

**ELT Student Teachers' Beliefs About Language Learning: The Case of
Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University**

Hacer DEMIR

Mustafa SEVIK

ABSTRACT

Learning English is a must because English is an inextricable element of people's academic lives and it is a highly popular and important issue that millions of people need to understand and learn in our global world. Beliefs about learning a foreign language are thought to be a key factor in determining why and how people learn English. Having a serious look at the beliefs of student teachers about language learning serves as a facilitator to find out and recover the roadblocks on the path to learning and teaching English. The goal of this study is to determine English Language Teaching (ELT) student teachers' beliefs about language learning as well as whether there is any difference according to their gender and class using the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) at Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University. BALLI (Horwitz, 1988) is a self-report questionnaire with 34 statements and five categories elaborating on the beliefs about the difficulty of language learning, language learning aptitude, the nature of language learning, learning and The means of the four categories out of five -foreign language aptitude mean, the difficulty of language learning mean, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies- were high. Motivations and expectations mean is very high. The overall results of the inventory differed significantly according to gender in favour of females over males. Foreign language aptitude results, the nature of language learning results, learning and communication strategies results and motivations and expectations results of the student teachers differed significantly according to gender in favour of females over males. Difficulty of language learning results have not differed significantly according to gender. Neither of five categories' results have differed significantly according to class.

Keywords: Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), ELT, Foreign Language Teaching, Language Learning Beliefs, Student Teachers.

Introduction

For the last three decades, it has been proposed that what language learners and foreign language teachers believe can influence both their experiences and behaviors in their learning and teaching experience. Foreign language learners have a variety of beliefs and attitudes about language learning (Horwitz, 1987) and the fact that the revelation of beliefs means a great importance to be able to comfort teaching and learning processes resulted in the creation of beliefs about language learning inventory. As clarified by Horwitz (1985, p.333) “so that prospective teachers may become more receptive to new information about language teaching, the methods instructor can encourage recognition and understanding of the beliefs these prospective teachers already have. Making the students’ belief systems explicit is the first step in their development as foreign language teachers.”

It has long been known that language learners hold positive or negative beliefs about the target language they are learning. While positive thoughts and beliefs contribute to one’s learning experience, negative thoughts, prejudices, misconceptions, fossilized and unbreakable beliefs may cause dramatic handicaps during this process. Victori and Lockhart (1995) differentiate between insightful beliefs held by successful learners and negative or restricted beliefs held by less successful learners, coming to the conclusion that if students develop or maintain preconceived notions about their own learning and place increased focus on factors beyond their control, they are unlikely to accept a responsible and productive approach to learning and may not ever become self - reliant. A person may act upon the belief that language learning means a lot of vocabulary build-up and another person may act upon the belief that language learning means a perfect command of grammar. While the former one equips himself with vocabulary studies, the latter equips himself with grammar activities and drills structure all the time. Again, the same attitude may prevail about the belief that younger people learn easily and this belief restrain that person from being successful whether or not he is a young or adult learner. One’s preconceived notion about his own effectiveness influences his success and performance in the class, no matter he is a student or a teacher. It is of vital importance to observe students’ and teachers’ attitudes and beliefs because they think their beliefs are the truth. According to Puchta (1999), beliefs are both driving principles and potent sensory filters for students' achievement; they behave as if they really are true. People accept a belief as true, regardless of whether they believe it consciously or unconsciously, and that belief guides their thoughts and actions (Borg, 2001). Beliefs can be thought as important incentives for behaviors. According to McDonough (1995), our own decisions on how to proceed are based on what we believe, what we value, what we believe is necessary, how we choose to behave, and how we deal with challenges. Successful students can develop insightful beliefs about language courses, their own competences and the application of effective strategies, such as the amount of time required to achieve fluency, the relative difficulty of languages, the appropriate age to start language learning, the roles of

grammar, vocabulary, and communication in language learning and other aspects of the learning experience (Yang, 1999). Indifference to learning, poor learning and memory, class anxiety, and a bad perception toward autonomy are all possible outcomes of incorrect or uninformed beliefs about language learning (Victori & Lockhart, 1995). Language learning beliefs, according to Barcelos (2000), are equivalent with preconceived assumptions, opinions and misconceptions. As a result, these beliefs must be discovered and corrected in order to assist language learners individually in setting more achievable goals, reducing their anxiety and developing more accomplished learning practices (Abdi & Asadi, 2015).

When students enroll in a language class, they bring all of their personal qualities within them, including their beliefs, attitude, and linguistic patterns, according to Hosseini and Pourmandnia (2013). Student teachers' beliefs take roots from their past and recent schooling, in this way, their professional learning is constructed and blended according to majority of students' belief systems through their education. Students' pre-existing belief systems are filtered through the courses they attend at universities. Recognizing students' beliefs in teacher education programs allows students to become more conscious of what they carry to their education and professors to adjust their methods classes precisely for the students (Horwitz, 1996). Johnson and Golombek (2018) emphasize the need of better understanding students, both in terms of their perceptions of themselves as future teachers/instructors and their long-term aspirations.

This study aims to have an understanding of ELT student teachers beliefs in Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University about foreign language learning as regards to the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, foreign language aptitude, learning and communicating strategies and motivation and expectations. Whether language learning beliefs harbor a relation to gender and age is also aimed to be investigated in a Turkish context. More specifically, the present study addresses the following research questions:

1-What beliefs do ELT student teachers at Mehmet Akif Ersoy University have about language learning?

2-Do gender and class of ELT student teachers affect language learning beliefs?

There are numerous studies on beliefs about language learning, but studies on beliefs of ELT students are limited. The pedagogical significance of this research can be described with its potential to recognize prospective teachers' beliefs about language learning in order to assist them in identifying their beliefs and their effects on their future teaching.

Literature Review

Language learning beliefs has gained a vital importance as a result of an inevitable demand for English learning. Horwitz (1987) referred language learner beliefs as assumptions, thoughts and ideas of language learners, basing them on previous learning environments which may be formal or informal. Language learning beliefs, according to Victori and Lockhart (1995), comprise generic preconceptions that learners have about themselves as learner, about variables that impact language learning, and about the nature of language education. Learners' initial assumptions about their duties and the responsibilities of teachers and toward teaching materials, as well as learners' first behaviors towards their own duties, are all examples of learning beliefs, according to Holec (1987). Beliefs, according to Gardner (1988), are expectations that instructors, parents and students have about the entire study of second language learning.

Clarification of beliefs of both learners and teachers owing to their probable negative effects on teaching and learning is a need and this fact makes studying student teachers' beliefs a matter of priority in that they are both learners and future language teachers. According to Lortie (1975), one's personal patterns in his mind are not only important, but also essential to becoming a teacher and he used the term "the apprenticeship of observation" which is constructed in the years students allocate at school. The experience they have include beliefs about what it demanded to be an effective language teacher and how students should take their steps. Although they are mostly unarticulated or expressed only in a simple form, these beliefs are transferred into their field of study in teaching. Most of these beliefs are in line with teacher educators' or academics' educational goals for teacher candidates, while others, regrettably, are not. Some student teachers' beliefs may be uncomfortable, such as an exaggerated optimism or an egocentric bias, which serves for themselves only and that they regard the most successful teaching as their own. They believe they will not experience the challenges the other teachers face and some feel they will be better teachers than their classmates. Because of these reasons, studying student teachers' beliefs is viewed as a facilitator to awaken them to what they have in their minds and how this could be beneficial or detrimental to their future teaching and thus delivering the information about their beliefs.

Horwitz (1988) investigated the beliefs of a group of first-year foreign language students who were studying German, French and Spanish. The responses of the students were remarkably consistent. Regardless, the data revealed a few tiny differences across the groups. Most of the students thought difficulty of language is dependent and majority of them thought the target language is of medium difficulty. The majority felt 1-2 years would be enough to learn another language. They were mostly optimistic about their speaking abilities. Many of the students did not see themselves as “particularly gifted language learners”. Most of them thought it is easier learning a language for children than adults. They seemed against the belief about math-science and related to learning a language or women’s being better than men about learning a language. For the item 33 Americans’ being good at language learning, the result is concerning, many of them seems in disagreement. German and Spanish students were into translation (70-75%), but French students were not (15%). They all seemed to learn the language to know its speakers better. In another study of hers, Horwitz (1999) compared the beliefs of different cultural groups. Although there were some differences in terms of beliefs across American, Korean and Turkish heritage groups, there were no clear cultural differences in responses to individual BALLI items. Beliefs may have differed depending on their age and professional level due to variances in beliefs between French and American educators. Several of the disparities between the four American groups, as well as the two groups of learners with Korean and Turkish ancestry, might be traced to differences in learning environments rather than culture.

Rıfkın (2000) conducted a very comprehensive study. Learners' beliefs in their first year of instruction were compared to learners' beliefs at other levels. Learners' beliefs in commonly versus less commonly taught languages were compared. Learners' beliefs at public research institutions versus learners' beliefs at small private liberal arts colleges were compared. The study was applied to 1,000 learners of 10 different languages at three different institutions. In the study were put forward three null hypotheses: 1-There is no relationship between beliefs about language learning and level of instruction. 2-There is no relationship between language learning beliefs and the language or language type studied. 3-There is no relationship between beliefs about language learning and the nature of the institution. The first null hypothesis had to be rejected because learners at the first-year level held beliefs that were significantly different from those held by learners at other levels in. Second null hypothesis had to be rejected because learners of less commonly taught languages did not have significantly different beliefs about language learning than learners of more commonly taught languages. On the contrary, learners of commonly taught languages held similar beliefs to those held by their counterparts learning less commonly taught languages about some statements. It’s probable that the particular language or its difficulty, rather than the language group (commonly or less commonly taught languages), has a bigger role in forming or forecasting learners' beliefs.) Third null hypothesis had to be rejected. It was probable that the individual institution or location of the institution, instead of the nature of the institution (large research institution or small private college) is an

important factor in forming or forecasting learners' beliefs. The rejection rates of the three null hypotheses were varied.

Pajares (1992), in his article about the language learning beliefs, paid attention to the beliefs of teachers and teacher candidates and remarked a focus to educational field and informed the field through his study in a way that the deficiency of such kind of research could benefit from. The difficulty in studying teachers' beliefs may have been caused by definitional problems and poor conceptualizations and different concepts of beliefs and belief structure. The article first examined the meaning given to beliefs and how those meanings differed from that of knowledge and provided a definition of belief and explored belief structures and their nature as in the path of main researchers in the field.

Peacock (2001) conducted a longitudinal research looking at how 146 trainee ESL teachers' beliefs regarding learning changed over the course of three-year program. BALLI was used to gather first-year student teachers' beliefs on language learning in comparison to teacher beliefs. Because of the fact that trainees may have had erroneous beliefs about language learning at the start of the program, it was intended that as they studied methodology, these beliefs would alter. It was thought that working on incorrect student teachers' beliefs was important because they could have a long-term impact on their future teaching experience. While student teachers progressed through their second and third years of study, developmental changes were monitored; but there were not notable changes in their beliefs. It was concluded that significant effort should be done to eradicate any negative trainee beliefs if available before trainee teachers begin teaching.

Richardson (2003) revisited the literature in her study on teacher candidates' beliefs to uncover the relationship between beliefs and actions and the changeability of these beliefs. She first developed a definition of beliefs in her paper on how those constructs differed from knowledge. She explained what was known about teacher candidates' beliefs on a variety of topics and where these beliefs may have come from. Recognizing student beliefs affect the ways in which teacher candidates approach the teacher education program and what they learn, because beliefs are taken as anticipated or unanticipated outcomes of the educational process. The focus in the preservice teacher education literature caught attention of many scholars and Richardson (2003) because of the fact that student teachers brought strong beliefs about teaching and learning with them at the end of twelve or more years as students in formal education. How or whether or not these misdirected or the fact that incorrect or ineffectual beliefs may be changed during the teacher education program was taken in hand in the paper. It was suggested that beliefs were important in the education of student teacher education and that their change and development should be a priority to uncover.

Vibulphol (2004) analyzed pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about language learning and the link between their beliefs and teaching practices during their practice teaching. 42 pre-service EFL

teachers completed BALLI before and after their practical teaching. Foreign language aptitude existed and they possessed it. English was a medium-difficult language that anyone could learn to speak fluently in five years. Some skills were found to be more difficult than others. Learning grammar rules, vocabulary and cultural knowledge was important and language immersion was beneficial. Learning how to translate was unnecessary.

Altan (2006) conducted BALLI research at five universities to 248 students. The participants were from the departments of English, German, French, Japanese, and Arabic. As a result of the research, it was found that students had various beliefs with varying degrees of realism. 74 of the student teachers were males and 174 of them were females. Most of them thought that difficulty of language is dependent. Japanese and Arabic language students rated the languages as very difficult, French and German language students followed them in lesser degrees. 70% of English language students believed English is an easy language to learn. Most of the students thought 1-2, 3-5 years would be enough to learn a language. Most of them believed in their own special abilities to learn and some people's being born with a special ability. Majority of them thought that everyone could learn a language. Most of the students stayed neutral against Turkish people's ability to learn a language and the result was found quite negative and concerning. 55% of them disagreed with the item stating learning a language is translation from target language.

Kunt and Özdemir (2009) checked possible change of beliefs of students who took methodology courses at the beginning and at the end of their teacher education program. BALLI was applied to pre-service English language teachers. The results indicated that there were various beliefs among all the pre-service teachers. The results showed that prospective teachers' engagement in methodology courses seemed to have a little impact on the improvement of their beliefs. The study had the objectives to compare the student teachers' beliefs about language learning in the first and last year of a pre-service program and to describe the difference between the beliefs of students taking the initial and those taking the final methodology courses. There was not significant difference among the beliefs of students taking the first and the last methodology course. Nearly all beliefs of pre-service teachers stayed the same. They believed that some languages were easier to learn and majority of them agreed that the language they would teach in the future was of medium difficulty. It was found that student teachers believed that children were better learners and that if one had spoken a foreign language, it would be easier for them to learn another. Most of them believed that everyone could learn to speak a foreign language and believed that some people had a special ability to learn foreign languages. They believed they were among the people who had special ability to learn a language. They believed that repetition and practice were of great importance. Second and fourth year student teachers believed that it was important to speak the language with excellent pronunciation. Most of them disagreed with the belief that one shouldn't say anything until one could say it correctly. Majority of them stated that speaking English is very important in their country and nearly all believed that speaking English would give them opportunities to find better job.

Altan (2012) investigated 217 ELT students and BALLI was used to collect the data. Most of the students supported the item about children's language learning ability; the item about everyone can learn a language, the item about people who speaks more than one language are intelligent. They did not agree with the items for Turkish people abilities to learn a language, women were better learners than men. Nearly 40% of them thought English was a medium difficult language and could be learned 1-2 years or 3-5 years and student teachers believed that some languages were easier to learn. Most of them were into vocabulary learning, nearly 30% of them into grammar-based learning. They mostly disagreed that learning a new language is translation from target language. They seemed in favor of communicative environment opportunities for practicing the language.

Çimen (2015) investigated pre-service and in-service English language teachers' beliefs on language learning as well as whether there were any disparities between their beliefs. As a result of her study, fourth-year and in-service teachers aware found to be more confident in their language learning abilities than pre-service teachers. People who spoke more than one language were considered to be clever by first-year pre-service teachers, but the belief appeared to eradicate as education and experience increased with fourth-year and in-service teachers. It was found that learning a language were more difficult for first-year pre-service teachers than for fourth-year pre-service teachers and in-service teachers. Translation played a big role for most of the first years although for fourth years and in-service teachers, it did not not. The first years believed that grammar was the most important part, on the other hand, the belief decreased to only 9% and 10% with fourth years and in-service teachers. Learners' beliefs of the importance of excellent pronunciation alter as they got more education in language teaching and experience with the language and teaching. In-service teachers and fourth-year students were more optimistic than first-year students about the importance of speaking English.

Hişmanoğlu (2016) investigated the beliefs of EFL students in preparatory programs, taking into account the effects of gender, language ability and foreign country experience on language learners' beliefs about language learning. 149 EFL students took part in the study. as a result of the study, it was found that male students had more positive beliefs about language learning than female students in terms of foreign language aptitude, difficulty of language learning and learning and communication strategies. Learners with a second language knowledge background had more positive beliefs in terms of foreign language aptitude, learning and communication strategies and the nature of language learning. Language learners with foreign country experience had more positive beliefs about language learning than language learners without foreign country experience in terms of language learning difficulty, learning and communication strategies, and language learning nature.

In the studies conducted with BALLI taking into account gender effect, for instance, Tercanlıoğlu (2005) looked into language learning beliefs of pre-service EFL teachers with an addition of gender effect on beliefs. BALLI was completed by 118 EFL student teachers. The category of motivations and expectations received the highest score in the research. According to the analysis of gender-related differences, the results did not show significant differences between males and females.

Bernat and Lloyd (2007) investigated the relationship between gender and language learning beliefs in their study. Only one item was statistically significant, while another was only slightly significant, indicating that males and females had similar beliefs about language learning. Females were more inclined than men to feel that multilingual people are extremely brilliant. Females were less likely than men to like conversing in English.

Daif-Allah (2012) examined 250 male and female students' beliefs about learning including the role of gender, using BALLI. The results showed that they have positive and realistic beliefs on foreign language learning, communication skills, motivation, and expectations. About the difficulty and nature of language learning, males and females had similar beliefs. In the elements of English language aptitude, learning and communication strategies, motivations and expectations, statistical gender disparities were shown to be significant.

Yazıcı (2014), in her study, aimed to see if there was a statistically significant difference in attitudes toward language acquisition between male and female university prep class students. BALLI was customized for Turkish EFL students. Except for the item 30, the study found no significant differences between males and females. The study's only statistically significant difference involved the association between speaking multiple languages and being extremely brilliant. The item for those who spoke more than one language were exceptionally intelligent received substantially more approval from female students.

Mudra (2016) looked into the beliefs of prospective language teachers about language learning in addition to gender differences in their beliefs. Conducted with BALLI, 100 males and female EFL students participated in the study. Except for a few items, there was not any significant gender difference in beliefs about English learning. One difference in terms of beliefs is about the item of whether or not learners who are skilled at math will have difficulty in learning English. More female students believed in the item, but only fewer male students did. Another difference between males and females is whether or not they will ultimately be able to communicate effectively in English.

Context

This quantitative study explored student teachers' beliefs about language learning in a university context and it also identified the relationship between students' beliefs about language learning, their gender and class.

Participants

Participants of this study consist of Mehmet Akif Ersoy University's English Language Teaching (ELT) department's students in Burdur. Total number of the students who participated in the study were 211. %59.2 (125) of the participants were females and %40.8 (86) of the participants were males. %14.2 (30) of the participants were from preparatory class, %26.5 (56) of the participants were freshmen, %23.2(49) of the participants were sophomores, %15.6 (33) of the participants were juniors, %20.4 (43) of the participants were seniors.

Data Collection and Analysis

The instrument held in this study is called the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), created by Elaine Kolker Horwitz in 1988. The study was conducted in the second week of fall semester of 2021-2022 academic year using Beliefs BALLI. The study necessitated the quantitative research and analysis of data. Due to the fact that the participants were pre-service English teachers, the scales were applied to the participants in their original form in English. Percentages and mean scores were generated to indicate descriptive results in response to first and second research questions. Frequency and percentage analyzes were used to determine the descriptive characteristics of the participants and to analyze the answers they gave to 34 items in the inventory. Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to analyze the inventory. The data obtained through BALLI were analyzed using descriptive statistics in (the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) SPSS 22.0. The t-test was used to investigate the differences according to the gender of the students, and the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was beneficial in the analyses according to the class, because the data indicated a normal distribution according to the Normality Test Results below.

Procedure

The researcher informed all relevant departments about the study and sought authorization from the ethics committee. Instructors informed their students about the research in advance and the researcher was permitted to gather data at the end of each instructor's lesson. The inventory was applied by the researcher at the end of each course for approximately 15 minutes. During the data collection process, a stress-free environment was intended to be created so that participants would fill out the questionnaires accurately and completely. Some of the surveys, however, were discovered to be incomplete and were removed from the study. Finally, the researcher gathered

all of the ELT student teachers' surveys and processed them for data analysis. Only the students whose inventories were fully filled were taken into account and that had already been stated in the forms that Mehmet Akif Ersoy University demanded. While applying the inventories, they were required to fill those consent forms as well.

Results

Findings of The Difficulty of Language Learning Category

BALLI items B3, B4, B6, B14, B24 and B28 defines the beliefs about the difficulty of language learning.

Table 1.

Percentages and Frequencies of Beliefs about the Difficulty of Language Learning

		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		NAND		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Some languages are easier to learn than others.	B3	2	0,9	2	0,9	8	3,8	87	41,2	112	53,1	4,445	0,704
The language I am trying to learn is: A=Very difficult B=Difficult C=Medium difficulty D = Easy E = Very Easy	B4	12	5,7	43	20,4	110	52,1	42	19,9	4	1,9	2,919	0,839
I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well.	B6	2	0,9	3	1,4	28	13,3	75	35,5	103	48,8	4,299	0,823
If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take him/her to become fluent? A=less than a year B = 1-2 years C = 3-5 years D = 5-10 years E = you can't learn a	B14	10	4,7	13	6,2	63	29,9	90	42,7	35	16,6	3,602	0,992

language in 1 hour a day													
It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	B24	45	21,3	85	40,3	47	22,3	20	9,5	14	6,6	2,398	1,122
It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.	B28	17	8,1	46	21,8	31	14,7	65	30,8	52	24,6	3,422	1,290

They agreed with the statement B3 at a very high level ($\bar{x}=4,445$). They agreed with the statement B6 at a very high level ($\bar{x}=4,299$). They agreed with the statement B24 at a weak level ($\bar{x}=2,398$). They agreed with the statement B28 at a high level ($\bar{x}=3,422$).

For B4, the language I am trying to learn is: A=Very difficult B=Difficult C= Medium difficulty D = Easy E = Very Easy

%5,7 (n=12) of the respondents found English very difficult, %20,4 (n=43) of the respondents found English difficult, %52,1 (n=110) of the respondents found English medium-difficulty, %19,9 (n=42) of the respondents found English easy, %1,9 (n=4) of the respondents found English very easy. They mostly believed that English is a medium-difficult language to learn.

For B14, If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take him/her to become fluent? A=less than a year B = 1-2 years C = 3-5 years D = 5-10 years E = you can't learn a language in 1 hour a day,

%4,7 (n=10) of the respondents opted for you can't learn a language in 1 hour a day; (n=13) of the respondents opted for 1-2 years; %29,9 of the respondents opted for 3-5 years; %42,7 of the respondents opted for 5-10 years; %16,6 of the respondents opted for less than a year. They mostly believed the optimum learning period of language learning is between 5-10 years.

Findings of Foreign Language Aptitude Category

BALLI items B1, B2, B10, B15, B22, B29, B32, B33 and B34 defines the beliefs the foreign language aptitude.

Table 2.

Percentages and Frequencies of Beliefs about the Foreign Language Aptitude

		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		NAND		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	B1	4	1,9	10	4,7	4	1,9	65	30,8	128	60,7	4,436	0,894
Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn a foreign language.	B2	9	4,3	17	8,1	36	17,1	90	42,7	59	28,0	3,820	1,063
It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	B10	9	4,3	12	5,7	28	13,3	101	47,9	61	28,9	3,915	1,015
I have a foreign language aptitude.	B15	1	0,5	5	2,4	48	22,7	98	46,4	59	28,0	3,991	0,805
Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.	B22	73	34,6	52	24,6	69	32,7	9	4,3	8	3,8	2,180	1,076
People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.	B29	89	42,2	73	34,6	29	13,7	15	7,1	5	2,4	1,929	1,028
People who speak more than one language well	B32	14	6,6	39	18,5	55	26,1	63	29,9	40	19,0	3,360	1,176

are very intelligent.

Turkish people are good

at learning foreign languages. B33 95 45,00 77 36,5 24 11,4 6 2,8 9 4,3 1,848 1,022

Everyone can learn to

speak a foreign language. B34 4 1,9 7 3,3 $\frac{1}{4}$ 6,6 75 35,5 111 52,6 4,336 0,887

They agreed with the statement B1 at a very high level ($\bar{x}=4,436$). They agreed with the statement B2 at a high level ($\bar{x}=3,820$). They agreed with the statement B10 at a high level ($\bar{x}=3,915$). They agreed with the statement B15 at a high level ($\bar{x}=3,991$). They agreed with the statement B34 at a very high level ($\bar{x}=4,336$). They agreed with the statement B22 at a weak level ($\bar{x}=2,180$). They agreed with the statement B29 at a weak level ($\bar{x}=1,929$). They agreed with the statement B32 at a medium level ($\bar{x}=3,360$). They agreed with the statement B33 at a weak level ($\bar{x}=1,848$).

Findings of The Nature of Language Learning Category

BALLI items B5, B8, B11, B20, B25, B26, B28 deals with the beliefs about the nature of learning.

Table 3.

Percentages and Frequencies of Beliefs about The Nature of Language Learning

		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		NAND		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
The structure of English is different from that of Turkish.	B5	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	21	10,0	190	90,0	4,900	0,300
It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language.	B8	6	2,8	37	17,5	48	22,7	77	36,5	43	20,4	3,540	1,088
It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.	B11	0	0,0	2	0,9	8	3,8	42	19,9	159	75,4	4,697	0,588
Learning a foreign language mostly a matter of learning many new vocabulary words.	B16	5	2,4	13	6,2	26	12,3	102	48,3	65	30,8	3,991	0,946
Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a many of grammar rules.	B20	35	16,6	62	29,4	53	25,1	52	24,6	9	4,3	2,706	1,138
Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.	B25	6	2,8	12	5,7	16	7,6	97	46,0	80	37,9	4,104	0,965

Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.

B26	12	5,7	55	26,1	75	35,5	54	25,6	15	7,1	3,024	1,016
-----	----	-----	----	------	----	------	----	------	----	-----	-------	-------

It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.

B28	17	8,1	46	21,8	31	14,7	65	30,8	52	24,6	3,422	1,290
-----	----	-----	----	------	----	------	----	------	----	------	-------	-------

They agreed with the statement B5 at a very high level ($\bar{x}=4,900$). They agreed with the statement B25 at a high level ($\bar{x}=4,104$). They agreed with the statement B28 at a high level ($\bar{x}=3,422$). They agreed with the statement B8 at a high level ($\bar{x}=3,540$). They agreed with the statement B11 at a very high level ($\bar{x}=4,697$). They agreed with the statement B16 at a high level ($\bar{x}=3,991$). They agreed with the statement B20 at a medium level ($\bar{x}=2,706$). They agreed with the statement B26 at a medium level ($\bar{x}=3,024$).

Findings of Learning and Communication Strategies Category

BALLI items B7, B9, B12, B13, B17, B18, B19 and B21 deals with the beliefs about learning and communication strategies.

Table 4.

Percentages and Frequencies of Beliefs about the Learning and Communication Strategies

		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.	B7	30	14,2	72	34,1	37	17,5	48	22,7	24	11,4	2,829	1,253
You should not say anything in the foreign language you can say it correctly.	B9	3	1,4	21	10,0	96	45,5	69	32,7	22	10,4	3,408	0,859
If I heard someone speaking the language I am trying to learn, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language.	B12	2	0,9	11	5,2	28	13,3	93	44,1	77	36,5	4,100	0,886
It is okay to guess if you do not know a word in the foreign language.	B13	7	3,3	13	6,2	39	18,5	97	46,0	55	26,1	3,853	0,987
It is important to repeat and practice often.	B17	0	0,0	3	1,4	8	3,8	26	12,3	174	82,5	4,758	0,588
I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.	B18	12	5,7	41	19,4	47	22,3	69	32,7	42	19,9	3,417	1,174
If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard	B19	39	18,5	65	30,8	39	18,5	38	18,0	30	14,2	2,787	1,326

to get rid of them later on.

It is important to practice

in the language laboratory. B21 0 0,0 12 5,7 41 19,4 109 51,7 49 23,2 3,924 0,807

The participants agreed with the statement B7 at a medium level ($\bar{x}=2,829$). They agreed with the statement B9 at a high level ($\bar{x}=3,408$). They agreed with the statement B13 at a high level ($\bar{x}=3,853$). They agreed with the statement B17 at a very high level ($\bar{x}=4,758$). They agreed with the statement B19 at a medium level ($\bar{x}=2,787$). They agreed with the statement B12 at a high level ($\bar{x}=4,100$). They agreed with the statement B18 at a high level ($\bar{x}=3,417$). They agreed with the statement B21 at a high level ($\bar{x}=3,924$).

Findings of Motivation and Expectations

BALLI items B23, B27, B30, and B31 deals with the beliefs about motivation and expectations.

Table 5.

Percentages and Frequencies of Beliefs about the Motivations and Expectations

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		NAND		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
If I speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it. B3	23	1,4	6	2,8	7	3,3	57	27,0	138	65,4	4,521	0,813
If I learn to speak this language very well it will help me get a B7	23	1,4	4	1,9	12	5,7	66	31,3	126	59,7	4,460	0,806

god job.

Turkish people think that it is important to speak a foreign language.

B												
30	0,0	1	0,5	55	26,1	85	40,3	70	33,2	4,062	0,781	
0												

I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.

B												
34	1,9	2	0,9	16	7,6	66	31,3	123	58,3	4,431	0,827	
1												

They agreed with the statement B23 at a very high level ($\bar{x}=4,521$). They agreed with the statement B27 at a very high level ($\bar{x}=4,460$). They agreed with the statement B30 at a high level ($\bar{x}=4,062$). They agreed with the statement B31 at a very high level ($\bar{x}=4,431$).

Findings of Five Categories in terms of Means and Standard Deviation

When the answers given by the participants of the research to the statements in general and under categories, the results have been gathered as below.

Table 6.

Inventory Point Means

	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
General Scale/Inventory	211	3,659	0,271	2,880	4,410
FL Aptitude	211	3,486	0,398	2,220	4,560
The Difficulty of Language Learning	211	3,514	0,450	2,000	4,670
The Nature of Language Learning	211	3,798	0,423	2,620	4,750

Learning and Communicating Strategies	211	3,440	0,410	2,250	4,750
Motivations and Expectations	211	4,369	0,499	2,250	5,000

Participants' results of means has been found as follows: The "General Scale" mean of the participants is high 3.659 ± 0.271 (Min=2.88; Max=4.41); "English Foreign Language Aptitude" mean is high $3,486 \pm 0.398$ (Min=2.22; Max=4.56); "the Difficulty of Language Learning" mean is high $3,514 \pm 0,450$ (Min=2; Max=4.67); "the Nature of Language Learning" mean is high 3.798 ± 0.423 (Min=2.62; Max=4.75); "Learning and Communication Strategies" mean is high 3.440 ± 0.410 (Min=2.25; Max=4.75); "Motivations and Expectations" mean is very high 4.369 ± 0.499 (Min=2.25; Max=5).

Findings Related to The Effect of Gender on Learning Beliefs

As to the gender differences, the results have been gathered as below. The five categories and the overall inventory were assessed in terms of gender differentiation.

Table 7.

Differentiation of Inventory Scores by Gender

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	sd	p
General Scale	Female	125	3,718	0,263	3,941	209	0,000
	Male	86	3,574	0,261			
English FL Aptitude	Female	125	3,546	0,414	2,667	209	0,008
	Male	86	3,399	0,359			
The Difficulty of Language Learning	Female	125	3,553	0,473	1,526	209	0,128
	Male	86	3,457	0,411			
The Nature of Language Learning	Female	125	3,865	0,412	2,822	209	0,005
	Male	86	3,701	0,421			

Learning and Communicating Strategies	Female	125	3,504	0,399	2,797	209	0,006
	Male	86	3,346	0,410			
Motivations and Expectations	Female	125	4,430	0,436	2,178	209	0,040
	Male	86	4,279	0,569			
Independent Samples T-Test							

The overall scale scores of the participants differ significantly according to gender ($t(209)=3.941$; $p=0.000<0.05$). General scale scores of females ($\bar{x}=3,718$) were found higher than males' general scale scores ($\bar{x}=3.574$). English foreign language aptitude scores of the participants according to gender differ significantly ($t(209)=2.667$; $p=0.008<0.05$). English foreign language aptitude scores of females ($\bar{x}=3,546$) are higher than male students' English foreign aptitude scores ($\bar{x}=3,399$).

The nature of language learning scores of the participants differ significantly according to gender ($t(209)=2.822$; $p=0.005<0.05$). The nature of language learning scores of female students ($\bar{x}=3,865$) are higher than male students ($\bar{x}=3,701$).

Scores of learning and communication strategies differ significantly according to gender ($t(209)=2.797$; $p=0.006<0.05$). Learning and communication strategies scores of female students ($\bar{x}=3,504$) are found to be higher than male students ($\bar{x}=3,346$).

The motivations and expectations scores of the participants differ significantly according to gender ($t(209)=2.178$; $p=0.040<0.05$). The motivations and expectations scores of female students ($\bar{x}=4.430$) are found to be higher than male students' scores ($\bar{x}=4.279$).

Difficulty of language learning scores of the participants do not differ significantly according to gender ($p>0,05$).

Findings Related to The Effect of Class on Learning Beliefs

As to the class distribution, the results have been gathered as below in general and under categories.

Table 8.**Differentiation of Inventory Points According to Class – Analysis of One-Way Variance**

	Group	N	Mean	SD	F	p
General Scale	Preparatory	30	3,679	0,273	1,363	0,248
	1	56	3,709	0,237		
	2	49	3,589	0,231		
	3	33	3,673	0,282		
	4	43	3,650	0,332		
English FL Aptitude	Preparatory	30	3,448	0,442	1,264	0,285
	1	56	3,587	0,409		
	2	49	3,438	0,350		
	3	33	3,465	0,335		
	4	43	3,452	0,439		
The Difficulty of Language Learning	Preparatory	30	3,456	0,374	1,583	0,180
	1	56	3,586	0,463		
	2	49	3,486	0,421		
	3	33	3,621	0,425		
	4	43	3,411	0,516		
The Nature of Language Learning	Preparatory	30	3,867	0,411	2,280	0,062
	1	56	3,804	0,356		
	2	49	3,663	0,451		
	3	33	3,928	0,351		
	4	43	3,797	0,497		

Learning and Communicating Strategies	Preparatory	30	3,508	0,478		
	1	56	3,431	0,343		
	2	49	3,383	0,338	0,636	0,637
	3	33	3,413	0,448		
	4	43	3,488	0,485		
Motivations and Expectations	Preparatory	30	4,475	0,466		
	1	56	4,455	0,465		
	2	49	4,301	0,456	1,336	0,258
	3	33	4,280	0,681		
	4	43	4,326	0,435		

Analysis of One-Way Variance

General scale, foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, motivations and expectations scores of the participants do not differ significantly according to class ($p > 0.05$).

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to identify language learning beliefs of ELT student teachers of Mehmet Akif Ersoy University (MAKU), taking also into account the effects of gender and class they are enrolled in on language learning beliefs. Horwitz's (1988) BALLI was used for the collection of the data and the results reveal that ELT university students have positive and realistic beliefs about language learning as regard to the difficulty of language learning, language learning aptitude, motivation and expectations about, the nature of FL learning and communicating strategies in foreign language learning.

ELT students of Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University were found to believe some languages' easiness to learn and their own ability to learn English ultimately. They believed English was a

medium difficult language to learn and a foreign language could be learned 5-10 years and 3-5 years. They found reading and writing easier in comparison to speaking and understanding the language. They believed in child learning superiority over adult learning and also believed in that some people were born with special talents to learn a foreign language and people who had already learns a foreign language could master another one easier. They believed in that everyone could learn a language and specially they believed in their own aptitude to learn English. They did not believe in female superiority of language learning and also believed that learning English was not related to learning math or science or related with learning other disciplines. They semi-agreed multilingual people's being clever. They did not to believe in Turkish people's being good language learners. They seemed highly aware of the differences the structures of Turkish language and the importance of language laboratories. They believed in the importance of language learning in that foreign culture and the importance of talking with native speakers when they had the chance. They believed that language learning required to learn vocabulary most and grammar second and did not seem to highly believe in grammar-based learning. They did not believe that language learning meant translation from that language. They did not believe in the necessity of speaking with an excellent accent and thought if a learner was allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it would be more difficult to correct later; but they believed in the correct use of English during speaking and also found it was okay to guess the meaning of an unknown word. They were shown to be self-conscious during speaking. They believed in the chances English would create for them as job opportunities and believed that Turkish people thought it was important to know English.

To summarize, transitioning from a student to a teacher is a very effort-demanding task and defining what ELT student teachers believe about language learning may be an constructive beginning to facilitate their education and in their quest to become effective teachers.

References

- Abdi, H. & Asadi, B. (2015). A synopsis of researches on teachers' and students' beliefs about language learning. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*. Volume 3, Issue 4, 104-114.
- Altan, M. Z. (2006). Beliefs about language learning of foreign language-major university students. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 31(2), 45-52.
- Altan, M. Z. (2012). Pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about foreign language learning. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(4), 481-493.
- Barcelos, A. M. F. (2000). Understanding teachers' and students' language learning beliefs in experience: A Deweyan approach. The University of Alabama.
- Bernat, E. & Lloyd, R. (2007). Exploring the gender effect on EFL learners' beliefs about language learning. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology*. Vol 7, 2007, pp 79-91
- Borg, M. (2001). Teachers' Beliefs. *ELT Journal*, 55(2), 186-87.
- Çimen, Ş. S. (2015). A comparative study on language learning beliefs of pre-service and in-service EFL teachers. *ELT Research Journal*, 4(4), 266-285.
- Daif-Allah, A. S. (2012). Beliefs about foreign language learning and their relationship to gender. *English Language Teaching*, 5(10), 20-33.
- Gardner, R. C. (1988). Attitudes and motivation. *Annual Review Of Applied Linguistics*, 9, 135-148.

- Hismanoglu, M. (2016). A study on English preparatory program EFL learners' beliefs about language learning in relation to gender, second foreign language knowledge and foreign country experience. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 5(5), 109-118.
- Holec, H. (1987). The learner as manager: Managing learning or managing to learn? In A. Wenden & R. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning*. 145-157.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1985). Using student beliefs about language learning and teaching in the foreign language methods course. *Foreign Language Annals*, 18(4), 333-340.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1987). Surveying student beliefs about language learning. *Learner Strategies In Language Learning*, 110129, 557-576.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1988). The beliefs about language learning of beginning university foreign language students. *The modern language journal*, 72(3), 283-294.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1996). Even teachers get the blues: Recognizing and alleviating language teachers' feelings of foreign language anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29(3), 365-372.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1999). Cultural and situational influences on foreign language learners' beliefs about language learning: A review of BALLI studies. *System*, 27(4), 557-576.
- Hosseini, S. B., & Pourmandnia, D. (2013). Language learners' attitudes and beliefs: Brief review of the related literature and frameworks. *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications*, 4(4), 63-74.

- Johnson, K. E. & Golombek, P. R. (2018). Making 12 teacher education matter through vygotskian-inspired pedagogy and research. In *The Routledge Handbook of Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Development* (pp. 443-456). Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315624747>
- Kunt, N. and Özdemir, Ç. (2010). Impact of methodology courses on pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 3938-3944.
- Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. University of Chicago Press (2020).
- McDonough, S. (1995). *Strategy and skill in learning a foreign language*. New York: St.
- Mudra, H. (2016). Prospective EFL teachers' beliefs about language learning and gender differences in a higher education context. *International Journal of Academic Research in Education*, 2(1).
- Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review Of Educational Research*, 62(3), 307-332.
- Peacock, M. (2001). Preservice ESL Teachers' Beliefs About Second Language Learning. A Longitudinal Study. *System*, 29, 177-195.
- Puchta, H. (1999). Beyond materials, techniques and linguistic analyses: The role of motivation, beliefs and identity. Plenary session at the LATEFL: 33rd International Annual Conference, Edinburgh, 64-72.
- Richardson, V. (2003). Preservice teachers' beliefs. *Teacher beliefs and classroom performance: The impact of teacher education*, 6, 1-22.

Rifkin, B. (2000). Revisiting beliefs about Foreign language learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(4), 394-408.

Tercanlıoğlu, L. (2005). Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Beliefs About Foreign Language Learning and How They Relate to Gender. *Electronic Journal Of Research In Educational Psychology*, 5-3(1), 145-62.

Vibulphol, J. (2004). Beliefs About Language Learning and Teaching Approaches Of Pre - Service EFL Teachers In Thailand. Unpublished Phd Thesis, Faculty of Graduate College Of The Oklahoma State University: U.S.A.

Victori, M. & Lockhart, W. (1995). Enhancing metacognition in self-directed language learning. *System*, 23(2), 223-234.

Yang, N. D. (1999). The relationship between EFL learners' beliefs and learning strategy use. *System*, 27(4), 515-535.

Yazıcı, İ. Ç. (2014). Beliefs about language learning: gender related or not? *Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 23(1), 229-238.