Evaluating Saudi University Students' Beliefs about Learning English

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Abstract

In this study, beliefs held by Saudi university medical students toward English and how it should be learnt will be elucidated through an experimental study. There is evidence that students bring their previous beliefs, experiences, learning strategies and attitudes to the classroom which are the main drivers for the actions that students perform to learn (Breen, 2001). It has been highlighted that students' beliefs is important, influencing their learning performance, motivation and learning strategies (Lowie et al., 2009; Horwitz, 1985). Results revealed that students reported more positive beliefs with reference to motivation and expectation statement, more negative beliefs with regard to learning and communication strategies and more uncertain responses to foreign language aptitude. Finally, the findings offered several pedagogical implications and recommendations for further research, especially at the university level.

Keywords: students' beliefs, language learning strategies, attitudes, motivation

1. Introduction

Recent developments in the field of teaching English as a second or foreign language have led to a renewed interest in the pedagogy of teaching and learning. With the advent of communicative language teaching, the role of students becomes more essential and approaches to learning turned to be more learners centered and take into account students' needs, background and goals (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The social context of learning is eminent for understanding the beliefs students bring to the process of learning which affect the learning process and performance (Bandura & Schunk, 1981, Breen 2001), and learning outcomes (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Breen, 2001; Horwitz, 1985; Ellis, 1997; Weinert & Kluwe, 1987). Richards and Lockhart (1996) pinpoint the major role of beliefs and state:

Learners' beliefs systems cover a wide range of issues and can influence learners' motivation to learn, their expectations about language learning, their perceptions about what is easy or difficult about a language, as well as the kind of learning strategies they favour (p. 52).

Elaine Horwtiz was the first to conduct a study on the nature of language learning beliefs after developing the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) in the late 1980s and putting it into practice to examine learners' beliefs about themselves and about the target language and how it should learnt in ESL and EFL settings. However, Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) claim that although research on learners' beliefs yield significant results, the question of how these beliefs are shaped and produced is still to be answered.

Foreign language teachers and curriculum designers should take into account the beliefs held by students that they bring to the classrooms and help them to expel the unhelpful ones because as Rokeach (1968) asserts "beliefs are predispositions to action" (p. 113). Sigel (1985), Harvey (1986) and Benson (2001) share the view that beliefs guide thoughts and behaviours. Horwitz (1988) notices that identifying students' beliefs will result in better understanding of their expectations about how a foreign or second language should be learnt and she maintains

Although, at first glance, faith in these claims can be dismissed as naive, such expectations surely influence students when they entered conventional language classrooms and their own progress lags behind their preconceived timetables (p. 283).

Besides hindering learning progress, unrealistic beliefs held by students can lead to increasing classroom anxiety and frustration (Horwitz et al., 1986; Truitt, 1995; Maclntyre & Gardner, 1989; Maclntyre, 1995; Krashen, 1985). Teaching practices are also important for affecting students' beliefs. For example, Peacock (1999; 2001) notices the potential impact of language teaching in general term on students' beliefs about language learning. For this reason, if teachers do not compare their own beliefs with their students' and tell students how to learn, learning outcomes might be negative.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition and Impact of Beliefs

Beliefs fall into the category of affective variables such as attitudes, anxiety, motivation and self-esteem. Beliefs are defined in different ways according to the research community and theoretical orientations (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005). For example, Richardson (1996) defines beliefs in a more general way as "psychologically held understandings, premises, or prepositions about the world that felt to be true" (p. 103). In this view, beliefs are not necessarily examined or verified and presuppose that they could conflict with each other as Rokeach (1968) highlights when describing his belief system structure "within it, in some organized psychological but not necessarily logical form" (p. 2). Lowie et al. (2009) define beliefs by emphasizing the role of cognitive and metacognitive aspects of the nature of knowledge and learning.

Learner beliefs refer to the beliefs of learners about language learning, such as their beliefs about their own language aptitude, about the difficulty of a language they want to learn, and about the best way to learn a language (p. 131).

The relationship between language learning beliefs and other affective variables is cyclical and interrelated. In recent years, learners beliefs are looked at as dynamic and situational which might change according to certain factors such as situation, age of learners, teachers' roles and learning activities. Lowie et al. (2009), for example, observe the relationship between beliefs and motivation pointing out that students might be less motivated if teachers implemented certain teaching methods which confront with their beliefs about the best way of learning. Similarly, Yale (1997) mentions that adult learners are more affected by the "affective filter" which he defines as "a kind of barrier of acquisition that results from negative feelings or expressions" (p. 192). It is not surprising that Krashen (1985) refers to the importance of lowering the affective filter of students in a teacher's care; he states that a student who is anxious or has low esteem about his ability to perform well will probably do less than someone who has confidence or no such worries. In the context of the college where the study was carried out, all students were adults.

Yang (1999) also points out the relationships between beliefs and learning strategies are closely related and linked together. Wen and Johnson (1997) assert that the relationship between beliefs and learning strategies are more noticeable and measured than other affective variables because they are direct and consistent to the existence of learners' beliefs. Researchers observed that students' beliefs have a great impact on the choice of language learning strategies for those who study English as a second or a foreign language (Oxford, 1990; Ellis, 1997; Cohen, 1998; Littlewood, 1984). In one study, AL-Roomy (2013) as part of his study, investigated the studies' skills of medical Saudi students and which learning strategies they adopted while learning English. Students reported that they had negative attitude toward group work and, therefore, preferred to work individually rather than collaboratively while performing classroom activities. They also believed that teachers were the main source of knowledge. Many studies investigate the factors influencing language learners' beliefs such as multi lingual setting and gender (Bernat, 2007; Nikitina & Furuka, 2006), soci- cultural dimension (Zhong, 2014), fields of study (Kassam, 2013), and age (Alseweed, 2009).

2.2 Saudi Studies on Students' Beliefs

Several studies shed light on students' beliefs regarding learning English in the Saudi context. Al-Seghayer (2014) pinpointed Saudi students' beliefs are one of the major obstacles that affect English education among Saudi students. He added that Saudi students held negative beliefs about English as a result of several internal and external factors including the way they perceive English, their personal experiences and expectations about studying English. Liton (2012) carried out a study to investigate students' motivation toward English in Saudi intermediate level schools. It concludes that EFL classrooms were demotivated and suggested some ways to motivate students. These include adapting technological instruments inside the classrooms, deploying authentic materials, diverse teaching methods and introducing English to students in early stages. Alasmari (2013) carried out another study on Saudi undergraduate students to examine their attitudes toward English. He found that although students hold positive attitudes and beliefs toward English, they still had negative beliefs about the role of teachers inside the classrooms because of the teaching practices.

Alsamaani (2012) did a study to explore the overall beliefs of novice Saudi university students about learning English as a foreign language. The study concluded that Saudi students hold positive and realistic beliefs about English and how it should be learnt. Some beliefs regarding the nature of language learning and communication strategies were influenced by the way they learnt English as undergraduate students. The study recommended that understanding students' beliefs is vital for knowing other factors affecting learning as well as teaching. These factors included students' expectations and motivation toward English, teachers' methods of teaching and finally the appropriateness of language learning syllabi.

Kassem (2013) carried out a study to investigate learning beliefs and attitudes of fresh Saudi college students majoring in business administration. Kassem compared a group of students majoring in English with another group majoring in business administration. The study concluded that although students majoring in English had stronger beliefs and attitudes toward EFL learning, non-English students did not perceive English as a threat to their mother tongue or culture. Moreover, non-English students reported two average low factors i.e., self-efficacy and the difficulty and nature of learning English.

All of these studies are relevant to my study, but, however, too little attention has been paid to investigating Saudi students' beliefs toward English considering the factor of field of study i.e. teaching English for medical students. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore beliefs hold by novice Saudi medical students at and compare with their learning strategies use.

3. Statement of the Problem

Saudi students' performance in English is not up to the mark by the time they become at university level (e.g., Javid et al., 2012). They have difficulty learning English courses which are taught mostly by native speakers of English. They always complain that they have to learn different subjects in English such as math, physics and chemistry. Teachers are criticized for not offering students the needed skills for learning English and creating supportive environments for learning. However, teachers cannot help students to learn English while they are less motivated or deploying certain learning strategies which are unhelpful to their studies. Students, who are adult learners, might develop some learning habits from their past experiences and insist on using them. Adult learners can be reluctant to find out new ways of learning and like to attend to their vast and diverse experiences of life. Teachers cannot tap students' motivation to learn or encourage them to be actively engaged in the learning process unless they know what beliefs and attitudes students hold that might hinder their learning.

To tackle the above issues, the study aims to answer the following question:

What are Saudi medical students' beliefs and attitudes toward learning English?

4. Methods and Methodology

4.1 Participants

The study was conducted in the English language department of King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. All participants were enrolled in an orientation pre-professional programme they had to pass in order to join the medical professional programme. 151 male students were given a questionnaire during the last two week study sessions of the second term 2014/2015.

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis

This study is based on data gained from both a questionnaire and background questions. Before administrating the questionnaire, I did a pilot study to investigate the clarity of questions after translating them and to know the estimate time needed for completion. Five students participated in the questionnaire. The questionnaire is called the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) which was developed by Horwitz (1984) to assess students' beliefs in a foreign language learning context. Since its development, BALLI has been used in different contexts with different levels of students all over the world. BALLI consists of 34 items for assessing students' beliefs, covering five areas: 1) difficulty of language learning; 2) foreign language aptitude; 3) the nature of language learning; 4) learning and communication strategies; 5) motivations and expectations – see table one for the organization of these items.

Table 1. Organization of BALLI statements

Area of Learning Beliefs	Items number
Foreign Language Aptitude	1,2,10,15,22,29,32,33,34
Difficulty of language learning	3,4,6,14,24,28
The nature of language learning	5,8,11,16,20,25,26
Learning and communication strategies	7,9,12,13,17,18,19,21
Motivations and expectations	23,27,30,31

Students had to choose one response out of five Likert scale specifying their level of agreement and disagreement i.e., 'strongly agree, 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree', and 'strongly disagree'.

However, it is important to mention that (BALLI) was not an instrument to account for all students' beliefs but rather was to find out the belief systems of a particular group because some teachers might find some unexpected beliefs hindering students learning (Horwitz, 2008). Also, it should be noted that the aim of BALLI is not to elicit black and white choices out of students' responses but rather to paint a picture of how these beliefs are intertwined with the learning process (Horwitz, 1988). Horwitz (1988) states that (BALLI) "was developed to assess student opinions on a variety of issues and controversies related to language learning" (p. 184).

For data analysis, students' responses were tabulated and analyzed statistically in terms of positive, neutral and negative response to a statement. Positive responses refereed to 'strongly agree' and 'agree' choices while negative responses stood for 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' choices.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 2. Foreign language aptitude

Questionnaire Items	Total Agree	Total Disagree	Total Undecided
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language	**110** 72.8%	**11** 7.2%	**30** 19.8%
2. Some people are born with special ability which helps them learn a foreign language	**46** 30.46%	**53** 35%	**52** 34.43%
10. It is easier for someone who speaks a foreign language to learn another one	**86** 56.95%	**17** 11.25%	**48** 31.78%
15. I have foreign language aptitude	**141** 93.37%	**3** 1.98%	**7** 4.63%
22. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages	**38** 25.16%	**44** 29.13%	**69** 45.69%
29. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages	**24** 15.89%	**87** 57.61%	**40** 26.49%
32. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent	**65** 43%	**30** 19.86%	**56** 37%
33. Saudis are good at learning foreign languages	**58** 38.41%	**27** 43.70%	**66** 17.88%
34. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language	**104** 68.78%	**23** 15.89%	**24** 15.23%
Overall responses and percentages of all items	**672** 49%	**295** 22%	**392** 29%

Statements 1, 2, 10, 15, 22, 29, 32, 33 and 34, which are summarized in table 2 above, present the special ability for language learning and beliefs about the characteristics possessed by successful and unsuccessful language learners. For item 1 "it is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language", the majority of students, 72.8%, gave positive responses either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' choices to this statement. This belief is similar to the common notion "the younger the better" found in second or foreign language learning acquisition incorporates the findings of Kovelman et al. (2008) who postulate that early age has positive effect on language development and performance.

In reply to the statement "some people are born with special ability which helps them learn a foreign language", respondents reported more negative responses "35%" or "undecided" ones 34% to this belief. Surprisingly, while respondents held strong beliefs about the age factor on foreign language learning and based on the background

questions students were asked, they had studied English for six years before joining the college. They had been exposed to English in the intermediate and high school levels.

They supported their responses by giving item 15 "I have a foreign language aptitude" the highest 'agree' response 93.37% and item 34 "everyone can learn to speak a foreign language" more positive responses 68.78%. Interestingly, although students reported more positive responses to item 15 where they looked at themselves as having the ability to learn, they did not think that Saudis in general were good at learning a foreign language (item 33). One possible explanation is that students might have had negative experiences while learning English and had little exposure to practice what they had learnt outside the classroom.

With regard to the characteristics of language learners, respondents indicated more positive responses 56.95% to item 10 "it is easier for someone who speaks a foreign language to learn another one," but they reported the least positive responses to item 29 "people who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages" (15.89%). Moreover, they did not consider the gender factor important in learning while responding to item 22 "women are better than men at learning foreign languages" (25.16%), nor did they regard intelligence as a main characteristic for learners (43%). This indicates that they think of language learning not as natural or biological ability they were born with but rather as a cumulative learning process which extends for years to reach their desired goal.

Table 3. The difficulty of language learning

Questionnaire Items	Total Agree	Total Disagree	Total Undecided
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	**131**	**8**	**12**
	86.75%	7.94%	5.24%
4. The language I am trying to learn is: 1) a very difficult language, 2) a difficult language, 3) a language of medium difficulty, 4) an easy language, 5) a very easy language.	**142** 94%	**2** 1.32%	**7** 4.63%
6. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well.	**49** 32.45%	**62** 41%	**40** 26.49%
14. If someone spends an hour a day learning a language, how long would it take him/her to become fluent? 1) less than one year, 2) 1-2 years, 3) 3-5 years, 4) 5-10 years, 5) you cannot learn a language in 1 hour a day.	**42** 27.81%	**72** 47.68%	**37** 24.50%
24. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	**65** 43%	**18** 11.92%	**68** 45%
28. It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.	**40** 26.49%	**49** 32.45%	**62** 41%
Overall responses and percentages	**469** 52%	**211** 23%	**226** 25%

The BALLI items 3, 4, 6, 14, 24, and 28 deal with the general difficulty of language learning and more specifically English. All responses are summarized in table 3 above. First of all, the large majority of students surveyed (86.75%) agreed that "some languages are easier than others", item 3. They supported their response to item 3 by giving a high 'agree' response to item 4 which affirms the difficulty of their target language. Most respondents (94%) believed that English is either 'very difficult' or 'difficult language'. Holding the belief of English as a difficult language affected students' expectation of success in the target language. Before students join intermediate schools they hear this everywhere, which predisposes them psychologically to expect solutions to be hard to find whenever they encounter any difficulty while learning. They expect to feel in a position where learning is not easy. This can lead to students losing confidence in themselves and failing to perform to their best (Krashen, 1985).

Students reported less agree and more 'disagree' responses to their ability to speak English very well and gave more amount of time to learnt it (32.45%, 27.81%,41% and47.68% respectively). It is clear that students were pessimistic about learning English which more likely would hinder the process of learning, increase classroom anxiety and lead to frustration (Horwitz et al., 1986). Items 24 and 28 assess the difficulty of language skills. On item 24 (43%) of respondents reported that speaking is easier than understanding and more 'undecided' responses (45%) to this belief. In addition, students disagreed (32%) that reading and writing English is easier

than speaking and understanding and (41%) were not sure about this statement. In both cases, students emphasized the difficulty of either receptive or productive skills including speaking, understanding, reading and writing. However, why did students consider speaking easier than others? This might be attributed to the place of oral skills in the Arab world and Saudi society in more specific. This supports Shannon's (2003) view, that the Gulf societies give privilege to oral tradition and Watson (2004) who was more specific and claimed that there was neglect in the Arab education of the reading culture. According to Watson, the lack of reading culture in the Arabic language negatively influenced how students learn English.

Table 4. The nature of language learning

Questionnaire Items	Total Agree	Total Disagree	Total Undecided
5. The structure of English is different from that of Arabic.	**113** 74.83%	**14** 9.27%	**24** 15.89%
8. It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language.	**61** 40.39%	**54** 35.76%	**36** 23.84%
11. It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.	**120** 79.47%	**13** 8.60%	**18** 11.92%
16. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.	**146** 96.68%	**2** 1.32%	**3** 1.98%
20. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammatical rules.	**131%** 86.75%	**11%** 7.28%	**9%** 5.96%
25. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.	**122** 80.79%	**5** 3.31%	**24** 15.89%
26. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.	**116** 76.82%	**17** 11.25%	**18** 11.92%
Overall responses and percentages	**809** 76%	**116** 11%	**132** 13%

Items 5, 8, 11, 16, 20, 25, 26 concern the issues of the nature of language learning and how it should be learnt. Responses to these items are reported above in table 4. In response to item 5, 74.83% of students agreed that the structure of Arabic is different from English which was expected in general terms because Arabic is from the Sematic language family which is totally different from English. The role of culture in learning English was assessed in items 8 and 11. 40.39% of respondents believed in this statement "It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language", suggesting that students did not see the inter-relationship between culture and language. However, there is a concern of learning English without being aware of the cultural framework in which it exists because the focus would be only on linguistic competence rather than communicative competence. Genc and Bada (2005) point out teaching English without its culture is incomplete because students are expected to find difficulty to communicate with English native speakers and observe that "for students of ELT, studying English culture is not an arbitrary but a necessity activity" (p. 80).

In item 11, the majority (79.47%) agreed that "It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country." Such a belief implies that there is no effective way to learn English unless someone travels for his studies to one of the English speaking countries. Otherwise, it would be a waste of time and effort. With regard to item 25, the majority (80.79%) emphasized that learning English is not the same as learning different school subjects which is good because learning any language takes time and need patience as well as using different learning strategies.

Finally, items 16, 20 and 26 examined students' perceptions of the weight to be placed on language learning tasks. The large majority of respondents (96.68%, 86.75% and 76.82% respectively) gave priority to recognizing new words, studying grammatical rules and focusing on translation. Students held such strong beliefs about how English should be learnt as a result of their own experience as English learners. They came from schools where teachers utilized the Grammar Translation method in teaching which focuses on the linguistic competence over communicative competence. In a Saudi context, the role of teachers is eminent in affecting students' beliefs especially negative ones via teaching practices (Alasmari, 2013).

Table 5. Learning and communicating strategies

Questionnaire Items	Total Agree	Total Disagree	Total Undecided
7. It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent pronunciation and accent.	**98** 64.90	**25** 16.55%	**28** 18.54%
9. You should not say anything in a foreign language until you can say it correctly.	**24** 15.89%	**105** 69.53%	**22** 14.56%
12. If I heard some people speaking the language I am trying to learn, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language.	**107** 70.86%	**17** 11.25%	**27** 17.88%
13. It is o.k. to guess if you do not know a word in the foreign language.	**113** 74.83%	**14** 9.27%	**24** 15.89%
17. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	**143** 94.70%	**4** 2.64%	**4** 2.64%
18. I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.	**48** 31.78%	**80** 52.98%	**23** 15.23%
19. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning it will be hard to get rid of them later on.	**48** 31.78%	**81** 53.64%	**22** 14.56%
21. It is important to practice in the language laboratory.	**119** 78.80%	**16** 10.59%	**16** 10.59%
Overall responses and percentages	**700** 58%	**342** 28%	**166** 14%

In the above table, BALLI items 7, 9, 12, 13, 18 and 19 have to do with learning strategies while items 17 and 21 are related to communicative strategies. In item 17, a large number of students, (94.70%), agreed that repetition and practice are essential methods for learning. Such belief embodies the phrase 'practice makes perfect." Additionally, students believed that fostering new technologies in learning is of great help. Most of them, 78.80%, emphasized the benefits of language lab over traditional methods of teaching, but surprisingly, the majority of them had not experienced English language labs in learning English because they came from state schools. The implementation of new technologies, as opposed to traditional manners, is effective in creating supportive and motivating learning environment (Liton, 2012; Harmer, 2001).

Regarding the communicating strategies, in item 9, students believed that there was no harm in making mistakes while practicing English in front of others (70.86% and 52,98% respectively) because their mistakes would be corrected by the passage of time (item, 19). Moreover, the majority of them (74.83%) gave "agree" responses to this statement "It is o.k. to guess if you do not know a word in the foreign language" and reported that they never mind practicing what they learn with English language speakers(item 12). It is clear that students deployed a compensation strategy i.e., "guessing" to make use of what they already know in order to recognize the meaning of unknown words.

Table 6. Motivations and expectations

Questionnaire Items	Total Agree	Total Disagree	Total Undecided
23. If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	**137** 90.72%	**6** 3.97%	**8** 5.29%
27. If I learn to speak this language very well, it will help me get a good job.	**131** 86.75%	**5** 3.31%	**15** 9.93%
30. Saudis think that it is important to speak a foreign language.	**120** 79.47	**7** 4.63%	**24** 15.89%
31. I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.	**125** 82.78%	**12** 7.94%	**14** 9.27%
Overall responses and percentages	**513** **85%**	**30** **5%**	**61** **10%**

BALLI items 23, 27, 30 and 31 focus on motivations and expectations students want to meet when learning English which are shown in table 6 above. In response to the four items, the majority of students (85%) were motivated to learn English in compared with a small number who disagreed (5%). This is a good indication because motivation plays a key factor in foreign language learning (Brown, 1994; Harmer, 2007; Marco,2003) and can indicate the rate of success among students as well (Dörnyei & Ushioda,2011). On one hand, students

were extrinsically motivated to learn English for better jobs as in item 27; on the other hand, students were intrinsically motivated to learn English to get to know members of the target language better as in item 31. Regarding the English status, students reported that Saudis look at English as having an essential role because it occupies an important place in the Saudi society (item, 30). However, more than 90% believed that the more they are efficient in English the better opportunities they have to practice it either for general or academic purposes (item, 23).

6. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

The present study investigated the beliefs of Saudi novice medical students by using Horwitz's (1987) BALLI. It has gone some way towards theoretically enhancing deeper understanding of Saudi English language learning. It revealed that novice Saudi university students held positive and negative beliefs about language learning. Overall, students reported more "unsure" replies for foreign language aptitude beliefs, more 'agree' responses related to motivations and expectations statements and 'disagree' responses with reference to learning and communication strategies. Some of these beliefs came from previous experiences as language learners; others from teaching practices adopted by their teachers or were just a random guess like the belief related to the best age of learning which were not directly to them because they had not experience it before.

In light of the findings, several pedagogical implications, recommendations and suggestions can be attained for Saudi English teaching, especially at the university level. First, it is important for teachers to be aware of students' beliefs and expectations about learning to provide students with appropriate teaching practices. Teachers should reinforce the good beliefs which maximize learning and help students to dispel the erroneous ones that hinder learning by discussing openly those beliefs with students (Horwitz, 1987 & 1988). Second, the curriculum designers can encourage activities which present language learning communicatively rather than linguistically i.e., focusing on using English in meaningful tasks rather than placing emphasis on grammatical norms. Third, students' beliefs can be tackled efficiently if they are well presented in pre-in service teachers programmes. Teachers can draw a picture in advance and expect such beliefs to be held. Finally, it would be worthwhile if more studies on students' beliefs investigate the Saudi context with different ages over a long period of time to figure out any changes in students' beliefs, and their field of studies and gender using more qualitative research tools to show from where students' beliefs are constructed (Zhong, 2014; Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005). If most students at different levels share the same beliefs, this suggests that the educational system as a whole needs to be considered to help students to have better expectations of language learning.

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