

Goals and Expectations of Foreign Language Learners: The Prospective English Language Teacher Perspective

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the insights gained by prospective English language teachers on foreign language learner goals and expectations. Interviewing language learners on their goals and expectations was a requirement of a selective course the participants took from the researcher. 18 students enrolled in the course agreed to participate. They were either 3rd (sophomore) or 4th (senior) year students at the ELT department. Each participant interviewed 3 foreign language learners and collected demographic information (such as age and language level) from their interviewees and asked the language learners what their goals are in learning a foreign language, what their expectations are and whether their expectations have been met. Each participant presented his/her findings during the selective course hours. After all the presentations were made, participants were asked to answer 2 open ended questions regarding the interviews they conducted and presentations they have listened to. The first question asked participants to indicate what insights they gained from their interviewee's responses and their classmates' presentations. The second question asked participants to indicate how these insights will affect their future language teaching. Participants reported that they observed that the goals of language learners vary from being orally competent in the target language to getting a better job. In terms of learner expectations, participants reported that they observed that language learners would like to engage in more communicative activities but are exposed to traditional teaching methods. Considering the second question, participants indicated how this awareness will affect their future teaching practices.

Key words: foreign language teaching, learner expectations, learner goals, learner needs teacher training