

Foreign Language Teachers' Self-efficacy Beliefs and Perspectives about Maintaining Their Students' Interest

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Abstract—Americans do not study foreign languages long enough to achieve communicative competence, and that poses economic and security problems for the nation as well as career and personal limitations for individuals. Despite the plethora of research studies on effective approaches and methods for teaching foreign languages, there is evidence in the literature that foreign language students often experience a loss of interest in the languages, and there is a critical need to investigate the causes of the lack of interest and propose solutions. To that end, this study took a look at the possible role played by teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in their ability or inability to maintain their students' interest in the target languages. By means of an online survey administered to foreign language teachers, this mixed methods study investigated their beliefs about their ability to impact their students positively and their general level of efficacy for teaching foreign languages. Findings revealed that the teachers overwhelmingly believed that they had a positive impact. However, their general level of efficacy was mildly high and there was no significant correlation between the teachers' sense of efficacy and their ability to maintain their students' interest in the languages. Implications for foreign language teacher preparation and professional development point to the need to develop a strong sense of efficacy as well as strategies for positively impacting students to maintain their interest in the language.

Index Terms—communicative competence, foreign language proficiency, foreign language teacher self-efficacy beliefs, teacher sense of efficacy

I. INTRODUCTION

Arguing that the inability to communicate in any language but English constitutes a threat to the nation's economic and military security, two recent studies have painted a grim picture of foreign language education in the nation's K-12 schools. The reports from the American Academy of Arts & Sciences and American Councils for International Education found that public schools and state departments of education are struggling to find qualified world language instructors and unequipped to track local and national trends on language learning. (Mitchell, 2017, paras. 1 & 2)

Mitchell (2017) observed that the American Councils for International Education, after seeking state-by-state data, report that 10.6 million K-12 students in the United States are studying a world language or American Sign Language, which is only one out of every five students, or 20%. The article described the subsequent lack of knowledge about foreign language teaching and learning as "striking," and the conclusion given by Abbott in the article was that "We're such a long way in this country from having it be normal to grow up learning other languages. ... Our future depends on our ability to engage with the rest of the world, and right now Americans have a very tough time doing that." (para 6). The consequent vicious cycle has resulted in a lack of certified foreign language instructors. Presently nationwide, 44 states and the District of Columbia have a critical need for certified foreign language instructors, and the supply is nowhere near meeting the growing demand.

Data released by the Modern Language Association (MLA) also show that foreign language study in colleges and universities continues to be on the decline, having experienced a significant reduction especially over the last 55 years. In spite of the fact that there was an upward surge from 1990 to 2006, there has been a decline since then, registering a 6.7% drop in 2013 and then a 9.2% drop from 2013 to 2016. The latter, according to the MLA report (Flaherty, 2018), is the second greatest drop in the history of MLA's enrollment census, the greatest being a 12.6% drop in 1972. In addition to the drop, and as further proof of the decline, the total number of foreign language enrollments in relation to the total number of registered students also declined from 8.1% in 2013 to 7.5% in 2016, which is less than half of what it was in 1916, and is very close to the lowest ratio ever recorded, which was 7.3% in 1980. The report added that modern language enrollments have lagged far behind overall college and university enrollments since 1960.

Of further concern is the fact that in general, students who begin studying foreign languages do not continue to study them long enough to achieve high proficiency levels and communicative competence. A problem that has existed over a span of many decades is the fact that most students do not study foreign languages beyond two years (Alonso, 2007; Andress et al., 2002; Garfinkel, 1987; Howard, 2007; Pratt, 2010; Ramage, 1990; Speiller, 1988). According to the literature, some of the factors that influence students' decisions to discontinue the study of languages are related to their classroom experiences as well as the impact second -language teachers have on them. Andress et al. (2002), Pratt et al. (2009), and Pratt (2010, 2016, 2017) found decreasing numbers among continuing high school students of German, Spanish, and French, as well as among students transitioning to college. The latest ratios of college introductory enrollments to advanced enrollments (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015) also reported the following significant ratios for languages: Italian: 9:1 in 2006, 10:1 in 2009, and 11:1 in 2013; French and German: 4:1 in 2009 and 5:1 in 2013; Arabic and Latin: 8:1 in 2009 and 2013; Japanese and Spanish: 5:1 in 2009 and 2013; and Chinese: 4:1 in 2009 and 2013. While some ratios remained steady across the three surveys, the ones that changed represented a reduction in enrollment from introductory to advanced levels. These reductions, which are on an upward trend, lead to numerous consequences, including low proficiency levels, lack of communicative competence, a serious shortage of fluent speakers and certifiable teacher candidates, inability to participate in global communities, and threatened national economic and military security (Flaherty, 2018; Mitchell, 2017).

Among the causes that have been attributed to these significant distinctions between enrollments in beginning and continuing high school foreign language classes and between introductory and advanced courses in colleges and universities is waning student interest (Andress et al., 2002; Flaherty, 2018; Pratt et al. 2009; Pratt, 2010, 2016, 2017; Wyatt, 2018). There is ample evidence in the literature to confirm the crucial role played by the maintenance of students' interest in the target languages in ensuring their continued study of the languages. However, the studies that have focused on the issue have centered primarily on students' perspectives and instructional strategies and there is a dearth of knowledge regarding other teacher-related factors that can influence this conundrum. If foreign language programs continue to experience low enrollment in spite of all the investigations that have been conducted on instructional strategies with a goal to meeting students' needs, is it possible that the solution lies partly with other, teacher-related, issues?

One of the important influences on students' education about which there is a dearth of knowledge in foreign language studies is teacher self-efficacy. As evidenced by the literature, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs play a crucial role in student outcomes and motivations. According to the conclusions drawn in various studies, in spite of differences in educational settings and systems, an increase in a teacher's self-efficacy translates into an increase in positive outcomes, as that inspires more motivation, confidence, and enthusiasm in students (Bandura, 1986; Caprara et al., 2006; Lee, Cawthon, & Dawson, 2013; Ertmer, 2005; Klassen et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2013; Maddux & Gosselin, 2003; Moseley, 2010; Scholz et al., 2002; Skaalvik & Bong, 2003; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy 2001, 2007). Additionally, efficacious teachers are better able to adapt to new circumstances and accommodate students' needs and effect pedagogical changes (Lee et al., 2013). It is therefore unequivocally essential to study teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in relation to the maintenance of their students' interest in the languages in order to determine how that factors into the continuation, or not, of their students.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Teacher Self-efficacy Beliefs*

The theoretical framework of this study is based on social cognitive theory, specifically the sixth construct, self-efficacy. According to the theory, self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs about their capabilities to successfully carry out a particular course of action (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1986) added that "among the types of thoughts that affect action, none is more central or pervasive than people's judgements of their capabilities to deal effectively with different realities" (p. 21). Evidence from the literature confirms that self-efficacy is an influential factor in human behaviors in a variety of settings (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Graham & Weiner, 1996; Martocchio & Judge, 1997; Saks 1995; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Consistent with the general framework of self-efficacy, Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (2001) defined teacher self-efficacy as teachers' judgment of their abilities to reach preferred results in terms of students' engagement and learning, even among those with low enthusiasm to learn. In fact, it is believed to influence student achievement and motivation and also positively affect teachers' beliefs about teaching and instructional behaviors (Bandura, 1977; Klassen et al., 2011; Ross, 1992; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Wyatt (2008, 2016, 2018) also defined it as teachers' beliefs in their abilities to support learning in various task-, domain- and context-specific cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social ways. Thus, it is equally related to teachers' behaviors and attitudes.

According to Woolfolk and Hoy (1990), teachers' sense of efficacy affects the amount of effort teachers invest in their teaching, the goals they set, and their level of aspiration, as well as students' behavior and learning outcomes. Guskey (1988) conducted an exploratory study with a sample of 120 elementary and secondary teachers to investigate the relationship between teachers' perceptions and their attitudes toward the use of new instructional practices. The teachers received a one-day training on instructional strategies. The findings revealed that measures of teacher efficacy, teaching effectiveness, and teaching self-concept were significantly related to teachers' attitudes regarding the

congruence, difficulty of use, and importance of the recommended practices. Furthermore, the study revealed that teachers who possess a high sense of efficacy are open to new ideas and are more willing to explore new methods in order to improve their skills and fulfill the needs of their students. Additionally, teacher efficacy has a direct impact on the learners' sense of efficacy as well as on student motivation and achievement (Akbari & Karimi Allvar, 2010; Anderson & Betz, 2001; Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988; Ashton, 1985; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989; Woolfolk, Rossoff, & Hoy, 1990).

Self-efficacy beliefs help determine the outcomes that people expect from their own actions. Teacher self-efficacy belief, therefore, has a central agent-means component, which is a belief in the ability to take action, combined with an outcome expectation, which is a means-ends belief as to the effect the action will have (Wheatley, 2005). These two components may or may not be harmoniously aligned, and the beliefs develop as a result of experiences that have impacted the teacher's cognition in different ways (Fives & Alexander, 2004). As a matter of fact, teachers who are confident in their teaching skills anticipate successful experiences with their students and they expect to be highly evaluated by their students as well as by school representatives (Silverman, 2010). The opposite is true for teachers who have a low sense of self-efficacy in their ability to instruct, interact, and communicate with their students, students' parents, and colleagues (Gay, 2003, 2010). They often anticipate low teaching performance and low respect even before they officially start teaching. Teacher self-efficacy beliefs are considered to be open to change and context sensitive. They also interact with other kinds of self-beliefs and operate within broader motivational frameworks, such as the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

While TSE in general has been widely researched for many decades, the study of language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs has lagged behind and has only recently gained focus in the last two decades. In fact, Wyatt (2018) reported that there was still no comprehensive synthesis of language teacher self-efficacy beliefs research. Furthermore, most of the research has been conducted in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts (Locke & Johnson, 2016; Locke et al., 2013; Phan, 2015; Thompson, 2016; Wyatt, 2018). Research into LTSE beliefs of teachers of other languages has been very limited. Out of 115 studies that were examined by Wyatt (2018), only seven investigated the LTSE beliefs of teachers of languages other than English, indicating an increase from the four that were recorded in Klassen et al. (2011). However, while Klassen et al. had only four studies on LTSE beliefs out of a total of 218, Wyatt (2018) had 96 out of a total of 115, with seven of them being about teachers of languages other than English, namely, Arabic, French, German, and Spanish. The remaining 89 studies were about teachers of EFL and ESL. The huge difference is a clear indication of the new focus on LTSE beliefs.

There is evidence in the growing literature that there is a positive relationship between foreign language teachers' self-efficacy and their language proficiency. According to Chacón (2005), the higher their sense of efficacy, the more likely they are to use communication or grammar-oriented pedagogical strategies. Mills and Allen (2008) also reported that native-speaking graduate assistants had higher scores on average than non-native speakers, thus further confirming the correlation between self-efficacy and content knowledge. Swanson (2010a) also discovered that teachers' sense of efficacy is related to their decision to remain in or leave the profession, and that their inability to help students at the early stages of language learning and lack of confidence to provide an alternate explanation, for example when students are confused, are significant predictors of teacher attrition.

There is also evidence that students' learning is impacted by teachers' affect and care about them, and that the teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are important in shaping their students' learning outcomes, motivation, and own self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, teachers' self-efficacy is a vital concept in second-language education. Six of Klassen et al.'s (2011) TSE beliefs studies explored the assumption that efficacious language teachers are more likely to find ways to have beneficial impact than those who are inefficacious, and they found "modest empirical support for the theorised connections" (p. 38). Swanson (2014) also emphasized the importance of building a strong sense of efficacy in teaching Spanish when his study revealed that there was a link between Spanish teacher efficacy and students' scores on the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese National Spanish Examinations, as well as the fact that teacher efficacy was also found to be related to whether teachers continued teaching or left the profession. However, studies on LTSE beliefs have never been used to determine the impact of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs on students' decisions whether or not to continue studying the languages. The present study therefore focused on this vacuum with a goal to ascertain that missing link and provide useful insights into whether or not second-language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are related to their impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages.

B. The Research Questions

The concept of teacher self-efficacy beliefs in teaching second languages deals with second-language teachers' beliefs about their ability to effectively accomplish their teaching tasks and reach desirable results as related to increasing students' motivation and maintaining their interest in the target languages. To that end, the purpose of this study was to determine the effects of foreign language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs on their students' decisions whether or not to continue learning the languages. The central questions were

1. Do foreign language teachers believe they have a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages they teach?

2. What is the relationship between the teachers' beliefs regarding their ability to have a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages they teach and their general sense of efficacy in teaching foreign languages?

Based on the aforementioned, the hypothesis was that the teachers with high proficiency levels in the foreign languages would demonstrate high self-efficacy beliefs and a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

Purposive sampling was used. Each of the three research team members compiled a list of e-mail addresses of middle and high school and lower-level college foreign language teachers whom they had access to from previous studies, collaborative work, professional activities, and their network, in different parts of the United States. ("Lower-level college" referred to the first two years.) An e-mail was sent to the addresses on the list to request participation in the survey. In order to participate, the teachers read a page of information about the study, as well as participants' responsibilities and rights, and clicked on the link to the questionnaire only if they agreed to participate. Therefore, participation was voluntary.

Out of approximately 250 invitations for participation, 131 recipients responded. Out of that group, 120 completed the survey, so the study was conducted with the 120 completed surveys. The sample was diverse in terms of gender, age, ethnic affiliation, and length of teaching experience, as well as the languages and grade levels taught. There were 87 females (72.5%) and 33 males (27.5%). They ranged in age from 22 to 62 years, with a mean age of 36.5. Fifty of them (41.67%) identified themselves as Caucasian/White, 45 (37.5%) as Hispanic/Latino, 20 (16.67%) as Asian/Other Pacific Islander, one (.83%) as Black/African American, and eight (6.67%) self-classified as other. About half of them, 45.8%, were high school teachers, 34.6% were college instructors, and 19.6% were middle school teachers.

The number of years in the foreign language teaching profession ranged from one semester to 32 years, with the highest range being 6 to 10 years. Spanish made up 54.92% of the languages taught, and the other percentages were 12.3% for Chinese, 7.38% for French, 6.56% for German, 4.92% for Latin, 3.28% for Italian and Russian, 2.46% for Arabic, 1.64% for Japanese and American Sign Language, and .82% for Portuguese and Turkish. Sixty-three (52.5%) were native speakers. With regard to training, seven (5.83%) indicated that their training programs were very ineffective, 11 (9.17%) of them considered their training programs ineffective, 24 (20%) reported that they were neither effective nor ineffective, 60 (50%) indicated that they were effective, and 18 (15%) believed they were very effective. Additionally, 85% of them had attended workshops, and the number of workshops ranged from one to "countless." In terms of fluency, 73.33% of them were fluent in the language they were teaching.

B. Instruments

Two instruments were used. The first instrument, the Teacher Academic and Demographic Questionnaire (TAD), was a background questionnaire created by the researchers to solicit personal information from the participants. It included previously researched predictors of teacher self-efficacy such as gender, age, and length of teaching experience, as well as teacher preparation and in-service training, instructional strategies and skills, and beliefs about their impact on students (Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996). The data were solicited via 20 multiple-choice and open-ended questions.

The second instrument, the Foreign Language Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (FLTSE), was also developed by the authors. It was adapted from the Sources of Multicultural Efficacy Scale (SMES) previously developed by one of the authors (Zaier, 2011) based on the Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (1998) teacher efficacy model that described four distinct sources for efficacy building on information proposed earlier by Bandura (1977). The SMES also adapted some of the elements from Bandura's Teacher Efficacy Scale (1997) and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy's Ohio Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (2001) and was reviewed and validated by 10 experts and field tested by 28 preservice teachers. The investigators replaced the multicultural content with foreign language content. The scale corresponded to Question 21 of the online survey and included 31 sub-questions rated on a scale from 0 to 100 to indicate the teachers' levels of certainty. It was used to assess the teachers' beliefs in terms of the four categories of sources of efficacy, namely, performance accomplishment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal.

C. Data Analysis

A mixed methods approach was used for the study in order to conduct a more thorough investigation, in consonance with Creswell (2014) that "[t]he researcher bases the inquiry on the assumption that collecting diverse types of data best provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data alone" (p. 48).

The quantitative data were entered into SPSS software for statistical analysis. To begin, the data were cleaned up, and the researchers calculated the reliability coefficient for the 31-item SES scale. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the scale was $\alpha = .923$ and therefore demonstrated a high standard of reliability (Henson, 2001). The participants' responses to Question 17 were used to answer the first research question regarding whether or not they believed they had a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages. Additionally, descriptive statistics including frequency distributions as well as multiple regression were performed on the data in the TAD to obtain more

information to explain further the responses to Question 17. To answer Research Question 2, the participants were divided into two groups corresponding to those who believed they had a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages (Group A) and those who did not believe they had a positive impact (Group B). The group means and standard deviations of the FLTSE of the two groups were calculated for the 31 items in Question 21. Then the individual means and standard deviations were calculated and a binary logistic regression was used to compare the means to the results for Research Question 1 to determine the relationship between the teachers' beliefs regarding their ability to have a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages and their sense of efficacy in teaching foreign languages. In order to obtain more information about the comparison, the participants' individual mean scores on the FLTSE were divided into quartiles to differentiate between groups who had high and low senses of efficacy, following the method used by Swanson (2014).

IV. FINDINGS

A. Do Foreign Language Teachers Believe They Have a Positive Impact on Their Students to Maintain Their Interest in the Languages They Teach?

The descriptive statistics revealed that the teachers overwhelmingly indicated that they believed they had a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages they teach. Out of the 120 participants, 110 (91.67%) responded in the affirmative, seven (5.83%) responded in the negative, and three (2.5%) did not provide any response.

A closer look at the profiles of the participants who responded affirmatively revealed the following: 71.82% were females. Spanish made up 54.92% of the languages that were taught, and the other percentages were 12.3% for Chinese, 7.38% for French, 6.56% for German, 4.92% for Latin, 3.28% for Italian and Russian, 2.46% for Arabic, 1.64% for Japanese and American Sign Language, and .82% for Portuguese and Turkish. A bit more than half, 54.55%, were native speakers. With regard to their teacher training, 20.91% indicated that they were neither effective nor ineffective, 5.45% indicated that they were very ineffective, 9.09% reported that they were ineffective, 47.27% considered them effective, and 15.45% indicated that they were very effective. Additionally, 80% had attended workshops, and the number of sessions ranged from one to "countless." Almost three-quarters, 70.9%, of them were fluent in the languages they were teaching, and the length of time they had taught foreign languages ranged from one semester to 32 years, with a mode of 6-10 years.

The data for the participants who responded in the negative revealed that 71.43% were females. Three-quarters, 75%, were teaching Spanish, and Japanese and French had 12.5% each. A sizeable minority, 42.86%, were native speakers. With regard to their teacher training programs, 14.29% believed they were very ineffective, 28.57% considered them ineffective, and 67.14% indicated that they were effective. Additionally, 85.71% of them had attended workshops, and the number of sessions ranged from one to "too many." Almost three-quarters, 71.43%, of them were fluent in the languages they were teaching, and one who was not fluent had been teaching for 29 years. Their length of teaching ranged from one semester to 29 years, with a mode of 5 years. Based on the demographic information, there appeared to be no obvious significant differences between Groups A and B that could explain why they chose yes or no.

A multiple linear regression conducted to determine the associations between the variables revealed that there were no relationships between the teachers' beliefs about their impact on their students and their gender ($r = 0.0003$), age ($r = -0.002$), native speaker status ($r = 0.038$), and years of experience ($r = 0.0029$) combined. Therefore, gender, age, native speaker status, and years of experience did not contribute information to the prediction of the teachers' impact on their students. Furthermore, r^2 was 0.009, indicating that the variability of the teachers' impact on their students could not be explained by any of the variables, and a P-value of more than 0.9 also confirmed that there was no significant relationship between the variables.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient conducted to ascertain the relationships between the independent variables further revealed that there were no correlations with the exception of age and experience, where there was a strong positive correlation with a coefficient of $r = 0.76$ and an r^2 of .58. This means that the older a teacher was, the longer his or her years of experience, and that 58% of the variation in a teacher's years of experience could be explained by his or her age.

B. What Is the Relationship between the Teachers' Beliefs Regarding Their Ability to Have a Positive Impact on Their Students to Maintain Their Interest in the Languages They Teach and Their General Sense of Efficacy in Teaching Foreign Languages?

The results of the FLTSE, which was used to ascertain information about the teachers' general level of efficacy in teaching foreign languages, showed that the teachers in general felt confident teaching foreign languages. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for the 31 items on the scale as well as their rank order. The range for all the items ($n = 31$) was from 41.71 (SD 36.41) to 89.07 (SD 28.77), with an overall mean of 69.85 (SD 11.23). The highest ratings corresponded to "I feel happy when I teach well," "The idea of teaching foreign languages does not make me feel nervous," "I have had successful experiences teaching foreign languages," and "I am passionate about teaching foreign languages." The lowest rated items corresponded to "I have not made mistakes when teaching foreign languages," "I have been trained to deal with many of the learning difficulties students encounter when learning foreign languages,"

“My colleagues tell me they learn a lot when they observe me teaching foreign languages,” and “Teaching foreign languages is not often frustrating,” in that order.

In terms of the four categories of sources of teacher efficacy addressed on the FLTSE, the rank order was emotional arousal (M 76.84, SD 31.98); verbal persuasion (M 72.91, SD 33.28); performance accomplishment (M 71.90, SD 31.73); and vicarious experience (M 64.53, SD 36.44). An analysis of variance (ANOVA) test confirmed that the differences between the groups were not significant (P-value 6.85).

TABLE 1
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR SOURCES OF EFFICACY SCALE

Foreign Language Teachers' Sources of Efficacy Scale	M	SD	Rank Order
Performance Accomplishment			
1. I have had successful experiences teaching foreign languages.	85.36	21.35	3
2. I have not done poorly in teaching foreign languages.	79.48	26.92	10
3. I have not made mistakes when teaching foreign languages.	41.71	36.41	31
4. I have successfully helped students learn foreign languages.	83.19	24.52	5
5. My teacher education program prepared me effectively to teach foreign languages.	63.63	30.90	21
6. I have been trained to deal with many of the learning difficulties students encounter when learning foreign languages.	54.59	34.12	30
7. My foreign language teaching skills have been honed by working with students.	76.73	30.73	11
8. I have learned how to effectively interact with foreign language students.	80	25.43	9
Vicarious Experience			
9. I have had opportunities to observe other teachers teaching foreign languages.	61.88	37.69	24
10. I have observed effective strategies other teachers use to teach foreign languages.	63.04	36.20	22
11. I see myself applying the same strategies used by other foreign language teachers to effectively teach foreign languages.	66.46	34.75	18
12. I see myself avoiding mistakes other teachers made while teaching foreign languages.	68.03	34.56	17
13. I have learned how to teach foreign languages by watching other skillful teachers.	58.17	36.39	27
14. My classroom observations of teachers of foreign languages are valuable to me.	68.82	37.29	15
15. I am able to improve my instruction of foreign languages by applying successful strategies I have observed experienced teachers use.	65.14	36.98	19
Verbal Persuasion			
16. My teachers often told me that I was good at teaching foreign languages.	64.78	37.41	20
17. I have often been praised for my ability to teach foreign languages.	69.58	34.68	14
18. My family members have told me that I have a talent for teaching foreign languages.	62.33	39.36	23
19. My colleagues have told me that I am good at teaching foreign languages.	70.68	35.32	13
20. My colleagues have often praised my ability to effectively teach foreign languages.	68.25	35.82	16
21. My colleagues believe I am a successful foreign language teacher.	71.37	33.57	12
22. My college classmates told me I will be an effective foreign language teacher.	61.20	40.56	25
23. My colleagues tell me they learn a lot when they observe me teaching foreign languages.	57.79	36.70	29
24. I am passionate about teaching foreign languages.	83.95	29.76	4
Emotional Arousal			
25. Teaching foreign languages is not often frustrating.	59.48	32.53	28
26. I do not feel discouraged when I think about teaching foreign languages.	82.12	25.94	6
27. The idea of teaching foreign languages does not make me feel nervous.	86.08	24.17	2
28. I feel comfortable helping students learn foreign languages.	81.85	31.72	7
29. I feel happy when I teach well.	89.07	28.77	1
30. I am never worried about understanding the learning needs of foreign language learners.	59.6	37.37	26
31. I do not feel stressed when I think about teaching foreign languages.	81	25.89	8

The means for Group A ranged from 42.91 to 88.25. The highest rated items were “I feel happy when I teach well,” “The idea of teaching foreign languages does not make me feel nervous,” and “I have had successful experiences teaching foreign languages.” The lowest rated items were “I have not made mistakes when teaching foreign languages,” “I have been trained to deal with many of the learning difficulties students encounter when learning foreign languages,” and “My colleagues tell me they learn a lot when they observe me teaching foreign languages.” The overall mean for Group A was 70.74 and the standard deviation was 11.16.

The group means for Group B ranged from 32.14 to 100. The highest rated items were “I feel happy when I teach well,” “I feel comfortable helping students learn foreign languages,” and “I am passionate about teaching foreign languages.” The lowest rated items were “I have not made mistakes when teaching foreign languages,” “Teaching foreign languages is not frustrating,” and “I have had opportunities to observe other teachers teaching foreign languages.” The overall mean for Group B was 60.54 and the standard deviation was 15.96.

The results of a t-test proved that the difference between the means of the two groups was not statistically significant (P-value = 0.16), thus indicating that there was no significant difference between the two groups with regard to their FLTSE. Therefore, there was no significant correlation between whether or not the teachers believed they had an impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages and their scores on the FLTSE.

In terms of the four categories of sources of teacher efficacy addressed on the FLTSE, the rank order for Group A was emotional arousal (M 77.72, SD 12.17); performance accomplishment (M 71.34, SD 15.69); verbal persuasion (M 68.79, SD 8.34); and vicarious experience (M 65.98, SD 3.44). The ranking for Group B was emotional arousal (M

62.04, SD 11.69); verbal persuasion (M 62.04, SD 11.69); performance accomplishment (M 61.96, SD 18.15); and vicarious experience (M 50.09, SD 5.56). An ANOVA revealed that based on the results of the FLTSE, there were no significant differences between the four sources of efficacy (P -value = 6.85).

The individual FLTSE means were calculated and compared to the teachers' responses to Question 17 to ascertain what type of relationship existed between the teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching foreign languages and their beliefs regarding whether or not they had a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages. In order to distinguish between groups of teachers with high and low senses of efficacy in teaching foreign languages, the teachers' individual mean scores were used to divide them into quartiles, a method used by Swanson (2014). The lowest 25% of the mean scores constituted the first quartile, the 26th to 50th percentile constituted the second, the third represented the 51st to 75th percentile, and the last quartile represented the 76th to 100th percentile. The mean scores ranged from 23.71 to 97.1, and the overall mean and standard deviation were 69.85 and 18.43, respectively.

A comparison of the individual mean scores of the FLTSE with the responses to Question 17 revealed that the teachers who indicated that they did not believe they had a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages had the following FLTSE means: 80.32, 25.81, 68.84, 57.10, 89.19, 31.61, and 70.94, indicating that there were two (28.57%) in the second quartile, three (42.86%) in the third quartile, and two (28.57%) in the fourth and highest quartile. With regard to the teachers who believed they had a positive impact on their students, there were four (3.64%) in the first quartile, 10 (9.09%) in the second quartile, 43 (39.09%) in the third quartile, and 53 (48.18%) in the fourth quartile. More than half of the FLTSE scores for Group A were in the fourth quartile, while the highest number for Group B fell in the third quartile. Therefore, based on the raw scores of the very unbalanced numbers, a comparison of the percentages for the groups indicated that overall, the teachers who believed they had a positive impact scored higher on the FLTSE than those who did not believe they had a positive impact. The overall mean for Group A was approximately 10 points higher than the Group B mean, Group A having a mean of 70.74 with a standard deviation of 11.16 and Group B having a mean of 60.54 with a standard deviation of 11.96, indicating that the Group B data had a higher standard deviation, or more dispersion, than the data for Group A.

A Pearson product-moment correlation revealed that there was a negligibly low positive correlation between the teachers' beliefs that they had a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages and their FLTSE scores ($r = 0.13$). Further confirmation of the insignificant relationship in ANOVA also confirmed a P -value of 0.16, which was higher than the required significance value of 0.05.

A multiple regression also revealed that there was no relationship between the teachers' ages, native speaker status, and years of experience and their FLTSE, with a coefficient of $r = 0.014$, meaning that the three variables explained only 1.4% of the variation in the FLTSE. It was statistically insignificant, because the P -value was 0.16. The P -values for age, years of experience, and native speaker status were also statistically insignificant, as they were well above 0.05.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study had two goals. First, it investigated high school and lower-level college foreign language teachers' beliefs about their abilities to have a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages. Second, it determined the relationship between the teachers' beliefs and their general sense of efficacy.

The results indicated that contrary to the investigators' hypothesis, the teachers overwhelmingly indicated that they believe they have a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages. Almost all, 91.67%, of them responded in the affirmative, meaning that an overwhelming majority of the teachers believed that they do not contribute to the discontinuation that prevents students from studying the languages long enough to become communicatively competent. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, multiple regression, and Pearson product-moment analyses also showed that none of the variables—that is, gender, age, years of experience, and native speaker status—correlated with the teachers' beliefs regarding whether or not they had a positive impact on their students to keep them interested in the languages. Therefore, there was no clear evidence of a basis for the responses they gave, which appeared to be arbitrary.

The overwhelming affirmative response by the teachers about their positive impact contradicts the findings of previous research, which confirmed that an important contributory factor for the loss of interest experienced in the study of the languages was what the teachers did or did not do. Andress et al. (2002), Pratt et al. (2009), and Pratt (2010, 2016, 2017) all reported some inability on the part of teachers to maintain the students' interest. However, this outcome is also not surprising, considering that as Andress et al. (2002) reported and Pratt et al. (2009) confirmed, there are significant differences between students' perceptions and teachers' perceptions that indicate that teachers misunderstand students. Further research needs to be conducted with students to verify the actual impact.

A follow-up study matching teachers with specific students as in the case of Swanson (2014), who matched teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching Spanish with their students' scores on the National Spanish Exam to determine the relationship between the two, is recommended in order to ascertain the impact of the teachers' influence. For that reason, specific students and their teachers should participate to ascertain a more direct relationship.

In general, the teachers were confident in their abilities to teach foreign languages. However, the confidence level was only mildly high, as the FLTSE reported an overall mean of only 69.85. Emotional arousal ranked highest among the categories of sources of teacher efficacy, followed by verbal persuasion, performance accomplishment, and

vicarious experience, in that order. An ANOVA test confirmed that the differences were not significant, indicating that the teachers' level of efficacy was mildly high in all four categories of self-efficacy.

The fact that the teachers' level of efficacy was mildly high could explain the difficulties they encountered in their efforts to influence the decisions of their students. The teachers who reported that they believed they had a positive impact on their students to maintain their interest in the languages had a slightly higher overall mean than the group that did not believe they had a positive impact. However, a t-test also proved that the difference between the means of the two groups was not statistically significant, so there was no significant correlation between whether or not they believed they had a positive impact on the students and their actual FLTSE scores. The results of the FLTSE therefore appeared to clarify the questionable results obtained for Research Question 1 in the sense that although the teachers overwhelmingly believed that they had a positive impact, the confidence level was only moderate and they were least confident in their knowledge and skills, which could be the explanation for the continued loss of students from foreign language programs.

Based on these results, the investigators conclude that although most teachers believe that they are keeping their students interested in continuing to study languages, their moderate sense of self-efficacy is indicative of the fact that their influence is probably not sufficient to achieve the desired impact. This outcome explains the problem that led to this investigation, and the investigators recommend an overhaul of foreign language teacher education to include specific training that leads to the maintenance of students in the study of the languages. This is crucial given the fact that if things continue the same way, foreign language enrollments will continue to decrease and the subsequent effect on the low numbers of fluent speakers of foreign languages will lead to a more acute shortage of foreign language teachers and continue the vicious cycle of shortages. Further studies will help identify specific content that must be incorporated into the curriculum.

Additionally, although the differences between the mean scores for the different categories of sources of teacher self-efficacy were not significant, given that the lowest scores were in the areas of performance accomplishment and vicarious experience, there appears to be evidence of a need for enhanced content knowledge and pedagogical skills in general among the teachers. The overhaul of foreign language teacher education mentioned above would also need to incorporate more emphasis on content and pedagogy. A follow-up study that proposes a foreign language teacher education curriculum that incorporates the lacking competences is recommended in order to provide adequate training that will ensure the ability of the teachers to maintain the interest of their students.

Findings from this study therefore appear to support the hypothesis that foreign language teachers' sense of efficacy is related to students' loss of interest in continuing the study of the languages, and that the mildly high confidence in their abilities is reflected in the level of impact they have on the students. This conclusion also supports the evidence in the literature that an increase in a teacher's self-efficacy translates into an increase in positive outcomes and increased motivation (Bandura, 1986; Caprara et al., 2006; Ertmer, 2005; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Klassen et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2013; Maddux & Gosselin, 2003; Scholz et al., 2002; Skaalvik & Bong, 2003; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy 2001, 2011). The fact that the data in the study were self-reported is a limitation, because they could not be verified. Interviews with some students would have added more useful information for clarification. These can be incorporated into follow-up studies.

This study has important implications for foreign language teachers, as the findings point to specific deficiencies in their efficacy, and they can utilize the results to determine the content and strategies that are needed to improve their efficacy as well as their abilities to impact their students positively to maintain their interest. Additionally, due to the high validity of the FLTSE, foreign language teachers in different contexts can self-administer it to determine their levels of efficacy and the improvements they need. The findings also have important implications for school administrators, as they are the ones who approve and fund in-service professional development opportunities for teachers. In addition to the regular topics covered in the professional training sessions, emphasis needs to be put on specific training that will enhance their self-efficacy and provide them with tools that will help them keep their students interested in continuing to learn the languages. With regard to foreign language teacher education programs, the data can provide guidance for the development of pre-service curricula that include the needed training for high efficacy and the acquisition of expertise in the development of student interest and motivation. The results will also give stakeholders a better understanding of what the institutions need in their efforts to provide needed services and education and collaborate with them.

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