

Exploring Changes in Learners' Language Learning Beliefs

Yoko Ichige

Abstract

This study investigated how learners' language learning beliefs developed in the course of learners' individual past learning experience and could change during a period of one semester course. The study was conducted on a group of female university students who took an English listening course. The questionnaire about language learning beliefs was originally constructed to investigate primarily the relationship between the students' past English learning experience, their learning during the course and the development of their beliefs about learning English. The questionnaire was administered twice in the beginning and the end of the semester, and the data were analyzed statistically. The results of statistical analysis were further probed by individual interviews to the students. The interview data was qualitatively analyzed in relation to the questionnaire results, and interpreted based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. The interpretation detected the three key words: environments, experiences, and personalization.

Keywords: environment, experiences, personalization

The relationship between language learning experiences and beliefs has been investigated in recent studies from several viewpoints. In Barcelos' study (2003) on the effect of experience on language learning beliefs, experience was defined as the interaction, adaptation, and adjustment of individuals to the environment (p. 174), which includes everything that facilitates or prevents what individuals do. From qualitative analysis of the data gathered from teachers and learners of an EFL course in the States, she concluded that "[teachers' and students'] beliefs about SLA were the results of the connections they made between their past and present experiences, thus exemplifying the principle of continuity and interaction as defined by Dewey (1938)". Ellis and Tanaka (2003) also pointed out the strong influence of personal learning experience on language learning beliefs, and stressed the relation of the learning environment to beliefs. They wrote that "experience of learning a language in a

different environment (e.g., a new teacher, new teaching material, a new setting) may lead to learners modifying their existing beliefs or forming new ones” (p. 64).

With more emphasis on the social aspect of interaction between experience and beliefs, Alanen (2003) wrote that language learning beliefs are formed and developed as learners use their target languages and do language learning activities in specific learning context, and pointed out that learner beliefs are socially constructed and value-associated based on the results of previous studies (Little et al., 1984; Sakui & Gaies, 1999; White, 1999). Alanen studied the learner beliefs of young Finnish foreign language learners from a neo-Vygotskian sociocultural framework, in which learner beliefs are defined as “a type of mediational means, a psychological and cultural tool that learners use to mediate human actions” (p. 69). She claimed that her study illustrated the socially co-constructed and contextual nature of belief formation. Dufva (2003) also stressed the influence of others on formation of language learning beliefs. She analyzed the data collected through interviews, group discussions or written narratives with a focus on ‘Voice’ of the subjects (Finnish foreign language learners and teachers). Dufva elaborated the features of beliefs as contextual, socially-formulated and dynamic. She stressed the role of Others “who have some kind of authority” (p. 137) to affect the formation and modification of beliefs, and pointed out that they embody “the linguistic attitudes of the community at large and ... the discourses within language education, language policies, curricula, syllabi and teachers’ practices” (p. 138).

From the literature review, it can be said that qualitative data about learning experience, that is, interactions between learners and their learning environment is crucial to explore the formation and development of language learning beliefs. The present study explored the relationship between the learning environment and language learners’ belief formation and changes with a focus on learners’ past learning experience. As a sequential mixed-methods study, the present study used semi-structured interviews to seek explanations for questionnaire data on the language learner beliefs of university students. In the first phase of the project, language learner beliefs were investigated with the quantitative data from the questionnaire. In the following phase, the results of the questionnaire were examined with the qualitative data from the semi-structured interview to get more concrete descriptions of the formation, state, and/or changes of learners’ language learning beliefs.

The following research questions were posed:

1. How are the students' past English learning experiences (in junior high and high school) related to their language learning beliefs?
2. Did the students' language learning beliefs change during the course they took in the present study? How, if at all, did the students' language learning beliefs change? What are the possible factors for the changes?
3. Were the changes of the students' language learning beliefs reflected in their self-directed learning?

Method

Following Barcelos' recommendation of taking a contextual approach to the investigation of learner beliefs, the present study defined that learner beliefs are not static, but variable through the interaction with factors in a specific learning situation. Applying a mixed methods design, the subjects' language learner beliefs were investigated with a questionnaire, a self-study journal and a semi-structured interview.

Course

The course was an elective English course designed to develop overall English communicative ability with the focus on listening skills. The course was designed based on the textbook (*Active Listening 2*, Cambridge University Press, 2007). Each lesson covered one of the units of the course textbook with pair- and group-works to enhance the students' use of English. The lessons were basically conducted in English. However, as the students' ability is not high enough to understand the teacher's instructions only in English, the teacher sometimes used Japanese to explain the instructions.

Participants

The participants of this project (N = 33) were the students in their second or third year (19 year-old or older) at a women's university in Tokyo. As the course in which this study was carried out was an elective English course, most of the students were not English related majors, but mostly science related majors, such as, Food science or Social study. All of them took the required English courses in their first year.

Instruments

Language learning belief questionnaire. A six-point Likert-scale questionnaire with 21 items includes items taken from the previous studies on language learning beliefs, Cotterall (1999), Horwitz (1987), Sakui & Gates (1999) and Mori (1999), and the original items of the present study (see Appendix).

As the first step to construct the Likert-scale questionnaire to be used in the present study, the open-ended questionnaire was administered to collect data as the bases to write the original questionnaire items specific to the present study. These original items were added to the ones taken from the previous language learner belief research. The open-ended questionnaire was administered to about 150 students of the Listening skills course at the beginning of spring semester in 2011. The results were analyzed qualitatively and the original items were written based on the results of analysis. Consequently, the original questionnaire consisted of 39 items with 4 scales was constructed. This questionnaire was administered to about 100 students of the same course at the end fall semester in 2011. The results were analyzed statistically to explore its underlying factors and examine its reliability.

Analysis of the likert-scale questionnaire

The result of the 39-item questionnaire was analyzed (collected in the end of the fall semester) by factor analysis on SPSS. As a result of extracting factors by principal component analysis, 9 of the original 39 items of the questionnaire were excluded due to their low correlation ($> .5$) detected by anti-image correlation. Second running of extraction on the remained 30 items showed the better indices for factor analysis (determinant 2.62E-008, KMO .791, Bartlett's test $p = <.000$, anti-image correlation $>.5$, Residual 26% $>.05$, communalities over .7 for all components). Nine components were extracted with eigenvalue > 1 . Among them, four components were identified as the factors based on the theoretical adequacy and the scree plot. As these four factors are considered related each other, oblique rotation was chosen for factor rotation with direct oblimin method. Factor correlation matrix justified the use of oblique rotation with the correlation coefficients from .387 to .154. The pattern matrix identified a group of items of each factor. Twenty four items were left altogether in the questionnaire, with 5 items for Factor 1, 4 items for Factor 2, 11 items for Factor 3 and 4 items for Factor 4. The constructs underlying the four factors were assumed respectively: Beliefs about the role of tests in learning English (Factor 1), Beliefs about a communicative orientation to learning English and tests (Factor 2), Beliefs about /Attitudes to learning English

(Factor 3), Beliefs about a traditional orientation to learning English.

The largest amount of the total variance was explained by Factor 3 (5.904) followed by Factor 1 (5.380), Factor 2 (4.177), Factor 4 (2.907). High correlations between Factor 1 and other factors imply that English tests play a significant role in English learning for the subjects, and they prefer the tests that are designed to measure the use of English. Also, the correlation between Factor 2 and Factor 3 indicates the tendency that the subjects like to enjoy using English in the class and to be tested their performance actually using English.

The reliability of the questionnaire was examined by using Chronbach's alpha, α . The four groups of items of the questionnaire were analyzed as the subscales which represent four factors. All the subscales showed the acceptable values of Chronbach's alpha (.836 for Factor 1, .762 for Factor 2, .806 for Factor 3 and .680 for Factor 4). By examining Item-Total statistics, three items (Item 19 of Factor 2, Item 9 of Factor 3 and Item 21 of Factor 4) were detected as affecting the overall Chronbach's alpha and deleted from the final version of the questionnaire. Accordingly, 21 items were retained in the questionnaire.

Confirming the inclusion of these 24 items in the questionnaire, Rasch model analyses using WINSTEPS were done to the subscales of the questionnaire to see if any of the items were misfitting the model and affecting the reliability of the questionnaire. Two items (Item 9 of Factor 3 and 21 of Factor 4) were detected as misfitting the model and deleted as in the factor analysis. In addition, Item 10 of Factor 3 was detected misfitting the model, and its deletion resulted in the higher reliability estimate and better separation for both of item and person. As for Item 19, which was deleted in the factor analysis, Rasch model analyses showed different result. Item 19 was retained because its deletion severely lowered the item reliability estimate and item separation. Consequently, the final version of questionnaire consisted of 21 items, the same number of items as in the factor analysis. The unidimensionality of each subscale of the questionnaire was checked through the values in the residual tables provided by Rasch Model. All the subscales showed the values high enough to prove their unidimensionality. At the same time, the six point-Likert scale was confirmed for appropriate category function in measuring.

Finally, the questionnaire was tested for any differential item functioning (DIF) among the groups of subjects from five different departments, which are English Literature, Japanese Literature, Food Science, Social Study and Life & Ecology. There was no item detected for DIF among the groups.

The following are the items in the four subscales of the questionnaire.

Factor 1: Beliefs about the role of tests in learning English

- I can review my learning by taking tests.
- Test is a good opportunity to know my current level of English and to improve my English ability.
- Tests should be administered on a regular basis so that I can assess development of English ability.
- All skills, such as, grammar, listening, reading comprehension should be tested.
- In English tests, the test takers should actually listen, read, write or speak in English.

Factor 2: Beliefs about a communicative orientation to learning English and tests

- I want to be tested English communication ability with an emphasis on listening and speaking ability.
- Testing pronunciation and communication ability is as important as testing the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.
- English for daily conversation should be tested.
- If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English I would go up to that person to practice speaking.

Factor 3: Beliefs about /Attitudes to learning English

- In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.
- I don't mind making mistakes if I can learn to communicate.
- If I learn to speak English very well it will help me to get a job.
- It is OK to guess if you do know a word in English.
- English conversation class should be enjoyable.
- I don't mind appearing foolish if I can make myself understood.
- Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.
- You learn a lot by having errors corrected.
- I study English because it is useful to communicate with English-speaking people.

Factor 4: Beliefs about a traditional orientation to learning English

- I need to know language rules before I can communicate in English.
- The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar.
- The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary words.

Self-assessment sheet. In the beginning of the course, the participants set their own goals of their self-regulated study (i.e., What will they be able to do by the end of the course?) and made detailed self-study plans to achieve their goals. The participants reflected what and how they did for their self-study and revised their study plans three times during the course.

Semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview was organized with questions about the participants' past English learning experience, questions emerged from analysis of the questionnaire data, and questions about the participants' self-directed study recorded on the assessment sheet. The questions in the interview consisted of three parts:

1. Questions about the participants' past learning experience in junior high and high school
2. Questions formed through the questionnaire analyses:
3. Questions about the participants' self-directed learning:

Procedure

In the beginning of the course, the participants wrote in the self-assessment sheet with their goals and self-study plans. The informed consent forms for participating in the present study were also gathered from the participants in the second or third class meeting. The questionnaire was administered twice, in the third or fourth class meeting and about 12 weeks later at the last class meeting after the final test. Throughout the course, the participants were asked to monitor and evaluate their own self-directed learning by writing in the self-assessment sheet three times throughout the course. At the end of the course, the semi-structured interview was conducted to six participants, who agreed to have an interview. The interview proceeded in Japanese by a colleague teacher of the author. Accordingly, the data analyses were performed sequentially. After the course final test, two sets of the questionnaire data were compared statistically before the semi-structured interview so that the results of the questionnaire analysis could be explored in more detail in the semi-structured interview.

Results

The questionnaire data were statistically analyzed using the repeated-measures ANOVA with factors (IV/Factor: pre- and post-test, DV: scores of four subscales

constituting the language learner questionnaire) and the paired-samples *t*-test on 21 pairs of scores of questionnaire items. To complement the result of the statistical analyses, the interview data and self-assessment sheet text data were qualitatively analyzed.

Results of Questionnaire

The sample size (33) was assumed to have a normal distribution for these two tests. The descriptive statistics showed that the mean of Factor 4 (Beliefs about a traditional orientation to learning English) was relatively lower than other three factors in both administrations of the questionnaire. This indicates that the participants generally think that vocabulary and grammar exercises less important for their English learning. However, the increase in Factor 4 was bigger than other three factors (see Table).

Table *Mean and Standard Deviation of Four Factors*

| Questionnaire | M (SD) | | | |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 |
| 1 | 3.21 (.74) | 2.91 (.77) | 3.30 (.77) | 2.27 (.94) |
| 2 | 3.27 (.67) | 3.18 (.68) | 3.45 (.79) | 2.64 (1.14) |

Note. Factor 1: Test, Factor 2: Communicative orientation, Factor 3: Attitude, Factor 4: Traditional orientation

Firstly, two sets of questionnaire data were compared statistically with the repeated-measures ANOVA with factors. The result did not detect any significant differences ($p < .05$) in all of the four factors of the questionnaire between its two administrations. However, two factors showed observable differences, Factor 2: *Beliefs about a communicative orientation to learning English and tests*, $F(1, 34) = 3.48$ at $p < .72$, and Factor 4: *Beliefs about a traditional orientation to learning English*, $F(1, 34) = 3.35$, $p < .77$. Both factors made an increase in the second questionnaire administered at the end of the course. This indicates the possibility that the participants' beliefs regarding these two factors have made a change during the course period. The change could be further probed specifically in these factors in the semi-structured interview.

Second, the paired-samples *t*-test was conducted on each pair of scores of 21 items of the questionnaire between its two administrations in order to see any changes in the

participants' beliefs in detail. The number of pairs of scores was acceptable to obtain accurate p values. A Bonfferoni adjustment was made to the alpha level ($p < .05/21 = 0.0238 \approx .02$). Although no significant differences were observed, two items displayed differences much larger than the rest of items: Item 16, $t = - 3.75$, (Factor 2, *If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English I would go up to that person to practice speaking*), and Item 20, $t = - 2.3$, (Factor 4, *The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar*). Both items showed an increase in the second administration. These results may sound a little contradictory as the former item is related to actual use of English while the latter is related to usage or knowledge of English. However, these results implied that the participants might have had experiences that worked to relate these two items in some way during the course period.

Taking the results above into consideration, the questions for the semi-structured interview were formed with the focus on the beliefs about a traditional orientation and communicative orientation to learning English, and the change in these beliefs. The questions were:

1. Questions about the participants' past English learning experience:
 - What were English lessons focused on in junior high and high school?
 - What kinds of activities/exercises/tasks did you do in English class?
 - What was tested on English tests at school?
 - How do you feel about the English classes you have had on the whole?
 - What/How did you study yourself? (self-directed learning)
2. Questions formed through the analyses of the questionnaire:
 - When you learn English, what do you think should be focused on? For example, communicative use of English? Vocabulary? Grammar? Or Something Else?
 - How, if at all, has your opinion about the above changed since you were in junior high school?
 - How, if at all, has it changed over the course of this past semester?
 - Why do you think has your opinion changed?
 - (About Item 16 and 20 of the questionnaire),
How did your opinion about Item 16 and 20 change?
3. Questions about self-directed study (showing the interviewee's self-assessment sheet):
 - Looking at what you planned to do your self-assessment sheet, what, if anything, were you unable to do? Why do you think this happened?

Results of Interview

The semi-structured interview was conducted with six participants (with pseudonyms respectively, Saki, Rie, Mayumi, Keiko, Miho, Yukie, for convenience hereafter), who agreed to answer the questions in the interview.

Firstly the participants were asked about their past learning experiences, especially in their junior high school and high school, and then, about their responses to some of the questionnaire items, and finally about the participants' self-directed study.

Past learning experiences in school. In junior high school, many of the participants seemed to study English with fun by playing games and communicating with ALT in English as Saki remembered below.

Saki: During the three years, we had the same teacher for the English class. It was like the lesson was focused on conversation, so we had to practice conversations in English with friends and the teacher. Spoke, and enjoyed singing songs a lot. Later, she also talked about how enjoyable the English lessons were in junior high school.

Saki: In junior high school, I liked English. The teacher was fun. We enjoyed conversations and games in the lesson, so I loved English class.

In high school, most of the six participants said that the lessons in high school were generally oriented to the college entrance examination, and they studied mostly to gain knowledge necessary to pass the examination. In the typical lesson at high school, they worked on grammar exercises, reading comprehension and vocabulary. The following are some excerpts from the interview about the English lessons they had in high school:

Saki: In high school, only grammar, we worked mostly on grammar exercises, and read a long passage and translated it in Japanese, and read another passage and translated it and... There was no conversation practice.

Mayumi: Lessons in high school were difficult for me. In the writing class, we spent the whole lesson working on exercises. ... I was sick of working only on exercises.

Individual variation in belief change. When the participants were asked whether English learning should focus on communicative use of English or vocabulary and grammar of English, all of the participants said that communicative use of English should be focused on. In this regard, however, there seems to be individual variation. Two of the participants said that their opinions had not changed since junior high

school while four other participants said that their opinions had changed. Yuki expressed how her opinion dramatically changed after she entered high school. She went to a private high school and she was in the special English class, where native speakers of English taught many classes in English.

Yuki: In high school, when speaking with foreigner teachers, even though I didn't know English grammar, but, I could manage to convey what I wanted to say somehow, so, I think grammar is not necessary to be focused on. ... When I was in junior high school, I always thought I must speak always accurately in grammar. As I do, I realized I can communicate, I thought I can communicate even without using difficult words.

Interviewer: You mean you felt that way as you spoke with the foreigner teachers in the lessons?

Yuki: Yes. Because we had a lot of opportunities to do so.

Interviewer: Since you entered the high school?

Yuki: Yes.

This excerpt illustrates that Yuki's opinion changed over time, and her experience of communicating with the foreigner teachers may have influenced her to change her opinion.

Miho also talked about the reason why her opinion changed in detail. Miho has been working part-time at a restaurant in Tokyo, where she often needs to communicate with foreigner customers in English to take orders.

Miho: [In junior high school] I preferred writing to speaking as I could get good scores on tests by writing and memorizing, I studied just for tests, so, I didn't feel the importance of studying English. But, ... when I entered the university and started working part-time, there a lot of foreigner customers come, and when I saw many foreigners talking in English, I was reminded that English is important, such as daily conversation. ... I thought it would be great if I could learn the conversation at the restaurant at least.

However, Miho also pointed out the necessity of grammar knowledge to communicate in English, even though she stressed that conversation should be focused on in learning English.

Miho: I think vocabulary is important, too, but spoken English, ... foreigners sometimes don't speak in English as we studied its grammar ... like in abbreviated form of a word, ... foreigners come to my restaurant, I sometimes can't get what they mean, ... I ask them to speak slowly. I can't communicate nor

even understand English, if I don't know grammar.

Like Miho, Keiko pointed out the need of grammar knowledge to communicate in English.

Keiko: If you memorize the meaning of a word, depending on grammar, that same word can have a different meaning.

She further talked on how her opinion changed.

Keiko: When I was in junior high school, I wondered why I was doing this, why I needed to study grammar. ... But, after taking some classes at college, I realized that learning grammar is important, too.

Communicative use and belief change. From the excerpts of the three participants' responses above (particularly those of Yukie and Miho), it is observed that their experiences of communicative use of English might have been associated with the change of their opinions.

Another example of how actual experience of communicative use of (or little use of) English affected the participants' opinions can be seen in the excerpt of the responses of Mayumi. Mayumi talked about the experience she had in Denmark when she was there last March. She said that she could not speak English at all then, which she said may have caused her to change her opinion.

Mayumi: Er, but, I think as English is usually used in conversation, so, it is convenient if you can speak.

Interviewer: Ah, convenient...

Mayumi: Yes.

Interviewer: That, has that idea changed since before? Between in junior high school or high school and now?

Mayumi: Well, I went to Denmark when I was freshman, in March. Then, I couldn't speak English at all and I thought I need to speak English very strongly. I think my opinion changed then.

Self-directed study. Most of the participants planned for their self-directed study to listen to English songs or watch movies in English with Japanese subtitles. They said that they could actually do what they had planned for their self-directed study to some extent. However, some of them said that they were so busy with assignments for other subject that they could not do as they expected. They appeared to choose activities that are easily accessible to them and that require them to actually use English, not the ones that require them to memorize.

One participant tried reading aloud English words from the course textbook to

build her vocabulary using. Another participant listened to English songs reading English lyrics with Japanese translation.

Keiko: First, I tried to get used to English by listening to English songs. Of course, I have been listening to them since before, I tried listening more often, and not only listening, I read the lyrics to understand English words. ... The card has the lyrics in English with Japanese translation. I always looked at it and found out what the words meant.

Discussion

The quantitative results of the questionnaire indicated little change in their beliefs during the 15-week course. Even though two questionnaire items showed differences between its two administrations in the beginning and end of the course, they were not significant enough to prove the association of the course and the participants' belief change. A possible reason for this would be the short period of time to observe belief change. One semester is too short to observe participants' belief change taking into consideration the six years of formal English education throughout junior high school and high school.

As for the qualitative analysis of the interview data, three key words emerged in the process: environments, experiences, and personalization. The first key word, *environment*, stands for what are available in the learning situation of each language learner including types of teaching approaches, opportunities of interactions with native speakers, classrooms or equipment accessible to learners, etc. In the case of the interviewed participants, environments are largely divided in two types. One is the environment for the communicative language learning, where English is learned to become a better user of English by using it. Learners are given more opportunities to use English with native or non-native speakers. The other is the environment for the traditional language learning, whose goal is often set to pass the entrance examinations. Learners mostly work on the exercises for gaining knowledge about language usage. In the interview, it was observed that some participants learned English in the former environment in junior high school, but in high school, the environment changed to the latter.

The second key word, *experiences*, means learners' actual use of English in the activities or events that require the learner to interact in English with others for realistic purposes. In the interview, some participants said that they had different

thought about what should be done for learning English after they actually interacted with native speakers of English in or out of school. Some of these participants came to pay more attention on grammar and vocabulary than before, while others came to pay more attention on the meaning they want to convey. From these comments of the participants, joining interactions appears to have significant effects on their belief change. It could be inferred that by joining interactions, they or language learners are in the process of meaning making with their interlocutors to make the meaning commonly understood by both as adequate to each specific moment for a specific purpose for them. Just during this process of meaning making, language learners may notice what it is like to communicate in English, in other words, what they need to do personally to engage in communication successfully, but not what is generally thought necessary for successful communication. As a result, they form their own beliefs about how they can be a successful interlocutor.

This process of belief formation is related to the third key word, *personalization*. Belief formation in this way is occurring internally noticing the significance included in the process of meaning making, thus, very individual and personal to each learner. The beliefs individually formed are confirmed, diminished or modified as learners go through more processes of meaning making by joining interactions.

Regarding this process of belief formation and reformation, Negeruela-Asarola explained from the perspective of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (2011). Negeruela-Asarola elucidated, "beliefs are social in origin, but not merely social in a general sense. ... but rather is a theory about how the social/communicative realm is internalized into the private/conceptual realm, to then once again become social/communicative (ad infinitum)" (p. 360).

Borrowing Negeruela-Asarola's terms above, the third key word, *personalization*, signifies the transformation of what was once social/communicative into what is now a part of one's conceptual framework. Hence, *personalization* takes on a very similar process of internalization of the sociocultural theory.

Furthermore, learners' noticing in *personalization* as pointed out earlier should be noted in relation to the process of internalization. Noticing seems to correspond to *consciousness* that was referred to by Wertsch (1985) as he cited Leont'ev's examination of the process of internalization, "consciousness is a product of society: it is *produced*. ... the process of internalization is not the *transferral* of an external activity to a preexisting, internal 'plane of consciousness': it is the process in which this internal plane is *formed*" (p. 64). Here again, *personalization* could be understood

compatible with *internalization*.

In explication of internalization, Vygotsky (1978) stressed the difference between the tool and sign as the means for mediation. The sign is internally-oriented for the purpose of mastering oneself while the tool is externally-oriented for changing the outside world. Vygotsky defined *internalization* as, "We call the internal reconstruction of an external operation internalization" (1978, p. 56). Taking this definition of internalization, it could be inferred that sign is the basic system for one to perceive and understand external phenomena in a rational way by categorizing everything to make sense to oneself. If language is thought as a type of sign, learning a second language means that one has another basic system for perceiving and understanding external phenomena, and reconstructs internally what one has internalized through one's first language.

Regarding second language learning beliefs, Yang and Kim (2011) claimed that the learning environment aligned with the learner's beliefs was critical for successful L2 learning by referring to the similar process termed *remediation* that is defined by Cole and Griffin as, "a shift in the way that mediating devices regulate coordination with the environment" (p. 326). Yang and Kim clarified the association among learner beliefs, remediation, and learning actions. They asserted, "L2 belief changes can promote L2 remediation process because the changes of learner beliefs can invoke a tension between the environments and learner perception, leading to qualitatively different actions" (2011, p. 326). Further, they stressed the importance of internalization of beliefs by citing Tudge (1999), "learner beliefs should be internalized to the extent that the beliefs can regulate and control actions" (p. 326).

The three key words that emerged in the interview data appear to represent the phases of formation and reformation of language learner beliefs. Language learner beliefs are formed and affected by learning environment, experiences (actual use of English in particular), to be internalized through personalization. This confirms Negeruela-Asarola's claim that beliefs are originally social and historical, and personally meaningful to be internalized.

Conclusion

Even though the present study was conducted with a relatively small number of participants of a specific group, two things were clarified about their belief change particularly from the interview. One is that beliefs are subject to time. In the interview, some of the participants reported their beliefs changed while they were in junior high school and high school or after they entered university. However, their beliefs did not necessarily change in the same way. This is another point, that is, there are individual differences in the way their beliefs changed. Some participants realized that it was more important than accuracy of English to communicate meaning even in imperfect English. Some others were reminded that grammatical knowledge was indispensable for successful communication in English.

Possible factors for these individual differences in belief change can be found in the relationship between the participants' past learning experience in school and their experiences of actual use of English. The effects of the actual uses of English on the participants' beliefs could be explained from the perspective of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. In this regard, Wertsch (1985) emphasized Vygotsky's explanation of function of language that language as a psychological mediation means does not further the mental function, but transforms it entirely. Accordingly, L2 learner beliefs as human mental process could be affected in some way by participating in interactions in more realistic contexts for more realistic purposes.

Although learners' past learning experience and actual use of English have been detected to be associated with belief formation and change in the present study, it would require more detailed inspections to find out specific factors that affect learner beliefs. From the in-depth examination of learners' past learning experience, several factors could be hypothesized, and then, examined to see how they work on belief formation and change in learners' current as well as future learning. From the results of the present study, one possible factor might be the college entrance examination-oriented lessons in high school. In addition, actual use of English, another possible factor, should be explored pedagogically for its potential to modify learner beliefs.

References

- Alanen, R. (2003). A sociocultural approach to young language learners' beliefs about language learning. In P. Kalaja, & A. M. F. Barcelos (Eds.), *Beliefs about SLA: New research approaches* (pp. 55-85). New York; Springer.
- Barcelos, A. M. F. (2003). Teachers' and students' beliefs within a Deweyan framework: Conflict and influence. In P. Kalaja, & A. M. F. Barcelos (Eds.), *Beliefs about SLA: New research approaches* (pp. 171-199). New York; Springer.
- Cotterall, S. (1999). Key variables in language learning: what do learners believe about them? *System*, 27, 493-513.
- Dufva, H. (2003). Beliefs in dialogic: A Bakhtinian view. In P. Kalaja, & A. M. F. Barcelos (Eds.), *Beliefs about SLA: New research approaches* (pp. 131-152). New York; springer.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1987). Surveying students' beliefs about language learning. In A. L. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp.119-129). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kalaja, P., & Barcelos, M. F. (2003). *Beliefs about SLA: New Research Approaches*. In P. Kalaja, & A. M. F. Barcelos (Eds.). New York; Springer.
- Mori, Y. (1999). Epistemological beliefs and language learning beliefs: What do language learners believe about their learning? *Language Learning*, 49, 377-415.
- Morse, J. M. (1991). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing Research*, 40, 120-123.
- Negueruela-Azarola, E. (2011). Beliefs as conceptualizing activity: A dialectical approach for the second language classroom. *System*, 39, 359-369
- Sakui, K., & Gaies, S. (1999). Investigating Japanese learners' beliefs about language learning. *System*, 27, 473-492.
- Tanaka, K., & Ellis, R. (2003). Study-abroad, language proficiency, and learner beliefs about language learning. *JALT Journal*, 25, 63-85.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman (Eds.), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Wertsch, J. V. (1985). *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- 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. 103-117). London; Prentice Hall.
- Wenden, A. (1998). Metacognitive knowledge and language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 19, 515-537.
- Wenden, A. (1999). An introduction to metacognitive knowledge and beliefs in language learning: Beyond the basics. *System*, 27, 435-441.
- Wesely, P. M. (2012). Learner Attitudes, Perceptions, and Beliefs in Language Learning. *Foreign Language Annals*. 45, 1, 98-117.
- White, C. (1999). Expectations and emergent beliefs of self-instructed language learners. *System*, 27, 443-457.
- Yang, J. S., & Kim, T. Y. (2011). Sociocultural analysis of second language learner beliefs: A qualitative case study of two study-abroad ESL learners. *System*, 39, 325-334.

Appendix

下記の各意見に対する考えを、下の1～6のうちから該当するものを選び右の欄に記入してください。

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | → | 非常にそう思う |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------|
| 1. 英会話ができるようになるためなら、間違えることをあまり気にしない。 | | | | | | | |
| 2. 英語を勉強するのは英語を話す外国人たちとコミュニケーションをとるのに便利だから。 | | | | | | | |
| 3. 外国語学習で最も重要なことは語彙を増やすことだ。 | | | | | | | |
| 4. 語彙や文法を覚えるのも大切だが、発音や会話力が身に付くようなテストが良い。 | | | | | | | |
| 5. もしわからない単語が出てきたら意味を推測しても良い。 | | | | | | | |
| 6. 英会話のクラスは楽しいものであるべきだ。 | | | | | | | |
| 7. テストを受けることはよい復習になる、またそうあるべきだ。 | | | | | | | |
| 8. リスニングやスピーキングを重視して会話力がつくようなテストが良い。 | | | | | | | |
| 9. 英語を上手に話せるようになったら、就職に有利になると思う。 | | | | | | | |
| 10. 実際に英語で読んだり話したり書いたりするテストが良い。 | | | | | | | |
| 11. 外国学習のもっとも重要なことは文法を学ぶことだ。 | | | | | | | |
| 12. 学力を測れるように定期的にテストを実施すべきである。 | | | | | | | |
| 13. テストは自分の英語力や弱点を知り、英語力を伸ばす良い機会である。またそうあるべきだ。 | | | | | | | |
| 14. 間違いを訂正されたほうが身に付く。 | | | | | | | |
| 15. 日常的に使える英語を試験に出してほしい。 | | | | | | | |
| 16. 自分と同世代の外国人が英語で話しているのを見かけたら、話しかけて会話の練習をする。 | | | | | | | |
| 17. 英語でCDを聴いたりテレビ番組を見たりすることは、英語学習にはとても重要だ。 | | | | | | | |
| 18. 文法、リスニング、長文読解などあらゆる分野をテストすべきだ。 | | | | | | | |
| 19. 英語学習にはたくさんリピートしたり練習したりすることが大切である。 | | | | | | | |
| 20. 英語で会話するにはまず文法を学ぶ必要がある。 | | | | | | | |
| 21. 英語で自分の言いたいことを通じさせるためなら、少しぐらい滑稽に見えてもいい。 | | | | | | | |