

## การศึกษาความเชื่อเกี่ยวกับการเรียนภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศของ ผู้เรียนชาวฮ่องกง

### A STUDY OF BELIEFS OF HONG KONGESE LEARNERS REGARDING LEARNING THAI AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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#### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจความเชื่อเกี่ยวกับการเรียนภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศของผู้เรียนชาวฮ่องกง กลุ่มตัวอย่าง คือ ผู้เรียนชาวฮ่องกงที่เรียนภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ (n=7) ณ ศูนย์ภาษาของมหาวิทยาลัยชั้นนำแห่งหนึ่งในฮ่องกง เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือ แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับความเชื่อในการเรียนภาษา (Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory: BALLI) ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ผู้เรียนชาวฮ่องกงที่เรียนภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศมีความเชื่อว่าผู้เรียนสามารถเรียนภาษาไทยได้ ถึงแม้ว่าผู้เรียนมีความเห็นว่าภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาที่มีความยากระดับปานกลางต่อการเรียน อีกทั้งผู้เรียนมีความเชื่อว่ามีหลายโอกาสที่จะได้ใช้ภาษาไทยหากผู้เรียนพูดภาษาไทยได้ในระดับดี ผลการวิจัยครั้งนี้ช่วยให้ผู้สอนได้ตระหนักถึงความเชื่อในการเรียนภาษาของผู้เรียนเพื่อที่จะได้วางแผนการเรียนการสอนภาษาไทยสำหรับผู้เรียนชาวต่างประเทศได้อย่างเหมาะสม นอกจากนี้การศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างความเชื่อในการเรียนภาษาไทยของผู้เรียนที่มีความหลากหลายทางเชื้อชาติกับกลยุทธ์ในการเรียนภาษาของผู้เรียนอาจให้ผลการวิจัยที่น่าสนใจสำหรับการศึกษาวิจัยในครั้งต่อไป

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## Abstract

This study purposed to investigate the beliefs of Hong Kongese learners of Thai as a foreign language (TFL). Participants were Hong Kongese TFL learners (n = 7) who took a Thai language class at the language center of the renowned university in Hong Kong. Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) questionnaire was used to collect data. The findings showed that Hong Kongese TFL learners believe that they can learn Thai language although they view that Thai is a medium-difficult language to learn. Also, they believe that they will have many opportunities to use Thai language if they can converse Thai very well. This study suggests that understanding the TFL learners' beliefs about Thai language learning is critical to plan the proper Thai language instructions. Future research may find more noteworthy results in the field of the study of belief about Thai language learning of the learners with different races along with the learners' language learning strategies.

**Keywords:** learners' beliefs, Thai language learning, Thai as a foreign language

## 1. Introduction

Beliefs about language learning have become an interesting issue for researchers in the field of second and foreign language acquisition for more than three decades. This is advocated by Horwitz (1987; 1988) who firstly systematically investigated the learners' beliefs about language learning with the self-reported scale that she developed and called, "Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI)". Researchers have found that second / foreign language learners enter the language class with a variety of beliefs about language learning (Stefanova & Shenkova, 2010; Abdi & Asadi, 2015). Those beliefs can indicate the learners' expectations of the target language learning and their actions in learning a language (Horwitz, 1987; Wenden, 1987). It states that learners' beliefs cause their approaches and actions and determine their ultimate success in target language learning. Understanding the learners' beliefs about language learning is therefore important because it facilitates teachers to understand their learners' expectations and approaches to the target language learning, so that teachers can take into account the appropriateness of the teaching material development and the language instructional design.

Most of the research that is conducted in this field have mainly investigated the learners' beliefs of English language learning (See Peacock, 2001; Nikitina and Furuoka, 2006; Adithepsathit and Wudthayagorn, 2018; Gopang, Memon, and Gopang, 2019; Iswati, 2019; Kovačević, 2019). There has still been insufficiency of the empirical research that investigate the learners' beliefs of foreign languages other than English. This study particularly interests to study the beliefs of foreign learners in Thai language learning context.

Thai language is one of the world languages that has become more popular among foreigners and there is an increased number of foreigners who learn Thai language today (Pimpuang, 2015; Lapyai, 2016). As there is a very limited research that focuses on Thai language learning in this context, this study therefore purposed to investigate the beliefs about Thai language learning of Thai as a foreign language (TFL) learners in five areas including Thai language aptitude, difficulty of Thai language learning, the nature of Thai language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivations and expectations.

## 2. Research Objective

This study aimed to investigate the beliefs of Hong Kongese learners of Thai as a foreign language.

## 3. Literature Review

Learners' beliefs about language learning play an important role in the learning process. Many research studies have shown that learners' beliefs affect their learning and influence the ultimate success (Altan, 2006; Stefanova & Shenkova, 2010). A number of studies regarding learners' language learning beliefs are based on Horwitz's (1988) questionnaire. Elaine Horwitz (1987; 1988) is the pioneer who investigated beliefs about language learning. She constructed a questionnaire, namely, Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) which consists of thirty-four statements for learners to state their agreement. There are five components of BALLI: (i) foreign language aptitude, (ii) difficulty of language learning, (iii) the nature of language learning, (iv) learning and communication strategies, and (v) motivations and expectations.

The learners' beliefs about language learning have been studied for more than a century. Wenden (1986) classified the stable knowledge about language learning of twenty-five English as a Second Language (ESL) college students. Those ESL students were interviewed on themes of the social settings and the strategy uses in which they use the second language. The findings showed that the ESL students' statements were classified into five categories: (i) designating which is about language uses, (ii) diagnosing which is about students' proficiency in the language, (iii) evaluating which is about the outcomes of using a strategy, (iv) self-analyzing which is about the reactions to a particular learning activity, and (v) theorizing which is about students' beliefs regarding the best way to learn a language. After that, Horwitz (1988) investigated the prevalence of certain common beliefs about language learning of German, French, and Spanish language learners by using the BALLI questionnaire. Some common beliefs gathered from her study are: (i) some languages are more difficult to learn than others, (ii) two years for learning are enough to achieve fluency in the target language, (iii) learning a target language is to achieve accuracy,

(iv) special aptitudes are required to learn a language, and (v) it is impossible for speakers of certain languages to achieve the target language pronunciation.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the learners' beliefs about language learning have still been studied by many scholars. BALLI questionnaire of Horwitz (1988) is widely employed to investigate the learners' beliefs about language learning. Some of the research studies in the field of learners' beliefs about language learning are as follows.

Peacock (2001) investigated changes in the beliefs of second language learning of ESL students. The findings showed that ESL students agreed that learning a second language is to learn a lot of vocabulary and grammar rules and they believed that people who can speak more than one language well are very intelligent. However, there are no significant changes in ESL students' beliefs of second language learning.

Nikitina and Furuoka (2006) examined the Russian language students' beliefs about language learning at Universiti Malaysia Sabah by employing the BALLI questionnaire. The findings showed that students did not believe in the special ability for learning a new language. They were enthusiastic to learn the Russian language in order to meet native speakers and they were motivated to learn Russian because they believe that the knowledge of a foreign language will enhance their job in the future.

Ariogul, Unal, and Onursal (2009) investigated the differences and similarities of beliefs about language learning among English, German, and French language learners by using the BALLI questionnaire. The finding showed that French language learners had more positive expectations in language learning. However, all three groups of language learners held certain beliefs.

Phonlabutra (2008) investigated the university students' beliefs in learning Japanese by using the BALLI questionnaire. The finding showed that most of the students believe that it is important for them to learn Japanese and it is enjoyable to learn the language. However, the beliefs of students in five areas such as foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivations and expectations are both supportive and not supportive of their Japanese learning.

Adithepsathit and Wudthayagorn (2018) explored the beliefs about English language learning, attitudes, and motivation of Thai undergraduate students by using the BALLI questionnaire, the attitudes questionnaire, and the self-efficacy questionnaire. The findings showed that the beliefs, attitudes, and motivation in English language learning of Thai undergraduate students vary in different years of their undergraduate study. Among students in the four years of the undergraduate study, the third-year Thai students have the strongest beliefs, positive attitudes, and highest motivation in English language learning.

Gopang, Memon, and Gopang (2019) examined the gender differences in anxiety and beliefs about English Language Learning of engineering students at Mehran UET, Pakistan by using the BALLI questionnaire and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

(FLCAS) and conducting the semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that there was no gender differences in students' foreign language anxiety and language beliefs and also showed that anxiety and beliefs are significantly associated with students' English language learning.

Iswati (2019) investigated the beliefs of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in an English class at the Language Training Centre of a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia by employing the BALLI questionnaire and conducting an interview to support the quantitative data. The results showed that (1) learners' beliefs about foreign language aptitude, (2) learners' beliefs in formal structural studies, and (3) learners' self-efficacy and expectation about learning English were low, whereas, learners' perceived value and nature of learning spoken English was fair.

Kovačević (2019) explored the relationship between lexical complexity measures and language learning beliefs of EFL first-year university students at the International University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina by using the BALLI questionnaire and in-class exam essays in an electronic format. The finding revealed that the different types of language learning beliefs and lexical complexity measures statistically caused the significant weak correlations between EFL students' language learning beliefs and Second Language (L2) production. However, the relationship between lexical complexity measures and language learning beliefs of the EFL students was overall statistically significant. The findings also indicated that the EFL students' language learning beliefs were related to the connections of motivation, L2 mastery, self-regulation, confidence, and anxiety which were performed through the students' L2 production.

The reviewed literature on the theme of learners' language learning beliefs indicates that there is a need for additional works to investigate learners' beliefs in various contexts of foreign language learning. This encouraged the author to investigate the TFL learners' beliefs about Thai language learning.

## **4. Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Research Setting and Participants**

This study was conducted at a Thai language class offered by the language center of the renowned top university in Hong Kong. The participants were seven Hong Kongese TFL learners who were selected by purposive sampling technique because there was not much number of TFL learners in class. However, all of the participants were recruited to participate in the survey research based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. That is, only the learners who were willing to participate throughout this survey research were recruited.

### **4.2 Research Instrument**

Horwitz's (1988) Beliefs about language learning inventory (BALLI) questionnaire was employed in this study to investigate TFL learners' beliefs about Thai language

learning. The BALLI is a self-report questionnaire consisting of thirty-four statements in Likert's Scale format from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

#### *Validity and Reliability*

Horwitz's BALLI questionnaire is considered to be a reliable tool for conducting research on learners' language learning beliefs in different sociolinguistic settings (Kuntz, 1996; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006).

#### **4.3 Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data obtained from the BALLI questionnaire.

### **5. Results**

#### *Demographics of Hong Kongese TFL respondents*

The number of responses received in this section was 7 Hong Kongese TFL learners, representing 100% of the target respondents. As shown in Table 1, the distribution of Hong Kongese TFL learners by gender shows that most of them were male (57.10%). Most of the respondents were aged more than 41 (85.70%). Most of them were studying Thai language less than one year (85.70%). In addition, the information gathered from open-ended question showed that the Hong Kongese TFL learners work in a variety of occupations such as manager, IT officer, housewife, and student, while, some of them are retirement age. Also, there were 42.90% of the Hong Kongese TFL learners who stated that their Thai language proficiency was fair and there were 57.10% of them stated that their Thai language proficiency was very poor.

**Table 1** Background information of Hong Kongese TFL learners

Background Information	Hong Kongese TFL learners (n = 7)	
	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Male	4	57.10
Female	3	42.90
Age		
Under 20	0	0.00
21-30	1	14.3
31-40	0	0.00
More than 41	6	85.7
Number of years studying Thai language		
Less than 1 year	6	85.7
2-3 years	1	14.3
More than 3 years	0	0.00

The results of the study were reported according to the five components of the BALLI questionnaire.

### 1) Thai language aptitude

As shown in Table 2, BALLI items in the Thai language aptitude category show that most Hong Kongese TFL learners agreed that some people are born with a special ability that helps them learn Thai (71.4%) and neither agreed nor disagreed that people who are good at learning math and science are not good at learning Thai (71.4%) and Hong Kong native-speakers are good at learning Thai (71.4%). There were 57.1% of Hong Kongese TFL learners who agreed that it is easier for children to learn Thai than adults, people who speak more than one language well are very intelligent, it is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn Thai, Hong Kongese TFL learners have Thai language aptitude, and everyone can learn to speak Thai. Hong Kongese TFL learners neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements that women are better than men at learning Thai (57.1%).

**Table 2** HK TFL learners' aptitude about Thai as a foreign language

No.	Statements	Percentage				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	It is easier for children than adults to learn Thai.	0%	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	0%
2	Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn Thai.	0%	0%	28.6%	71.4%	0%
3	It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn Thai.	0%	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	0%
4	I have Thai language aptitude	0%	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	0%
5	Women are better than men at learning Thai.	28.6%	0%	57.1%	14.3%	0%
6	People who are good at math and science are not good at learning Thai.	14.3%	0%	71.4%	0%	14.3%
7	People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.	0%	0%	42.9%	57.1%	0%
8	Your native-speakers are good at learning Thai.	0%	14.3%	71.4%	14.3%	0%
9	Everyone can learn to speak Thai.	0%	0%	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%

Note: SD = strongly disagree D = disagree N = neutral  
A = agree SA = strongly agree

### 2) Difficulty of Thai language learning

As shown in Table 3, BALLI items in difficulty of Thai language learning reveal that most Hong Kongese TFL learners agreed that they will ultimately learn to speak Thai very well (71.4%) and neither agreed nor disagreed that it is easier to speak than understand Thai (71.4%). There were 57.1% of Hong Kongese TFL learners who agreed that some languages are easier to learn than others and it would take 1-2 years to speak the language fluently if the learners spend one hour a day learning Thai. Hong Kongese TFL learners neither agreed nor disagreed that Thai is a medium-difficult language to learn (57.1%). There were 42.9% of Hong Kongese TFL learners who disagreed with the statement that Thai is structured in the same way as English. Interestingly, there was an equal percentage

of Hong Kongese TFL learners (28.6%) who agreed and neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that it is easier to read and write Thai than to speak and understand it.

**Table 3** HK TFL learners' Difficulty of Thai language learning

No.	Statements	Percentage				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
10	Some languages are easier to learn than others.	0%	0%	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%
11	Thai that I am trying to learn is:					
	11.1 very difficult	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	11.2 difficult	0%	0%	0%	42.9%	0%
	11.3 medium difficult	0%	0%	57.1%	0%	0%
	11.4 easy	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	11.5 very easy	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12	Thai is structured in the same way as English.	0%	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%	0%
13	I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak Thai very well.	0%	0%	28.6%	71.4%	0%
14	If someone spent one hour a day learning Thai, how long would it take him/her to speak the language fluently?					
	14.1 Less than a year	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	14.2 1-2 years	0%	0%	0%	57.1%	0%
	14.3 3-5 years	0%	0%	42.9%	0%	0%
	14.4 5-10 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	14.5 You can't learn Thai in 1 hour a day	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
15	It is easier to speak than understand Thai.	0%	14.3%	71.4%	14.3%	0%
16	It is easier to read and write Thai than to speak and understand it.	14.3%	14.3%	28.6%	28.6%	14.3%

Note: SD = strongly disagree D = disagree N = neutral  
A = agree SA = strongly agree

### 3) The nature of Thai language learning

As shown in Table 4, BALLI items in the nature of Thai language learning show that most Hong Kongese TFL learners agreed that learning Thai is different from learning other school subjects (85.7%). There were 71.4% of Hong Kongese TFL learners who agreed that it is necessary to learn about Thai speaking cultures to speak Thai. Hong Kongese TFL learners disagreed that learning Thai is mostly a matter of learning many grammar rules (71.4%). There were 57.1% of Hong Kongese TFL learners who neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that learning Thai is learning how to translate from their language. There were 42.9% of Hong Kongese TFL learners who agreed that learning Thai mostly a matter of learning many new vocabulary words. Hong Kongese TFL learners disagreed that it is better to learn Thai in Thailand (42.9%).

**Table 4** HK TFL learners' beliefs about the nature of Thai language learning

No.	Questions	Ranking				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
17	It is necessary to learn about Thai speaking cultures to speak Thai.	0%	14.3%	0%	71.4%	14.3%
18	It is better to learn Thai in Thailand.	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	0%	0%
19	Learning Thai mostly a matter of learning many new vocabulary words.	0%	14.3%	28.6%	42.9%	14.3%
20	Learning Thai is mostly a matter of learning a many of grammar rules.	0%	71.4%	14.3%	0%	14.3%
21	Learning Thai is different from learning other school subjects.	0%	0%	0%	14.3%	85.7%
22	Learning Thai is learning how to translate from my own language.	0%	0%	57.1%	42.9%	0%

Note: SD = strongly disagree D = disagree N = neutral  
A = agree SA = strongly agree

#### 4) Thai learning and communication strategies

As shown in Table 5, BALLI items in Thai learning and communication strategies reveal that most Hong Kongese TFL learners agreed that it is important to repeat and practice often (85.7%). Hong Kongese TFL learners agreed that it is important to speak Thai with an excellent accent (71.4%). There were 71.4% of Hong Kongese TFL learners who disagreed that it is okay to guess if you do not know a word in Thai and it will be hard to get rid of the mistakes later on if they are allowed to make those mistakes in the beginning. Hong Kongese TFL learners neither agreed nor disagreed that they feel self-conscious speaking Thai in front of other people (57.1%). There were 42.9% of Hong Kongese TFL learners who agreed that if they heard someone speaking Thai, they would go up to practice speaking Thai and it is important to practice Thai in the language laboratory. Hong Kongese TFL learners disagreed that they should not say anything in Thai until they can say it correctly (42.9%).

**Table 5** HK TFL learners' beliefs about learning and communication strategies

No.	Questions	Ranking				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
23	It is important to speak Thai with an excellent accent.	0%	14.3%	0%	71.4%	14.3%
24	You should not say anything in Thai until you can say it correctly.	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	0%	0%
25	If I heard someone speaking Thai, I would go up to him/her so that I could practice speaking Thai.	0%	14.3%	28.6%	42.9%	14.3%

Note: SD = strongly disagree D = disagree N = neutral  
A = agree SA = strongly agree

Table 5 (Continue)

No.	Questions	Ranking				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
26	It is okay to guess if you do not know a word in Thai.	0%	71.4%	14.3%	0%	14.3%
27	It is important to repeat and practice often.	0%	0%	0%	14.3%	85.7%
28	I feel self-conscious speaking Thai in front of other people.	0%	0%	57.1%	42.9%	0%
29	If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.	0%	71.4%	0%	14.3%	14.3%
30	It is important to practice Thai in the language laboratory.	0%	14.3%	28.6%	42.9%	14.3%

Note: SD = strongly disagree D = disagree N = neutral  
A = agree SA = strongly agree

### 5) Motivations and expectations of Thai language learning

As shown in Table 6, BALLI items in motivations and expectations of Thai language learning show that most Hong Kongese TFL learners agreed that they would like to learn Thai so that they can get to know the speakers better (85.7%). There were 71.4% of Hong Kongese TFL learners who agreed that they will have many opportunities to use Thai if they speak it very well. Hong Kongese TFL learners neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that Hong Kong native-speakers think that it is important to speak Thai (57.1%). Interestingly, there was an equal number of Hong Kongese TFL learners who neither agreed nor disagreed (42.9%) and disagreed (42.9%) that it will help them get a good job if they learn to speak Thai very well.

Table 6 HK TFL learners' Motivations and expectations of Thai language learning

No.	Questions	Ranking				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
31	If I speak Thai very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	0%	0%	14.3%	71.4%	14.3%
32	If I learn to speak Thai very well, it will help me get a good job.	0%	42.9%	42.9%	14.3%	0%
33	Your native-speakers think that it is important to speak Thai.	14.3%	14.3%	57.1%	14.3%	0%
34	I would like to learn Thai so that I can get to know the speakers better.	0%	0%	0%	85.7%	14.3%

Note: SD = strongly disagree D = disagree N = neutral  
A = agree SA = strongly agree

## 6. Discussion

### 1) Thai language aptitude

The findings in this category indicate that the Hong Kongese TFL learners have some beliefs about language aptitude that was consistent with the universal language learning beliefs. The participants in this study believed that children are easier to learn Thai than adults. Likewise, Nikitina and Furuoka (2006), Bernat and Lloyd (2007), Phonlabutra (2008), and Adithepsathit and Wudthayagorn (2018) found that their students agreed that it is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. Also, Hong Kongese TFL learners believe in the special ability for learning a new language, which conforms to Bernat and Lloyd (2007), Ariogul, Unal, and Onursal (2009), Azar and Saeidi (2013), and Adithepsathit and Wudthayagorn (2018) who found that their students believed that some people possess a gift for learning languages.

Moreover, the Hong Kongese TFL learners neither believed that women are better than men at learning Thai and people who are good at learning math and science are not good at learning Thai. These results are different from the study of Bernat and Lloyd (2007) who found that their students agreed that people who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages. Phonlabutra's (2008), Ariogul, Unal, and Onursal's (2009), and Azar and Saeidi's (2013) study also found that their students disagree with these two statements. However, Adithepsathit and Wudthayagorn (2018) obtained the same result to this study on the point that language learners neither agreed nor disagreed that women are better than men at learning a foreign language. Interestingly, Hong Kongese TFL learners believed that everyone can learn to speak Thai and they also believed that they can learn Thai language.

### 2) Difficulty of language learning

The findings in this category indicate that the Hong Kongese TFL learners believed that some languages are easier to learn than others which supports the findings of several other studies such as Horwitz's (1987), Bernat and Lloyd (2007), Phonlabutra (2008), Azar and Saeidi (2013), and Adithepsathit and Wudthayagorn (2018). The TFL learners neither agreed nor disagreed that Thai is a fairly difficult language in accordance with the studies of Bernat and Lloyd (2007) and Phonlabutra (2008) which also found that their students agreed that the target language they are trying to learn is a medium-difficulty.

Pertaining to the duration of time spent on the target language learning until they speak that language fluently, the Hong Kongese TFL learners agreed that it would take 1-2 years to speak Thai fluently if they spend one hour a day to learn Thai. It conforms to the findings of Ariogul, Unal, and Onursal (2009) in which their students also agreed that it would take two years to speak the foreign language fluently. It is noteworthy that Hong Kongese TFL learners believed that they will ultimately learn to speak Thai very well although they view that Thai is a moderately difficult language for them to learn.

### **3) The nature of Thai language learning**

The findings in this category indicate that the Hong Kongese TFL learners believed that it is necessary to know Thai culture for speaking Thai. The findings tally with the studies of Bernat and Lloyd (2007), Phonlabutra (2008), Ariogul, Unal, and Onursal (2009), and Adithepsathit and Wudthayagorn (2018) which also found that knowing the culture of the target language is important for speaking that language. However, Hong Kongese TFL learners disagreed with the statement “it is better to learn Thai in Thailand”. This finding supports the study of Azar and Saeidi (2013) which also found that their students disagreed to learn English in English-speaking countries.

Hong Kongese TFL learners believed that learning Thai mostly a matter of learning many new words. It is consistent with the findings of several other studies which also found that learning vocabulary words is an important part of learning a foreign language (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Phonlabutra, 2008; Ariogul, Unal, & Onursal, 2009; Adithepsathit & Wudthayagorn, 2018). A vast majority of Hong Kongese TFL learners strongly agreed that learning Thai is different from learning other school subjects. It is in accord with other foreign language learning which is also different from other school subjects (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Phonlabutra, 2008; Azar & Saeidi, 2013).

### **4) Learning and communication strategies**

The findings in this category indicate that the Hong Kongese TFL learners believed that it is important to speak Thai with an excellent accent. The findings tally with the previous studies found that language learners agreed with the statement “it is important to speak target language with an excellent accent” (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Ariogul, Unal, & Onursal, 2009; Phonlabutra, 2008) because they believed that the native-speaker accent is excellent (Ferguson, 2005).

However, the Hong Kongese TFL learners disagreed that they should not say anything in Thai until they can say it correctly. Likewise, Bernat and Lloyd (2007) and Azar and Saeidi (2013) found that their students also disagreed that they should not say anything in the target language until they can say it correctly. Hong Kongese TFL learners, consequently, believed that it is important to repeat and practice Thai often. It is in accord with other foreign language learning that it is important to repeat and practice a lot in target language learning (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Phonlabutra, 2008; Azar & Saeidi, 2013).

### **5) Motivations and expectations**

The findings in this category indicate that the Hong Kongese TFL learners agreed that they will have many opportunities to use Thai language if they speak Thai very well. It is the common belief of language learners (Horwitz, 1988; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Phonlabutra, 2008; Ariogul, Unal, & Onursal, 2009; Azar & Saeidi, 2013).

Hong Kongese TFL learners neither believed that they will enhance their job prospects if they speak Thai very well. This finding was consistent with the study of Ariogul, Unal, and Onursal (2009) that learning other languages would not make much of a

difference in finding a better job. Nonetheless, the Hong Kongese TFL learners were keen to learn Thai in order to know the native speakers of the Thai language better. It is consistent with the findings of several other studies (See Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Phonlabutra, 2008; Ariogul, Unal, & Onursal, 2009) that the language learners agreed that they want to learn the target language in order to understand the speakers of that target language.

## 7. Conclusion

This study purposed to investigate the beliefs of Hong Kongese learners of Thai as a foreign language. The findings of this study reveal that the Hong Kongese TFL learners' beliefs about Thai language learning were determined by many factors that influence their ultimate success in Thai language learning. The process of exploring the TFL learners' beliefs about Thai language learning can lead to the development of their effective language learning behaviors.

Specifically in terms of pedagogical implications, it is suggested to the TFL instructors to assess and understand their TFL learners' beliefs in terms of the psychological variables such as negative or positive beliefs about Thai language learning. This is so that the TFL instructors can shape and foster the positive aspects of the psychological variables and the TFL instructors reconsider the Thai language instructional plan so as to deliver the Thai language courses with the appropriate pedagogical approaches.

Furthermore, this study suggests the further research to investigate the beliefs about language learning of TFL learners of different races and to investigate the TFL learners' beliefs about language learning along with their language learning strategies. Future research may therefore find more noteworthy results in the field of the study of learners' belief about Thai language learning.

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