The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

An Exploratory Study of Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Regarding the Class Opening by Teachers of Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (TASOL)

A Thesis Submitted to

Department of Applied Linguistics |

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
Master of Arts
in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language

By

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Under the supervision of Dr. Raghda El Essawi

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the beliefs of teachers of Arabic to speakers of other languages (TASOL) about class openings and the interplay between such beliefs and teacher's in-class practices regarding class opening as the first introductory part of a lesson. A questionnaire of three parts was given to two groups of TASOL: the first group comprised 63 randomly selected teachers, to provide their beliefs in general about class opening. Observations and interviews were administered to the second group of teachers (30 observations and 10 interviews were conducted) to highlight the mentioned interplay. The investigated beliefs were inspired by similar studies and TBQ (Teacher Belief Questionnaire). The observation process involved using observation notes and an observation checklist by the researcher. Overall, the results of this study indicate that class opening beliefs of most participants suggest a realization of the importance of this part of the lesson. However, it also highlights that most teachers give priority to cognitive practices at the expense of affective ones recommended by the field. The study also sheds light on the convergence between teacher beliefs and practices as well the level of divergence, calling into question the widely held assumption that the latter is driven by the former.

Index Terms—teachers' beliefs, lesson planning, class opening practice, contextual factors.

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