

The Language Learning Beliefs of Arab ESL Students

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Abstract

Learning a second / foreign language is more than memorizing the grammatical rules and vocabularies. Language learning is a very complex activity, and culture plays a crucial role in this very dynamic, amorphous and debatable process. Learners of foreign /second languages also use different learning strategies which are influenced very much by their cultural and educational backgrounds. Belief is one of the most significant and important components of culture that encompasses language, religion, race and the personal history of any individual. During the last two decades many researchers have focused on learners' beliefs. This study investigates the beliefs of Arab undergraduate students who are studying at three Malaysian Universities, are assessed on an adapted version of the Belief about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), which was developed by Horwitz (1985). The paper assesses the students' beliefs in relation to the following areas of language learning: difficulty of language learning; foreign language aptitude; the nature of language learning; learning and communication strategies; and motivations and expectations.

Keywords: ESL/EFL, Second Language Learning, Beliefs about Language Learning, Arab Students