

**The Relationship Between Students' Beliefs
about Language Learning and Their
Attitudes towards Their Teachers.
A Study in English Language
Classes at Azad University,
Shiraz, Iran.**

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Abstract. In the 20th and 21st centuries English has become an indispensable part of educational curriculum in Iranian schools. Despite all the efforts and investments devoted to cultivate and popularize English among Iranian language learners, the outcome could not live up to the authorities' expectations. Learning a language is influenced by a variety of factors. Two of the most important of which are the learner's attitude and perception toward the target language. A great body of research has proved that learners' attitude towards foreign language learning and success in learning a foreign language were highly related. This study investigated the interrelated relationship between students' beliefs about language learning and their attitude towards their teachers in Iran, as well as the possible difference that existed between boys' and girls' attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. The findings indicated that there was a low, positive and significant relationship between

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the participants' beliefs about language learning and their attitudes towards their teacher. It was also observed that there was a significant difference between males and females in terms of their beliefs towards foreign language aptitude and difficulty of language learning. Based on the mean scores, it can be inferred that the females have the stronger beliefs in foreign language learning than males.

Keywords: Language attitude, gender, EFL learners, perception, belief, motivation, integrativeness.

1. Introduction

“Language is the centre of human life” (Cook, 1996, p. 1). It is one of the most important ways of expressing ourselves, communicating with people, planning our lives, remembering the past, exchanging ideas and preferences. The ability to do so in more than one language multiplies the opportunities for people to experience all these functions and even master them as well as advancing their career opportunities. Learning is the process of absorbing new information in a meaningful way and putting it to use. Children and young adults learn a large portion of their knowledge at school. At school, previously unknown information is deliberately presented to students so they can use it both to pass tests and move on to other studies. Foreign language learners vary in terms of many factors such as attitudes, motivation, learning style, age, gender, aptitude.

For most psycholinguists, either in a language learning situation or in a second language acquisition context, the importance of the learners' attitudes and beliefs plays a major role. A quick look at the major theories of language acquisition will suffice to demonstrate this.

It appears obvious that many language learners have definite beliefs about learning a foreign language. Whenever the topic of foreign languages comes up in a conversation, many people seem eager to express their views and opinions about language learning. With regard to beliefs about language learning, Omaggio (1978) states that good language learners have “insight into the nature of the task” (p. 2). Hosenfeld (1978) refers to mini-theories of second-language learning. Students' beliefs about language learning may have an impact on their performance in class. For example, if a student believes that she doesn't

have very good aptitude for language learning, she may not make much effort to learn the language. Teachers should pay close attention to students' beliefs in order to assess whether beliefs might have a negative impact on learning. Unrealistic beliefs about language learning can cause students to become anxious when they think that no one should make a mistake or that anyone should be able to learn a language in under two years. Unrealistic beliefs about the most effective ways to learn a language can cause students to adopt ineffective language learning strategies; for example, deciding to concentrate their efforts on memorizing vocabulary words or translating.

2. Research Questions

This study is considered as an investigatory one which aims to identify the relationship between students' beliefs about language learning and their attitudes towards their teachers in Iran. This study seeks to answer the following questions.

- 1.** Is there any significant relationship between students' beliefs about language learning and their attitudes towards their teachers?
- 2.** Do males and females hold different beliefs towards foreign language learning?

3. Review of Literature

Ngidi (2007) in her study examined the attitudes of learners, educators, and parents on the use of English as a language of learning and teaching and an additional language in selected schools to the north of Kwazulu Natal in South Africa. The findings revealed that learners have a positive attitude towards the use of English as a language of learning and teaching and an additional language in schools. The findings also indicated that educators have a negative attitude towards English as a language of learning and teaching and as an additional language in schools. The findings further showed that parents had a positive attitude towards the use of English as a language of learning and teaching and an additional language in schools.

Peacock (1998) examined the effect of authentic materials on the attitudes of EFL learners. His research described a classroom research project to investigate whether authentic materials increased the classroom motivation of learners, a claim often made but rarely, if ever, tested. A definition of attitude relevant to teachers was adopted-learner interest, persistence, attention, action, and enjoyment. Two beginner-level EFL classes participated, and both used authentic and artificial materials alternately. Results from two observation sheets and a self-report questionnaire indicated that while on-task behavior and observed motivation increased significantly when authentic materials were used, self-reported motivation only increased over the last 12 of the 20 days of the study. However, learners also reported authentic materials to be significantly less interesting than artificial materials to substantiate the theoretical assertions about the relationship between attitude and language learning, extensive studies have been carried out to examine the effect of attitudes on language learning and the relationship between attitudes and language success.

Hassan Soleimani (2010) examined a sample of Iranian medical students' attitudes towards English language learning. Three aspects of attitude (emotional, cognitive, and behavioral) were taken into consideration. In addition, the effect of learners' demographics on their attitudes was investigated. An adapted questionnaire was employed as a measuring instrument. The participants (N=40, medical students) were required to answer all the 30 items in the questionnaire concerning attitudes towards English language learning in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of attitude. The items were put in a 5-point Likert scale. The results showed that the overall mean score of English language attitude among the participants was 65.4 (out of 100, SD= 5.6). The independent samples t-test was carried out to explore the differences in the participants' attitude towards English language learning by gender. The results showed that the attitude of male students was higher than females. The results of current study implied that Iranian medical students hold highly positive overall attitude regarding English language learning. It is recommended that teachers should be responsive to learners' attitudes and value their students' attitudes and preconcep-

tions, as it can affect their success in foreign language learning.

Buschenhofen (1998) in his study assessed the attitudes towards English language existing among year 12 and final-year university students in Papua New Guinea. The results of the study indicated: (1) a generally positive attitude by both groups towards English and (2) some significant attitudinal differences in relation to specific English language contexts.

Yang et al. (2003) in their study discussed the attitudes students in Hong Kong hold towards English before and after their tertiary studies. The findings suggested that students were generally comfortable with the language environments and courses offered in secondary and tertiary settings; they agreed that learning English is important in the post-1997 era.

Chalak et al. (2010) in their study investigated the various socio-psychological orientations of Iranian undergraduates towards learning English. It focused on the motivation orientations of the students and their attitudes towards the target language and its community.

The results revealed that these Iranian Nonnative speakers of English learn the language for both 'instrumental' and 'integrative' reasons and their attitudes towards the target language community and its members were generally found to be highly positive.

Channa Mansoor Ahmed (2010) study investigated the students' attitudes towards activities used in an EFL classroom in one Thai university. The research participants include the students of first year (bachelor students of medical and engineering faculties) who had

studied public speaking subject as their minor in second semester. The data was collected through class observations and semi structured interviews. In classroom observations, EFL learners' perceptions and satisfactions on their teacher using class activities were recorded in the field-notes and questions related to EFL learners' attitudes in target language learning based on certain factors that include better teaching strategies, classroom activities and social environment that can help reduce or change negative attitudes were asked through interview. This study found promising results on the students' attitudes towards teacher using activities. More than half of the participants regarded teacher's us-

ing activities that determined their success in language learning. However, less than half of the participants showed dissatisfying factor that related to the EFL teacher using humor on their cultures as the part of his teaching. This research paves a way for future research by indicating issues and questions for researchers to address.

Hanan Alzwari (2001) investigated Libyan secondary school students' attitudes towards learning English in terms of the behavioral, cognitive and emotional aspects. It also explored whether there is any significant difference in the students' attitudes towards English language based on their demographic profiles i.e., gender, field and year of study. A total of 180 participants in the three study years from three specializations of Basic Sciences, Life Sciences, and Social Sciences took a questionnaire as a measuring instrument. Regarding the three aspects of attitude i.e., cognitive, behavioral, and emotional, the participants showed negative attitudes towards learning English. On the demographic profile, there were statistically significant attitudinal differences regarding gender and field of study but not year of study. Based on the research findings, some recommendations are finally presented.

Lamb (2004) carried out a study on the motivation of Indonesian adolescents towards learning English. His study aimed to track changes in students' reported motivation and learning activity and to identify internal and external factors which might be associated with the changes. It was found that the learners' initially very positive attitudes towards the language and expectations of success were maintained over this period, whereas their attitudes toward the experience of formal learning tended to be worse. He attributed the findings of the study to the cognitive and developmental perceptions of the students towards the concept of formal learning.

Yang (1999) carried out a study to investigate the relationship between EFL college students' beliefs about language learning and their use of learning strategies. The study found that language learners' self-efficacy beliefs about learning English were strongly related to their use of all types of learning strategies, especially functional practice strategies. Also, learners' beliefs about the value and nature of learning spoken English were closely linked to their use of formal oral-practice strate-

gies. The results of this study suggested cyclical relationships between learners' beliefs and strategy use and their final success in learning English.

Horwitz (1988) investigated the beliefs of a number of first semester foreign language learners at the University of Texas. The students were from different nationalities. Her learners appeared to somewhat underestimate the difficulty of language learning; 43 percent of them said that if you spent one hour a day learning a foreign language, you would become fluent within two years, and a further 35 percent that it would take three to five years. 50 percent believed in the existence of foreign language aptitude, and 35 percent said that they had that aptitude.

Horwitz (1988) proposed that these gaps between teacher and learner beliefs probably result in "negative (language-learning) outcomes" for learners. Horwitz also suggested that a gap between teacher and learner beliefs can lead to reduced learner confidence in and satisfaction with the class and to unwillingness to participate in communicative activities. In her final conclusions, she asserted that "Teachers will likely encounter ... many unanticipated beliefs, some enabling and some truly detrimental to successful language learning ... foreign language teachers can afford to ignore those beliefs if they expect their students to be open to particular teaching methods and to receive the maximum benefit from them".

Mantle-Bromley (1995) investigated the beliefs of 208 seventh grade middle school students taking first-year French and Spanish in Kansas. Mantle-Bromley's results indicated that some of her students' beliefs about language learning differed from commonly held teacher beliefs. In her study, learners believed in the existence of foreign language aptitude.

Sakui and Gaies (1999) found that inconsistency in beliefs about language learning may result from the context that the respondents based their responses on. In their study of Japanese learners, they found that respondents may respond to the same questionnaire item differently at two different times if they think about the statement in two different situations. From an interview with one respondent, they learned that the respondent would have responded to the item "You need to learn English from native speakers of English" differently if she thought about a different native speaker teacher when she completed the survey.

Another factor that was found to affect beliefs about language learning is stage of learning or the amount of learning experience. Mori (1999) found differences in beliefs between beginners and advanced language learners of Japanese in two aspects of beliefs: beliefs about the simplicity of knowledge structure (Simple Knowledge), beliefs about the existence of truth (Attainability of the Truth), and beliefs about the difficulty of one linguistic system of Japanese (Kanji). Advanced learners of Japanese in this study were found to believe that the knowledge structure was not simple and straightforward, that there was no absolute truth, and that Kanji was not easy. On the contrary, novice learners tended to think the opposite. Mori concluded that these variations might have resulted from the different amounts of instruction the learners have received.

According to the findings reviewed above, beliefs about language learning are independent constructs that consist of multiple dimensions. These beliefs seem to be context specific and may vary depending on the amount of learning experience learners have received.

Kern (1995) further investigated the different beliefs between students and teachers and found that over the period of a 15-week program, the mismatches between student and teacher beliefs still persisted. He found stability of student beliefs at the global level (when analyzing beliefs of all the students and all the teachers as a single group). He explained that the persisting mismatches might be resulted from factors other than teacher beliefs such as teachers' actual classroom practice, the nature of instructional activities, students' assessment of their own progress, students' expectations of achievement, students' awareness of mistakes, textbooks, tests, and written exercises, teachers' individual differences such as personalities, personal styles, and level of experience. He suggested that beliefs about language learning may not be easily influenced by teacher beliefs or that teacher beliefs did not influence their classroom practices.

However, when he compared beliefs of the students and teachers at the individual level (compared students' beliefs with those of their own instructor), changes in student beliefs were found and the direction of the changes were towards teacher beliefs, especially beliefs of beginning students (French I). Kern concluded that students' beliefs may be able

to change but beliefs of advanced learners (French II), who had more learning experience, may be more resistant.

In an investigation of learners' beliefs about language learning and strategy use, Wenden (1986) interviewed 25 adults studying in advanced level ESL classes at Columbia University, asking them about the social settings in which they used English and the learning activities they used. She found that these language learners often used learning strategies consistent with their beliefs about language learning. Fourteen of these students reported specific beliefs about the best way to learn a language. She classified these learners' reported beliefs into three major categories: those that valued using the language naturally, those that valued formal learning about grammar and vocabulary, and those that valued the role of personal factors such as emotions, aptitude, and self-concept.

Peacock (2001) reports on a longitudinal study that investigated changes in the beliefs about second language learning of 146 trainee ESL students over their 3-year program at the City University of Hong Kong. Although he reports differences in three key areas, disturbingly, no significant changes have been found. These key areas are: learning a second language means learning a lot of vocabulary and grammar rules and the belief that those speaking more than one language well are very intelligent. Peacock (2001) concludes that these participants when preparing their classroom tasks, materials, etc. might over-emphasize the learning of vocabulary and grammar rules compared to the other classroom tasks necessary for foreign language learning. And believing that those speaking more than one language are very intelligent might negatively affect their capacity to assess their future students' progress.

Truitt (1995) investigated the beliefs about language learning of university students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Korea. A total of 204 students enrolled in undergraduate English courses in Seoul, Korea, participated in this study. A questionnaire consisting of the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI, Horwitz, 1987) and a background questionnaire was translated into Korean and administered to the students. It was found that the Korean subjects in this study had some differences in their beliefs about language learning

from those of American foreign language students (Horwitz, 1988), ESL students in the United States (Horwitz, 1987), EFL students in Taiwan (Yang, 1999), and even another group of EFL students in Korea. In addition, the beliefs about language learning of the subjects in this study were correlated with background factors such as major and experience living in an English-speaking country. These findings provide evidence that learners' beliefs about language learning may vary based on their cultural backgrounds and previous experiences (Horwitz, 1987).

Shokrpour (2010) investigated Iranian learners' beliefs about language learning. It also aimed at finding the effect of gender on learners' beliefs about language learning. To this end, the Persian version of Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) was administered among 40 male and 40 female students. The findings revealed that the highest mean average among the five components of beliefs about language learning is belief of motivations and expectations ($M=3.1208$), followed by belief of learning and communication strategies ($M=3.0150$), and belief of difficulty of language learning ($M=2.5828$). The two components with the lowest scores were belief of the nature of language ($M=2.3479$) and belief of foreign language aptitude ($M=2.1917$). Moreover, there was a significant difference between learners' beliefs and gender.

Suwanarak (1999) sought to understand the perceptions about English language learning of 220 Thai graduate students studying for Masters degrees at a public university in Thailand. The students were questioned about their beliefs, strategies and achievements as English language learners. The data collected through these closed and open-ended questionnaires were then analysed quantitatively.

To explore their personal views in more depth, 35 students from the larger group were selected for interviews. The study findings reveal various beliefs about English language learning as well as similarities and differences in the students' use of strategies which were all relevant to their learning achievement. Surprisingly, a large number of the students considered themselves to be unsuccessful English language learners whereas only a small percentage of the students, with greater use of learning strategies, rated themselves as high achievers. Significant cor-

relations between students' beliefs about English language learning and their use of learning strategies indicate that the beliefs to some extent related to strategy use. The findings can be a valuable resource to consider appropriate ways of using students' perceptions to improve English teaching and learning practice.

Exploring the gender effect on EFL learners' beliefs about language learning.

Studies in second and/or foreign language acquisition research have shown that beliefs are quite stable within the learner, strongly held, and resistant to change. Moreover, interdisciplinary research suggests that beliefs are intertwined with factors such as self-concept and identity, self-efficacy, personality traits, and other individual differences (Furnham, Johnson & Rawles, 1985). Consequently, it has been suggested researchers study how these beliefs differ across language learners, particularly in terms of individual differences such as gender, age, nationality, learning style, and personality type.

There is still paucity in literature on the relationship between language learner beliefs and stable individual differences, such as gender. In psychology, researchers who have long been interested in the relationship of gender to behavior and cognition, have found significant sex related differences in social behavior, cognitive activity, and general verbal ability (Bacon & Finnemann, 1992). Yet, in the field of second and foreign language acquisition, a comparatively small number of studies report findings in relation to these variables.

For example, using the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) (Horwitz, 1987), Siebert (2003) conducted a study of 64 female and 91 male language learners (N=156) of mixed ethnic backgrounds (22 nationalities were represented), studying English at a higher education institution in the U.S. Siebert found a number of significant differences in beliefs among males and females in relation to language learning and strategy use, using descriptive statistics in the form of percentages. Findings revealed that male students were more likely than female students to rate their abilities highly. For example, male students were twice as likely to agree that people from their country were good at learning for-

eign languages. Similarly, male students were more likely to respond that they have a special ability for learning languages (25%), but only 10% of females agreed and no females strongly agreed. Male and female students also significantly differed in their assessments of how long it takes to learn a foreign language. Thus, if someone spent 1 hour a day learning a language, females estimated that it would take 5-10 years or that a language cannot be learned in 1 hour a day. Male students, on the other hand, were much more optimistic and indicated that it would take 1-2 or 3-5 years. These findings suggest that male and female students differ in their assessments of beliefs related to ability. Siebert also reported that, 23% of females, as opposed to 47% of males either strongly agreed or agreed that the most important part of learning a foreign language is learning grammar. In addition, only 7% of females, but 24% of males, agreed that it is important to practice with audio-visual equipment.

In another U.S. study, Bacon and Finnemann (1992) investigated gender differences in self reported beliefs about foreign language learning and authentic oral and written input. They surveyed 938 students of Spanish across two large state universities. The ratio of male to female respondents was approximately even. Unlike Siebert, who used the BALLI to obtain data, the researchers had developed their own 109-item questionnaire, though like the

BALLI, it used a 5-point Likert format in which students responded to a series of statements regarding their experience, beliefs, attitudes, motivation and strategies with the Spanish language, both in and outside the class.

Bacon and Finnemann found that female compared to male students reported a higher level of motivation and strategy use in language learning, greater use of global strategies in dealing with authentic input, and a higher level of social interaction with the target language (Spanish). Tercanlioglu (2005), on the other hand, performed an ANOVA and found no significant differences in beliefs about language learning of 45 male and 73 female full-time undergraduate EFL teacher trainees at a large Turkish university. She concluded that it is possible that age, stage of life and contextual differences in the language-learning situation may also be important sources of group variation in learner belief. It is likely

that the differences in findings between these studies may be due to, in part, the different analytical methods employed by the researchers. Research regarding gender differences in students' beliefs about language learning is rare and shows contradictory findings as noted above. Thus, further studies are necessary to get a better understanding. The aim of this study is to investigate whether previous research findings of gender differences (e.g. Siebert, 2003) in students' language beliefs can be replicated in the Australian context. Thus, this study fills an important gap in current research on the language beliefs of learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the context.

Based on the above-cited research in which two out of three studies showed gender differences (in particular the one by Siebert who also used the BALLI instrument employed here), the hypothesis put forward is: male and female students differ in their language learning beliefs.

Concerning gender, Bacon and Finnemann (1992) found that the women in their study were more motivated, more open to authentic input and had a more positive attitude to target language speakers. While Tercanlioglu (2005) found no statistically significant difference between male and female respondents in Turkey, Siebert's (2003) BALLI based study, examining international university students in the United States, showed significant gender-related differences. The author found males rated their own fellow citizens' abilities more highly, and believed that a language could be learnt in a shorter time than women did. More male than female students also believed that the learning of grammar was the most important part of language learning, and that practicing with audio-visual material was crucial.

Bernat and Lloyd (2007) found that the sexes differed significantly in only two BALLI items, as women were more likely to perceive multilingualism as a feature of intelligence than men were, and also enjoyed talking to natives less than their male counterparts did. Since the role of gender is context specific and the results of previous studies yielded such a variety of different results, the effect of gender seems to be an area worth examining in the Hungarian context. Also, through using multiple-item scales, the results are less likely to be subject to extraneous influences.

The Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), consisting of 34 items was administered to 155 female and 107 male English as a Foreign Language students enrolled in an Academic English Program. The Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test was employed to investigate gender difference. Results indicate that overall males and females held similar beliefs about language learning, with only one item being statistically significant and another one being marginally significant.

4. Method

4.1 Participants

The participants were chosen from Azad university randomly. All of the candidates were native speakers of Persian. They are students of M.A (Master of Arts) in English language teaching at Azad university of Shiraz. Mostly they are in upper intermediate level. 164 postgraduate university students from 6 university classes constituted the sample of the study. Out of all available candidates, 76 males and 88 females participated in the study.

4.2 Instrumentation

Two instruments were utilized in this study. The first one is the Attitude Questionnaire. The second one is the Belief Questionnaire.

4.3 Design

The design of this study was a quantitative one. It follows the data collection procedures and analysis of quantitative method. The data collection method for the quantitative mode was questionnaires; Student's attitude questionnaire and Beliefs about foreign language learning questionnaire. The correlation between the five components of the participants' beliefs about language learning and their attitudes towards their teachers was investigated. The difference between male and female students in terms of their beliefs towards foreign language learning was also considered.

4.4 Data collection procedure

For this research, the university students were chosen as the participants because the students are more accurate and they are able to compre-

hend different parts of questionnaires. Data was collected through two questionnaires. Five classes were selected, the students were asked to answer the belief about language learning questionnaire and attitude toward teacher questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to the participants in different sessions.

4.5 Data analysis

The analytical procedures employed to explore the research questions were computed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To ensure reliability of the questionnaires a small group of English language university students (N=10) were selected randomly for the pilot testing. Cronbach's Alpha analysis was used to find the reliability of the questionnaires. To find the correlation between the five components of the participants' beliefs about language learning and their attitudes towards their teachers, the researcher ran the correlation analysis.

5. Result and Discussion

5.1 Statistical operations

As mentioned earlier, Horwitz's (1987) Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) was used as a research tool in order to investigate the subjects' beliefs about English language learning. The BALLI evaluates beliefs about five language learning areas: (1) Foreign language aptitude, (2) the difficulty of language learning, (3) the nature of language learning, (4) learning and communication strategies and (5) motivations and expectations. The BALLI has 34 items. Thirty two of them offer 5-point Likert-type responses, ranging from "strongly agree =5" to "strongly disagree =1". The other two items; 4 and 14, are related to learners' rating of the difficulty level of English, ranging from very difficult, difficult, medium, easy, and very easy, and the amount of time needed to learn English very well.

To discover the participants' attitudes towards their teachers, the researcher used a thirty five Likert items. The responses were coded as "Never =1", "Always =5".

To answer the first research question, the researcher ran the correlation analysis. Table 1 shows the results of correlation between the

five components of the participants' beliefs about language learning and their attitudes towards their teachers.

Table 1. Correlation between the Participants' Beliefs about Language Learning and their Attitudes towards their Teachers

		Attitude
Foreign Language Aptitude	Pearson Correlation	.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.788
	N	164
Difficulty of Language Learning	Pearson Correlation	-.046
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.557
	N	164
Nature of Language Learning	Pearson Correlation	.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.450
	N	164
Learning and Communication Strategies	Pearson Correlation	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.765
	N	164
Motivation and Expectations	Pearson Correlation	.173*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027
	N	164

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Based on the results presented in Table 1, there is a low, positive and significant relationship ($r = .17$, $sig. = .02$, $p < .05$) between the participants' motivation and expectations and their attitudes towards their teacher.

To investigate the difference between male and female students in terms of their beliefs towards foreign language learning, the independent-samples t-test was run. As mentioned before, 76 male and 88 female university students participated in the study. The results of the analysis are given in the following tables (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Males and Females' Beliefs toward foreign language learning

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Foreign Language Aptitude	Male	76	3.5175	.42146	.04835
	Female	88	3.6742	.35249	.03758
Difficulty of Language Learning	Male	76	3.3092	.33300	.03820
	Female	88	3.4678	.35455	.03780
Nature of Language Learning	Male	76	3.5285	.39664	.04550
	Female	88	3.6667	.48870	.05210
Learning and Communication Strategies	Male	76	3.6711	.38180	.04379
	Female	88	3.7244	.33806	.03604
Motivation and Expectations	Male	76	3.8974	.58103	.06665
	Female	88	3.9841	.52978	.05647

Table 3. Independent Sample t-test Compare Males and Females' Beliefs towards foreign language learning

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Foreign Language Aptitude	Equal variances assumed	1.292	.257	-2.593	162	.010	-.15670	.06044	-.27605	.03735
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.559	146.802	.012	-.15670	.06123	-.27771	.03569
Difficulty of Language Learning	Equal variances assumed	.164	.686	-2.938	162	.004	-.15859	.05398	-.26520	.05199
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.951	160.840	.004	-.15859	.05374	-.26471	.05247
Nature of Language Learning	Equal variances assumed	1.750	.188	-1.967	162	.051	-.13816	.07022	-.27683	.00051
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.997	161.406	.047	-.13816	.06917	-.27475	.00157
Learning and Communication Strategies	Equal variances assumed	1.675	.197	-0.950	162	.344	-.05338	.05621	-.16438	.05762
	Equal variances not assumed			-.941	151.193	.348	-.05338	.05672	-.16544	.05868
Motivation and Expectations	Equal variances assumed	.422	.517	-0.999	162	.319	-.08672	.08677	-.25806	.08462
	Equal variances not assumed			-.993	153.255	.322	-.08672	.08736	-.25930	.08586

According to Table 3, there is a significant difference between males and females in terms of their beliefs towards foreign language aptitude ($sig. = .01, p < .05$) and difficulty of language learning ($sig. = .004, p < .05$). Based on the mean scores presented in Table 2, it can be inferred that the females ($M = 3.67$) have the stronger beliefs in foreign language learning than males ($M = 3.51$).

The results also showed that females' beliefs ($M = 3.46$) have higher concern about difficulty of language learning compare to males ($M = 3.30$).

6. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

6.1 Conclusion

In this section, the research questions of the study will be reiterated and then answered based on the conclusions drawn from the results.

1. Is there any significant relationship between students' beliefs about language learning and their attitudes towards their teachers?

Based on the results of the data analysis presented in Table 4.1, there is a low and positive relationship ($r = .17$) between the participants' motivation and expectations and their attitudes towards their teacher is significant ($sig. = .02, p < .05$).

2. Do males and females hold different beliefs towards foreign language learning?

The results of the t-test presented in Table 4.3 indicated that there was a significant difference between males and females in terms of their beliefs towards foreign language aptitude ($sig. = .01, p < .05$) and difficulty of language learning. Based on the mean scores presented in Table 4.2, it could be inferred that the females ($M = 3.67$) had the stronger beliefs in foreign language learning than males ($M = 3.51$).

The results also showed that females' beliefs ($M = 3.46$) had higher concern about difficulty of language learning compare to males ($M = 3.30$). The results of this study are in line with the following research.

Similar to the results of our study, in a study by Sayadian and Lashkarian (2012), both male and female Iranian university learners were highly oriented (91.86% and 89.87% respectively) with respect to their attitude towards English language learning. Also the findings of a

study by Channa Mansoor Ahmed (2010) on Yemeni petroleum engineering students revealed that they had positive attitudes towards the English language. In addition they hold significant positive attitudes towards the educational status of English in Yemeni schools.

Similarly, Chalak and Kassaian (2010) investigated the attitudes of Iranian undergraduate students majoring in English translation towards English language learning among one hundred and fifty three Iranian undergraduate students studying at Malaysian universities. The results of their study revealed that their attitudes were generally found to be highly positive. Also Ansari and Chowdhri (1990) in a study on a representative sample of 220 students in Malaysia showed that these learners hold positive attitudes towards English language community and its members. In parallel with these studies, the findings of a study by Sarwar (2002) revealed that the majority of the university students had positive attitudes and found the English language for specific purposes interesting to learn. In another study, Johnson (1997) investigated the attitude of Japanese non-English major EFL learners. These students exhibited a range of attitudes towards learning English. Their positive attitudes correlated positively with their proficiency levels, with higher level students possibly with the weakest dislike for English. Surprisingly enough, the results of a study by Yang et al. (2003) showed no significant correlation between EFL major students' attitudes towards English language learning and their overall English language proficiency.

Generally speaking, the finding of the present study is in line with some research that has been carried out in this area. For example, Bacon and Finnemann (1992) found that females were more motivated and more open to authentic input. Females also showed more positive attitude towards target language speakers. Siebert (2003) used Horwitz's (1987) BALLI as the tool. The study found significant differences in the beliefs of male and female students. Rieger (2009) also found the existence of gender effect on a number of beliefs factors that were statistically significant. However, this finding contrasts with the results of some other studies in which no significant relation between language learners' beliefs and gender was observed. For example, Tercanlioglu (2005) found no significant difference between male and female participants' language

learning beliefs in Turkey. Also, Bernat and Llyod (2007) used BALLI instrument as an analytical tool to investigate the relationship between beliefs about foreign language learning and gender among 155 female and 107 male EFL students. The findings showed that male and female students held similar beliefs about language learning.

6.2 Pedagogical implications

Based on the results of this study, language teachers can be assured of positive relationship between the learners' motivation and expectations and their attitudes towards their teacher. So, teachers can provide opportunities for students to share their own beliefs with peers and teachers, discuss language learning beliefs in class, and encourage the positive language learning beliefs. Consequently it will produce positive attitude towards language learning. Teachers may gain further insights in students' English learning situations with the understanding of learners' beliefs about language learning, as Horwitz (1988) suggests that better understanding of students' beliefs of language learning may allow language teachers to better understand students' expectations and satisfactions with their language class.

Furthermore, this study removes doubt from the syllabus designers and materials developers' mind if they are uncertain about the inclusion of providing students knowledge regarding language learning and setting goals for students in learning English.

Concerning the role of age, it was concluded that there was a significant difference between males and females in terms of their beliefs towards foreign language aptitude ($sig. = .01, p < .05$) and difficulty of language leaning ($sig. = .004, p < .05$). The results indicated that females had the stronger beliefs in foreign language learning than males. The results also showed that females' beliefs had higher concern about difficulty of language learning compare to males.

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