Beliefs on Second Language Learning among Pre-service Teachers in a Public University in Malaysia

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Article information	Abstract
	The purpose of this research was to identify the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) pre-service teachers' beliefs about second language (L2) learning, to determine whether there is a significant difference in beliefs among the TESL pre-service teachers of different years of study and how these beliefs were formed. These are important as the pre-service teachers' beliefs would have a direct influence on their practices as a teacher in future. This research was conducted with a sample size of 113 respondents using a mixed method design. Data collection is using the Belief About Language Learning Inventory, often known as BALLI approach to ensure a comprehensive understanding of individuals' beliefs. In addition, data was gathered using semi-structured interviews thus, guaranteeing a more in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and beliefs. Descriptive statistics showed that the highest mean score was recorded for the "motivation and expectations" dimensions. The ANOVA results showed statistically significant difference in the mean scores amongst the different years of study. Interview results indicated that beliefs were dominantly influenced by social support and exposure to the L2, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Results of the study could inform course developers and lecturers as to which aspects of language learning and pedagogical knowledge need to be focused on in the pre-service teachers' curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, a few studies have been conducted to investigate beliefs on language learning especially among adult learners (e.g., Bokiev & Ismail, 2021; Sabarwal, Jawdeh & Kapoor, 2022; Soleimani, 2020; Too & Saimima, 2019; Mohammadi, Parviz & Parviz, 2015). There is also a growing interest in pre-service second language and foreign language teachers' beliefs in language learning (e.g., Kunt & Ozdemir, 2010; Espinosa, 2014). These studies have explored beliefs about language learning, particularly among adult learners, and there is a growing interest in pre-service second language and foreign language teachers' beliefs in language learning, as well as among adult learners. Additionally, investigating the beliefs of adult learners can provide valuable insights into their motivations, expectations, and learning preferences, enabling educators to tailor instruction to meet their specific needs.

Beliefs are related to individual choices often consistent with attitudes, and these beliefs are influenced by psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world (Eisenhart, Shrum, Harding & Cuthbert, 1988; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). Vibulphol (2004) defines beliefs as ideas that learners hold and perceive to be true but may be different from the real information which the learners have received. Incorporating discussions and reflections on beliefs into teacher training programs will allow future educators to better understand and respect the diverse perspectives of their students. Beliefs are central constructs in every discipline, which deals with human behaviour and learning (Vibulphol,

2004; Abdi & Asadi, 2015). Understanding individuals' beliefs about language learning is crucial for educators and researchers alike, as these beliefs can greatly influence learners' motivation, strategies, and overall success in acquiring a new language. Furthermore, examining the beliefs of pre-service language teachers can provide valuable insights into their pedagogical practices and potential areas for professional development. Therefore, investigating beliefs about language learning among both adult learners and future language teachers is essential for enhancing the effectiveness of language education programs.

Language learners hold beliefs about five key dimensions that affect their approach to learning a new language. These dimensions are as follows: Language Aptitude, which refers to the ability to acquire language skills; Difficulty, which relates to the perceived level of challenge associated with learning a new language; The Nature of Language Learning, which encompasses beliefs about the process of language acquisition; Communication Strategies, which refers to the techniques learners use to communicate in the new language; and Motivation, which relates to the drive and enthusiasm learners have for learning a new language. Understanding these dimensions can help language learners and educators develop effective strategies to improve language learning outcomes.

Language Aptitude

Aptitude is the initial state of readiness and an innate cognitive ability that is formed by various factors which affects the performance in language learning (Singleton, 2017; Sureda, 2015). Horwitz (1987) stated that learners who are not successful in language learning may develop a belief that some possess a cognitive ability in language while others do not. In a similar vein, Mori (1999) found that learners who perceived language learning ability as "uncontrollable" or "fixed" may show low interest in learning. In her study of Japanese learners, she found that some learners believed that a foreign language learning ability was an innate ability and that it could not be improved. Due to this, these learners were not as successful in language learning as those who perceive their own ability as a controllable entity (Mori, 1999).

This suggests that learners who view language learning ability as a fixed trait may lack motivation and effort in their language learning endeavours. Additionally, Mori's findings highlight the importance of promoting a growth mindset in language learners, where they believe that their language learning ability can be developed and improved through dedication and practice.

Horwitz (1985) also posited that teachers who have this belief of people possessing a special ability to learn another language are prone to have negative expectations towards students. These expectations can influence their interaction and could possibly lead to biasness as the students who are perceived to be highly proficient are more likely to engage in interaction with the teacher and receive more attention from the teacher compared to the students who are believed to be of low proficiency. As a result, the students who are perceived to be less successful will likely do more poorly in their learning, as their teacher has expected.

This phenomenon is known as the "Pygmalion effect" or self-fulfilling prophecy, where students' performance aligns with the expectations placed upon them. It is important for educators to recognize and challenge these biases, providing equal opportunities and support to all students regardless of perceived proficiency levels. Additionally, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment can help mitigate the negative impact of these expectations on students' language acquisition journey.

Difficulty

Beliefs about the difficulty of language learning were found to be associated with language achievement as those who perceived language learning as difficult were found to have higher anxiety and may not perform well in language classes (Truitt, 1995). It was also found that judgments about language difficulty may affect learner expectation and commitment to language learning (Horwitz, 1985). Language learning difficulty is linked to language achievement, as those who perceive it as challenging

tend to have higher anxiety and may struggle in classes, while judgments about difficulty can also impact learner expectations and commitment.

This might slow down the progress of learning and potentially discourage learners. Another focus in this belief dimension is on teaching perspective, where sometimes teachers may have false expectations about students' progress, which can lead to a negative reaction towards some students. In a situation where teachers view the language they are teaching as an easy language, they may become frustrated with students who cannot perform as well as they are expected to. Consequently, academic expectations could lead to potential academic difficulties and failures (Hassel & Ridout, 2018). These false expectations can create a negative learning environment and hinder students' motivation to succeed. It is important for teachers to have realistic expectations and provide support and guidance to help students overcome any challenges they may face in their language learning journey.

The Nature of Language Learning

Many researchers claim that language is best learnt naturally. Accordingly, it is described that it is best to learn a language in its native land (Aziz & Quraishi, 2017). This is due to the nature of language learning which involves self-instruction, naturalistic learning, or self-directed learning (Benson, 2021). Horwitz (1985) posited that learners who prioritize the importance of vocabulary and grammar may neglect other language learning practices. Thus, she suggested that teachers who believe that learning a foreign language is simply a matter of learning vocabulary and grammar risk being resistant to new concepts and ideas about second language teaching. This resistance can limit their ability to effectively support and guide students in their language learning journey. It is crucial for teachers to stay open-minded and continuously update their teaching methods to create a dynamic and engaging learning environment. By embracing new concepts and ideas, teachers can better cater to the diverse needs of their students and foster a positive and motivating atmosphere for language acquisition.

Perhaps learning just vocabulary and grammar could help learners to pass an exam, but exposure to the language and opportunities for interaction are vital to help learners acquire the target language for real life communication. It was also found that beliefs about the nature of language learning vary among learners who were studying different languages and in different learning circumstances (Sakui & Gaies, 1999).

Communication Strategies

This is discussed further in the field of second language teaching research, where scholars emphasize the importance of teacher professional development and ongoing training. They argue that by staying up to date with the latest theories and methodologies, teachers can enhance their instructional practices and better meet the evolving needs of their students. Additionally, being open to new concepts and ideas allows teachers to adapt their teaching strategies to different learning styles and preferences, ultimately leading to more successful language learning outcomes for their students. Research on second language output shows that any form of language production is best learned through interaction and communication strategies. Then, this dimension in beliefs relates to an individual's attempt to fill the gap between communication effort and available linguistic resources.

However, learners who are too concerned about correctness and learners who lack confidence in speaking the target language are inclined to have high language anxiety (Truitt, 1995). Other research that shared the same view was a study conducted by Horwitz (1985), which found that learners with high language anxiety tend to avoid opportunities for communication and interaction. This suggests that language anxiety can hinder language production and ultimately impede successful language learning outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to address and alleviate learners' anxiety to create a conducive environment for effective language learning.

Research shows that language production is best learned through interaction and communication

strategies (Putri, 2013). However, learners with high language anxiety often avoid communication and interaction opportunities, hindering language production and learning outcomes. Addressing and alleviating anxiety is crucial for creating an effective language learning environment.

Motivation

Motivation is the learner's gravitation towards a goal in L2 acquisition and it acts as a catalyst to increase students' determination and interest in language learning (Chilingaryan & Gorbatenko, 2015; Crooke & Schmidt, 1991). Several studies have shown that motivation is dynamic, and it keeps changing and evolving throughout the learning process (Ellis, 2004). Considering the fluctuating nature of motivation can help educators tailor their teaching methods and strategies to meet the changing needs of language learners. Furthermore, fostering a positive and encouraging classroom environment can help sustain and enhance students' motivation, ultimately leading to greater language learning success.

Motivation is said to be the direction and magnitude of human behaviour, or, more specifically (i) the choice, (ii) the persistence, and (iii) the effort expended on it for a particular action (Sureda, 2015). This means that motivation refers to the direction and magnitude of human behavior, including choice, persistence, and effort expended for a specific action. Motivation plays a crucial role in language learning as it affects learners' choice of actions, their persistence in learning, and the effort they put into it. It is important to note that motivation is not a fixed trait but rather a dynamic factor that evolves and changes throughout the learning process. Therefore, understanding and addressing learners' motivation can greatly impact their language acquisition journey. Hence, it can be inferred that motivation is an internal drive that determines how one acts to achieve goals, and motivation evolves throughout the learning process affecting one's course of effort and persistence. Thus, motivation has a great impact on L2 achievement as it encourages and drives individuals to success (Gardner, 2000).

In essence, many researchers have investigated, and classified and categorized beliefs as these beliefs could influence the actions of teachers or students such as their actions during the teaching and learning process itself. Gardner (1993) explained that these beliefs can shape the teaching methods and strategies employed by language teachers, ultimately impacting the learning outcomes of their students. Furthermore, understanding the beliefs held by pre-service language teachers can also help identify any gaps or misconceptions that may exist in their training, allowing for targeted professional development opportunities to address these areas and improve overall language education practices.

Understanding pre-service teachers' beliefs about language learning can provide valuable insights into their approach to teaching and the strategies they employ in the classroom. By identifying these beliefs, educators can tailor their training programs to address any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge, ultimately improving the quality of instruction provided to future language learners. Thus, it is important to identify the pre-service teachers' beliefs of language learning as beliefs can shape teaching attitudes, teaching methods and even, teaching policies (Altan, 2006).

Hence, the present study aimed to investigate: (1) the TESL pre-service teachers' beliefs about second language learning, (2) if there are significant differences in these beliefs based on years of study, and (3) how these beliefs were formed. From theese research questions, we hope that the findings will provide valuable insights into the mindset of pre-service language teachers and contribute to the development of more effective language education programs. Additionally, the study aims to inform teacher educators and curriculum developers about potential areas for improvement in the training of future language teachers, ultimately enhancing the quality of language education in schools and institutions.

METHODS

The current study used a mixed method design, and it involved the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Creswell & Clark, 2017). The participants were 113 pre-service teachers, from years 1 to year 4, enrolled in the Bachelor of Education

in TESL program in a public university in Malaysia. Their age range was between 19 to 25 years old, and 26 (23.0%) were male and 87 (77.0%) were female. Of the total respondents, 32 (28.3%) were in the first year, 34 (30.1%) were in the second year, 26 (23.0%) were in the third year and finally 21 (18.6%) were in the fourth year).

The Belief about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) developed by Horwitz (1988) was used to gather data on the pre-service teachers' beliefs regarding language learning. The instrument was adapted and adopted to suit the Malaysian context (Johari, Sahari, Morni & Tom, 2017). The revised BALLI contains thirty-nine items and is divided into five components namely: A. Foreign language aptitude (no. 1 – 9); B. Difficulty of language learning (no. 10 -15); C. The nature of language learning (no. 16 – 22); D. Communication strategies (no. 23 – 31) and lastly E. Motivations and expectations (no. 32 – 39). This instrument uses a five-point likert scale with options ranging from 'strongly disagree to strongly agree'.

A semi-structured interview was carried out with 4 randomly selected participants; one from each group. The interview data was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. A thematic analysis of the data was then carried out. Words, phrases, clauses, and sentences expressing opinions and perceptions on the reasons behind the respondents' beliefs about language learning were coded accordingly. Emerging themes across the codes were identified, and the relevant codes were grouped under these themes. There are many studies correlated motivation and language learning success. For example, a study by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) found that learners who were more motivated to learn a second language were more likely to engage in language learning activities and achieve higher proficiency levels. Additionally, research by Gardner (1985) suggests that learners who have a positive attitude towards the target language and its culture are more likely to persist in their language learning journey. These findings further support the

Thirty per cent of the data was rated by a second rater. The percentage of the number of agreements between the first and second rater over the total number of agreement and disagreement (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was used to determine inter-rater reliability. There was an 82% agreement between the two raters which, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), indicates sufficient agreement for inter-rater reliability.

Survey data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS 25.0. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in the mean scores among the different years of study of the TESL pre-service teachers. If there was a significant difference, Tukey's Post Hoc Test was run to identify the pairs of mean scores that recorded a significant difference.

RESULT

A. Survey

The results displayed in Table 1 provide detailed information about the five dimensions of BALLI and their scores. The highest average score was observed for motivation and expectations (M=4.468, SD=0.664), indicating that learners are motivated and have high expectations for their language learning abilities. The second highest score was recorded for the difficulty of language learning (M=3.752, SD=0.558), implying that learners perceive language learning to be a challenging task. The third highest score was for the nature of language learning (M=3.579, SD=0.642), which indicates that learners have a good understanding of the language learning process. The fourth highest score was recorded for communication strategies (M=3.524, SD=0.508), suggesting that learners are aware of effective communication strategies. The lowest score was recorded for foreign language aptitude (M=3.568, SD=0.552), indicating that learners have less confidence in their innate ability to learn a foreign language.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of TESL pre-service teachers' beliefs about language learning

Component	Mean (Year)					SD
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Overall	
Foreign language aptitude	3.52	3.37	3.56	3.79	3.56	0.552
Difficulty of language learning	3.83	3.59	3.88	3.73	3.76	0.558
The nature of language learning	3.69	3.87	3.83	3.57	3.74	0.642
Communication strategies	3.58	3.42	3.48	3.57	3.51	0.508
Motivation and expectations	4.64	4.31	4.35	4.61	4.48	0.664

Table 2 shows the results of a one-way ANOVA of beliefs about language learning among the participants.

Table 2: One-way ANOVA of beliefs about language learning and the overall years of study

Components	Group	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Foreign language aptitude	Between Groups	2.481	.827	2.849	*.041*
	Within Groups	31.636	.290		
	Total	34.117			
Difficulty of language learning	Between Groups	1.494	.498	1.625	.188
	Within Groups	33.401	.306		
	Total	34.895			
Nature of language learning	Between Groups	2.039	.680	1.679	.176
	Within Groups	44.118	.405		
	Total	46.157			
Communication strategies	Between Groups	.495	.165	.633	.595
	Within Groups	28.405	.261		
	Total	28.900			
Motivation and expectations	Between Groups	2.568	.856	1.991	.120
	Within Groups	46.862	.430		
	Total	49.431			

Results show significant mean differences for "Foreign language aptitude". Thus, a Tukey post-hoc test was run to identify the groups that showed significant differences, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Pairwise comparisons between groups for foreign language aptitude

(I) year	(J) year	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
First Year	Second Year	.2663	.1327	.192	-.0799	.6125
	Third Year	.0791	.1422	.945	-.2921	.4502
	Fourth Year	-.1495	.1513	.757	-.5442	.2453
Second Year	First Year	-.2663	.1327	.192	-.6125	.0799
	Third Year	-.1873	.1404	.543	-.5535	.1789
	Fourth Year	-.4158	.1495	*.032*	-.8059	-.0257
Third year	First year	-.0791	.1422	.945	-.4502	.2921
	Second Year	.1873	.1403	.543	-.1789	.5535
	Fourth Year	-.2285	.1580	.474	-.6409	.1839
Fourth year	First year	.1495	.1513	.757	-.2453	.5442
	Second Year	.4158	.1495	*.032*	.0257	.8059
	Third Year	.2285	.1581	.474	-.1839	.6409

The analysis of the results indicates that there is a noteworthy distinction between the average scores of the 2nd year and 4th year students ($p = 0.32$) in the "Foreign language aptitude" segment. The arithmetic mean score of the 4th year pupils ($M = 3.79$) was significantly higher than that of the 2nd year students ($M = 3.37$).

B. Interview Results

Generally, all four respondents had positive attitudes towards learning a second language. One participant said that "I would say that I have positive beliefs on second language learning. I believe that I can acquire the language if I put efforts in practicing it, reading materials using the target language and learning the grammatical properties that make up the language". The interview data also yielded several themes across the interview sessions. Social support and exposure to the L2, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were identified as the most crucial factors that underpin the respondents' beliefs about language learning.

(a). Social support and exposure to the L2

All the respondents agreed that social support has influenced their beliefs about language learning. This social circle comprises of family, teachers, and peers. When their parents, siblings, teachers, and peers show strong support and encouragement for L2 learning, these participants developed a positive attitude towards L2 learning. For example, one respondent said that "I think it (the positive attitude towards L2 learning) came from my family. They always prioritize the importance of learning languages to survive and to pursue knowledge. Also, from school as well. The meaningful lessons given by teachers motivated me to improve my second language".

The role of the teacher to engage learners in the L2 lessons was also highlighted by all four respondents as a factor that influenced them in their beliefs about the importance of learning English. One respondent said that "My English teacher influenced me the most. Her endless encouragement and fun activities made me want to learn more". Another respondent stated that "My teachers in secondary school affected me the most. They influenced me to learn by introducing songs, doing interesting lessons in class, exposing, and instilling the culture of the language". Respondents recognized that their teachers acted as their role models who affected their beliefs about the importance of the English language. They believed that they could also become as good as their teachers by using the language daily and listening to songs and watching English television programs and movies in English.

All four respondents stated that they gain a lot of exposure to the English language from their family, friends, the mass media, and social media. For example, Respondent A said that "I think my language beliefs is [sic] formed from exposure through my family and friends. They always encourage me to learn other languages besides my mother tongue". Respondent B also claimed that "...through these mediums like the media, peers and teachers, I found that learning a language isn't always stressful and focuses on accuracy solely". Respondent C also mentioned that "Another contributing factor is surrounding environment influences language beliefs. Using English in everyday life that has deeply affects [sic] daily activities and choices in life such as the tendency and choice to listen to English songs, watching English movies and television shows [sic]". Respondent D also reported that, "I think my environment influences me the most. Right now, since I am a TESL student, I am surrounded with English speaking people most of the times [sic] and it influences me to watch English movies, shows and songs".

Social support and exposure to the L2 often provided by teachers, family, peers, and the media has helped shape positive beliefs about learning the English language among the respondents.

(b). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

Motivation also seems to be a highly influential factor that affected the pre-service teachers' beliefs about the L2. Intrinsic motivation such as a strong drive for learning English and extrinsic motivation such as better opportunities in the future in terms of career and expansion of knowledge were cited as

strong factors that influenced beliefs about learning English. For example, Respondent A stated that "I think the factor that influences me the most in learning the second language is my motivation. I strongly believe that being able to possess [sic] more than one language would help me in securing better career options in the future. I would also be able to expand my knowledge through learning a second language. In short, due to my extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, these dimensions have influenced me the most in learning the language". Respondent B reiterated this point as she stated that "Another possible factor is my own motivational level. I believe that if your intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is high, it will contribute to positive attitudes towards the language. Self-efficacy may also contribute to language belief. If one believes that he or she can succeed in a specific situation or accomplish a task, that individual will also shift the same attitude in learning the language". Respondent C also highlighted the importance of external motivation in the form of encouragement from her teachers. Learning English was initially stressful for her as she was highly focused on language accuracy. However, her teachers motivated her to speak in English without worrying too much about grammar and accuracy. She stated, "At first my language beliefs in the second language learning were quite rigid and slightly negative and stressful. Back in school, my teacher always tries to encourage me to speak in English despite me being conscious of my errors. This diminished my beliefs about how spoken language needs to be emphasized on accuracy and grammar". Respondent D also believed that it was her self-motivation that helped her form positive beliefs about learning English. This is further consolidated by her exposure to English through the mass media and her teachers. Obtaining good results in her examinations also motivated her to have positive beliefs in learning English, as she stated that "the reason why I have positive language beliefs on English is due to my past experiences where I usually score in English language papers even though I did not have much exposure towards the language except what was learnt in class. Then, when I was exposed more from my teachers and mass media such as songs, it made me believe that English is not that hard. I think my self-motivation is also a source for me to have positive language beliefs".

Clearly, motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, has greatly influenced the respondents' beliefs about learning English. All respondents reported that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has helped them form positive beliefs about learning English.

DISCUSSION

Results of the questionnaire showed that the students scored the highest mean for the "Motivation and expectations" dimension (M=4.468). This would indicate that, overall, the students feel that learning English is important, they want to learn English so that they can interact with other English language speakers globally, they believe learning English would give them better job opportunities, they want to have friends from other countries, they want to speak in English well, they believe that learning English can help them access information from many sources, English is important for higher education and English is important because it is an international language. This finding is also supported by the interview data. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation appears to be a strong factor that has influenced the students in learning English. They were encouraged to learn English by their parents, teachers, and peers, and they were exposed to English language using mass media and entertainment materials such as songs and movies. They also have a strong desire to be proficient in English to give themselves an advantage when applying for jobs.

In the dimension of aptitude, the TESL pre-service teachers generally agree that they are good at learning another language, the ability to learn another language is perceived as a sign of intelligence and that everybody possesses the ability to learn another language. Thus, the majority of the TESL pre-service teachers do believe that a state of readiness and capability to learn a second language is pre-wired in everyone. The results also showed a significant difference in beliefs about foreign language aptitude between the 2nd and 4th year students with the 4th year students scoring a higher mean (M=3.79) than the 2nd year students (M=3.37). This would indicate that the 4th year students had a significantly stronger

belief that they have a special ability to learn foreign languages, it is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language, some people have a special ability to learn foreign languages, Malaysians are good at learning English, people who speak more than one language are intelligent, and everybody can learn to speak a foreign language. The significant difference between the mean scores of the 4th year and 2nd year students is probably because the 4th year students are coming to the end of their studies. Thus, they have covered all the courses in the B.Ed. TESL program including Psycholinguistics which discusses the processes in language acquisition and language learning from birth till adulthood. Also, they have been exposed to the different theories in education such as the Multiple Intelligences theory (Gardner, 1983, 1993). Thus, their understanding of language aptitude is probably shaped by these concepts about the language acquisition and learning processes, and principles.

In the dimension of difficulty of language learning, TESL pre-service teachers do believe that they will learn to speak English well. It can be inferred that the TESL pre-service teachers have managed to build a strong belief of their capabilities in learning another language. This could be attributed to the mature perspective they have developed and their personal experiences throughout their years of study. The ANOVA results show that the 4th year students obtained the highest mean score (M=3.752) for this dimension and the lowest mean score (M=3.59) was recorded for 2nd year students. This is perhaps since the 2nd year students have just been introduced to subjects that require them to learn English in depth. These subjects which include linguistic concepts such as phonology, semantics, syntax, morphology, and pragmatics can be quite challenging. Students in their 4th year have come to the end of their studies and are about to go on teaching practice in selected secondary schools. Thus, the 4th year students are perhaps more mature and knowledgeable in terms of content and pedagogical knowledge.

In the dimension of the nature of language learning, the TESL pre-service teachers generally agree (M=3.74) that it is necessary to know the customs, the cultures, and the lifestyles of English-speaking people (such as British, Americans or Australians) in order to speak English correctly and appropriately in a particular context, it is best to learn English in an English-speaking country such as England, United States or Australia, learning vocabulary and grammar are important for learning English, learning English is different from learning other academic subjects, learning how to translate directly from Bahasa Malaysia is an important part of learning English and learning English involves a lot of memorization. However, the 4th year students scored the lowest mean for this dimension (M=3.57) as they appear to not agree that memorization and translation are important ways to learn English. This is probably because throughout their 4 years of study they have been exposed to 21st century teaching and learning skills which put greater emphasis on collaboration, meaning-making, and engagement with language tasks when learning a language, as opposed to rote-memorization and translation activities (Ismail & Abd. Samad, 2014).

The lowest overall mean was recorded for the "Communication strategies" dimension (M=3.51). This is because many of the students did not agree that "we shouldn't say anything in English until we can say it correctly", "I feel timid (shy) speaking English with other people", and "If beginner students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later". However, they generally agree that they "enjoy practicing English with the foreigners they meet", "it is okay to guess, if we don't know a word in English", and "in learning English, it is important to practice a lot using audio and visual materials through the Internet, radio and television". The range of means was between 3.42 to 3.58, which indicates a general agreement across all the years of study.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of the study have shown interesting revelations about the students' beliefs about language learning. These beliefs are important as they can inform course developers and lecturers as to which aspects of language learning and pedagogical knowledge need to be focused on. Understanding students' beliefs about language learning can help educators tailor their teaching methods

to better meet the needs and interests of their students. As the TESL pre-service teachers aim to become English language teachers, their beliefs about English language learning would affect their practices in the language classroom. It is fundamental for them to stay open-minded and continuously updating their knowledge and understanding of language learning theories can help TESL pre-service teachers adapt their practices to meet the diverse needs of their students. Thus, they must have a strong foundation in the theories and concepts of language learning, and their practices must be informed by the latest developments in language learning to ensure that their future students benefit from their lessons inside and outside of the classroom.

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