

## ADAY ÖĞRETMENLERİN YABANCI DİL ÖĞRENİMİ HAKKINDAKİ İNANISLARININ EĞİTİM YILI BAZINDA İLİŞKİLENDİRİLMESİ

Pınar YENİ PALABIYIK \*

### ÖZET

Bu çalışma 108 aday İngiliz dili öğretmeninin dil öğrenmeye yönelik inanışlarını incelemektedir. Çalışmanın amaçları üç yönlüdür. İlk olarak, mevcut öğrencilerin yabancı dil öğrenme inanışlarını açıklamaktadır; ikinci olarak ise bu inanışların öğrencilerin üniversitedeki eğitim yılına göre farklılık gösterip göstermediği sorgulanmakta, üçüncü olarak cinsiyet ve İngilizceyi öğrenme süresi gibi faktörlerin öğrencilerin inanışlarına olan etkisi bildirilmektedir. Gerekli bilgi Horwitz'in Dil Öğrenme İnanışları Envanteri'ne (BALLI) (1987) dayanarak oluşturulan anket aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Veri, Sosyal Bilimler İçin İstatiksel Paket (SPSS) kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular katılımcıların büyük bir çoğunluğunun yabancı dil öğrenmeye karşı hevesli olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin inanışları 1. ve 2. sınıf öğrencilerine nazaran daha iyimserdir. Son olarak cinsiyet ve İngilizceyi öğrenme süresinin inanışlar üzerinde esaslı bir etki bırakmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** dil öğrenme inanışları, öğretmen eğitimi, aday öğretmenler

### PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN RELATION TO YEAR OF STUDY

#### ABSTRACT

The present study examines the language learning beliefs of 108 pre-service English language teachers. The aims of this study are threefold: First, it elucidates the beliefs of those students; second, it investigates whether those beliefs vary in terms of the students' year of study at the university; and third, it assesses the effects of factors such as gender and length of learning English on the beliefs of students. Data were collected via a questionnaire which was based on Horwitz's "Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory" (BALLI) (1987). The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings indicate that most of the participants are motivated to learn a foreign language. Also, the 4<sup>th</sup> year students' beliefs are more optimistic than the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year ones. Lastly, gender and length of learning English were found to have no profound effect on students' beliefs.

**Keywords:** language learning beliefs, teacher education, pre-service teachers

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\* İngilizce Öğretmeni, Sakarya ili, Cumhuriyet Lisesi, pnaryeni@gmail.com

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the rise of the research on the area of educational psychology, concepts such as the mind, the attitudes and the beliefs of the learners have gained importance. According to Borg (1999), the term teacher cognition mainly refers to the beliefs, knowledge, theories, assumptions and attitudes that teachers hold about all aspect of their work. As is known, there are numerous definitions of beliefs which focus on many different aspects; however, trying to mention all of them cannot be possible in such a limited study. Mainly, Erdem (2009) defines beliefs as “generalizations on events and things which have its roots in experiences and knowledge and guide individual’s decisions and actions” (p.9).

Clearly, beliefs hold several features which can mainly be cited as being resistant to change, shaped by culture and so on. Kalaja and Barcelos (2003. cited in Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011, p.285) put forth the nature of beliefs as being context-dependent, complex, dynamic, and contradictory. Importantly, many researchers have focused on the issue of being resistant to change (e.g. Kim & Yang, 2011; Peng, 2011; Peacock, 2001). Moreover, Li (2005) notifies that beliefs become stronger as the individual grows older which shows the mere reason for being resistant. What makes beliefs an important concept is mainly related to the matter of being the origin of behaviors and actions. For this reason, negative beliefs can most probably lead to unsuccessful language learning experiences. At its best, the matter of metacognitive knowledge may be cited as a solution to the issue. Yüzbaşı (1991) defines metacognition as “the learners’ awareness and knowledge of their own learning process, as well as their abilities and tendencies to control these processes during learning” (p.24).

With respect to the studies conducted on the area of learner beliefs, it may be demystified that there have been many reviews which have different purposes in mind. For instance, Chee and Wang (2009) studied tertiary level students’ language learning beliefs, and they found that the participants had a strong instrumental motivation to learn English. Öz (2005) investigated the students’ beliefs about language learning who were at secondary education. The results indicated that there were variability in learners’ beliefs with respect to factors such as age, gender, and so forth. Further, Tercanlıoğlu (2005) surveyed gender-related differences in beliefs, but she found no significant difference. Interestingly, Aragao (2011) studied the link between beliefs and emotions, and the findings indicated the strong association between the feelings like shame, fear and beliefs. The effect of study-abroad context to belief change was investigated by Kim and Yang (2011); moreover, Borg (2011) surveyed the effect of teacher education courses on belief change. Peacock (2011) investigated changes in the beliefs about second language learning, and it was revealed that there was little change over the 3 years mainly with regard to Horwitz’s vocabulary and grammar beliefs. Changes in beliefs during a transition to tertiary study were studied by Peng (2011) and the study found out “the potential for adopting an ecological theoretical framework ...to explore the nature of learner beliefs” (p.314). Block and Pan (2011) researched beliefs about the

status of English as a global language in China. Their study revealed that “English is an international and global language in contrast to Chinese”(p.391).

On the other hand, Peacock (2001) declares that the investigations on the beliefs of pre-service EFL teachers are inadequate. Kunt and Özdemir (2010) investigated the impact of methodology courses on pre-service EFL teachers’ beliefs. They compared the beliefs of students who took methodology courses at the beginning and those at the end of their teacher education program. Interestingly, the results indicated that “prospective teachers’ engagement in methodology courses seem to have little impact on the improvement of their beliefs” (p.3938). By contrast, a more recent study by Borg (2011) concluded that teacher training courses have a considerable impact on the beliefs of pre-service teachers. That is to say, these courses may reinforce teachers’ beliefs, make their beliefs more evident, help teachers to put their beliefs into practice, be the source of new beliefs for teachers and develop links between beliefs and theory. This suggests that, the methods which are used on the teacher training courses might affect the way the teachers teach. All those findings indicate the significance of the term “apprenticeship of observation” which refers chiefly to “a key influence on prospective teachers’ cognitions is their experiences as learners” (Borg, 2006, p.52). Put differently, Erdem (2009) claims that teachers inevitably internalize their teachers’ behaviors when they are affected by the apprenticeship of observation.

When all those above mentioned points are taken into consideration, it is hoped that the pre-service teachers’ education level, the way they are taught and some other factors may have an extensive effect on their language learning beliefs. In addition, Horwitz (1988) cites the beneficial side of learning students’ beliefs, and she states that knowing students’ beliefs about language learning may help the teachers to gain a better understanding of their students’ success, expectations, and so on. With this in mind, this paper will explore the nature of pre-service EFL teachers’ beliefs, and if the year of study, gender and length of learning English effect the language learning beliefs of those learners. To that end, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. What are the language learning beliefs of pre-service EFL teachers?
2. Is there any difference between the beliefs of pre-service teachers regarding their year of study at university?
3. Do they have language learning beliefs that differ according to gender and length of learning English as a foreign language?

## **2. METHOD**

### **2.1. Participants**

The participants were 108 pre-service EFL teachers (22,3% male, 79,6% female). Their ages were between 18 and 25. All of them were undergraduates, and they were in different years of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Program at Abant İzzat Baysal University. TEFL is a 4-year full-time pre-service EFL teacher training programme. The degree acts as a teaching qualification. Trainee teachers com-

plete a great number of courses. Core courses on TEFL methodology and language learning consist of Approaches in English Language Teaching, Research Methods, Special Teaching Methods, Materials Evaluation and School Experience. Elective courses include Computer Assisted Language Teaching, Language and Culture, Utilizing Drama Techniques for Language Teaching, Current Applications in English Language Teaching [http://www.ef.ibu.edu.tr/bolumler/ders\\_prog/ingilizce\\_ogr.pdf](http://www.ef.ibu.edu.tr/bolumler/ders_prog/ingilizce_ogr.pdf)

## 2.2. Instrument

The instrument used for this study is Horwitz's (1987) *Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory* (BALLI) due mainly to the fact that structured questionnaires are generally more suitable to elicit information from a large number of learners simultaneously. The permission which is needed to use the inventory has been taken via e-mail from the author of BALLI. Tercanhoğlu (2005) adapted a few items for use in Turkey, so those items are found to be convenient for this study. As a quantitative self-report questionnaire, BALLI consists of 34 items to examine learners' beliefs in five logical areas which are named as foreign language aptitude, difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, motivations and expectations. The questionnaire was administered in English. The participants were asked to read a statement and decide if they (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree with each statement.

## 2.3. Procedures

The data of this study were gathered at the department of ELT in Abant İzzet Baysal University of Turkey. The participants voluntarily participated in the study. There were 108 volunteers from 180 students. Participants filled out the questionnaire without the assistance of the researcher in December 2011. After the questionnaire was applied, data were fed into the computer in order to analyze it statistically.

## 2.4. Analysis

In this study, Microsoft Excel and SPSS software package were utilized to find out the frequencies and to make figures. The frequencies of each question were discovered to answer the first research question. ANOVA was applied both for the year of study differences and the length of learning English as a foreign language divergence. Further, t-test was conducted to see the gender differences.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the study is concerned with the evaluation of the results which have been attained by dint of a questionnaire. The first question aimed to find the foreign language learning beliefs of pre-service teachers. As aforementioned, there are five main areas of BALLI; therefore, there will be five tables to answer this question in a detailed way. In order to examine the items easily, BALLI item ratings have been grouped into three categories. That is to say, disagree (D) means strongly disagree and

disagree, neutral (N) means neither agree nor disagree, agree (A) means both agree and strongly agree. Note that the percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Table 1 presents responses to the items which concern beliefs about “Motivation and Expectations”.

**Table 1.**  
*Response Frequency (in percentage) For Motivation and Expectations*

Item	STATEMENT	D	N	A
20	People in my country feel that it is important to speak English.	17	21	62
24	I would like to learn English so that I can get to know native speakers of English better.	6	19	75
29	If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.	5	1	94
31	I want to learn to speak English well.	-	2	98
32	I would like to have native-English speaking friends.	3	8	89

As can be seen in Table 1, the majority of the participants agreed with the items regarding motivations and expectations. Dörnyei (2001) mentions the relationship between beliefs and motivation, and he argues that “creating realistic learner beliefs is an important motivational strategy” (p.217). Very simply, two kinds of motivation can be pointed out which are named as extrinsic and intrinsic. According to Burden and Williams (2010), those who are extrinsically motivated perform an act just to gain something such as passing an exam, or gaining financial results; nevertheless, intrinsically motivated ones perform an act just because of interest or enjoyment.

None of the students disagreed with the item “I want to speak English well” (Item 31). Ninety-eight percent (98%) of them agreed with that item which shows that nearly all of the participants are intrinsically motivated. Besides, sixty-two percent (62%) of the participants believed that speaking English is important for the people in their country. Ninety-four percent (94%) of the respondents agreed with the item “If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.” This result indicates that those students are extrinsically motivated. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the participants claimed that they would like to learn English so that they can get to know native speakers of English better. In addition, eighty-nine percent (89%) of the respondents would like to have native-English speaking friends. With respect to items 24 and 32, a great number of students are eager to know the members of the foreign culture and language.

In a similar vein, a study which was conducted by Tercanlıoğlu (2005) also indicated parallel findings; however, Chee and Wang (2009) studied the beliefs in Taiwanese context and their study showed that only forty percent (40%) of their participants agreed with the item referring to learning English to know its speakers better. With respect to these findings, it can be claimed that the beliefs of the learners may evidently show variation according to their cultures.

**Table 2.**  
*Response Frequency (in percentage) For Difficulty of Language Learning*

Items	STATEMENT	D	N	A
3	Some languages are easier to learn than others.	1	16	83
4.	English is:	-	-	-
4.1	a very difficult language	59	39	2
4.2	a difficult language	51	37	12
4.3	a language of medium difficulty	17	33	50
4.4	an easy language	23	42	35
4.5	a very easy language	38	45	17
5	I believe that I will learn to speak English very well.	8	8	84
15	If someone spent one hour a day learning a language how long would it take them to speak the language very well?	-	-	-
15.1	less than one year	26	53	21
15.2	1-2 years	11	51	38
15.3	3-5 years	20	49	31
15.4	5-10 years	30	57	13
15.5	You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.	32	43	25
25	It is easier to speak than to understand a foreign language.	62	23	15
34	It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	18	27	55

Table 2 examines the difficulty of language learning. First, Tercanlıoğlu (2005) puts forth that “there is a common belief in Turkish society that some languages are easier to learn than others” (p.156). Similarly, eighty-three percent (83%) of the respondents agreed with the third item. Half of the participants (50%) believed that English is a language of medium difficulty. Also, ninety percent (90%) of them believed that it is possible to learn English over a period of less than a year to five years (Item 15). However, when item 15 is examined in detail, it can be seen that the majority of the students neither agree nor disagree with the statements. Therefore, it can also be emphasized that they are not sure about the length of time which is necessary to learn English.

Eighty-four percent (84%) of the respondents believed that they will learn to speak English very well which shows that they were “quite positive about their ultimate achievement” (Tercanlıoğlu, 2005, p.156). When the basic skills of language are concerned, it may be obviously maintained that speaking is the most difficult skill for the participants of this study. Notably, sixty-two percent (62%) of the participants agreed that it is easier to understand a foreign language than to speak it (Item 25); moreover, fifty-five percent (55%) of them believed that reading and writing are easier than speaking and understanding a foreign language (Item 34).

**Table 3.**  
*Response Frequency (in percentage) For Foreign Language Aptitude*

Items	STATEMENT	D	N	A
1	It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	2	1	97
2	Some people have a special ability to learn foreign languages.	2	5	93
6	People from my country are good at learning foreign languages	48	33	19
10	It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	10	13	77
11	People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.	71	18	11
16	I have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	15	20	65
19	Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.	45	33	22
30	People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.	18	28	54
33	Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	16	22	62

As is shown in the table above, a large number of participants (97%) believed that it is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. Evidently, this result is totally in line with the premise that emphasize the earlier is the better. When the second item is examined, it can be seen that the majority of the participants (93%) supposed the presence of foreign language aptitude. However, some researchers accept this type of belief as detrimental, because according to Erdem (2009), “most learners think that some people are born with a special aptitude for learning foreign languages and when they believe they do not have such an aptitude, it may lessen their motivation and result in failure” (p.21).

Interestingly, even though most of the participants (48%) disagreed with the idea of Turkish people’s success at learning foreign languages, sixty-five percent (65%) of them accepted themselves as having a special ability to learn a foreign language (item 16). Seventy-seven percent (77 %) of the participants agree on the claim that it is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one. With respect to item 11, only eleven percent (11%) of the participants agreed on the suggestion of “people who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages”. Further, Cook (2001) indicates that most successful language learners are also good at other subjects. In other words, being successful in one subject does not mean that a person cannot be successful in another area. The issues concerning the nature of foreign language learning process are dealt with in the items below, so table 4 reports these results.

**Table 4.**  
*Response Frequency (in percentage) For Nature of Language Learning*

Item	STATEMENT	D	N	A
8	It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.	19	20	61
12	It is best to learn English in an English speaking-country.	3	3	94
17	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the vocabulary.	8	14	78
23	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar.	46	23	31
27	Learning a foreign language is different from learning other academic subjects.	6	13	81
28	The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my native language.	41	30	29

As English is taught as a foreign language in Turkey, most of the students think that the best way to learn English can be possible in a target country. Therefore, ninety-four percent (94%) of the participants agreed with this opinion (Item 12). Further, sixty-one percent (61%) of the participants believed that it is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English (Item 8). Both items 8 and 12 indicate the importance of culture in learning a language. In other words, culture is absolutely paramount for most of the participants of this study. On the other hand, in relation to learners' beliefs about studying abroad (SA), a study by Kim and Yang (2011) suggested that their study challenges the common assumption which is expressed as "L2-rich exposure through SA is the optimal way to improve L2 proficiency" (p.325). Rather, they emphasize that if the learners' beliefs are not adapted to meaningful L2 environments, those beliefs negatively affect the success of the learners in the L2 environment.

When the items referring to vocabulary, grammar and translation are taken into account, interesting findings can be observed. According to the table, learning the vocabulary is more important than learning the grammar and translation for the participants, because seventy-eight percent (78%) of the respondents agreed on item 17. Although there is no significant difference with respect to the percentages regarding grammar and translation, it can be clearly noticed that the number of students who disagreed (46% for grammar, 41% for translation) are higher than the ones who were neutral or agreed on the items (Items 23 & 28). Along a similar vein, İncecay and Keşli-Dollar (2011) studied foreign language learners' beliefs about grammar instruction and error correction. They have found that grammar is an important aspect of the language for the participants; however, those participants believed that it should be taught in a more communicative way (p.3394).

Block and Pan (2011) studied learners' and teachers' beliefs in China, and the researchers pointed out that "the emphasis on the learning and teaching of English is still found to be examination oriented" (p.391); moreover, half of the participants (53.6% of teachers and 52.7% of students) accepted that current English exams emphasize more the grasp of English grammar. Turkish education is also mostly based on exams, so it is quite normal for the participants to accept grammar and translation as the most important part of learning a language. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the participants indicated that learning English is different from learning other school subjects. Table 5 reports the preferences of the students regarding learning and communication strategies.

**Table 5.***Response Frequency (in percentage) For Learning and Communication Strategies*

Item	STATEMENT	D	N	A
7	It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	11	12	77
9	You shouldn't speak anything in English until you can say it correctly.	77	16	7
13	I enjoy practicing English with the native speakers of English I meet.	2	9	89
14	It's OK to guess if you don't know a word in English	13	24	63
18	It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	-	5	95
21	I feel timid speaking English with other people.	35	35	30
22	If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	34	13	43
26	It is important to practice with cassettes or tapes.	4	15	81

First of all, the most interesting finding in this table is related to the traditional learning strategies. That is, ninety-five percent (95%) of the participants accepted repetition and practice as important. Furthermore, eighty-one percent (81%) of them valued practicing with cassettes and tapes. As is known, English is a foreign language in Turkey, and the students do not have any chance to practice the language outside of the classroom. Thus, practicing with cassettes and tapes may well be the most convenient way of performing that language for those learners.

With regard to pronunciation, it is observed that seventy-seven percent (77%) of the participants believed that speaking English with an excellent pronunciation is essential. Conversely, seventy-seven percent (77%) of them disagreed with the item "you shouldn't speak anything in English until you can say it correctly" (Item 9). Evidently, this finding shows that fluency is more crucial for the participants rather than accuracy. Besides, Peacock (1999, cited in Erdem, 2009) argues that if the learners mainly focus on learning the grammar items and give importance to saying something correctly, they become less proficient than those who disagreed. The respondents also strongly empha-

size error correction at the very beginning, or else it would be hard for them to speak correctly afterward (Item 22).

Concerning psychological factors which affect the development of language skills, item 21 refers to the issue of shyness. As may be seen, the percentages are similar for this item; that is to say, the item is mainly related to the personality of the participants, so being shy can change from person to person. Lastly, item 14 refers to guessing strategy, and sixty-three percent (63%) of the respondents agreed that it is OK to guess if you do not know a word in English. According to Griffiths (2003), good language learners guess and keep going rather than literally translating and meticulously looking up each new word.

The second research question was aimed to investigate if the year of study has any considerable influence on the learners' beliefs. Table 6 indicates ANOVA results which throws a clear light on the question.

**Table 6.**  
*ANOVA Table For Year of Study Differences*

Source	(SS)	(df)	(MS)	F	p	Reasonable Difference
<b>Between Groups</b>	666.179	3	222.060	3.517	.018	1-4, 2-4
<b>Within Groups</b>	6566.784	104	63.142			
<b>TOTAL</b>	7232.963	107				

Results of ANOVA indicated that there was a significant difference regarding the year of study. That is, although the beliefs of 1<sup>st</sup> grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students were similar, the beliefs of those being at 4<sup>th</sup> grade were clearly different from the ones who are at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Sheffe test was conducted in order to find the difference among grades. This test showed that 1<sup>st</sup> Grade students ( $\chi = 147.00$ ) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade students ( $\chi = 147.65$ ) had more negative opinions than those who were at 4<sup>th</sup> Grade ( $\chi = 153.23$ ).

In the light of these findings, it may be recognized that students develop positive attitudes towards foreign language learning as they advance through their teacher education. Borg (2006) notices that “at the start of teacher education programs, students may have inappropriate, unrealistic or naive understandings of teaching and learning” (p.54). Perhaps the courses that they take may influence their beliefs; in addition, the fourth grade students have the opportunity to practice teaching in state schools with the help of their course which is named School Experience. Possibly, these two reasons may cause a belief change among the learners. Clearly, the fourth grade students will be working as a language teacher in the near future; it is quite fascinating to learn that they have more positive attitudes towards foreign language learning. Possessing positive manners towards the learning of foreign language may help those prospective teachers while they are organizing and teaching their courses. Additionally, İnceçay (2011) has investigated the effects of pre-service teachers' language learning beliefs on their prac-

tice teaching. The results indicated that "...participants' teaching was greatly affected by their foreign language learning beliefs" (p.128).

The last research question was intended to investigate the effect of factors such as gender and length of learning English as a foreign language on the beliefs. Put differently, if those factors cause any noteworthy difference on foreign language learning beliefs or not are issued. Tables 7 and 8 show the findings of those points successively.

**Table 7.**  
*ANOVA Table For Length of Learning English Differences*

Source	(SS)	(df)	(MS)	F	p	Reasonable Difference
<b>Between Groups</b>	736.485	14	52.606	0.753	0.71	No
<b>Within Groups</b>	6496.478	93	69.855			
<b>TOTAL</b>	7232.963	107				

When the table is examined, it can be clearly seen that there is no significant difference between the participants with regard to the length of learning English as a foreign language. ( $p = 0.071 < 0.05$ ). In accordance with these findings, the length of learning English as a foreign language does not cause any change with reference to the foreign language learning beliefs of those learners. Perhaps it may be because of starting to learn English language after puberty. As may be anticipated, those participants do not acquire the foreign language, instead they learn it. Ellis (1985) concludes that age does not change the route of acquisition, but it certainly affects the rate and ultimate success.

The relation between gender and foreign language learning beliefs is examined in the table below, so table 8 illustrates the T-test results for gender.

**Table 8.**  
*T-test Results For Male and Female Students' Beliefs*

Group	N	$\bar{\chi}$	SD	sd	t	p
<b>Female</b>	80	149.31	8.11	106	- 0.36	.72
<b>Male</b>	28	149.96	8.66			

As is seen, there is not any considerable difference among the participants regarding gender. ( $t_{106} = -0.36$ ,  $p = 0.72 > 0.05$ ). While the mean score for female students is  $M = 149.61$ , male students' mean score is  $M = 149.96$ . Along with these results, male and female students' beliefs about foreign language learning show similarity even though the numbers of the male students are obviously less than the ones who are fe-

male. Hence, it can be concluded that gender cause no variation for the beliefs about language learning.

Accordingly, it may be urged that this result is totally in line with the previous studies that have focused on the differences with respect to gender. Tercanloğlu (2005) studied foreign language learning beliefs and found no variation regarding gender. Besides, Wong (2011) searched language learning strategy use and found no significant difference with respect to gender.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The major aim of this study was to investigate the Turkish pre-service teachers' beliefs about learning English as a foreign language, whether there were any differences in their beliefs according to their grade were also issued. Furthermore, if the factors such as gender and length of learning English have any major influence on the learners' beliefs or not were concerned successively in this quantitative study. The findings of this study signified that among the BALLI scales, motivation and expectations were more important for the participants of this study, because all the items referring to motivation and expectations the number of students who agreed were more than those who disagreed. In addition, this study provided an in depth insight into what is more important for the pre-service teachers with regard to foreign language learning. Second, it was quite surprising to find that there was a significant difference among the learners' foreign language learning beliefs with respect to year of study. It is mainly because of this, the beliefs of the prospective teachers should be given importance in a cautious way. Third, no significant difference found with regard to the relationship between foreign language learning beliefs and gender; what's more, the relationship between the length of learning English and the foreign language learning beliefs did not show any difference. All in all, it is quite noteworthy to find that both length of study and gender do not cause any difference on the learners' beliefs. In this regard, it may be said that anyone can learn a foreign language.

This study has a number of limitations which need to be addressed in future research. First, the effect of culture on the foreign language learning beliefs should be examined. Second, a further longitudinal study may focus on the practices of fourth grade students as language teachers. That is to say, the attitudes of those learners may be observed and if there is any difference between their beliefs as pre-service teachers and in-service teachers may be investigated. Finally, the current study relies on quantitative data only because of using BALLI as an instrument. Further research could be conducted with an interview in order to investigate reasons behind the second research question. In addition, first and second grade participants could be interviewed when they become fourth grade to see if there is any change in their beliefs.

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