



# Iranian EFL Teachers' Opinions Regarding Language Learning and Teaching: Changes with Their Growth in Experience

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## Abstract

Teachers' beliefs play significant roles in various dimensions of teachers' activities in the classroom and on students' lives. The current study aimed to examine teachers' opinions regarding language teaching and learning and their change through the passage of five years. From 1000 EFL teachers, estimated as the population, 278 EFL teachers are chosen as the participants. To measure the level of change, the researcher modified the perspectives as regard to language learning and teaching inventory (BALLATI) and asked the participants to respond. Based on the gathered data through google forms and the distributed questionnaires, the demographic information acquired from the participants, the level of difference based on their gender, academic degree, and their major were also measured. The results of data analysis demonstrated that there stood a substantial difference among teachers' opinions of five years ago and their present beliefs about language teaching and learning. Moreover, regarding teachers' gender, degree and major, no substantial difference between their beliefs from five years ago up to now were observed. The results may be fruitful for authorities of teacher training centers who need to know that the pre-services and new teachers' beliefs toward language learning and teaching is an effective issue in their future career progression and they may be the subject of change based on their growth in experience.

## Keywords:

Academic degree, gender, language teaching and learning, major, teachers' beliefs

## 1. Introduction

For so long, language learning and teaching have been two concepts which were extensively investigated by many eminent figures in the field of EFL/ESL learning situation. In first place, language learning is specifically defined as "a change in an individual resulted from experience" (Slavin, 2003; Zheng 2009). Also, the term "language teaching" is considered as a complex process. A language teacher must have scientific approaches to instruct a language. Borg (2003) introduced language teachers as active, thinking decision makers. Teaching is considered as facilitating factor for learning process. It empowers

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the learner to learn and set the conditions for learning. As the Information and communication technologies evolved, the arena of language teaching is widened. There are many soft wares, apps available for teaching a Language. These new technologies may affect the teachers' belief in the process of teaching for some years.

The notion of teacher's beliefs has been thoroughly investigated in the last 30 years. For instance, Richards (1998) justifiably claimed that a meticulous research on the subject of how beliefs operate will enable researchers to immediately recognize how teachers work and how they learn. EFL/ESL teaching is certainly the subject of various strong beliefs and attitudes among EFL/ESL teachers and these beliefs certainly affect their teaching methodology. In first place, it seems indispensable to accurately define the belief concept. To Richardson (1996), beliefs are those sophisticated understandings about the world that are thought to be true. Hence, beliefs can be regarded as the key factor which indicates the discipline which deals with human behavior and learning (White, 1999).

Due to subjective aspect of the term belief, single definition for the concept of belief is not offered. Every researcher describes it from a personal perspective. Borg (2006) stated that based on his literature review of the term belief, it refers to different categories such as applied knowledge, applied theories, thought, information, origins of teaching, educational knowledge, approaches, expectations, notions, and viewpoints. Pajares (1992) tried to find a clear definition of belief and stated that the construction of educational perspective is itself encompassing and broad.

Various attempts have been conducted to identify a core of underlying teachers' beliefs. For instance, Burns (1992) ran a study about teachers' belief and listed some beliefs which he believed are the main core of ESL teachers' belief. The participants were six ESL teachers. He claimed that these beliefs are those which can affect their approaches to language teaching and their instructional exercise. Those beliefs can be categorized as the reality of language, the direct connection between spoken and written tongue, the strategies which refer to language learning at the beginning language learning, learners, their aptitude to learn, and specifically their capability to learn English.

As the first and foremost concentration of the current project, the idea of changes in EFL teachers' belief was examined. An emphasized and examined feature of belief is concerned with its permanence (Pajares, 1992). Richards et al., (2001) findings revealed that beliefs are resistant to modification. However, Williams (1999) claimed that by creating the correlation between practice and theory for teachers, change can be brought about. Various studies focused on whether teachers' beliefs can change (Brown and McGannon, 1998).

Various kind of beliefs are considered as the teacher's beliefs that exist from personal to global and work as primary frames to grasp the world. Teachers' beliefs lead their behavior, decision-making, and communications with learners and determine what should be taught and in which way. As mentioned earlier, teachers' belief about language learning and teaching can affect the general decisions made by teachers in various steps of their teaching. Johnson and Ma (1999) mentioned that consciously or unconsciously, most teachers decide by a set of planned personal beliefs. Basturkmen et al., (2004) pointed to a filtering effect of beliefs on all parts of teachers' opinions, conclusions and choices. In brief, the beliefs may be regarded as assisting laws for language instructors.

As mentioned earlier, teachers' belief can influence their teaching to high extent. Three assumptions about the role of beliefs are presented by Johnson (1994) which are: a) teachers' actions in the classes can be explained based on their beliefs, b) the way teachers understand how learning and teaching work can be affected by their beliefs, and c) in order to design effective teacher preparation programs, beliefs should be recognized.

Researches have been conducted on various aspects of beliefs. In first place, some researchers concentrated upon how teachers' ideas are shaped (Johnson, 1994; Lortie, 1975). Moreover, others emphasized on if firm beliefs can be changed (Weinstein, 1990; Brown and McGannon, 1998). Also, there are some researches about the effects of pre-service training on their beliefs (Joram and Gabrielle, 1998; Mok, 1994; Peacock, 2001).

In the current study, the researcher focused on the modification aspect of beliefs during years. In so doing, the purpose of this study was searching possible changes that might have happened in Iranian EFL teachers' belief regarding language teaching and learning after their engagement in process of language teaching.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

To reliably define if teachers change their opinions and perspectives over long engagement in process of teaching for some years, a series of thorough investigation seems indispensable. The result of previous studies revealed controversial findings about the nature of changes in teachers' belief. Some researchers have revealed that teacher perspectives are constant and resistant to alteration (e.g., Kagan, 1992) whereas others showed some gradual modification in teachers' attitudes (e.g., Calderhead, 1996; Peacock, 2001). In addition, Calderhead (1996) added that these changes only happen when significant support is presented to teachers. Also, many researchers pointed to the reasonable possibility of modification in beliefs. Peacock (2001) stated these reasonable changes are achieved gradually and these changes only happen when considerable support is available to teachers.

In the context of Iran, few studies in the field of teachers' beliefs have been conducted. Among them Kasraee Nejad (2014) was the most salient one. In his unpublished MA thesis, he validated and ran a factor analysis in order to adapt Horwitz's questionnaire to Iranian context. Other researchers such as Soodmand Afshar and Ghasemi (2017) investigated the EFL teachers' opinions and their factual classroom practice. Furthermore, most of the academic works in the realm of beliefs in Iran are about learners' beliefs. Given that outlook, the current research intended to supply information on behaviors and thoughts of teachers to reduce misunderstanding between students and instructors, avoid students' academic failures, and present precious information concerning teachers' perspectives.

Moreover, the hypothesis of change in teacher's belief with regard to their experience is a factor which was ignored in previous researches in this field. Borg (2006b) stated that classroom experiences have demonstrated to own a great impact on teachers' actual knowledge and thus to develop teachers' actions. Also, Williams and Burden (1997) argued that in the real classes, the instructors experience new situations which assist them to shape hypotheses that they then approve or disapprove. In this research, the researcher believed that teachers' growth in understanding and experience is amongst the greatest factors in shaping EFL teachers' opinions and tried to examine this hypothesis.

In brief, regarding the lack of researchers about the role of teachers' experience in change of their belief specially in the context of Iran, as well as controversial results of previous studies about the change of teachers' belief, the current project was administered and entitled: "Iranian EFL teachers' perspectives concerning language teaching and learning: changes with their growth in experience."

## 3. Research Questions

To meet the study's primary aims, the researcher posed the next research inquiries:

### 3.1. Major research question

Q1: Is there any substantial difference between Iranian EFL teachers' past and present opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time (now and five years ago)?

### 3.2. Minor research questions

Q2: Is there any substantial difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language teaching and learning by the passage of time with regard to their gender?

Q3: Is there any substantial difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language teaching and learning by the passage of time with regard to their academic degree?

Q4: Is there any substantial difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language teaching and learning by the passage of time with regard to their major?

#### 4. Research Hypotheses

Considering the research questions mentioned above, the below null hypotheses has been formulated:

H01: There is no significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time (now and five years ago).

H02: There is no significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time with regard to their gender?

H03: There is no significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time with regard to their academic degree?

H04: There is no significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time with regard to their major?

#### 5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies on the fact that teachers' belief has crucial effects on their teaching as well as students' achievements. Hence, identifying the teachers' beliefs as well as change in these beliefs is effective tool to improve the process of Language teaching and learning. Borg (2001) declared that research about the teachers' beliefs is required to achieve a better understanding of what happens in the classroom.

Also, Basturkmen et al, (2004) pointed out to the vital effect of teachers' beliefs on various aspects of their educational activities such as aspects of teachers' thoughts, judgments and decisions. By same token, Johnson (1999) claimed that beliefs are such influential that affect the way teachers manage every aspect of their work because they are like tools that manage every interpretation and decision teachers make. In other words, teachers' beliefs are the foundations for their thoughts and performance (Johnson, 1994). Wan, Low & Li, (2011) added that beliefs are vital in assessing teaching process and its success or lack.

Hence, the benefit of the results of the present study for EFL teachers can be listed as following: a) beliefs influence teachers' actions in the classroom. Consequently, examining their beliefs help to identify them and recognize strength and weakness which consequently affect their action in real classes; b) beliefs affect the way teachers understand what learning and teaching are and how they integrate this knowledge in the classroom. As Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan (2001) reported, teachers usually teach the same way they were taught. Therefore, teachers' beliefs to high extent indicate the way in which they and their students operate.

According to Basturkmen (2012), a little consistency between teachers' beliefs and their real actions in classes are reported. As Phipps and Borg (2009) mentioned, this contradiction between teachers' beliefs and their real actions in classes can be considered as an undesirable and negative event. Moreover, as one of the practical advantage of this study, beliefs need to be understood in order to design effective teacher preparation programs. It helps authorities to have a clear understanding and apply appropriate program. So, the improvements to the curriculum, instructional methods and assessment strategies could be made. In other words, it will help curriculum developers and teacher trainers make the right decisions with regard to instructional methods and assessment techniques.

#### 6. Methodology

##### 6.1. Overview

In this chapter, participants' sampling is explained, the sites where the data were gathered, and what characteristics such as gender and age participants had, are presented. The instrument through which the data were gathered is elaborated. The procedure of conducting the research is explained in details, the research design and data analysis procedure are the final sections of this chapter.

##### 6.2. Participants and Setting

To conduct this study, the researcher selected teachers teaching English in public and private sectors of Khorasan Razavi province, Iran. From among 1000 teachers estimated to teach in Khorasan Razavi, according to the information obtained from the education office in some cities like Torbate Heydarieh, Roshtkhar, Gonabad, Khaf, Neyshabour, Sabzevar and Mashhad, 278 English teachers were selected, based on Krejcie-Morgan (1970) table of determining the sample size with confidence level of 95%. The questionnaires were sent to their emails and other accounts in Telegram and Whats app. The response rate is 78% which is an acceptable figure (Nulty, 2008). 217 teachers responded the items and returned the questionnaires. The main characteristic of these respondents was their years of experience in teaching English. They were required to have the experience of teaching English at least for 5 years to investigate their views and opinions regarding teaching at the beginning of their profession and at the moment in their profession. Their age varied from 26 to 57. All of them were Farsi speakers and they were selected from both genders.

### **6.3. Instruments**

In order to gather required data, the teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching inventory was used which is explained in the following:

#### **6.4. Teachers' opinions regarding Language Teaching and Learning Questionnaire**

In the early 1980s, Elaine Horwitz developed an instrument for identifying opinions regarding foreign language learning. She studied relationships between goals of students and teachers and learning strategies for foreign or second language acquisition of each group. The instrument which was used as the base measure for data gathering was opinions regarding language learning inventory (BALLI) consisting of 45 items which was developed for ESL context. The instrument used for the present research was Kasraee Nejad's opinions regarding Language Learning and Teaching Inventory (2014). This questionnaire had 45 items, and the Likert scale was kept as it was in Horwitz's (Five responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). In order to compare teachers' beliefs through the passage of time, the same Beliefs about Language Learning and Teaching Inventory (BALLATI) was used by changing the items to the past tense for examining their opinions regarding the same event five years ago (see Appendix A). For instance, all the questions had to parts (a, and b; the former was used for the present while the latter was used for the past, and the first items were as the followings:

1. a. Now, I believe it is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.

1. b. Five years ago, I believed it was easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.

For ease of administration and answering, each question about teacher's present belief about language learning and teaching accompanied by his/her belief about five years ago, thus there are ninety items on the scale. Some of the questions were asked to measure teachers' opinions regarding the importance of communication, and being bilingual, and the amount of difficulty or easiness of learning the second language. The reliability of the 90-item questionnaire was calculated through running Cronbach's alpha as .86. The validity of the modified questionnaire was proved by three professors in English department of Islamic Azad University of Torbat-e Heydarieh.

### **6.5. Procedure**

At the beginning of the project, the researcher selected her participants by asking the English department of education office to find the number of active English teachers. She found out that about 700 English teachers teach in different junior and senior high schools in Khorasan Razavi in public and private sectors. Since many of English teachers teaching in the institutes are from public sector, it was estimated that about 300 English teachers in all cities of Khorasan Razavi teach in private sector and are not employed in the ministry of education, thus the total number of English teachers in Khorasan Razavi including both public and private sectors are about 1000. Based on the number of teachers, the number of participants in the present study was calculated by Krejcie-Morgan's (1970) table. Thus, 278 English



teachers were targeted to answer the BALLTI. They had 5 to 30 years of experience and including both genders. In the next phase, the researcher converted the questionnaires into the google form and shared the links to her colleagues (public junior and senior high schools) and teachers teaching in the institutes. She explained the purpose of her research in the first section of the questionnaire and ensured that participants' responses were kept confidential.

### **6.6. Study Design**

Since the researcher sought to investigate the changes of teachers' beliefs through their growth in experience, the design of the present study was survey design.

### **6.7. Data Analysis**

At the beginning of data analysis, the demographic information of the participants was sorted based on their gender, age and years of teaching experience. In order to tabulate the descriptive data, participants' information was entered into SPSS and cross-tabulations were run to provide relevant tables. The next phase of data analysis was to convert the participants' responses downloading in a spreadsheet to SPSS. Inferential data analysis was run to provide the reliability of the questionnaire which was calculated by running Cronbach's alpha. After making sure of the reliability, the normality of the data was calculated by running Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. This index clarified if the data were normal or not. Data analysis was highly dependent based on the assumption of the normality. The obtained data were compared based on the teachers' experience from 5 years ago and their current beliefs about language learning and teaching.

## **7. Results and Discussion**

In this chapter, in order to respond to the research questions, the procedures for data analysis are elaborated then, the results of data analysis are presented section by section. The research questions are restated first, the demographic information of the respondents is presented based on their characteristics, primary data analysis including the reliability of the scales and the normality of gathered data is presented and at the end, answering the research questions accompanied by their relevant discussion closes this chapter.

### **7.1. Restatement of the Research Question**

The researcher sought to investigate a possible response to the following questions:

- Q1: Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time (now and five years ago)?
- Q2: Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time with regard to their gender?
- Q3: Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time with regard to their academic degree?
- Q4: Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time with regard to their major?

### **7.2. Data Analysis**

In this study, opinions regarding language teaching and learning were measured through administering BALLATI to English language teachers of Torbat-e Heydarieh who teach in both public and private sectors. Because of the ease of administration and Corona Virus pandemic throughout the world, the google forms were used. Teachers' responses were converted into SPSS and their demographic information, the reliability of the questionnaire, including 90 items, and normality of the gathered data were calculated through running Cronbach's alpha and Kolmogorov-Smirnov indices, respectively. To measure the difference between teachers' beliefs of five years ago and their present beliefs, descriptive

statistics of the participants accompanied by a paired samples t-test was calculated. Moreover, the possible difference which can be affected by some of the variables such as teachers' gender, academic degree and their major were also calculated. Since, these variables were considered as independent variables, a series of two-way ANOVA tests were run and Multivariate Tests revealed the possible impact of gender, degree and major on teachers' opinions regarding language teaching and learning of five years ago and their present beliefs.

### 7.3. Demographic information of the participants.

At the beginning, it is significant to give some information about participants' characteristics responded to the BALLATI. In the following tables, the information of the participants was tabulated based on the gender as well as other features such as work place, degree, major, and years of teaching experience. It should be noted that 78 percent (217) of the participants returned the questionnaire via either google forms or hard copy.

Table 1. Participants' Age, Degree and Years of Experience

Experience	Degree		Age				Total
			20-30	31-40	41-50	50-60	
5-10	Degree	BA	22	9	0		31
		MA	7	6	1		14
	Total		29	15	1		45
11-15	Degree	BA	2	20	1		23
		MA	0	14	2		16
	Total		2	34	3		39
16-20	Degree	BA	0	17	7	1	25
		MA	1	6	8	2	17
	Total		1	23	15	3	42
21-25	Degree	BA		2	18	0	20
		MA		0	9	1	10
		PhD		0	3	0	3
	Total			2	30	1	33
26-30	Degree	BA		3	29	4	36
		MA		2	12	4	18
	Total			5	41	8	54
30-35	Degree	BA			1	2	3
		MA			0	1	1
	Total				1	3	4
Total	Degree	BA	24	51	56	7	138
		MA	8	28	32	8	76
		PhD	0	0	3	0	3
	Total	32	79	91	15	217	

Table 1 presents the information of the participants based on their age, their academic degree and years of teaching experience. Since the system of teacher education in Iran prepares teachers from different channels like Teacher Training Centers (TTCs), graduates of other universities who were accepted in the official exams, Nehzat Savad Amoozi teachers and part time teachers, the years of the respondents and their teaching experience are not arranged in a similar order. Teachers with 5 to 10 years of teaching experience (N=45), with the age range of 20 to 30 (N=29), there were 22 teachers whose degree was B.A. and seven teachers hold M.A. degree. As this table shows, teachers with B.A. (31) and M.A. (14) with 5 to

10 years of teaching experience were in this raw, and no teacher with Ph.D. degree responded to the questionnaire. Teachers with 21 to 25 years of teaching experience only hold Ph.D. (N=3) whose age was above 40. From the total number of the respondents (N=217), teachers with B.A. degree (N=138) were the majority and those with M.A. (N=76) and Ph.D. (N=3) comprised the rest of the teachers. Moreover, 41.93% (N=91) of the respondents were between 41 to 50 years old. 36.40% (N=79) of the teachers were between 31 to 40 years old.

Table 2. Gender, Major and Teaching Place

Teaching Place		Major					Total	
		TEFL	Translation	Linguistics	Literature	Others		
Public	Gender	Male	20	2	6	10	20	58
		Female	40	6	11	5	35	97
	Total	60	8	17	15	55	155	
Private	Gender	Male	6	2	5	1	7	21
		Female	15	7	1	11	7	41
	Total	21	9	6	12	14	62	
Total	Gender	Male	26	4	11	11	27	79
		Female	55	13	12	16	42	138
	Total	81	17	23	27	69	217	

As seen in Table 2, male teachers (N=79) responded to the questionnaire in public (N=58) and private (N=21) sectors, and female teachers (N=138) responded to the questionnaire in public (N=97) and private (N=41) sector. Totally (N=217), teachers who teach in public schools (N=155) and teachers who teach in private institutes (N=62) answered the BALLATI. Moreover, this table shows the participants' gender and their major including TEFL (N=81, 37%), Translation (N=17, 7%), Linguistics (N=23, 11%), English Literature (N=27, 13%), and other majors (N=69, 32%).

#### 7.4. Primary data analysis

In order to choose the best procedure of data analysis, it is required to check the reliability of the instrument used in this study. To this end, Cronbach's Alpha test was run for the ninety-item BALLATI questionnaire.

Table 3. Reliability of the Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.86	90

As seen in Table 3, the reliability index for BALLATI questionnaire including 90 items was .86 which is a good reliability index.

Table 4. Test of Normality of the Data

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Beliefs1	.056	217	.09	.992	217	.29
Beliefs2	.086	217	.08	.981	217	.06

The other important preliminary test before running the main data analysis which identifies whether the data should be analysed parametrically or not is the test of normality. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk are the indices which show if the data violated from the assumptions of the normality or



not. As seen in Table 4, the distribution of the data is normal ( $K-S=.09$ ,  $.08$ ). Thus, it is concluded that the data can be analysed parametrically.

### 7.5. Main data analysis

Checking the assumptions of parametric data analysis, the researcher went through various steps to measure the difference between teachers' opinions regarding language teaching and learning in five years ago and their present beliefs. Since there are four research questions and each question requires a particular data analysis procedure, the following sections explain these procedures to answer the research questions.

### 7.6. Answer to the First Research Question

The first research question of this study concerns the existence of any significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time (now and five years ago). To this end, the gathered data were analyzed through running a paired sample t-test to measure the difference between their beliefs of five years ago and their present beliefs. The following tables demonstrate the results of analyses:

Table 5. Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	SD	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Present Beliefs	191.86	217	13.97	.94
	Beliefs of 5 Years ago	185.79	217	14.46	.98

Table 5 shows the mean scores (191.86, 185.79), the number of respondents ( $N=217$ ), the standard deviation (13.97, 14.46) and standard error of mean (.94, .98).

Table 6. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Beliefs1 - Beliefs2	6.07	11.34	7.88	216	.000

As seen in Table 6, there is a significant difference between teachers' beliefs of five years ago and their present opinions regarding language teaching and learning ( $M=6.07$ ,  $SD=11.34$ ) and;  $t(216)=7.88$ ,  $p=.000$ .

### 7.7. Answer to the Second Research Question

The second research question concerns the possible significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time with regard to their gender. As mentioned above, the data analysis procedure changes since gender as a categorical independent variable was added. To this end, to measure the difference between male and female participants' opinions regarding language teaching and learning in the five years ago and their present belief, a two-way ANOVA test was run.

Table 7. Multivariate Tests

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.960	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.040	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	23.888	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	23.888	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.014	1.530 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.219
	Wilks' Lambda	.986	1.530 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.219

Hotelling's Trace	.015	1.530 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.219
Roy's Largest Root	.015	1.530 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.219

Table 7, shows that gender has no significant role in teachers' opinions regarding language teaching and learning from 5 years ago up to now (sig.=.21).

Table 8. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Beliefs1	1490.532	7	212.93	1.09	.368
	Beliefs2	2350.907	7	335.84	1.63	.126
Intercept	Beliefs1	853899.52	1	853899.52	4387.62	.000
	Beliefs2	814372.80	1	814372.80	3975.17	.000
Gender	Beliefs1	594.537	1	594.53	3.05	.082
	Beliefs2	241.839	1	241.83	1.18	.279
Error	Beliefs1	40674.59	209	194.61		
	Beliefs2	42816.76	209	204.86		
Total	Beliefs1	8030521.00	217			
	Beliefs2	7535769.00	217			
Corrected Total	Beliefs1	42165.12	216			
	Beliefs2	45167.66	216			

Comparing the effect of teachers' gender in their responses towards their opinions regarding language teaching and learning through the passage of 5 years, no significant effect was observed (sig.=.08, .27). Accordingly, gender is not shown to be a significant factor affecting the change in teachers' belief through the passage of time.

### 7.8. Answer to the Third Research Question

The third research question concerns the possible significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time with regard to their academic degree. A two-way ANOVA test was run to measure this effect.

Table 9. Multivariate Tests

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.960	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.040	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	23.888	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	23.888	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
Degree	Pillai's Trace	.007	.388	4.000	418.000	.817
	Wilks' Lambda	.993	.387 <sup>b</sup>	4.000	416.000	.818
	Hotelling's Trace	.007	.386	4.000	414.000	.819
	Roy's Largest Root	.007	.779 <sup>c</sup>	2.000	209.000	.460

As Table 9 shows, respondents' academic degree had no significant effect on their opinions regarding language teaching and learning (sig.=.81).

Table 10. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Corrected Model	Beliefs1	1490.532 <sup>a</sup>	7	212.933	1.094	.368
	Beliefs2	2350.907 <sup>b</sup>	7	335.844	1.639	.126
Intercept	Beliefs1	853899.521	1	853899.521	4387.628	.000
	Beliefs2	814372.804	1	814372.804	3975.170	.000
Degree	Beliefs1	.140	2	.070	.000	1.000
	Beliefs2	175.914	2	87.957	.429	.652
Error	Beliefs1	40674.593	209	194.615		
	Beliefs2	42816.761	209	204.865		
Total	Beliefs1	8030521.000	217			
	Beliefs2	7535769.000	217			
Corrected Total	Beliefs1	42165.124	216			
	Beliefs2	45167.668	216			

Comparing the effect of teachers' academic degree in their responses towards their opinions regarding language teaching and learning through the passage of 5 years, no significant effect was observed (sig.=.65).

### 7.9. Answer to the Fourth Research Question

The fourth research question concerns the possible significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time with regard to their major. Based on four tests of two-way ANOVA analysis, the effect of major on teachers' beliefs was measured.

Table 11. Multivariate Tests

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.960	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.040	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	23.888	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	23.888	2484.300 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	208.000	.000
Major	Pillai's Trace	.060	1.608	8.000	418.000	.120
	Wilks' Lambda	.941	1.605 <sup>b</sup>	8.000	416.000	.121
	Hotelling's Trace	.062	1.601	8.000	414.000	.122
	Roy's Largest Root	.044	2.316 <sup>c</sup>	4.000	209.000	.058

As Table 11 shows, respondents' major had no significant effect on their opinions regarding language teaching and learning (sig.=.12) regarding three indices. However, the result of Roy's Largest Root index (0.058) should be treated with more cautions. Comparing the effect of teachers' major in their responses towards their opinions regarding language teaching and learning through the passage of 5 years with regard to their major, no significant effect was observed (sig.=.30, .06). As a result, teachers' major cannot be regarded as a significant factor in changing teachers' belief.

Table 12. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Corrected Model	Beliefs1	1490.532 <sup>a</sup>	7	212.933	1.094	.368
	Beliefs2	2350.907 <sup>b</sup>	7	335.844	1.639	.126
Intercept	Beliefs1	853899.521	1	853899.521	4387.628	.000
	Beliefs2	814372.804	1	814372.804	3975.170	.000
Major	Beliefs1	947.029	4	236.757	1.217	.305
	Beliefs2	1818.155	4	454.539	2.219	.068
Error	Beliefs1	40674.593	209	194.615		
	Beliefs2	42816.761	209	204.865		
Total	Beliefs1	8030521.000	217			
	Beliefs2	7535769.000	217			
Corrected Total	Beliefs1	42165.124	216			
	Beliefs2	45167.668	216			

## 8. Discussion

The results of the present study concerning the existence of any significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time (now and five years ago) indicated that there is a significant difference between teachers' beliefs of five years ago and their present opinions regarding language teaching and learning. Although the role of teachers' gender, academic degree, and major proved to have no significant effect on the changes in their beliefs, there may be other intervening variables which should be explored through interview in future studies. It is worth mentioning that having indices very close to the significance level for gender and major show that this study can be replicated in other provinces of Iran and may end in different findings. The results of the present study are in line with the previous study conducted by [Barcelos \(2014\)](#) who found that opinions regarding language learning and teaching is a dynamic and socially oriented concept.

Also, it agreed with the model offered by [Guskey \(1986\)](#) which expected change in belief regarding passing of time. [Guskey \(1986\)](#) claimed that by passing of time and teachers' real classroom experimentation, they are empowered to shape their permanent beliefs toward teaching and learning. Furthermore, in this process they are supported by their trainers or employers to interact and share ideas and consequently create their constant beliefs. The consequence of this interaction guides them to know that the new ideas were operative in their classrooms or not.

As the results of this study revealed, some deep and significant changes happened in teachers' belief about language learning and teaching by passing of time. The researcher believes that these changes as [Williams and Burden \(1997\)](#) proposed are the result of teachers' reflection. Also, [Pennington \(1996\)](#) argued that in order to have a deep personal change, reflection is indispensable element in order to have a deep personal change. Finally, as the other reason of such changes, "interaction" which proposed by [Orton \(1996\)](#) as a crucial factor leading teachers to make their beliefs clear and permanent can be enumerated.

The second research question concerns the possible significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time with regard to their gender. The results of the data analysis revealed no significant effect of gender on changes of their beliefs.

As [Upadyaya and Eccles \(2014\)](#) stated gender-related beliefs are related to the different features, qualities or characters that are linked to females or males. The findings are in line with a study conducted by [Shahvand and Rezvani \(2015\)](#). Their findings showed that both male and female teachers had the same beliefs based on the findings of their investigation. But, in the study of teachers' opinions regarding grammar by [Ghodousi \(2008\)](#), male teachers had stronger beliefs than women about effectiveness of some techniques of teaching.

The third research question of the present study which concerned the possible significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time

with regard to their academic degree, again, no significant difference was observed. Finally, the fourth research question which compared the changes in beliefs regarding to their major, no significant effect of major was observed. The findings of the study administered by [Khanalizadeh and Allami \(2012\)](#) partially support the results of this study as they concluded that in the context of Iran, teachers' beliefs to teaching writing were not affected by the level of education or gender. On the other hand, some studies reported different results. For instance, [Lockharts \(2008\)](#) resulted that teachers' opinions regarding writing skill varied based on their academic qualification in Hong Kong.

Accordingly, it can be argued that the findings of the present study to great extent support the results of the previous studies that considered the effect of gender, degree, and major of teachers as the less effective variation in changing teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching.

## 9. Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, a brief summary of findings was explained first. Next, the researcher's conclusion from the whole study was presented. Some pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research comprised the final sections of this chapter.

## 10. Summary of the Findings

As the main result of the current study, the researcher came up with the conclusion that there is a significant difference between teachers' beliefs of five years ago and their present opinions regarding language teaching and learning. In other words, the effects of the passage of time on Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs have been proved in the context of the current project. In addition, the possible significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' opinions regarding language learning and teaching by the passage of time with regard to their gender has been examined thoroughly. The final analysis of data revealed that gender has no significant role in teachers' opinions regarding language teaching and learning from 5 years ago up to now ( $\text{sig.}=.000$ ). Hence, as the next findings of this project, the assumption about the influence of gender in this area was entirely rejected. Also, the effects of teachers' academic degree were searched and the outcomes indicated no obvious effects of teachers' academic degree on this area. Finally, the teachers' major which had been regarded as the third independent variable. It was studied thoroughly and the outcomes, again, revealed no effective consequence for this variable. In other words, respondents' major had no significant effect on their opinions regarding language teaching and learning.

## 11. Conclusion

Major conclusions can be drawn from the present study. In the first place, the significant effects of the element of the passage of the time on teachers' belief have been proved. So, some general conclusions are as follows: First, the teachers' belief toward language learning and teaching is not a fixed structure and can be changed continuously. The subject of change in teachers' belief has been discussed by various researchers ([Brown and McGannon, 1998](#)). The researcher came to conclusion that the significant changes in EFL teachers' belief happens by experience. Thus, as the main conclusion of this study, some gradual change in teachers' beliefs is peremptory. Second, this conclusion has been supported by [Borg' \(2006b\)](#) findings which concluded that "Classroom experience has been shown to have a powerful influence on teachers' practical knowledge and hence to shape teachers' actions". The result of this occurrence can be explained as that the teaching experience creates some opportunities for teachers to experiment with new beliefs, to construct hypotheses that they then confirm or disconfirm, and consequently shape and change their beliefs. Third, the role of gender on the change of teachers' belief has not been confirmed by the results of this study. In other words, it's possible for both female and male teachers to experience change in their belief by passage of time and it's entirely wrong to discriminate between male and female teachers in this area. Fourth, the role of teachers' academic degree on change in EFL teacher' belief is insignificant, too. The researcher has come up with conclusion that the teachers' academic degree is more related to their theoretical knowledge about teaching and learning, so the impact of their degree is not as effective

as their actual knowledge of teaching, I mean their experiences. Indeed, the teachers' need to some actual career progression by their experience to achieve the better idea and beliefs toward language teaching and learning. Finally, the role of teachers' major has been examined and no significant effect was observed. Thus, the researcher concluded that all teachers, regardless of their major will experience change in their beliefs. The findings of the present study may be fruitful for the following active groups in the realm of education:

Primarily, as for authorities of teacher training centers, they need to know that the pre-services and new teachers' beliefs toward language learning and teaching is an effective issue in their future career progression and consequently better outcomes related to their students. The results of current study indicated that by passage of time their beliefs change, so they need to be presented with some more experienced teachers' beliefs to facilitate the process of changes in their beliefs. In other words, it's the authority responsibility to create opportunities for new teachers to share their beliefs with other more experienced colleagues. In addition, as the other results of this project, the variations of teachers' gender, academic degree, and major are irrelevant to these changes, hence all teachers can be offered with these chances to enhance their beliefs. It is highly recommended to place some additional day release program in their syllabus and curriculum. Finally, the experienced teachers also need to participate some on the job training programs to make their beliefs up-to-date. Furthermore, as for language teachers, especially the new and pre-services teachers, they need to know that their beliefs may directly affect their procedure in real language classes. As the findings of the research revealed the change of beliefs by passage of time, the researcher believe that the new and pre-services teachers need to progressively monitor their performances and also their beliefs. In addition, they are recommended to share their ideas with other teachers to reach the better understanding of teaching and learning. Also as for language learners, the possibility of changes in teachers' belief toward language learning and teaching can be generalized to wider population of students. Indeed, the probability of change in their beliefs toward language learning which is officially confirmed in this study as general manner, need to be used to inform students about this possibility. They need to know that as a beginner or advanced learner their beliefs are something progressive and by engagement in the process of learning they approach to better comprehension of language learning. In this way, they may conclude that their learning process loss it's ambiguous nature gradually, and the detrimental consequence of feeling confused and depressed will reduce. EFL teachers need to comply with current situations and update their teaching knowledge to overcome challenges and meet students need.

## 12. Suggestions for Further Research

Conducting this research was a unique experience for the researcher as an institute supervisor with usual difficulties of managing a different class with research objectives. The following are the suggestions for further research:

In first place, another study is needed to replicate the study to demonstrate its validity and also to confirm the possibility of changes in teachers' belief in other contexts. Also more study can be administered to investigate some shorter and longer passage of time. A case study may reveal better outcomes and represent more clear graph regarded the changes in the teacher' beliefs. Although, the results of this project confirmed the change of teachers' belief toward language learning and teaching, the effect of some other variations which may interfere the extent of these changes need to be investigated. For instance, the extent of teachers' social interaction in this period of time as well as their personal trends seems to be searched by other researchers.

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