The Beliefs of Second Language Acquisition in Teacher Candidates

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Abstract

The present study investigated if an elementary education program at a Midwestern university addressed teacher candidates' misconceptions of second language acquisition. Participants were 59 teacher candidates who enrolled at the first semester and 27 teacher candidates who enrolled at the last semester of the elementary education program. The Beliefs of Second Language Acquisition Survey was developed by the researcher based on studies on the myths and misconceptions about second language acquisition. Results showed that teacher candidates at the end of the program had a significant higher percentage of correct responses in ten beliefs of second language acquisition. The incorporation of second language acquisition in elementary education courses and field experiences had impact on clearing teacher candidates' misconception of second language acquisition, and helped preparing them to work with English Language Learners in mainstream classrooms.

The Beliefs of Second Language Acquisition in Teacher Candidates

The number of culturally and linguistically diverse students in classrooms has grown. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (Aud et al., 2010), between 1988 and 2008, the percentage of U.S. public school students who were White decreased from 68 to 55%; but the percentage of Hispanic students doubled from 11 to 22%. In addition, between 1979 and 2008, the number of U.S. school-age children (aged 5-17) who spoke a language other than English at home increased from 9 to 21% of the population in this age range.

Teacher Education Programs

With an increase in the population of English Language Learners (ELLs) at schools, the preparation of teacher candidates to work with these students was especially important. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, 2013) urged educator preparation providers (EPPs) to develop cohorts of new educators to raise the performance of all of the diverse P-12 students. Standard 1 on content and pedagogical knowledge specified that EPPs should provide the knowledge, skills, and professional disposition to teacher candidates to work with diverse populations. Standard 2 on clinical partnerships and practice also specified that working with diverse population should be part of the field experiences and student teaching

McIntyre, Byrd and Foxx (1996) stated that teacher candidates did not enter teacher education programs with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to work successfully with a diverse population of students. However, after investigating a required course entitled "Language, Literacy, and Culture in Education" by a secondary teacher education program, Dong (2004) found that the majority of the teacher candidates expressed increased confidence in their abilities to design a lesson tailored to ELLs' needs and create a culturally sensitive classroom environment.

To prepare teacher candidates to work efficiently with learners from different cultural and language backgrounds, Daniel (2008) recommended a revised paradigm of teacher preparation to require teacher candidates to develop a philosophy of literacy and biliteracy, acquire knowledge of select theories of second language acquisition, and prepare to become strategic teachers who design lessons that address both content and linguistic objectives. In addition, Ellis (2010) also proposed a framework linking second language acquisition researchers, classroom researchers, teacher educators and language teachers to use second language acquisition theory and research in teacher education programs. He suggested the overall goal of a teacher education program was to assist teachers to develop or modify their own theory of how learners learn second language in an instructional setting. Specifically, second language researchers (e.g., Genesee, 1993; Meyer, 2000; Mora, 2000; Teemant et.al., 1996) suggested that teacher education program should include building empathy toward second language learners' language difficulties and cultural differences, increasing understanding of the process of second language acquisition, adapting the curriculum and instruction to these students' cultural and language needs, and integrating discipline specific language and literacy skills into area of instruction. In summary, teacher education programs need to include second language acquisition in preparing teacher candidates to work with learners from different cultural and language backgrounds.

Second Language Acquisition

Giambo and Szecsi (2005) suggested that the theoretical foundation of second language acquisition in teacher preparation should include Cummins' theories of Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP), the transfer of knowledge and skills from first language to second language; and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), the differences between social language and academic language. It should also talk about Krashen's hypotheses of acquisition and

learning distinction, comprehensible input, the natural order of acquisition, the affective filter, and the monitor.

However, knowledge of second language acquisition should start with the five stages of language acquisition (Krashen & Terrell's, 1998). The first stage is preproduction when ELLs are in a silent period and are not yet ready to speak English. The second stage is early production when ELLs can speak in one- or two-word phrases. The third stage is speech emergence when ELLs can communicate with simple phrases and short sentences. The fourth stage is intermediate fluency when ELLs begin to use more complex sentences in speaking and writing to express their thoughts and ideas. The fifth is advanced fluency when ELLs are close to performing like native English-speaking persons in their content-area classes.

Cummins (1980a, 1980b, 1994, 2000a, 2000b) hypothesized two types of language proficiencies; Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP) vs. Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) and Basic Interpersonal Communicative skills (BICS) vs. Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). SUP refers to the separation of knowledge and skills in first language from second language whereas CUP refers to the transfer of knowledge and skills from first language to second language. Cummins believed that language knowledge and skills can be transferred from first language to second language. It suggests that ELLs who are proficient in their native language will acquire English more easily because literacy and other cognitive skills are transferable from one language to another.

BICS refers to contextualized everyday conversational ability dealing with familiar events or matters whereas CALP refers to decontextualized academic ability dealing with unfamiliar and abstract events or matters. Cummins believed that BICS is a context rich language where we can use clues to fill in something we do not understand, but CALP has little to no context clues and

requires analysis and critical thinking to understand what is going on. ELLs may take two years to develop BICS but five to seven years to develop CALP, so ELLs may be fluent in conversation but perform poorly in academic subjects. The BICS/CALP distinction was questioned and criticized for emphasizing test-taking skills in CALP and encouraging skills-oriented instruction (Edelsky, 1990), isolating language and literacy practices from their sociocultural and sociopolitical context (Wiley, 1996), and failing to capture the complexity of academic language and provide practical implications to teachers (Scarcella, 2003).

Krashen (1982, 1988, 1994) developed five hypotheses of second language acquisition. The acquisition-learning hypothesis distinguishes between language learning and language acquisition. It explains why spending time in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program does not automatically make ELLs fully proficient in English, and why communicating in meaningful interaction in English is important. The monitor hypothesis states that memorizing the rules of language helps ELLs to monitor their English only when they have sufficient time, focus on the correctness of language use, and remember the language rule. The natural order hypothesis proposes that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a predictable order. The input hypothesis stresses that ELLs improve and progress when they receive second language input one step beyond their current stage of language competence. The affective filter hypothesis suggests that ELLs with high motivation, self-confidence, good self-image and low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. These hypotheses were criticized for its lacking in testable evidence and its downplaying of the importance of language output and grammar instruction (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Myths of Second Language Acquisition

Without the knowledge of second language acquisition, teacher candidates may interpret how ELLs learn English with their common senses and develop false beliefs about second language acquisition. There are several widespread misconceptions in second language acquisition. First, children learn second languages quickly and easily (McLaughlin, 1992). However, under control environment, adult and adolescent learners perform better in second language than young children. The only advantage of children learning second language over adults is pronunciation. The younger one begins to learn a second language, the more native-like the accent one develops in that language.

Second, ELLs learn English in the same way and at the same rate (Harper & de Jong, 2004; McLaughlin, 1992). In fact, different factors influence English development, such as prior English literacy, school experiences, personality, aptitude, motivation, attitude, affective and sociocultural factors (Haynes, 2007).

Third, the more time ELLs spend in an English environment, the quicker they learn English (Harper & de Jong, 2004; Haynes, 2007; McLaughlin, 1992). Without any comprehensible input, ELLs do not learn much English even though they are surrounded by English-speaking people.

Fourth, the use of nonverbal support is an effective instruction for ELLs (Harper & de Jong, 2004). The visuals or other nonverbal means, such as graphic organizers or hands-on activities, increase the comprehensibility of content but discourage the language learning in school. Effective instruction should integrate language and content so as for ELLs to acquire content and language proficiency simultaneously.

Some of these myths were included in a survey developed by Karabenick and Noda (2004) to understand teachers' beliefs, attitudes, practices, and needs related to ELLs. Most

teachers believed these myths: (1) The more students are exposed to English, the more they will learn. (2) The use of a first language (L1) at home interferes with learning a second language (L2). (3) ELLs would do better in school if they do not learn to read and write in their LI. (4) ELLs should be tested in English rather than their L1.

To prevent teacher candidates from developing misconceptions of second language acquisition, teacher education programs should not only include theories of second language acquisition, but also should address these misconceptions. This may be done through different education courses, such as Multicultural Education, Educational Psychology, and Introduction to Exceptional Children or through field experiences working with ELLs. Teacher candidates are expected to be able to refute these myths and misconceptions of second language acquisition after taking these education courses and finishing the field experiences.

Studies on Second Language Acquisition

There are only a few studies on teacher candidates' conceptions of second language acquisition. Among them, one study examined how teacher candidates enhanced their understanding of second language learning through an action research project in a teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) education course (Zainuddin & Moore, 2004). Teacher candidates were required to observe and interact with English language learners (ELLs) for a total of 12 hours over the course of six weeks by providing tutorials with homework and conducting oral and literacy activities. They analyzed their own field notes and drew connections to the concepts on second language acquisition to complete the action research. The researchers triangulated the field notes, oral reports from interviews, class discussions and the action research reports to search for categories of teacher candidates' understandings and beliefs about second language acquisition. It was found that teacher candidates increased their appreciation for and

awareness of second language acquisition principles in language learning expectations, role of background knowledge in language acquisition, role of the home language in second language learning and nature of comprehensible input, awareness of personal biases and teacher practices as barriers to learning, and their own knowledge gap about cross-cultural differences.

The other study investigated whether the beliefs about second language learning and teaching the teacher candidates held at the beginning of a second language acquisition course had changed by the end of the course (Busch, 2010). The teacher candidates Busch studied were seeking the Culture, Language and Academic Diversity (CLAD) certification for teaching kindergarten through 12th grade in California. The beliefs statements came from "The beliefs about language learning inventory [TBALLI] for teachers from Horwitz (1988). The TBALLI contained 23 statements about language learning comprising beliefs in difficulty of learning a second language, the role of foreign language aptitude, the nature of language learning, and learning and communication strategies. Significant changes were found in beliefs in the length of time for acquisition (from 3.38 to 4.1 years), difficulty of language acquisition (from disagreement to agreement that similarity of the first & second languages make one language easier to learn than another), the role of culture (from disagreement to neutral that knowing about English-speaking cultures is necessary to learning English), the role of error correction (from agreement to disagreement that beginning students are not permitted to make oral errors), the importance of grammar (from agreement to disagreement that vocabulary and grammar are important), and the efficacy of audio-lingual learning strategies (from agreement to disagreement that repeating and practicing a lot is important) .

Another study also examined the extent to which a second language acquisition course influenced key beliefs relating to language learning (MacDonald, Badger, & White, 2001). The

researchers administered a questionnaire containing 12 statements on key beliefs on English

language learning to teacher candidates taking a second language acquisition course and teacher

candidates not taking a second language acquisition course at the beginning and the end of a

semester. Certain changes in key beliefs in the attitudes and beliefs towards language learning

were found in those teacher candidates who took the second language acquisition course. They

seemed to be moving towards the Krashenite view, which saw language learning as a largely

unconscious process, and towards a broadly cognitive perspective, which emphasized the

potential for conscious language learning.

Purpose of the Present Study

These studies on teacher candidates' conceptions of second language acquisition

examined beliefs about second language learning from foreign-language teachers (Busch, 2010)

or English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers (MacDonald, Badger, & White, 2001) after

taking a second language acquisition course (Busch, 2010; MacDonald, Badger, & White, 2001)

or a teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) course (Zainuddin & Moore,

2004). However, studies on the beliefs of the myths of second language acquisition from

elementary education teacher candidates before and after the elementary education program were

negligible.

The present study investigated if an elementary education program at a Midwestern

university addressed teacher candidates' misconceptions of second language acquisition.

Specifically, the research question was if there was any difference between teacher candidates'

beliefs of the myths of second language acquisition at the beginning and at the end of an

elementary education program. The findings may help other teacher education programs in

identifying directions to prepare their teacher candidates for working with ELLs. In addition to

offer a second language acquisition course, teacher education programs may opt for incorporating knowledge of second language acquisition in coursework.

Method

Participants

The present study included 59 teacher candidates who enrolled at the first semester and 27 teacher candidates who enrolled at the last semester of an elementary education program at a Midwestern state university. There were six males and 53 females in the first semester with a mean age of 22.86 years old (*SD*=5.83), and three males and 24 females in the last semester with a mean age of 23.36 years old (*SD*=2.48). Many of these teacher candidates were monolingual English speakers who had relatively limited foreign language experience in high school. For those who enrolled in the first semester of the elementary education program, they also had limited or no exposure to English language learners (ELLs). For those who enrolled in the last semester of the program, they had taken courses embedded with second language acquisition and worked with ELLs in field experiences and student teaching.

Instrument

The Beliefs of Second Language Acquisition Survey was piloted with 42 teacher candidates who enrolled in the first semester of an elementary education program. They were asked to write down their comments and questions on those statements unclear to them, and these statements were then revised to assure of their clarity. The revised survey (See Table 1) administered to 86 participants in this study had a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of .67.

The survey consisted of 25 statements about second language acquisition with a 5-point Likert scale (1 as strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree). These statements were developed by the researcher based on studies on the myths and misconceptions about second language learning

(Collier, 1989; Haynes, 2007; Marinova-Todd, Marshall, & Snow, 2000; McLaughlin, 1992; Samway & McKeon, 1999; Woolfolk, 2010). The 25 statements came from five belief categories: The relationship between native language and second language (questions 1, 6, 11, 16 & 21), the optimal age at which to begin second language instruction (questions 2, 7, 12, 17 & 22), the importance of the extent of exposure to the second language (questions 3, 8, 13, 18 & 23), the relationship between oral communication skills and academic language skills (questions 4, 9, 14, 19 & 24), and the cultural and individual differences in language learning styles (questions 5, 10, 15, 20 & 25).

To avoid the use of single-item variables, five statements were generated under each belief category. Some of the beliefs were true and some were false. For example, statements about the relationship between native language and second language, and the relationship between oral communication skills and academic language skills were true. Statements about the optimal age at which to begin second language instruction, the importance of extent of exposure to the second language, and the cultural and individual differences in language learning styles were false.

Procedure

The researcher invited teacher candidates to participate at the end of a class session. After briefing about the purpose of the study and reviewing the consent form, teacher candidates were asked if they would like to take part. If yes, teacher candidates would return the completed informed consent and complete the survey; if no, teacher candidates would exit the classroom. It took about 10 minutes for them to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each of the 25 statements.

Elementary Education Program at a Midwestern State University

The elementary education program at the Midwestern state university included courses and field experiences to prepare teacher candidates for working with ELLs. Courses which covered second language acquisition were Multicultural Education (language diversity), Educational Psychology (language development), and Introduction to Exceptional Children (multicultural and bilingual perspectives). Topics included Krashen and Terrell's (1998) stages of language acquisition; Cummins' (1980a) theories of Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) and Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP); Krashen's (1988) five hypotheses of second language acquisition; Haynes's (2007) misconceptions of second language acquisition; and McLaughlin's (1992) misconceptions about second language learning. In addition, the required 60-hour field experiences associated with these three courses included observing ELLs in mainstream classrooms and working with ELLs individually or in groups.

Data Analysis

Each statement of the Beliefs of Second Language Acquisition Survey was considered as a discrete entity. Responses to the 5-point Likert scale of the survey were recoded as correct or incorrect. If the statements were true, responses of agree or strongly agree were considered correct. If statements were myths, responses of strongly disagree or disagree were considered correct. Since statements about the relationship between native language and second language, and the relationship between oral communication skills and academic language skills were true, responses 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), and 3 (neutral) were recoded as 0 or incorrect and responses 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree) were recoded as 1 or correct. Since the rest of the

statements were false, responses 1 and 2 were recoded as 1 or correct and responses 3, 4, and 5 were recoded as 0 or incorrect.

The accuracy percentage was calculated for each of the 25 statements, and each of the five belief categories for teacher candidates enrolled at the first semester and at the last semester of the elementary education program. The use of percentage to show the accuracy of identifying the myths of second language acquisition was preferred over the use of mean to show the improvement of understanding of second language acquisition for two reasons. First, the survey was designed to identify the misconceptions, not the agreement level, of second language acquisition. Second, since the numerical responses of the Likert scale represented opposite level of agreement between true and myths statements, the mean of the scale did not reflect the improvement of understanding.

Results

Table 1 presents the percentage of correct responses to the Beliefs of Second language Acquisition Survey at the beginning and end of an elementary education program at a Midwestern state university. The mean correct response at the beginning of the elementary education program was 42.17% (SD=.35) and those at the end of the elementary education program was 52.91% (SD=.37). Since the responses of the survey were ordinal, a nonparametric independent samples t-test (i.e., Mann-Whitney's U test) was conducted to see whether there was any difference in the beliefs of second language acquisition at the beginning and the end of the elementary education program.

A significance level of $p < .05$ was used and ten survey statements were found to be significantly different. Teacher candidates at the end of the teacher education program scored

higher at four statements about the optimal age at which to begin second language instruction. They had improved their understanding that younger children do not learn a second language more easily than older children (from 0% to 11.11%; $U = 708$, $p = .010$); children do not learn a second language quicker and easier than adults (from 0% to 18.52%; $U = 649$, $p = .001$); the earlier children begin to learn a second language is not better (from 0% to 7.41%; $U = 737.5$, $p = .035$) and children do not usually have fewer inhibitions or are not less embarrassed than adults when they make mistakes in a second language (from 31.03% to 62.96%; $U = 533$, $p = .006$).

Teacher candidates also scored higher at three statements about the relationship between native language and second language after completing the teacher education program. They had improved their understanding that children who are more proficient in their native language learn a second language faster than those who are less proficient in their native language (from 52.54% to 81.48%; $U = 566$, $p = .011$); allowing English Language Learners (ELLs) to use their native language in school facilitates cognitive and academic growth (from 36.21% to 62.96%; $U = 573.5$, $p = .022$) and reading in the native language is helpful to children in learning a second language (from 27.12% to 51.85%; $U = 599.5$, $p = .026$).

Teacher candidates at the end of the elementary education program also scored higher at two statements about the relationship between oral communication skills and academic language skills. They had improved their understanding that ELLs don't always acquire social language naturally in informal contexts and they may need to be taught how to communicate appropriately in social situations (from 77.97% to 96.3%; $U = 650.5$, $p = .034$); although learning English is essential for school success for ELLs, the acquisition of English does not guarantee that they will succeed academically (from 59.32% to 85.19%; $U = 590.5$, $p = .018$).

Finally, teacher candidates scored higher at one statement about the importance of the extent of exposure to the second language after completing the elementary education program. They had improved their understanding that ELLs should not be encouraged to speak English from the first day of school (from 13.56% to 48.15; $U = 521$, $p = .001\%$).

Table 2 presents the percentage of correct responses to the five categories of the Beliefs of Second Language Acquisition survey at the beginning and end of an elementary education program. None of these reached the significance level of $p < .05$. Two belief categories had accuracy percentage over 50%. The highest was the relationship between oral communication skills and academic language skills, with 74.24% and 89.63%, and the second highest was the cultural and individual differences in language learning style, with 60.68% and 61.48%, at the beginning and at the end of the elementary education program respectively. The other belief categories scored lower than 50% in the accuracy rate. The lowest was the optimal age at which to begin second language instruction, with 20.78% and 31.85%, at the beginning and at the end of the elementary education program respectively.

General Discussion

The research question was if there was any difference between teacher candidates' beliefs of second language acquisition at the beginning and at the end of an elementary education program. Teacher candidates at the end of the program had a significant higher percentage of correct responses in ten beliefs of second language acquisition. The incorporation of second language acquisition in elementary education courses and the associated field experiences had an impact on clearing teacher candidates' misconception of second language acquisition, thus preparing them for working with English Language Learners (ELLs).

A change in accuracy rate was found at most of the beliefs about the optimal age at which to begin second language instruction. At the end of the teacher education program, more teacher candidates were able to refute the myth that younger children learn a second language more easily than older children. However, the accuracy rate in recognizing this myth was the lowest (20.78% at the beginning and 31.85% at the end of the program). It is encouraging to see more teacher candidates realizing that ELLs do not pick up English naturally by themselves. Not only do these ELLs benefit from English as a Second Language (ESL) program, they also need support from mainstream classroom teachers. On the other hand, it is also discouraging to see only about 30% of teacher candidates recognizing this myth at the end of an elementary education program. The misconception that young children learn a second language easily still prevails in most of the teacher candidates.

Even though the incorporation of second language acquisition and field experiences is able to change teacher candidates' misconception of second language acquisition, more deliberation has to be given to curriculum development of teacher education coursework and field experiences to bring out these changes. First, the incorporation of second language acquisition in education courses should be coordinated so that each aspect of second language acquisition is given enough time to cover. At the topic of language development, Educational Psychology may cover Krashen and Terrell's (1998) stages of language acquisition. At the topic of language diversity, Multicultural Education may include Cummins' (1980a) theories of Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP); as well as Krashen's (1988) hypotheses of acquisition and learning distinction, comprehensible input, the natural order of acquisition, the affective filter, and the monitor. At the topic of multicultural and bilingual perspectives, Introduction to Exceptional Children may discuss Haynes's (2007)

misconceptions of second language acquisition and McLaughlin's (1992) misconceptions about second language learning.

Second, second language acquisition should be embedded in all courses in the elementary education program. Teacher candidates should be able to see how second language acquisition is related to teaching methods in language arts, reading, social studies, math, science, music, art, and physical education. Suggested topics include theories and methods of teaching ELLs, instruction of content areas to ELLs, engagement of ELLs in mainstream classrooms, arrangement of learning environments for ELLS, evaluation of content knowledge of ELLs, and cultural-related differences in content areas.

Third, the field experience of each of these teaching methods should be strengthened with the opportunity to teach and work with ELLs in different content areas. Teacher candidates should be able to plan, instruct and evaluate lessons given to ELLs in mainstream classrooms. Seeing second language acquisition across the school curriculum and in action can further improve the misconceptions of second language acquisition and better prepare teacher candidates to work with ELLs.

Conclusions

Incorporating second language acquisition to elementary education coursework and working with ELLs in field experiences are effective ways to change teacher candidates' misconception of second language acquisition. Not only should foreign-language teachers or English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers learn about second language acquisition, teacher candidates who are trained to teach mainstream classrooms would also benefit from the knowledge of second language acquisition to work with the increasing diverse populations in schools.

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Table 1

The Percentage of Correct Responses to the Beliefs of Second Language Acquisition Survey at

the Beginning and the End of an Elementary Education Program.

Belief Statements	Beginning (N=59) Mean (SD)	End (N=27) Mean (SD)
1. Children who are more proficient in their native language learn a second language faster than those who are less proficient in their native language. (T)	52.54% (.50) *	81.48% (.40) *
2 Younger children learn a second language more easily than older children. (F)	0% (.00) *	11.11% (.32) *
3 The more time English Language Learners spend hearing and using English in the mainstream classroom, the faster they will learn English. (F)	1.69% (.13)	0% (.00)
4 Children may not be proficient in a second language even though they can speak it. (T)	86.44% (.35)	92.59% (.27)
5 Even though children may come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they will learn a second language in a similar way or at a similar rate. (F)	59.32% (.50)	51.85% (.51)
6 Allowing English Language Learners to use their native language in school facilitates cognitive and academic growth. (T)	36.21% (.49) *	62.96% (.49) *
7 Children learn a second language quicker and easier than adults. (F)	0% (.00) *	18.52% (.40) *
8 When English Language Learners are placed in an English-speaking environment, they will learn English. (F)	25.86% (.44)	15.38% (.37)
9 Even if English Language Learners can converse in English with classmates and teachers, they may not understand school subjects taught in English. (T)	91.53% (.28)	100% (.00)
10 If children are from the same linguistic and cultural background, they learn a second language in a similar way or at a similar rate. (F)	45.76% (.50)	37.04% (.49)
11 Learning school subjects in their native language helps English Language Learners learn English. (T)	18.64% (.39)	25.93% (.45)
12 The earlier children begin to learn a second language, the better. (F)	0% (.00) *	7.41% (.27) *
13 English Language Learners should be encouraged to speak English from the first day of school. (F)	13.56% (.35) *	48.15% (.51) *
14 English Language Learners don't always acquire social language naturally in informal contexts. They may need to be taught how to communicate appropriately in social situations. (T)	77.97% (.42) *	96.3% (.19) *

15 Since English Language Learners are learning English, instructional activities should not include their cultural experiences. (F)	79.66% (.41)	88.89% (.32)
16 Reading in the native language is helpful to children in learning a second language. (T)	27.12% (.45) *	51.85% (.51) *
17 The older a person begins to learn a second language, the more likely that person will speak that language without an accent. (F)	72.88% (.45)	59.26% (.50)
18 Parents of English Language Learners should be encouraged to speak English to their children at home. (F)	6.78% (.25)	18.52% (.40)
19 English Language Learners may need English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a New Language (ENL) services even if they can speak English fluently. (T)	55.93% (.50)	74.07% (.45)
20 English Language Learners who speak very little English should be placed in classrooms with younger students so they can more easily learn English. (F)	59.32% (.50)	70.37% (.47)
21 English Language Learners may lose their native language after learning English. (T)	3.45% (.18)	11.11% (.32)
22 Children usually have fewer inhibitions or are less embarrassed than adults when they make mistakes in a second language. (F)	31.03% (.47) *	62.96% (.49) *
23 Until English Language Learners learn English, there is no point in trying to teach them school subjects. (F)	89.83% (.31)	92.59% (.27)
24 Although learning English is essential for school success for English Language Learners, the acquisition of English does not guarantee that they will succeed academically. (T)	59.32% (.50) *	85.19% (.36) *
25 Because English Language Learners are in American schools, tests used to determine if they have learning disabilities must be in English. (F)	59.32% (.50)	59.26% (.50)
Total	42.17% (.35)	52.91% (.37)

Note: "*" indicates statistically significant at $p < .05$. (T) indicates the statement is true. (F) indicates the statement is false.

Table 2

The Percentage of Correct Responses to the Categories of the Beliefs of Second Language

Acquisition survey at the Beginning and the End of an Elementary Education Program.

Belief Categories	Beginning (N=59) Mean (SD)	End (N=27) Mean (SD)
1. The relationship between native language and second language (questions 1, 6, 11, 16, and 21)	27.59%	46.67%
2. The optimal age at which to begin second language instruction (questions 2, 7, 12, 17, and 22)	20.78%	31.85%
3. The importance of the extent of exposure to the second language (questions 3, 8, 13, 18, and 23),	27.54%	34.93%
4. The relationship between oral communication skills & academic language skills (questions 4, 9, 14, 19, and 24)	74.24%	89.63%
5. The cultural & individual differences in language learning styles (questions 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25)	60.68%	61.48%
Total	42.17%	52.91%