



English for specific purposes and beliefs about learning English: a case in Iranian university students

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ABSTRACT

The astonishing research on the nature of students' and teachers' beliefs about language learning in the 1980s by Horwitz paved the way for a multitude of investigations into this topic. There have been different studies focusing on the beliefs of EFL learners but the focus on students who learn English for their major field of study is lacking. This study aimed to address this gap and examined beliefs about learning a foreign language held by 90 Iranian female university students majoring in Theology and Islamic sciences. The present inquiry addressed beliefs held by the beginners and intermediate learners in order to assess which areas of beliefs were commonly shared by the two groups of learners and which areas contained considerable differences in beliefs hence finding the cause for their weakness in English. This study employed a questionnaire based on Horwitz's (1988) Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) as a research instrument, with some modifications to be appropriate to Iranian context. Statistical analysis detected three items where opinions of these two groups of students were significantly different and a pattern derived from the beliefs of both groups in Iranian context and in relation to English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

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Introduction

In the 1980s, Elaine Horwitz introduced research on beliefs about language learning held by language students and teachers. Since then the topic has been attracting considerable interest and a multitude of studies exploring language learning beliefs were done in different countries (Truitt, 1995; Park, 1995; Kuntz, 1999; Kunt, 1997; Peacock, 1998; Sakui & Gaies, 1999; Kimura *et al.*, 2001; Siebert, 2003; Bernat, 2006; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007). Researchers looked at language learning beliefs from different perspectives. Mori (1999) examined relationship between language learning beliefs and epistemological beliefs, Wenden (1999) focused on the relationship between metacognitive knowledge and learners' beliefs, Yang (1992) looked at the connection between language learning beliefs and the use of learning strategies while Carter (1999) explored the link between learners' beliefs and autonomy. Other studies have provided insight into the relationship between learners' success and their beliefs, approaches to language learning, use of learning strategies, and motivational aspects (e.g., Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Samimy & Lee, 1997; Victori, 1999 cited in Rodriguez Manzanarez, and Murphy, 2010). Despite the availability of extensive research on language learning beliefs, studies on this topic in Iranian context and in relation to English for Specific Purpose (ESP) are lacking. The present inquiry aims to address this gap.

Literature Review

Human beliefs are built through peoples' surroundings, backgrounds and previous experiences. As Barcelos (2000, p.4) asserts, "Beliefs cannot be separated from our identities, actions, and social experiences". It has been recognized that students enter a language classroom with a set of ideas as to what learning a foreign language involves. Students who begin

learning a new language usually have some ideas about the language difficulty, their own ability to master the new language, etc. From their previous language learning experience they might have gathered which learning strategies work best for them and have formed their own views about classroom proceedings and teacher's role.

Richardson (1996, p.103) describes beliefs as "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true". Working definition of language learning beliefs in the present study is that language learning beliefs are intangible property of human mind about what is right/true or wrong/false in the process of foreign language acquisition which may change depending upon the length of instruction. A question whether human beliefs are flexible was raised by psychologists and educationalists. However, research studies yield contradictory results. While some inquiries lend support to the proposition that learners' beliefs are resistant to change (Peacock, 2001) others indicate that beliefs do evolve over time and teachers have important roles in shaping learners' beliefs (Rubin, 1987; Wenden, 1987). The latter conclusion appears more feasible to the present authors since people – and learners – need to constantly adapt to their new circumstances, and this involves making some adjustments to their personal beliefs and assumptions. Some researchers, in fact, believe that beliefs differ because they are value-related and tenaciously held (Alexander and Dochy, 1995; Wenden, 1999 cited in Amuzie and Winke, 2009). In fact, according to Ellis (2008), like a number of other individual difference variables, beliefs are dynamic and situated".

In this connection, context is an important factor when exploring students' beliefs. A recent study conducted by Siebert (2003) in the USA considered the influence of ethnicity and

nationality on the beliefs of students learning English in American universities. Participants in Siebert's study came from different countries, such as Brazil, Egypt, Japan, Russia, Syria, Taiwan, Thailand, etc. All students were taking intensive English language courses. According to the results of Siebert's study, national origin did have an influence on students' beliefs about language learning. The most significant differences concerned such aspects of language study as length of time one needs to master the English language, the difficulty of English, and foreign language aptitude. Thus, Japanese students tended to have less confidence in their own language ability than did students from the Middle East. Also, there were differences regarding the length of time needed to master a foreign language between students of different nationalities.

One of the studies on the relationship between beliefs and level of proficiency was done by Nikitina and Furuoka (2007). This study aimed to examine beliefs about learning a foreign language held by 107 Russian language students at University Malaysia Sabah (UMS). It juxtaposed beliefs held by the beginners and intermediate learners in order to assess which areas of beliefs were commonly shared by the two groups of learners and which areas contained considerable differences in beliefs. This study employed a self reported questionnaire based on Horwitz's (1988) Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) as a research instrument, with some modifications done to suit the Malaysian context. Statistical analysis detected five items where opinions of two groups of students were significantly different. Two statements concerned language aptitude and the difficulty of learning the Russian language; one statement involved learning and communication strategies. The beliefs that children learn foreign languages easier and faster than adults and that some people have an inherent talent for learning languages were stronger among the intermediate level students.

Secondly, the two statements that it is difficult to understand the Russian language and that Russian grammar is difficult received stronger agreement from the intermediate level students. Lastly, the importance of an excellent pronunciation is another variable where the divergence in the beliefs between the beginner and intermediate level students was statistically significant. The intermediate level students gave less value to speaking with a native-like accent thus demonstrating enhanced learning and communication strategies than did the beginner students. It should, however, be noticed that this study was not on the beliefs of language learners toward English but with respect to learning Russian language.

Meanwhile differences in language learning beliefs among learners of different national origins and ethnicity lend support to an assumption that learners' background is an important aspect to consider when examining language learning beliefs. One of the factors that affect students' background knowledge is their field of study. In fact, students' background knowledge mainly refers to knowledge acquired from vocational courses and their majors at university (Bernat, 2006). However, there has not been sufficient attention paid in previous studies to the role of field of study in shaping learners' beliefs about learning English. Considering the current participants' field of study and the fact that they, in Iranian context, are not good at English compared to Arabic, it is hypothesized that their lack of proficiency in English is due to their opinions and beliefs about the importance of learning English, so it was an interesting aspect to examine.

The current research aims to investigate whether there is any difference between beginner and intermediate students' (majoring in Theology and Islamic Sciences) beliefs' toward Learning English. Questions of significance here are: (1) Do the beginner and intermediate level students hold the same beliefs about language learning? (2) In which areas learners' beliefs are mostly the same and in which areas they show most difference? and (3) Is there any pattern in these two groups' beliefs about learning English?

Participants

One hundred and fifteen students majoring in Theology and Islamic sciences at two universities of Iran participated in this research. They were at their 6 to 8 semester and had Specialized English (ESP) as one of their necessary courses. To avoid the possible effect of gender on the participants' beliefs, they were females ranged between 19 and 23. The level of students' proficiency was determined according to a placement test and they were divided into three groups of beginner, intermediate and advanced according to the results of OPT. Since the focus of the present study was on intermediate and beginners, the advanced group was omitted so ninety female English learners were the participants of the present study.

Instruments

Two instruments were used in the present study. The first one was a placement test; an Oxford Placement Test which was administered in order to assign the students to advanced, intermediate and beginner levels. The other instrument of the present study, and the main one, was the "Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory" (BALLI) designed by Horwitz (1987). The BALLI is a widely used instrument (e.g. Howritz, 1989; Tumposky, 1991; Park, 1995; Kern, 1995; Oh, 1996; Yang, 1999; Kunt, 1997; Carter, 1999; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Siebert, 2003) used to assess learner beliefs in relation to second or foreign language learning. Using the same instrument, our study aims to replicate Siebert's (2003) study with a similar sample of young adult learners from beginner to intermediate English language proficiency level, but the difference is that the participants of the present study learn English for a specific purpose that is their own field of study- Theology and Islamic Sciences.

The BALLI measures 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. All items were rated on a 5- point rating scale, with 32 items ranging from *strongly agree* (1), to *strongly disagree* (5). The response options asking for the difficulty of the English language ranged from *very difficult* (1) to *very easy* (5). The questionnaire was modified to suit the objectives of this study in Iranian context. Therefore, the BALLI item ratings were integrated into three categories, representing agree, neutral and disagree as well as difficult, neutral and easy. Moreover, one of the items in the questionnaire asking about how long it takes to speak English ranged from *less than one year* (1) to *you can't learn a language in one hour per day* was deleted in the questionnaire used in the present study. The reason for this omission was that since participants of this study were students of Theology and Islamic Sciences, it seemed that fluency in English was not that much important for them even for intermediate learners and this decision was based on the researcher's experience of teaching English to the students of this major. Since the students participating at the present study

were not majoring in English, the questionnaire was translated into the students' native language (i.e. Persian) to avoid any possible ambiguity in the questions.

Data Collection

Data collection procedure took place in March at two classes of university students majoring in Theology and Islamic sciences in Iran. First of all, the researcher introduced the study to the participants and made them familiar with the placement test and the questionnaire. Then both of the instruments were administered. The researcher asked them to first answer the Oxford Placement Test and then the Questionnaire. Participants answered the placement test and then completed the questionnaires in the class and returned the forms to the lecturer. Thus the response rate was 100 percent. The researcher asked the students to give answers individually without consulting their classmates. The OPT test was administered to all the participants (105 students), then they were divided into three groups of advanced (15 persons), intermediate (50 persons) and beginner (40 persons). Since the focus of the present study is on intermediate and beginners, the advanced group was omitted. Finally, after collecting the questionnaires, the researcher asked 10 participants to mention their reasons and elaborate on their responses to the Questionnaire. The aim of collecting this further information through interview was to back up and help explain the results obtained from the Questionnaire.

Data Analysis

All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 16). Bivariate analyses included cross tabulations. These are demonstrated through bar charts with the grouping variable being level of proficiency. Since we wanted to assess whether there are significant differences in respondents' perceptions- divided according to their level of proficiency- and the data for the BALLI consisted of ordinal variables, the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test was used. The Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test (also called the Wilcoxon rank sum test or the Mann-Whitney U test) is one of the best known non-parametric tests and is analogous to the parametric two sample t-test. The Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test is used to test the null hypothesis that two samples are drawn from the same population, i.e. it determines whether the difference between the medians of the two groups is significant. This test is used when the normality assumption is questionable and/or when data is ordinal, i.e. when the data can be ranked. Thus, the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test is most suitable for an analysis in this study.

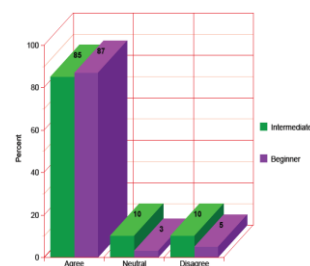
Results

The participants in this study are students of Theology and Islamic Sciences. They are female university students aged between 19 to 23 years. Their answers to the Questionnaire are presented through the following tables. Results of the items are presented in groups according to the five language areas of the BALLI Questionnaire.

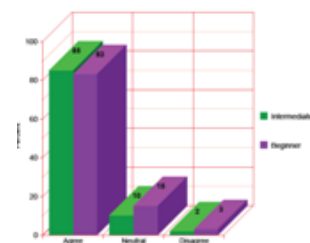
Foreign Language Aptitude

Responses to the items of Foreign Language Aptitude show that participants agreed with the statements of most items (see Figure 1). An overwhelming majority (85% of intermediate and 87% of beginners) believed that it is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language, and 85% of intermediate and 83% of beginners contend that some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages. However, a majority (62%) disagreed with the statement that people who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages. Also, a majority (56%) neither agreed nor disagreed

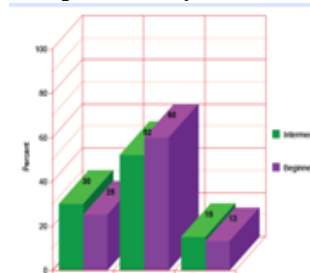
that people from their own country are good at learning languages, and 62% neither agreed nor disagreed that people from their country are good at learning foreign languages. Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney tests showed that there are no significant differences in responses between intermediate and beginner English learners except for item four (Mann-Whitney $U=6495.00$, $p=.004$) which showed that intermediate learners are more likely than beginners to believe that "it is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one".



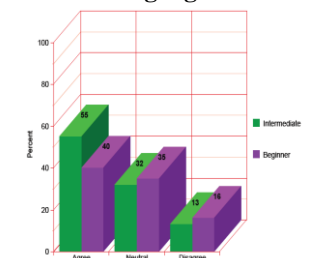
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.



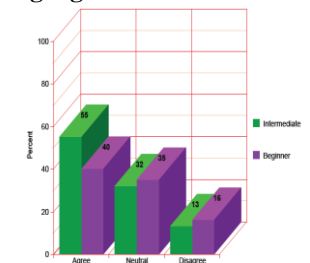
2. Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages.



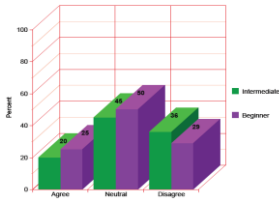
3. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.



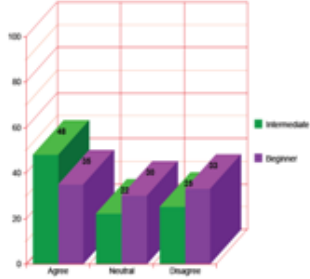
4. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.



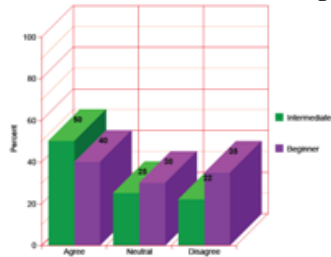
5. People who are good at math or science are not good at learning foreign languages.



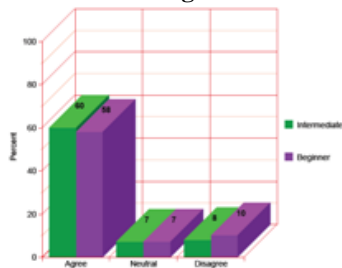
6. I have a special ability for learning foreign languages.



7. Women are better than men at learning languages.



8. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.

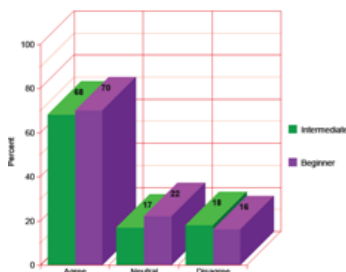


9. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.

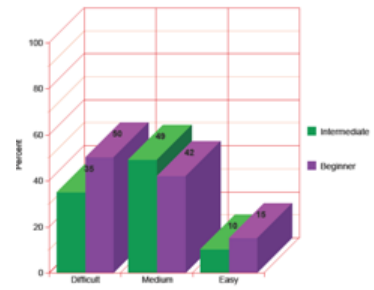
Figure 1. Foreign language Aptitude

Difficulty of Language Learning

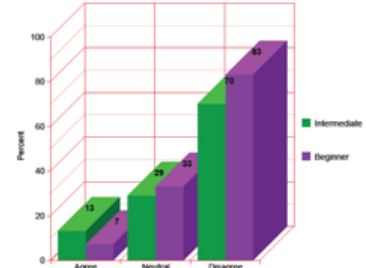
The graphs in Figure 2 below show that most respondents (70%) agree with the statement of some languages being easier than others, and 50% of the beginners find the English language of difficult. A significant portion of respondents disagree with the statement that “It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language”, this portion is specifically higher for beginners (83%) than intermediate respondents (70%) indicating that they either believe the reverse, namely that it is easier to understand than speak a foreign language or that both may be difficult. But the point is the difference between intermediate and beginner participants is not significant.



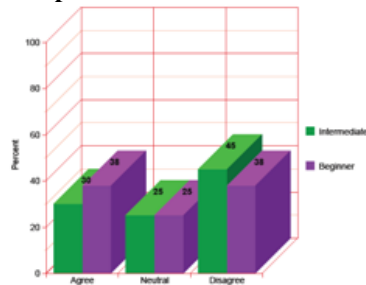
10. Some languages are easier than others.



11. English language is: difficult, medium difficult, easy.



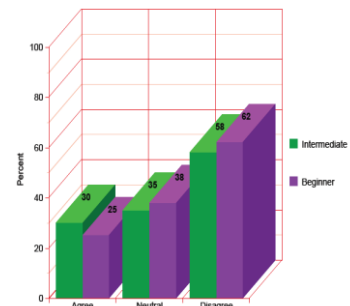
12. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.



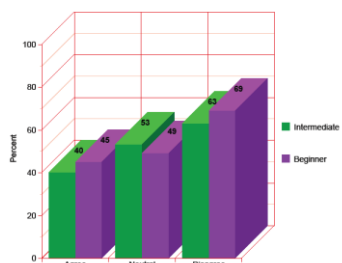
13. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.

Figure 2: The Difficulty of Language Learning Nature of Language Learning

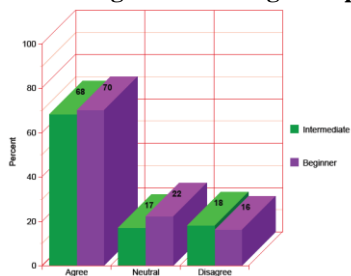
The graphs for the statements about the nature of language learning (see Figure 3) show that respondents agreed with the statements that “the most important part of learning a foreign language is learning new words” (70%), and that “learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects” (60%), but many of them disagreed, as well, with the statement that “it is best to learn English in an English speaking country” (69%) and that “the most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my own language” (68%). Many believed that “the most important part of learning a foreign language is learning grammar” (48%), with the smallest proportion disagreeing with this statement (25%). There were no significant differences in terms of responses to items 14 to 19, i.e. intermediate and beginner participants responded to items 14 to 19 in a similar fashion.



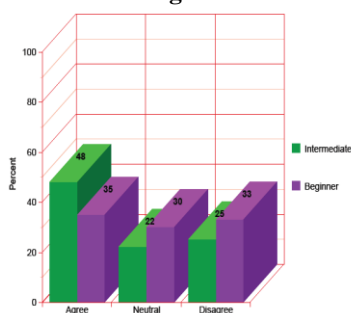
14. It is necessary to learn about English speaking cultures to speak English.



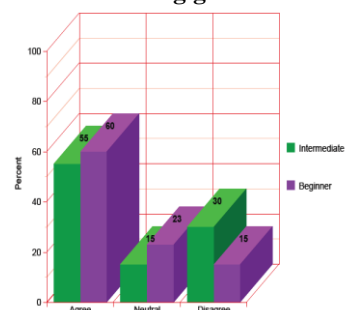
15. It is best to learn English in an English speaking country



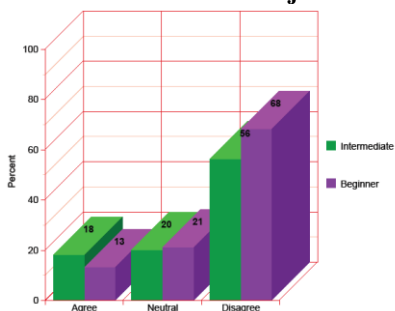
16. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning new words



17. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning grammar.



18. Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects

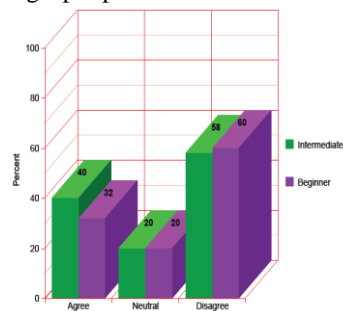


19. The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my own language.

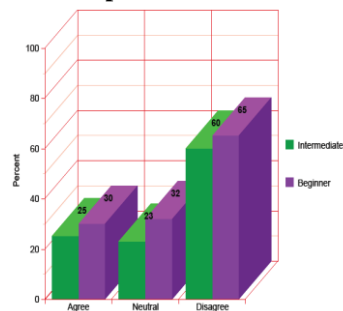
Figure 3: The Nature of Language Learning Learning and Communication Strategies

The charts for learning and communication strategies show distinct responses (see Figure 4). A large majority of respondents believe that they feel shy speaking English with

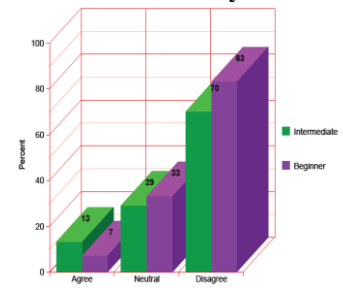
foreign people (87%), “it is important to repeat and practice a lot” (78%), “if beginning students are allowed to make mistakes in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on” (60%), and find it acceptable to practice with audio equipment such as cassettes or CD ROMs (58%). However, most respondents disagreed with the statement that “I enjoy practicing English with the foreign people I meet” (83%), and that “you shouldn’t say anything in English until you can say it correctly” (65%) and that “it is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation” (60%). Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney tests showed no significant differences in responses between intermediate and beginner respondents, although items 22 and 25 were marginally significant (Mann-Whitney $U=7289.50$, $p=.053$) showing that beginners are less interested in practicing English with foreign people than intermediate ones and that the latter are slightly less likely than the former to feel shy speaking English with foreign people.



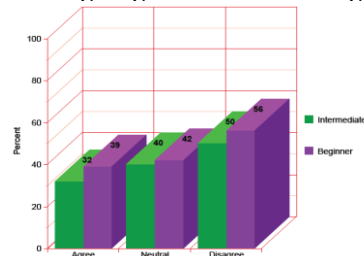
20. It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.



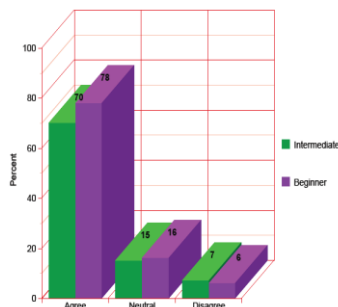
21. You shouldn’t say anything in English until you can say it correctly.



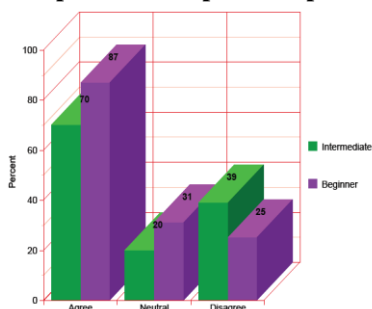
22. I enjoy practicing English with the foreign people I meet



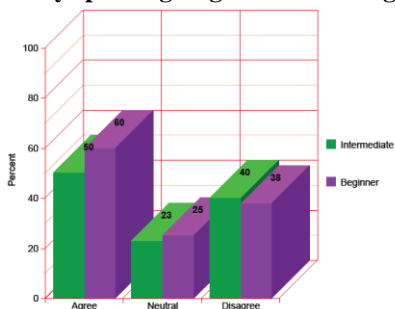
23. It’s OK to guess if you don’t know a word in English



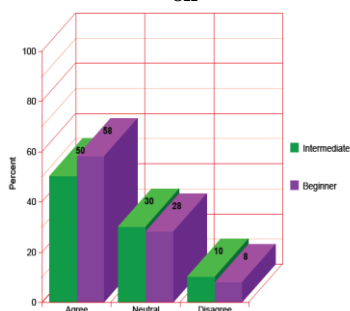
24. It is important to repeat and practice a lot



25. I feel shy speaking English with foreign people



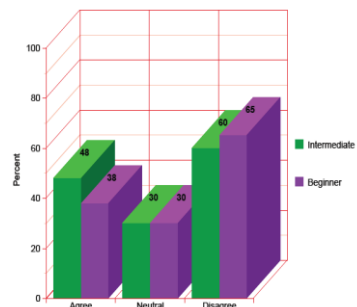
26. If beginning students are allowed to make mistakes in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on



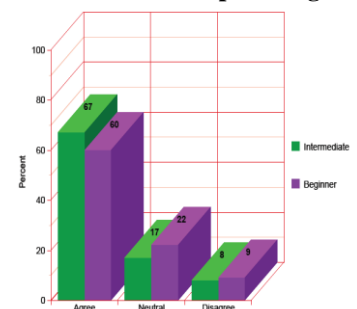
27. It's important to practice with Cassettes/tapes or CD ROMs.

Figure 4: Learning and Communication Strategies Motivations and Expectations

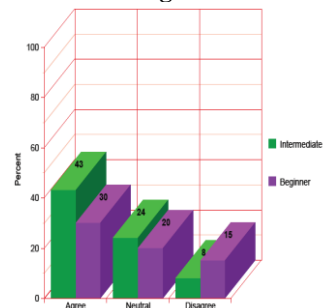
Responses on items for motivations and expectations indicate that an overwhelming majority of respondents disagreed with the statements “I would like to have foreign friends” (79%) and “if I learn to speak English very well, I will have better job opportunities” (68%). A majority agreed with that people in their country feel that it is important to speak English (67%) and that they want to learn to speak English very well (60%) (see Figure 5). There are no significant differences in respondent’s perceptions for the motivation and expectation items in terms of their level of proficiency.



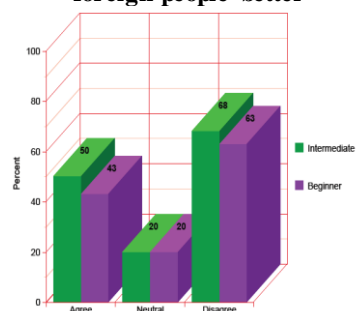
28. I believe I will learn to speak English very well



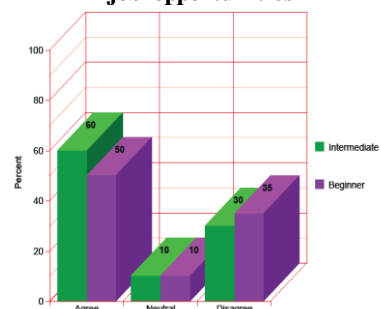
29. People in my country feel that it is important to speak English



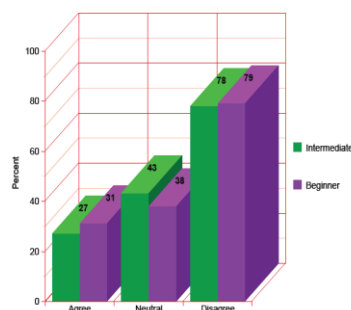
30. I would like to learn English so that I can get to know foreign people better



31. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have better job opportunities



32. I want to learn to speak English very well



33. I would like to have foreign friends
Figure 5: Motivations and Expectations

Discussion

The aim of the study was to ascertain whether there are any differences in language beliefs of participants due to their level of proficiency. Regarding the research questions: (1) do the beginner and intermediate level students hold the same beliefs about language learning? (2) what are the areas where the learners' beliefs are mostly the same and what are the areas where those beliefs are most different?, results of the present study show that intermediate and novice learners of English in this study generally held similar views about language learning in all categories of the survey instrument 'Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory' (BALLI). However, there were three items on which responses of intermediate and beginner respondents differed. One of these items related to the item that "it is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one". In fact, the results of statistical analysis showed that intermediate learners are more likely than beginners to believe this aspect. This could be due to the students' making comparisons between their previous and present language learning achievements.

In other words, it can be said that intermediate language learners are more successful in learning English than the beginners and that this may be because of their contrastive language learning in that they compare English with Arabic and benefit from their knowledge of Arabic grammar and vocabulary. Another difference, although marginally different, was found in two items that concerned the degree of respondents' interest in practicing English with foreign people and their feeling of shyness in speaking with foreign people. Results related to this items showed that beginners are less interested in practicing English with foreign people than intermediate ones and that the latter are slightly less likely than the former to feel shy speaking English with foreign people. Thus, the hypothesis that intermediate and advanced learners of English differ in terms of their language learning beliefs was supported only for the three items noted above.

After collecting the questionnaires, the researcher asked 10 participants to mention their reasons and elaborate on their responses to the Questionnaire. Although the discrepancies between intermediate and novice learners were not significant, comparing their responses with each other for each item may be useful. For the section related to "Foreign language Aptitude", intermediate learners' responses to items were in harmony with those of novice ones. The results related to the next category of the Questionnaire, "the Difficulty of Language Learning", showed that for most intermediate learners English was neither difficult nor easy but novice learners considered learning English a difficult job.

For the next section, "the Nature of Language Learning", results of the interview with the beginner language learners

revealed that they were not interested in a foreign language culture, in learning English in foreign countries. This lack of interest in culture of English speaking countries was because of their unfamiliarity with that culture and since they were not skillful, they believed they didn't have enough self confidence for these circumstances. Moreover, a majority of them agreed that learning a foreign language was different from learning other academic subjects. This is due to the fact that they have all their academic subjects either in their first language, Persian, or their second language which is Arabic so English courses are really different and problematic for them.

The participants' responses to the items of the category "Learning and Communication Strategies" revealed that for almost both groups pronunciation was not the focus. In fact, since they learned English for specific purposes, they needed not pronunciation of words. Almost all of them were not that much interested in practicing English with foreign people and believed that repetition was really important. For the last two items of this section, novice learners agreed more that students should be prevented from making mistakes since their fossilized mistakes in English, specifically in terms of pronunciation and grammar, were due to their errors not having been corrected previously. In addition, they were interested in practicing with cassettes/tapes or CD ROMs because they believed a model for learning English was needed.

The third research question "Is there any pattern in these two groups' beliefs about learning English?" was answered by the section related to "Motivations and Expectations". In fact a pattern was derived from both groups' responses to the questions, i.e. both groups showed that speaking was not their focus because they did not need this skill. This kind of need analysis is in line with the ESP books available for these majors in that the purpose of learning English in them is expanding reading skill and knowledge of vocabulary. But the contradiction was that their responses to item 32 revealed their interest in learning speaking but since speaking had not been practical for them during all their education, they lack enough motivation in practicing this skill. It is noticeable that lack of practice in speaking and listening can have negative effect on learners' knowledge of vocabulary which may make their knowledge of language passive. Accordingly, although they may not come across a situation which requires their listening and speaking ability, these skills can affect the other two skills -i.e. reading and writing- interactively.

The results of the present study differed from Nikitina and Furuoka' research (2007) in that the latter found five items where opinions of intermediate and beginner students were significantly different. Two statements each concerned language aptitude and the difficulty of learning the Russian language; one statement involved learning and communication strategies. The beliefs that children learn foreign languages easier and faster than adults and that some people have an inherent talent for learning languages were stronger among the intermediate level students. Secondly, statements that it is difficult to understand the Russian language and that Russian grammar is difficult received stronger agreement from the intermediate level students. Lastly, the importance of an excellent pronunciation was another variable where the divergence in the beliefs between the beginner and intermediate level students was statistically significant. The intermediate level students gave less value to speaking with a native-like accent thus demonstrating enhanced learning and communication strategies than did the

beginner students. It should be noticed here that Nikitina and Furuoka' research (2007) examined the beliefs of students toward learning Russian Language not English and this can justify the discrepancy between the results of their study and the present one.

Conclusion

Overall, with the exception of three items, intermediate and beginner respondents in this study seemed to respond in a similar fashion in terms of their beliefs about foreign language aptitude, the difficulty they perceived when learning a language, the nature of language learning, the strategies in learning and communication, and their motivations and expectations. Intermediate and novice group differed significantly in their belief in the ease of learning another language for someone who already speaks a foreign language. In fact, the results of statistical analysis showed that intermediate learners are more likely than beginners to believe this. Another difference, although marginally, was found in two items that concerned the degree of respondents' interest in practicing English with foreign people and their feeling of shyness in speaking with foreign people. Results related to these items showed that that beginners are less interested in practicing English with foreign people than intermediate ones and that the latter are slightly less likely than the former to feel shy speaking English with foreign people. Thus, the hypothesis that intermediate and advanced learners of English in the above ESP context differ in terms of their language learning beliefs was supported only for the three items noted above and this provided the answer for research questions 1 and 2. For research question 3, a pattern can be derived from both groups' responses to the questions. In fact, both groups showed that speaking was not their focus because they did not need this skill.

Pedagogical Implications

In terms of pedagogical implications of learner-beliefs research, identification of these beliefs and recognizing their potential impact on language learning and teaching in general, as well as in more specific areas such as learners' expectations and strategy use specially in the field of ESP, can inform future syllabus design and teacher practice in an EFL course. The BALLI assessment tool could be a good starting point. Wenden (1986) points out that activities in which learners examine and evaluate their beliefs may lead to increased awareness and even adjustment of their expectations concerning language learning. This finding of the present study could be of interest to educational policymakers and university curriculum planners since it lends support to the idea of having enough information about the needs of students and their beliefs about learning English.

Results of this study offer some useful insights into language learning beliefs of students studying English for specific purposes, more specifically for those majoring in Theology and Islamic Sciences. To conclude, knowledge of students' beliefs about language learning is important for language instructors as it can provide a valuable insight into the learners' perceptions of and ideas on language learning. This is especially important for expatriate teachers who have different learning experiences and backgrounds from their students. Ideas and opinions about language learning tend to influence students' learning behavior. Therefore, assessing learners beliefs could help to identify potential "problem areas" and make some adjustment to the classroom procedure.

Limitations of the Study

It seems, however, that caution should be exercised in generalizing the current findings beyond this student population, or indeed to other wider populations, where other variables are likely to exist. In addition, it is important to note that apart from level of proficiency, a number of social, cultural, contextual, cognitive, affective, and personal factors can be responsible for shaping the nature and strength of language learner beliefs (for a review, see Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005). Using a longitudinal research design rather than a cross-sectional one as was done here may help to further elucidate the nature and development of language beliefs.

Suggestion for Further Research

Accordingly, future research could further investigate the role of level of proficiency in learner beliefs across different populations, contexts, age groups, and specifically other majors. Also, there is currently paucity in literature on the impact of learner beliefs in the language classroom, the stability or flexibility of beliefs about language learning, as well as their relationship to other stable individual factors such as personality type. The limitations of the present study go beyond its contextual and institutional constraints. Given the particularly complex and multi-faceted nature of beliefs about language learning and the myriad factors that can shape learner beliefs, no attempt will be made to generalize the findings of this study beyond the local context, although comparison data suggest feasibility of finding general trends across contexts, and individual differences of learners, through replicated studies.

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