EXPLORATION OF THE BELIEFS OF NOVICE LANGUAGE TEACHERS AT THE FIRST YEAR OF THEIR TEACHING ENDEAVORS

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ÖZET

Bu çalışma, yeni İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öncelikli kaygılarını incelemekte, uygulama sırasında lisans düzeyinde öğrendikleri kuramlardan sapıp sapmadıklarını araştırmakta ve gerçek sınıf ortamının gereklerini yerine getirirken yaşadıkları kuram ve uygulama arasındaki farklılıkları açıklamanın çeşitli yollarını aramaktadır. Johnson (1992) tarafından geliştirilen kanı envanterinin Likert ölçeğe göre adapte edilmesi ile nicel veriler, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerle nitel veriler toplanmıştır. 13 İngilizce öğretmeninden toplanan verilerle yapılan çoklu varyans analizi (MANOVA) sonucunda Johnson (1992) tarafından dile getirilen işlev temelli yargıların beceri temelli yargılardan çok daha fazla tercih edildiği görülmüştür. Nicel çözümlemelerin ardından öğretmenlerin kaygılarını daha iyi anlamak amacıyla görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Nitel veriler, önceki çalışmaları desteklemiş, düşünüş ve uygulama arasında farklılık olduğunu göstermiş, yeni öğretmenlerin birincil kaygılarının öğrencilerin anlamlı etkinliklerle yönlendirilmesi yerine sınıf yönetimi, ideal disiplinin sağlanması, ders içeriğinin zamanında tamamlanması ve sınavlara hazırlanmak olduğunu göstermiştir. Çalışmada betimlenen durum için olası açıklamalara yer verilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kanı envanteri, kanı-uygulama farkı, Öğretmen eğitimi, Yeni öğretmenler, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi

ABSTRACT

This study explores the primary concerns of novice English Language Teaching (ELT) teachers, examines if novice teachers deviate from the training they got at their BA level, and seeks for possible explanations of the discrepancy between novice teachers' background and their application in meeting the demands of a real classroom. Through Likert-scale questionnaires prepared after adapting Johnson's (1992) belief inventory, quantitative data were collected from 13 ELT teachers. Results of the one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) revealed that function-based statements determined by Johnson (1992) were preferred significantly more than skill-based statements. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews to get meaningful insights about the concerns of novice teachers. Results of the qualitative data confirmed the findings of the previous studies, revealed a gap between teachers' beliefs and practices, and suggested that primary concerns of novice teachers are establishing a classroom conduct in terms of an appropriate degree of discipline, covering the required material on time and preparing for the examinations rather students' well-being and involving them in meaningful learning activities. Possible reasons for this situation are identified.

Keywords: Belief inventory, teacher education, belief-application discrepancy, novice teachers, English Language Teaching

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Introduction

Considerable work has been done in different fields of education on teachers' background knowledge and they have been refined by a number of educational researchers (Leinhardt & Smith, 1985; McEwan & Bull, 1991; Schulman, 1986). There have been distinctions in terms of the term 'background knowledge' such as content knowledge versus instructional knowledge, former referring to knowledge of content matter to be taught while the latter referring to the knowledge of conducting lessons by moving appropriately through segments (Leinhardt & Smith, 1985). During the mid 1980s, the debate over the importance of subject matter versus pedagogical knowledge in teacher education programs gained greater importance. Schulman (1986) argues that in medical science, subject matter knowledge is more important; however, instructional knowledge is primary in educational science. McEwan and Bull (1991) question the distinction between subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, and argue that all knowledge is pedagogic regardless of being related to content or instruction.

A further distinction stemming from cognitive science in terms of the concept of background knowledge is made between procedural versus declarative knowledge. The idea behind this distinction is that teachers not only need to know things, they also need to know how to do things. Their decision-making is comprised of both decisions of what to do and how to do. Leinhardt et al. (1985) state that teachers' teaching patterns and subject matter have declarative and procedural components. It might be stated that knowledge about students, resources and constraints is the declarative part of teaching whereas knowledge of appropriate classroom behaviors and procedures might be considered as procedural. Subject matter knowledge also includes facts about a field of study which is a component of declarative knowledge. Besides, it has a procedural component that is the 'algorithms that operate on those facts' (Leinhardt et al., 1985; 248). However, it is not always possible to make such a clear-cut distinction between these knowledge types and their components.

The focus of the present study is the background knowledge that is shaped by the teacher education programs and its instantiation in reality. Many studies suggest that coursework in teacher education makes a positive difference in teaching performance, and educational coursework is more powerful in predicting teaching effectiveness than content expertise (Ashton & Crocker, 1987; Everston et al., 1985; Ferguson & Womack, 1993). Studies on teachers who entered the classroom with less educational coursework had greater difficulty than graduates of educationally enriched programs in attending to students' motivation, differing language abilities, curriculum development, classroom management and determining appropriate teaching methods (Everston et al., 1985).

Preparation in professional education has been found to be positively associated with increased teacher sensitivity, effectiveness in dealing with diverse student needs and the ability to teach in a way that facilitates higher

mental processes (Ashton et al., 1987). Studies have also shown that teachers without knowledge of classroom management skills have more difficulties managing routine tasks than teachers who had training in these skills (Ashton et al., 1987; Everston et al., 1985).

In foreign language teaching, teachers' background knowledge has also been described as underlying their performance in realizing their teaching tasks. They first choose the global schemata that satisfy their general goals and then choose lower level goals with the associated schemata to achieve higher level performances. These schemata is primarily shaped by the interaction of pedagogical coursework and the reconstruction applied by the individual teacher who is also considered as a 'thinker' in contrast to previous traditional arguments in the literature, which considered teachers as 'tabula rasa'. Woods (1991) introduces the concept of an integrated view of beliefs, assumptions and knowledge (i.e. BAK) and explains how a teacher develops these issues through experiences as a learner and a teacher from the very beginning. He also makes the same distinction between the content knowledge and the instructional knowledge, and claims that the general framework is relevant in second language teaching as well. However, it is not possible to make this clear-cut distinction either between content and pedagogical knowledge or between declarative and procedural knowledge, since language itself accelerates the complexity of the notion. Aspects of background knowledge are not clearly categorized when second language teaching is in question since beliefs, assumptions and the schemata are strongly interrelated.

The way teachers teach when they graduate from a teacher preparation program has been the focus of many studies (Bullough & Baughman, 1993; Fuller, 1969; Hall and Loucks 1979; Sandholtz, Ringstaff, & Dwyer 1990). Fuller's study (1969) provides insights into the initiation of pre-service teachers into the profession. He identifies four stages of teacher development. In the first stage, *pre-teaching concerns,* pre-service teachers start to get a sound grasp of their role as educators. This stage might also be associated with the concerns of student EFL teachers. The second stage, *self-adequacy*, is characterized by teachers' efforts to attain control of the classroom and instructional mastery. In this stage they are also concerned with doing well when the supervisor is present. Getting favorable evaluations from supervisors, being accepted and respected by other teachers, knowing that students like and respect them, and knowing how students evaluate them as teachers are basic concerns of this stage. In the third stage, *teaching tasks* or *teaching situations concerns*, novice teachers are concerned with applying their learning to their teaching situations, student load, and lack of academic freedom for proper applications of their background knowledge. The pressures of teaching routine and the inflexibility of the teaching environment are primary concerns of the third stage. In the final stage, *teaching impact*, the new teacher tries to diagnose and meet individual needs, focuses on unmotivated students and facilitates students' intellectual and emotional development after coping with their own survival needs. Hall and Loucks (1979) refines the model and identifies three stages for the very same

model, named as the survival stage, mastery stage and impact stage, a classification which merely excludes the first stage of Fuller (1969) that coincides more with the concerns of student EFL teachers. Sandholtz, Ringstaff, and Dwyer (1990) explored the model in different settings including computer mediated environments and claimed that the model did apply in new contexts.

Bullough, Knowles and Crow (1991) state that new teachers' initial concerns are generally with relationships with students, dealing with classroom management, instructional methods and teacher explanations. Only later, they are able to focus more on the needs of individual pupils in their classroom. Bullough et al. (1991) refers to a case study of how a teacher struggled to develop her teaching skills in the first year and how she dealt with the problems common to novice teachers. They report that the primary orientation of the teacher shifted from discipline to motivating students and responding their needs after the first year. Moreover, teachers' lesson plans became more realistic and consistent with their teaching. They were also able to deal with unexpected situations occurred in classroom after the first year.

The process seems relevant in different fields of education; however, the order of the stages and the time attributed to those are controversial. It is not appropriate to talk about definitive stages of initial teaching experiences; however, the proposed framework might be used as a checklist to see its applications in unique contexts. Bullough et al. (1993) claim that the context might both enable and limit new teachers' chances to apply what they got in their teacher preparation program and shape their vision. Therefore, the contexts itself might either shorten this one-year orientation process or lengthen it.

Teachers' experiences in the initial entry have been well reported in the literature by such studies; however, less documented in second and foreign language teaching literature (Almarza, 1996; Johnson, 1996; Richards, 1998). The difference between experienced and inexperienced teachers has been explored extensively in the second language literature (Akyel, 1997; Johnson, 1992; Richards, 1996; Woods, 1991). As indicated in these studies, novice ESL teachers paid more attention to unacceptable mannerisms and more concerned with maintaining the flow of activities, that is, discipline and authority are their primary concerns. Studies also suggest that Fuller's (1969) stages are applicable in the context of foreign language education since teaching in this respect also starts with trivial concerns of novice teachers and shifts to a holistic view through time.

Johnson (1996) describes the mismatch between the teachers' vision of teaching and their actual classroom applications via a case study of a student teacher in an MA TESL program in the United States. He claims that the teacher lacked the practical knowledge to deal with the realities of the classroom. The teacher reported in the study was highly concerned with maintaining the order and the flow of activities in his classroom. Practice might make perfect; however, the current study's focus is the reflective practice which

gains importance particularly during the first year of teaching. Almarza (1996) focused on the ways teacher trainees responded to new approaches presented in their language teacher education program. The difficulties those teachers experienced when they applied what they had learned to real classroom settings are identified. Moran (1996) also focuses on the diversity of knowledge and skills that must be gained to deal with actual classroom settings in order to survive the first year of teaching. Primarily, development of expertise in handling with instructional tasks is discussed as a crucial dimension of teaching in the literature (Freeman & Richards, 1996).

Kagan (1992) observes that initial teacher education concerns tend to transfer to the first job. Roberts (1998) supports Kagan (1992) and Bullough et al. (1993) in claiming that the first school strongly influences a teacher's behaviors. He maintains that the experience of the new language teacher will primarily be affected by her status in the first school. The aim of the present study is to explore the attitudes of the newest graduates of a privileged teacher education institution towards language teaching practices. The context of teaching is assumed to be influential in implementing what is gained in the teacher education program. However, regardless of the context, each novice teacher is expected to go through an adjustment period in which they enhance their teaching performance and contextualize their knowledge in relation to specific situations.

In the present study the following research questions are addressed.

1 How do novice teachers with a rich pedagogical background report they cope with their first year of teaching?

2. What are the types of adjustments they had to make?

3. What is the extent to which they are able to apply what they gained in the teacher education program?

4. What are the aspects of teaching they find problematic at the initial stage of their teaching?

Methods and Procedures
Participants

Thirteen foreign language teachers who completed a four-year full time undergraduate BA degree in teaching English as a foreign language offered by the Department of Foreign Language Education in Boğaziçi University participated in the study. They graduated from the department in July 2003. All of them are native speakers of Turkish. They had to complete an assessed probationary year, that is, they were not officially considered fully trained on graduation.

The basic components of the program they graduated from consist of English language development, linguistics, and professional courses including foreign language teaching methodology. Students are also provided with opportunities to pursue individual interests in various subject matters via elective courses. The objective of the program is stated as helping students to achieve adequate mastery of the English Language and to provide them with

knowledge and sufficient practical skills for teaching English as a foreign language. Students are introduced to real educational settings from the freshman year. Several required courses they take involve them in observations and critical assessment of the real teaching settings on the basis of theoretical and practical knowledge they are supposed to grasp. Besides, they are exposed to a foreign language other than English to contribute to their schemata in understanding the language learning experience and reflect better. Last but not the least; students are trained in computer assisted language teaching via courses supported by the Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technology. They are trained in software preparation and evaluation via two comprehensive materials development courses given in successive semesters as well.

The program organizes practice teaching in several educational settings all of which are considered to be privileged in terms of the quality of the educational procedures. Practical classroom skills are developed through microteaching activities from the early years to the sophomore year. Field experiences starting from the very beginning are extended at the senior year and students are required to observe educational settings and critically reflect on the pedagogical aspects throughout the first semester of the senior year. In the second semester of the senior year, students are supposed to complete at least six micro-teaching sessions that are assessed by cooperating teachers, supervisors and peers. Before graduation, they are supposed to prepare a portfolio reflecting their insights based on their classroom applications.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to get a picture of our participants' beliefs about ESL instruction, Johnson's (1992) belief inventory was transformed into a Likert Scale and administered to our participants. The statements that more closely reflect their beliefs were taken for granted as their general existing beliefs. Semi-structured interviews on the use of target language, lesson-planning, materials evaluation, testing, decision-making, professional responsibilities, and classroom management were administered. The basic question was whether they were able to apply what they had gained in the department and in what respects they were deviating from their existing beliefs. Four of the interviews were administered as telephone surveys because of the concerns of time and availability. On the basis of their responses on questionnaires, two meetings were arranged with the teachers to describe and discuss their teaching experiences and to report on difficulties they encountered. Five teachers joined the first meeting on May 24, 2004 and 6 teachers joined the second meeting on June 1, 2004. Discussions were realized in teachers' native language and lasted at least 40 minutes each. The first discussion was recorded. In the second one, critical points were checked on a tally sheet on the basis of steps mentioned above. Both of the meetings were depicted on a tally sheet to see the general picture of the attitudes. Two teachers did not participate in the discussion sections even though they joint the interviews.

The data were analyzed through SPSS 14.0 for Windows. Means and standard deviations of each question were provided along with the descriptive statistics of rule-based, function-based and skill-based statements determined by Johnson (1992). Besides, a one-way multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to see whether participants' beliefs on rule-based, function-based, and skill-based statements differed significantly from each other. Through using the facilities of repeated measures ANOVA statistics, the difference between the dependent variables was identified clearly.

Subjects' responses to interviews were coded and analyzed via content analysis. The inductive coding technique suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990) was particularly helpful. Initial data were audio-taped, transcribed, reviewed sentence by sentence and statement patterns that occurred in the data were listed. The list of the statements that grew after this analysis was also reviewed by another independent rater, and a consensus on the template between the researchers was built.

Results

From the belief inventory of Johnson (1992) we see that the most positive responses in accordance with their mean scores were given to the following statements successively.

- As long as EFL students listen to, understand, practice and remember the appropriate use, they are actually learning the language (M=3.1538, SD= 0.555) (function-based).
- ESL students generally need to understand the grammatical rules of English in order to become fluent in the language (M=3.077, SD= 0.494) (rule-based).
- As long as language learners listen to, practice, and remember the language which native speakers use, they are actually learning the language (M=3.077, SD= 0.641) (skill-based).

On the other hand, most negative responses were given to the following statements:

- It is important to provide clear, frequent, precise presentations of grammatical structures during English language instruction (M=1.692, SD= 0.630) (rule-based).
- Language can be described as a set of behaviors which are mastered through lots of drill and practice with the language patterns of the native speakers (M=1.692, SD= 0.480) (skill-based).
- When language learners make oral errors, it usually helps to provide them with a lot of oral practice with the language patterns which seem to cause them difficulty (M=2.077, SD= 0.641) (skill-based).

Means and standard deviations of all questions are provided in Appendix. As a next step, mean scores of rule-based, function-based and skill-based statements were calculated and a one-way multivariate analyses of variance

(MANOVA) was conducted. Means and standard deviations of these three types of statements are provided below:

Table 1. Descriptive statistics regarding statement types

Descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rule-based statements	13	2,569	0,373
Function-based statements	13	2,846	0,384
Skill-based statements	13	2,369	0,281

Before conducting the MANOVA, multivariate normality was checked. To do this, mahalanobis distances were checked as suggested by Pallant (2001). The critical mahalanobis value for three dependent variables is 16.27 according to Tabachnick and Fidell (1996). In our case, the highest mahalanobis value was 8.778 which suggested that the data met the normality assumption of MANOVA. More specifically, the data did not have multivariate outliers (Pallant, 2001). There were more cases in each cell (i.e. 13) than the number of dependent variables (i.e. 3) which helped the data to meet the assumption of sample size (Pallant, 2001). The MANOVA was conducted and multivariate tests were checked. Multivariate tests are tests of significance which help researchers to indicate whether there are statistically significant differences on a linear combination of the dependent variables (Pallant, 2001). Generally, Wilks' Lambda is chosen by the researchers to report. However, as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (1996), Pillai's trace was selected since it is more robust when the sample size is small. The result of the MANOVA is provided below:

Table 2. Summary of MANOVA on dependent variables

	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pillai's Trace	,996	837,679	3,000	10,000	,000	,996

As the significance value given in Table 2 suggests, there are significant differences among participants on a linear combination of the dependent variables. The statements mostly chosen by our participants expressed that their beliefs were in line with the communicative methodology and learner-cantered perspective since they had the highest means on function-based statements (M=2.846). However, the fact that they ranked rule-based statements as the second most important aspect (M=2.569), they seemed to agree that when they confronted the realities of the classroom they had hard time in persisting in their beliefs. They had the lowest mean score on skill-based statements (2.369). These three means were also checked through one-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). In fully repeated measure ANOVAs, if the

sphericity assumption is violated, the chance of doing Type II error increases (Huck, 2000). We found a probability value of .70 in Mauchly's Test of Sphericity, thus the Sphericity assumption was met. The calculated F value indicated that novice teachers rated Johnson's (1992) statements differently ($F_{2, 11}$=5.964, p<.018). This analysis confirmed the result of MANOVA. However, to see the source of this difference, pairwise comparisons were conducted. The analysis revealed that the significant difference was between novice teachers' comments on function-based statements (M=2.846) and skill-based statements (M=2.369) (t_{12}=3.584; p<.004).

Summary of the interviews is provided in the following paragraphs. 70 per cent of our participants (9/13) stated that they generally had to use the native language in the classroom in line with the target language since they thought that students did not understand the instructions. 46 per cent of them (6/13) stated that they pre-planned for the lesson; however, they did not write exactly each step of the class beforehand whilst others followed the course book more closely. 46 per cent of them (6/13) stated that they generally tried to use supplementary materials in addition to textbook. Unfortunately 55 per cent of them (7/13) stated that they generally followed the course-books or the materials that were assigned by the institution. 85 per cent of our participants (11/13) felt competent in materials evaluation and preparation. Almost all of them (12/13) stated that their primary concern was to cover the material they prepared beforehand or they were assigned to cover, since the exams were generally mutual in their institutions. 85 per cent of the participants complaint about the classroom management problems and claimed that they could not be communicative enough because of the discipline problems with young learners (77% - 10/13), because they were to cover a huge amount of material (69 % - 9/13), and because they were overloaded or the institution pass onto them some responsibilities other than teaching (77% - 10/13).

During our meetings a few of the teachers claimed that their teaching was almost always textbook-based either because they did not feel confident enough to move beyond the textbook. They claimed that they spent much time in trying to make their students understand the instructions and the material via using L1 instructions and translations of the lexical structures provided in the books. When the researcher elaborated on their skills on material evaluation, they claimed that they felt competent in materials development; however, they were not able to apply either because of the strict curriculum or lack of proper facilities.

Most of the participants claimed that they started teaching with a strong belief in communicative activities; however, as the curriculum progressed, they had to abandon these types of activities to different extents as a result of discipline problems in class. Particularly teachers of young learner classes claimed that they even could not write something easily on the board since any student might disrupt the order in an extreme way when he feels that he is not in the teacher's notice area.

They all agreed that they learnt the importance of giving equal attention to students, the importance of supplying positive interdependence and individual accountability in the department; however, they did not feel themselves experienced enough to implement these dimensions properly.

Only two teachers stated that they were able to use technology in their classroom. Most of them complained that they were being fossilized because they did not have chance to apply what they learnt in their department to the reality because of contextual limitations.

Discussion

Our participants reported to be communicative but they were not able to apply their thoughts appropriately to an ideal extent. This might either be explained by the constraints of the educational institution as our participants mention or course overload of the teachers. However, it might also reflect either the discrepancy between what they thought was ideal and what they actually did or a defense mechanism towards not applying proper procedures.

Discussions and interviews supported the claims of Richards (1998). Even though participants had a theoretically and practically enriched education, their primary concerns become establishing a classroom conduct in terms of an appropriate degree of discipline, covering the required material on time and preparing for the examinations in their initial year of the profession. These strong focuses might prevent them from applying more central procedures that are crucial in second language teaching settings. These concerns make them hold a teacher-cantered approach rather than a learner-cantered approach in contrast to what they expressed in the belief inventory.

Heavy teaching and non-teaching workload, insufficient facilities and large class sizes might be other factors that prevent them from proper implication of the methodology (Richards, 1998; Roberts, 1998; Kagan, 1992). Secondly, their own language learning experiences might still have an effect on their practices as Richards and Lockhart (1995) points out. Last but not the least; their inexperience might be an important factor in affecting their approach. As Akyel (1997: 690) points out:

...inexperienced teachers do not possess a wide ranging repertoire of knowledge and skills that can be called upon to meet the demands of a given student population or classroom situation.

One of the criticisms raised towards the traditional teacher training models is that university based courses equip trainees with the highest values without seriously considering the resistances and difficulties involved in implementing them. Therefore, rather than a given curriculum, a dynamic approach to language teacher education seems to be ideal in helping trainees adjust the reality. If teacher educators have an understanding of their trainees' knowledge, they become more successful in relating the reality and the theory to their pre-existing knowledge in a more appropriate way. Moreover, the program needs to involve teacher trainees in different contexts of teaching. Teacher education should not be a model in which traditional or progressive teaching is imposed,

rather, the program should help trainees establish connections with their personal understandings and build on their background knowledge which is fortunately relevant in our case. Almost all these are supplied to an ideal extent in our specific case. Therefore, discrepancy between novice teachers' background knowledge and their classroom applications could not be explained by the inefficiency of the education they got.

Conclusions and Implications for Teacher Education

The first concern of the novice teachers was the survival which might be reduced via providing more school-based practice in teacher education programs. Schools might also offer novice teachers support by employing senior staff as mentor friends. Reflective practice makes teaching better and better.

Tensions with the school culture are another important finding. Teacher education programs ought to develop awareness of school conditions as they are and should provide experience of more than one school if possible. The primary problem in schools is that the new teachers are saddled with responsibilities the school needs to pass onto someone rather than responsibilities they are trained for. The teachers could be more effective if they are supposed to realize what they had training for.

Freeman et al. (1996) suggest that when teachers in training are taught as they are expected to teach, they are more likely to enter into the discourse of the new professional easily. This direct experience help teacher trainees share the real experience of an ideal discourse community, which will provide them with meaningful insights rather than mere declarative knowledge.

The power of context which affects teacher's voice and shape their vision should not be underestimated. It is hard to find a proper balance between the context and the person, since they both matter and they are interdependent. As Bullough et al. (1993) suggests, teacher trainees ought to encounter contexts rich in instructional alternatives that will provide the novice teachers with meaningful insights to get a sound grasp of the profession in meaningful and sensitive ways.

Almarza (1996) points out that teaching competence and teaching performance are different issues. Findings suggest that novice teachers do not teach according to their existing knowledge rather they modify their activities according to the reality that they are not used to dealing with yet. Therefore, just via single one-shot data collection procedures one cannot get enough insight into the relationship between teachers' beliefs, assumptions and knowledge (BAK) (Woods, 1991). That is, the current study is not without its limitations. Even though it validated the results of Richards (1998) and Kagan (1992), it might have been better via a quasi experimental time series design in which rather than one-shot observations or data collection procedures, a longitudinal data collection procedure is applied. Moreover, current results could have been more suggestive via regular observations of new teachers to see the correlation between their expressed approach and their real

implications. Finally, in order to realize triangulation, stimulated recalls would have been more appropriate to get sounder insights into the reasons of deviating from the theory in reality. The author still has access to 90 percent of 2003 graduates to conduct further studies to see their perceptions after several years of experience. Cooperative work with authors interested in the current issue is most welcome.

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Appendix

STATEMENT	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Language can be thought of as a set of grammatical structures which are learned consciously and controlled by the language learner, (rule-based)	2,462	0,519
2. As long as language learners understand what they are saying, they are actually learning the language, (function-based)	3,154	0,555
3. When language learners make oral errors, it helps to correct them and later teach a short lesson explaining why they made that mistake, (rule-based)	2,769	0,927
4. As long as language learners listen to, practice, and remember the language which native speakers use, they are actually learning the language, (skill-based)	3,077	0,641
5. Language learners generally need to understand the grammatical rules of English in order to become fluent in the language, (rule-based)	3,077	0,494
6. When language learners make oral errors, it usually helps to provide them with a lot of oral practice with the language patterns which seem to cause them difficulty, (skill-based)	2,077	0,641
7. Language can be thought of as meaningful communication and it is learned subconsciously in non-academic, social situations, (function-based)	2,692	0,480
8. If language learners understand some of the basic grammatical rules of the language, they can usually create lots of new sentences on their own. (rule-based)	2,846	0,689
9. Usually it is more important for language learners to focus on what they are trying to say and not how to say it. (function-based)	2,692	0,630
10. If language learners practice the language patterns of native speakers, they can make up new sentences based on those language patterns which they have already practiced, (skill-based)	2,385	0,506
11. It is important to provide clear, frequent, precise presentations of grammatical structures during English language instruction, (rule-based)	1,692	0,630
12. Language can be described as a set of behaviors which are mastered through lots of drill and practice with the language patterns of the native speakers, (skill-based)	1,692	0,480
13. When language learners make oral errors, it is best to ignore them, as long as you can understand what they are trying to say, (function-based)	2,923	0,641
14. Language learners usually need to master some of the basic listening and speaking skills before they can begin to read and write, (skill-based)	2,615	0,506
15. It is not necessary to actually teach language learners how to speak English; they usually begin speaking English on their own, (function-based)	2,769	0,725