak English in front of other people.

5. Motivation and expectations (Items 12, 21, 26, 30, 31, 35 and 36)

- (12) I can improve my English if I often chat with English native speakers.
- (21) I would like to learn English so that I can make friends with foreigners.
- (26) If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.
- (30) Nowadays Lao people think it is very important to learn English.
- (31) I would like to have friends from the foreign country.
- (35) I learn English only to pass the exam.
- (36) A teacher should speak Lao as much as he/she can while teaching.

6. The role of the teacher and feedback (Items 4, 28, 34 and 37)

- (4) A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.
- (28) Without a teacher, learning English is impossible for me.
- (34) It depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English.

- (37) The teacher is the best resource person for me to learn English.

7. The role of media utilization in EFL (Items 23 and 39)

- (23) Multi-media is very useful in learning English.
- (39) It is important to practice English in the language laboratory.

8. Learner's independence (Items 16, 29, 38)

- (16) It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.
- (29) Extra-curricular activities enable me to learn English well.
- (38) Doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful.

Based on the modified items above, the belief questionnaire was generated and then administered to collect data. A summary of items is shown in Figure 3.2.



1. S/T: It is easier for children than adults to learn English.
2. S/T: Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn English.
3. S/T: English is a difficult language.
4. S/T: A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.
5. S: I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.
T: Students believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well.
6. S/T: Laotians are good at learning English.
7. S/T: It is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent.
8. S/T: It is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well.
9. S: I should not say anything in English until I can say it correctly.
T: Students should not say anything in English until they can say it correctly.
10. S/T: People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning English.

Figure 3.2: Summary of the Items of Beliefs

11. S/T: It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.
12. S: I can improve my English if I often chat with English native speakers.
T: Students can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers.
13. S: It is OK to guess if I do not know the meaning of a new word in English
T: It is OK to guess if students do not know the meaning of a new word in English
14. S: I have English language aptitude.
T: Students have English language aptitude.
15. S/T: Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items.
16. S/T: It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.
17. S/T: Women are better than men at learning English.
18. S/T: If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of such mistakes later on.
19. S: I feel shy or uncomfortable when I speak English in front of other people
T: Students feel shy or uncomfortable when they speak English in front of other people.

Figure 3.2: Summary of the Items of Beliefs (Cont.)

21. S: I would like to learn English so that I can make friends with foreigners.

T: Students would like to learn English so that they can make friends with foreigners.

22. S/T: It is easier to speak than to understand English.

23. S/T: Multi-media is very useful in learning English.

24. S/T: Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.

25. S/T: It is very important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.

26. S: If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.

T: If Students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job.

27. S: Only a native speaker can teach me to speak English very well.

T: Only a native speaker can teach students to speak English very well.

28. S: Without a teacher, learning English is impossible for me.

T: Without a teacher, learning English is impossible for students.

29. S: Extra-curricular activities enable me to learn English well.

T: Extra-curricular activities enable students to learn English well.

30. S/T: Nowadays Lao people think it is very important to learn English.

31. S: I would like to have friends from the foreign country.

T: Students would like to have friends from the foreign country.

Figure 3.2: Summary of the Items of Beliefs (Cont.)

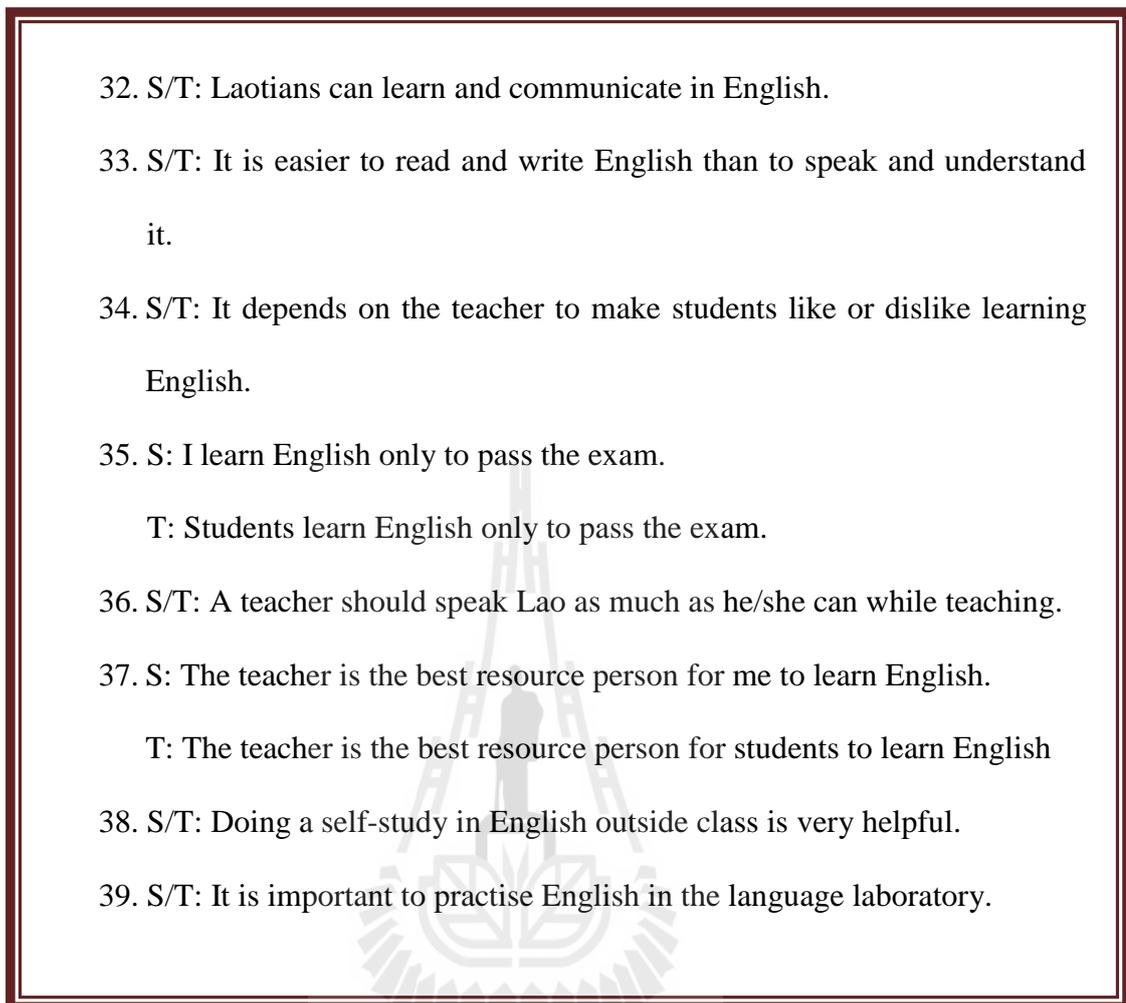


Figure 3.2: Summary of the Items of Beliefs (Cont.)

3.5.1.1 The Design of the Questionnaire for Students

The questionnaire consisted of three parts: the first part was a ‘Student Profile’ which was designed to collect data about the teacher student namely,

- Name of participant (on a voluntary basis)
- Gender (Male/Female)
- Major (English major/Non-English major)
- Teacher education program to be completed (Bachelor or Diploma)

The second part was 'Learners' beliefs about learning English as a foreign language' based on the modified version of the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI, Horwitz, 1987b), Cotterall (1995), Intaraprasert (2004) and Jun (2008). In this part, teacher students were required to rank their responses on 5-Likert scales (Likert, 1932) which ranged from '**Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree, and Strongly Agree**'.

The third part of the questionnaire was 'Additional Comments' in which teacher students were asked to write any comments or suggestions they might include in relation to their beliefs about English learning.

Every effort to make the questionnaire valid and reliable has been made. There were versions in English and Lao. The English version was used for discussion purposes for the present investigation and the Lao version was used for the purpose of data collection with students and teachers. These two versions of the belief questionnaire were used as the instrument, as this would help maximize ease of administration and ensure greater accuracy of results. The translation from English into Lao was initially done by the researcher. The questionnaire was administered to 962 students at 3 universities and 8 colleges in order to collect the quantitative data for the present investigation.

3.5.1.2 The Design of the Questionnaire for Teachers

There were also three parts. The first part was a 'Teacher Profile' which was designed to collect data about the teacher namely,

- Name of participant (on a voluntary basis)
- Teaching experience (Inexperienced, Moderately Experienced and Experienced)

- Levels of teaching (university/ college)

The second part was ‘Beliefs about learning English as a foreign language’. Some of the items were different while some were the same as the ones in the teacher student questionnaire and were intended to compare similarities and differences in beliefs between students and teachers.

The third part of the questionnaire was ‘Additional Comments’ in which teachers were asked to write any comments or suggestions they might include in relation to their beliefs about English learning. If they had any comments, this might be of great benefit to the researcher to have more in-depth data for the interview.

The teacher questionnaire was also translated from English into Lao for the convenience of the teacher participants and the accuracy of the results.

For the Student Questionnaire, it could be noted that most statements of beliefs used the first pronoun ‘I’ with the purpose of allowing students to freely express their own thoughts or ideas rather than those of others. For the Teacher Questionnaire, those items which used ‘I’ were changed to ‘students’. The intention was to explore what teachers of English think about the statement knowing themselves as successful language learners in contrast to their teacher students who were comparatively unsuccessful in learning English.

It is obviously stated that both questionnaires used 5-point rating scales which are valued as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

1	=	Strongly Disagree
2	=	Disagree
3	=	Not Sure
4	=	Agree
5	=	Strongly Agree

The decision was made by participants what degree they preferred for each item of beliefs in English learning. To illustrate this, a sample of the questionnaire is shown in English and in Lao as below:

English version:

A Statement of Beliefs	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
0. It is important to speak English with an excellent accent.		√			

Lao version:

ຄວາມເຊື່ອກ່ຽວກັບການຮຽນ ພາສາອັງກິດ	ບໍ່ເຫັນດີ ທີ່ສຸດ	ບໍ່ເຫັນ ດີ	ບໍ່ໝັ້ນໃຈ	ເຫັນດີ	ເຫັນດີທີ່ ສຸດ
0. ມັນເປັນສິ່ງສໍາຄັນທີ່ຕ້ອງ ເວົ້າ ພາສາອັງກິດ ດ້ວຍ ສໍານຽງທີ່ຄ້າຍຄືເຈົ້າຂອງ ພາສາ.		√			

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

In investigating a learner and teacher's beliefs about English language learning, a researcher can ask the participant to describe what beliefs about language learning he or she holds and the reason why such beliefs are held. Presumably, one way to do this is to interview students and teachers of English. The interview can provide in-depth data for retrospective accounts of beliefs he or she has held.

Interviews can be characterized in terms of their degree of formality and can be placed on a continuum ranging from unstructured through semi-structured to structured (Nunan, 1992). Whether they are structured or unstructured, student

interviews provide personalized information on many types of beliefs about language learning which would not be available through classroom observations. According to Intaraprasert (2004), an unstructured interview is guided by the responses of the interviewee and the interviewer exercises little or no control over the interview. This makes the direction of the interview relatively unpredictable. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a general idea of where he or she wants the interview to go, and what should come out of it.

As mentioned above, the semi-structured interview seems to be popular among researchers. The reason for its popularity is stated by Nunan (1992, p. 149) “...because of its flexibility, the semi-structured interview has found favour with many researchers, particularly those working within an interpretive research tradition”. Therefore, in the present study, semi-structured interview was employed in order to get rich and in-depth data.

3.5.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews of Students

The interviews were conducted with the focus on a face-to-face style of selected participants after the questionnaire was administered. Guided questions for the interview of students both in English and Lao versions were included in Appendix 5. The main purpose of the interview was to collect qualitative data to answer the research questions for the present study.

After the selection, the interviewees were invited to attend the interviews on a voluntary basis. Four university teachers of English from English Department, Faculty of Letters were invited by the researcher to have a discussion of the guided questions in order to gain more useful information from the selected students. All the interviews were conducted in Lao, the first language of both

interlocutors. They were tape recorded and transcribed afterwards more or less verbatim and then were translated into English for analysis. Details of the interviews were described in the qualitative data analysis.

3.5.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews of Teachers

The interviews were conducted similarly to those for students. The guided questions for the interview were based on teacher questionnaire which covered 8 aspects. Both versions of guided questions in English and Lao for the teachers of English are shown in Appendix 6. Similarly, four university teachers of English from English Department, Faculty of Letters were invited by the researcher to have a discussion of the guided questions in order to gain more useful information from the selected teachers.

All the interviews were conducted in Lao, the first language of both interlocutors. They were tape recorded and transcribed afterwards more or less verbatim and then translated into English for analysis. Details of the interviews were described in the qualitative data analysis.

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

As discussed previously, different research methods have their own advantages and disadvantages. Obviously, it is useful to investigate beliefs held by Lao university/college students and university/college teachers as teachers of English using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to Johnson (1977, p. 9), “research methods are procedures a researcher follows in attempting to achieve the goals of a study”.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted MMR which was mixed methods research in one study in which quantitative data taken from two sets of questionnaires was complemented by qualitative data taken from two interviews. The combination of the two methods included questionnaire items demanding objective responses as well as oral semi-structured interviews with both students and teachers. The research methods in this study met the needs of the research objectives.

3.6.1 A Pilot Study of the Questionnaire and the Semi-Structured Interview

In order to investigate the beliefs about language learning of a large and diverse target population, there was a need to carry out a pilot study before the formal questionnaires were administered to all participants.

Before the final versions of both questionnaires were prepared, 30 English students and 10 teachers of English were sampled from Faculty of Education, National University of Laos on the basis of convenience and availability. The purpose of the pilot study was to check the reliability of the questionnaires. By so doing, the researcher was well aware that the representativeness of subjects did not need to be 100 percent as the same as the subjects in the main study.

Each item was carefully discussed with all of the students and teachers to ensure they could fully understand without any doubts and there were no ambiguities for any item. The researcher gave a brief instruction on how to respond to it. They were told that there were no right or wrong answers. What important is that they would answer according to their beliefs about learning English. And also they could ask the researcher immediately if they had any questions. After students and teachers completed the questionnaires which took them about 20 minutes, the researcher confirmed that they were able to answer all of the items.

Not long after the pilot study of the questionnaires, 10 students and 4 teachers were interviewed by the researcher using semi-structured questions. Eventually, a series of semi-structured interviews with guided questions for students and teachers was revised and some questions were added in order to explore more information in relation to students' and teachers' beliefs about learning English in teacher education in Lao PDR.

From a pilot study of the semi-structured interview, the researcher has learnt that some students felt uncomfortable and shy in responding the questions face to face even in Lao language after a few minutes of the interview. Thus, the researcher spent awhile to create trust and a friendly atmosphere so that students could express freely what they believed. As a result, the interview was smoothly conducted with a special thanks to each student interviewee in the end. In terms of student and teacher interviews, these will be explained in detail in the qualitative data analysis in Chapter 5. Both English and Lao versions of the guided questions are shown in Appendices 5 and 6.

3.6.2 Data Collection

The research data were drawn from 962 students of the 2 programs that is 485 from Bachelor (3 FOEs) and 477 from Diploma program (Luangnamtha TTC, KhangKhay TTC, Savannakhet TTC, Saravane TTC, Ban Keun TTC, Dongkhamxang TTC, Luang Prabang TTC and Champasak TTC) and 129 teachers from NUOL (Vientiane the Capital), Souphanouvong University, Champasak University, Luangnamtha TTC (Luangnamtha Province), KhangKhay TTC (Xiang Khouang Province), Saravane TTC (Saravane Province), Ban Keun TTC (Vientiane Province), Dongkhamxang TTC (Vientiane the Capital), Luang Prabang TTC (Luang Prabang

Province), Champasak TTC (Champasak Province), Savannakheth TTC (Savannakheth Province).

In the present study, the locations doing research were identified as follows:

- Three Universities: National University of Laos, Souphanouvong University, and Champasak University
- Eight Teachers' Training Colleges: Luang Prabang TTC, Dongkhamxang TTC, Ban Keun TTC, Savanankheth TTC, Luangnamtha TTC, KhangKhay TTC, Saravane TTC and Champasak TTC

The arrangements were well prepared by the teacher of English at each university and college who was invited by the researcher to help administer the questionnaire and the interview: a set of questionnaires was firstly given to teacher students to complete in class. Students spent approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete the questionnaires. Some of the students offered their comments and suggestions afterwards. In particular, the researcher appreciated the fact that many teacher students voluntarily provided a means of contact, such as a mobile telephone number or an e-mail address in order to be an interviewee if the researcher needed them. After finishing the questionnaire, some students were chosen to be interviewed on a voluntary basis or with their teacher's recommendation. The teacher students' interviews will be described in detail in Chapter 5.

As for the collection of the teachers' questionnaires, it was very difficult to request all the participants to answer the questionnaire at one time even at one university or college because of the teachers' busy teaching tasks and the way they work as a teacher in Laos. To the best of my knowledge, many of the teachers at university do not need to go to the university office but they go directly to the

classroom according to their teaching timetable, unless they are requested to attend a faculty meeting once a week or every two weeks.

As a result, the researcher had to ask the Chair of the English Department/Foreign Language Department at each university and College to administer the teachers' questionnaires to each teacher. Then, the responses to the Teachers' Questionnaires were collected by each Chair and returned to the researcher after 3 days at least.

Most teachers of English of the English Department/Foreign Language Department from the three universities and eight colleges fully answered the questionnaires, except for those who were not available due to their different kinds of work. In terms of the teachers' interviews, it normally depended on the teacher's convenience and availability. The researcher highly appreciated to those who spent their valuable time to sharing their ideas, thoughts and suggestions. Details of the teachers' interviews will be described in detail in Chapter 5.

In summary, the procedure of data collection is stated as follows:

- (1) The formulation of the questionnaire;
- (2) The administration of questionnaire;
- (3) The selection of the target group to be interviewed; and
- (4) The conduct of the interview.

3.7 Analyzing, Interpreting and Reporting Data

In the previous sections, the research questions are based on the objectives of the study, followed by the sampling and the rationale for the choice of subjects, methods of data collection, descriptions of eight categories of belief and the procedure

for the data collection. Finally, the process of data collection is described. This section puts emphasis on analyzing quantitative data from the students' and teachers' questionnaire, and reports the results.

Ideally, it is suggested that when multiple data are systematically analyzed and interpreted, more reliable conclusions result (Eisner, 1991). In this study, the data were collected in the Lao context; as a result, it was more convenient and feasible to conduct all the questionnaire items in Lao. In addition, Lao was used as the working language to interview both students and teachers. The data obtained in the questionnaires were analyzed by the researcher with the assistance of the SPSS program.

The purpose of the questionnaire analysis is to answer the research questions in relation to the percentages of beliefs about learning English language held by Lao university and college students and their teachers of English.

The data analysis was proceeded as follows:

- Data were quantified and the SPSS program was used to analyze the data.
- Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the data to find out percentage of the responses by the participants.
- Chi-square Tests were employed to determine the significant variation patterns in the learners' reported beliefs about learning English as a foreign language at the individual item level:

1) whether the beliefs held by students are related to their gender, TE program and major;

2) whether the beliefs held by teachers are related to their teaching experience and level of teaching; and

3) whether the beliefs about EFL held by students and teachers vary significantly. If so, it is intended to analyze them in order to see what kinds of variation patterns exist.

3.8 Summary

Based on the related literature review in Chapter 2, most researchers used questionnaires and interviews to explore beliefs about language learning from the participants. The most frequently used instrument is the modified BALLI developed by Horwitz. To be more specific, the BALLI has been used in at least 13 published studies and doctoral dissertations with a variety of student and teacher populations.

In the present study, both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as the main instruments for the collection of data. The questionnaire items were modified based on BALLI (Horwitz, 1987b) and Cotterall's (1995) factor analysis items. Finally, the procedures for the data analysis were also provided. In the next chapter, all the data obtained from both students' and teachers' questionnaires will be analyzed, interpreted and reported in detail.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

ABOUT BELIEFS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report the results of the quantitative data from both the students' and teachers' questionnaires. This section starts off with beliefs about English learning held by students followed by beliefs about English learning held by teachers in Lao PDR. Then, significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English held by students according to their gender, TE program and major are reported. This is followed by significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English held by teachers according to their teaching experience and level of teaching. Finally, beliefs about English language learning held by students and teachers are compared in order to find out if any significant variation patterns exist.

In the present investigation, responses to 39 questionnaire items were firstly analyzed. Responses to questionnaire by both students and teachers were analyzed as 'Disagreement', 'Uncertainty', and 'Agreement'. The degree of beliefs ranged from 'Strongly Disagree' which is valued as 1, 'Disagree' valued as 2, 'Not Sure' valued as 3, 'Agree' valued as 4 and 'Strongly Agree' which is valued as 5. These frequency categories were consolidated in to 3 categories so that the main tendencies could be detected clearly. That is to say, responses of 1 and 2 (Strongly Disagree/ Disagree) were consolidated into a single category called 'Disagreement', responses of 3 as one

category called 'Uncertainty', and responses of 4 and 5 ('Agree' and 'Strongly Agree') were combined into a single category called 'Agreement'. This has been done in order to discern the overall trends in the participants' responses.

To determine the percentages of beliefs, the researcher adopted the criteria from Intaraprasert (2004, p. 54) that any items with 50% or more of the responses by the participants in either '4' or '5' will be presented.

4.2 Results of the Questionnaires about Beliefs

4.2.1 Beliefs about Learning English Held by Students

In this section, beliefs about English language learning held by students are presented from the highest to the lowest percentage based on the criteria above. In order to get the overall picture of what students reported agreeing, the description will be based on the eight categories of the items of beliefs.

Based on the data reported by the 962 students from 3 universities and 8 teacher training colleges in the student questionnaire, it was found that 24 out of 39 belief items met the criteria given earlier. Table 4.1 below shows the results from the 24 items of beliefs about learning English.

Table 4.1 Beliefs about Learning English Held by Students (24 out of 39 items)

Rank	Item	Belief Item	Agreeing (%) (n=962)
1	16	It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.	93.7
2	30	Nowadays Lao people think it is very important to learn English.	93.0
3	12	I can improve my English if I often chat with English native speakers.	91.8
4	23	Multi-media is very useful in learning English.	91.4
5	25	It is very important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.	90.1
6	4	A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.	89.7
7	37	The teacher is the best resource person for me to learn English.	88.3
8	38	Doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful.	86.3
9	26	If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	85.4
10	15	Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items.	82.5
11	39	It is important to practice English in the language laboratory.	79.6
12	31	I would like to have friends from foreign country.	77.4
13	32	Laotians can learn and communicate in English.	77.0
14	20	Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.	76.9
15	24	Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.	76.6
16	1	It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	73.3
17	7	It is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent.	70.7
18	11	It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.	67.3
19	34	It depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English.	65.6
20	21	I would like to learn English so that I can make friends with foreigners.	64.6
21	3	English is a difficult language.	62.5
22	29	Extra-curricular activities enable me to learn English well.	62.2
23	5	I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.	58.7
24	6	Laotians are good at learning English.	50.0

- **Category 1: The Difficulty of Language Learning**

With respect to the Difficulty of Language Learning, Table 4.1 above shows that more than half of the students (62.5%) considered English as a difficult language (item 3). In addition, Table 4.1 shows that 58.7% of the students reported believing that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well (item 5) which shows that the majority of the students are optimistic and confident about English language learning.

- **Category 2: Foreign Language Aptitude**

In terms of Foreign Language Aptitude, 77.0% of students reported agreeing that Laotians can learn and communicate in English (item 32), while 73.3% agreed that it is easier for children than adults to learn English (item 1), and 50.0% agreed that Laotians are good at learning English (item 6). In other words, most of the students believed that it is better to learn English at a younger age rather than after their maturity. Although language gifts do exist in the process of language learning, it does not mean that only those with special ability for learning a foreign language can learn it. Hence, students believe that Laotians are capable of learning and communicating in English.

- **Category 3: The Nature of Language Learning**

In terms of the Nature of Language Learning, 90.1% of students agreed that it is very important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English (item 25), while 82.5% agreed that learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items (item 15), 76.9% agreed that learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules (item 20), 76.6% agreed that learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects (item 24),

and 67.3% reported agreeing that it is better to learn English in an English-speaking country (item 11).

- **Category 4: Strategy Use**

The majority of the students (70.7%) reported agreeing that it is important to speak English with an excellent accent when they learn English (item 7). This can be stated that the students pay much attention to English accent so that they could speak English with confidence when they use the language. On the other hand, another item of strategy use also attracted the majority of students, such as, 71.9% of students disagreed that they should not say anything in English until they could say it correctly (item 9). This can be explained that the students care very much about ‘just say it’.

- **Category 5: Motivation and Expectations**

In terms of motivation and expectations, 93.0% of students agreed that nowadays Lao people think it is important to learn English (item 30) which is the second in rank, followed by 91.8% of students reportedly believed that they can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers (item 12). Meanwhile, 85.4% of students agreed that if they learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job (item 26). The results of the students’ agreements to these items show that English language has become very important and useful in Lao PDR, and they believed that they would have a good job if they speak English well. Interestingly, students are highly motivated by this instrumental force to learn English in order to teach it after graduation or enter labor market in Laos. In addition, Table 4.1 shows that 77.4% of students reported believing that they would like to have friends from foreign country (item 31). This is followed by 64.6% of students

reported that they would like to learn English so that they can make friends with foreigners (item 21).

- **Category 6: The Role of the Teacher and Feedback**

It is very interesting to show that the majority of students considered teacher as an important figure in teaching. For instance, 89.7% of students believed that a teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes which comes in the sixth rank (item 4). In addition, 88.3% of students reported that the teacher is the best resource person for them to learn English (item 37), and 65.6% agreed that it depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English (item 34). As a result, in a learner-centered approach, teacher still plays an important role in teaching and giving feedback.

- **Category 7: The Role of Media Utilization in EFL**

When it comes to the role of media utilization in EFL, the percentages of the following items clearly show the evidence. They are: item 23 'Multi-media is very useful in learning English' (91.4%) which is in the fourth rank, item 39 'It is important to practise English in the language laboratory' (79.6%). The results show that students consider media utilization as a very important means in learning English.

- **Category 8: Learner's Independence**

With respect to beliefs about learner's independence, 93.7% of students agreed that it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class (item 16) which is the first in rank, and 62.2% of students reported believing that extra-curricular activities enable them to learn English well (item 29). Meanwhile, 86.3% of students reported that doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful (item 38). The results

show that in a learner-centered approach, students need to heavily rely on themselves in the process of learning.

In conclusion, in this section, students' responses to 39 questionnaire items were reported based on the beliefs about English language learning. The majority of students in Lao PDR reported believing that it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class. This is followed by the fact that nowadays Lao people think it is important to learn English. In the next section, the teachers' responses to Teacher Questionnaire based on beliefs about learning English will be reported.

4.2.2 Beliefs about Learning English Held by Teachers

This section concentrates on analyzing and interpreting quantitative data from teachers' beliefs questionnaire, and reporting results. Teachers' responses to 39 questionnaire items were analyzed with the assistance of the SPSS program first by calculating percentages, and then reported based on the beliefs about English language learning.

Based on the data reported by the 129 teachers in Lao PDR, it was found that 25 out of the 39 items met the criteria given earlier i.e. more than 50% of the teachers reported that they believed or agreed to what was stated in the questionnaire. Table 4.2 below shows the results from 39 questionnaire items of beliefs about learning English from Teacher Questionnaire.

Table 4.2 Beliefs about Learning English Held by Teachers (25 out of 39 items)

Rank	Item	Belief Item	Agreeing (%) (n=129)
1	38	Doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful.	96.1
2	16	It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.	95.3
3	23	Multi-media is very useful in learning English.	95.3
4	37	The teacher is the best resource person to learn English.	93.8
5	12	Students can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers..	93.0
6	30	Nowadays Lao people think it is important to learn English.	91.5
7	34	It depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English.	82.2
8	13	It is OK to guess if students do not know the meaning of a new word in English.	81.4
9	39	It is important to practice English in the language laboratory.	81.4
10	11	It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.	76.7
11	1	It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	73.6
12	7	It is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent.	72.1
13	15	Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items.	71.3
14	4	A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.	70.5
15	24	Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.	69.8
16	25	It is important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.	69.8
17	26	If students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job.	69.8
18	29	Extra-curricular activities enable students to learn English well.	69.8
19	19	Students feel shy or uncomfortable when they speak English in front of other people.	63.6
20	3	English is a difficult language.	60.5
21	32	Laotians can learn and communicate in English.	58.1
22	22	It is easier to speak than to understand English.	52.7
23	2	Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn English.	51.9
24	20	Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.	51.2
25	5	Students believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well.	50.4

- **Category 1: The Difficulty of Language Learning**

In Table 4.2 shows that 60.5% of teachers considered English as a difficult language, while 27.9% of them regarded it as an easy language (item 3). In addition, 52.7% of them agreed that it is easier to speak than to understand English (item 22); and 50.4% of teachers reported believing that students will ultimately learn to speak English very well (item 5). The results show that although English is a difficult language, teachers believe that their students will ultimately improve speaking ability.

- **Category 2: Foreign Language Aptitude**

With respect to foreign language aptitude, 73.6% of teachers reported believing that it is easier for children than adults to learn English (item 1); 58.1% of them agreed that Laotians can learn and communicate in English (item 32); and 51.9% of teachers agreed that some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn English (item 2). These beliefs provided evidence that a high percentage of teachers believed that it is better to learn English at a younger age rather than after their maturity.

- **Category 3: The Nature of Language Learning**

In terms of belief about the nature of language learning, 76.7% of teachers agreed that it is better to learn English in an English-speaking country (item 11); 71.3% of teachers agreed that learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items (item 15); 69.8% of teachers reported believing that learning English is different from learning other school subjects (item 24); and 69.8% agreed that it is important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English (item 25) and 51.2% agreed that learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules (item 20). The results obviously show that teachers believe that

learning English is different from learning other school subjects in terms of a lot of new vocabulary items and grammar rules.

- **Category 4: Strategy Use**

Regarding strategy use, the majority of teachers (81.4%) reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that it is OK to guess if students do not know the meaning of a new word in English (item 13). Besides, 72.1% of teachers reported believing that it is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent (item 7). Moreover, 63.6% of teachers reported believing that students feel shy or uncomfortable when they speak English in front of other people (item 19). When taking into a close consideration on the items which teachers reported ‘strongly agree or agree’, we possibly have an overall impression that teachers highly value Strategy Use in language learning.

- **Category 5: Motivation and Expectations**

In relation to the items of Motivation and Expectations, only three items were reported as beliefs based on the set criteria. The majority of the teachers (93.0%) reported agreeing that students can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers (item 12) while 91.5% of the teachers reported believing that nowadays Lao people think it is very important to learn English (item 30). This is followed by 69.8% of teachers reported believing that if students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job (item 26). The results of these items clearly show that Lao people as well as students and teachers are highly motivated in learning and teaching English. Not surprisingly, learning and knowing a foreign language is a kind of ‘fashion’ in Laos since the period of colonization until nowadays.

- **Category 6: The Role of the Teacher and Feedback**

In terms of the Role of the Teacher and Feedback, 93.8% of the teachers reported believing that the teacher is the best resource person for students to learn English (item 37); 82.2% of teachers reported believing that it depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English (item 34); and 70.5% of the teachers reported believing that a teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes (item 4). The results show that teachers strongly believe that the role they play in language learning under the constructivist pedagogy is very important to their students.

- **Category 7: The Role of Media Utilization in EFL**

Concerning beliefs about the Role of Media Utilization in EFL, we found that the great majority of teachers which is 95.3% of the teachers reported believing that multi-media is very useful in learning English (item 23). Moreover, 81.4% of the teachers reported believing that it is important to practice English in the language laboratory (item 39). The results show that media utilization in EFL is very necessary in language teaching as well as in language teacher education.

- **Category 8: Learner's Independence**

When taking beliefs about Learner's Independence into consideration, 96.1% of the teachers reported believing that doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful (item 38). This belief item is the top rank. Besides, 95.3% of the teachers reported believing that it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class which is one of the top second (item 16), followed by 69.8% of the teachers reported believing that extra-curricular activities enable students to learn English well

(item29).The results clearly show that teachers strongly believe that students should develop and enhance their independence in language learning.

In summary, this section reports the beliefs reported by 129 teachers of English at the three universities and eight Teachers' Training Colleges in Lao PDR. The great majority of teachers reported believing that doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful. Similarly, a high percentage of teachers agreed that it is important for students to repeat and practise a lot in class and multi-media is very useful in learning English. In the following sections, students' responses to 39 items based on their gender, TE program and major are analyzed and significant variation patterns in beliefs will be described in detail.

4.2.3 Significant Variation Patterns in Beliefs about Learning English Held by Students according to Variables

In the previous section 4.2.1, beliefs held by students were reported based on certain criteria by using the descriptive statistics data analysis without considering significant differences. In this section, the chi-square (χ^2) tests were employed to determine the significant variation patterns in learners' reported beliefs about learning English as a foreign language at the individual item level in association with their gender, TE program and major among 962 students in this specific research. The chi-square (χ^2) tests are used to compare the actual frequencies with which participants gave different responses on the 5-point rating scale, a method of analysis closer to the raw data than comparisons based on average responses for each item. For the chi-square (χ^2) tests, responses of 1 and 2 ('Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree') were consolidated into a single 'Disagreement' category; responses of 3 'Not Sure' were one individual 'Uncertainty' category; and responses of 4 and 5 ('Agree' and

‘Strongly Agree’) were combined into a single ‘Agreement’ category. The purpose of consolidating the 5 degrees of response into 3 categories of beliefs is to obtain cell sizes with expected values high enough to ensure a valid analysis (Green and Oxford, 1995, p.271).

According to McCall (1970,p. 230), the level of significance is usually set at .05 and sometimes at .01 or .001. As Kohout (1974) states, the .05 level is routinely used in the Social and Behavioral Sciences. Regarding the levels of significant differences associated with each variable, namely gender, TE program and major, a conservative level of significance ($\alpha < .001$ and $\alpha < .01$) and a more liberal level ($\alpha < .05$) are both adopted in this study which show the degree of significance in a strong or a weak way. That is, if the probability of an event is .001, the researcher expects this event to occur 1 in 1000 times or less, and if the probability of an event is .05, that means the expectation of occurrence is 5 in 100 times or less.

In this section, students’ responses to Student Questionnaire were analyzed by using the SPSS program with the chi-square (χ^2) tests and beliefs in terms of the students’ gender, TE program and major will be reported respectively.

4.2.3.1 Students’ Gender

In this section, beliefs held by students in terms of gender are reported based on the results of the chi-square (χ^2) tests analysis. Regarding the gender of the participants in this specific investigation, there were slightly more female than male students (490:472). Beliefs held by 962 students are illustrated according to the eight categories of the items of beliefs. In order to get a general picture of beliefs held by students in terms of their gender in Lao PDR, the significant results are described in detail according to Table 4.3 as follows:

Table 4.3 Significant Variation Patterns in Beliefs about Learning English in terms of Students' Gender

Item 1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.				
Gender	Agreement	Uncertainty	Disagreement	Observed χ^2 P<.05
Male	68.2%	22.2%	9.7%	$\chi^2 = 12.141$ p<.01
Female	78.2%	15.1%	6.7%	
Item 8. It is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well.				
Male	54.4%	21.4%	24.2%	$\chi^2 = 8.300$ p<.05
Female	45.7%	23.1%	31.2%	
Item 10. People who are good at Mathematics or science are not good at learning English.				
Male	16.5%	29.2%	54.2%	$\chi^2 = 6.896$ p<.05
Female	11.4%	34.9%	53.7%	
Item 12. I can improve my English if I often chat with English native speakers.				
Male	94.7%	3.2%	2.1%	$\chi^2 = 13.107$ p<.01
Female	89.0%	4.3%	6.7%	
Item 14. I have English language aptitude.				
Male	39.4%	41.5%	48.0%	$\chi^2 = 12.736$ p<.01
Female	28.6%	19.1%	23.5%	
Item 25. It is important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.				
Male	87.1%	10.2%	2.8%	$\chi^2 = 9.733$ p<.01
Female	93.1%	5.3%	1.6%	
Item 32. Laotians can learn and communicate in English.				
Male	74.6%	17.6%	7.8%	$\chi^2 = 6.608$ p<.05
Female	79.4%	16.5%	4.1%	

The results of the chi-square tests illustrated in Table 4.3 indicated significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English reported by students with a significantly higher percentage of male than female students reported believing that (Item 8) it is very necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well (54.4% and 45.7%); (Item 10) people who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning English (16.5% and 11.4%); (Item 12) I can improve my

English if I can chat with English native speakers (94.7% and 89.0%); and (Item 14) I have English language aptitude (39.4% and 28.6%). What has been found previously, it can be stated that male students are more positive and confident in socialization with native English speakers. In the meantime, a significantly higher percentage of female than male students reported that (Item 1) it is easier for children than adults to learn English (78.2% and 68.2%); (Item 25) it is very important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English (93.1% and 87.1%); and (Item 32) Laotians can learn and communicate in English (79.4% and 74.6%). From what has been found, it can be stated that female students are more comfortable with language translation.

4.2.3.2 Students' Teacher Education Program

In this section, significant variation patterns in beliefs about English language learning held by students associated with their Teacher Education program (Diploma level and Bachelor level) are reported in exactly the same way as in Section 4.2.3.1.

In this particular investigation, 477 students were students at Teachers' Training Colleges and 485 students were university students. Regarding the participants' TE program in the present investigation, the number of each group was nearly equal. Beliefs held by 962 students in terms of their TE program are illustrated according to eight categories of items of beliefs. The significant results are presented in Table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4 Significant Variation Patterns in Beliefs about Learning English in terms of Students' Teacher Education Program

Item 1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.				
TE program	Agreement	Uncertainty	Disagreement	Observed χ^2 P<.05
Diploma level	76.5%	17.4%	6.1%	$\chi^2=7.212$ p<.05
Bachelor level	70.1%	19.6%	10.3%	
Item 3. English is a difficult language.				
Diploma level	56.6%	16.4%	27.0%	$\chi^2=14.451$ p<.01
Bachelor level	68.2%	13.2%	18.6%	
Item 4. A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.				
Diploma level	87.0%	5.5%	7.5%	$\chi^2=7.524$ p<.05
Bachelor level	92.4%	3.3%	4.3%	
Item 5. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.				
Diploma level	54.1%	43.2%	2.7%	$\chi^2=8.988$ p<.01
Bachelor level	63.3%	33.8%	2.9%	
Item 34. It depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English.				
Diploma level	57.9%	24.3%	17.8%	$\chi^2=28.747$ p<.01
Bachelor level	73.2%	18.4%	8.5%	
Item 39. It is important to practice English in the language laboratory.				
Diploma level	76.1%	17.4%	6.5%	$\chi^2=7.307$ p<.05
Bachelor level	83.1%	12.6%	4.3%	

The results of the chi-square tests illustrated in Table 4.4 indicated significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English with a significantly higher percentage of students studying at the diploma level than those studying at the bachelor level reported believing that (Item 1) it is easier for children than adults to learn English (76.5% and 70.1%). In the meantime, a significantly higher percentage of the bachelor level students than the diploma level students reported agreeing that (Item 3) English is a difficult language (68.2% and 56.6%); (Item 4) A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes (92.4% and 87.0%); (Item 5) They

believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well (63.3% and 54.1%); (Item 34) it depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English (73.2% and 57.9%); and (Item 39) it is important to practise English in the language laboratory (83.1% and 76.1%).

4.2.3.3 Students' Major

In the present investigation, 480 students were English majors and 482 Non-English majors. The significant results are presented in Table 4.5 below:

Table 4.5 Significant Variation Patterns in Beliefs about Learning English in terms of Students' Major

Item 1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.				
Students' Major	Agreement	Uncertainty	Disagreement	Observed χ^2 P<.05
EM	69.6%	21.9%	8.5%	$\chi^2 = 7.804$ p<.05
NEM	77.0%	15.1%	7.9%	
Item 5. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.				
EM	74.8%	23.3%	1.9%	$\chi^2 = 104.215$ p<.01
NEM	42.7%	53.5%	3.7%	
Item 6. Laotians are good at learning English.				
EM	46.5%	45.4%	8.1%	$\chi^2 = 7.160$ p<.05
NEM	53.5%	36.9%	9.5%	
Item 11. It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.				
EM	74.0%	9.2%	16.9%	$\chi^2 = 21.351$ p<.01
NEM	60.6%	11.0%	28.4%	
Item 12. I can improve my English if I often chat with English native speakers.				
EM	94.6%	2.3%	3.1%	$\chi^2 = 10.078$ p<.01
NEM	89.0%	5.2%	5.8%	
Item 16. It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.				
EM	95.2%	2.3%	2.5%	$\chi^2 = 9.788$ p<.01
NEM	92.1%	6.2%	1.7%	

Table 4.5 Significant Variation Patterns in Beliefs about Learning English in terms of Students' Major (Cont.)

Item 23. Multi-media is very useful in learning English.				
EM	94.0%	4.0%	2.1%	$\chi^2=8.411$ p<.05
NEM	88.8%	6.6%	4.6%	
Item 35. I learn English only to pass the exam.				
Students' Major	Agreement	Uncertainty	Disagreement	Observed χ^2 P<.05
EM	5.6%	8.3%	86.0%	$\chi^2=21.975$ p<.01
NEM	13.3%	11.8%	74.9%	
Item 36. A teacher should speak Lao as much as he/she can while teaching.				
EM	21.2%	10.4%	68.3%	$\chi^2=24.734$ p<.01
NEM	35.7%	9.1%	55.2%	
Item 39. It is important to practise English in the language laboratory.				
EM	82.7%	13.3%	4.0%	$\chi^2=6.566$ p<.05
NEM	76.6%	16.6%	6.8%	

Note: EM=English Major; NEM=Non-English Major

The results of the chi-square tests illustrated in Table 4.5 indicated significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English with a significantly higher percentage of English major students than Non-English major students reporting that (Item 5) they believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English well (74.8% and 42.7%); (Item 11) it is better to learn English in an English-speaking country (74% and 60.6%); (Item 12) they can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers (94.6% and 89.0%); (Item 16) it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class (95.2% and 92.1%); (Item 23) multi-media is very useful in learning English (94% and 88.8%); and (Item 39) it is important to practise English in the language laboratory (82.7% and 76.6%).

In contrast, the results revealed the significantly higher percentage of Non-English major than English major students reported believing that (Item 1) it is

easier for children than adults to learn English (77.0% and 69.6%); (Item 6) Laotians are good at learning English (55.3% and 46.5%); (Item 35) they learn English only to pass the exam (13.3% and 5.6%); and (Item 36) a teacher should speak Lao as much as he/she can while teaching (35.7% and 21.2%). Regarding studying English for a mere purpose of passing the exam, the results may reflect the exam-oriented curriculum in teacher education in Lao PDR. However, the belief held by Non-English major students about this matter might change, so it should be another interesting point to investigate whether learner beliefs can change overtime or not in order to understand it better. Besides, Non-English major students with poor background of English prefer their teacher to use Lao rather than English while teaching.

4.2.3.4 Summary

In summary, the results of the chi-square tests are reported in Section 4.2.3 determine the significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English held by students in Lao PDR in association with their gender, Teacher Education program and major. In the next section, significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English held by teachers according to variables will be reported in detail.

4.2.4 Significant Variation Patterns in Beliefs about Learning English Held by Teachers according to Variables

In Section 4.2.3, beliefs about learning English were reported based on the chi-square tests to determine the significant variation patterns in beliefs at the individual item level associated with their gender, TE program and major among the 962 students in Lao PDR. In this section, the responses of 129 teachers to 39 belief items of the Teachers' Questionnaires were analyzed with the chi-square tests and beliefs

about learning English held by teachers in association with their teaching experience and level of teaching are reported respectively. For the chi-square tests, responses of 1 and 2 ('Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree') were consolidated into a single 'Disagreement' category; responses of 3 'Not Sure' were one individual 'Uncertainty' category; and responses of 4 and 5 ('Agree' and 'Strongly Agree') were combined into a single 'Agreement' category. The purpose of consolidating the five levels of responses into three categories was to obtain cell sizes with expected values high enough to ensure a valid analysis (Green and Oxford, 1995, p. 271) as was done initially with the report of beliefs held by students.

4.2.4.1 Teachers' Teaching Experience

In this section, beliefs held by teachers in terms of their teaching experience are reported based on the results of the chi-square tests analysis. Regarding the teaching experience of the teacher participants in this research, teacher participants were categorized according to the number of years they have been teaching English at TTCs and universities. Teachers who have been teaching from 1 to 5 years were described as the 'inexperienced'; those with 6 to 15 years of teaching experience were the 'moderately experienced'; and those with more than 15 years of teaching experience were categorized as the 'experienced'. From the profile of teacher questionnaire, with the total of 129 teachers, 57 teachers were inexperienced; 59 teachers were moderately experienced and 13 teachers were experienced. Beliefs held by teachers in Lao PDR in relation to their years of teaching experience are illustrated in Table 4.6 below:

Table 4.6 Significant Variation Patterns in Beliefs about Learning English in terms of Teachers' Teaching Experience

Item 4. A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes				
Teaching Experience	Agreement	Uncertainty	Disagreement	Observed χ^2 P<.05
Inexp.	80.7%	1.8%	17.5%	$\chi^2 = 24.198$ p<.01
Modexp.	64.4%	0%	35.6%	
Exp.	53.8%	23.1%	23.1%	
Item 8. It is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well				
Inexp.	54.4%	24.6%	21.1%	$\chi^2 = 12.040$ p<.05
Modexp.	35.6%	18.6%	45.8%	
Exp.	61.5%	30.8%	7.7%	
Item 20. Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.				
Inexp.	66.7%	10.5%	22.8%	$\chi^2 = 9.960$ p<.05
Modexp.	39.0%	16.9%	44.1%	
Exp.	38.5%	15.4%	46.2%	
Item 28. Without a teacher, learning English is impossible for students.				
Inexp.	35.1%	17.5%	47.4%	$\chi^2 = 15.369$ p<.01
Modexp.	6.8%	18.6%	74.6%	
Exp.	15.4%	23.1%	61.5%	

Note: Inexp= Inexperienced (1-5 years) ; Modexp= Moderately Experienced (6-15 years); Exp= Experienced (More than 15 years)

The results of the chi-square tests illustrated in Table 4.6 indicated significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English with significantly higher percentages of inexperienced and moderately experienced teachers than experienced teachers reported believing that (Item 4) a teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes (80.7% and 64.4%, 53.8%); (Item 20) learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules (66.7% and 39.0%, 38.5%); and (Item 28) without a teacher, learning English is impossible for students (6.8% and 35.1%, 15.4%). Meanwhile, the significantly higher percentage of experienced teachers than inexperienced and moderately experienced teachers reported believing

that (Item 8) it is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well (61.5%, 54.4% and 35.6%).

4.2.4.2 Teachers' Level of Teaching

In this section, beliefs about learning English held by teachers in terms of their level of teaching are reported based on the results of the chi-square tests analysis. The level of teaching was categorized as college level and university level. According to the results, no significant differences were found in terms of this variable but one item as illustrated below in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Significant Variation Patterns in Beliefs about Learning English in terms of Teachers' Level of Teaching

Item 16. It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.				
Level of Teaching	Agreement	Uncertainty	Disagreement	Observed χ^2 P<.05
CL	100%	0.0%	0.0%	$\chi^2 = 7.949$ p<.05
UL	89.5%	5.3%	5.3%	

Note: CL= College Level

UL= University Level

The results of the chi-square tests illustrated in Table 4.7 indicated significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English with a significantly higher percentage of the teachers at the college level than those teaching at the university level reporting believing that (Item 16) it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class (100% and 89.5%). This means that teachers of TTC put a heavy emphasis on repetition and practice a lot in class.

4.2.5 A Comparison of Beliefs about Learning English Held by Students and Teachers

As described in the previous sections (4.2.3 and 4.2.4), the significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English held by students and teachers in

teacher education in Lao PDR have been reported according to the results from the chi-square tests with the assistance of the SPSS program. In this section, a comparison of beliefs about learning English held by students and teachers in Lao PDR will be reported according to the results of the chi-square tests as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 A Comparison of Belief about Learning English Held by Students and Teachers

Item 4. A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.				
Students/Teachers	Agreement	Uncertainty	Disagreement	Observed χ^2 P<.05
Students	89.7%	4.4%	5.9%	$\chi^2=62.138$ p<.001
Teachers	70.5%	3.1%	26.4%	
Item 5. Students believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well.				
Students	58.7%	38.5%	2.8%	$\chi^2=24.370$ p<.001
Teachers	50.4%	38.0%	11.6%	
Item 13. It is OK to guess if students do not know the meaning of a new word in English.				
Students	47.6%	21.8%	30.6%	$\chi^2=52.606$ p<.001
Teachers	81.4%	5.4%	13.2%	
Item 14. Students have English language aptitude.				
Students	33.9%	44.8%	21.3%	$\chi^2=15.156$ p<.001
Teachers	24.8%	62.8%	12.4%	
Item 15. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items.				
Students	82.5%	11.7%	5.7%	$\chi^2=12.675$ p<.05
Teachers	71.3%	15.5%	13.2%	
Item 20. Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.				
Students	76.9%	11.3%	11.7%	$\chi^2=52.936$ p<.001
Teachers	51.2%	14.0%	34.9%	
Item 21. Students would like to learn English so that they can make friends with foreigners.				
Students	64.6%	19.1%	16.3%	$\chi^2=86.303$ p<.001
Teachers	23.3%	33.3%	43.4%	
Item 25. It is important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.				
Students	90.1%	7.7%	2.2%	$\chi^2=53.554$ p<.001
Teachers	69.8%	17.8%	12.4%	

Table 4.8 A Comparison of Belief about Learning English Held by Students and Teachers (Cont.)

Item 26. If students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job.				
Students/Teachers	Agreement	Uncertainty	Disagreement	Observed χ^2 P<.05
Students	85.4%	11.6%	2.9%	$\chi^2=21.080$ p<.001
Teachers	69.8%	25.6%	4.7%	
Item 31. Students would like to have friends from foreign country.				
Students	77.4%	16.5%	6.0%	$\chi^2=93.179$ p<.001
Teachers	38.0%	50.4%	11.6%	
Item 32. Laotians can learn and communicate in English.				
Students	77.0%	17.0%	5.9%	$\chi^2=39.668$ p<.001
Teachers	58.1%	20.9%	20.9%	
Item 34. It depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English.				
Students	65.6%	21.3%	13.1%	$\chi^2=14.417$ p<.001
Teachers	82.2%	10.1%	7.8%	
Item 38. Doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful.				
Students	86.3%	10.6%	3.1%	$\chi^2=10.048$ p<.001
Teachers	96.1%	3.1%	0.8%	

The results of the chi-square tests shown in Table 4.8 reveal that 13 out of 39 items were found to be significantly different. A significantly higher percentage of students than teachers reported believing that (Item 4) a teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes (89.7% and 70.5%); (Item 5) students believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well (58.7% and 50.4%); (Item 14) students have English language aptitude (33.9% and 24.8%); (Item 15) Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items (82.5% and 71.3%); (Item 20) learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules (76.9% and 51.2%); (Item 21) Students would like to learn English so that they can make friends with foreigners (64.6% and 23.3%); (Item 25) it is important to learn

English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English (90.1% and 69.8%); (Item 26) if students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job (85.4% and 69.8%); (Item 31) students would like to have friends from the foreign country (77.4% and 38.0%); and (Item 32) Laotians can learn and communicate in English.

In the meantime, a significantly higher percentage of teachers than students reported agreeing that (Item 13) it is OK to guess if students do not know the meaning of a new word in English (81.4% and 47.6%); (Item 34) it depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English (82.2% and 65.6%); and (Item 38) doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful (96.1% and 86.3%).

In summary, in Section 4.2.5, the comparison of beliefs about English language learning held by students and teachers in teacher education in Lao PDR was reported based on the chi-square tests. Significant variation patterns in beliefs held by students and teachers were found to some extent. Significant differences of items of beliefs are shown in Table 4.8. The next section deals with the summary of results of the questionnaires of students and teachers.

4.3 Summary

In this chapter, the quantitative data is reported. In Section 4.2, the results obtained from the questionnaires responded to by 962 students and 129 teachers in three universities and eight Teachers' Training Colleges in Laos are reported. The highlights of the findings of the present investigation are shown in a summary below:

- In terms of the students' beliefs about learning English, the majority of the students agreed that it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class. They also believed that nowadays, Lao people think that it is very important to learn English. In addition, they believed that they can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers.
- Regarding the teachers' beliefs about learning English, the majority of the teachers believed that doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful. The teachers also emphasized that it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class. Besides, they agreed that the teacher is the best resource person for students to learn English.
- With respect to the gender of students, a significantly higher percentage of male than female students reported believing that it is very necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well; people who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning English; they can improve their English if they can chat with English native speakers; and they have English language aptitude. In the meantime, a significantly higher percentage of female than male students regarded it is easier for children than adults to learn English; it is very important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English; and Laotians can learn and communicate in English.
- Regarding the teacher education program, a significantly higher percentage of bachelor-level students than diploma-level students reported agreeing that English is a difficult language; a teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes; they believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well; it depends on the teacher to make students like or

dislike learning English; and it is important to practise English in the language laboratory. In the meantime, a significantly higher percentage of the students of diploma-level than of bachelor-level students reported believing that it is easier for children than adults to learn English.

- In terms of major, a significantly higher percentage of English-major students than Non-English major students reported believing that they will ultimately learn to speak English well ; it is better to learn English in an English-speaking country; they can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers ; it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class ; multi-media is very useful in learning English ; and it is important to practise English in the language laboratory. In contrast, the results revealed a higher percentage of Non-English major than English major students reported agreeing that it is easier for children than adults to learn English; Laotians are good at learning English ; they learn English only to pass the exam; and a teacher should speak Lao as much as he/she can while teaching.
- In terms of teaching experience, significantly higher percentages of moderately experienced and experienced teachers than inexperienced teachers reported believing that a teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes; it is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well; learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules; and without a teacher, learning English is impossible for students.
- With respect to level of teaching, a significantly a higher percentage of teachers at the college level than teachers at the university level reported believing that it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.

- The results of the chi-square tests reveal that 13 out of 39 items were found to be significantly different. A significantly higher percentage of students than teachers reported believing that a teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes; students believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well; they have English language aptitude; learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items; learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules; students would like to learn English so that they can make friends with foreigners; it is important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English; if students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job; students would like to have friends from the foreign country; and Laotians can learn and communicate in English.
- In the meantime, a significantly higher percentage of teachers than students reported agreeing that it is OK to guess if students do not know the meaning of a new word in English; it depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English; and doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful.

In summary, this chapter put an emphasis on the results from the analysis of the quantitative data from both students' and teachers' questionnaires about beliefs in learning English. In Chapter 5, the results from the analysis of the qualitative data from both students' and teachers' semi-structured interviews about beliefs in learning English will be presented.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to report the results of the qualitative data from students' and teachers' semi-structured interviews which were conducted with 54 students and 27 teachers at 8 colleges and 3 universities in Lao PDR. The results from the analysis of students' semi-structured interviews are presented first. This is followed by the results from the analysis of teachers' semi-structured interviews.

5.1.1 Results of the Semi-Structured Interviews of Students

Students' semi-structured interviews were conducted with a group of students in each TTC and each Faculty of Education shortly after the Student's Questionnaire was administered. The details of the students' semi-structured interviews can be seen in Section 3.5.2.1.

According to the information of contact (Mobile phone number) offered by a lot of students from the Students' Profile in the questionnaire, a certain number of students were selected and invited to be interviewees on a voluntary basis. These students were not categorized as unsuccessful or successful but gender, TE program and major oriented. The detailed background information of student interviewees is shown in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1 Information about Student Interviewees

Gender		Major		Teacher Education Program	
Male	Female	English Major	Non-English Major	College Level	University Level
25	29	30	24	39	15

The detailed guided questions can be seen in Appendix 5. The Lao language was used as the working language in the interviews. Before starting the actual interview, the researcher spent some time explaining the reasons and importance of the interviews and sincerely promised to keep the content of interviews confidential in an attempt to make every interviewee relaxed and comfortable to express their real feeling. Most of the interviews lasted for approximately 10 minutes and a few of them for over 15 minutes.

All the interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed more or less verbatim and translated into English for the analysis. In this specific research, content analysis was mainly adopted to analyze the transcriptions. In order to have a better analysis of students' semi-structured interviews, responses from students were categorized and then grouped together. The results of 54 students' semi-structured interviews are identified based on the main 13 guided questions (See Appendix 5). The results of students' semi-structured interviews are described in detail below:

Q1 (1) How do you interpret the term 'aptitude'?

(2) Do you think that you have a foreign language aptitude?

Concerning English language aptitude, two sub-questions have been designed to explore learners' beliefs about this special ability. The first question aims to explore how students interpret the term 'aptitude', and the second is intended to

request the students to estimate their own foreign language aptitude. According to the results of the students' interview, 'aptitude' means quick learning and understanding, good memory, special skill in a particular area, innate gift of the individual and diligence. The findings are summarized below:

- *S5: ... 'Aptitude' is something occurs from your birth and..you are capable of doing a certain thing...There is no need to require a lot of practice.*
- *S30: ... 'Aptitude' is precious for human beings. Everyone has innate gift...The difference is what your aptitude is...Are you good at arts, English or a certain activity?....*
- *S36: ...It is something that is with us from birth. Everyone has 'aptitude' but in different aspects. This means some people are very good at doing something but not the other... For example, I very well perform singing and dancing...*

A number of students reported that they have foreign language aptitude to some extent shown in different aspects of language learning. They described that they can speak English well, understand and remember well what has been taught, have some time talking with foreigners and love reading texts. A number of students have many opportunities to chat with foreigners. Even one student described that due to the love for English, he was selected from his school to study at TTC. Examples are:

- *S12: ...I feel I have.. When I am free, I like doing self-study by reading books, magazines and playing with net...*
- *S17: ... I love it..I like it....I was selected from my school for a further study of English major here...*
- *S25: ... Probably I have...I started learning English at Mattayom 3 and I was the top second of English subject...*

The majority of students reported that they did not have any foreign language aptitude at all. They described that their English learning basically as a result of their interest and commitment in English, poor background from Mattayom Ton (Lower-Secondary) and Mattayom Pay (Upper-Secondary), and textbook-oriented teaching methodology. Examples are:

- S23: ... Ah..Everyone has language aptitude but I...don't. Instead, I only have the courage at least to say... 'Good morning' to a foreigner.
- S48: ...I feel that I don't have [English]...this is because of no background...When I studied English at Mattayom Pay, Ajarn [the teacher] emphasized only on textbook....not from A,B,C...and without teaching the formation of words...this a big problem for me.

Q2 Do you think it is easy or difficult to learn English? If it is easy, in what aspects? / If it is difficult, in what aspects?

In terms of the difficulty in learning English, some of the students responded that it is difficult and very difficult to learn English. Based on the responses from students' interviews; the students reported that it is difficult in terms of structure, grammar rules, the twelve tenses, pronunciation especially 'R' sound and 'L' sound and to some extent vocabulary. Examples are:

- S3: ...Yes, difficult....because English.. one word has many meanings....I also found it very difficult to pronounce the words correctly...
- S9: ...I think it's difficult...because we are Lao....No direct relation with English language..Lao people use Lao as official language and use it in daily life... We never use English for communication..I mean English is unfamiliar.
- S26: ... Oh, difficult...Pronunciation is difficult and makes me confused. Perhaps, partly because of the teaching of Ajarns...I mean different Ajarns is different pronunciation...many same words are pronounced differently ...oh.. I got confused.

Meanwhile, some students reported that it is easy to learn English in particular in daily life vocabulary, speaking, similarities with Lao language and the teaching style of the teacher [Ajarn]. Examples are:

- S37: ...For me...speaking is easy.... It only needs practice and practice.....my problem is to understand the text....
- S43: ...Although English is unfamiliar....I think it's easy when we can compare English to Lao language...

Surprisingly, the majority of the students reported that English is neither easy nor difficult in terms of the 4 skills. The reason behind here is one's commitment.

Examples are:

- *S4: ...On second thoughts, I think not easy and not difficult. If it is difficult, ...why so many people can speak English? And if it is easy, why so many people cannot speak English...*
- *S19: ...English is not difficult and not very easy...If we have strong determination, nothing is difficult...The point is to practice speaking, writing and trying to chat English with native speakers as much as you can. This helps a lot...*

Q3 What is the most frequent method you use when you learn English?

When students were asked what method they use most frequently to learn English, both English major and non-English major shared some methods such as, memorizing vocabulary, practising reading, reading aloud, doing self-study, and translating. The widely used tool is dictionary and for some students, Google search.

Examples are:

- *S5: ...Most of the time, I read and practice with friends. ...When I am free and alone, I read aloud to myself.*
- *S12: ...Whenever I find an interesting word, ...I always write that word on my hand and translate it into Lao...I make sure for the meaning of the word...and then stick the word on the wall of the bedroom, kitchen and even toilet...*
- *S38: ...I practice English by listening to the tape, paragraph by paragraph, ...when I notice difficult words, ...I type them in Google for the meaning and the use of them..*
- *S44: ...When I first came here and studied English at this TTC, ...I tried to learn 3 words a day. For each word, I wrote on the paper 40-50 times.....let's say 2-3 pages... in order to memorize and understand their meaning. Then I stick the three words on the wall of my bedroom, toilet and kitchen....Finally, I used the three words in making sentences...*

Q4 How much time do you usually spend on learning English every day after class?

With respect to how much time the students spend on their English learning after class, the responses varied from almost no time, 15-20 minutes a day, an hour a day to several hours a day. According to the responses, the more exposure of English identified in the teacher education curriculum, the longer time students spent in self-learning of English. After reading the transcript of the students, time spent was dedicated to doing homework, reading short stories, watching video, and attending English extra classes. Examples are:

- *S13: ...After class, before going to bed, I tried to catch 2 words...at least 2 words...and then tried to learn some more words in the dictionary and learnt by heart..*
- *S18: ...I always have 3 hours for self-study. This period of time, ...I spent partly on listening to music, partly on listening to English conversation and on reading books.*
- *S42: ...I spent 4 hours in learning English by myself..After cooking and having dinner, I attended extra English class near my dormitory...*

Q5 (1) Do you often read English magazines, newspapers or books after class?

(2) Do you often listen to English radios, songs, or watch English movies after class?

(3) Do you think these after class activities influence your English study greatly?

Concerning learner's independence, three sub-questions to explore what students do after class. Most students reported that after class, they often read English magazines and newspapers such as Magazine 'Champa Lao' and 'Vientiane Times' newspaper. Some students watched movies such as 'Harry Potter' and 'Titanic'. They

found it difficult to understand and most of the time they guessed. The majority of students reported that they listened to music and their favorite songs are ‘Take Me to Your Heart’, ‘My Love’, ‘Nothing At All’, ‘One More Night’, ‘You Are Not Alone’, ‘I Miss You’, ‘The Day You Ran Away’ and ‘Somebody’. Examples are:

- *S6: ...I like reading books, newspapers and magazines...I read slowly and softly...I also like listening to music....My favorite song is ‘My Love’...I cannot sing but I love it...*
- *S19: ...Yes, I ever read stories...like folktales and magazines. Some parts, I understood but the others I didn’t....I guess most of the time...For music...I love English songs so much especially ‘One More Night’ and ‘Take Me To Your Heart’.*

When students were asked what influences after-class activities have on their learning English, they responded very positively. Most students said that these after-class activities can stimulate their interest to learn English; offer them opportunities to learn English vocabulary and culture; create an atmosphere to learn English in the Lao surroundings and improve their four skills of English language especially listening and speaking skill. The following excerpts show a general view of the influence on the students’ English learning:

- *S18: ... Em...Much influence. If we rely only on learning English in the classroom, I think it’s not enough. There is a need to open up the knowledge by learning from other sources...the English course here is only 2 years...not enough indeed...*
- *S44: ...I think there is much influence ...after class. I think I learn much more... let’s say 70%, ...more than I learn in class. It improves my language skills especially listening.*

Q6 How do you use your English language?

When students were asked how they use their English language after they have learned English for many years (three years in Mattayom Ton and another three years in Mattayom Pay), the majority of students responded that they use English with their friends and foreigners very little except for having English class and taking

exam. Some students have a chance to talk with foreigners when they ask for directions and food to eat in restaurants. In other words, they rarely use English in their daily lives. Examples are:

- *S6: ...I occasionally met foreigners asking for directions...I also talked to friends face to face and sometimes on the phone...I even talked on the phone to an Australian who married my auntie...I understood only some words...I got confused. It was a long distance call.*
- *S30: ...I learnt English for many years...I used it since Mattayom Two...My sister ran a restaurant and there were many customers...there were foreign customers as well. I asked and talked to them in English...*
- *S45: ...I used English with my best friend in class and after class. I also had a chance to talk to foreigners ...I understood what they said to me...*

Q7 What role do you think vocabulary and grammar play in learning English?

The role of vocabulary and grammar consists of the basic nature of English language learning. Vocabulary is regarded as the basic element in learning English successfully. In this regard, the majority of students reported that grammar is more important than vocabulary since they will become teachers upon graduation. In order to be a teacher of English, there is a need to know a lot of grammar rules. It is similar with a teacher of Lao language.

Three types of responses are shared by English major and non-English major students which are summarized below:

1) Vocabulary is basically more important than grammar

- *S24:..I think vocabulary is more important than grammar...For example, when I listened to others...I mean foreigners talking to each other...if I knew a lot of vocabulary, I am sure I would be able to translate and understand...*
- *S26: ...By learning grammar, if you have to make a sentence, you have to make it a full sentence like... 'Do you like it?'...On the contrary, in speaking or in many situations, I heard just only 'Like it?'..Em...words, not structure that make sense...*

- *S30: ...In learning English, I stress speaking skill. In order to speak well, I need to know a lot of vocabulary...the more the better. In speaking, there is no need for perfect grammar as long as you understand and you are understood...I mean just say it...and I have courage to speak...really.*

2) **Vocabulary is as important as grammar**

- *S25: ...both of them are very important. If you don't know vocabulary, you cannot communicate with others....Similarly, if you don't know grammar, the others will not be able to understand you..*
- *S36: ...The two are equally important...Grammar enables us to write correctly...For example, when we make sentences, we will know which tense to be used...present or past tense...and if we do not know vocabulary..we won't be able to make sentences.*
- *S39: ...If we know the words well and understand grammar rules, we will learn English well...and understand more. For example, if we know the words like... 'yesterday' and 'usually', we will know that 'yesterday is used with simple past tense, and 'usually' with simple present tense...*

3) **Grammar is more important than vocabulary**

- *S5: ...Grammar plays a leading role in learning English...if we are poor in grammar, the foreigners will not understand us...Particularly, as a teacher student of English, this is very serious...we have to know a lot... When we teach, we will spend more time in explaining grammar rules.*
- *S37: ...I think grammar is more important. I would say...to teach English and to speak English is different...Teaching English is more than teaching speaking...As a teacher student of English, I had to work hard on grammar rules,...on the use of the twelve tenses...*
- *S48: ...I think grammar is much more important than vocabulary...let's say...what are vowels and alphabets?...When they are combined together..how to pronounce words and what their meanings are... Besides, you know other grammar rules..it's good for you...I mean, if you know basic grammar, your learning English will be easier.*

Q8 Is your teacher very helpful in your learning English? In what ways?

Regarding the teacher's role in learning English, the question aims to explore how the students think of their teachers in their English learning at TTC and university. Most of the students regarded the role played by the teacher as similar. The majority of students reported that their English teachers were very helpful in their learning English. They considered their English teacher as a guide, a helper, a facilitator, a coach, a trainer or a supervisor who could lead them to the right

direction, supported them and gave them immediate help when they needed it. When they were asked in what ways their teachers could help, many responses are summarized as follows:

- Teacher explained difficult words and translated into Lao;
- Teacher helped students pronounce difficult words many times;
- Teacher sometimes explained in Lao;
- Teacher helped with correct grammar rules and the use of words;
- Teacher gave students homework;
- Teacher made students do useful activities in class;
- Teacher told students to be in front of class and let them practise conversation;
- Teacher used video clip to support teaching;
- Teacher helped a lot in teaching techniques; and
- Teacher created a friendly atmosphere

Examples are:

- *S4: ...Ajarn helped a lot. He led me the right direction. My listening skill was improved and so was my pronunciation. Ajarn is very good at pronunciation and he made me focus on phonetics and...practice pronunciation...*
- *S23: ...The teacher helped a lot in terms of reading and writing...Many times, the teacher used Video clip of English in teaching...I didn't feel asleep.*
- *S47: ...Yes, teacher is very helpful. Teacher always stressed the four skills. I learnt a lot in reading and writing...I never felt shy...the teacher always created a very friendly atmosphere...I felt comfortable.*

Meanwhile, some students reported that their teachers could not help a lot in their learning English. This is mainly because the teaching schedule of non-English major students is only 2 hours per week at TTC and 4 hours a week at university.

Examples are:

- *S9: ...Yes, teacher is helpful but...according to the syllabus, only 2 hours a week of learning English....something like a little of isolation between teacher and student.*
- *S18: ...Yes a little help. Learner-centered is like this. My teacher put emphasis on teaching methodology rather than the mastery of subject matter...say teaching techniques. I had to work hard by myself in learning English.*
- *S30: ...Two hours a week. Of course not much help...I did my own calculation. Say teacher's help 20%, self-study 50%, and from TV, movies...30%*

Q9 Can you learn English without your teacher?

A further question was asked to the students as to whether they could learn English without their English teacher by aiming to explore the students' independence. Two main types of responses were identified. Firstly, the majority of students reported that they could not learn English without their teacher. Examples are:

- *S 24: ...I think teacher is the key resource person. I study, I learn English...but when I don't understand and have problems...who can help?...Only teacher!*
- *S25: ...For me, Ajarn is like a key. I am like a door. Without Ajarn, how can we open the door? ...*
- *S43: ...When I studied by myself, I faced so many problems..and when I asked Ajarn, many things were clear...Dictionary is not enough.*

Secondly, some students responded that in the modern world with high technology, they could learn English without the teacher. Examples are:

- *S9: ...Yes, possible. Self-study and strong determination work. I had met many people who received little education of Lao and English...but surprisingly, they could talk and communicate with foreigners.*
- *S13: ...Yes, I can...Because nowadays...modern world...high technology. I could learn by myself...from newspapers, magazines, internet...facebook, you tube...*

Finally, some students reported that they could learn English without their English teacher, but it would be better with the help of a teacher. Examples are:

- *S34: ...Yes, it can be possible to learn without a teacher but no quality...I mean...many times, I learnt by myself without knowing what was right and what was wrong. With the help of the teacher, I exactly knew the mistakes...I changed...and at last I was in the right way.*
- *S39: ...Except for teaching methodology, I could learn by myself...but I know that Ajarn is an experienced person. Teacher teaches teacher student...so, the help from Ajarn is always appreciated.*

Q10 What is your strong belief in learning English? Please explain.

The last question for the students in the semi-structured interviews is what strong belief students hold in learning English. The majority of students was very positive and highly motivated to learn English in order to become good teacher of English upon graduation, find a good job, and have better life in the future. Examples are:

- *S5: ...If you don't have talent or gift, you have to be industrious or ...I mean no ponsawan but ponsaweng. I believe that upon my graduation, I will be able to speak English and use it effectively...*
- *S13: ...I always believe that after the completion of English program at this college, I will have a good and permanent job...I will be proud when...at that time...students will call me 'Ajarn' ...I am sure I can teach English.*
- *S49: ...Put it easy... 'Good English good future'...Many scholarship for studying overseas are given to women with good English as first priority...Even in the newspapers, if you have a good command of English, you will be of special consideration...*
- *S52: ...Em, my motto is 'Where there is a will, there is a way'...If you have commitment, English is not that difficult!...My father studied in many countries...He is my model...I will follow him.*

In summary, in Section 5.1.1, the results from students' semi-structured interviews conducted in 8 Teachers' Training Colleges and 3 faculties of education are presented based on transcription scripts. The next section will deal with the results from the teachers' semi-structured interviews.

5.1.2 Results of the Semi-Structured Interviews of Teachers

Teachers' semi-structured interviews were conducted in a similar way to that of the students'. The detailed design of teachers' semi-structured interviews can be seen in Section 3.5.2.2.

Eleven main guided questions for teachers' semi-structured interviews were conducted based on a Teacher Questionnaire (See Appendix 6). The questions were revised after the pilot study. Lao was also used as a working language in the interviews for better understanding and greater convenience.

Ideally, an even number of teachers were needed to be interviewed according to two variables i.e. teaching experience and level of teaching based on the original proposal. However, most of teachers from 8 colleges and 3 universities were moderately experienced and the majority of them were teaching at college level. In addition, all the teachers were busy with their teaching during the term time. As a result, 27 teachers were invited to be interviewees on a voluntary basis. The background information of the teacher interviewees is shown in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2 Information about Teacher Interviewees

Teaching Experience			Level of Teaching	
Inexp.	Modexp.	Exp.	University Level	College Level
13	11	3	10	17

Table 5.2 above shows that 27 teachers participated in the semi-structured interviews. Among the teacher interviewees, there are more inexperienced teachers than other two categories. The majority of them were teaching English at Teachers' Training Colleges.

As for the conducting of teachers' semi-structured interviews, the researcher always spent some time on explaining the reasons and significance of interviewing before starting each actual interview. A promise to keep the content confidential was always made in order to make the interviewees relaxed and confident to say what they actually thought. Most of the interviews lasted approximately 10 minutes and a few of them lasted over 15 minutes. At the end of each interview, thank and wish were given to the interviewees for their cooperation.

All the teachers' interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and translated for data analysis. Field notes were documented as well. The researcher used content analysis to analyze the transcription scripts. The results of the teachers' semi-structured interviews are examined and presented based on the main 11 guided questions (See Appendix 6) which are related to the eight categories of beliefs about learning English as a foreign language.

Q1 How did you learn English successfully?

EFL teachers, who were regarded as successful English language learners, were asked how they learned English successfully. The teachers' responses were summarized as three main types namely, being interested in learning English, teaching English and being trained within and outside the country. Examples are:

- *T1: ...I have been teaching at this TTC since 1993...I graduated from Dong Dok University...I had English training in Thailand, Australia and I studied in Sweden for a master degree in educational design....oh, I love English... in both learning and teaching...I can speak French a little...*
- *T4: ...Em, I love my students, I love teaching...seven years of teaching at this university. I graduated from faculty of education, NUOL, Vientiane Capital. Here, at first, I submitted my application form...then I was interviewed and...I got it! Last two years, I went to Singapore for intensive English training....valuable experience though...*
- *T22: ...I have been teaching here since 2008...Later I studied English as a continuing course for 2 years at National University of Laos...It's a kind of*

success....In fact, I love English since Mattayom Ton. I learnt ABC from there...

Q2 What factor influences most in terms of success of learning English?

Based on the first question, teachers were asked what factor influenced their success most in learning English. Learner's motivation, strategy use, strong family support and interest were summarized as the main responses from the teachers.

Examples are:

- *T3: ...I started learning English from Mattayom Pay ...and I loved it immediately although the teaching schedule was 2 hours per week. Frankly speaking, I was never absent...never...I loved the teaching of Ajarn and I always paid much attention...*
- *T9: ...I graduated from Pakse TTC...Seven years of teaching here. I can say it's a success...First of all, my interest and hope for being a teacher of English... Secondly, a financial and spiritual support from my family...My parents had high expectations from me and I didn't let them down...*
- *T25: ...I would say many factors...Firstly, the world around us. Nowadays, it is the age of information, communication and technology. We need to know them and understand them...But if you know English, you'll be in the frontline and get much more benefit. That's why I worked hard on this language. Secondly, it's myself... I was very much interested in learning a foreign language especially English...I learnt it from many sources such as from radio, TV, music...and now everywhere I see many people talking and chatting in English...*

Q3 (1) How do you interpret the term 'aptitude'?

(2) Do you think that you have a foreign language aptitude?

In terms of language aptitude, two main types of interpretation were reported by teachers. They are: language aptitude means a kind of gift or talent or special ability; and to some extent, *ponsawan* is similar to *ponsaweng*. Examples are:

- *T1: ...In my opinion, everything is from love....The love for something leads to the possession of ponsawan and ponsaweng. Ponsawan and ponsaweng are similar in many ways...like two sides of one coin...*
- *T21: ...Language aptitude is...a kind of gift. It's the possession of that person. For example, if you have English language aptitude, it's hard to say that you also have other special skills...*

A few teachers reported that they had a foreign language aptitude to some extent. Examples are:

- *T12: ...I feel I have. I learnt and understood English quickly...until now I like teaching using my own style...that is gesture...It's like a kind of show...ha ha...*
- *T16: ...I feel I have foreign language aptitude...For example, before learning English here, I could speak Chinese quite well...In fact, I knew Chinese when I was a pupil of Pathom (primary school). I spent most of my time of childhood living with Chinese people...*

However, some teachers reported that they did not have any language aptitude.

Their success in learning English was a result of some other factors especially 'ponsaweng' which means they achieved by using their own effort. They gained much more from this strategy use. Examples are:

- *T10: ...I think I don't have...It's all about my own interest and effort. I studied English since Mattayom Ton...I liked it. At that time, I attended extra class and paid 8,000 Kip per month. Later, Ajarn would stop teaching because of very few students attended...My friends and I didn't want to stop...and we agreed to pay more which was 10,000Kip [USD1]...*
- *T13: ...I don't think I have language aptitude...but I tried hard to succeed. I'll tell you my sad story abroad. After the completion of Mattayom Pay, I was selected to study in Czechoslovakia...I studied there for 3 years and I failed. I returned home with sadness. Czech language was very difficult... Finally, I stood up and now I am a teacher of English...*

Q4 Do you think women are better than men at learning English?

The majority of teachers expressed the feeling that it is very hard to answer this question. The point is 'better in what aspect?' According to the results reported by teachers in relation to better English performance, three main types of responses are summarized below:

1) Women are better than men

- *T19: ...I think women are better... Women are more patient...and they spend more time on learning than men do...Men also study but after class, they always play and participate in many activities...In my class, I noticed that successful students sat in front and unsuccessful students sat far*

behind...among them, many women sat in front...and they participated more...

- *T22: ...Yes, that's right...women are more industrious and eager to answer teacher's question...Men tend to listen attentively and be quiet...In my class, whatever activity was, women were more active and understood more quickly.....Men tended to think first before action...*

2) **Women are as good as Men**

- *T3: ...After 3 years of teaching, I didn't see any differences...It depends on the individual...From my teaching experience, many times men performed better and got better grade...and many times women better...It is hard for me to differentiate...*
- *T15: ...Hum...From my teaching experience here...at this university,...I didn't see any differences...it's equal... Both men and women performed well in English language learning...But when I was myself a student of NUOL, women were more progressive...Their pronunciation was better....Now, as a teacher, both of them are equal...*

3) **Men are better than women**

- *T14: ...As a woman and as a teacher of this TTC,...I noticed that male students were much more enthusiastic in learning English...they asked a lot of questions...while female students were slightly shy. Actually, each batch of graduates, more male students were among the top ten...*
- *T24: ...I think it's quite different...As a learner and as a teacher, It seemed to me that female students tended to lack courage...That's why they kept quiet most of the time. Their problem was speaking...The communication with others was also a problem...For male students, they were not shy and had more confidence in speaking with Ajarn and friends...*

Q5 **What role do you think vocabulary and grammar play in learning**

English?

This question is related to the nature of language learning. The majority of teachers put grammar in a more important position than vocabulary in learning English. However, some other teachers held quite different beliefs about the importance of vocabulary and grammar. Three main responses are summarized below:

(1) Vocabulary and grammar are equally important

- T7: *...I think both of them are equally important...In speaking, the focus is on vocabulary while writing, the focus is on grammar...My teaching here is based on this assumption...*
- T15: *...Both are important...but I want to divide into two phases...When I was a beginner, I worked hard on vocabulary. I learnt new words as many as I could. But when I was an intermediate and advanced learner, my focus was on grammar and structures...Hum...It's like a baby who learns how to say 'Mummy, and 'Daddy' and when grown up, the boy/the girl can make long sentences...*

(2) Vocabulary is more important than grammar

- T3: *...I think vocabulary...English vocabulary is very very rich...much richer than Lao...and there are a lot of word formation rules. On one hand, one word can have many meanings and on the other hand...if you put or add prefix or suffix, you can have more and more new words...Besides, there are a large amount of borrowed words and more interestingly, now there are computer words...oh, lots and lots...*
- T6: *...Yes, vocabulary. Actually, English grammar is quite similar to Lao grammar in many ways...particularly the structure...but English words and Lao words are totally different...I mean without knowing English words, how can we promote communication and good writing...*

(3) Grammar is more important than vocabulary

- T8: *...When I was a student of English at Pakse TTC, I emphasized grammar more than vocabulary. Without knowing grammar, I could not be a good teacher...I needed to have a good and solid foundation of grammar. Even until now, I try hard on it...I don't want to get stuck when students ask me about grammar rules...For vocabulary...I mean difficult words, I can guide them to look up in a dictionary or net...like google...*
- T10: *...As a student, I always stressed grammar more than anything else...I felt very confident when I understood the structure and tenses as well as other grammar rules...After knowing this, I developed my speaking skill...I was not afraid when I talked to others...Now I am a teacher and I always tell my students to follow...*
- T22: *...Yes grammar. Many students said that this subject was very boring...But, in my opinion, you have to know it as long as you will become a teacher of English...This is serious for me. For vocabulary, it's easy...you can help yourself...I mean self-study.....at least you have dictionary and google....but if you don't know grammar, the teacher is right there for help...*

Q6 Do you think learning English is just a matter of translating from English into Lao?

Similarly, this question was intended to explore teachers' beliefs in relation to the nature of English language learning. Two main responses are summarized from the teachers' semi-structured interview transcripts. Examples are:

(1) It depends on the different stages of learning

- *T1: ...There are different stages, I think. At the first stage or low stage...I mean from the very beginning, translation is unavoidable...Many English words need to be translated into Lao right away...Here, there are two advantages....one is, you can save time, two, you use Lao as a helping hand to promote learning English....Hum, for the high stage, it works automatically.....no need for translation...*
- *T11: ...Lao first and English after...When I was a first year student, I was very busy with homework and I ...relied heavily on translation...but my translation was too direct!...Later, when I was the last year student, I learnt that translation was both art and science...*

(2) Learning English is not just a matter of translating from English into Lao

- *T5: ...Actually, if you want to be OK at translation, there is a subject called 'Basic Translation'. For teaching English, ...it's not really a translation...it's more than that. Instead, it's English-Lao and Lao-English...just the promotion of understanding English...not translation for the sake of translation...*
- *T27: ...I don't think that way...Many people assumed that learning English was just a matter of translation...For me, learning English is to learn many subjects such as general English, vocabulary, grammar, phonetics, pronunciation, essay writing, literature and so on...I used to learn English with a foreigner as my Ajarn...you see...no translation...*

Q7 Do you think learning English is the same or different from learning other school subjects? Please give reasons.

Concerning the nature of language learning, this question aims to explore whether learning English is similar or different from learning other subjects. The majority of teachers reported that it is different in many ways. The others expressed

the idea that learning English shares something in common with learning other subjects. Three main responses are summarized below:

(1) Learning English is different from learning other school subjects

- *T2: ...Yes, quite different...A lot of memorization is needed when learning English...more than other school subjects...For example, you have to remember the 3 forms of verb... like...do-did-done, speak-spoke-spoken, see-saw-seen, cut-cut-cut, have-had-had...*
- *T15: ...I think it's different...For example, learning politics is lecture-based but English is activity-based with the active participation of students...Learning Maths needs to know a lot of formulas, equations which are fixed but learning English is very flexible...and there are more new words come up...*
- *T20: ...Totally different, I guess...English is a foreign language...It seems that we live in a different environment.....Meanwhile all other subjects are taught in the use of Lao as a medium of instruction...*

(2) Some aspects are different from and some aspects are the same as learning other school subjects

- *T4: ...In terms of content, it's different....That's why we have different subjects...like Maths, Physics, English, Lao and so on...But in terms of methodology, it's the same...*
- *T19: ...I think for learning English and other school subjects, ...the learning process is the same but unlike the other subjects, ...English learning spins around the 4 skills such ...speaking, reading, writing and listening...*

(3) Learning English is the same as learning other school subjects

- *T5: ...The same, yes...I think learning Lao language is easy...but I am wrong. Learning English is not difficult...and again I am wrong...Every subject is difficult...Hum, no pain no gain...*
- *T25: ...Personally, in light of learner-centered approach, I think learning English is the same as learning other school subjects in terms of delivery of content, pedagogy, instructional development, measurement and evaluation...*

Q8 What do you think when students make mistakes in their language communication?

In relation to the role of the teacher and feedback, the majority of the teachers reported that they allowed students to talk through and gave feedback at the end of the class. Examples are:

- *T17: ...When students made mistakes, I gave them feedback at the end of the class...It seemed to me that they were very satisfied with this...I was afraid that they would lose confidence if I gave them immediate feedback...*
- *T19: ...I never and never interrupt my students when they practice conversation. I gave them topic and format the day before...They prepared and practiced....In class, I just took notes...and gave feedback after the conversation was over...*

On the contrary, some teachers responded that students' mistakes in communication need to be corrected immediately. Examples are:

- *T9: ...It's normal for students to make mistakes. I didn't wait and... by knowing that it's a mistake, I corrected it right away...I didn't care if they liked it or not.....hopefully not...Students tried again and I said 'very good'.*
- *T16: ...I would say about students' pronunciation...Many times, I noticed mispronounced words. I said 'stop' and corrected it at once...and let them practice and practice until they could pronounce that word correctly...I know...they felt uncomfortable.*

A few teachers used peer correction before the final comment from teachers.

Examples are:

- *T1: ...Most of the time, my students corrected among themselves..under my supervision....this is similar to friend-help-friend...*
- *T5: ...A minor mistake is OK, ... but a serious one,...I asked other students to correct it first...I encouraged my students by looking around and...at last, someone had a say...Finally, I had a comment and made sure they understood more or less....*

Q9 How do you usually deal with the students who are poor at English?

This question is about how teachers teaching English at TTCs and universities deal with the number of unsuccessful students who are struggling to learn English

subject despite their poor language performances. The majority of teachers reported that these students needed help and they should be encouraged to be positive, confident and enthusiastic in learning English rather than to be pessimistic and frequently criticized. Under such circumstances, they try to help unsuccessful students to find better ways of learning and a variety of strategy use was implemented. Two main responses are summarized as follows:

(1) Engagement and encouragement

- *T3: ...I always told them to be a good example of trying hard, ...to be industrious and positive...and not to give up easily... Besides, I explained that learning English in class was not enough....they had more time at home or at the dorm...they had to do homework and practice a lot of reading...*
- *T9: ...Provide them special care and give more opportunity...Some of my students came from remote areas...They struggled hard and I always stood beside them...It's quite tough... but they are like our children...*

(2) Strategy use

- *T13: ...I used two methods to deal with them...One, I gave them homework and turned in the next day...Two, I told successful students to help them closely...and sometimes I told unsuccessful students to come out in front of class and say something...*
- *T16 :... I told them to sit in front so that they could pay more attention...and also, I had more control over them...When it's time for group learning, I made it a mixed group ensuring that within the group, ...there were 3 sorts of students; high achiever, achiever and low achiever...One more thing that could not be ignored...I had to create a friendly atmosphere to maximize the outcome...*
- *T21: ...I always asked them to answer my questions to show that I cared for them...No pressure I should say...When necessary, an extra class was organized especially when it was near the term exam...*

Q10 What is your strong belief in learning English? Why?

The last question for the teachers' semi-structured interviews is about a particular belief in learning English and what the reasons are. The majority of teachers responded that the spirit and the love for learning is a decisive factor. As a successful

learner once, and a teacher of English, they are highly motivated and proud to have a teaching job at TTCs and universities. Two main motives are summarized as follows:

(1) Commitment, devotion and change

- *T3: ...I strongly believe that if we have strong will and do something with love, ...everything will be possible. Success is not that far....Nowadays, English is a globalized language...Laos will enter ASEAN Community in the year 2015 and English is a working language...*
- *T4: ...When I was sent to study English major at NUOL, Vientiane Capital, my class was crowded and there were many achievers...I was the only one who came from Pakse, the rest from the north and central Laos...From the start, it seemed to me that we had the same English background...but after 2 to 3 months, my classmates were ahead of me....what's up? I started to observe and observe....the answer was learning style. I changed my learning style...and I made progress like others. Three years passed, ...we had Ajarn from USA teaching English...I always sat at the back of the class because I was afraid of being asked by Ajarn...I again observed my friends who were sitting in front...They asked Ajarn and during the break, they talked to each other...My friends learnt more...I had a reflection and... all at once, I made a big decision....I changed my attitude since then....Now, I am full of confidence!....*
- *T19: ...English is an international language....I have my own motto 'Better taking note than remembering'. It's impossible to remember everything ...English is a very rich language...so I do both ...teach students and learn new things...*

(2) Hope for further study outside the country

- *T18: ...As a teacher of pronunciation of two-year experience, I think my English is not enough...It's a long way to go for academic excellence. I'll work harder and try harder to get scholarship for studying abroad...say Australia or New Zealand or Singapore for a master degree of English...*
- *T20: ...I am from ethnic group...I was a good student and was sent to study in Vietnam. After that I returned to Laos and studied English at the National University of Laos. By knowing that I am not qualified enough, ...I applied for a master degree of English at NUOL...This is not a full stop. I'll try my best to study abroad for a doctoral degree....I hope I'll have more chance since I am a woman teacher from ethnic group...*

In sum, in Section 5.1.2, the results from 27 teachers' transcripts of semi-structured interviews are reported based on the eleven guided questions relating to the eight categories of beliefs in this section.

5.2 Summary

In Chapter 5, the results from the analysis of the qualitative data from both students' and teachers' interviews are reported. The main findings are summarized below:

- Foreign language aptitude does not seem to play a very important role in the success in learning English although some students reported that they had such special ability. The majority of students owed their success of learning English to their love and much interest in English, hard work and great effort (*ponsaweng* rather than *ponsawan*), good language background, better learning methods, the use of multi-media, and good English teachers.
- Most Lao students are highly motivated than ever before in learning English in order to have good opportunity for a teaching job after graduation. They are well aware that Lao PDR will join ASEAN Community in the year 2015 in which English is a working language. Their interest for teaching guided them to enter teacher education program. The main purpose of learning English is to meet all requirements at different stages of teacher education. They normally expected their teacher to facilitate and create a successful learning environment and assign them to do some exercises and homework related to the examination in order to attain better academic performance.
- When students were asked what method they use most frequently to learn English, both English major and non-English major tried hard to memorize vocabulary items, read textbooks and stories, read aloud, studied in the library, and practised with friends. Apart from the previously mentioned methods, many students often extended their learning after class in which

they had to pay. Besides, they preferred to do some extra-curricular activities such as, watching English movies, listening to popular English songs, and reading newspapers and magazines of English.

- Although a few teachers claimed to have a foreign language aptitude, they always emphasized the importance of some other factors which lead to one's success in learning English such as, the love for teaching, motivation, endeavor, strong family support, better strategy use to promote learner-centered pedagogy, and successful language learning environment.
- With respect to learning English when compared with learning other school subjects, the majority of teachers said that English is a very rich language and needs tremendous effort to attain very good academic performance in relation to the four skills namely, speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Therefore, a lot of input needs to be invested such as, self-study, memorization, practice and commitment.
- Regarding the students' mistakes in learning English, many teachers said that mistake-making is normal, understandable and unavoidable. Instead of criticizing, the teachers ignored students' mistakes, conducted friend-help-friend for correction, and created a friendly atmosphere for optimum learning outcome.

In summary, this chapter put an emphasis on the results from the analysis of the qualitative data from both students' and teachers' semi-structured interviews. In Chapter 6, a summary of research findings and discussion will be presented first; then the implications, contributions, and limitations of this present study will also be provided. Finally, a conclusion to this study will be made.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this last chapter is to summarize the research findings from Chapter 4 and 5 in response to the six research questions proposed in Section 3.2, Chapter 3. Subsequently, the discussion of the findings is described in detail. This is followed by the implications arising from the present investigation for English language learning in the tertiary context in Lao PDR. Finally, the contributions of the present study to the related areas, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research and a conclusion are presented respectively.

In Chapter 4, beliefs from both students' and teachers' questionnaires reported by 962 students and 129 teachers from 8 Teachers' Training Colleges and 3 universities which offer teacher education program in Lao PDR were analyzed systematically by the researcher in an attempt to identify the discrete belief about learning English. Certain significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English held by Lao students in relation to their gender, TE program and major were found. Then, the significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English reported by Lao teachers of English according to their teaching experience and level of teaching were also obtained. Finally, a comparison of beliefs held by students and teachers were reported. In Chapter 5, the results of the qualitative data from 54

students' and 27 teachers' semi-structured interviews revealed some useful implications which supported the research findings in a triangulated way.

6.2 Summary of the Research Findings

The present investigation has presented the research findings of beliefs reported by students and their teachers of English in teacher education in Lao PDR. In the following section, the findings responding to the six research questions for the present investigation are illustrated as follows:

6.2.1 Research Question 1:

What are the percentages of students reporting discrete beliefs about learning English?

In response to the first research question, the research findings demonstrate that the major findings can be classified into three different groups according to the three consolidated categories in terms of the degrees of agreements, uncertainty and disagreements. As indicated in Chapter 4, the discrete belief items from the questionnaire are presented in one category which is 'Agreeing'. In this particular study, the researcher adopted the criteria from Intaraprasert (2004, p. 54) that any items with 50% or more of the responses by the participants in 'Agreeing' category is applied.

As mentioned above, according to the set criterion which is the degree of agreements, the findings from the students' questionnaire showed that 24 out of 39 items of beliefs about English language learning were reported by 962 students from 3 universities and 8 Teachers' Training Colleges in Lao PDR. The findings are summarized as follows:

Percentages of beliefs about learning English held by students

Rank	Belief Item	Agreeing (%) (n=962)
1	It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.	93.7
2	Nowadays Lao people think it is very important to learn English.	93.0
3	I can improve my English if I often chat with English native speakers.	91.8
4	Multi-media is very useful in learning English.	91.4
5	It is very important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.	90.1
6	A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.	89.7
7	The teacher is the best resource person for me to learn English.	88.3
8	Doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful.	86.3
9	If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	85.4
10	Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items.	82.5
11	It is important to practice English in the language laboratory.	79.6
12	I would like to have friends from foreign country.	77.4
13	Laotians can learn and communicate in English.	77.0
14	Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.	76.9
15	Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.	76.6
16	It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	73.3
17	It is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent.	70.7
18	It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.	67.3
19	It depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English.	65.6
20	I would like to learn English so that I can make friends with foreigners.	64.6
21	English is a difficult language.	62.5
22	Extra-curricular activities enable me to learn English well.	62.2
23	I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.	58.7
24	Laotians are good at learning English.	50.0

From what has been found, it is interesting to point out that the majority of students in Lao PDR reported believing that it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class. This can be stated that teacher students put heavy emphasis on repetition and

practice in learning English. Since they do not have language aptitude, it is not surprising that classroom practice is very helpful. This is followed by the fact that nowadays Lao people think it is important to learn English. This is in accordance with Sithirajvongsa (2004) stating that English is the most important foreign language in the Lao school system and globally, it is used as a working language in ASEAN.

6.2.2 Research Question 2:

What are the percentages of teachers reporting discrete beliefs about learning English?

In response to Research Question 2, the research findings from the teachers' questionnaires revealed that 25 out of 39 items of beliefs were reported by 129 teachers. The findings are summarized as follows:

Percentages of beliefs about learning English held by teachers

Rank	Belief Item	Agreeing (%) (n=129)
1	Doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful.	96.1
2	It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.	95.3
3	Multi-media is very useful in learning English.	95.3
4	The teacher is the best resource person to learn English.	93.8
5	Students can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers	93.0
6	Nowadays Lao people think it is important to learn English.	91.5
7	It depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English.	82.2
8	It is OK to guess if students do not know the meaning of a new word in English.	81.4
9	It is important to practice English in the language laboratory.	81.4
10	It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.	76.7
11	It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	73.6
12	It is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent.	72.1
13	Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items.	71.3
14	A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.	70.5

Percentages of beliefs about learning English held by teachers (Cont.)

Rank	Belief Item	Agreeing (%) (n=129)
15	Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.	69.8
16	It is important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.	69.8
17	If students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job.	69.8
18	Extra-curricular activities enable students to learn English well.	69.8
19	Students feel shy or uncomfortable when they speak English in front of other people.	63.6
20	English is a difficult language.	60.5
21	Laotians can learn and communicate in English.	58.1
22	It is easier to speak than to understand English.	52.7
23	Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn English.	51.9
24	Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.	51.2
25	Students believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well.	50.4

From what has been found, the great majority of teachers put high value on doing a self-study in English outside class. One of the possible explanations might be less time spent for students with their teachers in class than outside class. Besides, teachers shared similar ideas with of their students in terms of repetition and classroom practice though the percentages are slightly different (95.3% and 93.7%).

6.2.3 Research Question 3:

Do students' beliefs about learning English vary significantly with their gender, teacher education program and major? If they do, what are the main significant variation patterns?

The results of the chi-square tests revealed that 7 out of 39 items varied significantly according to the gender; 6 out of 39 items varied significantly according to the teacher education program; and 9 items varied significantly according to the major of 962 students from 3 universities and 8 Teachers' Training Colleges in Lao

PDR. The significant differences in items of beliefs ranged from $p < .001$ to $p < .05$.

The findings are summarized as follows:

- **Significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English in terms of students' gender**

Significant Variation Pattern 1: Male > Female

This variation pattern shows that a significantly higher percentage of male than female students reported the following beliefs about learning English:

- It is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well.
- People who are good at Mathematics or science are not good at learning English.
- I can improve my English if I often chat with English native speakers.
- I have English language aptitude

Significant Variation Pattern 2: Female > Male

This variation pattern shows that a significantly higher percentage of female than male students reported the following beliefs about learning English:

- It is easier for children than adults to learn English.
- It is important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.
- Laotians can learn and communicate in English.

What has been found previously, it can be stated that male students are more positive and confident in socialization with native English speakers. Meanwhile, female students are more comfortable with language translation i.e. from English into Lao and Lao into English.

- **Significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English in terms of students' teacher education program (diploma level and bachelor level)**

Significant Variation Pattern 1: Diploma > Bachelor

This variation pattern shows that a significantly higher percentage of the students studying at the diploma level than those studying at the bachelor level reported believing that it is easier for children than adults to learn English.

Significant Variation Pattern 2: Bachelor > Diploma

This variation pattern shows that a significantly higher percentage of the students studying at the bachelor level than those studying at the diploma level reported the following beliefs about learning English:

- English is a difficult language.
- A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.
- I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.
- It depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English.
- It is important to practise English in the language laboratory.

From what has been found, it is interesting to point out that a significantly higher percentage of bachelor level students than diploma level students reported agreeing that it depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English. This can be stated that pedagogy seems to be crucial for good learning atmosphere.

- **Significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English in terms of students' major (English major and Non-English major students)**

Significant Variation Pattern 1: English major > Non-English major

This variation pattern shows that a significantly higher percentage of English major students than Non-English major students reported the following beliefs about learning English:

- I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.
- It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.
- I can improve my English if I often chat with English native speakers.
- It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.
- Multi-media is very useful in learning English.
- It is important to practise English in the language laboratory.

Significant Variation Pattern 2: Non-English major > English major

This variation pattern shows that a significantly higher percentage of Non-English major students than English major students reported the following beliefs about learning English:

- It is easier for children than adults to learn English.
- Laotians are good at learning English.
- I learn English only to pass the exam.
- A teacher should speak Lao as much as he/she can while teaching.

From what has been found previously, it can be stated that English major students are more positive and confident in learning English under various

environments namely, in class, in the language lab, society and a target country which is English-speaking country.

6.2.4 Research Question 4:

Do teachers' beliefs about learning English vary significantly with their teaching experience and level of teaching? If they do, what are the main significant variation patterns?

The results of the chi-square tests revealed that 4 out of 39 items varied significantly according to the teaching experience and 1 item varied significantly according to the level of teaching of 129 teachers from 3 universities and 8 Teachers' Training Colleges in Lao PDR. The significant differences ranged from $p < .001$ to $p < .05$. The findings are summarized as follows:

- **Significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English in terms of teachers' teaching experience**

Significant Variation Pattern 1: Inexperienced and Moderately Experienced > Experienced

This variation pattern shows that significantly higher percentages of inexperienced and moderately experienced teachers than experienced teachers reported the following beliefs about learning English:

- A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.
- Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.

Significant Variation Pattern 2: Experienced > Moderately Experienced and Inexperienced

This variation pattern shows that a significantly higher percentage of experienced teachers than moderately and inexperienced teachers reported believing that it is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well.

- **Significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English in terms of teachers' level of teaching**

Regarding this variable, it was found that only one significant variation pattern existed with a significantly higher percentage of the teachers teaching at the college level than those teaching at the university level reported believing that it is important to repeat and practice a lot in class.

6.2.5 Research Question 5:

Do beliefs about learning English vary significantly according to their status i.e. students and teachers? If they do, what are the main significant variation patterns?

The results of the chi-square tests revealed that 13 out of 39 items varied significantly between teachers and students. The significant differences in items of beliefs ranged from $p < .001$ to $p < .05$. The findings are summarized below:

- **A comparison of beliefs about learning English held by students and teachers (a mismatch)**

Significant Variation Pattern 1: Students > Teachers

This variation pattern shows that a significantly higher percentage of students than teachers reported the following beliefs about learning English:

- A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.
- Students believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well.
- Students have English language aptitude.
- Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items.
- Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.
- Students would like to learn English so that they can make friends with foreigners.
- It is important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.
- If students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job.
- Students would like to have friends from the foreign country.
- Laotians can learn and communicate in English.

Significant Variation Pattern 2: Teachers > Students

This variation pattern shows that a significantly higher percentage of teachers than students reported the following beliefs about learning English:

- It is OK to guess if students do not know the meaning of a new word in English.
- It depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English.
- Doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful.

6.2.6 Research Question 6:

Why do students and teachers hold particular beliefs about learning English?

In response to research question 6, the results from the analysis of the qualitative data from both students' and teachers' interviews are reported. The main findings are summarized below:

- Foreign language aptitude does not seem to play a very important role in the success in learning English although some students reported that they had such special ability. The majority of students owed their success of learning English to their love and much interest in English, hard work and great effort (*ponsaweng* rather than *ponsawan*), good language background, better learning methods, the use of multi-media, and good English teachers.
- Most Lao students are highly motivated than ever before in learning English in order to have good opportunity for teaching job after graduation. They are well aware that Lao PDR will join ASEAN Community in the year 2015 in which English is a working language. Their love for teaching guided them to enter teacher education program. The main purpose of learning English is to meet all requirements at different stages of teacher education. They normally expected their teacher to facilitate and create a successful learning environment and assign them to do some exercises and homework related to the examination in order to attain better academic performance.
- When students were asked what method they use most frequently to learn English, both English major and non-English major tried hard to memorize

vocabulary items, read textbooks and stories, read aloud, studied in the library, and practised with friends. Apart from the previously mentioned methods, many students often extended their learning after class in which they had to pay. Besides, they preferred to do some extra-curricular activities such as, watching English movies, listening to popular English songs, and reading newspapers and magazines of English.

- Although a few teachers claimed to have a foreign language aptitude, they always emphasized the importance of some other factors which lead to one's success in learning English such as, the love for teaching, motivation, endeavor, strong family support, better strategy use to promote learner-centered pedagogy, and successful language learning environment.
- With respect to learning English when compared with learning other school subjects, the majority of teachers said that English is a very rich language and needs tremendous effort to attain very good academic performance in relation to the four skills namely, speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Therefore, a lot of input needs to be invested such as, self-study, memorization, practice and commitment.
- Regarding the students' mistakes in learning English, many teachers said that mistake-making is normal, understandable and unavoidable. Instead of criticizing, the teachers ignored students' mistakes, conducted friend-help-friend for correction, and created a friendly atmosphere for optimum learning outcome.

6.3 Discussion of the Research Findings

The main purposes for conducting this study were to explore how students and teachers in teacher education in Lao PDR perceive English language learning; what significant variation patterns in beliefs in terms of investigated variables exist; and what are similarities and differences between students and teachers beliefs in the Lao tertiary context. Some important findings emerged from this present investigation.

This section is intended to discuss the main research findings with respect to the data obtained from the students' and teachers' questionnaires, and partly from the semi-structured interviews in order to identify an overall picture of the investigation at 8 Teachers' Training Colleges and 3 universities in Lao PDR. It focuses on beliefs reported by students in relation to each of the three independent variables, i.e., students' gender, teacher education program, and major. This is followed by the beliefs reported by teachers in association with each of the two variables, i.e., teachers' teaching experience, and level of teaching. Finally, it discusses the comparison of beliefs between students and teachers.

6.3.1 An Overall Picture of Beliefs about Learning English Held by Students

Learners' beliefs can influence both their attitude toward the language itself as well as toward language learning in general (Tumposky, 1991). Beliefs about the difficulty in English language learning held by the students are particularly important because their "...judgments about the difficulty of language learning are critical to the development of their expectations for and commitment to it" (Horwitz, 1988, p.286). The findings of the present study revealed that more than fifty percent of students regarded English as a difficult language, while nearly one third of them considered it

as an easy language , and only fourteen percent of them felt that English was neither a difficult nor an easy language. According to Horwitz (1987), students' judgments about the difficulty of language learning are critical to the development of students' expectations for and commitment to language learning. In this case, the students who believe that they will eventually learn to speak English very well may put maximal efforts in learning English while those who do not feel positively about their success in learning may put only minimal efforts since they are unlikely to see the good results. This can be implied that teachers should take serious consideration on how to well design teaching plan and give immediate help and encouragement if necessary.

Laos has witnessed a big demand for English since the adoption of the 'Open Door Policy' in 1990s. Recently, the economic development in Laos has been remarkable; more and more foreign companies have come to Laos for doing business in various sectors of the economy. English language is widely used and spoken everywhere in both public and private sectors. As a result, more than ninety percent of students reported agreeing that nowadays Lao people think it is very important to learn English. This degree of agreement is very significant to both learners and teachers. Under such circumstances, many Lao students are highly motivated to learn English in order to enter and graduate from Teachers' Training Colleges and universities. Not surprisingly, extra classes of English are organized everywhere in order to enhance learning outcomes. Undoubtedly, English is not only a compulsory subject for students at schools at all levels but also it is an urgently needed language for the whole country (Sithirajvongsa, 2004). As one student wrote at the additional comments of students' questionnaire, '*...I think there is a strong need to teach English from the very beginning...say, from kindergarten or Grade 1 of Pathom*

onward... Yes, English is very important and is widely used around the world...It's time for Lao people to be able to speak and write English...It would be much better if a teacher of English is outstanding and qualified enough for teaching English major teacher students...'. The findings from other students' interviews also showed that most of the students regarded English as a very important language.

Although students' main purpose of learning English is just to meet all requirements determined by the teacher education curriculum, it is surprising to find that more than seventy percent of students reported agreeing that an excellent accent is very important when speaking English. The findings were consistent with the previous study (Kern, 1995) which shows the importance of speaking a foreign language with an excellent accent. As cited in Intaraprasert (2004) 'Accent' is defined as 'distinctive manner of oral expression or the way in which people of a particular area, country or social group pronounce words', in this case, people from English-speaking countries or native speakers of English. The findings might imply that many Lao students were not confident enough to speak English because of their over-anxiety about their imperfect English accent. Furthermore, some students might become reluctant to practise their English because of their poor English accent, and might be discouraged from learning English if they could not improve their accent as they expect. Therefore, it is more important to correct students' mispronunciation which really interferes with understanding in authentic communications rather than their un-native-like accent (Peacock, 1999). Richards and Lockhart (1994) point out that for some learners, a native-like accent may not be considered an important goal, since they will use English mainly to speak with other non-native speakers of English. For other students, however, acquiring a native-like accent in English may be a high

priority. In other words, the emphasis on a 'perfect accent' might destroy some students' confidence in speaking English to some extent. In fact, students should be often encouraged by teachers to communicate in English as much as possible. Besides, more opportunities should be provided for students to practise English which they have learned for many years.

Generally, according to what has been discussed above, it seems that students highly valued English and were highly motivated in learning English in the teacher education program.

6.3.2 An Overall Picture of Beliefs about Learning English Held

by Teachers

According to Horwitz (1988, p.291), an English "...language teacher is likely to be viewed as an 'expert' about language related matters, his/her views-whether expressed explicitly in class or implicitly by teaching practice- could have a strong influence on the students' own beliefs". It is obvious that all teachers hold beliefs about their work, students, subject, roles and responsibilities, no matter whether those beliefs are stated or not, which have been shaped and formed from personal identity and beliefs (Pajares, 1992). In sum, the beliefs held by teachers strongly influence the way they teach.

With regard to teachers' beliefs about English language learning, 'doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful' became the top rank of beliefs by the majority of teachers of English. The findings showed that many teachers highly value learner's independence. This is very important for language learning especially in the light of learner-centered teaching methodology, since they meet their students in a limited time for a week, which is reportedly inadequate to master the language. They

also had such experience when they were teacher students. Regarding this issue, Horwitz (1987) suggests that a large amount of language learning goes on outside the classroom and is therefore not subject to the teachers' direct intervention. Yet, how teachers control this learning is very crucial to their success as language teachers.

With regard to teachers' beliefs about the role of media utilization, the findings in this study revealed that more than ninety percent of teacher reported that multi-media is very useful in learning English. As one teacher wrote at the additional comments of teachers' questionnaire, '*...In terms of good teaching and learning, the teacher has to use instructional materials to concretize what has been explained. In addition, he or she has to use new techniques to make the lessons more interesting...By so doing, the students will show interest and readiness for active participation*'. In the researcher' opinion, teaching is not 'teaching for the sake of teaching'. In many cases, teaching English is fun. Teachers enjoy teaching and students enjoy learning. Listening to music, watching movies and using internet is very helpful to promote teaching and learning. In Lao PDR, nowadays, the access to internet is available in each TTC and university which favors the successful learning environment.

Generally, according to what has been discussed above, it seems that teachers reported agreeing that doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful and so it is with media utilization in EFL.

6.3.3 Beliefs Held by Students in terms of Gender

Students come to the classroom with very specific assumptions about how to learn a language and about the kinds of activities and approaches they believe to be useful (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). With respect to speaking English, the results of

the students' semi-structured interviews revealed that speaking English is very difficult and challenging. One of the possible reasons for this matter is that many of these students will graduate and become teachers of English in the future. This can be implied that poor English leads to poor teaching.

With respect to foreign language aptitude, which is described as the 'general existence of specialized activities for language learning' (Horwitz, 1988, p.287), it is normally considered as one of the important factors leading to one's success in English language learning. In this particular study, students' interpretations of 'aptitude' basically focused on their diligence, persistence and commitment as well as the amount of time spent on learning. More male than female students admitted that they have foreign language aptitude to some extent. In addition, more female than male students believed that it is easier for children than adults to learn English. This might reflect the concept of 'The Younger, The Better'. Students who hold such beliefs might be led to have negative expectations about their own capability of learning English and they "...probably doubt their own ability as language learners and expect to do poorly in language study" (Horwitz, 1988, p. 288).

Another point which is worth discussing is that more male than female students take English culture as an important part of learning English. They believed that it is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well. They also believed that they can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers. One of the possible explanations might be that in Lao culture, boys and men have more opportunities than girls and women in terms of socialization. A similar result was also reported in Martin and Laurie's (1993) finding that knowing some aspects of the target language was important. Culture and language learning are

inseparable and constitute a single universe or domain of experience (Kramsch, 1991b, p. 217). Wenden (1987b, p.188) also claims that "...the better we can understand the cultural context which gives rise to the language we are trying to learn, the more likely we are to come to understand the essential differences between the way in which the language is used...". The results from students' interviews also revealed that the majority of students prefer to watch English movies, listen to English songs, and read some stories of English after class so that they could have more opportunities to learn English culture, which is closely linked to the target language which they are learning. In practice, these extra-curricular activities have an influence on the students' English language learning in a very positive way. Not only could they learn English language, but they have a good opportunity to learn some English culture through these activities. Moreover, with regard to the curriculum, although the inclusion of the culture in the foreign language curriculum has become more prevalent in recent years, gaining in both popularity and respectability, there are still those who either ignore the concept or deny its validity (Valdes, 1990).

In sum, there is no way to avoid teaching culture when teaching English. Students might develop their interest in learning and come to accept the English culture to a certain extent. As a result, they are likely to spend more time and energy on learning. From the results of the students' interviews, watching English movies and listening to English songs was found to be overwhelmingly favorable by almost all of the students. This can be regarded as a good chance for the students to expose themselves to an authentic language surrounding.

In the present study, more females than males agreed that it is important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English. This

might imply that female students are more comfortable with language translation. Critically, students who hold such beliefs might be led to have a negative impact on their learning outcome. This belief is closely associated with the traditional classroom which is lecturer-oriented or teacher-centered with the heavy emphasis on grammar and translation. In this regard, Intaraprasert (2004, p.94) states that “ Given students’ passive learning habits and the teacher’s belief that it is impossible to change these habits, language classrooms...remain lecture-oriented or teacher-centered, with the focus on grammatical items and translation. What the students attempt to do is to attend class, listen to the teacher’s explanation, finish the assignments and pass the final examinations”. The findings from the present investigation showed significant differences of beliefs about learning English between the male and female students.

In general, males are more committed, sociable and confident than their female counterparts in their perception of English language learning, although there is no data as yet to provide evidence in this regard so far. Hence, future research in this aspect needs to be explored.

6.3.4 Beliefs Held by Students in terms of Teacher Education Program

Concerning to students’ teacher education program, very few studies have explored learners’ beliefs about learning English in the Lao tertiary context. In fact, English in teacher education curricular system in Lao PDR is learned primarily not for the sake of contact with the native-English speaking community, rather it is the language for teaching students to become EFL teachers upon graduation. In a larger perspective, according to Bowers (1996), it is the language of science, specifically perhaps of the majority of research journals...the neutral language of commerce, the standard currency of international travel and communication. In this particular study,

it is not surprising to find that more bachelor level students than diploma level students agreed that a teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes. Mistakes are unavoidable but need to be corrected properly by the teacher who is regarded as a very successful learner. In this regard, the university students think teacher's correction is more crucial than of college students. One of the possible explanations might be the higher level of English is, the stronger need for better language skills.

In terms of the difficulty of language learning, more Bachelor level students than Diploma level students agreed that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well. This might be implied that university students are more optimistic in learning English since it is a 4-year English program at university while 3-year program at Teachers' Training College. Obviously, English exposure is more favorable at universities. In fact, at the National University of Laos, for instance, a great number of language programs are available for students such as, English, French, Russian, German, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

In addition, with respect to teacher's role and feedback, more Bachelor level students than Diploma level students agreed that it depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English. A possible explanation may concern the students' satisfaction in class especially with the teacher's methods of teaching.

Through the informal discussion with some students at NUOL, the researcher found that many students felt the focus of their classroom learning is still on grammar and translation while students want to learn more speaking and they also want their teacher to speak English rather than Lao while teaching in class. This view may also be supported by Horwitz's (1987) suggestion that whenever instructional activities are

not consistent with students' preconceived beliefs about learning English or fail to meet students' expectations, students can lose confidence in the teacher's instructional approach and their ultimate achievement can be limited. In other words, the influence of teachers on students' like or dislike of learning English cannot be ignored. This phenomenon may be explained by the social value of Lao people where teachers are still seen as respectable people in the society and can be the students' role model.

Through my observation at the Faculty of Education, NUOL, it is the researcher's general practice to learn about students' expectation and attitude toward English before starting each of new classes. Students are asked to express their ideas about English. As all students are teacher students, English seems to be something beyond their ability to cope with. However, this is not always true for every student. Very often, teacher students find English very useful and important. One of the reasons given apart from the difficulty of the language deals with their English teachers especially those at their primary and secondary schools.

The comments about their English teachers are, for example, frequently absent, too strict, unsmiling, cruel or unkind. In contrast, students who like English tend to make rather positive comments about their teachers such as they are kind, patient, understanding, and very helpful or have pleasant personalities. However, a systematic investigation needs to be carried out further to examine this issue.

Generally, according to what has been discussed above, it seems that university teacher students were more optimistic and teacher-oriented in terms of teaching methodology and teacher's personalities.

6.3.5 Beliefs Held by Students in terms of Major

In terms of the difficulty of language learning, with regard to one's major influences one's English language learning, more English major than Non-English major students agreed that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well. In this regard, English major students are more positive and confident since they will become English teachers upon graduation. In the Lao context, as a teacher of English, he or she can have two incomes such as, from a regular class and extra class since the teacher's salary in Lao PDR is not high enough. As a result, English major students work very hard in order to be successful learners. According to the students' interviews, a number of students attended extra-English class where they could learn and practise more.

With respect to motivation and expectations, the findings clearly showed that more Non-English major than English major students agreed that a teacher should speak Lao as much as he or she can while teaching English. It is not surprising for Non-English major students to hold such belief since their major is Lao language, Mathematics, Politics, Chemistry, History or other majors that use Lao language as the medium of instruction. Obviously, English as a foreign language is included in the teacher education curriculum but very limited number of hours per week is allocated. As a result, the students expect their teachers to use Lao as much as they can to accommodate students' language levels while teaching English. In other words, they expected their teachers to speak some Lao rather than only English to teach English as well as to tell them what to do in class. However, these students might be frustrated when classroom methods do not match their expectations (Kern, 1995).

In addition, the findings revealed that a small number of Non-English major students agreed that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well. Again, this perception deals with the difficulty of speaking English. With regard to this skill, one possible explanation for the students' belief that it is a difficult skill has to do with their limited exposure to the English language. In the Lao context, students of other major other than English are likely to be exposed to the target language only when they are in the classroom with their teacher and their English teacher can be seen as the only person they can speak English with, but even that an opportunity to speak English is still very limited.

The findings from the present investigation showed significant differences of beliefs about learning English between English major and Non-English major students. Generally, according to what has been discussed above, it seems that English major students were more positive, active and confident than their Non-English major counterparts in the language speaking skill.

6.3.6 Beliefs Held by Teachers in terms of Teaching Experience

In Section 3.4.2 of Chapter 3, one hundred and twenty nine EFL teacher participants were categorized as inexperienced (57), moderately experienced (59) and experienced teachers (13) according to their years of teaching experience as teachers of English.

Teachers' beliefs about learning English may be based on their training and their teaching experience (Freeman, 1992). These beliefs are developed through their 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975), 'deeply entrenched' (Powell, 1992; Kern, 1995; Tatto, 1998), and 'have the potential to influence both their experience and actions (Horwitz, 1988).

In this particular study, the findings showed no strong relationship between beliefs held by EFL teachers and their teaching experience. With respect to beliefs about the role of the teacher and feedback, the findings revealed that more teachers from inexperienced and moderately experienced when compared with experienced teachers reported believing that a teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes. It is obvious that less experienced teachers favor direct intervention when students make mistakes while experienced teachers use many teaching approaches to promote learning outcomes. The findings from the teachers' interviews also revealed that many teachers helped a lot in students' mispronunciation in terms of speaking skill and wrong sentences in terms of writing skills. Besides teachers' corrections, peer corrections were also encouraged by teachers.

Similarly, learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules. This might imply that less experienced teachers rely heavily on grammar in language learning. One of the possible explanations might be that they recalled English classes that focused solely on grammar lessons and they believed such classes contributed to their success in English language learning. As a result, they might have tried to give their students what they believed had worked best for them.

Moreover, without a teacher, learning English is impossible for students. This indicates that less experienced teachers are comfortable and confident in their teachers as the best resource person in class while experienced teachers are more optimistic about learning by themselves. A possible explanation might be that experienced teachers view learning as something that can occur everywhere, not only in class but outside as well.

The findings from the present investigation showed significant differences of beliefs about learning English between inexperienced, moderately experienced and experienced teachers in relation to their years of teaching experience. Generally, according to what has been discussed above, it seems that experienced teachers were more positive, active, independent and confident than moderately experienced and inexperienced teachers in English language learning.

6.3.7 Beliefs Held by Teachers in terms of Level of Teaching

As illustrated in Section 3.4.2 of Chapter 3, according to their level of teaching, one hundred and twenty nine teacher participants were categorized as teachers of college level (72) and university level (57). No previous studies have investigated the significant variation patterns in beliefs held by EFL teachers in terms of level of teaching. Again, the findings in this study showed no strong relationship between beliefs held by teachers of college level and of university level. Regarding the learner's independence, the findings in this study revealed that more teachers of college level than teachers of university level considered that it is important to repeat and practise a lot in class. What might be an explanation for the significant difference under this category is teacher education program. More specifically, it is a 3-year program at college level while 4-year program at a university level. As a result, teachers at college level by recalling their years of learning at Teachers' Training Colleges, put more emphasis on repetition and practice.

In general, in terms of level of teaching, teachers' beliefs were not greatly influenced by level of teaching, either the teachers of college level or the teachers of university level. It is also confirmed the fact that beliefs are not easy to change with EFL teachers' teaching level.

6.3.8 A Comparison of Beliefs about Learning English Between Students and Teachers

Both students and teachers bring their experience to the classroom that influences their perceptions in subtle ways (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). These beliefs do nevertheless express realities which may influence classroom practices (Richards and Lockhart, 1994), and directly or indirectly affect their expectations about classroom behaviors (Wright, 1987). The findings in this particular study revealed that students and teachers share the same views on 26 items of beliefs below:

Item1: It is easier for children than adults to learn English.

Item2: Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn English.

Item 3: English is a difficult language.

Item 6: Laotians are good at learning English.

Item 7: It is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent.

Item 8: It is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well.

Item 9: Students should not say anything in English until they can say it correctly.

Item 10: People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning English.

Item 11: It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.

Item 12: Students can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers.

Item 16: It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.

Item 17: Women are better than men at learning English.

Item 18: If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of such mistakes later on.

Item 19: Students feel shy or uncomfortable when they speak English in front of other people.

Item 22: It is easier to speak than to understand English.

Item 23: Multi-media is very useful in learning English.

Item 24: Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.

Item 27: Only a native speaker can teach students to speak English very well.

Item 28: Without a teacher, learning English is impossible for students.

Item 29: Extra-curricular activities enable students to learn English well.

Item 30: Nowadays Lao people think it is very important to learn English.

Item 33: It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.

Item 35: Students learn English only to pass the exam.

Item 36: A teacher should speak Lao as much as he/she can while teaching.

Item 37: The teacher is the best resource person for students to learn English.

Item 39: It is important to practise English in the language laboratory.

As illustrated in Section 3.3, the researcher hypothesized that more similarities rather than differences of beliefs held by students and teachers, the more successful and satisfying learning and teaching environment the students and teachers would be. In addition, the gradually narrowing gap between students and teachers will contribute to positive rather than 'negative (language learning) outcomes' (Horwitz, 1988, p. 292). On the contrary, the wide gap between students and teachers or the mismatch between students' and teachers' beliefs might create tension in the classroom (Bernat, 2008), result in negative learning outcomes for learners, reduce learners' confidence

in and satisfaction with the class, and lead to a reluctance to participate in communicative activities (Peacock, 1999). Strikingly, this particular study revealed a narrow gap between students and their teachers since more similarities than differences of beliefs in English language learning held by students and teachers were found.

Learners' beliefs have the potential to influence the actions that learners perform to learn a foreign or second language if the learners are able and prepared to act on their beliefs (Ellis, 2008). With regard to teaching, 'teachers' beliefs play a major role in defining teaching tasks and organizing the knowledge and information relevant to those tasks' (Nespor, 1987, p.324). In terms of the difficulty of language learning, the findings revealed that students and teachers shared the same views on (Item 3) English is a difficult language; (Item 22) It is easier to speak than to understand English; and (Item 33) It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it. On the one hand, both students and teachers described English as a difficult language. On the other hand, they regarded the 4 skills of language learning as different learning outcomes. In the Lao context, as mentioned in Section 1.4, French is given a status as the 'first foreign language' while English is 'the most important foreign language'. The notion that 'English is the most important foreign language' does not mean it is an easy language. In teacher education program, three years required for a higher diploma of English and four years of a bachelor program of English. In this regard, English is a difficult language means learners have to make great effort in order to become teachers of English. In a mindset of Lao people, it is a kind of success and pride if one's offspring is able to speak a foreign language. As an active learner, the researcher himself can speak two foreign languages such as, French

and English. Regarding the language skills, both students and teachers believed that listening or understanding English is more difficult than reading, writing and speaking. In many cases, Lao students and teachers struggled very hard to understand what foreigners had said or talked to each other. Through the informal discussion with some students and teachers at NUOL, the researcher found that most of them felt the listening test of TOEFL and IELTS the most difficult part.

Another point which is worth discussing deals with foreign language aptitude. 'Aptitude is defined as *'the ease of learning or understanding'*, or more simply *'intelligence'*. The capacity of learning is inherent in all humans and the speed or facility to learn depends upon the individual's intelligence. The process of language acquisition uses this intelligence in order to be able to communicate with others in the community' (Intaraprasert, 2004, p. 75).

In this regard, both students and teachers believed that (Item 1) It is easier for children than adults to learn English; (Item 2) Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn English; (Item 6) Laotians are good at learning English; (Item 10) People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning English; (Item 17) Women are better than men at learning English; and (Item 27) Only a native speaker can teach students to speak English very well. As a result, both students and teachers were confident and optimistic in learning and teaching in the realm of teacher education in Lao PDR. However, the question may be raised whether these phenomena influence people's judgment or it is a result of their subjective experience in life. It can be inferred that intelligence or special foreign language ability alone cannot ultimately determine one's success in English language learning. If both students and teachers believed that they had a certain kind of foreign

language aptitude, they might have owed their success in English language learning at least partly to such sort of special ability to a certain degree. However, it may infer that some learners who denied the existence of foreign language aptitude lacked the confidence to learn English well (Peacock, 1999). It may also be that these learners may feel that their failure in English language learning was due to the lack of a foreign language aptitude. Considering the teachers of English as language ‘experts’, the findings seem to reveal that foreign language aptitude has played an important role in these teachers’ success in learning English.

In terms of the nature of language learning, the findings were consistent with what Hinkel (1999) claims is beliefs that (Item 8) It is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well; (Item 11) It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country; and (Item 24) Learning English is different from learning other school subjects. Hinkel (1999) states that applied linguists and language teachers have become increasingly aware that second or foreign language can rarely be learned or taught without addressing the culture of the community in which it is used. According to Williams and Burden (1997), learning a foreign language involves far more than simply learning language skills, or a system of rules, or grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner. In other words, there is no way to avoid teaching culture when teaching English. The findings from this study were also supported by the results from the teachers’ interviews. As one teacher interviewee said, “... *let’s put it in a simple way. For example...greeting to each other...For Lao people, we just say ‘Sabaidee’ for all time to greet each other while foreigners say ‘Good morning’, ‘Good afternoon’, and*

'Good evening'....you see...we learn how to greet each other in English cultural context...". Again, in relation to the difference between English and other school subjects, Williams and Burden (1997, p. 115) state that "there is no question that learning a foreign language is different from learning other subjects, mainly because of the social nature of such a venture". Similarly, Gardner (1985, p. 146) agrees that "languages are unlike any other subject taught in a classroom in that they involve the acquisition of skills and behavior patterns which are characteristics of another community".

With respect to strategy use, both students and teachers believed that (Item 7) It is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent; (Item 9) Students should not say anything in English until they can say it correctly; (Item 18) If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of such mistakes later on; and (Item 19) Students feel shy or uncomfortable when they speak English in front of other people. One interesting point is that, both students and teachers highly valued a native-like accent in English and placed it as a high priority. However, learners who hold beliefs in speaking English with an excellent accent might care too much about their accent rather than other communication strategies. Moreover, they might become more-self conscious to speak English in front of other people and lack confidence to communicate with people in English because of their over-anxiety about their imperfect accent. Similarly, anyone believing that he/she should not say anything until he/she can say it correctly is likely to avoid speaking most of the time (Horwitz, 1987).

Regarding motivation and expectations, both students and teachers agreed that (Item 12) Students can improve their English if they often chat with English native

speakers; (Item 30) Nowadays Lao people think it is very important to learn English; (Item 35) Students learn English only to pass the exam; and (Item 36) A teacher should speak Lao as much as he/she can while teaching. In learning English or any other foreign language, motivation seems to play an important role among language learners (Harmer, 1991; Williams and Burden, 1997; Richards and Lockhart, 1994). The motivation in language learning can be either integrative or instrumental. According to Williams and Burden (1997), learners differ markedly in their need to achieve or to be successful. In this particular study, it can be assumed that both students and teachers are highly motivated. They expect to use the English language in the real life in order to improve their language proficiency. In the Lao tertiary context, however, both of them normally lack such opportunities at college and university. These findings were also supported by the findings from students' and teachers' interviews. When the students were asked how they apply their English language, many of them responded that 'almost no use', except for few students working at restaurants, guest houses, hotels and night clubs after class. In other words, both of them had very limited exposure to the English language.

Another interesting point which should be highlighted here deals with exam. A test is considered as a tool for teachers to check their students' learning to a certain level. In the Lao tertiary context, English language teaching identified in teacher education curriculum of all levels become somewhat exam-oriented. The notion of 'Teach to Test' is something like the alarm clock for learners in order to succeed. As a result, students in general, and English major students in particular had to take all kinds of exam since they started learning English. Obviously, students and teachers shared the same beliefs because of exam predominance in teacher education system. This hot issue

is somewhat related to the students' beliefs that a teacher should speak Lao as much as he/she can while teaching. In other words, 'English Only' is unwelcome in many circumstances. However, according to Intaraprasert (2004), their belief about this matter might change, so it should be another interesting point to investigate if learner's beliefs can change over time or not in order to understand it better.

With respect to the role of the teacher and feedback, the findings in this study revealed that both students and teachers believed that (Item 28) Without a teacher, learning English is impossible for students; and (Item 37) The teacher is the best resource person for me to learn English. In the context of teacher education in Lao PDR, Lao people always give high respect to teachers as knowledgeable and trustworthy people who tirelessly devote their lives for the education of future leaders of the nation. In the researcher's opinion, it is not surprising that both students and teachers highly valued the role of teacher as the best resource person in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, learning English at Teachers' Training College or at university is not just only learning a foreign language but it is also a 'what to teach and how to teach'. This might imply that the role of teacher is twofold which is to teach content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge.

With regard to the role of media utilization in English language learning, both students and teachers believed that (Item 23) Multi-media is very useful in learning English; and (Item 39) It is important to practise English in the language laboratory. The findings revealed that media utilization has become very important for students and teachers of English in the process of learning English language nowadays. By holding such belief, teachers can create successful learning environment within their institutions. School administrators should be aware of this matter as well.

Another point which is worth discussing here deals with learner's independence. In this study, both students and teachers agreed that (Item 16) It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class; and (Item 29) Extra-curricular activities enable students to learn English well. The findings revealed that students and teachers placed great emphasis on repetition and practice. In the context of Lao teacher education, in order to become effective teacher of English, students have to make great effort in learning not only in class but outside class as well. In other words, to learn English is one thing and to teach English is another thing. There is no short cut and this is not a 'wish' but a 'need'. Through the researcher's teaching experience, he was asked quite often from students on how to be good at learning English. The answer was only one word 'PRACTICE and PRACTICE'. Nowadays, this issue is very critical since many teacher students did not invest adequate time and energy in self-practice and study.

In summary, the main findings from the present investigation have been discussed in detail in this section. The following section will focus on the implications of the research findings for English language learning in the Lao tertiary context in relation to teacher education.

6.4 Implications of the Research Findings for Learning and Teaching English in the Lao Tertiary Context

As illustrated in the previous section in response to the research questions, the findings from the present study revealed significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English in terms of students' gender, TE program and major. Also, the findings showed significant variation patterns in beliefs about learning English in

terms of teachers' teaching experience and level of teaching. In addition, this present investigation also showed both similarities and differences of beliefs between students and their teachers. A comparison of students' and teachers' beliefs revealed significant variation patterns as well. As a result, some implications for learning English for students and teachers in teacher education in Lao PDR are discussed below:

1. In Lao context, French is considered as the 'first foreign language' while English is regarded as the 'most important foreign language'. Offering English a status as the most important foreign language implies that English is the most needed foreign language for the country's socio-economic development (Sithirajvongsa, 2004). The research findings summarized in the previous section demonstrate that English is very important by the majority of both students and teachers. This might imply that most students were highly motivated to learn English extrinsically rather than intrinsically. They overestimated the difficulty of learning English but underestimated the amount of time needed to learn English successfully. They highlighted the importance of an excellent accent in learning English but rarely had chances to practise what they had learned. Moreover, they emphasized the rote memorization of new vocabulary words in the process of learning English without trying some more useful methods to improve their English proficiency. With this regard, Horwitz (1987) suggests that if students hold such beliefs; they tend to spend more time or expend much effort in memorizing vocabulary lists at the expense of learning the other language skills. Therefore, teachers should correct

students' understanding or discourage some learning strategies in order to maximize the learning outcomes. Furthermore, teachers should introduce better and more effective learning strategy use to their students. For example, Lao students should be encouraged to pay more attention to the pronunciation rather than accent. Horwitz (1987) suggests that their over-concern with the accent will probably inhibit their communication attempts. In the constructivist pedagogy, teachers should always keep in mind that the ultimate goal of teaching is to teach students to become responsible for their own learning, and, the sooner the better.

2. Another belief which should be pointed out here deals with culture. Arising out of the research findings, both students and teachers shared the same beliefs of knowing English culture in order to speak English well. Regarding the culture of people whose native language is English, teachers should raise their students' awareness about the culture as it is inseparable. As suggested by Wandel (2003), teachers should also develop students' intercultural sensitivity. In other words, students should be allowed to get to know a number of different cultural outlooks and perspectives. They ought to be provided with tools to analyze fundamental aspects of cultures. Following Wenden (1987, p. 188), "the better we [language learners] can understand the cultural context which gives rise to the language we are trying to learn, the more likely we are to come to understand the essential differences between the way in which that language is used and our own". Apart from this, Baker (2003) supports the importance of culture and language teaching and learning that culture and language are inexorably

linked and thus cannot be separated. This indicates that teaching English without teaching culture is impossible. Whether culture is consciously or unconsciously part of the teachers' pedagogic aims, the transmission of culture is unavoidable. 'Cultural shock', for example, is included in many English textbooks for students to learn and be aware of. To a greater extent, the difference between learning English and other school subjects lies in this phenomenon.

3. Another aspect which has been suggested in the literature deals with students' and teachers' expectations. As in any classroom, there are certain expectations of language lessons. Both teachers and learners have expectations about the content and the method of foreign language teaching. Often their expectations are not explicitly articulated (Cortazzi, 1990). With regard to this issue, Richards and Lockhart, 1994, p. 35) suggest that "...differences between students' and teachers' beliefs reinforce the importance of clarifying to learners the assumptions about what is useful to focus on in a language lesson or accommodating classroom practices to match them more closely to students' expectations. The consequences of not doing so are likely to be misunderstanding and mistrust on the part of both students and teachers. Therefore, teachers and students should spend sometime discussing their beliefs in order to maximize the learning outcomes and minimize the misunderstanding and mistrust between them.
4. In the present study, the more similarities than differences found between students' and teachers' beliefs also implied significant implications for

learning and teaching English to a greater extent. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the implication of Figure 3.1 is that the bigger the overlapping area between pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs, the better. In other words, the more similarities rather than differences of beliefs in English language learning, the more successful and satisfying learning and teaching environment will be. Undoubtedly, the gradually narrowing gap between students' and teachers' beliefs will contribute to positive rather than 'negative (language learning) outcomes' Horwitz, 1988, p. 292). Despite the 'static' and 'unchangeable' characteristics of beliefs, it is highly recommended that teachers should help, encourage and promote their students to hold more facilitative or functional beliefs in their English learning. Consequently, the gap between students' and teachers' might become narrower, a successful learning environment might be created, and more positive language outcomes might be achieved ultimately.

5. Last but not least, in order to help teacher students, in particular those who are English major, teachers should ensure their students that the ability to learn English is not innately fixed but could be improved with commitment, hard work and persistence in learning. Teacher should make their students see that nothing is impossible for them to learn. In addition, teachers should narrow the gap of level of teaching and level of learning as well as to provide opportunities for students to share successful experiences in learning English so that more facilitative beliefs could be promoted and debilitating beliefs could be avoided.

6.5 Contributions of the Present Study

Based on the findings, it is possible to explore how they can contribute to other related areas. The reasons for carrying out this investigation were firstly to explore the percentages of discrete beliefs about English language learning held by students and teachers; secondly, to investigate the significant variation patterns in beliefs in terms of described variables; thirdly, to compare the similarities and differences of beliefs held by the students and teachers in the Lao tertiary context; and to explore why students and teachers hold particular beliefs about learning English.

As previously seen in Chapter 2, no single studies have ever been conducted on the beliefs about English language learning held by students and teachers of English, especially a comparison of beliefs between students and teachers in teacher education in Lao PDR. The findings of the present investigation make a contribution to the available information for teacher education to classroom practice and provide guidance for a lesson plan, course syllabus, material revision process, and test designs being undertaken at the Lao tertiary context. In addition, it can provide some information not only for teachers of English in teacher education but also English teachers in general education to learn more about what their students need and expect so that a more harmonious and friendly learning environment can be ultimately created.

The value of insights gained from investigating the beliefs held by students and teachers enables teachers make use of the findings to improve their real classroom teaching which is considered as a 'black box' of teaching-learning process. In addition, teachers can introduce the appropriate language learning strategies in association with learners' beliefs about English language learning to their students so

that their students may be able to improve their language learning in general or manage their own learning processes so as to be more successful. Last but not least, the research on learners' and teachers' beliefs will hopefully provide some information to evaluate, implement and reform some policies on language teacher education in Lao PDR in the new light of constructivist pedagogy.

6.6 Limitations of the Present Study and Recommendations for

Future Research

The present investigation has been valid and valuable in addressing the primary research questions, which are to identify the percentages of beliefs about English language learning held by students and teachers, the significant variation patterns in beliefs in terms of different variables, the relationship of beliefs between students and teachers, and particular students' and teachers' beliefs about learning English. However, in carrying out the research, certain limitations have been apparent and areas for possible future research have been discerned. To take the limitations into consideration first, the following issues are worthy of attention:

- 1). Firstly, the data obtained for the present investigation were mainly from two written questionnaires and semi-structured interviews without being checked against through other sources such as classroom observation, teacher's lesson plans, or students' diaries. These sources should also have been considered so that more information could have been obtained to triangulate the research findings from various aspects. The combination of more research methods could have allowed the researcher obtain more in-depth information in relation to the formulated research questions.

- 2). Secondly, open-ended questions about the formation of beliefs in accordance with eight categories should have been included in the two questionnaires in order to explore how these beliefs are formed. By so doing, more information might have been obtained in terms of each category of beliefs held by students and teachers of English in Lao PDR.
- 3). Thirdly, this particular investigation is limited to the data analysis focusing only on the level of 'Agreement' of beliefs about learning English. The level of 'Uncertainty' and 'Disagreement' should also have been considered so that more information could have been obtained from various dimensions.
- 4). Finally, since this particular study was carried out among a certain group of participants at eight Teachers' Training Colleges and three universities in Lao PDR, the generalization of the findings has to be limited to the similar contexts.

Notwithstanding the limitations, this specific investigation is nonetheless valid. However, the following areas related to beliefs about English language learning might be justified in further research:

- 1). As shown in the review of related literature, it can be noted that a number of research works examined learners' beliefs in association with English language learning and teaching, use of language learning strategies, and anxiety in the language classroom. The researcher still sees there is a need to replicate research on beliefs about learning English held by students and their teachers of English by examining similar variables in the other settings of Lao tertiary contexts.

- 2). As identified in the general education curriculum in Lao PDR, English is taught as a foreign language at different levels i.e. from primary school level to lower and upper-secondary level. Beliefs about learning English held by students are gradually developed through their language experience at different levels of schooling. Therefore more studies are needed in the lower and upper-secondary school levels to explore: (1) percentages of beliefs about learning English held by the students and their teachers; (2) how the beliefs are formed; and (3) to what degree teachers' beliefs might influence those of their students.
- 3). Teachers' beliefs in language learning have played an important role in classroom practices. It is important to relate teachers' beliefs to their students' in order that they will be in tune with each other in terms of classroom practices.
- 4). It is still essential to explore what relationship exists between beliefs about learning English held by English major students of Faculty of Letters and of Faculty of Education and their teachers at four universities of Lao PDR.

6.7 Conclusion

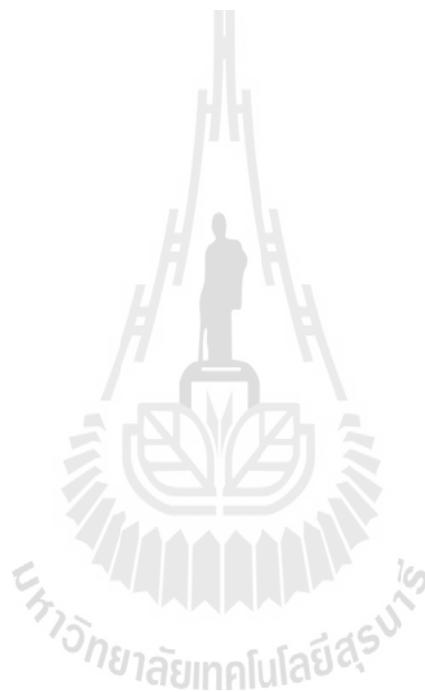
The present investigation has been conducted in a data-based, systematic, and non-judgmental descriptive manner. The study also gives a comprehensive picture of the students' and teachers' beliefs about English language learning in the Lao tertiary context of teacher education. It is a new study which has contributed to the field of research on beliefs about learning English as a foreign language in Lao PDR in general and to the field of research on beliefs about English language learning held by

students and teachers in teacher education in particular, in terms of investigated variables, i.e. students' gender, teacher education program and major; and teachers' teaching experience and level of teaching. The findings of match between students' and teachers' beliefs have provided certain significant implications for both learning English for students and teaching English for teachers. It can be stated that effective language teaching and learning can only be achieved when teachers are aware of their learners' needs, capabilities, potentials, expectations and preferences. As a result, it is also important for teachers to be aware of what particular belief their students hold.

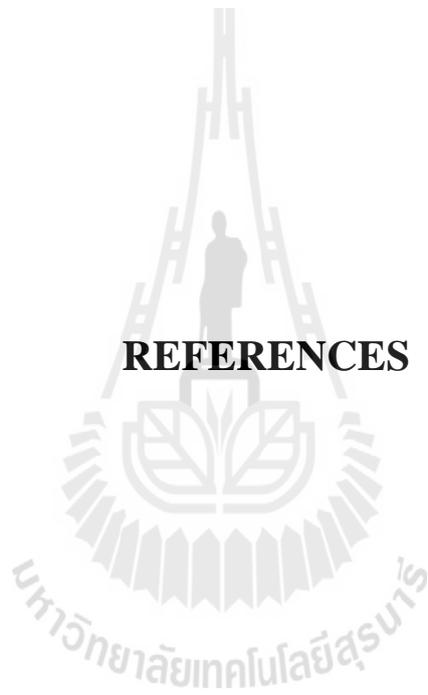
In this particular study, the findings revealed that students and teachers shared the same views on twenty six out of thirty nine items of beliefs. With this in mind, the researcher suggests that Lao teachers should make great effort to maximize students' learning outcomes and minimize their misunderstanding and dissatisfaction in order to create a healthier and friendlier learning environment. In teacher education, the love for language teaching and the love for language learning should be harmonized. Ideally, 'the Best and the Brightest' teacher is strongly needed than ever before in teacher education in Lao PDR. Better teachers means better learning outcomes and 'teacher change' is highly required.

The notion of teacher change is crucial to the field of second language teacher education as it plays a central role in the process of teacher professional development, and it is multi-dimensional and triggered both by personal factors as well as by the professional contexts in which teachers work. The limitations of the present investigation and some recommendations for future research have been described. For the future study, some other qualitative research methods are recommended for using in the investigation of beliefs in order to gain more information and insight to

support the results obtained by using quantitative method. Last but not least, it is worth noting that the replication of the research by taking the formerly investigated variables in association with students' and teachers' beliefs or other variables could shed some light on new aspects of research in the field.



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APPENDIX A

Student Questionnaire about Beliefs

(English Version)

I. Student Profile

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to gather information on your beliefs about learning English as a foreign language. Your information will be only used in this research and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

1. Name (Voluntary):.....
2. Contact (Voluntary):
3. TE Program :
 Diploma (TTC) Bachelor (Faculty of Education)
4. Your Academic year: year 1 year 2 year 3 year 4
5. Your Major: English Major Non-English Major
6. Your gender: Male Female
7. Your age (years- old):
8. You perceive your English ability as:
 Very Good Good Fair Poor Very Poor
9. Your beliefs about the difficulty of the English language (tick the one which best indicates your beliefs)

English is:

- (1) a very difficult language
- (2) a difficult language
- (3) a language of moderate difficulty
- (4) an easy language
- (5) a very easy language

II. Statements of Beliefs

Instructions: Read each statement carefully and put a (✓) for the response which best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1	=	Strongly Disagree
2	=	Disagree
3	=	Not Sure
4	=	Agree
5	=	Strongly Agree

Example:

Statements of Beliefs	1	2	3	4	5
0: It is important to speak English with an excellent accent.				✓	

Statements of Beliefs	1	2	3	4	5
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.					
2. Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn English.					
3. English is a difficult language.					
4. A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.					
5. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.					
6. Laotians are good at learning English.					
7. It is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent.					
8. It is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well.					
9. I should not say anything in English until I can say it correctly.					

Statements of Beliefs	1	2	3	4	5
10. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning English.					
11. It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.					
12. I can improve my English if I often chat with English native speakers.					
13. It is OK to guess if I do not know the meaning of a new word in English.					
14. I have English language aptitude.					
15. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items.					
16. It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.					
17. Women are better than men at learning English.					
18. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of such mistakes later on.					
19. I feel shy or uncomfortable when I speak English in front of other people.					
20. Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.					
21. I would like to learn English so that I can make friends with foreigners.					
22. It is easier to speak than to understand English.					
23. Multi-media is very useful in learning English.					
24. Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.					
25. It is very important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.					
26. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.					
27. Only a native speaker can teach me to speak English very well.					
28. Without a teacher, learning English is impossible for me.					
29. Extra-curricular activities enable me to learn English well.					
30. Nowadays Lao people think it is very important to learn English.					
31. I would like to have friends from foreign country.					

APPENDIX B

Student Questionnaire about Beliefs

ແບບສອບຖາມນັກສຶກສາກ່ຽວກັບຄວາມເຊື່ອໃນການຮຽນ

ພາສາອັງກິດ

(Lao Version)

I. ຂໍ້ມູນນັກສຶກສາ

ຂໍ້ແນະນຳ: ແບບສອບຖາມນີ້ຖືກອອກແບບເພື່ອເກັບກຳຂໍ້ມູນກ່ຽວກັບຄວາມເຊື່ອຂອງເຈົ້າ ຕໍ່ກັບ ການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດໃນຖານະທີ່ເປັນພາສາຕ່າງປະເທດ. ຂໍ້ມູນຂອງເຈົ້າຈະຖືກນຳໃຊ້ເຂົ້າໃນ ການວິໄຈຄັ້ງນີ້ ແລະ ຈະຖືກເກັບຮັກສາເປັນຄວາມລັບ.

ຂໍຂອບໃຈໃນຄວາມຮ່ວມມືຢ່າງຈິງໃຈຈາກເຈົ້າ.

1. ຊື່ ແລະ ນາມສະກຸນ(ຕາມຄວາມສະໝັກໃຈ):.....
2. ເບີໂທຕິດຕໍ່(ຕາມຄວາມສະໝັກໃຈ):
3. ລະບົບສ້າງຄູ: ວິທະຍາໄລຄູ(ຊັ້ນສູງ) ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ(ປ.ຕີ)
4. ປີຮຽນ: ປີ 1 ປີ 2 ປີ 3 ປີ 4
5. ສາຂາວິຊາ: ເອກພາສາອັງກິດ ອື່ນໆ
6. ເພດ: ຍິງ ຊາຍ
7. ອາຍຸ:ປີ
8. ປະສົບການໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ.....ປີ
9. ອັງກິດຂອງເຈົ້າຢູ່ໃນລະດັບໃດ:
ເກັ່ງຫຼາຍ ເກັ່ງ ບານກາງ ອ່ອນ ອ່ອນຫຼາຍ
10. ຄວາມເຊື່ອຂອງເຈົ້າຕໍ່ຄວາມຍາກໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ (ເລືອກໜຶ່ງຂໍ້ທີ່ເໝາະກັບເຈົ້າທີ່ສຸດ)

ພາສາອັງກິດແມ່ນ:

- 1) ພາສາທີ່ຍາກຫຼາຍ
- 2) ພາສາທີ່ຍາກ
- 3) ພາສາທີ່ຍາກບານກາງ
- 4) ພາສາທີ່ງ່າຍ
- 5) ພາສາທີ່ງ່າຍຫຼາຍ

II. ຄວາມເຊື່ອກ່ຽວກັບການຮຽນ ພາສາອັງກິດ

ຂໍ້ແນະນຳ: ກະລຸນາອ່ານແຕ່ລະປະໂຫຍກດ້ວຍຄວາມລະມັດລະວັງ ແລະ ໃຊ້ເຄື່ອງໝາຍຕົກ (✓) ລົງໃນຂໍ້ທີ່ຈັດລະດັບຄວາມເຫັນດີ ຫຼື ບໍ່ເຫັນດີ ຕາມຄວາມເປັນຈິງ (ກະລຸນາຕອບແບບສອບຖາມນີ້ໃຫ້ຄົບທັງ 39 ຂໍ້)

ຍົກຕົວຢ່າງ:

ຄວາມເຊື່ອກ່ຽວກັບການຮຽນ ພາສາອັງກິດ	ບໍ່ເຫັນດີທີ່ສຸດ	ບໍ່ເຫັນດີ	ບໍ່ໝັ້ນໃຈ	ເຫັນດີ	ເຫັນດີທີ່ສຸດ
0: ມັນເປັນສິ່ງສຳຄັນທີ່ຕ້ອງເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດດ້ວຍສ່ານຽງທີ່ຄ້າຍຄືເຈົ້າຂອງພາສາ.				✓	

ແບບສອບຖາມ

ຄວາມເຊື່ອກ່ຽວກັບການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຂອງນັກສຶກສາ

(Student)

ຄວາມເຊື່ອກ່ຽວກັບການຮຽນ ພາສາອັງກິດ	1	2	3	4	5
1. ເດັກສາມາດຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດໄດ້ດີກວ່າຜູ້ໃຫຍ່.					
2. ຄົນຈຳນວນໜຶ່ງເກີດມາມີຄວາມສາມາດພິເສດທີ່ ຊ່ວຍເຂົາເຈົ້າ ຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ.					
3. ພາສາອັງກິດເປັນພາສາທີ່ຍາກ.					
4. ຄູ່ຄວນຈະແກ້ໄຂທຸກເທື່ອທີ່ນັກສຶກສາເຮັດຜິດ.					
5. ຂ້ອຍເຊື່ອວ່າໃນທີ່ສຸດຂ້ອຍຈະເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດໄດ້ດີ.					
6. ຄົນລາວຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດເກັ່ງ.					
7. ມັນເປັນສິ່ງສຳຄັນທີ່ຕ້ອງເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດດ້ວຍສຳນຽງທີ່ຄ້າຍຄື ເຈົ້າຂອງພາສາ.					
8. ມັນຈຳເປັນຕ້ອງຮູ້ວັດທະນະທຳຂອງເຈົ້າຂອງພາສາໃນການເວົ້າ ພາສາອັງກິດ.					
9. ຂ້ອຍບໍ່ຄວນຈະເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດຈົນກວ່າຈະສາມາດເວົ້າໄດ້ ຖືກຕ້ອງ.					
10. ຄົນທີ່ເກັ່ງວິທະຍາສາດ ຫຼື ຄະນິດສາດມັກຈະບໍ່ເກັ່ງພາສາອັງກິດ.					
11. ການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດທີ່ດີທີ່ສຸດຄື ການຮຽນໃນປະເທດທີ່ໃຊ້ ພາສາອັງກິດ.					
12. ພາສາອັງກິດຂອງຂ້ອຍຈະດີຂຶ້ນຖ້າຂ້ອຍໄດ້ລົມກັບເຈົ້າຂອງ ພາສາເລື້ອຍໆ.					
13. ຖ້າບໍ່ຮູ້ຄວາມໝາຍຂອງຄຳສັບໃໝ່ໃນພາສາອັງກິດຜູ້ຮຽນຄວນ ຈະ ເດົາຄວາມໝາຍຂອງຄຳນັ້ນ.					
14. ຂ້ອຍເຊື່ອວ່າຂ້ອຍມີຄວາມສາມາດພິເສດ ຫຼືພອນສະຫວັນໃນ ການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ.					
15. ສິ່ງທີ່ສຳຄັນທີ່ສຸດໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ ຄືການຮຽນຮູ້ຄຳສັບ ໃໝ່.					
16. ມັນມີຄວາມສຳຄັນໃນການຝຶກເວົ້າເລື້ອຍໆໃນຫ້ອງຮຽນ.					
17. ຜູ້ຮຽນເພດຍິງສາມາດຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດໄດ້ດີກວ່າເພດຊາຍ.					

ຄວາມເຊື່ອກ່ຽວກັບການຮຽນ ພາສາອັງກິດ	1	2	3	4	5
18. ຖ້າຫາກຜູ້ເລີ່ມຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຖືກປ່ອຍໃຫ້ເຮັດຜິດໃນໄລຍະທຳອິດການແກ້ໄຂກໍຈະເຮັດໄດ້ຍາກໃນໄລຍະຫຼັງ.					
19. ຂ້ອຍຮູ້ສຶກອາຍເມື່ອຂ້ອຍເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດຕໍ່ໜ້າຄົນອື່ນ.					
20. ສິ່ງທີ່ສຳຄັນທີ່ສຸດໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ ຄື ການຮຽນຫຼັກໄວຍະກອນ.					
21. ຂ້ອຍຕ້ອງການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ ເພື່ອວ່າຂ້ອຍຈະມີໝູ່ເພື່ອນຕ່າງປະເທດ.					
22. ການເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດແມ່ນງ່າຍກວ່າການເຂົ້າໃຈພາສາອັງກິດ.					
23. ການຝຶກຝົນພາສາອັງກິດໂດຍໃຊ້ສື່ຕ່າງໆເຊັ່ນ: ເທບ ຫຼື ວິດີໂອ ຊ່ວຍນັ້ນມີຄວາມສຳຄັນ.					
24. ການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດນັ້ນແຕກຕ່າງຈາກການຮຽນວິຊາອື່ນໆ.					
25. ມັນສຳຄັນທີ່ສຸດໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດໂດຍຜ່ານການແບຈາກພາສາອັງກິດເປັນພາສາລາວ ຫຼືແປຈາກພາສາລາວເປັນພາສາອັງກິດ.					
26. ຖ້າຂ້ອຍເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດເກັ່ງຂ້ອຍຈະມີວຽກເຮັດງານທຳທີ່ດີ.					
27. ເຈົ້າຂອງພາສາເທົ່ານັ້ນທີ່ສາມາດສອນຂ້ອຍໃຫ້ເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດເກັ່ງ.					
28. ຖ້າບາດສະຈາກອາຈານການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດແມ່ນເປັນໄປບໍ່ໄດ້ສຳລັບຂ້ອຍ.					
29. ກິດຈະກຳພາສາອັງກິດນອກຫ້ອງຮຽນຊ່ວຍໃຫ້ຂ້ອຍຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດໄດ້ດີຂຶ້ນ.					
30. ບັດຈຸບັນນີ້ຄົນລາວຄິດວ່າການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດສຳຄັນຫຼາຍ.					
31. ຂ້ອຍຢາກມີໝູ່ເພື່ອນເປັນຄົນຕ່າງປະເທດ.					
32. ຄົນລາວທຸກຄົນສາມາດທີ່ຈະຮຽນຮູ້ແລະສື່ສານເປັນພາສາອັງກິດໄດ້.					
33. ການອ່ານແລະຂຽນພາສາອັງກິດນັ້ນງ່າຍກວ່າການເວົ້າ ແລະເຂົ້າໃຈ.					
34. ຄູ່ຜູ້ສອນມີສ່ວນເຮັດໃຫ້ຜູ້ຮຽນມັກ ຫຼື ບໍ່ມັກພາສາອັງກິດ.					
35. ຂ້ອຍຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດເພື່ອສອບເສັງຜ່ານເທົ່ານັ້ນ.					
36. ຄູ່ຜູ້ສອນຄວນຈະເວົ້າພາສາລາວໃຫ້ຫຼາຍທີ່ສຸດໃນເວລາສອນພາສາ ອັງກິດ.					

APPENDIX C

Teacher Questionnaire about Beliefs

(English Version)

I. Instructor Profile

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to gather information on your beliefs about learning English as a foreign language. Please kindly spare a few minutes of your time to fill out this questionnaire. Your personal information and responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Name (voluntary).....
2. Your phone number (voluntary):.....
3. Your level of teaching (please tick one box only)
 College Level University Level
4. Your teaching experience (years):.....
 1-5 years 6-15 years More than 15 years
5. Your gender: Male Female
6. Your beliefs about the difficulty of English language (tick the one which best indicates your beliefs)
English is:
 (1) a very difficult language
 (2) a difficult language
 (3) a language of moderate difficulty
 (4) an easy language
 (5) a very easy language

II. Statements of Beliefs

Instructions: Read each statement carefully and put a (✓) for the response which best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Example:

A Statement of Beliefs	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
0: It is important to speak English with an excellent accent.				✓	

Statements of Beliefs	1	2	3	4	5
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.					
2. Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn English.					
3. English is a difficult language.					
4. A teacher should correct every time when students make mistakes.					
5. Students believe that they will ultimately learn to speak English very well.					
6. Laotians are good at learning English.					
7. It is necessary to speak English with an excellent accent.					
8. It is necessary to know English culture in order to speak English well.					
9. Students should not say anything in English until they can say it correctly.					
10. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning English.					
11. It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.					

Statements of Beliefs	1	2	3	4	5
12. Students can improve their English if they often chat with English native speakers.					
13. It is OK to guess if students do not know the meaning of a new word in English.					
14. Students have English language aptitude.					
15. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items.					
16. It is important to repeat and practise a lot in class.					
17. Women are better than men at learning English.					
18. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of such mistakes later on.					
19. Students feel shy or uncomfortable when they speak English in front of other people.					
20. Learning English is a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.					
21. Students would like to learn English so that they can make friends with foreigners.					
22. It is easier to speak than to understand English.					
23. Multi-media is very useful in learning English.					
24. Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.					
25. It is very important to learn English through translation from English into Lao and Lao into English.					
26. If Students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job.					
27. Only a native speaker can teach students to speak English very well.					
28. Without a teacher, learning English is impossible for students.					

Statements of Beliefs	1	2	3	4	5
29. Extra-curricular activities enable students to learn English well.					
30. Nowadays Lao people think it is very important to learn English.					
31. Students would like to have friends from foreign country.					
32. Laotians can learn and communicate in English.					
33. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.					
34. It depends on the teacher to make students like or dislike learning English.					
35. Students learn English only to pass the exam.					
36. A teacher should speak Lao as much as he/she can while teaching.					
37. The teacher is the best resource person for me to learn English.					
38. Doing a self-study in English outside class is very helpful.					
39. It is important to practise English in the language laboratory.					

III. Additional Comments

Any comments or suggestions? If so, please write below:

.....

.....

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.....

Thank you very much!

APPENDIX D

Teacher Questionnaire about Beliefs

(Lao Version)

I. ຂໍ້ມູນອາຈານ

ຂໍ້ແນະນຳ: ແບບສອບຖາມນີ້ຖືກອອກແບບເພື່ອເກັບກຳຂໍ້ມູນກ່ຽວກັບຄວາມເຊື່ອຂອງທ່ານ ຕໍ່ກັບ ການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດໃນຖານະທີ່ເປັນພາສາຕ່າງປະເທດ. ຂໍ້ມູນຂອງທ່ານຈະຖືກນຳໃຊ້ເຂົ້າໃນ ການວິໄຈຄັ້ງນີ້ ແລະ ຈະຖືກເກັບຮັກສາເປັນຄວາມລັບ.

ຂໍຂອບໃຈໃນຄວາມຮ່ວມມືຢ່າງຈິງໃຈຈາກທ່ານ.

1. ຊື່ ແລະ ນາມສະກຸນ (ຕາມຄວາມສະໝັກໃຈ): ເບີໂທຕິດຕໍ່ (ຕາມຄວາມສະໝັກໃຈ):
2. ສອນໃນລະດັບໃດ?
 ວິທະຍາໄລຄູ ຄະນະສຶກສາສາດ (ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ)
3. ປະສົບການໃນການສອນພາສາອັງກິດ.....ປີ
 1-5 ປີ 6-15 ປີ ຫຼາຍກວ່າ 15 ປີ
4. ເພດ: ຍິງ ຊາຍ
5. ຄວາມເຊື່ອຂອງທ່ານຕໍ່ກັບຄວາມຍາກໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ (ເລືອກໜຶ່ງຂໍ້ທີ່ເໝາະກັບທ່ານທີ່ສຸດ)

ພາສາອັງກິດແມ່ນ:

- 1) ພາສາທີ່ຍາກຫຼາຍ
- 2) ພາສາທີ່ຍາກ
- 3) ພາສາທີ່ຍາກປານກາງ
- 4) ພາສາທີ່ງ່າຍ
- 5) ພາສາທີ່ງ່າຍຫຼາຍ

II. ຄວາມເຊື່ອກ່ຽວກັບການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ

ຂໍ້ແນະນຳ: ກະລຸນາອ່ານແຕ່ລະປະໂຫຍກດ້ວຍຄວາມລະມັດລະວັງ ແລະ ໃຊ້ເຄື່ອງໝາຍຕົກ (✓) ລົງໃນຂໍ້ທີ່ຈັດລະດັບຄວາມເຫັນດີ ຫຼື ບໍ່ເຫັນດີ ຕາມຄວາມເປັນຈິງ (ກະລຸນາຕອບແບບສອບຖາມນີ້ໃຫ້ຄົບທັງ 39 ຂໍ້)

ຍົກຕົວຢ່າງ:

ຄວາມເຊື່ອກ່ຽວກັບການຮຽນ ພາສາອັງກິດ	1	2	3	4	5
0. ມັນເປັນສິ່ງສຳຄັນທີ່ຕ້ອງເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດດ້ວຍສ່ານຽງທີ່ຄ້າຍຄືເຈົ້າຂອງພາສາ.				✓	



ຄວາມເຊື່ອກ່ຽວກັບການຮຽນ ພາສາອັງກິດ	1	2	3	4	5
1. ເດັກສາມາດຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດໄດ້ດີກວ່າຜູ້ໃຫຍ່.					
2. ຄົນຈຳນວນໜຶ່ງເກີດມາມີຄວາມສາມາດພິເສດທີ່ຊ່ວຍເຂົາເຈົ້າຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ.					
3. ພາສາອັງກິດເປັນພາສາທີ່ຍາກ.					
4. ຄູ່ຄວນຈະແກ້ໄຂບຸກເບີອທີ່ນັກສຶກສາເຮັດຜິດ.					
5. ນັກສຶກສາເຊື່ອວ່າໃນທີ່ສຸດພວກເຂົາຈະເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດໄດ້ດີ.					
6. ຄົນລາວຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດເກັ່ງ.					
7. ມັນເປັນສິ່ງສຳຄັນທີ່ຕ້ອງເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດດ້ວຍສ່ານຽງທີ່ຄ້າຍຄືເຈົ້າຂອງພາສາ.					
8. ມັນຈຳເປັນຕ້ອງຮູ້ວັດທະນະທຳຂອງເຈົ້າຂອງພາສາໃນການເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດ.					
9. ນັກສຶກສາບໍ່ຄວນຈະເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດຈົນກວ່າຈະສາມາດເວົ້າໄດ້ຖືກຕ້ອງ.					
10. ຄົນທີ່ເກັ່ງວິທະຍາສາດຫຼືຄະນິດສາດ ມັກຈະບໍ່ເກັ່ງພາສາອັງກິດ.					
11. ການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດທີ່ດີທີ່ສຸດຄື ການຮຽນໃນປະເທດທີ່ໃຊ້ພາສາອັງກິດ.					
12. ພາສາອັງກິດຂອງນັກສຶກສາຈະດີຂຶ້ນຖ້າພວກເຂົາໄດ້ລົມກັບເຈົ້າຂອງພາສາເລື້ອຍໆ.					
13. ຖ້າບໍ່ຮູ້ຄວາມໝາຍຂອງຄຳສັບໃໝ່ໃນພາສາອັງກິດນັກສຶກສາຄວນຈະເດົາຄວາມໝາຍຂອງຄຳນັ້ນ.					
14. ນັກສຶກສາເຊື່ອວ່າພວກເຂົາມີຄວາມສາມາດພິເສດຫຼືພອນສະຫວັນ ໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ.					
15. ສິ່ງທີ່ສຳຄັນທີ່ສຸດໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຄືການຮຽນຮູ້ຄຳສັບໃໝ່.					
16. ມັນມີຄວາມສຳຄັນໃນການຝຶກເວົ້າເລື້ອຍໆໃນຫ້ອງຮຽນ.					
17. ຜູ້ຮຽນເພດຍິງສາມາດຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດໄດ້ດີກວ່າເພດຊາຍ.					
18. ຖ້າຫາກຜູ້ເລີ່ມຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຖືກປ່ອຍໃຫ້ເຮັດຜິດໃນໄລຍະທຳອິດການແກ້ໄຂກໍ່ຈະເຮັດໄດ້ຍາກໃນໄລຍະຫຼັງໆ.					
19. ນັກສຶກສາຮູ້ສຶກອາຍເມື່ອພວກເຂົາເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດຕໍ່ໜ້າຄົນອື່ນ.					
20. ສິ່ງທີ່ສຳຄັນທີ່ສຸດໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ ຄື ການຮຽນ ຫຼັກໄວຍະກອນ.					

ຄວາມເຊື່ອກ່ຽວກັບການຮຽນ ພາສາອັງກິດ	1	2	3	4	5
21. ນັກສຶກສາຕ້ອງການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ ເພື່ອວ່າພວກເຂົາຈະມີ ໜູ່ເພື່ອນຕ່າງປະເທດ.					
22. ການເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດແມ່ນງ່າຍກວ່າການເຂົ້າໃຈພາສາອັງກິດ					
23. ການຝຶກຝົນພາສາອັງກິດໂດຍໃຊ້ສື່ຕ່າງໆເຊັ່ນເທັບ ຫຼື ວິດີໂອ ຊ່ວຍນັ້ນມີຄວາມສໍາຄັນ.					
24. ການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດນັ້ນແຕກຕ່າງຈາກການຮຽນວິຊາອື່ນໆ.					
25. ມັນສໍາຄັນທີ່ສຸດໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດໂດຍຜ່ານການແບ ຈາກພາສາອັງກິດເປັນພາສາລາວຫຼືແປຈາກພາສາລາວເປັນ ພາສາອັງກິດ.					
26. ຖ້ານັກສຶກສາເວົ້າພາສາອັງກິດເກັ່ງພວກເຂົາຈະມີວຽກເຮັດ ງານທໍາທີ່ດີ.					
27. ເຈົ້າຂອງພາສາເທົ່ານັ້ນທີ່ສາມາດສອນນັກສຶກສາໃຫ້ເວົ້າພາສາ ອັງກິດເກັ່ງ.					
28. ຖ້າບາດສະຈາກອາຈານ ການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດແມ່ນເປັນໄປບໍ່ ໄດ້ສໍາລັບນັກສຶກສາ.					
29. ກິດຈະກຳພາສາອັງກິດນອກຫ້ອງຮຽນຊ່ວຍໃຫ້ ນັກສຶກສາຮຽນ ພາສາອັງກິດໄດ້ດີຂຶ້ນ.					
30. ບັດຈຸບັນນີ້ຄົນລາວຄິດວ່າການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດສໍາຄັນຫຼາຍ.					
31. ນັກສຶກສາຢາກມີໜູ່ເພື່ອນເປັນຄົນຕ່າງປະເທດ.					
32. ຄົນລາວທຸກຄົນສາມາດທີ່ຈະຮຽນຮູ້ ແລະ ສື່ສານເປັນພາສາ ອັງກິດໄດ້.					
33. ການອ່ານແລະຂຽນພາສາອັງກິດນັ້ນງ່າຍກວ່າການເວົ້າແລະ ເຂົ້າໃຈ.					
34. ຄູ່ຜູ້ສອນມີສ່ວນເຮັດໃຫ້ຜູ້ຮຽນມັກ ຫຼື ບໍ່ມັກພາສາອັງກິດ.					
35. ນັກສຶກສາຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດເພື່ອສອບເສັງຜ່ານເທົ່ານັ້ນ.					
36. ຄູ່ຜູ້ສອນຄວນຈະເວົ້າພາສາລາວໃຫ້ຫຼາຍທີ່ສຸດໃນເວລາສອນ ພາສາອັງກິດ.					
37. ຄູ່ຜູ້ສອນແມ່ນຜູ້ຊ່ວຍທີ່ດີທີ່ສຸດສໍາລັບນັກສຶກສາໃນການຮຽນ ພາສາອັງກິດ.					
38. ການສຶກສາຄົ້ນຄ້ວາດ້ວຍຕົນເອງນອກຫ້ອງຮຽນ ຊ່ວຍໃຫ້ຮຽນ ພາສາອັງກິດໄດ້ດີຂຶ້ນ.					
39. ມັນສໍາຄັນທີ່ຈະຝຶກພາສາອັງກິດໃນຫ້ອງທົດລອງພາສາ.					

APPENDIX E

Guided Questions

in Students' Semi-Structured Interview

(English Version)

Questions:

1. How do you interpret the term 'aptitude'?
2. Do you think that you have a foreign language aptitude?
3. Do you think it is easy or difficult to learn English? If it is easy, in what aspects? /
If it is difficult, in what aspects?
4. What is the most frequent method you use when you learn English?
5. How much time do you usually spend on learning English every day after class?
6. Do you often read English magazines, newspapers or books after class?
7. Do you often listen to English radios, songs, or watch English movies after class?
8. Do you think these after class activities influence your English study greatly?
9. How do you use your English Language?
10. What role do you think vocabulary and grammar play in Learning English?
11. Is your teacher very helpful in your learning English? In what ways?
12. Can you learn English without your teacher?
13. What is your strong belief in learning English? Please explain.

ຄໍາຖາມສໍາພາດສໍາລັບນັກສຶກສາ

(Lao Version)

ຄໍາຖາມ:

1. ເຈົ້າເຂົ້າໃຈຄຳຄຳແນວໃດຕໍ່ຄໍາເວົ້າທີ່ວ່າ “ພອນສະຫວັນ”?
2. ເຈົ້າຄິດວ່າເຈົ້າມີພອນສະຫວັນທາງດ້ານພາສາຕ່າງປະເທດບໍ່?
3. ເຈົ້າຄິດວ່າການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຍາກ ຫຼື ງ່າຍ? ຖ້າງ່າຍ, ງ່າຍຄືແນວໃດ? ຖ້າຍາກ, ຍາກຄືແນວໃດ?
4. ວິທີໃດທີ່ເຈົ້າໃຊ້ຕະລອດໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ?
5. ແຕ່ລະມື້ເຈົ້າໃຊ້ເວລາຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຫຼາຍປານໃດ ຫຼັງຈາກເລີກຮຽນ?
6. ເຈົ້າໄດ້ອ່ານ ວາລະສານ, ໜັງສືພິມ ຫຼື ປຶ້ມ ທີ່ເປັນພາສາອັງກິດເລື້ອຍບໍ່ຫຼັງຈາກເລີກຮຽນ?
7. ເຈົ້າໄດ້ຟັງ ລາຍການວິທະຍຸ, ເພງ ຫຼື ເບິ່ງຮູບເງົາ ທີ່ເປັນພາສາອັງກິດເລື້ອຍບໍ່ຫຼັງຈາກເລີກຮຽນ?
8. ເຈົ້າຄິດບໍ່ວ່າກິດຈະກຳຫຼັງເລີກຮຽນເຫຼົ່ານີ້ມີອິດທິພົນອັນໃຫຍ່ຫຼວງຕໍ່ການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຂອງເຈົ້າ?
9. ເຈົ້າໄດ້ນຳໃຊ້ພາສາອັງກິດຄືແນວໃດ?
10. ເຈົ້າຄິດວ່າຄຳສັບ ແລະ ຫຼັກໄວຍະກອນ ມີບົດບາດສໍາຄັນແນວໃດຕໍ່ການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຂອງເຈົ້າ?
11. ອາຈານຂອງເຈົ້າຊ່ວຍເຈົ້າໄດ້ຫຼາຍບໍ່ໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຂອງເຈົ້າ? ເພິ່ນຊ່ວຍດ້ານໃດແດ່?
12. ຖ້າບໍ່ມີອາຈານເຈົ້າສາມາດຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດໄດ້ບໍ່?
13. ຄວາມເຊື່ອທີ່ໜັກແໜ້ນໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຂອງເຈົ້າແມ່ນຫຍັງ? ໃຫ້ເຫດຜົນ

APPENDIX F

Guided Questions

In Teachers' Semi-Structured Interview

(English Version)

Questions:

1. How did you learn English successfully?
2. What factor influences most in terms of success of learning English?
3. How do you interpret the term 'aptitude'?
4. Do you think that you have a foreign language aptitude?
5. Do you think women are better than men at learning English?
6. What role do you think vocabulary and grammar play in Learning English?
7. Do you think learning English is just a matter of translating from English into Lao?
8. Do you think learning English is the same or different from learning other school subjects?
9. What do you think when students make mistakes in their language communication?
10. How do you usually deal with the students who are poor at English?
11. What is your strong belief in learning English? Why?

ຄໍາຖາມສໍາພາດສໍາລັບອາຈານ

(Lao Version)

ຄໍາຖາມ:

1. ທ່ານປະສົບຜົນສໍາເລັດໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຄືແນວໃດ?
2. ມີບັດໃຈໃດແດ່ທີ່ຊ່ວຍໃຫ້ທ່ານປະສົບຜົນສໍາເລັດໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດ?
3. ທ່ານເຂົ້າໃຈຄືແນວໃດຕໍ່ຄໍາເວົ້າທີ່ວ່າ “ພອນສະຫວັນ”?
4. ທ່ານຄິດວ່າທ່ານມີພອນສະຫວັນທາງດ້ານພາສາຕ່າງປະເທດບໍ່?
5. ທ່ານຄິດບໍ່ວ່າຜູ້ຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດເກັ່ງກວ່າຜູ້ຊາຍ?
6. ທ່ານຄິດວ່າຄໍາສັບ ແລະ ຫຼັກໄວຍະກອນ ມີບົດບາດສໍາຄັນແນວໃດຕໍ່ການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຂອງທ່ານ?
7. ທ່ານຄິດບໍ່ວ່າການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດເປັນພຽງແຕ່ການແປຈາກພາສາອັງກິດມາເປັນ ພາສາລາວເທົ່ານັ້ນ?
8. ທ່ານຄິດວ່າການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຄືກັນ ຫຼື ຕ່າງກັນກັບການຮຽນວິຊາອື່ນໆໃນໂຮງຮຽນ? ຖ້າຄື, ຄືຢູ່ບ່ອນໃດ/ຖ້າຕ່າງ, ຕ່າງຢູ່ບ່ອນໃດ?
9. ທ່ານຄິດແນວໃດເມື່ອນັກສຶກສາເວົ້າຜິດໃນເວລາສົນທະນາເປັນພາສາອັງກິດ?
10. ທ່ານມີວິທີການແນວໃດເພື່ອຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອນັກຮຽນອ່ອນພາສາອັງກິດ?
11. ຄວາມເຊື່ອທີ່ໜັກແໜ້ນໃນການຮຽນພາສາອັງກິດຂອງທ່ານແມ່ນຫຍັງ? ໃຫ້ເຫດຜົນ

CURRICULUM VITAE

Athithouthay Chatouphonexay was born in Vientiane Capital, Lao People's Democratic Republic on 1 April 1957. He studied at Lycée De Vientiane (French Model) and completed high school in 1978. After 4 years of learning at Dong Dok, he received his Bachelor's Degree in Lao Language and Literature from Dong Dok Pedagogical Institute in 1982. He has been teaching literature at the Institute since 1982. He received a scholarship and went to study in Australia for a Graduate Diploma in English at Curtin University, Western Australia in 1989. Then in 2001, he got a fellowship to study in USA as a Humphrey Fellow. In 2005, he went to study at Stockholm Institute of Education (SIE), Sweden for a Master Degree in Educational Design. After teaching English and literature for many years, in 2008, he went to Thailand to study for a doctoral degree in English Language Studies at Suranaree University of Technology in Nakhon Rachasima.

At present, he is working at the Faculty of Education, the National University of Laos as a senior lecturer of English and Foreign Literature. His academic areas of interest are mainly in Language and Literature, particularly on beliefs about learning English as a foreign language in Lao People's Democratic Republic. He is also very much interested in language teacher education, language and culture and comparative education. He can be contacted through:

athithouthay@gmail.com