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Ghada Abdalla Ibrahim Abdelrehim

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

As indicated by its title, this study focuses on understanding the interplay between teachers' beliefs and their class opening practices. The term 'beliefs' is used interchangeably with other terms in research such as 'knowledge', 'cognition', 'thinking', 'perception', 'principles', 'implicit theories', and 'conceptualizations'. Pajares' (1992) definition of this term, ranging from "principles', 'intuitive' or 'implicit theories' to 'professional craft knowledge'" (cited in Breen et al., 2001, p. 472), has made it more challenging to gain insight into this topic. A considerable body of research has discussed the interplay of teaching beliefs and practices (Johnson, 1992; Basturkmen, 2012; Farrell & Ives, 2014; Fung & Chow, 2002; Eslami & Allami, 2012; Garden, 1996) to investigate whether the former affect the latter, and, if so, in what manner. Two distinct stances can be noted in this body of research: the first inclines strongly towards teacher beliefs affecting teaching practices, while the second casts doubt on this relationship.

Belonging to the first school of thought are Meijer et al., (1999) who have asserted the importance of studying teachers' beliefs due to their profound influence on teachers' behaviors in the classroom and vice versa (cited in Graham et al., 2014, p. 44). Richards and Lockhart (1994) have explained that what teachers do is assumed to be a reflection of what they know and believe, adding that "teacher knowledge and "teacher thinking" provide the underlying framework of schema which guides the teacher's classroom actions" (p. 29). Pajares (1992) has explained that studying teaching beliefs is essential since "unexplored entering beliefs may be responsible for the perpetuation of antiquated and ineffectual teaching" (p. 328).

The study of Parker and Brindley (2008) has referred to Hart (2004) and Pajares (1992) who have discussed the pre-service teachers' beliefs that play an important role in providing effective teacher preparation and casting light on teachers' classroom practices and behaviors (p. 2). According to the authors of this study, a clearer understanding of graduate preservice teachers' initial beliefs is essential as it may improve teaching practices that contribute to potential success of relevant required educational reforms (p.1). It is important to bear in mind, however, the challenging nature of belief changing. Munby (1982) has explained that "the testing of our beliefs

against experience is influenced by the beliefs themselves for they interact with how we perceive the data. So it is that our earlier theories and beliefs about social and physical reality are less likely to change” (p. 206).

With regard to the second research stance in this study, there is intense debate around the relation between teaching beliefs and practices. Farrell and Ives (2014) have argued that while some second language teaching researchers, such as Kuzborska (2011), have traced a strong relationship between teaching beliefs and practices, other studies, most notably by Farrell and Lim (2005), have reported minimal correspondence (p. 2). In his review on the relationship between teacher cognition and classroom practice, Borg (2003) has claimed that “teachers’ practices do not ultimately always reflect teachers’ stated beliefs, personal theories and pedagogical principles” (p. 91).

Basturkmen (2012) has given examples of studies, such as those conducted by Sinprajakpol (2004) and Sugiyama (2003) that revealed a mismatch between teaching beliefs and actual teaching practices due to the contextual factors that prevent teachers from translating their beliefs into actions (p. 286). Johnson (1992) has pointed out that several studies such as those by Duffy (1982), Duffy and Ball (1986), and Lampert (1985) suggested that the complexities of classroom life can sometimes constrain teachers' ability to provide instruction that is consistent with their theoretical beliefs (p. 84). Duffy (1982) has clarified several examples of these contextual factors by explaining that “the institutional constraints of the classroom place different demands on the participants, causing them in some situations to work out ‘mutually regressive’ relations in the classroom or to conspire together to effect instructionally undesirable situations”. He added that teachers are not limited to one pre-defined role in their classrooms; rather, they are expected to fulfill diverse responsibilities that include “substitute parent, crisis counselor or first aid personnel”. Consequently, their practice can be affected by a certain contextual complexity that is “often unconsciously created”. Given such constraints, “little evidence of teacher thinking and decision making” can be anticipated (pp. 360-361).

1.1 Statement of Problem and Rationale of Study

The interest in the relationship between teaching beliefs and teaching practices is becoming more and more noticeable in the field. In fact, Stuart and Thurlow (2000) have referred to a shift in educational research from focusing on “instructional strategies and teaching behaviors to the beliefs and perspectives that promote teachers to use these instructional strategies and exhibit these behaviors”, as noted in the work of Beijaard and De Vries (1997) (p. 113). It is this growing interest in and controversy over the interplay between teaching beliefs and teaching practices that have spurred the current study. This study attempts to examine teachers’ beliefs regarding the effect of class opening on their teaching practices during this part of the lesson.

‘Class opening’ as a key term in this study is interchangeably used in research with other terminologies such as ‘warm up’, ‘brainstorming’, ‘lesson entry’, ‘icebreaker’, ‘lesson beginning’, ‘housekeeping’, ‘attention-getter’, ‘lesson opener’, and ‘re-energizers’. Class opening is one of the teaching areas that is conducive to a variety of pedagogical practices. Chlup and Collins (2010) have explained that due to the elastic feature of the icebreakers, the ‘one-size model’ can be effortlessly sidestepped (p. 35).

Kindsvatter, Wilen, and Ishler (1988) in their definition of the ‘Entry’ of a classroom session have pointed out that “the first few minutes of a class are the most crucial time in relation to teacher impact” (p. 103). There is a consensus in research on the focal function of class opening which is basically attracting students’ attention. Teachers can vary in selecting the right action or activity that can work with their students for such attention to be captured. Richards and Lockhart (1994) have allocated a chapter on lesson structuring which starts with the ‘Opening’. They have presented several activities for teachers to begin their lesson with. These activities are categorized under five main purposes of lesson beginnings: “to establish appropriate affective framework, to establish appropriate cognitive framework, to encourage student responsibility and independence, to fulfill required institutional role or to overcome pragmatic difficulty” (p. 129).

Despite its importance, Velandia (2008) has pointed out that the warm up phase or class opening has not been given enough importance in practice as compared to other phases of a class (p. 10). A preliminary search of the literature by McGrath, Davies, and Mulphin (1992) has shown a lack of a theoretical approach for analyzing lesson beginnings; as these researchers observe, “...

some of the best known EFL methodology textbooks (Allen & Valette, 1972, Hamer, 1983, Hubbard, Jones, Thornton & Wheeler, 1983) make no reference at all – so far as we can see – to lesson beginnings” (pp. 93-94). Chlup and Collins (2010), in their article on adult learning, expressed the hope that their writing will “fill a gap as there is a lack of recent work on the benefits of using icebreaker in daily instructional activities in the adults education literature” (p. 35).

Despite the above, only a limited amount of research has attempted to look at whether teachers’ beliefs and practices reflect an awareness of these “crucial moments” at the beginning of a lesson, as claimed by Kindsvatter, Wilen, and Ishler (1988, 103). Focusing on class openings to test the belief-practice interplay in this study is, therefore, likely to address this gap in research regarding class practices.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What beliefs are held by TASOL regarding class opening?
- 2- What purposes do openings serve and what are the factors influencing TASOL during the opening phase?
- 3- How do the beliefs of TASOL correspond to their practices in terms of class opening?

1.3 Delimitations

The study aims at exploring the interplay between teachers’ beliefs and their practices in terms of class opening procedure. Studying the relation between beliefs and practices is perceived in research as a significant and controversial educational topic that is worthy of deeper scrutiny and analysis. Focusing on class opening has the potential to enrich the teaching methodology field as this introductory part has so far not been widely examined. Results of the study are expected to shed light on the degree of alignment between L2 teachers’ beliefs and classroom behaviors regarding class opening practice. The study also aims to reveal the most commonly adopted openings among the targeted TASOL, if any.

1.4 Key Definitions

1.4.1 Teaching Beliefs

Parker and Brindley (2008) have discussed the complex construct of teacher beliefs as being hard to identify or describe, illustrating some examples from research as well. Pajares (1992) included “attitudes, dispositions, knowledge and perspectives” when defining this construct. Nespor (1987) described beliefs as being “evaluative, affectively stored, and episodic or experience-based in nature”. Rokeach (1968) has pointed out the multiple components of beliefs such as the “cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements” and has explained that “beliefs are comprised of knowledge, emotion, and action” (p.1). Kagan (1992), in his research implications on teacher beliefs, has specifically defined teaching beliefs as “a particularly provocative form of personal knowledge” generated mainly during the pre-service or in-service teaching by teachers’ inherent hypotheses regarding learners, teaching materials and classroom environment (p. 65).

1.4.2 Class Opening

‘Class opening’ as a term has been referred to in research as ‘warm up’, ‘brainstorming’, ‘lesson entry’, ‘icebreaker’, ‘lesson beginning’, ‘housekeeping’, ‘attention-getter’ ‘lesson opener’ or ‘re-energizers’. In a study by McGrath, Davies, and Mulphin (1992), this term referred to the time between the teacher’s initial interaction with students in class and the first major activity, which usually ranges between three and fifteen minutes of short activities (p. 92). Robertson and Acklam (2000) have described warmers or icebreakers as short activities, inferring that they “should not be a dominant part of the lesson” (p. 12). To the researcher, the close of the lesson entry does not have a specific time point; rather, it is indicated by the teacher engaging in the first activity that addresses the lesson's main topic. The teacher may indicate the end of the class opening phase through a clear signal such as the transition statement “Now, let’s move to our new lesson today”, or a kind of pause or short interval. One of the challenges facing the researcher during observation is to differentiate between the end of the class opening and the start of the following main activity. In case such a boundary is not clear in the observation, the researcher can seek a clarification during teachers’ interviews.

1.5 Operational Definitions

1.5.1 Teaching Beliefs

In terms of the operational definition of ‘beliefs’, the researcher has adopted a combination of two perspectives. One by Rokeach (1968), presented in Parker and Brindley (2008, p.1), and

one by Kagan (1992). While Rokeach has adopted the multi components of beliefs: cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements, Kagan has defined teaching beliefs as “a particularly provocative form of personal knowledge” created by teachers’ innate hypotheses concerning learners, teaching materials and classroom environment (p. 65). These two perspectives can cover a wide range of individual thoughts serving as a guide to detect a complex entity such as beliefs.

1.5.2 Class Opening

This study relies on the definition of McGrath, Davies, and Mulphin (1992) to opening. This definition stated that opening is the time between teacher’s initial interaction with students in class and the first major activity (p. 92)

1.6 Abbreviations

TASOL: Teachers of Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages

L2: Second Language

ALI: Arabic Language Instruction

AUC: American University in Cairo

T: Teacher

I: Interviewer

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study investigates the relation between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding class opening in Arabic classes to speakers of other languages. It explores what teachers believe about the importance of class opening, which purpose (s) they fulfill through this introductory part of the lesson, and whether their beliefs correspond to their practices. Thus, this chapter discusses literature on the relation between teaching beliefs and practices in terms of class opening as a teaching practice. The chapter ends by revealing several detected research gaps regarding these two areas.

2.1 Teaching Beliefs

2.1.1 'Beliefs' as a term

The research review by Barcelos & Kalaja (2011) has discussed several studies on second language teaching beliefs where 'beliefs' were defined as changing, multifaceted, and related to dialects, political setting, emotional influence, knowledge, and action (p.282). The review referred to Kalaja & Barcelos (2003) who have also confirmed the complex nature of beliefs construct, describing it as "context-dependent, in a number of cases variable even within one and the same context or over time - and at the same time constant - complex, discursively constructed through negotiation, dynamic and contradictory" (p. 285).

The term 'beliefs' does not easily lend itself to accurate description in a research context. The challenge of outlining this notion has been revealed by Pajares' (1992) review, where he described it as a construct that:

travels in disguise and often under an alias – attitudes, values, judgements, 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, and repertoires of understanding. (p. 309)

However, Pajares has pointed out that only a few of these descriptions are found in literature.

Kagan (1992), in his implications on teacher beliefs, has criticized the inconsistency of using the term ‘beliefs’ in research where some have substituted it with ‘principles of practice,’ ‘personal epistemologies,’ ‘perspectives,’ ‘practical knowledge’ or ‘orientations’ (p. 66). In his article on concepts regarding teacher’s beliefs, Borg (2001) has concluded that ‘beliefs’ is “a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held” that inspires how individuals think and behave. However, as a popular concept in teaching research, he has commented that “Despite its popularity, there is yet no consensus on meaning, and the concept has acquired a rather fuzzy usage” (p. 186).

Pajares’ (1992) review has revealed a shift of interest from the multi component definition of ‘beliefs’ by Rokeach (1968), where ‘beliefs’ has cognitive, affective and behavioral components and that ‘knowledge’ is a component of ‘beliefs’ to the generic definition by Nisbett and Ross (1980), where ‘beliefs’ is a type of knowledge (p. 314). However, Pajares has asserted the difficulty of distinguishing between ‘knowledge’ and ‘belief’ (p. 309).

2.1.2 Teaching Beliefs Definition

The complexity of describing the term ‘beliefs’ matches that of defining the construct of teaching beliefs. Parker and Brindly (2008) have attributed this complexity to the use of certain synonyms for beliefs presented in research by Pajares (1992) such as ‘attitudes,’ ‘dispositions,’ ‘knowledge,’ and ‘perspectives’ (p. 1). However, Kagan (1992), in his research implications on teacher beliefs, has specifically defined teaching beliefs as “a particularly provocative form of personal knowledge” generated mainly during the pre-service or in-service teaching by teachers’ inherent hypotheses regarding learners, teaching materials and classroom environment (p. 65).

2.1.3 Beliefs System

As a reflection on what has been revealed by teaching beliefs studies, Calderhead (1996) has suggested five zones where teachers hold important beliefs; “beliefs about learners and learning, teaching, subjects or curriculum, learning to teach, and about the self and the nature of teaching.” He has argued that these systems of beliefs are deeply connected and may well be interrelated (cited in Mohamed, 2006, p. 20). In spite of this apparent close connection between

these systems, some research has shown that beliefs may unexpectedly work in opposition to one another.

A study by Garden (1996) has found a negative effect of the multiple beliefs systems where “Beliefs in one system, such as beliefs about the use of the target language in the classroom, may, for example, periodically conflict with beliefs in another system, such as beliefs about student factors” (cited in Bastrukumen, 2012, p. 284). Clark and Peterson (1986), in their reference to the complexity of beliefs clusters within the same beliefs system, have suggested that “there are wide variations in teachers’ belief systems even among those who are committed to the same educational practices” (cited in Mohamed, 2006, p. 20). Furthermore, the data collected from the participants (experienced language teachers) in a study by Breen et al., (2001) has revealed that one specific classroom behavior may reflect more than one principle, while, conversely, one principle may be expressed through different practices (p. 495). One of the main challenges during investigating beliefs is the complexity of the multiple belief system. Therefore, interviewing as a research technique may help in providing an oriented elicitation on any beliefs that may appear to be contradicted during investigation.

2.1.4 The Relationship between Teacher Beliefs and Practices

There are studies that show alignment between beliefs and practices while others do not. Johnson’s (1992) study, on the relation between teachers’ beliefs and practices in literacy instruction in ESL classes, has found a reliable correspondence between the methodological approaches of teachers and the plans they developed for them (cited in Basturkmen, 2012, p. 283). Similarly, Farrell and Ives (2014) have revealed in their study that teacher’s beliefs provided a strong basis for classroom actions in general (p. 15).

Farrell and Ives (2014) have focused on investigating and reflecting on the relationship between stated beliefs and observed classroom practices. The participant in the mentioned study was a novice male ESL teacher at a Canadian university language school who was specifically interested in exploring his own beliefs and practices about teaching reading. Being a sole participant, an in-depth analysis was done through several types of interviews: pre-observation interviews, post-observation interviews, final interviews, and follow-up interviews. One of the results this study yielded sufficient evidence of was correspondence between the participant’s

complex beliefs about teaching reading and many of his classroom related practices. Although many of the detected beliefs converged with classroom practices, some beliefs related to learners did not.

While the study of Fung and Chow (2002) has found only limited alignment between teachers' beliefs and practices during the practicum of novice teachers (cited in Basturkern's, 2012, p. 283), Eslami and Allami (2012), in their study, have revealed no alignment between the two (1684). They have examined the relation between teachers' self-beliefs of L2 learning, in-class practices and decisions. The participants included L2 teachers as well as learners. The teachers were selected randomly from a number of Iranian language institutes, centers, and universities. Comparing the responses of the questionnaire on teachers' beliefs, the observation notes, and researcher's checklists reflected a lack of significant connection between teachers' beliefs and practices.

It is worth mentioning that Garden's (1996) study has revealed a middle-of-the-road alignment of teaching beliefs and practices where she concluded that some practices provided evidence for alignment with the beliefs investigated while others did not (p.389). The aim of the study was to compare teaching beliefs about reading and reading instruction with instructional practices in classrooms. The participants were six female French and Spanish teachers from three public secondary schools. The findings showed an alignment between reported beliefs and observed practices regarding three beliefs about reading instruction as follows: reading proficiency is facilitated by providing students with frequent opportunities for reading practice, the use of the target language is preferable for reading instruction, and oral reading interferes with reading comprehension. In contrast, the results showed non-alignment regarding three other areas: students' frequent need to read, the need to minimize using students' L1 during reading instruction, and conflict of reading aloud with students' understanding. Moreover, the teachers' beliefs about the motivational needs of their students appeared to be stronger than those regarding effective reading instruction.

Based on research findings that teachers' classroom behaviors are guided by their teaching beliefs, a natural alignment between those behaviors and beliefs may be easily hypothesized. Yet, Basturkmen's (2012) integrated review has pointed out that research findings (Fang, 1996; Richards, 1998; Cummins et al., 2004) on the alignment or non-alignment between teachers' beliefs and practices were contradictory (p. 282). Moreover, Borg (2015) has denoted a debate on the same concern that "remains current today" (p. 12).

2.1.5 Explanations of the Mismatch between Teacher Beliefs and Practices:

With respect to the reasons behind diverging teacher beliefs and practices, various interpretations have been suggested in research. Basturkmen (2012) in his review has suggested that this mismatch may be due to research methods where studies use mainly self-report tools such as questionnaires to assess teacher beliefs (Richardson et al., 1991). However, he added, even when a study such as the one by Van Der Schaff et al. (2008) used multiple sources of data for studying the relation between teacher beliefs and practices, it failed to provide clear evidence for a correspondence between the two (p. 284).

Graham et al., (2014), in their study on the relation between teacher beliefs about listening in a foreign language, have presented the justification of Speer (2005) for the divergence between beliefs and practices. Speer has attributed the lack of correspondence between the two to the variance in conceptualization of the same term and its applications by researchers, especially in teaching mathematics. Graham et al. mentioned in their study an example of this varying conceptualization where teachers and researchers may differently theorize the term 'listening effectively' (p. 46).

Some research such as that by Duffy (1982), Duffy and Ball (1986), Lampert (1985) (cited in Johnson, 1992, p. 84), and Fang (1996) (cited in Mohamed, 2006, p. 29) has attributed the mismatch between teachers' beliefs and practices to the challenges of their teaching context that hinder their full adherence to their beliefs. Duffy (1982) has summarized those challenges as follows:

Teachers have limited amounts of freedom and flexibility; they must routinely work within resource shortages, deal with complex (and often unconsciously created) social relations and fend off multiple and conflicting expectations while simultaneously putting forward the image of a cool professional who has the classroom and the children's learning under control. (p. 361)

The studies in Basturkmen's review generally showed a divergence rather than a convergence due to the constraints of contextual factors (cited in Graham et al., 2014, p. 46).

Hoffman and Kugle (1982), in their investigation on the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and the verbal feedback they offer students during guided oral reading, have found that "beliefs and behaviors are situation specific". Teachers hold different beliefs for different groups largely as a function of student ability. Teachers tend to behave in terms of feedback in ways consistent with the situational context of instruction" (p.1). Moreover, investigative work by Maikland (2001) has revealed that classroom procedures reflecting teachers' beliefs cannot be similar in different pedagogical environments; studies by Sinprajakpol (2004) and Sugiyama (2003) have shown that at times teachers cannot implement what they believe in due to situational restrictions (cited in Basturkmen, 2012, p. 286).

As an example of the contextual factors that may affect the interplay between teaching beliefs and practices, Borg's (1999) study on teachers' practice of using grammar terminology has reported valuable results. The study aimed at describing actual classroom practice and explaining the manner in which this practice was informed by teachers' cognition. The participants were EFL teachers in two schools in Malta. A considerable influence of two contextual factors, namely educational or professional experience and classroom events of the instructional context, was reported. As an example of the second detected factor, at times teachers used certain terminology when answering grammar questions which they tended to avoid using at other times when they felt it might impede the students' comprehension of a given explanation.

Cimbricz (2002) and Zanzali (2003) have revealed institutional constraints as an important contextual factor affecting the relation between teaching beliefs and practices. They have suggested that L2 teachers, in giving classroom instructions which reflect their own pedagogy,

may be obliged to take into consideration the institutional standards, rubrics, and restrictions (cited in Eslami & Allami, 2012, p. 1690). In a similar vein, Borg (2003), in his review of language teacher cognition research, has concluded that studying the contextual factors such as ‘institutional, social and instructional’ which affect the teaching environment can help in interpreting how teachers’ beliefs can inform their classroom practices (p. 106). However, Lee (2009), in his study on teachers’ beliefs and practices in relation to written feedback, has raised questions regarding whether teachers consider those constraints as the real reason behind a possible divergence of their beliefs and practices, or whether they are merely using this excuse to justify the inconsistency between their beliefs and practices (cited in Basturkmen, 2012, p. 286).

Baker (2014) has stated that teachers’ beliefs and practices are also influenced by other contextual factors such as the students themselves and the content syllabus (p. 156). Clark and Yinger (1977), on their research on teaching thinking, have explained that each teaching class is manipulated by a grouping of elements working collectively such as characters, restrictions, and prospects that uniquely affect the teacher’s actions in a specific setting (p. 279).

2.2 Class Opening

The second construct that this study will be looking into is ‘class opening’. As mentioned in Chapter One, the operational definition of class opening adopted in this study is the one presented in the study by McGrath, Davies and Mulphin (1992). They defined the opening as the time between the teacher’s start to interact with students in class and the first major activity, which usually takes from three to fifteen minutes and could include some short activities. Several terms are used interchangeably with ‘class opening’, as shown in the definitions section in Chapter One. In many cases, this variation of terms refers to the multiple roles that this introductory part plays in the lesson. For example, ‘warm-up’ refers to the cognitive/affective role while ‘icebreaker’ refers to the affective one.

2.1.1 The Purposes of Class Opening

As revealed by research, the significance of class opening lies in its various purposes which teachers can choose to adopt in their practices. The main three purposes for using class openings found in research are: cognitive, affective, and organizational/administrative. While we find that

some studies have shed light on the cognitive purpose of class opening such as those by Borich (1988) and Joshi (2006), other research has focused on the affective purpose such as Klippel (1984), Weisz (1990), Boatman (1991), McGrath, Davies and Mulphin (1992), Zawaagstra (1997) and Chlup and Collins (2010). Research has also focused on the organizational/administrative purpose such as that by Emmer (1982), Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) and Chen (2003). However, a considerable number of researchers have emphasized an integration of two or more purposes such as Wittrock (1986), Kindsvatter, Wilen and Ishler (1988), Celce-Murcia (2001), Lassche (2005), Slater (2006), Ruiz and Ramírez (2008), Velandia (2008), Lee (2011), Akhtar (2014) and Celce-Murcia et al., (2014). In spite of the variation of the term ‘class opening’ in research, it is chosen specifically for this study because it covers all the above mentioned purposes.

A- *Emphasis on the cognitive purpose*

Borich’s (1988) book on effective teaching methods has labeled class opening as an ‘attention-gaining event.’ He has explained the significance of clarifying today’s objectives as a way of placing more emphasis on gaining students’ attention at the beginning of the lesson. He has elaborated that if students recognize, early in the lesson, the learning outcomes, this will help mentally orient them towards reaching an efficient learning level (p. 123). Regarding the primary role of a lecture introduction (i.e. opening) in reviewing early learned materials, Joshi (2006) has indicated that it is essential to “explore pre-existing knowledge” and relate it to new knowledge (cited in NELTA journal, 2006, p. 95).

B- *Emphasis on the affective purpose*

A study by McGrath, Davies and Mulphin (1992) was found to be one of the few to directly investigate class opening practices, as its title ‘Lesson Beginning’ indicates. This study explored the habitual practices of class beginning by twelve teachers of English and other languages in adult education, in addition to the students’ attitude to these practices. The data collected was analyzed based on five categories of class opening purposes: affective framework, cognitive framework, student independence, institutional requirement, and pragmatic difficulty. In terms of teachers’ preference, there seemed to be an inclination towards the affective purpose over the cognitive one during the initial activities of the lessons traced. However, interviews with teachers indicated that they generally placed more emphasis on the main topic of the lesson rather than its beginning.

Generalization of the study's findings was hard to achieve due to the small sample taken from a specific context, as the authors disclosed.

Although the previously mentioned literature in this section has pointed out the importance of the role of 'class opening' in reducing learners' affective filter through decreasing anxiety, Klippel (1984) has claimed otherwise. In his book titled 'Keep Talking', he has claimed that class opening (which he labeled as 'warming up') may not always have a positive effect on learners' affective filter; instead it may represent a 'threat' for an overly shy student. This type of student usually feels anxious if forced to perform an activity alone in front of others in class. Such anxiety may be managed during the lesson itself if this student becomes more accommodated with the classroom academic environment by being involved in pair or group work (p. 12).

Some research has referred to the class opening as an icebreaker which plays an important role in classrooms in terms of affective purpose. Boatman (1991), in his article on icebreaker strategies, has defined the purpose of those strategies as assisting in providing easy communication among students, especially the new ones, and establishing a space of social ease as well as a concept of 'experiential learning' (p. 3). Zwaagstra (1997) has praised icebreakers as they build "communication, problem solving, teamwork and trust" among students (p. 218).

Chlup and Collins (2010), in their article on adult learning, have emphasized the affective role of a lesson opening (referred to as 'icebreaker' or 're-energizer') which includes, mainly, short activities aiming at breaking barriers between teachers and students in classrooms before starting the 'event': that is, the lesson itself. Through such practices, teachers can better handle the distance with their students to open up and get involved with their personal lives. This will finally help teachers in building rapport with students to obtain their trust, leading to a secure academic environment where meaningful interaction and successful learning are guaranteed (p. 36). Weisz (1990) has suggested five important social interaction techniques: "ice-breakers, group process, learning in pairs, role-playing, discussion, and experiential activities." Ice-breakers help in creating a "more open classroom climate" through which students share knowledge (p. 74).

C- *Emphasis on the organizational/administrative purpose*

Teaching any class involves some organizational or administrative work, such as taking attendance, making announcements, assigning homework, paper distribution, checking technology, or seating. This kind of work has sometimes been referred to in research as ‘housekeeping’ tasks. According to the current study, class opening starts with the first interaction between students and the teacher. Thus, a lack of consensus on including some of the housekeeping tasks in the class opening has been found in research.

Chen (2003) has revealed, in his study on student experience of communicative language teaching, that the first few minutes in a class were often used for administrative work such as homework issues and organizing activities (pp. 263). Also, in his manual on organizing and managing classrooms, Emmer (1982) has listed some of these tasks fulfilled by the teacher at the beginning of a teaching class such as handling absences, tardiness and early leaving, announcements, paper distribution (p. 45). Yet, Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995), in their teaching practice handbook, have suggested that ‘announcements’ be at the end of the lesson when students can “take the information away fresh in their minds,” unless the teacher has doubts over having enough time by then and decides to start with these announcements instead (p. 55).

D- Emphasis on the integration of cognitive and affective purposes

Kindsvatter, Wilen, and Ishler (1988) have stated that the main purpose of a ‘lesson entry’ is attracting students’ attention to the learning activity, preparing them to the coming learning point, and motivating them to get involved. To these authors, this part of the lesson sets the tone for the whole lesson which should alert teachers to the need to take extra care of planning for it (p. 103). Celce-Murcia (2001) has called the first phase of a lesson the ‘information and motivation’ phase, where students’ interest, experience, and related language knowledge are addressed (p. 33).

In his study, Velandia (2008) has mentioned the role of opening (referred to as ‘warm up’) activities for fulfilling certain conditions by teachers. For successful warm up activities, teachers should present clear instruction, motivate students to participate in the opening activities, and connect them solidly to the lesson. Thus, teachers can save time and effort as well as provide an interesting opening for students (p. 20). These conditions are taken into consideration during the class observations’ analysis of the current study. Lassche (2005) has suggested in his article on

class opening (referred to as ‘warm up’) in language learning ‘a research-based form’ for the warm-up [class opening] phase. This form includes components related to building rapport with students, clarifying the lesson objectives to them, and brainstorming the content to build schema, taking into account the special classroom context (p. 83).

Akhter (2014) has revealed several functions of the class opening (referred to as warm up) activity. The aim of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of using warm up activities in language classroom. The participants were ten teachers and 247 students from five private universities at Dhaka in Bangladesh. The data collected for this study included the principles of warm-up and its relation to students’ background knowledge and lesson objectives. It also includes the reasons of its importance (building rapport with students, helping to attract students’ attention, and motivating them to learn) as well as its drawbacks. The study results indicated that teachers in a language class can use a warm-up activity for different reasons such as giving teachers the chance to clarify the lesson’s goals, establishing good rapport with students, providing an appropriate learning context for learners, motivating students to learn, recalling previous knowledge, and capturing students’ attention at the beginning of the lesson. Yet, lack of cooperation by some of the participants, mainly from students, in filling in the questionnaire and the small size of the teachers’ sample, (despite being thoroughly examined) could have affected the findings in Akhtar’s study.

E- Emphasis on the integration of cognitive and organizational purposes

Lee (2011), in his dissertation on discourse analysis, has also revealed that the opening phase is important for teachers as well as students. Rather than focusing on the common purposes of the lesson opening revealed in research such as reviewing, previewing, or socializing, Lee has offered a cognitive road map of the day’s lesson expectations, the housekeeping work (homework, announcements and course-related issues), and the learning outcomes (p. 90).

One of the aims of Lee’s investigation was to study how teachers perceive the functions of the various stages in a lesson. The participants were four ESL teachers working in an intensive English program. An analysis of 24 lessons showed the opening phase of each lesson to consist of three steps: getting started, warming up, and setting up the lesson agenda. In the first required step,

the teacher does not only greet students, but also gains the students' attention so that the lesson could begin. In the nearly obligatory second step, the teacher allows issues ranging from collection or returning homework or exams to reminding students about assignments to useful announcements. The last optional third step is just an outlining of the agenda of the lesson. Limitations of the dissertation included a small number of participants, in addition to being recruited from one particular teaching context, and a small size of the analyzed corpus (24 lessons). Results of the study are thus difficult to be generalized.

Slater (2006) has also called, in his article, for an emphasis on cognitive and organizational purposes at the beginning of the class. He has defined the task(s) performed by the teacher during the first five minutes of a class to invite students to learn as 'bell works'. Through these works teachers can help their students to create a cognitive link between old and new knowledge, in addition to implementing some organizational task such as "taking roll, rearranging supplies and activity materials, resetting demonstrations, or completing administrative forms" (pp. 477).

Ruiz and Ramírez (2008) have included two different activities in class opening: routine opening (referred to as 'pre warm-up') activity which is mainly an administrative one, and warm up activity that is related to energizing the students' previous knowledge to enhance learning (p. 174). Wittrock (1986) has called for the cognitive context of instruction where a lesson begins with a short review as well as routine tasks, mainly checking homework. This will allow recycling the previously taught materials as well as working on correcting and handling difficult academic points by the teacher (p. 379).

F- *Emphasis on the integration of cognitive, affective and organizational purposes*

Celce-Murcia et al., (2014), on discussing the lesson's segments, have referred to the importance of lesson opening (referred to as 'opener'), asserting that "starting the lesson well can be like serving a good appetizer in a meal" (p. 366). They have suggested ideas with which to begin a lesson such as creating a fitting atmosphere for the day's class, warming up students to focus on language use, preparing students for the approaching activities, reviewing previous

learning materials, and presenting to the early comers useful and fun tasks until late comers join in order to preview the components of the coming ‘meal’.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature concerned with teaching beliefs and practices, with a particular focus on class opening behavior in Arabic classes to speakers of other languages. The chapter started with an overview on the published literature on the terms ‘beliefs’ and ‘teaching beliefs’ followed by a justification of studying those beliefs. Empirical studies and research to explore a potential relation between teaching beliefs and practices were then reviewed. Finally, the class opening as a teaching practice was discussed, with an emphasis on its different purposes in classrooms.

Despite being one of the most popular topics that has been discussed in research, teaching beliefs still needs more research efforts to be further explored. Pajares (1992) has revealed a lack of research in investigating teachers’ beliefs as an essential domain in the educational field, stating that “For various reasons, this avenue continues to remain lightly traveled” (p. 326). Clark & Yinger (1977) have praised the ‘promising start’ of research on teacher thinking towards interpreting the rationale behind teachers’ behaviors in classroom (p. 301). Knezedivc (2001) has explained that developing teachers’ awareness of the reasons behind their classroom decisions is important because it is the beginning of a “process of reducing the discrepancy between what we do and what we think we do” (cited in Farrell & Ives, 2014, p. 2).

Basturkmen (2012) has called for a research focus on the relation between teaching beliefs and practices beyond the case studies and adopt comparative studies instead to explore more of the potential contextual factors that may affect such a relation (p. 292). In terms of methodology, Mohamed (2006), in his study on the relation between teaching beliefs, classroom practices, and professional development, has also disclosed that most studies on beliefs resort to self-reported beliefs which cannot always be reliable to reflect “a realistic picture of what teachers really believe and how they truly behave in their teaching situations” (p. 34). This is why observation of actual practice followed by clarifying the rationale behind this practice are included in the methodology process of the current study.

Regarding class opening, Slater (2006) has described the opening minutes in any class as precious moments that some teachers, surprisingly, miss as their valuable chance to create an “effective learning environment” (p. 477). Mulphin, Davies, and McGrath (1992) have explained that although some of ‘lesson opening’ purposes have been discussed in research, they have not been, until the time of their study, empirically confirmed regarding the extent to which teachers used ‘lesson opening’ for the purposes stated in literature and also how the ‘opening’ was perceived as significant by students compared to other parts of the lesson (p. 93).

Investigating class opening falls under research discussing topics such as classroom management, classroom procedures, classroom organization, classroom decision making, second language instruction, scaffolding instruction, lesson planning, routines planning, lesson structure, motivation, pedagogy training, teacher thinking, teaching immersion, or teaching models. There is a strong need for more independent research that focuses on the practice of this particular part of a lesson since studies covering it are either scarce or outdated.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the methodological approach that was used to arrive at answers to the Research Questions introduced by the current study. These Questions are: 1-What beliefs are held by TASOL regarding class opening? 2- What purposes do openings serve and what are the factors influencing TASOL during the opening phase? 3- How do the beliefs of TASOL correspond to their practices in terms of class opening? First, we will discuss the research design, population selection, the ethical standards observed, the process of data collection, and, finally, the data analysis, all of which sections are illustrated in detail.

3.1 Research Design

Krathwohl (1998) has called for understanding the two main contrasting and equally important methods of doing research, quantitative and qualitative, if one wants to comprehend the word ‘research’. While the first method uses statistical description and follows “deductive logic to predict results from hypothesis”, the second one employs verbal description and follows “inductive logic to find an explanation” (p. 5). Dornyie (2007) has referred to the general difference between the two methods, noting that quantitative research results mainly in converting collected data into figures or numbers that can be analyzed statistically, typically by using surveys or questionnaires. As for the qualitative research, it yields open-ended data that is unrelated to figures or numbers and requires deep analysis by the researcher instead, and typical instruments of this method are the interview or observation (p. 24).

Dornyie has criticized the quantitative approach as a sole research method on the grounds that it is “generally not very sensitive in uncovering the reasons for particular observations or the dynamics underlying the examined situation or phenomenon” (p. 35). Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2005a) have argued that the qualitative approach, as a sole research method “does not have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own” (cited in Dornyie, 2007, p. 35). With the development of research methodology to manage the challenges of adopting a sole research method, mixed methods have been widely adopted in order to exploit the strengths and

avoid the drawbacks of using each method separately (Creswell, 2009, p. 203). Using a mixed method for this study is expected to enrich the research process to produce more reliable results. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) have discussed several mixed method designs in their book, amongst which is the parallel/simultaneous scheme where most studies use quantitative and qualitative data (figures and description) to address the same Research Questions, i.e. working in a ‘complementary manner’ (p. 47).

In an attempt to answer the Research Questions of the current study, collecting quantitative data is first initiated to provide the general impression of a large sample about an issue, followed by qualitative data through observations and interviews from a small sample to verify this general impression. However, at some point during this process, both data are simultaneously collected; that is questionnaire forms are further collected while conducting observations and interviews. This method is intended to reach the maximum possible number of questionnaire forms. Applying this design has hopefully succeeded in exploring the beliefs of TASOL towards class opening and describing systematically a certain phenomenon (alignment or non-alignment between teachers’ beliefs and practices in terms of class opening practice) in a natural teaching context (L2 classes) through questionnaire-based survey data and inspection of individual teachers.

One crucial issue in research design is considering the reliability and validity criteria of the data collection methods and procedures. Best and Kahn (1998) have defined these two concepts: ‘reliability’ refers to “the degree of consistency” a research tool or a data collection practice exhibits, whereas ‘validity’ refers to “the quality of data collection procedure” that facilitates measuring the intended variables/factors (cited in Mohamed 2006, p. 64). Creswell (2009) has agreed with Best and Khan on reliability definition, yet in terms of validity, he has stated that qualitative validity refers to the researcher’s checking of findings’ accuracy (p. 232).

Some reliability procedures have been considered in the current study. One procedure is to adopt the triangulation approach where the investigation point is regarded from different perspectives. Perry (2011) has called on researchers to avoid the drawback of using one research procedure, advising that “they should triangulate their findings with those of other procedures to increase credibility of their findings” (p. 124). Lee (2011) has commented on the methodological

triangulation by asserting that “Data triangulation adds rigor to research, as it provides a much more complex and richer perspective of the phenomenon under investigation” (p. 53). Mathison (1988) has praised this data triangulation as an approach to enrich “the validity of evaluation” and research conclusions (cited in Farrell & Ives, 2014, p. 5). Mohamed (2006) has discussed the principle of triangulation as a substantial tactic to validate some aspects of a qualitative study in order to fill the gap of subjective data collection procedures or researcher’s bias in terms of data interpretation (p. 65). The two qualitative tools used in the current study (observations and interviews) were intended to verify the results generated by the quantitative tool of the same study (questionnaire).

Another way to ensure reliability in the current study is to provide an example of qualitative data analysis and coding to reflect the researcher’s analytical approach (see Appendix D & E). Moreover, the questionnaire, observation notes, and checklist of the current study were piloted to evaluate their relevance to the study’s investigation focus. Krathwohl (1998) has recommended piloting by researchers, noting that “the time and effort you spend in pilot testing will be more than repaid by the elimination of confusing wording, ambiguous questions for which the results would be uninterpretable” (p. 372). Recording the semi-structured interviews in order not to count on the researcher’s skills of recalling information can also support the reliability criterion of the study. For attaining validity, attending different classes by the same teacher and by different teachers would give the chance for transferability of the study’s findings where they can be applied to other situations or contexts. A richly detailed description of data analysis to raise the reader’s trust of the possibility of this transferability is intended. Moreover, choosing the observed teachers from outside the acquaintance pool of the researcher can eliminate bias.

3.2 Sampling

The sample chosen for this study is a ‘convenient sample’ where the researcher has easy access to the subjects who are available and willing to participate. Dornyei (2007) has pointed out that despite the insignificant degree of generalizability within this type of sample, it is commonly used in the experimental social science research (p. 99). The participants of the current study share similar characteristics due to their profession as TASOL. For the purposes of this study, sampling is perceived at two levels: a large sample of Arabic teachers from all over the world (60 teachers,

at least) who have access to the Arabic-L list through which they receive and fill out the questionnaire electronically, and a small sample of Arabic teachers (10 in number) who are observed and interviewed by the researcher. All participants are given a consent form for their participation.

1- Questionnaire Participants

These participants are randomly selected, there is no specific criterion to choose them. The researcher's choice is based on looking for a specific electronic mail list where all the subscribers are worldwide teachers of Arabic to speakers of other languages. The targeted number of the questionnaire respondents is 60 minimum.

2- Class Observation Participants

The participants are mainly teachers from the ALI Department at AUC with its different programs. Their selection is based on their availability, accessibility to the researcher, and volunteering readiness. These teachers teach a class or more during the semester when the data collection process started. The participants did not know the focus of the study and what was being exactly observed by the researcher in order to guarantee a natural class opening practice.

3- Participants in the Semi-structured Interview

These are the teachers who have been previously observed for the sake of this study. Immediately before the interview, participants learned about the focus of the study by reading the consent they needed to sign. The researcher strongly assures the participants before starting the interview that none of their teaching behaviors are to be judged as correct or wrong because the study only aims at exploring what is happening there, no matter what it is.

3.3 Instruments

A review of some existing studies resulted in selecting those specific instruments. Although Graham et al., (2014) have used a questionnaire in their study to investigate the listening beliefs in foreign language teaching, they have pointed out "any self-report instrument can only provide information about teachers' stated or professed beliefs and practices, rather than what these might be in reality" (p. 47). Therefore, seeking actual practice through class observations followed finally by a process of reflection by the observed teachers on pedagogical choices they made through interviews will help researcher gain insight into the teachers' rationalization of their

performance. Farrell and Ives (2014), in referring to the research tools used in investigating the beliefs and practices of L2 teachers in terms of reading skills, have claimed that only a few studies on beliefs used questionnaires, interviews, and class observations combined in one study (p. 4). Therefore, in terms of methodology procedures, the current study may significantly contribute to the educational research field.

The instruments of data collection in this study are used in a specific order. First, the questionnaire was initiated to gather quantitative data from a large sample in August 2016 and during the following Fall semester respectively until the minimum targeted number (60) of forms was reached. With the beginning of the Fall semester 2016, three consecutive classes for each teacher in the small sample were observed to detect the various practices of class opening in a natural pedagogical context. Third, interviews with the observed teachers immediately followed their last observations to decide on the rationale behind their class behaviors.

1- Questionnaire

The questionnaire was the first instrument used in this study after obtaining the approval of the IRB. Prior to conducting the study, the questionnaire was sent to the large sample of participants, and continued be sent during the research process until the targeted number of forms (60) was attained. Once the IRB approval was obtained, the questionnaire was sent to Mr. Dilworth Parkinson at dilworthparkinson@gmail.com. to forward it to volunteers from subscribers of Arabic-L, representing the large sample of the study. A reminder was sent two weeks later to obtain the maximum quantity of forms possible. The questionnaire was developed and distributed through the use of Google forms application. Using this application provides an easy way to collect information that can quickly and easily be converted into various graphs to enrich the data analysis process with stimulating visual aid.

The questionnaire items discuss the same themes addressed by the interview. A full copy of the questionnaire is attached in the Appendices (see Appendix A). Part I is partially adapted from Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire which presents general teaching beliefs (<https://eltrantsreviewsreflections.wordpress.com/teacher-beliefs-questionnaire>), and from the

study by Akhtar (2014) where a specific questionnaire for teachers on the role of warm-up activities was conducted.

Answers to Part I reveal the respondents' beliefs about issues such as the importance of class opening in relation to the learning process (Q.1, 11, 6, 7, 9), its importance as perceived by the educational institutions where those respondents work (Q. 13, 14, 15), planning for the opening or lack of it (Q. 2, 3, 4, 5), and the various purposes it addresses (Q. 8, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19). A Likert scale is used in this part to measure the degree of agreement of the respondents on the given input. Dörnyei and Csizér (2011) have explained that "the most common measurement for the closed-ended items in most professional questionnaires is Likert scale which indicates the extent of the respondent's agreement; ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'" (p.76).

As for Part II, it consists of two sections: A and B; Section A mainly deals with the various practices teachers think they adopt to address certain purpose(s) on starting their classes, adapted from the categories investigated and summarized by a study conducted by McGrath, S. Davis and H. Mulphin (1992) titled 'Lesson beginnings'. They have referred to three types: affective, cognitive, and pragmatic which affect the practice of those beginnings and decide their purpose. The affective purpose includes the manner in which teachers deal with various aspects at an emotional level, such as feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasms, motivations, and attitudes (such as socializing or sharing personal stories or worries with students). The cognitive purpose involves knowledge and development of intellectual skills (such as previewing or discussing learning outcomes). The pragmatic purpose includes physical movement, coordination, and use of the motor-skill areas (such as checking appropriate setting or handling late comers) (cited in Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p.115). In the current study, the third purpose is renamed 'administrative/organizational' to address a larger scale of classroom practice of which pragmatic needs are a part (such as technology setting or distributing handouts).

As for section B, it contains two open-ended questions that look into thoughts on planning/skipping the class opening which help in providing additional related data. Part II does not only reveal the activities/tasks the teachers think they use and which correspond to the various functions of a class opening, but also how frequently they think they use them. Hence, results of

answers on this part can conclude which of these activities/tasks are mostly favored and, accordingly, which of the class opening purposes meets the highest teachers' preference.

Regarding Part III of the questionnaire, it addresses teachers' stance towards some contextual factors, such as learners' proficiency level, skills taught, institutional policy, or learning outcomes, which were found in research to have an influence on class opening practice. The aim of this part is to explore which of these factors teachers consider a determinant of their behaviors in classrooms. Barcelos, (2003) has justified the discrepancy between teaching beliefs and practice as at times arising from the role of contextual factors (cited in Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011, p. 287). Studies by Duffy (1982), Duffy and Ball (1986), and Lampert (1985) have shown that the complexities of classroom life may prevent teachers from attending to their beliefs and providing instruction which is consistent with their theoretical beliefs (cited in Johnson, 1992, p. 84).

Responses on Part III do not only reveal which contextual factor(s) can affect teachers' practices of class opening, but also its/their frequency patterns which can indicate the most influential one(s), as perceived by teachers. As for part IV, it includes demographic information like gender, teaching experience and teaching location. The challenge of relying on questionnaires for data about beliefs, as Kalsoom and Akhtar (2013) have pointed out, is that "it is difficult to monitor one's beliefs and thoughts but we can make interpretations from one's self reported beliefs- and these things have predictably been investigated by Thurstone, Guttman and Likert type scales" (p. 55). Moreover, Dörnyei and Csizér (2011) have explained that the most effective tool to obtain a large amount of data in a relatively short time is the standardized questionnaire (p. 75), regardless of certain disadvantages of conducting questionnaires in research.

Milne (1999) has summarized the deficiencies and solutions which have been taken into account regarding the type of the questionnaire designed for this study. The respondents may give superficial answers, especially if the questionnaire takes a long time to answer. This can be avoided if the questions require short answers and/or the questions of the questionnaire are not too many. The items of the questionnaire of the current study are short, taking about 20 minutes to fill out. In addition, respondents may not be willing to answer due to concerns that their answers may be taken against them personally. This sensitivity can be reduced when they read (before filling

out the questionnaire) that negative opinions can be as useful as positive ones to research studies; the introduction of this study's questionnaire includes this statement.

Milne (1999) has also called for limiting the space available for open-ended questions in order to avoid generating large amounts of data that need much time and effort to analyze. In response to this, the questionnaire in the current study features only two open-ended questions. Milne has added that misinterpretation that can be generated by possible attempts to clarify certain questionnaire items may be avoided by piloting the questions; this explains why this questionnaire was piloted on five teachers. Piloting the questionnaire of the current study has resulted in one modification which is removing an irrelevant open-ended question about the impact of teaching experience on class opening practice to include it within the interview questions instead. Despite all the above, Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) have illustrated that “It is obvious that discrete data collection procedures (typically through scaled-answer questionnaire) cannot yield holistic theories” (p. 260). This is why this study includes the qualitative research tools.

2- Class Observations:

Observation as a technique aims at describing an event as it is. The event in this study is a class opening practice. Borg (2003) has supported the notion that “examination of teachers’ actual pedagogical practices” are essential for investigating their cognitions (cited in Baker, 2014, p. 155). Creswell (2009) has defined qualitative observation as the procedure where the researcher takes field notes on the behaviors of the observed individuals at the research site (p. 181).

The class observation for this study is a non-participant type where the researcher is an ‘outsider’. However, the observation environment is not alien to the researcher due to previous experience in teaching and academic study in the same institution (AUC). Classes are neither videotaped nor recorded to guarantee a relaxed and natural teaching performance. Observing three consecutive classes by the same teacher and ten different teachers respectively yielded a total of 30 class observations (each lasting around 75 min). This continual pattern of observation aims at exploring classroom behaviors by the same teacher which may reflect a variance in practice compared to beliefs according to the type of lesson, the goal of class introduction, the skill taught or some procedures that are intended exceptionally for the observed opening. Although the main

focus of the observer was to trace the class opening practice in detail, all observations lasted till the end of the class to avoid giving any indications to the observed teacher what the observation focus was.

Dornyei (2007) has illustrated the advantages and disadvantages of observation as a qualitative research tool. The benefits may include studying actual behavior at its instant occurrence and managing the challenge of some individuals to verbalize their thoughts. However, observing behaviors does not necessarily interpret the reasons behind those actions. Moreover, the observation process becomes more challenging in applied linguistics where researchers usually observe mental variables deemed 'unobservable' (p. 185). Therefore, following the observations in this study by interviews with the observed individuals can fill such a gap in previous research.

3- Semi-structured Interviews:

This interview is an open-ended questionnaire which was employed immediately after the third and last observation for each observed teacher to collect data about his/her beliefs and practices in terms of class opening procedure. During the interview, the researcher established a convivial and relaxing atmosphere where the interviewee could reflect easily on his/her experiences on the issue in question. The researcher makes sure that the place of the interview was quiet and accessible to the participants. The interviewees were assured, after signing the consent and before the beginning of the interview, that the interview questions aim at justifying their teaching behaviors of class opening in the observed classes rather than evaluating those behaviors. One of the basic skills of any interviewer is to be a good listener who does not judge what he/she hears, but rather approves the information received.

The interview questions were recorded for later transcription so that the collected data could be properly analyzed. Each interview in this study lasted for approximately half an hour. The researcher explained to the interviewee at the beginning of the interview that they would be asked some open-ended questions, half of which focus on their beliefs regarding the importance of class opening and half on its actual practice. The interview questions were designed to address the following themes: the importance of class opening in relation to the learning process (Q.6), its importance as perceived by educational institutions (Q.12, 13, 14), planning/skipping the opening

(Q. 7, 8, 9, 10), the various purposes it addresses (Q. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), and the effect of contextual factors on its practice (Q. 11). These were the same themes addressed by the questionnaire.

Like any research instrument, the interviewing process has benefits and disadvantages. Dornyei (2007) has discussed the former as “a natural and socially acceptable way of collecting information”, in addition to being achievable, even by the beginning researchers. Moreover, more elaborative detail can be unearthed, if need be, for any ambiguous or insufficient information reported by the interviewee. Regarding the disadvantages, conducting interviews tends to be a time-consuming tool requiring specific skills that may not be accessible to every interviewer. Additionally, due to the lack of anonymity, interviewees may try to project a more favorable portrayal that conflicts with their reality (p. 143-144). Comparing the actual practice with what has been reported by the interviews may address this last challenge.

After conducting the first interview with the first teacher, a modification related to the order of questions was made. The researcher thought it preferable to start by asking about the purpose of the class opening, examples of tasks/activities that fulfill that purpose, and the specific task/activity that meets the students’ needs the most. Questions on planning or skipping the opening then follow to ask about general beliefs. The researcher wanted the interviewees to reflect first on the practice that has been just observed before they forget any of the details of their observed classrooms.

3.4 Ethical Standards

As for taking precautions in terms of the human subjects’ protection, participants’ rights were highly considered by the researcher when using the instruments of data collection. The questionnaire, for the large sample, is anonymous to guarantee protection of those participants’ privacy. As for the small sample, the observed and interviewed teachers were guaranteed the privacy of their disclosure during their observation or interviewing. Accordingly, there was no risk threatening those participants. This small sample was given the chance to acknowledge the study’s results which adds a positive ethical dimension to their participation. In terms of consuming time, answering the questionnaire can take about twenty minutes which did not represent a load on the respondents. This short time is meant to reduce any sense of boredom or

mental fatigue caused during the answering process. A feeling of embarrassment at poor performance or frustration does not form a threat to participants as well because they are assured that individual thoughts and opinions are only addressed and not judged as right or wrong and the consent supports such an assurance.

3.5 Data Collection

Data for this study was collected through three instruments; a questionnaire (quantitative tool), class observation, and interviews (qualitative tools).

3.5.1 The Questionnaire

The first step in the data collection process involved seeking quantitative data from the large sample. As soon as the IRB approval was obtained on the questionnaire, it was sent electronically to that sample through the Arabic-L emailing list. The forms were submitted and compiled electronically and the results automatically summarized into graphs. This gave an advantage to the researcher who was thus able to receive a preliminary impression about the responses in a consistent and easy way. The reliability of the items of the questionnaire was measured after piloting it to ensure that the internal consistency of those items was valid. This was done through a specialist who used Cronbach's alpha measurement to check the correlation between the items which proved to be positive; specifically for the items under Part I and III of the questionnaire.

3.5.2 Class Observations

As for qualitative data collection from the small sample, it started while further quantitative data was being gathered. The researcher sent an email to the people in charge of class schedules during Fall 2016 in the ALI Department at the AUC to explain the need to observe some of these classes for the purposes of the current study. The email clarified the aim of the study and expressed a strong sense of appreciation for the volunteering participants' time and effort, in case of accepting to participate in the study. Upon receiving the volunteering participants' acceptance, the researcher sent the research protocol (being observed consecutively for three classes followed by an interview and a lesson plan for each class needs to be sent to the researcher before each observation) to those participants to be prepared ahead. Another email was sent to them a couple of days before the

observation process as a reminder and to confirm the venue of the observed classes, concluding with the interview. Observation schedules were arranged in such a way that two to three teachers could be observed and interviewed during the same week. The researcher arrived before both the students and the teacher, sitting at the back of the class so as not to cause any physical disturbance in the research site.

Collecting data through class observation tool in this study involved using two different kinds of notes. The first was the class observation notes where teachers' detailed behaviors during the observed class openings were recorded. The second was the checklist which included expected types of opening practices as suggested in the literature review of this study. The observation notes were compared against the checklist items at the end of each teacher's three observed openings. However, upon piloting those observation notes, a need for a third type, pre-observation notes, materialized. These pre-observation notes include lesson plan charts to be filled by the observed teachers ahead of each observed session to provide general guidelines for that day's session. This may help in understanding more the rationale behind the observed teachers' class behaviors. The researcher was supposed to receive these notes before starting the observed class.

For the class observation notes, they are field notes that are taken down in class while the participants are teaching. They are headed by the name of the teacher, the number of the session, the level of students and the venue of the class. The researcher used these blank charts to document mainly the incidents occurring at the beginning of the class starting with the teacher's entrance to the classroom until teacher began first activity marking end of opening. During observation, field notes such as codes, numbers, signs, and so forth, may be added in the margins or at the back of the observation notes. There is a column in the class observation notes where the researcher could add any point requiring further elaboration during the interview.

Regarding the observation checklist, it was used at the end of the observation process for each teacher, that is, after the third observed opening of each teacher. The list includes some opening practices suggested by research in a study by McGrath, S. Davis, and H. Mulphin (1992) titled 'Lesson beginnings'. This list is intended to facilitate analyzing the data collected from three

observed openings by each teacher which may end up with adding new unlisted observed practices to the checklist items.

3.5.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Wright (2005) has explained that elicitation about beliefs is usually undertaken “directly or indirectly through exploration of practices in interview or similar situations, and the research is dependent on teachers’ articulatory capacities and our interpretation of what they say”; however, he has stated that teachers’ articulation of their beliefs is far from easy (p. 266). The semi-structured interview for this study was conducted immediately after the last observation of each teacher and took about half an hour. The researcher and the teacher agreed that the place of the interview would be in the same observed class or the teacher’s office. Before starting the interview, the proper operation of the used audio device was checked; two devices were used for a backup consideration. The questions paper was prepared and the researcher ensured that there was sufficient space for comments. Only a few comments were needed due to the facility of recording.

The purpose of the interview was to explore in more detail teachers’ beliefs towards class opening and their rationale behind their observed practices. Probing questions on those beliefs and practices include usually ‘why’ and ‘how’ for elaboration needs. Although the researcher followed the questions originally planned for the interview, an instant change, like removing, modifying or adding a question that is implied by an immediate need during the interview process would occur.

In addition, one question was added based on the questionnaire preliminary results such as asking about the frequency of handling students’ worries in the class opening where a considerable percentage of the respondents showed less attention to this specific affective practice. An additional question was added to the teacher interviews of the teachers who failed to provide the researcher with their lesson plans for the observed classes due to time constraints. This question aimed at asking the observed teacher if he/she thinks that he/she followed what has been planned for the class opening of the three observed sessions. At the end of each interview, interviewees were thanked, assured of confidentiality, and offered a summary of the study results, if they so desired.

3.6 Data Analysis

There were two types of data to be analyzed in this study; quantitative and qualitative. While analysis occurs after collection with quantitative data, Merriam (1988) and Marshall and Rossman (1989) have contended that “data collection and data analysis must be a simultaneous process in qualitative research” (cited in Creswell, 2009, p. 198). The quantitative data in this study was first collected and then analyzed. As for the qualitative one, further data collection may be done if initial analysis implied so. This was facilitated through communicating with the interviewees, after being interviewed, to ask them any additional question(s) that may prove to be important for the collected data clarification.

3.6.1 Quantitative Data

For analyzing the quantitative collected data from the questionnaire, a descriptive statistics was drawn through the computer software program Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The researcher enlisted a specialist’s help for running such statistics to generate the central tendency measurements (the mean and the standard deviation) for statements under Part I, and the frequency counts for statements under Part II,A and Part III. As for the open-ended questions in Part II, B, their answers were analyzed the same way as the qualitative data, unless responses of those questions can be systematically categorized into points in a certain way.

Analysis of Part I of the questionnaire provided the agreement percentage (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree) on certain beliefs on class opening. Analysis of Part II, A provided the frequency counts (ranging from frequently to never) of addressing certain purpose(s) in class opening practice where the most favored one by teachers can be inferred. Analysis of Part III showed the effect frequency (ranging from frequently to never) of contextual factors on class opening practice where the most influential one, as perceived by teachers, can be suggested. Regarding part IV, it covered the demographic data of the respondents such as gender, teaching experience, or teaching locations.

3.6.2 Qualitative Data

Observing and interviewing the same teacher throughout several classes can be perceived as a research asset because it draws a continual pattern of a specific teaching practice in different classes. Steps of analysis for the qualitative data collected from this study follow a certain order. First, all the interviews were transcribed. Second, all data (i.e. class observation sets and interviews) was reviewed to gather a first impression. Third, each teacher was assigned a number to use instead of names for privacy concerns. Fourth, each teacher's portfolio (observation sets and interview) was read to reach a sufficient level of understanding of each participant's approach. Fifth, the collected data of the interviews was coded by assigning tags for units of information to reduce the huge amount of data obtained.

Once codes were assigned, the data was classified according to subcategories such as opinion, concept, argument, justification, activity, classroom behavior, and teaching decisions. Markers of different colors were used for distinguishing these subcategories to facilitate the classification process. Then, the irrelevant codes were dropped and the subcategories regrouped into main categories or themes such as the importance of class opening, the purposes it addresses, and the impact of contextual factors on its practice. This analysis process was done first for every teacher's portfolio and then for all teachers' combined. On analyzing either qualitative or quantitative data, attention was paid to anything that looked contradicted, repeated, or stated as important by the participants. These notes may prove to be significant for the discussion section of the study.

Chapter Four

STUDY RESULTS

This chapter first presents the results of the quantitative data represented by teachers' questionnaire on beliefs about class opening. The total number of respondents is 63 of TASOL from various parts of the world. The results of the qualitative data then follow represented by class observations and the interviews with ten TASOL working at the Department of ALI at AUC. Both the quantitative and qualitative results presume to address the Research Questions of this study.

The questionnaire and interview questions are constructed according to the operational definitions of 'beliefs' adopted in this study. The selected beliefs reflect a combination of the two approaches provided by Rokeach (1968) and Kagan (1992). While Rokeach has adopted the multi components of beliefs: cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements (cited in Parker & Brindley, 2008, p.1), Kagan has defined teaching beliefs as "a particularly provocative form of personal knowledge" created by teachers' innate hypotheses concerning learners, teaching materials and classroom environment (p. 65).

The definition of class opening in this study is inspired by the definition provided by the study by McGrath, Davies and Mulphin (1992). Class opening in this study refers to the time between the teacher's initial interaction with students in class and the first major activity, which usually ranges between three and fifteen minutes of short activities (p. 92). The reason behind adopting the definition in this specific study is its research focus. The study is titled 'Lesson Beginnings', which is directly related to the current research.

4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data is collected by a questionnaire filled out by a randomly selected sample population who received this questionnaire through the Arabic-L electronic mail list. The subscribers to this list are TASOL from different countries in the world. The total number of respondents participating in the questionnaire is 63. The questionnaire is technically analyzed using one of the special statistics programs (SPSS) supported by the Social Research Center at AUC. The questionnaire (see Appendix A) presents three topics: teachers' beliefs towards class

opening, the various purposes addressed there, and the contextual factors that may affect teachers' opening practices.

Questionnaire Results

In each box in the provided Tables of the quantitative data, there are two numbers: the number on top indicates the number of responses and the number at bottom indicates the percentage that represents that number out of all 63 responses. The bottom numbers are utilized to derivate the mean and standard deviation for Part I. The mean is the average level of agreement among responses while the standard deviation refers to the square root of the average square deviation of the scores from the mean; that is, the higher the standard deviation, the greater the variation in responses. The mean interpretation key used for discussing the results in Part I is:

Low level of agreement = 1.00 - 2.50
 Average level of agreement = 2.50 - 3.50
 High level of agreement = 3.50 - 5.00

In order to determine beliefs about the class opening, the respondents of this questionnaire (TASOL) were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree') their level of agreement with statements in Part I of the questionnaire as shown in Table (4.1) below:

Table (4.1): Teachers' beliefs towards class opening (extracted from Part I in the questionnaire):

Part I: Teachers' Beliefs								
#	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	mean	St.
1	The class opening is an important part in the lesson plan.	0	1 1.6%	1 1.6%	10 15.9%	51 81%	4.76	.560
2	I plan a class opening for most of my classes.	1 1.6%	3 4.8%	8 12.7%	16 25.4%	35 55.6%	4.29	.974
3	My class openings are spur of the moment ideas.	8 12.7%	12 19.0%	21 33.3%	15 23.8	7 11.1%	3.02	1.184
4	I sometimes change my intended opening in response to unforeseen events that take place in class.	1 1.6%	4 6.3%	8 12.7%	22 34.9%	28 44.4%	4.14	.981
5	I sometimes need to skip the intended class opening.	6 9.5%	15 23.8%	13 20.6%	26 41.3%	3 4.8%	3.08	1.112
6	Starting the class with an opening helps in paving for the following phase of the lesson.	1 1.6%	0	3 4.8%	12 19.0%	47 74.6%	4.65	.722

7	The class opening has no impact on the learning process.	42 66.7%	17 27.0%	3 4.8%	0	1 1.6%	1.43	.734
8	I use the class opening time for fulfilling class administrative housekeeping like checking attendance or preparing materials/objects/announcements to be used/distributed/presented.	20 31.7%	19 30.2%	11 17.5%	10 15.9%	3 4.8%	2.32	1.216
9	The main function of the class opening is to attract students' attention.	0	4 6.3%	10 15.9%	25 39.7%	24 38.1%	4.10	.893
10	The class opening is a chance to build a rapport with students.	2 3.2%	0	4 6.3%	22 34.9%	35 55.6%	4.40	.871
11	Using a class opening, aside from housekeeping work, is useful for both the teachers and the students.	1 1.6%	2 3.2%	3 4.8%	14 22.2%	43 68.3%	4.52	.859
12	I use 'fun' activity(s) for the class opening	1 1.6%	6 9.5%	18 28.6%	24 38.1%	14 22.2%	3.70	.978
13	My pre-teaching training has encouraged using class openings.	4 6.3%	8 12.7%	12 19.0%	17 27.0%	22 34.9%	3.71	1.250
14	My institution encourages the use of class openings.	6 9.5%	6 9.5%	27 42.9%	11 17.5%	13 20.6%	3.30	1.186
15	I received training in my institution on using class openings.	22 34.9%	7 11.1%	10 15.9%	13 20.6%	11 17.5%	2.75	1.545
16	Addressing students' affective needs (like reducing anxiety, establishing rapport, arousing positive emotions) is the most important purpose of class openings.	1 1.6%	4 6.3%	15 23.8%	20 31.7%	23 36.5%	3.95	1.007
17	Addressing students' cognitive needs (i.e. needs that have to do with learning like recalling previous knowledge, setting lesson's goals, previewing) is the most important purpose of class openings.	0	4 6.3%	8 12.7%	27 42.9%	24 38.1%	4.13	.871
18	Addressing class organizational/administrative needs (like gathering HW, checking attendance, distributing handouts, announcements) is the most important purpose of class openings.	25 39.7%	18 28.6%	12 19.0%	5 7.9%	3 4.8%	2.10	1.160
19	All the above purposes, in the last three questions, are equally important.	16 25.4%	20 31.7%	10 15.9%	13 20.6%	4 6.3%	2.51	1.256

Note: SD = strongly disagree, D= disagree, N= neutral, A= agree, SA= strongly agree, St.= standard deviation

Table (4.1) discusses several beliefs, one of which is the importance of class opening as a significant component of the lesson plan (statement1). Teachers overwhelmingly believe (96%; SA 81%, A 15.9%, with a high mean 4.76) in the significance of class opening. They mostly agree (93%, SA 74.6%, A 19.0%, with a high mean of 4.65) that class opening helps pave the way for the following phase of the lesson (statement 6). They mostly perceive class opening (90%, SA 68.3%, A 22.2%, with a high mean of 4.52) as useful for both the teachers and the students (statement 11). The standard deviation of these three questions (.560, .722, .859, respectively)

shows that there is limited variation in responses. It is interesting to note that statement 1 indicates the least variation. However, there is a considerable difference between the number of teachers who strongly agree and who agree on the last two questions (statements 6 & 11). Only one teacher (1.6%) out of all (63) agrees that the opening has no impact on the learning process (statement 7), while 3 (4.8%) responses are neutral on the same question.

As for practices related to class opening, teachers mostly tend (81%, SA 55.6%, A 25.4% with a high mean of 4.29) to plan their opening for most of their classes (statement 2). Interestingly, almost an equal percentage of teachers (79%, SA 44.4%, A 34.9% with a high mean of 4.14) sometimes tend to change the planned opening due to unforeseen events in class (statement 4). However, almost half of the teachers (46%, SA 4.8%, A 41.3% with a moderate mean of 3.08) are sometimes inclined to skip the class opening if need arises (statement 5). A number of teachers (35%, SA 11.1%, A 23.8% with a moderate mean of 3.02) do not plan their opening as it arises from spur of the moment ideas (statement 3). Yet, the standard deviation of statements 2 & 4 (.974, .981, respectively) shows less variation in responses compared to statements 3 & 5 (1.184, 1.112, respectively) indicating a narrower consensus.

The number of teachers (38%, SA 17.5%, A 20.6 with a moderate mean of 2.75) who indicate that they have received training in their institution on using class openings (statement 15) is equal to the percentage of teachers (38%, SA 20.6, A 17.5% with a moderate mean of 3.30) who believes in their institution's encouragement to use class openings (statement 14). Over half of the teachers agree (62%, SA 34.9%, A 27.0% with a high mean of 3.71%) that their pre-teaching training has encouraged them to use class opening (statement 13). Yet, the standard deviation of these three statements (13, 14, 15) illustrates a high variation in responses (1.250, 1.186, 1.545, respectively).

Concerning the different purposes class opening targets to serve, responses of the cognitive practices such as recalling previous knowledge, setting lesson goals, and previewing (statement 17) indicate that they receive the highest attention by teachers (81%, SA 38.1%, A 42.9% with a high mean of 4.13). The affective practices such as reducing anxiety, establishing rapport, and arousing positive emotions (statement 16) receive less albeit significant attention (68%, SA 36.5%,

A 31.7% with a high mean of 3.95). As for the organizational/administrative practices such as collecting homework, checking attendance, distributing handouts, and making announcements (statement 18), these tasks receive little attention (12%, SA 4.8%, A 7.9% with a low mean of 2.10). However, there is a limited percentage of teachers who support the importance of all the purposes on an equal basis (statement 19) which is 27% (SA 6.3%, A 20.6% with a low mean of 2.51).

The standard deviation of statement 17 (the cognitive purposes are the most important for class opening) does not show much variation in responses indicating a high level of teachers' consensus (.871). However, the standard deviation of statement 16 (the affective purposes are the most important for class opening), statement 18 (the organizational/administrative purposes are the most important for class opening), and statement 19 (all purposes are equally important for class opening) reveals a higher variation in responses (respectively 1.007, 1.160, 1.256).

The frequency of opening practices teachers follow to address the three purposes of class opening: cognitive, affective, and organizational/administrative, are shown in the following Table:

Table (4.2): Teachers' practices addressing various purposes of the opening (extracted from Part II A in the questionnaire):

Part II A: Teachers' Practice					
#	Statements	F	O	R	N
Cognitive purpose					
1	Link the previous lesson to the new one	43 68.3%	18 28.6%	2 3.2%	0
3	Review the previous lesson	18 28.6%	28 44.4%	14 22.2%	3 4.8%
6	Set objectives of the new lesson	33 52.4%	20 31.7%	7 11.1%	3 4.8%
19	Start the first major main activity in the lesson directly, skipping the opening completely*	1 1.6%	13 20.6%	29 46.0%	20 31.7%
11	Brainstorm the new topic	35 55.6%	17 27.0%	9 14.3%	2 3.2%
17	Preview the new lesson	33 52.4%	21 33.3%	5 7.9%	4 6.3%
18	Link the new lesson to the real world	32 50.8%	22 34.9%	7 11.1%	2 3.2%

Affective purpose					
2	Greet students	58 92.1%	4 6.3%	1 1.6%	0
5	Chat with students	41 65.1%	17 27.0%	5 7.9%	0
8	Stimulate students' interest with a personal story/incident	25 39.7%	26 41.3%	11 17.5%	1 1.6%
10	Address personal issues/worries of students	12 19.0%	27 42.9%	18 28.6%	6 9.5%
13	Share with students a funny/humorous episode	13 20.6%	34 54.0%	15 23.8%	1 1.6%
14	Work on fusing/blending in culturally different students with the rest of the class	14 22.2%	25 39.7%	15 23.85	9 14.3%
16	Use a 'fun' activity	24 38.1%	27 42.9%	11 17.5%	1 1.6%
Organizational/Administrative purpose					
4	Take absence	17 27.0%	10 15.9%	12 19.0%	24 38.1%
7	Organize the materials to be used in today's session	21 33.3%	19 30.2%	14 22.2%	9 14.3%
9	Discuss homework*	15 23.8%	28 44.4%	16 25.4%	4 6.3%
12	Make announcements	11 17.5%	31 49.2%	19 30.2%	2 3.2%
15	Check on the appropriateness of classroom setting	16 25.4%	22 34.9%	14 22.2%	11 17.5%
20	Use lesson opening to buy time to accommodate late comers	3 4.8%	20 31.7%	22 34.9%	18 28.6%
21	Check on the needed technology tools	12 19.0%	14 22.2%	24 38.1%	13 20.6%

Note: F = frequently, O = occasionally, R = rarely, N = never

*This item is not considered one of the cognitive practices; rather, it relates to class opening practice in general.

*Discuss homework here means the related admin. tasks such as distributing papers or giving homework instructions.

The Cognitive Purpose

Table (4.2) shows that the practice most frequently used by teachers (68.3%) in their class opening is to link the previous lesson to the new one, while previewing the new lesson is the practice least used (6.3%). According to the calculations technically carried out by SPSS, the results suggest that 'reviewing the previous lesson' is the cognitive practice teachers 'Occasionally' (44.4%) follow and it is the cognitive practice a limited percentage of teachers 'Rarely' (22.2%) follow in their

opening. It is worth mentioning that all teachers link the previous lesson to the new one in their opening but with varying frequency since none of them chose the response 'Never'.

The Affective Purpose

The practice which most teachers (92.1%) frequently follow in their class opening is greeting the students, while working on fusing culturally different students with the rest of the class is the practice which most teachers (14.3%) never follow. Over half of the teachers (65.1%) frequently use the practice of chatting with students in the opening. More than half of the teachers (54.0%) occasionally share with students a funny/humorous episode, while a limited percentage of them (28.6%) rarely address personal issues/worries of students. It is noticeable that all teachers always greet and chat with students since none of them reported that they do not practice such conventions.

The Organizational/Administrative Purpose

The practice which highest percentage of teachers (33.3%) frequently follow in their class opening is organizing the materials to be used in their current session, while taking attendance during opening ranks highest as the practice that teachers (38.1%) never follow. Almost half of the teachers (49.2%) occasionally make announcements and a considerable percentage of them (38.1%) rarely check on the needed technology tools.

At the end of Part II A of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to indicate other classroom opening practices they may follow, showing their frequency and the purposes they fulfill. Only 11 out of the 63 teachers (6.93%) responded to this question. Following are those eleven responses:

- 1- Almost every class begins with "su2aal al-yom" (the question of the day) or a similar, relatively free conversational activity in which students ask each other a question (usually chosen by the instructor) following a 'reporting' phase. Usually the question is designed to elicit forms that have been covered in class to that point (cognitive purpose).

- 2- Ask if students have any questions, even if unrelated to course materials directly. Allow opportunity to relate course content to student concerns when appropriate (affective/cognitive purpose).
- 3- Giving students individual attention as they come in before the formal class begins (affective purpose)
- 4- Greeting students (establishes rapport and chemistry) and starting one short activity to warm things up (affective/cognitive purpose).
- 5- I often use a quick quiz as an opening. The quiz is generally based on what they'd covered in the previous homework, or else it introduces the topic of the day. I allow students to check it afterwards, and then use that as a platform for addressing questions (cognitive purpose).
- 6- I usually use class opening to preview the previous lesson and make sure that students have no problem in understanding the previous topic (cognitive purpose).
- 7- Make sure students are starting to think in the target language (cognitive purpose)
- 8- Play an Arabic language song for the students to activate vocabulary and introduce them to different styles of Arab music (affective/cognitive purpose).
- 9- Since we have limited time for lessons, other things such as attendance, checking technology, student personal issue are done either prior to class or while students do assigned activities (cognitive purpose)
- 10- Very important
- 11- Warm up activities - a review of previous lesson/knowledge - introduction to new lesson - a quick review of lesson - and finally attendance and announcements (cognitive/affective/administrative)

As for the two open-ended questions of the questionnaire in Part II B, they are analyzed in the same way as the qualitative data of the study (using codes for information units and then relating the ones that are placed under the same theme to reduce the amount of collected data). The below responses of these two questions fall under the analysis theme of planning/skipping the class opening:

Q 1. If you plan your class opening, do you follow what you have planned? If not, why?

Out of 63 teachers, 17 (27.0%) stated that they follow their plan of class opening, but did not give any explanation of how they do so. Only two teachers (3.2%) answered that they do not plan their openings; one pointed out that “being a slave to one's lesson plan is a recipe for mediocrity” and another referred to the preference for the spontaneous approach in practicing class opening. However, one teacher (1.6%) answered: “I don't usually plan, unless there is a specific reason to do so (current events, announcements, new students)”.

The rest of respondents to the first qualitative question in Part II B in the questionnaire mentioned that they usually plan their class opening and follow what they have planned unless they are forced to deviate from this plan. Following are the teachers' justifications for this deviation in descending order according to respondents' consensus, followed by examples of comments:

- Students' needs (whether affective needs like students' mood and their need to talk about something interesting to them or cognitive needs like discussing questions related to last lesson or homework)
“In general, I try to. The only reason I wouldn't follow what I had planned is if something came up (generally something a student brings up) that I feel it needs to be addressed immediately.”
“I mostly follow the plan unless student inquiries indicate the need to revise something else, I would adjust the plan.”
- Unforeseen circumstances
“Usually I do, but sometimes I don't, most probably due to high numbers of late comers or a breaking news or event the day of class.” [in today's class]
- Current important news/events (like bad weather or demonstrations outside campus)

“Sometimes, I do not follow what I have planned for, because I sometimes check the current mode of my students, or new importantly released/occurred news, and so I build my opening”

- Technology problems

“I generally do, but often I have technology problems that don't allow me to use the class opening. Other times, from students questions I'll realize that they need to focus on something else other than what I'd planned.”

- Coming up with a better idea for the opening

“Almost always follow plan if I don't come up with a better idea.”

Q2. Do you sometimes skip your class opening to start the class with the new lesson? If yes, when do you do this and why?

Out of 63 teachers, 30 (47.6%) stated that they do not skip their openings. Only ten teachers (15.9%) mentioned that they rarely do this for certain reasons such as students' lengthy questions in the opening, time constraints, or extreme circumstances. The rest of the respondents answered that they sometimes forego their openings due to the following:

- Time constraints.

“Yes. I try to avoid doing this, but sometimes it is just simply not possible due to the simple factor of time. Sometimes I don't have ten minutes available at the beginning and I just need to go right to the lesson because I feel it needs the full period to really be effective.”

- Student tardiness

“If the students were late.”

- Students' readiness

“When I feel no need for an opening or just students are ready to take the new lesson.”

- Unforeseen circumstances

“If there are unexpected time constraints (due to student questions, announcements, etc.).”

To account for what factors that may affect TASOL form of class opening, those teachers were asked in Part III of the questionnaire to specify the frequency with which a set of contextual factors influence their choice of practices to be used in class opening. The following Table shows the frequency with which teachers' practices are influenced by each factor:

Table (4.3): The frequency of contextual factors influence on teachers' practices of the opening (extracted from Part III in the questionnaire):

Part III: Dominant Factors on the Selection of Class Opening Practice					
#	Statements	F	O	R	N
1	Student proficiency level	40 63.5%	17 27.0%	2 3.2%	4 6.3%
2	Students' learning style	26 41.3%	24 38.1%	7 11.1%	6 9.5%
3	Student preference	25 39.7%	25 39.7%	11 17.5%	2 3.2%
4	Lesson outcomes	37 58.7%	19 30.2%	5 7.9%	2 3.2%
5	Difficulty of lesson	28 44.4%	24 38.1%	6 9.5%	5 7.9%
6	Skill addressed by lesson	39 61.9%	19 30.2%	2 3.2%	3 4.8%
7	Time constraint	35 55.6%	23 36.5%	3 4.8%	2 3.2%
8	My institution policy	6 9.5%	14 22.2%	18 28.6%	25 39.7%
9	My teaching experience	48 76.2%	14 22.2%	1 1.6%	0
10	My pre-teaching training	18 28.6%	24 38.1%	12 19.0%	9 14.3%

Note: F = frequently, O = occasionally, R = rarely, N = never

In this section only the highest percentages under each level of frequency are discussed unless they are below 25%. As indicated by Table (4.3), the five factors that would frequently affect the kind of practice teachers choose for their class opening are: teaching experience, students' level, skill taught, lesson outcomes, and time constraint (76.2%, 63.5%, 61.9%, 58.7%, & 55.6% respectively). On the other hand, a moderate percentage of teachers are occasionally influenced by student preference (39.7%), as well as pre-teaching training, difficulty of lesson, and students' learning style on equal percentage (38.1%). Also a moderate percentage of teachers are rarely (28.6%) or never (39.7%) influenced by their institution's policy in practicing their opening. It is worth mentioning that all teachers believe they are predominantly influenced by their teaching experience in choosing the opening since none of them chose the response 'Never'. It is worth also noting here that the highest percentages of responses are clustered around the two highest levels of frequency (frequently and occasionally) which indicates a high level of agreement among

teachers about frequency with which the mentioned factors in this questionnaire affect their choice of opening.

For the section entitled ‘Other’ (i.e. other contextual factors) at the end of Part III of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to indicate factors other than the ones mentioned in the questionnaire influencing their chosen class opening practice, showing the frequency with which these factors do so. Only seven out of the 63 teachers (4.41%) responded to this question. Following are those seven responses:

1. The opening activity should help to draw everyone in and get them started thinking in the target language
2. Current events
3. Class dynamics and rapport with students
4. Ongoing events on campus, students' interests
5. I think to how to connect between the old and the new lesson and building upon each other

It should be noted that 3 and 5 in the above mentioned items are vague as neither “dynamics in class” nor “the way to connect between the old and the new lesson” is explained. Due to the limited results received for this question and the vague nature of some of them, the question is excluded in discussion of results.

4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

This data is collected to detect the beliefs of TASOL in terms of class opening importance, the practices these teachers follow in their opening, and the factors that may affect their opening practice. The data collection instruments are class observations and interviews for randomly selected sample of population (ten teachers) working at the same institution (the ALI Department at AUC) where they teach an intensive language program. The qualitative data is collected over a month and half. The number of the conducted interviews is ten and the number of the observed openings is 30 (each teacher is observed for three consecutive sessions). All interviews are audio recorded except for one, upon the request of the teacher.

Teachers’ Interviews

After conducting the interviews (see Appendix D), they are all transcribed and read more than once, collectively (all teachers together), and individually (each teacher's interview). Then through a coding process, the amount of data collected is reduced (Appendix E presents a sample of analysis) to come up with the following themes, according to which the interviews are analyzed:

- A. Impact of class opening on the remaining phases of a lesson
- B. Purpose(s) of class opening
- C. Class opening as part of lesson plan
- D. Factors affecting class opening practices

A- Impact of class opening on the remaining phases of a lesson

Regarding the impact of class opening practice on the remaining lesson phases, all teachers agree on a positive impact, except one who sees that it is the activity itself which engages the students rather than the opening. This does not mean that this teacher considers opening as not having a positive impact. Rather, she believes that the importance of class opening lies in its cognitive purpose rather than the affective purpose which involves engaging the students. One teacher also commented that a teacher is sometimes forced to change what is planned for the opening, which may end up with no effect of the opening on the remaining lesson phases. Following are some statements to indicate teachers' inclinations towards the opening. (Note that 'I' stands for interviewer and 'T' stands for teacher in the following quotations):

- Teacher 10: (affective impact)

I: Does using a class opening affect the remaining phases of a lesson?

T: Usually

I: How?

T: It usually affects, I usually have an opening because it creates a relaxing atmosphere and sometimes a motivating atmosphere because I do not like to just start the class with 'open your book and do so and so

-Teacher 5: (cognitive impact)

I: Does using a class opening affect the remaining phases of a lesson?

T: Should, haaaa [teacher laughs]

I: How?

T: As I said, I see it as a linkage between what happened the last time and what is going to happen today, so it is not like something completely different from or separate from what was done before

I: So do you think that this linkage would affect the remaining lesson structures?

T: Yes, I will give you an example, yesterday they were having a quiz and before the quiz I made sure to repeat the words again, to make sure that it is a continuous process, it is not something like we did this yesterday and today it is different, no I like to make the linkage.

B- Purpose(s) of class opening

The results of the interviews reveal that most teachers refer to class opening as ‘warm up’ and/or ‘ice breaker’. While the first expression serves both of the affective and the cognitive purposes of class opening, the second one solely addresses the affective one. In their explanation, most teachers stated their adoption of an integrated purpose that meets both cognitive and affective needs, while a few supported one of these two purposes. Among the commonly used cognitive/affective practices that teachers adopt is encouraging students to converse using a specific structure or a specific set of vocabulary. Here, activities are formulated of questions about students’ daily life that are structured to encourage students to use a certain set of vocabulary or certain grammar structures (like past or present tense).

As for the affective practices that teachers pointed out they adopt, they are:

- breaking the ice between students and teachers,
- getting students interested in the learning content,
- motivating and encouraging students to start the class,
- capturing students’ attention,
- creating rapport with students.

These are represented by the following activities:

- Asking personal open-ended questions,
- Greeting students (normal greeting discourse).

Openings that address the cognitive needs of students include, for example:

- eliciting new vocabulary,

- reviewing the previously learned material,
- reviewing a specific structure,
- linking the previous lesson with the new one,
- recycling the new vocabulary.

Following are examples of activities that fulfill the mentioned cognitive practices as stated by teachers:

- conducting an interview outside class, search for something or read something, then report to class,
- showing students pictures to discuss or comment,
- assigning some vocab and give students the space to use it freely,
- giving a 5-minutes vocab quiz,
- reinforcing a specific structure,
- asking students to use specific verbs,
- providing quick mechanical drills,
- asking open-ended questions on a recent event,
- brainstorming through reading a passage,
- asking students to read something catchy about the lesson,
- discussing homework,
- starting with something that students prepared at home,
- correcting or editing the homework.

Despite teachers' assertion of their tendency towards combining affective and cognitive purposes when choosing their opening practices and activities, it is clear that the examples they present are predominantly cognitive.

Following are examples of teachers' responses presenting the two tendencies in the opening: the tendency towards addressing integrated purpose (first pattern), and another towards addressing only one (second pattern):

First pattern (integrated purpose)

-Teacher 3:

I: What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?

T: Break the ice between the teacher and the students, try to know the students better and try to use the new vocab in their daily personal life and connect it to the main lesson in a way or to the daily life and the recent events

I: Can you give examples of the task/activity(s) that fulfill this purpose(s)?

T: I usually start the class by asking them what they did today, yesterday, at the weekend in their personal life. I can also ask questions related to the recent events, what is going on the world or in the university or the most outstanding events. I also try to look at the new vocab and use it in an open-ended questions which will give them like to more think about it even in their own language and try to see how they will answer that.

Second pattern (one purpose)

- *Teacher 9:*

I: What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?

T: Either to break the ice, draw students' attention or create a rapport with students

I: Give examples of the task/activity(s) that fulfill this purpose(s)?

T: "A page title or a picture and students guess what we will discuss, it is a challenging repetitive opening activity for a new lesson. If it is not a new lesson then my opening is a chit chat only for couple of minutes or commenting on a hot topic, if there is like the American elections."

Looking at the preliminary results of the questionnaire, a lack of attention towards addressing students' concerns in the opening can be detected. This led to adding the following question to the interview to address this gap:

How frequently do you deal with students' worries in the opening?

Most of the interviewees stated that they deal with this issue if it arises e.g. due to a quiz, a difficult homework, an unsatisfying academic performance or a language practice difficulty. Two of those teachers referred specifically in their answers to the beginning of the semester where learners of a new language usually get worried due to the expected difficulties. Teachers' responses of this question focus on the academic worries, except two teachers who referred to non-academic worries such as approaching a student if he/she is sick, abnormally silent, or has unexcused absence.

As for addressing the administrative/organizational purpose of class opening (including checking attendance and technology, making announcements, accommodating late comers and distributing papers), most teachers take attendance; some take it in writing and some make a mental list of absentees. Most of them check technology if needed, but this is done before class rather than in the opening. Announcements are made if needed; however, two of those teachers stated that if the announcement is important, they start the class with it, while other two prefer to postpone announcements to the class ending instead of the opening. For accommodating late comers, most teachers did not express concern with this task in general. However, two of those teachers stated that they only care about latecomers if they are normally punctual students. Distributing papers is taken into consideration, if needed, by most teachers, except one who stated that she regularly gives back the homework papers in class opening. Two out of all teachers pay no attention to these kinds of tasks. Worth mentioning is that one of the teachers referred to grouping as an organizational activity in the opening in order to create a comfortable class work environment, such as: never matching two talkative students together or a talkative student with a quiet one.

C- Class opening as part of lesson plan

Statements under this theme highlight teachers' beliefs about class opening as part of their lesson plans; they address whether teachers plan this part of the lesson, and whether they implement, change or completely skip opening. Teachers' stated beliefs reveal that planning of opening is a predominant practice among interviewed teachers. It is interesting to note that most teachers plan their class opening, except for a few who follow a spontaneous manner of practicing it as a way of simulating the normal human interaction in real life. All of those teachers who plan their opening agree that they cannot follow what has been planned all the time. Some of them also agree on writing their plan, even in codes or signs. Few stated that sometimes a detailed plan is needed if, for example, the opening activity involves several steps or the activity is presented to high level students. Following are examples of teachers' thoughts about planning their opening:

-Teacher 8:

I: Do you usually plan your class opening?

T: Usually I try to plan it, sometimes I can, sometimes I just like today's class, I know that we want to finish the review sheet for tomorrow's quiz, we do not want to spend time, I just came in and we started.

I: So if you usually plan it, do you do this in writing or in mind?

T: I write down total number of minutes, this is expected to take so and so minutes and this will take so and so minutes

I: But you do not write what you will say in the opening, write just codes or signs maybe?

T: No I do not do that, I have it in mind. I used to write everything down when I was still in the beginning

I: If you plan it, even in your mind, do you usually follow what you have planned?

T: Usually yes

-Teacher 5:

I: Do you usually plan your class opening?

T: Yes

I: Do you do this in writing or in your mind?

T: It depends on the class, some classes, especially with the advanced levels I need to write down everything I am planning to do

I: Why specifically with advanced levels?

T: More specifically colloquial advanced because in my past experience with CASA students, I was usually given the highest levels of the CASA students, it is a very challenging task, CASA and advanced, I plan everything I write everything and I have a plan B always. For example, if it is colloquial we have many things to do we have vocab activities, games, listening activities

I: So, if you plan it, do you usually do what you have planned?

T: It depends, not all the time, sometimes an activity requires a longer time or a shorter time than expected, sometimes students are bored with a certain activity, so I have to stop and move.

Most of the teachers' statements regarding planning the opening also indicate that experienced teachers should plan their opening, yet, one teacher commented "experienced teachers should plan their opening, but it does not happen all the time." Another teacher claims that experienced teachers need not to plan as they can successfully manage any unforeseen circumstances in class due to their long exposure to the challenges of the teaching context. Following are examples of teachers' explanations of this issue:

-Teacher 6:

I: Are experienced teachers in need to plan their class opening?

T: “Yes, planning is something organizational, it shows your logic, actually experienced teachers tend to plan more often than inexperienced teachers because the inexperienced ones do not sense the time challenge, maybe they overestimate their capabilities but, as an experienced teacher I do plan every step of my lesson.”

-Teacher 3:

I: Do you think experienced teachers in need to plan their class opening? Why?

T: “Yes, I think so. I would say I am an experienced teacher, just to be targeted, not to be just like chatting or so, no, it has to be targeted, what I am going to ask them, about what and how am I going to correct them because opening is not like filling the time, it has an aim which they have to be fulfilled that’s why they have to think about it.”

-Teacher 10:

I: Do you think experienced teachers are in need to plan their class opening?

T: “No, they are always prepared with alternative ideas if they enter the class and found that they need to change the opening.”

In terms of skipping the class opening, all interviewees mentioned that they do not skip it unless the situation requires them to do so, mostly due to time constraints. Some of them clarified that they are sometimes forced to skip or shorten their class opening if students are late for class, if the day’s session is a midterm, or if there is a lot of work to do in this specific session. However, different reasons for skipping the opening, such as a lack of friendly and relaxed atmosphere in class between teacher and students or among students themselves, and the schedule framework where two consecutive sessions are given to the same students which cancels out the need to practice a second class opening, were highlighted. The following teachers’ quotations reflect this discussion:

-Teacher 4:

I: Do you sometimes skip your class opening?

T: Almost never, except when it has to do with the circumstances of the schedule, for example I am teaching the same group of students two consecutive classes, so I meet them in the first hour then we have a break then I meet them for the second hour. Often there is this kind of fluidity

because of the continuity, I just met them before then they went for getting a bite or stretching their leg, so we just take it from where we left.

-Teacher 6:

I: Do you sometimes skip your class opening?

T: This happens only when the students come late or they have a lot of activities to perform during a limited time, in this case, I summarize, I do it very quickly but I do not skip.

-Teacher 10:

I: Do you sometimes skip your class opening?

T: Yes.

I: How frequent?

T: if for any reason like in short classes if I have something and I need to finish it today, I will skip the opening

I: in your second observed session, do you think you skipped your opening then?

T: Yes because of the midterm.

D- Factors affecting class opening practices

In regard to the theme of the contextual factors (teaching context i.e. classroom environment) that impact teachers' selection of class opening such as class size, level of students, students' needs, learning outcomes, institutional policy, and skill taught, interviewees were asked if they consider any impact of the previously mentioned factors on their opening practice. An overwhelming number of teachers emphasize the impacting importance of most of these factors. However, when asked about the most influential factor(s) for them, their statements revealed discrepancies in terms of such an impact. The factors viewed by teachers as the most influential are two: cultural differences (students in class from different countries) and students' level. The factor that appears as less influential is the class size. The three factors least considered as influential by teachers (i.e. mentioned by one teacher only) are students' needs, students' learning style, and skill taught. Interestingly, one teacher illustrated more than one factor as influential.

Justifications for the influence inconsistencies of contextual factors in class opening practice discussed above are reflected by the following teachers' explanations:

-Teacher 10:

I: Do contextual factors of each class like size, level of students, students' needs, cultural differences, learning outcomes, institutional policy, skill taught affect your selection of the lesson opening activity?

T: Yes and the most important one is the cultural differences because I can use this difference to lead a discussion in class making students exchange information about their different cultures. I always hope for this factor in class.

-Teacher 6:

I: Do contextual factors of each class like size, level of students, students' needs, cultural differences, learning outcomes, institutional policy, skill taught affect your selection of the lesson opening activity?

T: Most of these factors affect the selection of the opening

I: What is the most influential?

T: The skill taught is very important, the size of the class is also very crucial, the students' level.

I: Which do you consider first?

T: I consider first the level of the students.

One of the contextual factors appearing in the qualitative data is the impact of the institution where teachers are teaching. All teachers acknowledge their institution's support of using class opening; however, most of them referred to the freedom they are granted to practice their opening. Most teachers agree that there is no evaluation or follow up by their institution for class opening practice, unless, as stated by a few, there is a periodic observation. With the exception of two, most of the teachers mentioned that their opening practices are in line with their institution's pedagogy approaches. The majority of teachers stated that they had previously observed class opening. However, two of them pointed out that these observations were conducted long time ago while another two were unsure whether they are focusing during observation on class opening in particular. Only one teacher disclosed that she has not observed any opening at all.

Class Observation

The observation tool in the study involves using two forms: Observation notes (Appendix B presents a sample) and observation checklist (see Appendix C). The first form includes a Table with three columns: the opening incidents showing detailed opening

actions by teachers, the main activity of the lesson which indicates the end of the opening, and questions by the observer to be raised in the interviews.

The second form used for the class observation process is the observation checklist which includes all the practices suggested by research for the opening, specifically the study by McGrath, Davies & Mulphin (1992). The checklist also includes a blank space for any additional observed actions that are different from the ones in the checklist. The following Table shows the data collected through the observation checklist. The numbers used below (from 1-3) show number of times each teacher follows a specific practice during his/her three observed openings:

Table (4.4): Observation Checklist

	# of observed practice throughout 3 sessions									
Cognitive practices	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
Teacher related the new information with the old one		1			1	1		1	1	
Teacher accessed previous knowledge of students		2	3	2	2	3		1	3	1
Teacher explained the outcome of the lesson	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2
Teacher related the class opening with real world		2	3	2	1		1	1	3	1
Teacher discussed homework				1		2		1	1	1
Teacher discussed academic difficulty			1	1		2			1	1
Teacher brainstormed the new topic	1	1							1	
Teacher previewed the new lesson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The class opening is related to the topic of today's lesson	1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1
Affective practices	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
Teacher narrated a personal story/incident		1	2				1		1	
Teacher handled personal issues/worries of students		1	1		2	1				1
Teacher greeted students	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	3
Teacher had social chat		1	3	1	1		2	1	2	1
Teacher shared with students a funny/humorous episode	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Teacher used a 'fun' activity			1	1						
Administrative/organizational practices	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
Teacher accommodated late comers						1				
Teacher made announcement(s)					1	1		1		
Teacher took attendance	3	1			1	1	2	1		1
Teacher distributed materials for today's class	1	1		1		1		2	1	2
Teacher checked the appropriateness of classroom setting	1									
Teacher checked the needed technology tools	3				1		1			
Teacher involved all students	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
The class opening is within the range of 5-15 min	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	2	1
Additional observed practices/observation notes	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
Interview a native speaker				1			1			
HW feedback		1	1	1	1	2			1	

Introduce culturally oriented expressions of greeting		1				1			
Addressing integrated purpose through greeting expressions		3		1	2	2	2	1	
Teacher began with the first major activity skipping class opening completely			1			1			1

- The researcher recorded all the practices used by teachers in the 30 openings. After the third observed session for each teacher, all observed practices of this teacher were combined to be compared against the observation checklist items, as shown in the above Table. The last section of the observation checklist contains any additional notes on the teacher’s practice that merit inclusion in the data analysis.
- The figures shown in Table (4.4) reflect that, in general, cognitive purposes receive the highest attention from teachers, while affective ones are only moderately considered. As for the organizational/administrative purposes, they receive the least attention from teachers. By looking at the practices falling under cognitive purpose, the numbers corresponding to these practices include mostly the numbers ‘2’ & ‘3’ (i.e. detected in 2 to 3 observed sessions for most teachers). This indicates a robust use of these practices, compared to those falling under other purposes.
- Table (4.4) illustrates that the most used cognitive practice is accessing the previous knowledge of students (include mostly the numbers ‘2’ & ‘3’), while brainstorming the new topic is the least practiced one (i.e. detected in only 1 of observed sessions for most teachers, if at all).
- ‘Greeting students’ is the most used affective practice detected in all 3 observed sessions for most teachers, while the practice of using a ‘fun’ activity is the least used (presents the number ‘1’).

As an administrative practice, the table shows the following:

- Taking attendance displays the numbers ‘2’ and ‘3’, while the practice of checking classroom setting and accommodating late comers are detected once only in most teacher observations. Although taking attendance seemed during observation to be the most practiced organizational function, while being interviewed most of the teachers clarified that this is done just to check out of human concern, rather than for documentation purposes. They explained that they usually record absence without letting students notice this.

- Checking technology tools is not a common practice in class opening. Teachers, as clarified by the interview, pointed out that they always find technology tools in classrooms are set and ready to use; if a specific technical preparation is needed, they do it before class. However, the Table shows that only one teacher is regularly keen to adjust technology tools during opening time in the three sessions observed.

It is also worth noting that the Table reveals that:

- A cognitive purpose practice and an affective one are totally ignored by observed teachers. These are, respectively, previewing the new lesson and sharing humorous episodes with students.
- Only once is class opening connected to the topic of that day's lesson.
- While two teachers do not practice any social chat, one teacher is keen to do it throughout all the sessions.
- The practice that is noted in all observed openings, regardless of the kind of purpose addressed by teachers, is involving students in the practiced opening.
- For the time limit of class opening, out of the 30 observed openings, nine are less than five minutes duration, while two are more than 15 min, and the rest is within the average (5-15 min, as stated by the class opening definition adopted by this study). Of all observed sessions, only three openings are skipped by teachers due to unplanned events such as a visit by the program director, teacher's tardiness, or time pressures in covering the required content.

Table (4.4) also reveals that some opening practices are detected that are not previously set in observation checklist items. These practices which are not revealed in the literature review of this study are: interviewing a native speaker, homework feedback, introducing culturally-oriented expressions of greeting and addressing integrated purpose (affective and cognitive) in greeting practice.

The additional observed practices are as follows:

- The observer, as a native speaker, is asked by two teachers in the opening to interact with students.
- Homework feedback is presented in some openings by most teachers (6), either asking students about their feedback on the last HW or initiating HW feedback by teachers due to anticipated difficulty of the assigned last.
- Two teachers introduce Egyptian vernacular morning greeting expressions used in informal settings (صباح الفل ، إزيكم زي البمب)
- Most teachers (6) address integrated purpose during their greeting i.e. they are used to correct students' greeting responses regarding vocabulary, structure, or pronunciation (such as correcting the use of masculine versus feminine pronouns, using long vowels instead of short ones, or presenting word derivations by teachers).

4.2.1 Important remarks on pre-observation and class observation notes:

- The pre-observation notes refer to the lesson plans prepared by the teachers before teaching the class. The aim of using these notes in the study is to help in answering the third Research Question in the study that investigates the alignment between what teachers believe and what they actually did. Only six teachers provided their complete pre-observation notes (lesson plans) before being observed. The remaining teachers either sent incomplete ones or sent these notes after being observed which may affect the results negatively. Therefore, these lesson plans are not included in the analysis section. Comparing the lesson plan against the actual class behavior could have enriched the discussion chapter, yet this is to be viewed as one of the limitations of the study.
- Three teachers include in their lesson plans terms other than the term 'opening', used in this study, in their pre and post observation notes. For example, they used 'warm up', 'ice breaking' or 'introduction', of which the greeting is part.
- Homework (HW) in observation notes may sometimes refer to a different meaning from the one in the literature review of this study where students test their established knowledge about certain materials they have learned. This different meaning of HW is due to the nature of the program where classes have been observed. All observed teachers are teaching flipped classes where students are usually assigned certain preparation at home,

including new knowledge, to be discussed in the following session. Yet, students are also sometimes assigned HW by teachers to test the new/old knowledge.

- Two of the observed teachers have a special schedule where they are used to teach two consecutive sessions to the same group of students. While one teacher attributes her skipping one of the openings to this distinctive schedule, the other teacher views these two continuing classes as separate where an opening is applicable after the break.
- One of the teachers, in one of her observed openings, took more than the expected time for the first activity which is intended by the teacher to be practiced for the opening. In the interview, she provided an interesting justification by considering what she did as a 'hybrid' opening activity; in between an opening activity and a main activity.
- One of the teachers, in one of her observed openings, was late and all what she did for the opening was an 'apology'. In the interview, she stated that she does not consider that she skipped the opening on that session; she rather thinks that her 'apology' is an opening in itself for that session.

To sum up, the research in this study begins by collecting quantitative data to investigate teachers' beliefs towards class opening, their practices of this introductory part of the lesson, and the factors that may impact these practices. Collecting the qualitative data is proposed as well to fill the gap which quantitative data fails to address in order to reach a conclusion. Mohamed (2006) has discussed the principle of triangulation as a substantial tactic to validate some aspects of a qualitative study in order to fill the gap of subjective data collection procedures or researcher's bias in terms of data interpretation (p. 65). Thus, both types of data are intended to provide answers to the Research Questions of the current study.

Chapter Five

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study, reported in the previous chapter, reveal some beliefs and practices that study sample of TASOL share regarding the class opening. These beliefs and practices are apparent in the responses of a questionnaire provided by a large sample (63 teachers) and supported by the beliefs and practices revealed by observations and interviews for a small sample (10 teachers). To help guide the discussion of the study results, this chapter revisits the Research Questions that the study seeks to answer. Reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter Three of this study is provided when need be.

5.1 First Research Question:

What beliefs are held by TASOL regarding class opening?

The study includes qualitative and quantitative data about teachers' beliefs in terms of class opening; quantitative data is represented by the large sample responses through the questionnaire (statements 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 16, 17, 18 & 19 in Part I). On the other hand, qualitative data is represented by themes deduced from the interviews and open-ended questions, as well as observations of a smaller TASOL sample. Regarding the beliefs revealed by the questionnaire, the following Table shows statistics of the questions related to the beliefs towards the importance of class opening:

Table (5.1): Quantitative data on beliefs towards class opening (extracted from Part I of the questionnaire):

Part I: teachers' beliefs								
#	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	mean	St
1	The class opening is an important part in the lesson plan.	0	1 1.6%	1 1.6%	10 15.9%	51 81%	4.76	.560
6	Starting the class with an opening helps in paving for the following phase of the lesson	1 1.6%	0	3 4.8%	12 19.0%	47 74.6%	4.65	.722
7	The class opening has no impact on the learning process.	42 66.7%	17 27.0%	3 4.8%	0	1 1.6%	1.43	.734
11	Using a class opening, aside from housekeeping work, is useful for both the teachers and the students.	1 1.6%	2 3.2%	3 4.8%	14 22.2%	43 68.3%	4.52	.859

The mean interpretation key used for discussing the results of Part I is:

Low level of agreement = 1.00-2.50

Average level of agreement = 2.50-3.50

High level of agreement = 3.50-5.00

Table (5.1) reveals the high level of respondents' agreement (or disagreement in case of 7) on statements 1 (the class opening is an important part in the lesson plan), 6 (Starting the class with an opening helps in paving for the following phase of the lesson), 7 (the class opening has no impact on the learning process) & 11 (using a class opening, aside from housekeeping work, is useful for both the teachers and the students) indicating importance of class opening. This is reflected by those questions' high mean and low standard deviation which reflect teacher consensus on this issue.

The above is further supported by qualitative data where analysis of teacher interviews reveals that one of the important themes reported on by most teachers is the significance of class opening. These highlight that most interviewees believe that class opening has a positive effect on the remaining phases of the lesson. Following are some examples of teachers' quotations that reflect that positive effect:

- *Teacher 2:*

I: Does using a class opening affect the remaining phases of a lesson?

T: sometimes yes

I: How?

T: If I failed to attract their attention at the beginning, may be they are not attracted during the rest of the class, so they are kind of like distracted, not interested, lazy

- *Teacher 7:*

I: Does using a class opening affect the remaining phases of a lesson?

T: In most cases

I: How?

T: Sometimes when I succeed to do this, it works as an introduction to the lesson, when this happens it proves to be a very good tool to start or to open a session

- *Teacher 9:*

I: Does using a class opening affect the remaining phases of a lesson?

T: Usually

I: How?

T: It usually affects, I usually have an opening because it creates a relaxing atmosphere and sometimes a motivating atmosphere because I do not like to just start the class with ‘open your book and do so and so

In fact, all interviewed teachers agree on the engaging effect of class opening, except one teacher who thinks that it is the activity itself which engages the students and not the opening: “The type of the activity itself, in my own point of view, is the part which engages the students or not, not the opening of the classroom itself.”

Teachers’ belief in the significance of class opening is further highlighted in the quantitative data by the high level of agreement on statements indicating that most teachers take the time to plan their class opening and mostly avoid skipping it. This is reflected in statements 2, 3 & 5 in Part I below. The following Table shows the level of agreement on these statements:

Table (5.2): *Quantitative data on beliefs about planning/skipping opening (extracted Part I of the questionnaire):*

Part I: teachers’ beliefs								
#	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	mean	St
2	I plan a class opening for most of my classes.	1 1.6%	3 4.8%	8 12.7%	16 25.4%	35 55.6%	4.29	.974
3	My class openings are spur of the moment ideas.	8 12.7%	12 19.0%	21 33.3%	15 23.8	7 11.1%	3.02	1.184
5	I sometimes need to skip the intended class opening.	6 9.5%	15 23.8%	13 20.6%	26 41.3%	3 4.8%	3.08	1.112

Low level of agreement = 1.00-2.50, average level of agreement = 2.50-3.50, high level of agreement = 3.50-5.00

In Table (5.2), statement 2 (I plan a class opening for most of my classes) demonstrates a high level of agreement. This is further verified by the standard deviation (.974) which indicates low variation of responses. In statement 3 (my class openings are spur of the moment ideas); however, level of agreement (SA/A 44.9%) and standard deviation suggest a possible tendency towards spur of the moment openings. The apparent conflict between those statements could be

explained by results in qualitative data indicating that some teachers consider unplanned openings as an attempt at simulating normal human interaction in real life, as will be further discussed in the following section.

Generally speaking, qualitative data under the theme of planning and/or skipping class openings reflects a tendency towards the former. With the exception of two teachers who follow a spontaneous way of interacting with students to simulate the normal human interaction when people meet, most teachers indicate that they plan class openings. Simulation of human interaction here probably refers to exchange of greeting as a form of opening. Thus, like all normal human interactions, exchange of greeting in openings is not likely to be a planned act. Following are statements by one of those two teachers who practices a spontaneous opening:

-Teacher 1:

I: Do you usually plan your class opening?

T: No, I never,

I: Do you do it on spur of the moment?

T: Yes

I: Why?

T: Because I never thought about it. Just never thought about it, for example, if you are entering a meeting, if you are going to an interview, if you are going to any place, it is according to the place you are going to or according to the people you are going to meet, this affects how you introduce yourself to them. So it is not to be planned at all.

The general tendency towards planning the opening is further verified by qualitative data indicating that teachers do not consider having long teaching experience as a reason for avoiding to plan the class opening. Most interviewees agree that experienced teachers need to plan their opening, except one. This teacher claims that experienced teachers need not to plan as they can successfully face any sudden events in class due to their long exposure to the challenges of teaching context. Yet, another teacher commented “experienced teachers should plan their opening, but it does not happen all the time.” The following quotations reflect the above issue:

-Teacher 2:

I: Are experienced teachers in need to plan their class opening?

T: If they do not plan it they improvise the opening, it may work sometimes but not always, so they need to have a plan even in mind even if it is not very detailed one minute by minute, so experience may help to manage it smoothly but something has to be planned in mind

-Teacher 8:

I: Are experienced teachers in need to plan their class opening?

T: I think good teachers need to plan?

I: Why?

T: Maybe experienced teachers will be able to deal with variations or sudden things that come up easily, but good teachers should plan it

I: So experienced teachers in spite of their experience, they should plan it, they should be prepared to practice it although they have the ability to deal with variations or anything come up

T: Yes

-Teacher 7:

I: Are experienced teachers in need to plan their class opening?

T: The class opening no, but the class itself yes

I: Why?

T: After a long time of teaching I think you develop some sort of sensitivity to read the characters of your students

All of the above highlight teachers' belief that class opening is an important part of the lesson. This belief is not reduced by the moderate agreement to statement 5 in the same Table (I sometimes need to skip the intended class opening) as reflected by the statement's relatively moderate mean (3.08) as well as its high standard deviation (1.112) pointing out varied responses among the five scales. Moderate agreement with this statement (41%) results from the fact that a considerable percentage of teachers' responses on this question are centered on 'Neutral, (20%). This - in addition to the very low percentage of SA (4.8%) - reflects that while a moderate number of teachers would skip their opening if need arises, some tend to believe that class opening is a part of the lesson they would avoid skipping.

The above is further verified by qualitative data where there is a general tendency among teachers not to skip opening unless they are forced to. Thus, they may skip class opening or shorten it. This would be due to unforeseen events, which does not often occur. Below are examples of teachers' statements on that:

-Teacher 6:

I: Do you sometimes skip your class opening?

T: This happens only when the students come late or they have a lot of activities to perform during a limited time, in this case, I summarize, I do it very quickly but I do not skip

-Teacher 8:

I: Do you sometimes skip your class opening?

T: Yes

I: How frequent do you do this?

T: I try not to do it much but for instance if I am pressed for time then I skip it and just go to today's subject

The general picture created so far from analyzing quantitative and qualitative data indicates a general belief among teachers that class opening is important. Teachers' consensus on the importance of class opening constitutes research-based evidence of the vital role of this part of the lesson plan that matches literature about the topic. This would agree with Slater (2006) stand point, in his article titled 'The first three minutes of class', where he described the opening minutes in any class as precious moments that some teachers, unexpectedly, miss as their valuable chance to create an "effective learning environment" (p. 477). Lee (2011), in his dissertation on discourse analysis, has also revealed that the opening phase is important for teachers as well as students. In his study, Velandia (2008) has mentioned the role of opening (referred to as 'warm up') activities for fulfilling certain conditions by teachers. He pointed out that successful openings (i.e. those with clear instruction that motivate students to participate in the opening activities, and connect them solidly to the lesson) can save teacher time and effort as well as provide an interesting start for students (p. 20).

5.2 Second Research Question:

What purposes do openings serve and what are the factors influencing TASOL during the opening phase?

The answer to this question will start with a discussion of opening purposes to detect the most heavily relied on type/types of purposes. It will then move to highlighting teachers’ practices during class opening by the two samples of population in the study (the respondents of the questionnaire and the interviewees) and factors affecting them as detected in quantitative and qualitative data.

A. Type/Types of purposes most heavily relied on:

The study by McGrath, S. Davis and H. Mulphin (1992) titled ‘Lesson beginnings’ has referred to the various purposes teachers think they address on starting their classes. The authors have demonstrated three related contributions or purposes that an opening could fulfill: affective, cognitive and pragmatic purposes (p. 92). For the current study, the third purpose is renamed as ‘administrative/organizational’ to address a larger scale of class opening practice where pragmatic needs are part of (such as technology setting or distributing papers). Beside the importance of class opening as a class procedure, the study questionnaire also investigates teachers’ beliefs about the importance of various purposes addressed by the opening. The following Table shows the results of statements 16, 17, 18 & 19 of Part I which address this issue:

Table (5.3): Quantitative data on beliefs towards the importance of the opening purposes (extracted Part I of the questionnaire):

Part I: Teachers’ Beliefs								
#	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	mean	St
16	Addressing students’ affective needs (like reducing anxiety, establishing rapport, arousing positive emotions) is the most important purpose of class openings.	1 1.6%	4 6.3%	15 23.8%	20 31.7%	23 36.5%	3.95	1.007
17	Addressing students’ cognitive needs (i.e. needs that have to do with learning like recalling previous knowledge, setting lesson’s goals, previewing) is the most important purpose of class openings.	0	4 6.3%	8 12.7%	27 42.9%	24 38.1%	4.13	.871
18	Addressing class organizational/administrative needs (like gathering HW, checking attendance, distributing handouts, and announcements) is the most important purpose of class openings.	25 39.7%	18 28.6%	12 19.0%	5 7.9%	3 4.8%	2.10	1.160

19	All the above purposes, in the last three questions, are equally important.	16 25.4%	20 31.7%	10 15.9%	13 20.6%	4 6.3%	2.51	1.256
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Low level of agreement = 1.00-2.50, average level of agreement = 2.50-3.50, high level of agreement = 3.50-5.00

According to the figures (mean & standard deviation) in Table (5.3), teachers value the cognitive purpose over the affective one, while the administrative purpose receives least attention. Interest in cognitive openings is reflected by the high mean (4.13) and low standard of deviation in statement 17 (addressing students' cognitive needs is the most important purpose of class openings). Stress on affective purpose addressed by statement 16 (addressing students' affective needs is the most important purpose of class openings) on the other hand is less clear as reflected by its lower mean (3.95) and higher standard of deviation compared to statement 17. Though the responses of this statement incline more towards agreement (SA 36.5%, A 31.7%), the 'Neutral' response percentage is fairly high at (23.8%). This indicates that more teachers believe in using class opening to address cognitive purposes compared to those who attribute its usefulness to affective ones.

As for the administrative purpose in the above Table inspected by statement 18 (addressing class organizational/administrative needs is the most important purpose of class openings), results show the least level of agreement by teachers. This is reflected by low percentages of agreement to the statement, a low mean (2.10), and a high variation in responses echoed by the standard deviation (1.160). The above results are further verified by the low level of agreement in statement 19 (All the above purposes, in the last three questions, are equally important) as well as high variance among respondents (1.256) which reflect that teachers do not regard cognitive, affective, and administrative purposes as equally important.

Qualitative data presents a slightly different picture from the one presented by quantitative one about purposes of class openings. Unlike quantitative data (where each purpose is highlighted and discussed separately), teachers in qualitative data seem to suggest a new perspective that highlights combined cognitive/affective purpose for openings. This seems to put to question the detected primacy of cognitive purpose in quantitative data. The combined purpose for openings aligns with a considerable body of research in the field. Researchers who have emphasized an

integration of two or more purposes in the opening include Wittrock (1986), Kindsvatter, Wilen and Ishler (1988), Celce-Murcia (2001), Lassche (2005), Slater (2006), Ruiz and Ramírez (2008), Velandia (2008), Lee (2011), Akhtar (2014) and Celce-Murcia et al., (2014).

Teachers' affective/cognitive purpose of opening in qualitative data is reflected by the following statements:

- T 3: "Break the ice between the teacher and the students, try to know the students better and try to use the new vocab in their daily personal life and connect it to the main lesson in a way or to the daily life and the recent events"
- T 5: First of all it is like a starter or a warm up activity and then it is defining the objective of what is going to be done, and third try to link it with what was previously studied in the last previous class session"
- T 7: "Warm up and make an introduction to the new lesson, I think these are the two main purposes"
- T 8: "Warm up, helping students, according to theory, to be prepared for the coming activity, the main activity; getting their attention"

It is also worth noting here that qualitative data also reveals a focus by some teachers on affective purposes of openings as reflected by the following statements:

- T 1: "Social interaction in order to close the gap between the teacher and the students"
- T 6: "I think it is a bit of an icebreaker, a friendly communicative opener between the students and the teacher"
- T 9: "Either to break the ice, draw students' attention or create a rapport with students"
- T 10: "It is a kind of warm up, for the first three weeks usually it is to break the ice between the teacher and the students, but I think every day it is a kind of warm up and the students are sleepy or tired"

Unlike results of questionnaire, only one teacher indicates a purely cognitive purpose as the goal of class opening, as indicated by the following statement:

-T 4: “I think of class opening as a sort of warm up to the following activity and as a reminder of previous things, also I try to ask questions which purposefully try to elicit certain responses related to previous lesson.”

Although the above seems to suggest a clear difference between quantitative and qualitative results, a look at the practices/activities that teachers provided as examples of what they use in their opening (which will be discussed in the following section) reveals a different picture.

B. Practices corresponding to class opening purposes:

Practices used by teachers in their openings inspected by Part II of the questionnaire confirm teachers’ more cognitive-oriented practices in their class openings. A review of such practices indicates that teachers rely more heavily on cognitive practices, while affective practices are less frequently used and administrative are used least, as will be discussed later in this section. The following Table shows the related results revealed by the questionnaire (Part II) in arranged descending order:

Table (5.4): Quantitative data on the most frequently used practices by teachers (in percentages) to address the various purposes of their class openings (extracted from Part II in the questionnaire):

Cognitive purpose	%	Affective purpose	%	Administrative purpose	%
Link previous knowledge to new one	68.3	Greet students	92	Organize materials for the session	35.3
Brainstorm the new lesson	55.6	Chat with students	65.1	Taking attendance	27
Set lesson objectives	52.4	Share personal story/incident with students	39.7	Check classroom setting	25.4
Preview the new lesson	52.4	Use ‘fun’ activity	38.1	Discuss homework*	23.8
Link the new lesson to the real world	50.8	Work on fusing/blending in culturally different students with the rest of the class	22.2	Check on the needed technology tools	19.0
Review the previous lesson	28.6	Share with students a funny/humorous episode	20.6	Make announcements	17.5
		Address personal issues/worries of students	19.0	Use lesson opening to buy time to accommodate late comers	4.8

**‘Discuss homework’ refers to the related organizational issues like HW instructions or giving back or collecting assignments papers.*

Percentages in Table (5.4) reveal that over 50% of teachers frequently use five cognitive practices (link previous knowledge to new, brainstorm the new lesson, set lesson objectives, preview the new lesson, and link the new lesson to the real world) in the opening, while the same ratio of teachers frequently uses only two affective practices (greet students & chat with them). The Table's figures also show that less priority is given by teachers to the administrative practices of the opening, since the four highest percentages of these practices are below 50%. Thus, as mentioned earlier, results here tend to give primacy to cognitive practices which aligns with results of Part I of the questionnaire.

It is interesting to note however that some results stated in the above Table are in conflict with teachers' behaviors detected during class observations. For example in Table (5.4), three cognitive practices receive high attention by teachers as indicated by questionnaire: 'linking the new knowledge with the old one, which requires accessing previous knowledge, (68.3%), 'brainstorming the new topic' (55.6%) and 'previewing the new lesson' (52.4%). Class observations, however, point out that while 'accessing the previous knowledge of students' was a frequently observed cognitive practice by teachers, 'brainstorming the new topic' was much less observed.' Furthermore, 'Previewing the new lesson' was totally ignored in the observed openings.

Similarly, regarding affective practices, the questionnaire results as reflected by the figures in Table (5.4) suggest the following as the most frequently used practices: 'greeting students' (92%), 'using a 'fun' activity' (38.1%) and 'sharing humorous episode with students' (20.6%). However, observations demonstrate that 'greeting students' was the practice used most by teachers for openings, while 'using a 'fun' activity' was the least. One affective practice was totally disregarded by the observed teachers in the opening which is 'sharing humorous episode with students.'

In terms of the organizational/administrative practices in the opening, Table (5.4) points out that the following four practices are the most frequently used: 'organize materials for the session' (35.3%), 'taking attendance' (27%), 'checking classroom setting' (25.4%) and 'discuss homework' (23.8%). Although 'taking attendance' seemed to the researcher during observations

to be one of the most widely used practices, data from the interviews indicates that ‘taking attendance’ is a mere human interaction reflecting teachers’ interest in their students’ whereabouts, as reported by most of the interviewees. On the other hand, ‘making announcements’ and ‘accommodating late comers’ were equally the least considered by questionnaire respondents. These results agree to some extent with the results displayed by the observations. While ‘taking attendance’ was the most administrative practice followed by observed teachers, ‘checking classroom setting’ and ‘accommodating late comers’ were detected once only in most teachers’ observations. This lack of alignment between teachers’ practices as indicated by questionnaire provided to the bigger sample and observed behaviors of the small sample may be the result of the former being an international sample working in variant institutions and with variant backgrounds.

It is worth mentioning here that the overwhelming number of teachers, according to the above Table, agreeing to the fact that ‘greeting students’ is a practice teachers would frequently use (92%) does not necessarily indicate an outstanding interest in this affective practice or the purpose it represents. In fact, this could be spurred by the fact that greeting is an important form of social interaction in most cultures, making most teachers (even those who give primacy to cognitive practices) consider it as a practice they frequently use. Some research in the field has considered exchange of greetings as an affective opening practice. As an example of the mentioned research is the study titled ‘Lesson beginnings’ by McGrath, S. Davis and H. Mulphin (1992, p. 107) in which the authors considered greeting as an activity falls under affective purpose. Although greeting can reduce tension in the classroom and address the affective filter of students, greeting is presumably a spontaneous form of human interaction rather than a planned practice, especially in the Arab region of which Egypt is a part. Thus, it could be a good idea to re-consider dealing with it as an established form of opening practice, especially in cultures where exchange of greeting is a cultural-must.

Also worth mentioning is the marginalization indicated in questionnaire results of one of the affective practices that, in the present researcher’s opinion, effectively reduces learners’ affective filter, namely ‘addressing personal issues/worries of students’ which receives the least attention by teachers (19% in Table 5.4). The same is reflected in Part II A in the questionnaire (statement 10) which demonstrates that less than half of the teachers (42.9%) occasionally address

students' worries, 28.6% of teachers rarely consider them, and 9.5% never approach this affective practice. The interview responses did not depart much from those yielded by the questionnaire. Interviewees explained that they deal with students' worries (especially the academic ones) only when there is a specific need for doing so. Although these low figures do not necessarily indicate teachers' reduced concern with this issue, as they may address these worries at times different from the opening (e.g. before or after class or during the office hours), it would still be a good idea to do so in class opening through asserting expected ease of lesson, or asserting that teacher will create time for addressing learning difficulties or moments of cultural shock.

As for qualitative data, despite the claim mentioned by most teachers (namely following integrated purpose in the opening) in the previous section (types of purposes most heavily relied upon), the examples of activities teachers mentioned they use in the interviews, as demonstrations of their class practices, were mostly cognitive. Thus, this sheds doubt on the credibility of the previously mentioned claim where teachers give primacy to the cognitive purpose over the affective one (which concords with the questionnaire results). This is established by a quick review of practices stated by teachers, as represented in the following Table:

Table (5.5): Common activities of teachers following an integrated purpose in the opening (mainly cognitive and affective) as well as of teachers following one of these two purposes:

(integrated purpose)	(one purpose)
1- Asking students Qs [about their life] to be forced to use what they learnt	1- Discuss something booming like an accident that happened
2- Making interview outside class, search for something or read something then report to class	2- Saying something in a very cultural and colloquial way
3- Show students pictures to discuss them on their own	3- Share with students something personal
4- Assigning vocab for students to use freely	4- Quick review of previously learned vocab
5- Giving a 5-minutes vocab quiz	5- Asking students to produce sentences on photos or a caricature
6- Asking students personal open-ended questions	6- Asking students to read sentences
7- Reinforce a specific structure	7- Giving students a list of vocab to use
8- Quick mechanical drills	8- Speaking activity about weather
	9- Asking personal open-ended questions

<p>9- Asking open-ended questions on a recent event</p> <p>10- Brainstorming through reading a passage</p> <p>11- Assigning students a catchy reading about the lesson</p> <p>12- Discuss homework</p> <p>13- Discuss a hot topic like the US elections</p> <p>14- Start with something that students prepared at home</p> <p>15- Greet students (normal greeting discourse)</p> <p>16- Correct or edit the homework</p>	<p>10- Review a specific structure in a different context</p> <p>11- Ask one of the students to introduce something cultural to class</p>
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A quick review to the activities mentioned under integrated cognitive/affective purpose reveals that only some of them display integration. These are 1/6/9/11/13; in activities 1&6 teachers activate linguistic knowledge (cognitive) as part of a personal conversation (affective). As for 9/11/13, teachers attempt to entice students' interest by reading or talking about a topic that s/he assumes is appealing to them (affective) while activating students' linguistic knowledge (cognitive). The rest of mentioned activities are mainly cognitive (except #15 which is purely affective). Similarly, activities in the 'one purpose' list show a list of cognitive activities (except activities # 2 and 3 which are affective and # 1 and 9 which fall under integrated purpose; affective/cognitive).

To further substantiate the dominance of the cognitive purpose regarding opening practices, most responses of interviewees for the frequency of addressing students' worries in the opening unveiled an interesting point. Most teachers focus on 'academic' worries which would suggest that even affective interest is really related to academic (i.e. cognitive) performance. Further support of this result is provided by the observation checklist which reveals that the cognitive practices were generally favored by teachers for class opening, while the affective ones were less chosen. This is also especially interesting since the terms teachers used for 'class opening' like 'ice breaker' suggest a tendency towards affective purpose by focusing on students'

affective filter, while the activities teachers explained to fulfill the opening purposes reveal an interest in using cognitive practices.

C. Factors affecting choice of practice:

One of the important topics that is approached by the quantitative data as well as the qualitative analysis themes in this study is the role of the contextual factors (for example, students’ needs, proficiency level, skill taught, or class size) on teachers’ practices during class opening. Research supporting the impact of the contextual factors on teachers’ practices, Duffy (1982), Duffy and Ball (1986) and Lampert (1985), has referred to the challenges of teaching context that hinder the full adherence of teachers’ practices to their beliefs (cited in Johnson, 1992, p. 84). Furthermore, Borg (2003), in his review of language teacher cognition research, has concluded that studying the contextual factors (such as ‘institutional, social and instructional’) which affect the teaching environment can help in understanding how teachers’ beliefs can inform their classroom practices (p. 106).

The influence of contextual factors is mainly scrutinized by Part III of the questionnaire as well as the interviews representing part of qualitative data. The following Table which is presented in the Study Results Chapter presents the degree of influence of the stated factors on teachers’ opening practices:

Table (4.3): The frequency of contextual factors influence on teachers’ practices of the opening (this Table was copied from chapter four with its same number and title):

Part III: Dominant factors on the selection of class opening practice					
#	Statements	F	O	R	N
1	Student proficiency level	40 63.5%	17 27.0%	2 3.2%	4 6.3%
2	Students' learning style	26 41.3%	24 38.1%	7 11.1%	6 9.5%
3	Student preference	25 39.7%	25 39.7%	11 17.5%	2 3.2%
4	Lesson outcomes	37 58.7%	19 30.2%	5 7.9%	2 3.2%
5	Difficulty of lesson	28	24	6	5

		44.4%	38.1%	9.5%	7.9%
6	Skill addressed by lesson	39 61.9%	19 30.2%	2 3.2%	3 4.8%
7	Time constraint	35 55.6%	23 36.5%	3 4.8%	2 3.2%
8	My institution policy	6 9.5%	14 22.2%	18 28.6%	25 39.7%
9	My teaching experience	48 76.2%	14 22.2%	1 1.6%	0
10	My pre-teaching training	18 28.6%	24 38.1%	12 19.0%	9 14.3%

Note: F = frequently, O = occasionally, R = rarely, N = never

Results of Table (4.3) illustrate that the most frequent three factors that impact teachers' practices of class opening are teaching experience (76.2%), students' level (63.5%) and skill taught (61.9). In an attempt to compare the same factors shown by qualitative data as revealed by the interviews and open-ended questions, it appears that interviewees highlight the importance of five contextual factors: class size, students' level, students' preferences, cultural differences, and skill taught. However, the most influential factors that affect opening practice are considered to be cultural differences and students' level, as reported by them. This partially conforms to the questionnaire results where the students' level is one of the most impacting contextual factors for respondents, as well as teaching experience and skill taught. On the other hand, class observations make clear that time constraints (caused by exam, or teacher tardiness) and schedule necessities (teaching two consecutive sessions) are among the most important contextual factors that affect class opening.

One of the contextual factors highlighted in this study is the institution impact on teachers' practicing of class opening. Table (4.3) above shows that a sizable percentage of teachers are never influenced by their institution policy during their opening practice (39.7%). An additional emphasis on this result is displayed by the responses of statements 14 and 15 in Part I in the questionnaire. The mean (3.30) of statement 14 (My institution encourages the use of class openings) indicates average agreement, while the standard deviation records (1.186) reflecting lack of consensus among teachers on this issue. Also, statement 15 (I received training in my institution on using class openings) reveals a low level of agreement (mean 2.75) with a high standard

deviation (1.545). Responses on the institution's support through training on class opening is greatly variant (SA 17.5%, A 20.6%, N 15.9%, D 11.1%, SD 34.9%). This above suggests that most teachers are not likely to be influenced by institutional instruction in terms of opening practice and/or not receiving needed support (in form of training) to help them use the opening actively.

Qualitative data on this issue apparently concords with those of the questionnaire but for different reasons. Although all interviewees refer to their institution's support of using class openings, they emphasize the freedom they are granted to practice this part of the lesson. Accordingly, this eliminates any pressure from the institution where they are teaching regarding their opening practice. Worth mentioning is that such freedom of practice affirmed by the interviewees contradicts with what has been revealed by the studies of Cimbricz (2002) and Zanzali (2003). These studies concluded that it seems that L2 teachers, in giving their instruction in their classrooms which reflect their own pedagogy, are obliged to take into consideration the institutional standards, rubrics and restrictions (cited in Eslami & Allami, 2012, p. 1690). It is therefore possible to conclude here that results of this study reduce importance of institution as a factor affecting opening practice.

To sum up on the results of this question, data shows that the cognitive purpose and practices of class opening is mostly favored by teachers, while the affective one is less considered and the administrative one is the least deliberated. It also reveals a consensus on students' level as the contextual factor that mostly affect teachers' selection of the opening.

5.3 Third Research Question:

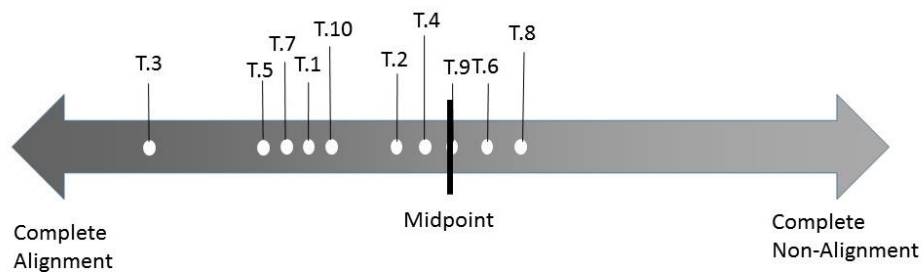
How do the beliefs of TASOL correspond to their practices in terms of class opening?

In order to answer this question, first each teacher's practice throughout three observed class openings was analyzed to investigate the correspondence between each teacher's beliefs (as proclaimed in interviews with researcher) and her practice (all observed teachers are coincidentally female). Then, the general picture of such correspondence for all teachers was examined to reach a conclusion. This investigation concluded that there is some level of congruence between

teachers' beliefs and classroom behaviors during the class opening; however, signs of non-congruence between the two were also detected.

The alignment between teacher beliefs and practices in the study looks more like a continuum where the top of the continuum reflects a high level of alignment between beliefs and practices and the bottom of the continuum shows the opposite. Representing results here as a continuum helps the researcher tackle the difficulty of assigning a clear cut level of alignment or non-alignment for each teacher; such a task is both difficult and unnecessary for fulfilling the current research goal which is to highlight presence/absence of alignment rather than its extent. The results reveal that no one of the teachers showed complete non-alignment between belief and practice. One teacher is placed towards the top of the continuum (T. 3), which represents complete alignment, four teachers are in the mid distance between the top and the middle of the continuum (T.5, T.7, T.1 & T.10), and five teachers are placed around the mid-point (T.2, T.4, T.9, T.6 & T.8), as shown by the following diagram:

Diagram (5.1): Alignment/non alignment between teachers' beliefs and practices continuum:



The following section presents an analytical picture of alignment/non alignment between each teacher's beliefs of class opening (as represented by statements taken from teachers' comments during interviews) and the practices that are related to the mentioned beliefs (noted during researcher's observation of teachers' class openings):

Teacher (3): Most of the observed practices of this teacher corresponded to her stated beliefs towards class opening. Following are examples of the teacher comments reflecting her beliefs and the related practices, as shown by observations notes:

Table (5.6): Beliefs and practices of teacher (3):

Quotations reflecting teacher beliefs	Observed Practices that are related to the mentioned belief
<p>1-I: What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?</p> <p>T: Break the ice between the teacher and the students, try to know the students better and try to use the new vocab in their daily personal life and connect it to the main lesson in a way or to the daily life and the recent events. (integrated cognitive/affective purpose).</p>	<p>In all the observed openings, T. started with a chat with students. In the first opening, T. was correcting students' chat output. In the chat of second and third openings, students were encouraged to use previously learnt vocab of last lessons (cognitive/affective practices).</p>
<p>2-I: What is/are the task/activity(s) you practice most in your class opening that you believe fulfills your students' needs?</p> <p>T: As I said it is the questions, asking them personal questions using the vocab or relating it to the recent events". "If students get used to use what they are learning in class in their daily life, that will be great, that would make sense, mainly the class would be like the continuation of their day to day life.</p>	<p>T. asked students open ended-questions in all the observed openings (e.g. "what did you do yesterday?", "Did anyone have a major change in his life?", "When do we usually feel guilty?." Students used learned vocab to express their ideas.</p>
<p>3-I: How frequently do you deal with students' worries and issues in the opening?</p> <p>-T: A lot. If there is a student absent, I usually start by addressing him "Hey, how are you? Oh you were sick" to point out that it is important for me that he missed the class.</p>	<p>One of the students was unusually quiet. T. asked this student 'what is wrong?' in an attempt to reduce the affective filter of this student who seemed to be under pressure.</p>
<p>4-I: How frequently do you check administrative tasks in your opening?</p> <p>T: After I finish my introductory questions, I try to do that but it depends, is everyone there, if there are any latecomers. I usually postpone the important announcement or the admin whenever I see that everyone in class in order not to repeat it and probably between two activities.</p>	<p>Observation showed that none of administrative/organizational practices was approached during opening.</p>

Table (5.7) shows that the belief of addressing an integrated purpose (cognitive and affective) in the opening corresponds to the tasks/activities this teacher mentioned she practices in

her interview. It is clear from the teacher’s quotations that she considers it important to break the ice with students (affective) as well as enhance their knowledge of certain language-related facts (cognitive). This is what teacher actually did. Regarding her activities, the teacher stated that if students know how to use what they learn in class outside it, that would be very useful for them (Quot. 1 & 2) which explains her reliance on questions that would encourage using previously learned material. Also, teacher’s observed practice showed addressing students’ worries when needed, as stated in the interview. One of the observed openings revealed this in response to an immediate need of a student (one of the students showed signs of worry/anxiety by being unusually quiet) (Quot.3). The teacher stated her preference for delaying administrative practices as not to be included in the opening. It was clear that she did not approach any of these practices in her observed openings (Quot.4).

Teacher (5): There is a noticeable degree of alignment between the stated beliefs of this teacher and her observed practices in the context of class opening. Following are examples of the teacher’s comments reflecting her beliefs and related practices, as indicated by observation notes:

Table (5.7): Beliefs and practices of teacher (5):

Quotations reflecting teacher beliefs	Observed practices that are related to the mentioned belief
<p>I-I: What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?</p> <p>T: First of all it is like a starter or a warm up activity and then it is defining the objective of what is going to be done, and third try to link it with what was previously studied in the last previous class session (mainly cognitive purpose)</p> <p>I: Can you give examples of the task/activity(s) that fulfill this purpose(s)?</p> <p>T: For example, the previous session dealt with vocab activities, students were introduced with a list of vocab with meaning in English and they were asked to do a number of activities related to studying, memorizing, reading, pronunciation and writing down these words. In today’s session, the opening is linking what</p>	<p>Activities presented throughout the three openings of this teacher were eliciting vocab, checking homework, reviewing and setting lesson objectives. However, in the third opening, teacher had a social chat with one of the students. (mainly cognitive practices)</p>

<p>was in that previous session and today where a quick review of these words was conducted through the PowerPoint presentation and then students were asked to read the text in which these words are used and try to understand and remember the text based on their knowledge of the vocab.</p>	
<p>2-I: Does using a class opening affect the remaining phases of a lesson? T: Should. I: How? T: As I said, I see it as a linkage between what happened the last time and what is going to happen today, so it is not like something completely different from or separate from what was done before.</p>	<p>The mentioned role of the opening is supported by the practices of all the observed openings. Activities that followed greeting the students mostly addressed cognitive purpose as shown in the adjacent statement reflecting teacher belief.</p>
<p>3-I: How frequently do you check admin. tasks like technology, late comers, absence or distributing papers? T: I never take attendance, I may ask about the absent ones if they had not approached me by email, for example, or had not told me about their absence before, I ask about them, I ask about someone, like today, who was absent yesterday and I told him today “are you better today?” I: But you never take attendance for your record? T: I take it in my mind but I never show to them that I take it.</p>	<p>T asked about absentees only once throughout the observed openings. T seemed to check students’ whereabouts rather than taking attendance.</p>
<p>4-I: How frequently do you deal with students’ worries in the opening? T: I frequently ask them especially at the beginning of the semester for beginners ‘how do you feel with the Arabic language?’ and they start pouring worries ‘it is very difficult, the pronunciation is very hard, I found it hard to distinguish between short and long vowel’. This is a way of addressing their worries I: Especially at the beginning of the semester?</p>	<p>Observed openings of the teacher were void of any interaction on the mentioned academic worries.</p>

T: Yes, and then as we proceed, so I ask them later “how do you feel now?” I always comfort them, I always tell them you are not learning the sounds in vacuum, you will learn them in the words you study, you will know that a certain word spelled that way not the other way and you will learn it, and it comes by studying more materials and they realize that and they start to be relaxed with the language.

Table (5.8) shows that the first two quotations are related to teacher beliefs of purpose and importance of the opening. Both purpose and stated activities reveal primacy of cognitive aspects in teacher beliefs and practices. However, regarding the affective purpose, teacher used one affective-oriented practice, other than the normal social form of greeting, which is having a chat with one of the students in one of the three observed openings. (Quot. 1 & 2). As for administrative practices in opening, she asked about one of the absentees once which supports her reduced concern with openly taking attendance (Quot.3). The teacher also explained that she constantly addresses academic worries by assuring students that they can overcome language difficulties in time, but this could not be traced in the observed practices (Quot.4).

Teacher (7): In this teacher’s case, we notice a high degree of alignment between the stated beliefs and observed practices with regard to class opening. As shown by the observation notes, examples of the teacher’s statements reflecting her beliefs and related practices are given below:

Table (5.8): Beliefs and practices of teacher (7):

Quotations reflecting teacher beliefs	Observed practices that are related to the mentioned belief
<p>I-I: What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?</p> <p>T: Warm up and make an introduction to the new lesson, I think these are the two main purposes (integrated cognitive/affective purpose)</p> <p>I: Give examples of the task/activity(s) that fulfill this purpose(s)?</p>	<p>In two of the observed openings, social chat was exchanged with students after greeting (the third opening was skipped). T also introduced the lesson objectives in the two openings (cognitive/affective practices)</p>

<p>T: Usually I do it through some sort of interaction between the students and myself, so it is speaking. I never give activities unless I have something very booming like sometimes caricature, picture, an accident that happened.</p>	
<p>2-I: How frequent do you check admin. tasks like checking technology, accommodating late comers, taking absence or distributing papers in the opening? T: You can tell, you watched me and you can tell. Sometimes I do it while I am talking to them, sometimes when I arrive the class earlier than them and this happens many times. Usually I check technology before they come.</p>	<p>-T wrote something very quickly during students' talk (checking attendance, as clarified by her). It seemed that technology was checked by teacher before class because it is all set when she starts.</p>
<p>3-I: Do you sometimes skip your class opening? T: Yes. I: How frequent do you do this? T: Rarely. I: When? T: Sometimes, when I am in a very bad mood I do not feel like to do anything, just go directly to the lesson.</p>	<p>Teacher skipped opening only once in the three observed sessions when she was late (i.e. skipping was due to time constraint).</p>
<p>4-I: Do you think that in this particular session you skipped the class opening? T: I cannot remember actually or maybe I considered what happened, my apology, was the class opening maybe, I think this is most probably what happened.</p>	<p>T skipped the opening.</p>

Table (5.10) shows that this teacher believes in an integrated purpose: cognitive (introducing the new lesson) and affective (warm up, which could be addressing either cognitive or affective). The related observed opening practices agree with her belief. In the two observed openings (as the third was skipped), teacher had a chat involving the observer in the first opening and had a chat over the weekend in the second opening. These two chats were followed by stating today's objectives (Quot.1). In one of the openings, this teacher used her pen to take attendance very quickly while students were talking among themselves. She came earlier than her two

openings and fixed the technology before class rather than at the beginning of the class. This supports her belief about administrative practices (Quot.2).

The teacher thinks that one reason that can cause her to skip her opening is when experiencing a bad mood. This bad mood could have been reflected in one session due to her unintentional tardiness that led to skipping the opening (Quot.3). Although she stated that she did not skip the opening on that session (Quot.4), the extreme brevity of opening makes it difficult to believe that this opening fulfills the purposes that the teacher mentioned opening should fulfill; hence, it is more realistic to assume that the opening was skipped due to time constraints.

Teacher (1): Number of observed practices of this teacher indicated a correspondence with her stated beliefs towards class opening, while few did not. Following are examples of the teacher comments reflecting her beliefs and related practices, as shown by observations notes:

Table (5.9): Beliefs and practices of teacher (1):

Quotations reflecting teacher beliefs	Observed practices that are related to the mentioned belief
<p>I-I: what about the organizational tasks in the opening, what do you do? T: Actually that depends on the classroom itself, I will do on the spot. -I: I noticed that you used to take attendance once you enter, why? T: I do not do that, this is what you understood, I am not keen about the attendance, I am keen about the people themselves. I ask about them because I want to check on them, it is about making them feel that they are important to me and I ask about them by name. I: Do you usually take attendance? T: In my mind.</p>	<p>T used to check attendance and technology after greeting. T asked about absentees in all her observed sessions after greeting. However, she seemed to check students' whereabouts rather than taking attendance. Technology requirements in one of her classes made her change the students' seating arrangement on the spot.</p>

<p>2-I: Does using a class opening affect the remaining phases of a lesson?</p> <p>T: Well, I do not think it will affect the remaining phases of the classroom because there are other interactions not only the opening.....However, the type of the activity itself, in my own point of view, is the part which engages the students or not, not the opening of the classroom itself.</p>	<p>Observed practices of the teacher did not reflect any affective practices addressing students' engagement</p>
<p>3-I: What do you think is the main purpose(s) of class opening?</p> <p>T: Social interaction in order to close the gap between the teacher and the students and make them feel that they are in a friendly environment where capable of interacting with the teacher in a very open way, for example, I believe that when you smile to a student, when you show care to the student, this might affect their interaction in the classroom itself. It is very important for me to create a friendly environment where students can accept anything from me.(affective)</p> <p>I: What about the cognitive needs, do you think you need sometimes to review, to preview or relate the new vocab to the real world?</p> <p>T: The opening in my own point of view is just when you open the door and say hello to the students and try to have a social interaction with them because actually, in my own point of view again and I am not generalizing, the relationship between human beings is very important in order to make them accept what you are going to say.</p> <p>I: So you start with the affective purpose mainly, what about the cognitive?</p> <p>T: of course the cognitive should come after that because it is the purpose of the lesson at the end of the day because for example, if I am going to teach them vocab or grammar or whatever.</p>	<p>T, in the three observed sessions, had almost the same pattern of opening practice: greeting, asking about absentees, checking technology ended by cognitive practice (eliciting vocab or setting the objective of the lesson) (administrative/cognitive practices)</p>

Table (5.12) shows that teacher stated that she does not care much for taking attendance during opening, she rather makes a mental note of absent students. Her observed openings support her related belief (Quot. 1). Teacher considers students’ engagement, as a practice, to be addressed through lesson activities rather than the opening ones (Quot. 2). The practices used in class opening were in line with this statement since none targeted solely students’ engagement.

Teacher stated she believes that class opening is a “social interaction” that bridges the gap between teachers and students in order to provide a relaxing classroom atmosphere. Yet, her practice in the three observed openings does not reveal concern for the above (closing the gap between teacher and student as well as providing a relaxing classroom atmosphere) suggesting a possible conflict between belief and practice. However, she also indicated she believes in the cognitive role of the opening. This is in fact reflected by her opening practices. In general the openings reveal a tendency to use administrative/cognitive practices (greeting as a normal social form was usually followed by certain administrative tasks like checking attendance and technology then cognitive practices like eliciting vocab or setting lesson objectives) (Quote.3) rather than cognitive/affective as she indicates.

Teacher (10): Number of observed practices of this teacher aligned with her stated beliefs towards class opening, while few did not. Examples of the teachers’ statements reflecting her beliefs and related practices (as shown by observations notes) are as follows:

Table (5.10): Beliefs and practices of teacher (10):

Quotations reflecting teacher beliefs	Observed practices that are related to the mentioned belief
<p>1-I: Can you give me examples of the task/activity(s) that fulfill the opening purpose(s)?</p> <p>T: On Thursday I ask them what they are going to do in the weekend if they already know the future.</p>	<p>T asked students about what they will do during the weekend</p>
<p>2-I: in your second observed session, do you think you skipped your opening then?</p> <p>T: Yes because of the midterm.</p>	<p>Opening was skipped due to midterm.</p>

<p>3-I: What is/are the task/activity(s) you most practice in your class opening that you believe fulfill your students' needs? Why?</p> <p>T: I think general talking, a chat I think this is important and many students wrote in the evaluation that they like that part, the 10 minutes when they talk about what they did and they share it with others. It is authentic and communicative.</p>	<p>T practiced a general chat in one of the openings.</p>
<p>4-I: What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?</p> <p>T: It is a kind of warm up, for the first three weeks usually it is to break the ice between the teacher and the students, but I think every day it is a kind of warm up and the students are sleepy or tired, especially at the end of the semester, so I think it is important to have an opening that motivates and encourages the students to start the class (affective purpose)</p>	<p>In the two of the observed openings (third opening was skipped), teacher used cognitive practices (setting lesson objectives or discussing homework). Yet, one of these two openings included a chat with students on the coming weekend. (cognitive practices were intended as well).</p>

Table (5.11) shows some alignment between what teacher says her practices are (ask students what they will do during weekend) and what she actually does (Quot.1). The teacher states – as indicated by interview data - that she sometimes skips her opening, stating that having a midterm can be one of the reasons for doing this. She actually skipped an opening for the same reason (Quot.2). Teacher shows an interest in student-teacher chats since the students, in their evaluations, praise the first minutes of chatting with the teacher in class. She actually conducted a chat once in her observed openings (Quot.3).

Although she focuses on the affective dimension in clarifying the main purpose of the opening (motivating and encouraging students to start the class), the activities she actually performed in her openings show a tendency towards cognitive practices (after the normal social form of greeting, setting objectives and HW discussion were implemented). Yet, in one opening, teacher allowed a chance for chatting about weekend activities (Quot.4). This; however, was a cognitive/affective practice since teacher points out practicing future tense.

Teacher (2): This teacher's stated beliefs and observed practices regarding class opening showed a mix of alignment and non-alignment. The following are examples of her comments mirroring her beliefs and related practices, as shown by observations notes:

Table (5.11): Beliefs and practices of teacher (2):

Quotations reflecting teacher beliefs	Observed practices that are related to the mentioned belief
<p>1-I: Does using a class opening affect the remaining phases of a lesson?</p> <p>T: sometimes yes.</p> <p>I: How?</p> <p>T: If I failed to attract their attention at the beginning, may be they are not attracted during the rest of the class, so they are kind of like distracted, not interested, lazy.</p>	<p>In one of the observed openings, T presented a culturally oriented expression that is related to greeting (صباح الفل) and started a discussion with students about it in an attempt to engage students.</p>
<p>2-I: Ok, do you do any organizational or admin. work like distribute papers, take attendance, check technology, something like that?</p> <p>T: Yes, of course, I mean not like taking attendance but may be group the students on a way that I think it would make them feel comfortable working together.</p>	<p>T asked once about absentees. T seemed to check students' whereabouts rather than taking attendance. In one of the opening she selected students for a pair work.</p>
<p>3-I: What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?</p> <p>T: Get students interested in what they are going to learn, refresh what they know in their mind, and create a link between what they have already learnt and what they will learn or practice (affective/cognitive purpose)</p>	<p>T in two of her observed openings, T used to do a cognitive practice (setting lesson objective, eliciting vocab or giving quick quiz) after greeting. However, she discussed a culturally oriented expression in the third opening after greeting and before a cognitive practice (mostly cognitive practices)</p>
<p>4-I: What is/are the task/activity(s) you most practice in your class opening that you believe fulfill your students' needs?</p> <p>T: speaking, conversation asking questions.</p> <p>I: Why do you think that this is the most favored by them?</p> <p>T: it makes them alert to a great extent.</p>	<p>Observed practice revealed asking students questions but did not reveal any speaking activities</p>

Table (5.9) shows that teacher starts off by saying that class opening ‘sometimes’ has an impact on the remaining phases of the lesson if it succeeds in attracting students’ attention at the beginning of the class. In line with this belief is her attempt, in one of her observed openings, to attract students’ attention by presenting a new and culturally-oriented form of greeting, usually used by youth in Egypt and explaining its meaning and usage (Quot.1). Starting lesson by this cultural hint did arouse students’ interest. For administrative tasks, the teacher did not consider taking attendance as a practice she would use her opening for; instead, she mentions matching students in pair/group work. Her opening showed agreement with her related belief (Quot. 2).

The teacher believes in an integrated purpose (affective and cognitive) for the opening. Teacher also reports that the activity she believes most fulfills her students’ needs is the speaking activity and conversation through asking questions to spark alertness. Despite the above, the observed practices of two of her openings did not support this belief where she used to greet students (a normal social form) then prepare them for further learning (cognitive) (Quot.3). Also, conversation between teacher and students was observed in only two openings, but no speaking activities assigned by the teacher to the students were observed (Quot.4).

Teacher (4): Some of the observed practices of this teacher presented a correspondence to her stated beliefs towards class opening, while others showed non-alignment. Following are examples of the teacher’s comments reflecting her beliefs and related practices, as shown by observations notes:

Table (5.12): Beliefs and practices of teacher (4):

Quotations reflecting teacher beliefs	Observed practices that are related to the mentioned belief
<p>I-I: How frequently do you deal with students’ worries and issues?</p> <p>T: Actually if it arises, if the first thing is saying ‘hello students, how are you? And a student says “Teacher, the homework was very hard”, that is a common thing they say like today, so I</p>	<p>In one of the observed openings, T distributed the homework papers and discussed a common issue on its difficulty.</p>

<p>address it before at the very beginning, I cannot begin the class without clearing the air and the worries, so I definitely address it.</p>	
<p>2-I: Do contextual factors of each class like size, level of students, students' needs, cultural differences, learning outcomes, institutional policy, the skill taught affect your selection of the lesson opening activity?</p> <p>T: The class size is a big factor, as I mentioned earlier, when I say just chatting or casual talk, when it is a big class, I cannot let everybody say it, it will just take forever.</p>	<p>Due to the small number of students, T had the time to let every student ask more than one question to the observer in one of the openings using the WH words students learnt last lesson.</p>
<p>3-I: What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?</p> <p>T: I think of class opening as a sort of warm up to the following activity and as a reminder of previous things, also I try to ask questions which purposefully try to elicit certain responses related to previous lesson</p> <p>I: Then you are focusing on reminding them with what has been learnt before or refresh old vocab</p> <p>T: Yes but very indirectly, for example, we have been working on verb conjugation so on Sunday I asked them 'how was your weekend, any news' and then they answered 'I did, I traveled, I visited..' so I say 'Oh, he traveled, did you travel, did you visit'.</p> <p>It will seem to them that this is just a nice social warm up where as in fact, and it is, additionally I am pushing some of these specific learning points that has been previously learnt (integrated affective/cognitive purpose)</p>	<p>In one of the observed openings, T had a chat with students on what they eat and drink. In the two other openings, after greeting T stated lesson objectives in one and carried out a speaking activity in the other. Students were encouraged to use previously learned structures while asking the observer personal questions (mostly cognitive practices)</p>
<p>4-I: In your second session, why did you start directly with the main major activity which was the dictation?</p> <p>T: This was one of the instances where I absolutely skipped the opening for two reasons; one reason is the continuity and the fluidity of the two consecutive sessions I mentioned before, and the second was an administrative logistic thing related to</p>	<p>T used to teach two consecutive sessions being two separate classes, as reported by her. In one of her sessions, T started the consecutive second session with a short chat with students on the food and drinks they were having in class (she used to allow beverages during class and not only during break).</p>

assessment and the director had walked in and took some time of the session.	
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Table (5.13) displays an example of a comment showing that this teacher believes in addressing students’ worries (academic ones) when needed and this was fulfilled in one of her sessions (Quot.1). Class size is an important contextual factor for this teacher, as illustrated in her interview. Teacher’s choice to have students ask observer questions during opening is the embodiment of teacher belief in the above mentioned since her small class size led her to choose an interesting but time consuming opening activity (Quot.2).

The teacher statements suggest that she believes in an integrated purpose for the opening (cognitive/affective) but her practices were not completely in line with this belief. She only had a chat with students in one opening while an emphasis on cognitive practices was observed in the other two openings (Quot.3). Teacher also reported that she never skips her opening except when she is teaching the same students two consecutive classes, as per the schedule (this leads to eliminating the second opening), yet in one of these second consecutive sessions, teacher conducted a chat with students at the beginning of the class which seemed to serve as an opening (Quot.4).

Teacher (9): The same trend of alignment versus non-alignment between the observed practices and stated beliefs of this teacher was noted, as shown by the following comments illustrated by the observation notes:

Table (5.13): Beliefs and practices of teacher (9):

Quotations reflecting teacher beliefs	Observed practices that are related to the mentioned belief
<p>1-I: What is/are the task/activity(s) you most practice in your class opening that you believe fulfill your students’ needs?</p> <p>T: Speaking activity and I figured out that this is what pleases students and I want them to enjoy what they are learning. Since it is a beginning of the session so let’s focus on speaking like if our lesson is about weather, I let them speak about weather.</p>	<p>T had social chat with students in two of her openings. One of these chats was on weather where learnt vocab was used.</p>

<p>2-I: What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?</p> <p>T: Either to break the ice, draw students' attention or create a rapport with students (affective purpose).</p> <p>-I: Can you give examples of the task/activity(s) that fulfill this purpose(s)?</p> <p>T: A page title or a picture and students guess what we will discuss, it a challenging repetitive opening activity for a new lesson. If it is not a new lesson then my opening is a chit chat only for couple of minutes or commenting on a hot topic, if there is like the American elections.</p>	<p>T used some cognitive activities in all her openings (reviewing vocab/structure, discussing homework, setting lesson outcomes or eliciting a picture). These practices were used after chatting in two of her observed openings. Chatting was also interrupted by correcting students' language in two of the openings (integrated cognitive/affective practices)</p>
<p>3-I: Do contextual factors of each class like size, level of students, students' needs, cultural differences, learning outcomes, institutional policy, skill taught affect your selection of the lesson opening activity?</p> <p>T: Yes and the most important one is the cultural differences because I can use this difference to lead a discussion in class making students exchange information about their different cultures. I always hope for this factor in class.</p>	<p>Observed openings did not include using cultural differences to pave the way for in class discussions.</p>

Table (5.14) shows that as this teacher said, she mostly uses speaking activities in her openings conducted through pleasant small talk that is related to the learning point (for example chat on weather if the teaching theme is weather) (Quot.1). Such pleasant talk on weather reflects an integrated (cognitive/affective) purpose in the opening. However, the teacher emphasizes a purely affective role for opening stating that its purpose is breaking ice, building rapport with students, and capturing their attention. This purely affective purpose also fails to align with some of the opening practices she mentioned she uses since those target cognitive beside the affective needs of students (Quote.2). This is also clear in teacher's observed practices where she uses conversations to fulfill cognitive purposes as well. Teacher indicates giving priority to cultural differences as an important factor that affects her opening selection since she uses these to start

talking with students about their culture; however, this was not apparent in the observed openings (Quot.3).

Worth mentioning is that when this teacher was asked why she addressed in two of her openings an integrated purpose (chatting and providing feedback or correcting language during chatting), she answered “this is the way I learnt language” which highlights another factor that impacts teacher choice of opening practice not discussed by this study, but still worth shedding light on, namely, teachers’ own experience as learners.

Teacher (6): The observed practices of this teacher reveal a mixture of alignment and non-alignment between belief and practice. Following are examples of the teacher quotations reflecting her beliefs and the practices that are related to the mentioned beliefs, as shown by observations notes:

Table (5.14): Beliefs and practices of teacher (6):

Quotations reflecting teacher beliefs	Observed practices that are related to the mentioned belief
<p>1-I: What is/are the task/activity(s) you most practice in your class opening that you believe fulfill your students’ needs?</p> <p>T: I usually resort to correct or to edit their previous homework, this is what I usually do after greeting them, after the warm up or the icebreaker I usually tell them ‘Ok, we have covered this item or this topic last class and at the end of the class I gave you a certain assignment, then now I require you or I ask you just to show me your homework and let’s edit it or correct it (integrated affective/cognitive purpose).</p>	<p>In two of her openings, this teacher corrected last assignments after greeting the students. In the third session, she asked students if they have any problem with last homework, but no one showed a problem (cognitive practices).</p>
<p>2-I: What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?</p> <p>T: I think it is a bit of an icebreaker, a friendly communicative opener between the students and the teacher</p> <p>-I: Can you give me examples of the task/activity(s) that fulfill this purpose(s)?</p>	<p>T used to carry out administrative and cognitive practices after the normal social greeting in all her observed openings.</p>

<p>T: Only you greet the students when you tell them ‘good morning’ ‘Salaam Alaikom’, even you can start with colloquial sentences although I am teaching them Fusha ‘how are you?’ ‘Are you Ok?’, these are good openers, I think, or suitable openers</p> <p>I: Why do you think you choose asking questions in the opening?</p> <p>T: No, I am not asking questions, I just say ‘good morning’ and sometimes I resort, like in our normal speech, to using the colloquial common question when people meet ‘how are you?’, I use it either in colloquial or in Fusha</p>	
<p>3-I: What about accommodating late comers as an administrative practice?</p> <p>T: If somebody is late, I usually disregard this as if he is not here, he or she just sits as if nothing is happening because I do not want to waste the class time.</p>	<p>In one of the observed openings, T accommodated a late comer while she was correcting individual students’ homework. She told the student what she was doing (correcting HW) and asked the student to sit.</p>

Table (5.15) shows that this teacher believes in the importance of addressing language difficulties in the opening, as reflected not only by her statements during the interview, but also by her observed openings (Quot.1). However, some opening practices by this teacher failed to correspond to her stated practices. Teacher reported that the opening purpose is breaking the ice through friendly communication with students, yet her tendency towards addressing a cognitive purpose in the opening was clear throughout her practices. In all her observed openings, after the normal social form of greeting, she took attendance (only in two sessions) then discuss and correct HW or a quiz. (Quot.2). Moreover, she stated that she does not pay attention to late comers in her class however, in one of her openings, she paused to explain to one late comer what he had missed (an administrative practice). Although this was done very briefly (she only told the late comer ‘we are correcting the HW’), it is still different from her strong statement (If somebody is late, I usually disregard this as if he is not here) (Quot.3).

Teacher (8): While some of the practices observed in the case of this teacher were in line with her stated beliefs towards class opening, others showed a lack of alignment. The following

comments by the teacher exemplify her beliefs and the related practices, according to the observations notes:

Table (5.15): Beliefs and practices of teacher (8):

Quotations reflecting teacher beliefs	Observed practices that are related to the mentioned belief
<p>1-I: What about absence as an administrative practice? I noticed that in two of your classes you asked about students where they were. Did you mean to take attendance?</p> <p>T: I write attendance after class, I do not call names, as they are four or five students only</p>	<p>Taking attendance in writing was not observed in any of the openings</p>
<p>2- I: Do you usually plan your class opening?</p> <p>T: Usually I try to plan it, sometimes I can, sometimes I just like today's class, I know that we want to finish the review sheet for tomorrow's quiz, we do not want to spend time, I just came in and we started</p> <p>I: Let me stop here, you said today you were constrained with time and you needed to finish the review for tomorrow's midterm, so you just came in and you just started, do you believe that you skipped the class opening today?</p> <p>T: I think yes.</p> <p>[Later....]</p> <p>-I: Why did you talk about US elections today in the opening?</p> <p>T: It is a hot topic and we mentioned it last week, I asked them about their expectations and one of them expected Trump to win so when she came today we discussed it.</p>	<p>T discussed an unplanned hot topic (US elections) inspired by one of the students' entry to the class.</p>
<p>3-I: What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?</p> <p>T: Warm up, helping students, according to theory, to be prepared for the coming activity, the main activity, getting their attention (integrated affective/cognitive purpose)</p>	<p>In two of the openings, T carried out cognitive practices (homework discussion, setting lesson objectives and reviewing). In the third opening, a chat on weather with students was added to the cognitive practice. She also showed administrative practices in two openings when distributing papers</p>

<p>-I: Can you give me examples of the task/activity(s) that fulfill this purpose(s)?</p> <p>T: There can be several tasks, a task can be a brainstorming by asking questions about something, it can be reading</p> <p>I: Why specifically brainstorming or reading?</p> <p>T: They can be done in a very short time, like reading you can read headlines for example, brainstorming about questions, it does not take much time and they will not get involved in doing something like reading a longer text or writing, productive skills that require concentration, you can do that without going deep into the subject</p> <p>-I: What is/are the task/activity(s) you most practice in your class opening that you believe fulfill your students' needs?</p> <p>T: I can tell you what I like to do most, and that is when you read something catchy related somehow to what we are doing, the content we are doing and that is not all the time available, sometimes I find it, sometimes I do not, when I find it I take it as an opportunity</p>	<p>for students to use and checking attendance (mostly cognitive/administrative practices).</p>
<p>4-I: Do contextual factors of each class like size, level of students, students' needs, cultural differences, learning outcomes, institutional policy, skill taught affect your selection of the lesson opening activity?</p> <p>T: Cultural needs can be interesting, they can be useful for students in life, students' level you have to think about it for everything, that goes without saying, and students' needs as well.</p>	<p>Observed practices did not include any addressing of cultural needs.</p>

Table (5.16) shows that teacher has a specific belief towards one of the administrative practices of the opening (taking attendance) and her observed practice supports such belief (Quot.1). Teacher reported that she did not plan an opening for one of her three observed sessions. Although her practice showed that she conducted an opening on that single session (chat on US elections), it seems that this chat was not intended as she stated. It appears that teacher decided to

talk about this hot topic when a certain student (who was very interested in the US elections last week) came in to the class (Quot.2). Worth to note that such unplanned class incident (student's entrance) represents the impact of contextual factors on teacher's class behaviors.

Teacher explains an integrated purpose for the opening (cognitive/affective) and the practice of one of her openings was in line with this belief. However, the activities she mentioned she uses to fulfill this purpose are more of cognitive purpose (brainstorming and reading). Yet, she expresses a difficulty to apply an activity (reading something catchy related to the learning points taught) that fulfills the integrated purpose she believes in (Quot.3). Teacher believes in the usefulness of addressing cultural needs in the opening as a contextual factor, but she did not present any of these needs in her openings (Quot.4).

To sum up, the above discussion shows that there is a tendency for teachers' beliefs to align with the related practices. Half of the teachers (five) reflect a degree of correspondence between their beliefs and practices regarding class opening, while the other half of teachers (five) showed a mixture of aligned and non-aligned features. It is important to note that each teacher was observed three sessions only, which means that lack of congruence between practices and stated beliefs might have resulted from this limited number of observations. This study's goal however which is limited to detecting the possibility of lack of congruence (rather than its extent) has been fulfilled by proving that such a possibility does exist.

As such, the current study raises questions – even if inconclusively - regarding the notion that beliefs are determinant of actions, as stated by researchers such as Farrell and Ives (2014), Johnson (1992), Kuzborska (2011) and Richards and Lockhart (1994). This would be in line with the studies by Sinprajakpol (2004) and Sugiyama (2003) which show that at times teachers cannot apply what they believe in due to situational restrictions (cited in Basturkenn, 2012, p. 286). Similarly, research (Duffy, 1982; Duffy & Ball, 1986; Lampert, 1985; and Fang, 1996) has detected a lack of alignment between teacher beliefs and practices and has attributed such dissonance to the challenges of teaching context that hinder teachers' full adherence to their beliefs. This point was also explored by Clark and Yinger (1977), in their research on teaching thinking, where they have explained that every teaching class is manipulated by a group of

elements working collectively such as characters, restrictions, and prospects to affect teachers' actions in a specific setting that may not work similarly in another (p. 279).

In the case of this study, it is obvious that contextual and teacher related factors sometimes do affect class opening practices. For example, T.7, T.8 and T.10 presented some practices that support this challenge: T.7 was forced to skip her opening due to time constraint resulting from her unplanned tardiness. T.8 was affected by an instant class incident to conduct an unplanned opening. Also, teachers' practices may be affected by their own personal experiences; T. 9 provided an example of how her perspective of teaching language as a learner affected her class practice of which the opening is a part, as indicated by her statement: "this is the way I learnt language."

However, the study also highlights another reason for lack of alignment between beliefs and practices, namely over-emphasis of cognitive aspects/dimensions of learning in class openings. Such a lack of alignment seems to result at many times from giving primacy to cognitive practices (whether in case of practices suggested by questionnaire, interviews or in those revealed by observations) while claiming primacy of the affective or the integrated affective/cognitive purpose of opening. An explanation of the variation between teachers' claim of their tendency to use an integrated cognitive/affective opening and their tendency to choose cognitive practices could be teachers' overt concern for balancing cognitive and affective factors as opposed to a covert (or maybe even subconscious) over concern for teaching and learning of new material at expense of all else. Yet, reasons for such behavior could be varied and are in need of further research.

Overall, the study findings shed light on teachers' beliefs about the importance of class opening. In terms of the opening practice, results show that teachers tend to plan their openings in addition to not skip them unless they are obliged to. As for the class opening purposes, results of the study indicate a stronger tendency towards addressing the cognitive needs in openings rather than the affective ones, even when teachers affirm their preference for an affective-cognitive

blended purpose. Organizational/administrative purposes seem to receive the least attention by teachers in their openings.

5.4 Conclusion

The study findings point to teachers' beliefs in the significant role of class opening which shapes their awareness of the "crucial moments" at the beginning of a lesson, as claimed by Kindsvatter, Wilen, and Ishler (1988, p.103). The study also sheds light on the controversy addressing the interplay between teaching beliefs and practices which has been remarkably noted in research. The main purpose of the study is to examine how teachers' beliefs correspond to their classroom practices in terms of class opening. The aim is not to delve into 'best practices'; rather, the idea is to explore the current practices of those teachers as they are.

The main finding of the study indicates that teachers' beliefs do not necessarily align with their practices. Being well-qualified and mostly experienced Arabic teachers, the inspected individuals seem clearly disposed, in theory, towards the importance of class opening and are acquainted with its various beneficial purposes. In relation to their opening practice, however, these teachers seem more oriented towards one function of the opening (mainly cognitive).

Given the challenging task of investigating the alignment and non-alignment between beliefs and practices, the methodology of the current study was carefully selected. It does not include only administering a questionnaire for a large sample to explore beliefs, but also observing and interviewing a small sample to compare between what has been said and what was actually done. Although the questionnaire was filled out only by part of the population, this gap should not be regarded as a methodology drawback as it would serve no particular purpose if the small sample were asked to fill out the questionnaire containing the same questions as the interview. Thus, seeking identical beliefs through both kinds of samples proved to be meaningful in reaching a conclusion regarding the focus of the study.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Choosing a small number of participants who are observed for only three sessions to gain a deeper understanding of their actions is regarded as one of the limitations of this study. Hence,

results of certain parts of the study cannot be generalized to a larger population. However, results could be suggestive of the possible existence of congruence/divergence aspects between teachers' beliefs and practices. One of the limitations that appeared during the qualitative data collection is the failure to receive full lesson plans before observations from some of the observed teachers due to their busy schedule. In an attempt to fill this gap, a question was added to the interview to ask those teachers if they think they did what they planned for the class opening in the observed sessions. That said, an affirmative answer may be misleading as the teachers may think that they followed what they had planned while in fact they did not.

An important limitation of this study is centered on the difficulty of investigating beliefs. Pajares (1992) has referred to Rokeach's (1968) caution when investigating beliefs where people cannot or do not usually want to present their beliefs in an accurate way. This makes it difficult for any belief to be directly observed or measured; rather, inferences are made based on 'what people say, intend, and do (p. 314). Kagan (1992), in accounting for this challenge, has explained that the difficulty stems from comprehending teachers' beliefs which cannot be concluded through a direct interpretation of actions; similar behaviors may be differently caused. He has added that it is hard to 'elicit beliefs' of teachers from their teaching philosophy (p. 66). Using the research triangulation method may contribute to confirming the conclusion reached.

One further limitation could be designing a questionnaire for participants of different cultural backgrounds while having the observed cases from the same Arab cultural context. This could affect the results in terms of alignment between beliefs and practices. Although including a demographic part in the questionnaire of this study is considered a delimitation, it can also be viewed as a limitation. The data collected from this part were not considered for investigation due to time constraints of research.

5.6 Pedagogical Suggestions

The clear tendency towards addressing students' cognitive needs suggests the need for increasing teacher awareness of a variety of activities or teaching practices that could balance cognitive and affective needs since focusing on satisfying only the cognitive requirements is not useful for the learning process. Achieving a balance between sustaining the cognitive as well as

the affective needs is more beneficial for a teaching context, especially the language one. Also, addressing the students' worries in a second language learning environment constitutes a necessity for teachers to be considered. Learning a new language usually represents a challenge for students in terms of accommodating an alien linguistic scheme formulated by unfamiliar cultural and social systems.

Understanding teachers' pedagogical choices for research or professional development purposes requires an understanding of several factors that impact such choices. These include teacher beliefs, contextual factors, and previous experiences as learners. It is therefore imperative that institutions targeting certain pedagogical behaviors (such as a balanced affective and cognitive opening) to understand teacher beliefs about such behaviors as well as the contextual factors that impact their adoption. Teachers are sometimes only relatively aware of the possible lack of congruence between their beliefs and practices. It is therefore important to encourage self-reflection practices as well as peer observation to increase teacher awareness of possible lack of congruence between what they believe to be beneficial practice and their actual practice and reasons thereof.

5.7 Suggestions for Further Research

The findings yielded by the study pose a challenge to research on the correspondence between classroom actions and the beliefs behind those actions. Results also give rise to new and interesting questions that are worth researching:

- Is concentration on cognitive needs only in opening or in all parts of teachers' lesson?
- How do learners regard lesson opening?
- Do variables such as gender, years of teaching experience, proficiency level of students, or teachers' cultural backgrounds affect the practice of the opening?
- To what extent do factors related to teacher background (for example: teachers' training or teachers' previous experience as language learners) impact teachers' pedagogical choices?
- To what extent do contextual factors affect teachers' pedagogical choices?
-

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APPENDIX A
Teachers' Questionnaire

First Minutes in Your Lesson

If you are/were teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages, kindly give about 20 minutes to fill out this questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers; only your valuable input is sought.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the beliefs and practices of teachers of Arabic for speakers of other languages regarding the importance of their 'class opening' defined by McGrath, Davies & Mulphin (1992) as "that part of a lesson between the moment when the teacher starts to interact with students and the commencement of the first major activity". The questionnaire is part of an MA thesis sponsored by the TAFL program at the American University in Cairo. Your input, whether positive or negative, will definitely add a value to the current research study. Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. Thank you for your time, your contribution is highly appreciated.

Please answer all the questions.

Part I: teachers' beliefs

Choose to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements about "class opening":

1- The class opening is an important part in the lesson plan.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

2- I plan a class opening for most of my classes.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

3- My class openings are spur of the moment ideas.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

4- I sometimes change my intended opening in response to unforeseen events that take place in class.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

5- I sometimes need to skip the intended class opening.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

6- Starting the class with an opening helps in paving for the following phase of the lesson.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

7- The class opening has no impact on the learning process.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

8- I use the class opening time for fulfilling class administrative housekeeping like checking attendance or preparing materials/objects/announcements to be used/distributed/presented.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

9- The main function of the class opening is to attract students' attention.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

10- The class opening is a chance to build a rapport with students.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

11- Using a class opening, aside from housekeeping work, is useful for both the teachers and the students.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

12- I use 'fun' activity(s) for the class opening.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

13- My pre-teaching training has encouraged using class openings.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

14- My institution encourages the use of class openings.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

15- I received training in my institution on using class openings.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

16- Addressing students' affective needs (like reducing anxiety, establishing rapport, arousing positive emotions) is the most important purpose of class openings.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

17- Addressing students' cognitive needs (i.e. needs that have to do with learning like recalling previous knowledge, setting lesson's goals, previewing) is the most important purpose of class openings.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

18- Addressing class organizational/administrative needs (like gathering HW, checking attendance, distributing handouts, announcements) is the most important purpose of class openings.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

19- All the above purposes, in the last three questions, are equally important.

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

(The previous part is partially adapted from Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire <https://eltrantsreviewsreflections.wordpress.com/teacher-beliefs-questionnaire/> which presents general teaching beliefs and from Akhtar (2014) where a specific questionnaire for teachers on the role of warm up activities was conducted).

Part II: Teachers' practice

A- Show how often you include the following classroom behavior(s) in your class opening.

- Link the previous lesson to the new one
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Greet students
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Review the previous lesson
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Take absence
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Chat with students
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Set objectives of the new lesson
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Organize the materials to be used in today's session
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Stimulate students' interest with a personal story/incident
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Discuss homework
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Address personal issues/worries of students
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Brainstorm the new topic
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never

- Make announcements
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Share with students a funny/humorous episode
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Work on fusing/blending in culturally different students with the rest of the class
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Check on the appropriateness of classroom setting
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Use a 'fun' activity
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Preview the new lesson
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Link the new lesson to the real world
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Start the first major activity in the lesson plan directly, skipping class opening completely.
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Use lesson opening to buy time to accommodate late comers
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Check on the needed technology tools
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Other (Pls. indicate the frequency of the classroom behavior(s) and the purpose it/they fulfill):

B- In answering the following questions, please give your reason(s) for your answer as required:

1- If you plan your class opening, do you follow what you have planned? If not, why?

2- Do you sometimes skip your class opening to start the class with the new lesson? If yes, when do you do this and why?

(The previous part is partially adapted from the categories investigated and summarized by the study of McGrath, S. Davis and H. Mulphin (1992) "Lesson beginnings", Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistic, Dept. of Applied Linguistics/Institute for Applied Language Studies, University of Edinburgh, Scotland).

Part III: Dominant factors on the selection of class opening practice

Show how often you think the following factors affect your choice of class opening practice:

- Student proficiency level
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Students' learning style
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Student preference
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
- Lesson outcomes

- | | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never |
|---|------------|--------------|--------|-------|
| ○ Difficulty of lesson | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never |
| ○ Skill addressed by lesson | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never |
| ○ Time constraint | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never |
| ○ My institution policy | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never |
| ○ My teaching experience | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never |
| ○ My pre-teaching training | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never |
| ○ Other ((Pls. indicate the frequency of the factor) <input type="text"/> | | | | |

Part IV: Demographic information

Gender

Male

Female

Years of experience in teaching Arabic for speakers of other languages

0-5

6-10

11-20

More than 20

Level of learners you mostly teach

Elementary

Intermediate

Advanced

Superior
All the above

Teaching institution/country

1- Please state the institution (s) and the country (s) you previously taught in
.....

2- Please state the institution (s) and the country (s) you are currently teach
in

APPENDIX B
Observation Notes Sample

Class observation notes with a focus on class opening

Teacher: 4

Class: Fusha elementary

Date: Oct. 26, 2016

of session: 2

The class opening incidents	The first major activity	Notes (anything needs to be clarified during interview)
1-T greeted SS and they answered back. T. asked about the absentees 2- T corrected HW individually 3- T discussed the feedback on last quiz and gave back the quiz papers to SS 4- T checked the common academic difficulty showed by the quiz on the board 5- T made an announcement	T started a game to review the grammar rules that have been newly presented in the previous session, signaled by the transition "Now, I have a game".	1-When you asked about the absentees, did you mean to take attendance? 2- Why did you correct the HW individually? 3- Why did you include the quiz feedback in the opening? 4- Do you usually make announcements in the opening?
Duration:10 min for # 1-5		

APPENDIX C
Observation Checklist

Cognitive practices
Teacher related the new information with the old one
Teacher accessed previous knowledge of students
Teacher explained the outcome of the lesson
Teacher related the class opening with real world
Teacher discussed homework
Teacher discussed academic difficulty
Teacher brainstormed the new topic
Teacher previewed the new lesson
The class opening is related to the topic of today's lesson
Affective practices
Teacher narrated a personal story/incident
Teacher handled personal issues/worries of students
Teacher greeted students
Teacher had social chat
Teacher shared with students a funny/humorous episode
Teacher used a 'fun' activity
Administrative/Organizational practices
Teacher accommodated late comers
Teacher made announcement(s)
Teacher took attendance
Teacher distributed materials for today's class
Teacher checked the appropriateness of classroom setting
Teacher checked the needed technology tools
Teacher involved all students
The class opening is within the range of 5-15 min
Additional observed practices/observation notes

APPENDIX D
Teachers' Interview Sample

“Before asking some questions regarding class opening, let me share the definition of ‘class opening’ as adopted in the study. ‘Class opening’ is “that part of a lesson between the moment when the teacher starts to interact with students and the commencement of the first major activity”, as defined by McGrath, Davies & Mulphin (1992).

- 1- What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) of class opening?
- 2- Give examples of the task/activity(s) that fulfill this purpose(s)? What is the rationale behind your selection?
- 3- What is/are the task/activity(s) you most practice in your class opening that you believe fulfill your students' needs? Why?
- 4- How frequent do you deal with students' worries in the opening?
- 5- How frequent do you check administrative tasks like checking technology, accommodating late comers, taking absence or distributing papers in the opening?
- 6- Does using a class opening affect the remaining phases of a lesson? If yes, how? If no, why?
- 7- Do you usually plan your class opening? If yes, do you do this in writing or in your mind? And if you plan it, do you usually follow what you have planned?

- 8- If the answer for the previous question is ‘no’, do you do it on spur of the moment? If yes, why?
- 9- Are experienced teachers in need to plan their class opening? If yes, why?
- 10-Do you sometimes skip your class opening? If yes, how frequent do you do this?
When? Why?
- 11-Do contextual factors of each class like size, level of students, students’ needs, cultural differences, learning outcomes, institutional policy, skill taught affect your selection of the lesson opening activity? If yes, how? Which, do you think, is the most influential factor? Why?
- 12-Does the institution you work in encourage using “class openings”? If yes, does it follow and evaluate the practice of this part of the lesson? How?
- 13-Do your class opening procedures comply with the pedagogy approach of your institution? If not, why?
- 14-Have you observed any class opening practice before; during your pre-teaching training or your visiting other teachers’ classes?

APPENDIX E
Interview Analysis Sample (T.4)

Relevant text	Codes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -“ if I dealt with the affective so it will set the tone for the remaining of the lesson, you know if it is nice, bubbly and personal” -“ it is nice and natural” -“ I am refreshing some of the previously learnt point but in an affective way” - usually related to the previous homework or if I come back with yesterday’s quiz (academic worries) -“I will wait until the end of the class” (non-academic worries) -“ I address it before, at the very beginning, I cannot begin the class without clearing the air and the worries” (academic worries) -“ they enjoyed it” -“ Actually if it arises” (frequency of addressing SS worries) -“ I never thought exactly about it but I am simulating natural human interaction” -“ so that is the tone of caring and it give the sense of safe environment” -“ I never thought about this, but it just stops the Energeia of the class” (admin task in opening) 	Affective Purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - belief in the purpose of class opening as a “a reminder of previous things” -“relate to previous” -“refresh previously learnt” - HW discussion -“elicit certain responses” -‘communicative’ -“proficiency oriented approach” -address common mistakes -collective feedback on the homework 	Cognitive Purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - belief of great effect of using class openings on the phases of a lesson -deliberately addressing the affective part with the cognitive part -“I would be paying attention to the news so that I catch anything of direct relevance” - Emphasis on combined purposes “I just chat chat and write on the board that is the only thing I do for opening.” -“ I am eliciting specific language production so I do it for the affective thing again and because it is important for what comes next” (asking about their trip) 	Integrated purpose (affect. & cog.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not addressing the administrative task (attendance, technology, late comers, distributing papers) in class opening “usually postpone it to the end” 	Administrative Purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -usual casual chat is “totally unplanned” -if planned due to certain class, “it is in my head” -“I do not really plan it” -“ very natural, I do not need to plan it” - I almost never skip opening, “except it has to do with the circumstances of the schedule” - Experienced teachers need to plan their opening, especially if they are more methodical -“I stick to one little formula which even though it is the same, never seems or means repetitive” 	Opening practice

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -“ it did not work, so let’s just stick to the text” (skipping opening) - “This was one of the instances where I absolutely skipped the opening” (two reasons; fluidity and admin issue) -“ for the expediency sake” (skipping opening) -“ an administrative logistic thing related to assessment and the director had walked in” (skipping opening) -“simply there was no time and no particular need as I was with them for an hour” (skipping opening) - “if a class is somehow not very harmonious together or with me or something like that, I would try at the beginning and if I found no response I become less inclined to do it...I just get in to the material, it is like my duty to give them this material, but it is rare (skipping opening) -“I never skip my class opening” -Affective activity is “open-ended questions” -“again it is the normal open questions without any specific material” - Emphasis on the affective activity “the only thing I do is the open-ended questions” -Cognitive activity is “quick basic mechanical drill” - cognitive activity “reinforce vocab” -cognitive activity “reinforce certain structure” 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -small size of class encourages practicing the unplanned opening - skipping an opening is sometimes due to the schedule framework; the same group of students in consecutive sessions - The class size is a big factor in selecting the opening -“in a writing class I probably would think of also very specific thing to write on the board as a kind of opener” -in certain classes like writing or media “I have to plan it but it is usually shorter and more specific” -Emphasis on one of the factors “ The class size is a big factor, as I mentioned earlier” -with a big class the opening is “more general but it is not as usually interactive or successful” -“the institution I work in gives a lot of freedom to the teacher to adopt their own eclectic methods” -“it is not a big issue that is dealt with, for example, in our weekly department meeting. - my approach is compliant with the institution approach -“I am not sure, it is only on the very periodic basis, for example, when you are up to the renewal of your contract or when you are up for a promotion” -“it was not explicitly pointed out as a component of the class session frankly (during pre-teaching training) 	<p>Impacting factors</p>