



Volume: 09 / N°: 01 January (2025),

p32-p50

## **Teachers' Role in Fostering EFL Learners' Positive Beliefs about Language Learning: The Case of Teachers at M'Sila University**

Mr Refice Noureddine

Djillali Liabes University of  
Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria

noureddine.refice@univ-msila.dz

Prof. Yahiaoui Habib

University Mustapha Stambouli of  
Mascara, Algeria

yahiaoui.habib@yahoo.co.uk

### **Abstract ;**

This study investigates the strategies EFL teachers use to foster positive beliefs about English language learning. Using a 19-item survey with 23 teachers, analyzed through statistical and qualitative methods, the findings reveal that teachers consider learners' beliefs essential to language learning success. Many teachers support the inclusion of belief-awareness activities in lessons, viewing these as tools for enhancing students' self-awareness and motivation. Teachers perceive students' awareness of their own beliefs as moderate, indicating this as an area for further development. They actively work to create supportive learning environments by employing motivational, reflective, and real-world strategies. Despite challenges like student anxiety, fixed mindsets, and limited English exposure outside of school, teachers express confidence in their ability to positively shape students' beliefs. Overall, the study highlights the critical role teachers play in cultivating positive beliefs, suggesting that engaging students in belief-awareness activities can significantly boost motivation and improve learning outcomes in EFL classrooms.

### **Article info**

Received

27/10/2024

Accepted

10/12/2024

### **Keyword:**

- ✓ Second language learning
- ✓ individual learner differences
- ✓ language learner beliefs
- ✓ positive beliefs
- ✓ negative beliefs

## **1. Introduction**

With the rise of cognitive psychology, researchers began to focus on the role of learner variables such as learning styles, strategies, attitudes, and motivation in language learning. One of the more recently explored variables is learners' beliefs about language learning. These beliefs are defined as "personal constructs that learners hold about themselves as language learners, about the nature of language and language learning, and about the role of the teacher and the learner in the learning process" (Ellis, 2008, p. 56). Research indicates that learners' beliefs influence various aspects of language learning, including "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" (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p. 52). Successful learners often develop insightful perceptions on language learning processes, their abilities, and the use of effective strategies, which enhances their learning experience. Conversely, some learners may form misguided or negative beliefs, leading them to rely on ineffective strategies (Wenden, 1987; Yang, 1999), develop negative attitudes toward learning and autonomy (Victori & Lockhart, 1995; Cotterall, 1995), experience classroom anxiety (Kunt, 1997; Truitt, 1995; Horwitz, 1989), and perform poorly (Peacock, 2001; Mori, 1999). For example, a student who believes that learning a second language involves primarily the learning of vocabulary and grammatical rules will spend most of their time and effort on this strategy in hope of eventually achieving a communicative competence. However, this approach might overlook other important aspects of language learning, such as developing speaking, listening, and cultural understanding skills, which are also critical for achieving true communicative competence.

Acknowledging the significant impact of beliefs on language learning, researchers have emphasized the need to identify learners' beliefs (Breen, 2001; Arnold, 1999). Understanding these beliefs gives language educators valuable insights into learners' "expectation of, commitment to, success in, and satisfaction with their language classes" (Horwitz, 1988, p. 283). This understanding enables teachers to make more informed instructional choices (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Frugé, 2007), allowing them to adapt their teaching methods and materials to better meet students' needs and interests. Furthermore, it allows them to adopt "a more sensitive approach to organizing learning opportunities in their classes" (Cotterall, 1999, p. 494), ensuring that the learning environment is more responsive to the preferences of learners, which can enhance their overall educational experience. In addition, teachers who understand their students' beliefs are better equipped to engage in meaningful discussions about learning, allowing learners to reflect on their own beliefs and strategies. This process of reflection enables learners to become more aware of their beliefs and develop strategies to overcome any negative ones, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes (Cotterall, 1999).

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

As a teacher, I have observed that learners often enter language classes with misconceptions about language learning, which can significantly affect their performance in class. For example, some learners may believe that fluency can be achieved within a few months, setting unrealistic expectations that lead to frustration when they don't meet them. Others may adopt the opposite view, thinking that no amount of time or effort will suffice, which can reduce their motivation to try. Additionally, some learners might think that only those with a special talent for languages can succeed, which can discourage them when they encounter difficulties. On the other hand, while hard work and persistence are essential, over-reliance on effort without effective strategies can lead to burnout. These erroneous beliefs can have a negative impact on learners' level of motivation, their attitude, learning strategy choice and use, achievement, proficiency, and their overall behaviour. Therefore, it is essential for language teachers to understand their students' beliefs about language learning. This understanding allows teachers to challenge negative beliefs, reinforce positive ones, and help learners develop more realistic and empowering perspectives on language learning. As a result, students' motivation, self-confidence, and willingness to adopt effective learning strategies improve, leading to a more engaged classroom environment and better learning outcomes.

### **3. Research Objectives**

The main objective of this study is to investigate the strategies that EFL teachers employ to foster positive beliefs about English language learning among their students. Specifically, the research aims to explore how teachers perceive EFL learners' beliefs about language learning and how these perceptions influence their teaching practices. Additionally, the research seeks to identify the methods, classroom practices, and motivational techniques that teachers utilize to raise learners' awareness of their beliefs about English language learning. By bringing learners' beliefs to the forefront, teachers can help students confront and reshape negative assumptions, fostering a mindset that is conducive to long-term language learning success. This investigation is crucial, as learners' beliefs about language learning significantly impact their motivation, persistence, and eventual success in acquiring English as a foreign language.

### **4. Research Questions**

The study intended to address the following research questions:

- How do EFL teachers perceive learners' beliefs about language learning?
- Do EFL teachers use effective strategies to promote positive beliefs among their students?

### **5. Literature Review**

#### ***Start of Research on Learner Beliefs***

Research on L2 learner beliefs dates back to the 1970s when scholars, seeking to understand the characteristics of successful language learners, began exploring factors that promote second language acquisition (Rubin, 1975). As a result, learners' beliefs about language learning gained

recognition as an important area of study. The pioneering empirical research on L2 learner beliefs was led by Elaine Horwitz (1985, 1987, 1988) and Anita Wenden (1986, 1987). Horwitz, in particular, introduced the influential “Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory” (BALLI), a questionnaire aimed at examining learners’ beliefs about language learning (Kalaja, P., Barcelos, A. M. F., & Aro, M., 2018). The BALLI was developed to raise awareness among educators and researchers about the diverse beliefs held by American students studying foreign languages in the United States and how these beliefs might affect second language learning and teaching. It assesses students’ beliefs in five key areas: foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and students’ motivations and expectations.

In 1988, Horwitz conducted a study examining the beliefs of first-semester foreign language learners at the University of Texas, which included 80 students learning German, 63 learning French, and 98 studying Spanish. The findings revealed some discrepancies between learners’ beliefs and common teacher perceptions. Many students seemed to underestimate the difficulty of language learning: 43% believed that studying for one hour a day would lead to fluency within two years, while another 35% estimated it would take three to five years. Additionally, 34% thought language learning was primarily about acquiring vocabulary, and 29% believed it was mainly about learning grammar rules. Half of the students subscribed to the idea of foreign language aptitude, with 35% believing they personally had it. Moreover, 71% viewed speaking with an excellent accent as important, and 50% felt it was necessary to practice in a language lab. Horwitz concluded that investigating learners’ beliefs is very important because it leads to a better understanding of their “expectations of, commitment to, success in, and satisfaction with their language classes” (1988, p. 283).

Horwitz’s research paved the way for future studies. Numerous studies were conducted with EFL and ESL learners from various regions around the world, including Australia (e.g., Bernat, 2006; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007), the United States (e.g., Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Mori, 1999), Korea (e.g., Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995), Turkey (e.g., Kunt, 1997; Altan, 2006), China (e.g., Su, 1995), Taiwan (e.g., Yang, 1999), and others. Studies have been conducted to investigate the common beliefs held by various groups of language learners (e.g., Bernat, 2006; Boakye, 2007). Another research area has focused on the relationship between beliefs about language learning and factors such as language learning strategies (e.g., Wenden, 1987; Yang, 1999), anxiety (e.g., Banya & Chen, 1997; Kunt, 1998), motivation (e.g., Banya & Chen, 1997; Kim-Yoon, 2000), learner autonomy (e.g., Victori & Lockhart, 1995; Cotterall, 1995), attitude (e.g., Banya & Chen, 1997), and language proficiency (e.g., Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Peacock, 1998, 1999). Research has demonstrated that learners’ beliefs about language learning significantly influence their motivation levels, attitudes, choice and use of language learning strategies, achievement, proficiency, and overall behavior. In this context, Richards and Lockhart (1996, p. 52) argue that “learners’ belief 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”.

### **Definition of Learner Beliefs**

Beliefs have been defined in various ways depending on the theoretical perspective. Rubin (1987) succinctly defines learner beliefs as “the learner’s own ideas about how languages are learned and taught” (p. 28). Ellis (2008) describes learner beliefs as “personal constructs.” He explains that these constructs reflect how learners perceive themselves as language learners, their understanding of what language is and how it functions, their views on how the language learning process works, and the roles of both teachers and learners in that process:

*Learner beliefs are personal constructs that learners hold about themselves as language learners, about the nature of language and language learning, and about the role of the teacher and the learner in the learning process.*  
(p. 56)

Richards and Lockhart (1996, p. 52) point out that “learners’ beliefs are influenced by the social context of learning”. This suggests that beliefs are not formed in isolation but are rather social constructs developed through interactions with various individuals and influences around them, including peers, teachers, and the overall educational environment. These interactions can provide students with different perspectives, feedback, and experiences that contribute to their understanding of language learning. Ellis (2008) highlights that learners’ beliefs about language learning are shaped by several interconnected factors. First, past experiences in both general education and specific language learning contexts play a crucial role, as positive or negative encounters can significantly influence a learner’s confidence and attitudes toward language learning. Additionally, a learner’s cultural background contributes to their beliefs by framing their understanding of language’s importance, the value of education, and preferred learning styles within their community. Furthermore, individual personality traits affect how learners view themselves and their capabilities. For example, a learner with an extroverted personality may be more inclined to participate in communication and take risks, whereas a more introverted learner might be more hesitant. Importantly, personality also impacts self-efficacy beliefs, which are the learners’ perceptions of their ability to succeed in language learning. Together, these factors create a complex framework that shapes how learners approach and engage with language learning, ultimately affecting their motivation, strategies, and success.

*Learners’ beliefs about language learning derive from a variety of sources - their past experience, both of education in general and of language learning in particular, their cultural background and their personality (which, in particular, may affect self efficacy beliefs). (Ellis, 2008, p. 22)*

### **Significance of Learner Beliefs**

Research shows that learners' beliefs affect various aspects of language learning, including "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" (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p. 52). Successful learners develop insightful perspectives on language learning processes, their own abilities, and the application of effective strategies, which enhances their overall learning experience. Conversely, some learners may hold erroneous or negative beliefs that can cause them to use ineffective strategies (Wenden, 1987; Yang, 1999), develop negative attitudes toward learning and autonomy (Victori & Lockhart, 1995; Cotterall, 1995), experience anxiety (Horwitz, 1989; Truitt, 1995; Kunt, 1997), and ultimately perform poorly in their classes (Mori, 1999; Peacock, 2001). For instance, a student who believes that mastering a new language mainly involves memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules will dedicate most of their time and energy to this strategy, hoping to achieve communicative competence eventually. However, this approach may overlook other crucial aspects of language learning, such as improving speaking, listening, and cultural awareness skills, all of which are key to attaining true communicative competence. Likewise, a student who believes that a specific language aptitude is essential for learning a foreign language but feels they lack that aptitude may start their language learning journey with a rather pessimistic view of their chances for success. In this regard, we refer to a study by Wenden (1987) on the relationship between learners' beliefs and language learning strategies. Her subjects were 25 adult ESL learners. They were asked to talk about the language learning activities in which they engaged, in the classroom and outside. Wenden found a consistency between learners' beliefs and their choice and use of language learning strategies. That is, learners' explicit beliefs about how best to learn a language determined their choice and use of learning strategies. For her part, Mori (1999) found that one of the key findings from her research was that "a strong belief in innate ability is associated with lower achievement" (1999, p. 408). This suggests that students who see their abilities as flexible and capable of growth have a greater likelihood of reaching higher levels of proficiency.

### ***Learner Beliefs: Research Approaches***

Barcelos (2003) distinguishes three main approaches to studying learners' beliefs about language learning. The normative approach views these beliefs as "preconceived notions, myths, or misconceptions" and investigates them through tools like Likert scale questionnaires, such as the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) developed by Horwitz (1987). In contrast, the metacognitive approach considers learners' beliefs as "theories in action" (Wenden, 1999), and are examined through content analysis of learner self-reports, typically collected via semi-structured interviews. The contextual approach, which Barcelos argues is superior, focuses on how learners' beliefs are shaped by their specific experiences and contexts. It utilizes a variety of data types and analytical methods, moving away from the view of beliefs as fixed "mental trait" (p. 26). Additionally, a fourth approach (metaphor analysis) has been identified by Ellis (2002) and Kramsch (2003), which explores the metaphors learners use to describe their learning experiences, providing an indirect way of identifying their beliefs.

## ***Teacher's Role in Fostering Learners' Positive Beliefs***

Acknowledging the substantial influence that beliefs exert on language learning, researchers have emphasized the importance of identifying learners' beliefs (Breen, 2001; Arnold, 1999). Understanding learners' beliefs can provide language educators with valuable insights into their "expectations, commitment, success, and satisfaction with their language courses" (Horwitz, 1988, p. 283). In other words, Understanding learners' beliefs gives teachers a clear picture of how learners might approach their studies, what they expect to achieve, how dedicated they will be to the language learning process, and how satisfied they feel with their progress. Based on this knowledge, teachers can better address these beliefs, either by reinforcing positive ones or challenging and reshaping negative or limiting beliefs (Cotteral, 1999). For example, if a student believes that language learning is only for people with a 'natural talent,' the teacher can introduce examples of learners who succeeded through consistent practice, emphasizing that effort is more important than innate ability. Similarly, if a student feels that making mistakes is a sign of failure, the teacher can encourage a growth mindset, explaining that mistakes are an essential part of learning. On the other hand, teachers can reinforce positive beliefs about language learning, such as the beliefs that everyone can learn a new language, that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process, and that language learning can be enjoyable and fun. They can also promote the benefits of learning a new language, such as increased cognitive abilities, better job opportunities, and enhanced cross-cultural communication skills. Understanding learners' beliefs can also help teachers make more informed choices about teaching (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Frugé, 2007) and adopt "a more sensitive approach to organizing learning opportunities in their classes" (Cotterall, 1999, p. 494). When teachers grasp what their students believe about language learning, such as their perceptions of difficulty, their motivation levels, or their views on how languages should be learned, they can adjust their teaching methods accordingly. For instance, if a teacher learns that many students believe they struggle with speaking due to anxiety, they might incorporate more low-pressure speaking activities to build confidence. Similarly, if learners express a belief that grammar is too complicated, the teacher might choose to integrate grammar lessons more seamlessly into engaging activities instead of isolating them. In doing so, teachers can create a more supportive learning environment that aligns with students' needs and perspectives, ultimately enhancing their learning experiences.

Dörnyei (2001, p. 67) proposes that "the best way of confronting false learner beliefs" is through discussing "some of the key issues with the students." He suggests that this discussion could address several important points, including the overall difficulty of language learning and the specific challenges of learning the particular L2 being studied. It should also cover the realistic rate of progress students can expect, what is required from the learner to achieve success, and the most effective methods for learning languages. By engaging learners in such discussions, teachers can help clarify misconceptions and guide students toward a more accurate understanding of the language learning process. Dörnyei recommends beginning discussions by having students complete a short questionnaire on learner beliefs, created by Elaine Horwitz (1988). The students' answers can then be used as a starting point for exploring the validity of common

beliefs and misconceptions about language learning. Cotterall (1999, p. 510) notes that “teachers who have access to their learners’ beliefs” can improve their effectiveness by reinforcing beliefs that facilitate language learning and challenging those that impede it. This approach allows teachers to foster deeper discussions with students about the learning process, prompting learners to reflect on their own beliefs and strategies. Such reflection increases students’ awareness of their beliefs and provides them with the tools to modify negative ones, ultimately resulting in more successful learning outcomes.

## **6. Methodology**

### **Participants and Setting**

The participants of this study were 23 permanent teachers from the Department of English at M’Sila University, from a total of 30 teachers working in the department. The participants represented a diverse geographic background, coming from various regions, including M’Sila, Bordj Bou Arreridj, Sétif, Biskra, and Jijel. Their educational backgrounds were also varied, with 14 participants holding PhDs, 8 having Master’s degrees, and 1 possessing a professoriate. The age distribution ranged from 30 to over 40 years, with no teacher younger than 30. Specifically, 17 participants were over 40 years old, and 6 were between 30 and 40. The gender balance was uneven, with 15 female and 8 male teachers participating in the study. In terms of teaching experience, 7 participants had less than 10 years of experience teaching English, 13 had between 10 and 20 years of experience, and 3 had more than 20 years of experience. The diversity in age, gender, academic qualifications, and years of experience provided a broad spectrum of perspectives on English language teaching within the department.

### **Method of Research**

This study seeks to examine the strategies that EFL teachers use to cultivate positive beliefs about English language learning in their students. In particular, it aims to explore how teachers perceive learners’ beliefs about language learning and how these perceptions shape their teaching practices. Due to the exploratory nature of the research, a mixed-method approach was selected, as it enables a more comprehensive understanding of the topic by incorporating both numerical data and in-depth qualitative insights. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the study captures measurable patterns along with the more detailed and complex aspects of teachers’ views and teaching practices.

### **Data Collection Tools and Procedure**

The primary data collection tool for this study is a survey questionnaire consisting of 19 items, including both closed and open-ended questions. This design allows for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire was developed based on the literature review conducted for this research to ensure alignment with the study’s objectives. It is divided into five key sections. The first section (Demographic Information) gathers basic participant details such

as teaching experience and qualifications. The second section (Teachers' Perceptions of Learners' Beliefs) focuses on understanding how teachers view their students' beliefs about learning English and the role these beliefs play in the language learning process. The third section (Strategies for Fostering Positive Beliefs) identifies the specific strategies and activities that teachers find most effective for promoting positive beliefs about English language learning. The fourth section (Classroom Practices) examines how often teachers incorporate activities aimed at fostering positive beliefs into their lessons, assessing the practical application of these strategies. Finally, the fifth section (Challenges and Suggestions) explores the difficulties teachers face in promoting positive beliefs and provides an opportunity for teachers to offer suggestions or share additional comments on how to better support positive beliefs in EFL learners.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

The questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year. It was distributed to teachers via email. Sufficient time was provided for them to complete the questionnaire. Once the data was collected, two types of analysis were conducted: **statistical descriptive analysis** for the quantitative data (responses to closed-ended questions) and **content analysis** for the qualitative data (responses to open-ended questions). The statistical analysis primarily focused on calculating the frequency of responses in percentages for each questionnaire item. These percentages were then used to draw conclusions about the various points addressed in the survey. For the open-ended responses, the data was carefully reviewed multiple times, and the main ideas were organized into relevant categories.

### ***7. Data Analysis and Interpretation***

#### **Teachers' perceptions of learners' beliefs**

Question 5: In your opinion, how important are EFL learners' beliefs about language learning in determining their overall success?

This question aims to assess teachers' perceptions of the significance of EFL learners' beliefs about language learning in determining their overall success. It uses a Likert scale with five options, ranging from "Not important" to "Very important," allowing teachers to express the extent to which they believe learners' beliefs play a role in their language learning outcomes. In response to the question, 34.78% of teachers indicated that they believe learners' beliefs are "Important," while 65.22% of teachers stated that they view these beliefs as "Very important." No teachers rated these beliefs as "Not important," "Slightly important," or "Moderately important." This demonstrates a strong consensus among the teachers, with all respondents recognizing the significant role that learners' beliefs play in their success, and the majority emphasizing their crucial importance.

Question 6: To what extent do you think your students are aware of their own beliefs about English language learning?

## **Teachers' Role in Fostering EFL Learners' Positive Beliefs about Language Learning .....**

In this question, teachers are prompted to provide their perceptions of how aware their students are of their own beliefs about English language learning. It allows teachers to indicate the degree of self-awareness they believe their students have concerning these beliefs. In response to this question, 73.91% of teachers believe their students are "Moderately aware," while 13.04% think their students are "Slightly aware" and another 13.04% feel their students are "Quite aware." None of the teachers indicated that their students are "Not at all aware" or "Very aware." This suggests that the majority of teachers perceive their students to have a moderate level of self-awareness regarding their beliefs about language learning.

**Question 7: Do you think that learners' negative beliefs (e.g., "English is too difficult for me") are a barrier to their success?**

This question seeks to explore teachers' perspectives on whether learners' negative beliefs, such as "English is too difficult for me," hinder their success in learning the language. The responses indicate that 26.09% of teachers agreed that negative beliefs present a barrier to success, while 73.91% strongly agreed. No teachers selected "Strongly disagree," "Disagree," or "Neutral." These findings reveal that nearly 74% of teachers firmly believe that negative beliefs significantly impact students' success, with the rest also viewing these beliefs as an obstacle, though somewhat less intensely. This consensus underscores the value teachers place on mindset in student achievement, suggesting that addressing and reshaping negative beliefs may be crucial for improving outcomes in EFL classrooms.

**Question 8: Do you believe that raising learners' awareness of beliefs about language learning should be a part of teaching methodology in EFL classrooms?**

The aim of this question is to evaluate teachers' perspectives on whether raising students' awareness of their beliefs about language learning should be integrated into EFL teaching methodologies. The responses reveal that 13.04% of teachers agreed, while 86.96% strongly agreed, with no teachers expressing disagreement or neutrality. This demonstrates a clear consensus, with nearly 87% of teachers strongly supporting the inclusion of belief-awareness in EFL methodology and the remaining 13% also in favor, though to a lesser extent. This strong alignment suggests that teachers widely recognize the value of helping students become aware of their beliefs about language learning, indicating that incorporating belief-awareness practices into teaching may be essential for creating a more effective and positive learning environment.

**Question 9: How frequently do you notice that your students' beliefs about English language learning (e.g., beliefs about the difficulty of language, beliefs about effective learning strategies, etc.) impact their performance in class?**

Teachers are asked in this question to reflect on how often they observe that their students' beliefs about English language learning, such as beliefs about the difficulty of the language or

effective learning strategies, influence their classroom performance. The response options range from “Rarely” to “Very frequently,” allowing teachers to indicate the frequency with which they notice this impact. The breakdown of responses is as follows: Rarely: 0% (0 out of 23 teachers), Occasionally: 0% (0 out of 23 teachers), Sometimes: 26.09% (6 out of 23 teachers), Frequently: 47.83% (11 out of 23 teachers), and Very Frequently: 26.09% (6 out of 23 teachers). The data shows that a large majority (73.92%) reported that they observe students’ beliefs influencing their performance either sometimes (26.09%) or frequently (47.83%), suggesting a strong awareness among educators of the direct correlation between students’ beliefs and their classroom performance. Additionally, the 26.09% of teachers who reported observing the influence of beliefs very frequently indicates that these beliefs are a persistent factor in learning environments. This aligns with existing research, which highlights that learners’ beliefs about language learning significantly affect their performance and achievement in language learning.

**Question 10:** How important do you think the role of teacher motivation and encouragement in promoting learners’ positive beliefs about language learning?

This question asks teachers to consider how essential their own motivation and encouragement are in helping students develop positive beliefs about learning English. Teachers can choose from five options, ranging from “Not important” to “Very important”. The results show that all teachers (100%) believe that teacher motivation and encouragement are crucial for fostering positive beliefs about language learning, as no teachers selected any of the options indicating a lack of importance, such as “Not important,” “Slightly important,” “Moderately important”. This unanimous response suggests a strong consensus among educators about the significant role that teacher support plays in shaping learners’ beliefs and attitudes. It highlights the understanding that positive reinforcement from teachers can greatly influence learners’ beliefs about their capabilities and the learning process itself.

**Question 11:** How confident are you in your ability to positively impact your students’ beliefs about learning English?

Through this question, teachers are invited to evaluate their confidence in their ability to positively impact their students’ beliefs about learning English. With response options ranging from “Not confident at all” to “Very confident,” it allows teachers to express the level of assurance they feel regarding their effectiveness in shaping students’ beliefs and attitudes toward English language learning. The responses show that 13.04% (3 out of 23 teachers) selected “Confident,” and a large majority of 86.96% (20 out of 23 teachers) chose “Very confident.” This high level of confidence indicates that teachers see themselves as important in shaping students’ beliefs about language learning. They recognize the value of their motivational role in the classroom and feel prepared to encourage positive beliefs in their students. Overall, the data reflects teachers’ strong confidence in their ability to impact students’ beliefs, suggesting this self-assurance may help create a more positive and effective learning environment.

### **Strategies for promoting positive beliefs**

## Teachers' Role in Fostering EFL Learners' Positive Beliefs about Language Learning .....

Question 12: What types of activities do you consider most effective in promoting positive beliefs about language learning? (Select all that apply)

This question invites teachers to identify the types of activities they believe are most effective in fostering positive beliefs about language learning. Respondents can select multiple options from a list that includes group discussions and peer collaboration, teacher-led motivational discussions, self-reflection activities, real-life language use activities, and an option to specify any other activities they consider effective. This allows teachers to share their insights on effective practices for promoting positive beliefs about language learning. The responses to the question reveal teachers' preferences for certain strategies, particularly those supported by research. The breakdown is as follows: *group discussions and peer collaboration* were selected by 65.22% (15 out of 23 teachers), *teacher-led motivational discussions* by 73.91% (17 teachers), *self-reflection activities* by 78.26% (18 teachers), and *real-life language use activities* by 60.87% (14 teachers), with no teachers suggesting additional activities. This data indicates that teachers strongly favour varied activities, with a notable preference for "self-reflection activities" and "teacher-led motivational discussions", aligning with research that highlights their effectiveness in fostering positive beliefs. This alignment suggests that teachers are well aware of the benefits of these methods and value strategies that combine reflection, motivation, and social interaction. "Group discussions and peer collaboration" were chosen by over half of the teachers, reflecting the belief in social learning as a means to build student confidence and positive beliefs through peer support. "Real-life language use activities", chosen by 60.87% of teachers, emphasize the importance of practical language engagement to make learning feel relevant and achievable for students. The absence of additional suggestions underscores that the provided options effectively represent activities that teachers find beneficial. Overall, the data reflects a consensus among educators on using research-backed strategies to foster positive beliefs, demonstrating teachers' commitment to creating an encouraging environment that supports student engagement and positive attitudes toward language learning.

Question 13: In your experience, what is the most effective strategy for changing learners' negative beliefs about language learning? (Select all that apply)

This question prompts teachers to specify the strategies they find most effective for changing learners' negative beliefs about language learning. Respondents can select multiple options from a list that includes: encouraging students to reflect on and evaluate their own beliefs, assisting learners in establishing clear and achievable learning goals, providing learners with opportunities to experience success in language learning, fostering a positive and supportive learning atmosphere, sharing success stories of past learners, along with an option to specify other strategies. This allows teachers to share their insights and experiences regarding effective methods for changing negative beliefs. The responses highlight teachers' reliance on several research-backed approaches. The breakdown is as follows: *encouraging students to reflect on and evaluate their own beliefs* was chosen by 26.09% of teachers (6 out of 23), *assisting learners in*

establishing clear and achievable goals by 86.96% (20 teachers), providing opportunities for success by 100% (23 teachers), fostering a positive and supportive atmosphere by 73.91% (17 teachers), and sharing success stories of past learners also by 86.96% (20 teachers). No additional suggestions were provided. The data suggests that the most favoured strategy among teachers for changing negative beliefs is “providing students with opportunities to experience success”, with all teachers selecting this option. This choice reflects the importance placed on giving students firsthand experience with achievable language goals, which can directly counteract negative beliefs. Additionally, 86.96% of teachers chose both “assisting students in setting clear, reachable goals” and “sharing success stories”, showing a strong consensus on the value of these strategies to inspire belief in language learning potential. Only 26.09% of teachers selected “encouraging students to reflect on and evaluate their own beliefs”. This suggests that, although research highlights the effectiveness of this strategy for changing negative beliefs, teachers may either underutilize this strategy or perceive other strategies as more practical or impactful in their classroom settings. The relatively low selection rate (26.09%) could indicate that teachers may be less familiar with implementing reflective activities, even if reflection is recognized as beneficial.

### **Classroom practices**

Question 14: How frequently do you include activities designed to promote positive beliefs about language learning in your lessons?

Teachers are required in this question to indicate how often they incorporate activities aimed at promoting positive beliefs about language learning in their lessons. With response options ranging from “Rarely” to “Very frequently,” it allows teachers to reflect on the regularity with which they engage students in activities designed to foster their beliefs about language learning. Teachers’ responses show a strong inclination toward regularly using these strategies. None of the teachers reported rarely or occasionally incorporating these activities, with the breakdown of responses as follows: “Sometimes” (34.78%, 8 out of 23 teachers), “Frequently” (52.17%, 12 out of 23 teachers), and “Very frequently” (13.04%, 3 out of 23 teachers). This distribution indicates that most teachers (65.21%) use these strategies consistently, reflecting a commitment to fostering positive beliefs in students. However, the 34.78% selecting “sometimes” suggests that these activities, while important, may not always be the primary focus of every lesson. This frequent application of strategies to encourage positive beliefs aligns with research on the value of consistently reinforcing such beliefs to boost student motivation and performance.

Question 15: Have you ever assessed your students’ beliefs about English language learning?

This question inquires whether teachers have ever evaluated their students’ beliefs about English language learning. The responses to this question show that a strong majority (86.96%, or 20 out of 23 teachers) have done so, while only 13.04% (3 out of 23) have not. This indicates that most teachers recognize the importance of understanding learners’ beliefs to better support their learning. The high percentage of teachers who assess these beliefs aligns with research suggesting

## **Teachers' Role in Fostering EFL Learners' Positive Beliefs about Language Learning ....**

that identifying and addressing student beliefs can positively impact learning outcomes. By assessing students' beliefs, teachers can reinforce positive ones and work to reshape any negative or limiting ones, fostering a more supportive classroom environment. Overall, the results reflect a strong commitment among most teachers to incorporate student beliefs into their instructional practices.

**Question 16:** If yes, which methods have you used? (Select all that apply)

This follow-up question asks teachers who answered “Yes” to the previous question about the methods they have used to assess their students' beliefs. The responses reveal that teachers mainly use classroom observations (65.22%) and informal discussions (73.91%) to assess beliefs, suggesting a preference for direct, interactive methods. While questionnaires are recommended in research, none of the teachers selected this method, possibly due to a perception that surveys might not capture the full range of students' beliefs as effectively as more personal approaches. Additionally, student reflections or journals, chosen by 13.04%, may be less common due to the time required. Overall, the responses suggest that teachers prefer methods that allow them to address students' beliefs within the flow of classroom interactions.

**Question 17:** Please describe a specific example of a successful strategy you have used to foster positive beliefs among your EFL learners.

This is an open-ended question that invites teachers to share a specific example of a successful strategy they have implemented to promote positive beliefs among their EFL learners. It encourages teachers to reflect on their experiences and provide detailed insights into effective practices that have positively influenced students' beliefs. Teachers' responses illustrate various strategies, with key themes emerging in their approaches. Many teachers focus on **personal motivation and goal setting**, helping students identify their own reasons for studying English and setting achievable goals, which makes language learning relevant to their personal and career aspirations. Another central theme is **connecting English to real-life relevance**, with teachers emphasizing its practical value for success, particularly in the job market, and using projects like videos or written texts to showcase tangible accomplishments. Additionally, **creating a supportive learning environment** that encourages gradual progress and normalizes mistakes is prioritized; teachers encourage students to view mistakes as natural and as learning opportunities, aiming to build resilience and a growth mindset. Teachers also emphasize **positive role modelling and responsiveness**, highlighting the need for teachers to maintain positive attitudes themselves, address students' specific needs, and offer targeted remedial tasks to boost confidence. Some responses mention “**success sharing**” **activities**, where students share positive experiences, fostering mutual motivation and a sense of achievement. Collectively, these strategies underscore the teachers' emphasis on motivation, real-world application, resilience, and support, aimed at nurturing positive beliefs about language learning.

## Challenges and suggestions

Question 18: What obstacles do you face when trying to promote positive beliefs about English language learning?

This question seeks to gather insights from teachers about the challenges they encounter while attempting to promote positive beliefs about English language learning. The teachers highlighted several key obstacles in promoting positive beliefs about English language learning among students. One prominent theme is *language anxiety*, with students often feeling fearful of making mistakes, especially in speaking and writing, which reduces their confidence and willingness to participate. Many teachers pointed out the impact of *fixed mindsets and negative past experiences*, where prior challenges or unsatisfactory encounters with English created negative attitudes and a belief that English is inherently difficult. *Cultural attitudes and societal expectations* also add pressure rather than encouragement, particularly when English isn't widely used or perceived as valuable in the local context. Teachers noted the *lack of exposure to English outside the classroom*, which limits real-world application and reduces motivation. Furthermore, *time constraints* in crowded classrooms hinder individual support and limit opportunities for collective practice, while the *high student-to-teacher ratio* makes it difficult to provide personalized guidance. Additionally, the varied *learning styles and preferences* among students create challenges in finding universally effective strategies, and inconsistent or unclear feedback may further confuse learners about their progress. Finally, some teachers mentioned that students who didn't choose English as their field of study tend to lack motivation, especially when coupled with low proficiency, leading to entrenched negative beliefs.

Question 19: Any other comments or suggestions regarding promoting positive beliefs among EFL learners?

In this question, teachers are invited to share any additional comments or suggestions related to promoting positive beliefs among EFL learners. It provides an open-ended space for teachers to offer further insights, experiences, or recommendations that could contribute to better understanding and supporting the development of positive beliefs among EFL learners. In response to the question, teachers provided several suggestions. A key theme is creating a *supportive and engaging classroom environment* where students feel valued and safe to express themselves without fear of judgment. Many emphasized the importance of *constructive feedback* (both oral and written) that highlights students' progress and efforts, not just their achievements. Another recurring theme is *encouraging autonomy and self-awareness* by involving students in goal-setting and helping them recognize their strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers also highlighted the value of *using authentic materials and real-life contexts* to make English relevant and applicable, which reinforces its practical benefits. Many suggested *diversifying classroom activities* to cater to various learning styles, maintain interest, and encourage resilience by normalizing mistakes as part of the learning journey. Additionally, teachers stressed the significance of a *growth-oriented mindset*, encouraging students to view challenges as opportunities. Suggestions also included fostering a *sense of community* through success sharing

## ***Teachers' Role in Fostering EFL Learners' Positive Beliefs about Language Learning .....***

and teamwork, which can boost motivation and mutual support. Finally, teachers noted the impact of being personally invested and motivated as educators, as their dedication directly influences students' attitudes toward learning English.

### ***8. Discussion of Results***

The survey responses provide valuable insights into the beliefs and practices of EFL teachers regarding the role of learners' beliefs in language learning. A consistent theme throughout the responses is teachers' recognition of the importance of fostering positive beliefs among learners, with a majority viewing these beliefs as essential for student success (Questions 5 and 7). Most teachers believe that learners' beliefs significantly impact their performance and agree that addressing negative beliefs is critical for academic achievement.

Teachers largely perceive students to have only moderate awareness of their beliefs, indicating a potential area for growth in self-awareness among students (Question 6). They also overwhelmingly support including belief-awareness activities in EFL methodology (Question 8), suggesting that many educators see value in strategies that help students reflect on their language learning beliefs.

Teachers report observing a direct correlation between learners' beliefs and classroom performance, with a notable portion seeing this impact frequently (Question 9). This observation aligns with research on the influence of beliefs on language learning outcomes. Additionally, teachers unanimously agree on the significance of teacher encouragement, motivation, and positive reinforcement, emphasizing their role in shaping learners' beliefs (Question 10).

Confidence levels are high among teachers regarding their ability to impact students' beliefs positively (Question 11), which may foster a supportive learning environment. They also identify effective methods for promoting positive beliefs, with a strong preference for strategies that incorporate self-reflection, motivational discussions, and real-life application, reflecting a commitment to practices supported by language learning research (Questions 12 and 13). Despite these efforts, obstacles such as student anxiety, fixed mindsets, and limited exposure to English outside the classroom remain challenges for many teachers (Question 18).

In summary, teachers in this survey are proactive in employing belief-fostering strategies, yet they recognize challenges such as student anxiety and time constraints that limit their effectiveness. The findings underscore the importance teachers place on beliefs in the learning process and suggest a need for continued support in developing practices that can further enhance learners' confidence and motivation in English language learning.

### ***9. Conclusion***

This study sought to explore the strategies EFL teachers use to foster positive beliefs about English language learning and to examine how their perceptions of learners' beliefs influence their teaching practices. The primary research questions focused on understanding teachers' views of learners' beliefs and determining whether they employ effective strategies to promote positive beliefs among their students. Through a survey questionnaire of 23 items, data were collected and analyzed using both statistical and qualitative methods, with findings presented as response frequencies and thematic interpretations. The results reveal a strong consensus among teachers regarding the essential role of learners' beliefs in their overall success, with many teachers recognizing the direct influence of these beliefs on classroom performance and academic achievement. Most teachers support incorporating belief-awareness activities into EFL teaching, viewing them as critical in helping students gain a better understanding of their own beliefs. Although teachers perceive a moderate level of self-awareness among students regarding their language learning beliefs, this is identified as an area where further development could enhance learning outcomes. The study highlights teachers' commitment to fostering a supportive learning environment through motivational strategies, self-reflection activities, and real-world applications, which align with research-backed methods to enhance positive beliefs. Teachers' confidence in their ability to positively influence students' beliefs further underscores their proactive role in shaping a constructive learning atmosphere. However, they face challenges such as student anxiety, fixed mindsets, and limited exposure to English outside the classroom, which can impede their efforts. In conclusion, this study emphasizes that teachers play a pivotal role in promoting positive beliefs about language learning. By actively engaging students with belief-awareness strategies and addressing barriers to positive mindsets, teachers can enhance student motivation, engagement, and success in EFL learning.

## 10. References

1. Altan, M. Z. (2006). Beliefs about language learning of foreign language-major university students. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 31 (2), 44-52.
2. Arnold, J. (1999). *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Banya, K. & Cheng, M. H. (1997). Beliefs about Foreign Language Learning: A Study of Beliefs of Teachers' and Students' Cross Cultural Settings. Paper presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Florida.
4. Barcelos, A. M. F. (2003). Researching beliefs about SLA: A critical review. In P. Kalaja & A. M. F. Barcelos (Eds.), *Beliefs about SLA: New Research Approaches* (pp. 7-33). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
5. Bernat, E. (2006). Assessing EAP learners' beliefs about language learning in the Australian context. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 8 (2), 202-227.
6. Bernat, E., & Gvozdenko, I. (2005). Beliefs about language learning: Current knowledge, pedagogical implications, and new research directions. *TESL-EJ*, 9 (1), 1-21.
7. Bernat, E., & Lloyd, R. (2007). Exploring the gender effect on EFL learners' beliefs about language learning. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology*, 7, 79-91

8. Boakye, N. (2007). Investigating students' beliefs about language learning. *Per Linguam: a Journal of Language Learning*, 23(2), 1-14.
9. Breen, M (Ed.) (2001). *Learner contributions to language learning: New directions in research*. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
10. Cotterall, S. (1995). Readiness for autonomy: Investigating learner beliefs. *System*, 23(2), 195-205.
11. Cotterall, S. (1999). Key variables in language learning: What do learners believe about them? *System*, 27, 493-513.
12. Dornyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
13. Ellis, R. (2002). Learner beliefs and language learning. In R. Ellis, *The study of second language acquisition* (pp. 7-30). Oxford University Press.
14. Ellis, R. (2008). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
15. Frugé, C. (2007). *Epistemological congruency in community college classrooms: Effects of epistemological beliefs on students' experiences*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Louisiana State University, United States.
16. Horwitz, E. (1985). Using student beliefs about language learning and teaching in the foreign language methods course. *Foreign Language Annals*, 18(4), 333-340.
17. Horwitz, E. (1987). Surveying student beliefs about language learning. In A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp. 119-129). London, UK: Prentice Hall International.
18. Horwitz, E. (1988). The beliefs about language learning of beginning university foreign language students. *The Modern Language Journal*, 72 (3), 283-294.
19. Kalaja, P., Barcelos, A. M. F., & Aro, M. (2018). Revisiting research on L2 learner beliefs: Looking back and looking forward. In P. Garrett, & J. M. Cots (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language Awareness* (pp. 222-237). New York: Routledge.
20. Kim-Yoon, H. (2000). *Learner beliefs about language learning, motivation and their relationship: A study of EFL learners in Korea*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation.
21. Kramsch, C. (2003). Teaching along the cultural faultline. In D. L. Lange and R. M. Paige (Eds.), *Culture as the Core: Perspectives on Culture in Second Language* (pp.19-36). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
22. Kunt, N. (1997). *Anxiety and beliefs about language learning: A study of Turkish speaking university students learning English in North Cyprus*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation.
23. Mantle-Bromley, C. (1995). Positive attitudes and realistic beliefs: Links to proficiency. *The Modern Language Journal*, 79(3), 372-386.
24. Mori, Y. (1999). Epistemological beliefs and language learning beliefs: What do language learners believe about their learning? *Language Learning*, 49 (3), 377-415.

25. Park, G. P. (1995). *Language learning strategies and beliefs about language learning of university students learning English in Korea*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, TX.
26. Peacock, M. (1998). Exploring the gap between teachers' and learners' beliefs about "useful" activities for EFL. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8 (2), 233-250.
27. Peacock, M. (1999). Beliefs about language learning and their relationship to proficiency. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9 (2), 247-265.
28. Peacock, M. (2001). Pre-service ESL teachers' beliefs about second language learning: a longitudinal study. *System*, 29, 177-195.
29. Richards, J. C., & Lockhart, C. (1996). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
30. Rubin, J. (1975). What the "good language learner" can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly*, 9, 41-51.
31. Su, D. (1995). *A study of English learning strategies and styles of Chinese university students in relation to their cultural beliefs about learning English*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.
32. Truitt, S. N. (1995). *Anxiety and beliefs about language learning: A study of Korean university students learning English*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation.
33. Victori, M., & Lockhart, W. (1995). Enhancing metacognition in self-directed language learning. *System*, 23(2), 223-234
34. Wenden, A. (1986). What do second language learners know about their language learning? A second look at retrospective accounts. *Applied Linguistics*, 7(2), 186–205.
35. Wenden, A. (1987). How to be a successful language learner: Insights and prescriptions from L2 learners. In A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp. 103-118). London, UK: Prentice Hall.
36. Wenden, A. L., & Rubin, J. (Eds.), (1987). *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
37. Yang, N. D. (1999). The relationship between EFL learners' beliefs and learning strategy use. *System*, 27, 515-535.