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교육학석사학위논문

Changes in Attitudes and Beliefs among  
EFL High School Students in  
Level-based English Classes

영어 수준별 수업에서  
한국 고등학생들의 태도와 신념의 변화

2017년 2월

서울대학교 대학원  
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by  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Differentiated approach is one of the distinctive features characterizing the 7<sup>th</sup> National Curriculum of Korean English education. In most of Korean secondary schools, the level-based placement of English classes is implemented to put the differentiated curriculum into practice. The present study investigates the formation and changes of EFL learners' attitudes and beliefs under the level-based placement of English classes. Additionally, analyses on the data from focus groups who experienced level movements were conducted in order to examine there were differences between level-up and level-down groups.

The participants were 259 Korean high school students in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. To examine the changes of the participants' affective factors, three successive surveys with the items on attitudes and beliefs were administered. By the factor analyses, new five affective dimensions were created and the changes of learners' dimensions were analyzed through comparison among data from three surveys. Further investigations were implemented on the focus groups including level-up and level-down groups to find out whether there were significant differences in the changes of affective dimensions among focus groups.

Several significant findings emerged from this study. First, learners were encouraged to develop their positive attitudes toward English while successive level-based class groupings were implemented whereas their attitudes toward School English education changed in a negative way. Second, learners' self-

efficacy among the dimensions related to beliefs became constantly stronger, which implies that learners would put more efforts in their future study. Third, it was revealed that focus groups showed significant differences in their changes of attitudes and beliefs. While level-up groups developed their positive attitudes toward English learning and school English education, level-down groups didn't show positive changes in both attitudes. In terms of self-efficacy, both groups strengthened their self-efficacy, but the extent of changes was bigger for the level-up groups.

Based on the findings, the study discusses issues on curriculum implementation and learners' affective factors in English education. It also provides some pedagogical implications concerning the development and implementation of the English education curriculum and its influences on learners' affective factors.

Key Words: differentiated curriculum, level-based placement, English classes, affective factors, attitudes, beliefs, self-efficacy

Student Number: 2003-23710

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

This study looks into the changes of attitudes and beliefs among EFL high school students in level-based English classes. Specifically, it focuses on investigating how the level movements affect the changes of learners' affective factors such as their learning attitudes and beliefs. This introductory chapter describes the purpose of the study (Section 1.1), states the research questions (Section 1.2), and presents an overview of the thesis (Section 1.3).

### **1.1 The Purpose of the Study**

Individual differences of second or foreign language learners have been dealt with in a lot of second language acquisition (SLA) researches (Peirce, 1995; Siegal, 1996; Gardner et al., 1997). Within the area of individual differences, several factors such as motivations, attitudes, beliefs, self-constructs (self-efficacy, self-concept and self-identity), affective states, and strategy uses can be included. Among those factors, attitudes and beliefs (including self-constructs) are mainly influenced by previous experiences as language learners, or shaped by their own cultural backgrounds (Horwitz, 1987). When those factors are being dealt with, social and cultural backgrounds of learners should be considered carefully. Therefore, not only English as a second language (ESL) situation but also English

as a foreign language (EFL) situation will influence language learners' individual factors. Only a few researches about those factors, however, have been conducted under the EFL situation where English learners are educated mainly in the public school settings based on the specific national curriculum and educational policies.

Many researches have revealed that learners' positive attitudes affect their learning achievements (Lee, 1996; Yun, 1997) and strategy uses (Oh, 1996). Kim (1995) found that Korean and Japanese learners showed different attitudes although both countries are under same EFL situations. Language learners' beliefs have also been studied by researchers and it has been suggested that beliefs influence language learning (Yand, 1999; Sakui et al., 1999). However, those studies have paid attentions only on measuring specific relationship at the moment when the studies were being conducted. Only a few researches have been focused on longitudinal process like emergence, formation and change of learner individual factors. White (1999) examined expectations, shift in expectations and emergent beliefs of 'novice' self-instructed language learners. Moreover, Cotterall (1995) suggested that learner beliefs can reflect learners' "readiness" for autonomy.

Compared to adult learners, secondary school students tend not to have fixed attitudes or beliefs about language learning. Throughout language education that they are provided, those factors are emerged, formed, shifted, changed, and fixed. Especially in Korea, majority of the English education is conducted inside the school under the national curriculum. In order to have exact understandings about their learning process and learners' individual factors, it is necessary to examine

classroom situations more closely. It has been revealed that learners' individual factors can be one of the criteria for predicting learners' future study. (Boakye, 2015; Chihara & Oller, 1978; Choi, 2005; Loo & Choy, 2013; Shedivy, 2004)

According to the 7<sup>th</sup> national curriculum of Korea, the purpose of English education is to develop their basic communicative ability, and to appreciate diverse cultures, develop and introduce Korean cultures through English (MOE, 1999). One of the basic principles underlying this curriculum is to implement individual language teaching and learning according to students' proficiency levels. Individual learning can happen either within the class or out of the class which means regrouping of students only for English classes based on their abilities (differentiation). Students are usually replaced into two or three groups. Effects of ability grouping have been examined by several researchers (Yoon, 1998; Slavin, 1990) who suggested that those effect varied across gender and students' levels.

Other than specific effects or results, more careful concerns should be paid for a certain length of time on students' individual factors which can be easily affected by situations, especially in case of young learners. Therefore, the first and foremost purpose of the current study is to investigate the changes of young EFL learners' affective factors for a whole school year in the specific situation where their levels of English classes are constantly changed based on their grades. Furthermore, the present study examines the focus groups of students whose scores are around division point of two level classes and who need to move from one level to the

other in each class re-grouping throughout the year. By looking into the changes of learners' affective factors under the level-based placement of English classes, this study may make some fruitful suggestions for improving Korean English education curriculum and for implementing a certain curriculum in secondary schools.

To serve the purposes, the successive surveys with the same questionnaire are conducted after each class re-grouping and the changes of the survey results are examined carefully. Further investigations are implemented on the changes of the focus groups – those who move to upper or lower levels – in order to find out whether there are significant differences in their changes of affective factors. Rather than examining the survey results, the study demonstrates the results of group interviews to look deeply into how the learners changed under the level-based English classes.

## 1.2 Research Questions

The present study aims to investigate how the successive <sup>1</sup>level-based placements of English classes affect the learner's individual affective factors such as attitudes and beliefs. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

- 1) How are attitudes and beliefs of EFL Korean high school students changed along with a series of groupings into two different level classes – higher proficiency level (Class A) and lower proficiency level (Class B) – throughout the year in the level-based English classes?
  
- 2) How do the changes vary across two focus groups of students – the groups of students whose scores are around a borderline for dividing the learners into two levels and who move from one level to the other?

---

<sup>1</sup> There are several terms referring to the differentiated curriculum being implemented in Korea (e.g. ability-based grouping), but in the current research, a term of 'level-based class placement' will be solely used.

### **1.3 Organization of the Thesis**

The organization of the thesis as follows: Chapter 1 discusses the purpose of the study, introducing the significance of the present study along with the research questions being addressed. Chapter 2 reviews previous literature on learners' attitudes, learners' beliefs and the differentiated curriculum, providing a theoretical background to the present research. In Chapter 3, research method and data analyses are described. Then, the results of the survey analyses in terms of the whole classes and focus groups supported with the results of interview analyses are provided in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the major findings and offers pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

This Chapter reviews a body of literature relevant to the present study. Section 2.1 deals with attitudes in language learning, one of the main learners' affective factors for the current research and the other factor, beliefs in language learning is examined in Section 2.2. Finally, the 7<sup>th</sup> curriculum and differentiated approach including previous studies on the level-based curriculum are discussed in Section 2.3.

#### **2.1 Attitudes in Language Learning**

Ellis (1994) classified learner attitudes as one of social factors which affect second language acquisition externally. He demonstrated six different attitudes toward (1) the target language, (2) target language speakers, (3) the target-language culture, (4) the social value of learning the L2, (5) particular uses of the target language, and (6) themselves as members their own culture. He pointed out that these attitudes are likely to reflect the particular social settings in which learners find themselves. In this definition, however, the main focus has been put on specific English as a Second Language (ESL) situation and wider range in certain society rather than school or classroom situation where the learning is actually happening. In EFL situation like Korea or Japan, many conditions are different.

Richards et al. (1985) define that EFL refers to the role of English in countries where it is taught as a subject in schools but where it has no recognized status or function. Judd (1987) thinks that in an EFL situation, English “serves little communicative function” and has no special status or use over any other foreign language”. According to Broughton et al. (1978), in EFL situation, English “is taught in schools, often widely, but it does not play an essential role in national or social life”. Therefore, when attitudes under EFL situation are dealt with in researches, more concerns need to be paid on the formal school situations such as English classes, English teachers and learners’ classmates in school.

Gardner(1985) defined attitudes as an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual’s beliefs or opinions about the referent. According to Gardner (1985; 2003)’s socioeducational model of second language acquisition, there are five attitude/motivation variables one of which is attitudes toward the learning situation. It indicates that specific learning situation where learning is happening influences learners’ attitudes. Especially, in EFL situation, formal curriculum operation would be one of learning situations.

LoCastro (2001) investigated several individual differences in SLA one of which was attitudes, especially attitudes towards target language. Through the Japanese EFL learners’ self-reports, LoCastro found that learners who showed positive attitudes towards English paid a lot of efforts to establish a L2 self-identity compatible with their own goals. Learners’ attitudes affect their second language learning in many ways. Relationship between attitudes and language success was

already studied by John Oller and his colleagues (Oller et al., 1977; Chihara et al., 1978; Oller et al., 1978). In these three studies, researchers got to the conclusion that positive attitudes toward self, the native language group, and the target language group enhanced proficiency.

## **2.2 Beliefs in Language Learning**

Another major factor related to the affection of language learners is beliefs. Moreover, several issues on learners' beliefs have been dealt with more importantly in many researches on second language learning (SLL). Thus, the history how beliefs got interests in the field of SLL is reviewed in Section 2.2.1. Section 2.2.2 presents how beliefs and self-efficacy – beliefs about one's potential – have taken their roles in SLL.

### **2.2.1 Interests in Beliefs**

Many researchers have pointed out the importance of individual differences in second language learning. However, when it comes to classifying those differences researchers have used different ways (Ellis, 1994). Ellis suggested three main types which consist of individual differences of language learners: beliefs about language learning (LL), affective states which can be related with anxiety, and various general factors like age. Recently, Ehrman et al. (2003) classified learner

differences into the three areas: 1. learning styles, 2. learning strategies, and 3. affective variables. According to Ehrman et al. (2003), affective factors include motivation, self-efficacy, tolerance of ambiguity, and anxiety, among others. As mentioned in the previous section (section 2.1), motivation is deeply related with learners' beliefs. Even though they didn't exactly mention beliefs, one of the sub-factors, self-efficacy, can be a part of beliefs.

### **2.2.2 Beliefs and Self-efficacy**

Bandura (1997) created a model based on self-efficacy which is defined as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments”. Such beliefs influence the amount of effort people put forth and how long they continue to pursue tasks, including learning tasks, in the face of obstacles and failures. Eccles and Wigfield (Eccles et al., 1984; Wigfield, 1994) suggested that motivation is based on how much students expect to succeed at a task and how much they value that success. It shows that motivation is also deeply related with learners' beliefs about their learning and themselves.

Factors which consist of beliefs of language learners have been suggested by several researchers. Most commonly accepted classification, ‘Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI)’, was developed by Horwitz (1987; 1988) which is composed of five major area: (1) difficulty of language learning, (2) foreign language aptitude, (3) the nature of language learning, (4) learning and

communication strategies, and (5) motivations and expectations. The BALLI items resulted from free-recall protocols of foreign language and ESL teachers of different cultural background, student (both foreign language and ESL) focus groups, and additional beliefs supplied by teacher educators from a variety of culture groups (Horwitz, 1988). Besides BALLI by Horwitz, Cotterall(1995) developed questionnaire items from a series of interviews with ESL students about their experience of language learning in order to gather data on learner beliefs. Cotterall conducted factor analysis to identify the underlying constructs of twenty-six questionnaire items. The six factors obtained were named as follows: (1) role of the teacher, (2) role of feedback, (3) learner independence, (4) learner confidence in study ability, (5) experience of language learning, and (6) approach to studying.

However, Cotterall's study was administered to ESL learners whose beliefs can be different from ones of EFL learners. Sakui and Gaies (1999) studied the beliefs about language learning of Japanese university learners of English. They conducted interviews in order to check if interview data can be useful in confirming and explaining data collected through a questionnaire. In their study, a factor analysis of 45 questionnaire items was performed and four factors were yielded as follow: (1) beliefs about .a contemporary (communicative) orientation to learning English, (2) beliefs about a traditional orientation to learning English, (3) beliefs about the quality and sufficiency of classroom instruction for learning English, and (4) beliefs about foreign-language aptitude and difficulty. Recently, other researches on the beliefs of EFL learners have conducted such as China (Wen

& Johnson, 1997) and Japan (Luppescu & Day, 1990).

Self-concept is the factor that has been usually considered together with learner's self-efficacy. Choi (2005) included self-efficacy and self-concept into learners' self-constructs and investigated whether those two factors can act as predictors of academic performance of college students. Some researchers viewed these two self-constructs as the same construct (Choi, 2005). On the other hand, according to Bong & Clark (1999), the nature of self-concept is multidimensional in the sense that it has both cognitive and affective components. However, the nature of self-efficacy is unidimensional in that it is predominantly cognitive. Even though they have commonality, there is an important distinction between them clearly separates the two constructs: the type of self-appraisal. Evaluating self in comparison with others heavily influences self-concept, whereas evaluation self in comparison with ones' past performances influences self-efficacy (Bong & Clark, 1999). According to Choi (2005), self-concepts were significant predictors of college students' term grades. Not only in language learning but also in other subjects learning, self-concept of learner can be a major factor that influences results. Pietsch et al. (2003) examined the relationship among self-concept, self-efficacy, and performance in mathematics among 416 high school students. Unlike self-efficacy beliefs which represent primarily cognitive assessments of competence (Bandura, 1977), self-concept beliefs include affective self-perceptions (Pietsch et al., 2003). One more concept that can be mentioned here is 'self-identity' of SL learners. Compared to self-concept, self-identity gives more focus on society

and culture where learners belong to (Kim & Kennedy, 2004).

Under the formal education where exams are really important, learners tend to have fear of failure. In other words, self-confidence that learners have plays an important role in classroom performance (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004). Jere (1998) suggested the term ‘failure syndrome (FSS)’ which can be replaced with ‘low self-concept’ or ‘frustrated’. According to Jere (1998), unlike students of limited ability, who often fail despite their best efforts, failure syndrome students often fail needlessly because they do not invest their best efforts.

## **2.3 The 7th Curriculum and Differentiated Approach**

National curriculum of English education in Korea were created, reformed and revised by the government so far. Currently, the 7<sup>th</sup> national curriculum is being in practice, and one of the major orientations characterizing the curriculum is its differentiated approach, which appears as a form of level-based class placement in secondary schools. Section 2.3.1 examines how the 7<sup>th</sup> national curriculum has been adopted and revised in English education. Section 2.3.1 reviews how the level-based class placement was actually implemented in school settings and some researches on the implementation and effects of the curriculum.

### 2.3.1 English Education of the 7<sup>th</sup> Curriculum

According to the 7<sup>th</sup> national curriculum (Pae, 1996), English education in secondary schools was revised under the five basic principles: (1) active language teaching preparing for globalization and informationalization, (2) English education taking account of learners' proficiency and experiences, (3) practical English education for encouraging communicative competence, (4) English education for developing fluency giving importance to the process, and (5) adoption of English teaching method for validity and appropriateness. One of the essences of the 7<sup>th</sup> English curriculum is an implementation of individual learning according to the students' proficiency levels. (MOE, 1999; 2001) Since the 7<sup>th</sup> national curriculum first proclaimed and implemented, two revisions were carried out in 2007 and in 2011<sup>2</sup>. In addition, another revision (the 3<sup>rd</sup> one) of the curriculum was also announced that it would be implemented in 2018.

One of the main features of the 7<sup>th</sup> English curriculum is that it is based on the learner-centered education (Seong, 2004). Yu (2008) stated that while traditional education in the past was characterized by teacher-centered, textbook-centered, and result-centered education, recent education has been focused on learner-centered and process-centered education. Nunan (1988) summarized that learners need to be provided with effective strategies and they are supported to find their own learning methods. Learners are encouraged to set their own goals and evaluate themselves

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<sup>2</sup> The general guidelines of the 7th National Curriculum were revised first in 2006 and second in 2009. According to the guidelines, the English curriculums were revised in 2007 and in 2011 respectively.

in learning. Learner-centered education is deeply related to the differentiation since it emphasizes individual differences and developments.

As one of the members of a team to reform the 7<sup>th</sup> national English curriculum, Kim (1997) analyzed and compared foreign language curriculums in the United States, England, Israel, and Hungary and suggested six underlying concepts in forming the new curriculum. One of those concepts is the proficiency-based approach which is introduced in the 7<sup>th</sup> curriculum in order to allow students to learn according to their own abilities and interests. Individual learning can be implemented in two different ways. One is within a multi-level classroom by one teacher where small group tasks or individual tasks are provided, the other is a real differentiated approach where replacement of students according to their levels are made (Gim, 1997).

### **2.3.2 Level-based Class Placement**

When it comes to differentiation, ability grouping or level-based class placement can be considered. Effects of ability grouping have been topics of several studies overseas and within the country (Slavin, 1990; Yoon, 1998). Standards of grouping should be decided carefully. If just achievements in exams are the standards, it's hard to expect appropriate outcomes (Slavin, 1990). It indicates that across learner's levels, the effects of differentiation can be varied.

Most of secondary schools (middle and high schools) in Korea have been

adopting and implementing the differentiated English curriculum of the 7<sup>th</sup> National curriculum and many researches on the effects of the curriculum, specifically on the level-based placement of English classes, have been conducted. Early researches put main focus on how the level-based groupings affected learners' English proficiencies or grades.

Some researchers (Kim, 2003; Lee & Cheong, 2005) were interested in the students in lower level classes and they expressed worries that level-based class placement didn't promote low-level learners to develop their English proficiencies. It was suggested that creating educational materials specialized for different levels was a key to success of level-based placement.

Kim (2006) investigated opinions of the first year students in a girls' high school on the level-based placement of English classes. She reported that more than half of the students in the upper level class preferred the level-based grouping whereas the students in the middle level class expressed the negative opinions on effects of the level-based class placement. Yu (2008) conducted the study on high school students' attitudes toward effects of the level-based English class placement, specifically effects on their academic achievements. He reported that students gave negative answers on the effects of ability-based groupings on their grades. Noticeably, however, students in upper level class thought that class environments affected their English achievement in a positive ways.

Most of the researches on the level-based placement of English classes have been conducted with the data from the one-time survey or the data from students'

academic achievements. This present research put more focus on the changes of learners' factors while the English class placements were implemented in the school settings rather than investigating whether the curriculum affected learners' grades or not.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how attitudes and beliefs of EFL high school students are formed and changed under the level-based placement of English classes. For this purpose, the present research mainly used a quantitative method, employing three successive questionnaire surveys. Additionally, they were accompanied by the qualitative method of interviews for in depth investigation of particular cases.

This chapter provides the methodological approach and research design for the present study. Section 3.1, Section 3.2, and Section 3.3 describe the participants, instruments, and data collection procedures for the current research. Finally, Section 3.4 describes the data analysis procedures.

### **3.1 Participants**

The participants of this study consisted of two hundred and fifty nine Korean EFL students (ten classes) in the first grade of a high school which is located in the northern area of Seoul, Korea. The English proficiency of these students was lower than the average of Korean high school students. Not many of them have experiences learning English outside of the public school setting, through occasions such as attending private institutes, having private tutoring or visiting

English-speaking foreign countries for the purpose of travel or language study. One hundred and forty three were boys and one hundred and sixteen were girls. Table 3.1 displays the composition of the participants.

**TABLE 3.1**

**Detailed Class Composition of Participants**

Gender	Boys						Girls			
Group	G1		G2		G3		G4		G5	
Class	1-1	1-2	1-3	1-4	1-5	1-6	1-7	1-8	1-9	1-10
Number	25	23	25	23	24	23	29	29	29	29
Level-based groupings	A(High): 20		A: 20		A: 20		A: 24		A: 24	
	B(Low): 14*2		B: 14*2		B: 14,13		B: 17*2		B: 17*2	
Total	143						116			
	259									

In the beginning of the school year, all classes were constructed as multi-levels, which is a common way to group students in every Korean secondary school. Participants had four English classes a week. Until late April, they took English classes in their original classes. Throughout the year, three ability-based groupings of students were arranged according to student grades: in May (mid-term of spring semester), in August (final of spring semester), and in October (mid-term of fall semester). Ten classes were grouped into five of two classes and each group was divided into three newly constructed classes – one higher level class (Class A) and two lower level classes (Class B) – each time. The borderlines for dividing

Class A and Class B were decided based on the class size. Four different English teachers taught the two-level classes in turns. After each grouping was finalized, students were placed into their newly designated classes in every English class and surveys were performed accompanied by these groupings.

After all surveys were carried out and final exam of fall semester was finished, eight students (four girls and four boys) were selected for the group interviews. Two participants out of four girls had stayed in the same level (Class A or Class B) for the year and the other six students had moved from one level to the other level at least once throughout the year. The background information of the interviewed students is summarized in Table 3.2.

**TABLE 3.2**  
**Participants for Interviews**

Interview Sessions	Students' Name	Gender	Level Placement Results		
			1 <sup>st</sup> grouping	2 <sup>nd</sup> grouping	3 <sup>rd</sup> grouping
First Session	Girl 1(G1)	Female	A	A	A
	Girl 2(G2)	Female	B	B	B
	Girl 3(G3)	Female	A	A	B
	Girl 4(G4)	Female	A	B	A
Second Session	Boy 1(B1)	Male	B	A	A
	Boy 2(B2)	Male	A	A	B
	Boy 3(B3)	Male	B	A	A
	Boy 4(B4)	Male	A	B	B

## **3.2 Instruments**

The instruments for this study include a questionnaire for three successive surveys implemented after the each level-based class grouping and two sessions of focus group interviews conducted at the end of the school year.

### **3.2.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire in Korean was constructed to investigate learners' affective factors. Most of the items drew upon the previous researches on attitudes and beliefs, but a few of the items were newly written to accommodate Korean EFL context (see Appendix). The same questionnaire was used for three successive surveys except for one difference which is that the one for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> surveys included three more items related to differentiated curriculum since those surveys were conducted after students were replaced into new levels according to their grades. Besides, the 1st questionnaire included individual learner factors such as learners' gender, starting age of learning English, experiences of residence in English-speaking countries, and learning experiences outside the school in order to collect their basic background information. The main part of the questionnaire consisted of three sub-parts which are Learners' Attitudes (LA), Learners' Beliefs (LB) and Learners' Self-concepts (LS). The number of the whole items of the main part was thirty-seven which were fourteen about LA, eighteen about LB, and five

about LS. Those items were made in four-point Likert scale ranging from ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘disagree’, to ‘strongly disagree’ to avoid the students’ blind selection of ‘neutral’ in five-point Likert scale questions (Jung, 2011).

In practice, Likert-type scales in language learning could safely operate with a range of 5~9 categories (Cox, 1980). From a statistical viewpoint, longer scale lengths of 7 or more categories are more desirable because of the gain in score variability (Busch, 1993). However, for this study, with the considerations of learner’s age and the purpose of the study, only four categories were adopted. Another issue about using Likert-scale which needs to be considered is whether to provide an odd or even number of categories (Busch, 1993). For this study, even number which would require respondents to choose one direction was chosen. The reasons why the option of neutral answer was deleted are: first, this study was carried out with young high school students and it might be possible for them to choose just neutral answer for being relieved from the pressure of making choices; second, in this study, the main focus was not on checking learners’ attitudes and beliefs once but on describing how those learners’ individual factors were formed and changed throughout the continuous surveys. Therefore, neutral answers were no use for that aim. Details of the construction of items are displayed briefly on Table 3.3.

**TABLE 3.3****Detailed Construction of Survey Items**

Categories of Items			Numbers of items	
			1 <sup>st</sup> survey	2 <sup>nd</sup> ,3 <sup>rd</sup> surveys
Learners' Attitudes	Toward English Learning (AEL)	Positive	4	4
		Negative	4	4
	Toward English Class (AEC)	Positive	3	3
		Negative	3	3
Learners' Beliefs	Self-efficacy and expectation about learning (BSE)		11	11
	Foreign language aptitude (BLA)		4	4
	Formal English education (BEE)		3	3
Learners' Self-Concepts	About themselves (SC)		5	5
Additional	On level-based class placement			3
Total			37	40

## 1) Learners' Attitudes (14 items)

Many researches related learners' attitudes were considered here to make items. Gardner(1985)'s 'The Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (AMTB)' was adopted but only some parts were chosen with consideration of the purpose of this study. Kim(1995) analyzed the factors which consist of English learning attitudes into seven attitudinal factors. Lee(1996) developed seventy-four questionnaire items through students' free essays to measure their attitudes and motivations. For this study, items related to attitudes toward English learning (AEL) and attitudes toward English classes in school (AEC) are chosen. There are several reasons why

these two areas of attitudes are administered. In this study, focuses are being paid on school situation under the certain curriculum and way of class grouping. Moreover, under the EFL situation, most of participants' English education is carried out within the school, formal education. They hardly have opportunities to communicate with target language people (except native instructors) and be exposed to target culture. Eight items (four positive, four negative) about AEL and six items (three positive, three negative) about AEC are included.

## 2) Learners' Beliefs (18 items)

'Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI)' which Horwitz (1987; 1988; 1999) developed was mainly administered to collect information on learners' beliefs, but again some parts from the inventory, especially ones related to learners' self-efficacy, were chosen for the specific purpose of this study. Originally, the BALLI contains thirty-four items in five major areas. Items were developed referring to and revising previous studies (Cotterall, 1999; Yang, 1999; Sakui & Gaies, 1999).

Among eighteen items, eleven were about learners' self-efficacy and their expectations about learning English which were the main focus of this study. Process of ability grouping of students can be considered by them as success or failure, therefore it can affect their beliefs about their capabilities. It was expected that throughout the whole procedure of this study, there might be significant changes in students' self-efficacy and expectations. Besides that, four items about

foreign language aptitude and three items about formal English education were also included.

### 3) Learners' Self-Concepts (5 items)

The importance of self-concepts in normal learning has been already discussed by many researchers (Bong & Clark, 1999; Choi, 2005). The same principle can be adopted in second or foreign language learning. In order to investigate the changes of learners' concepts about themselves (for example, self-concepts about their proficiency), five items were added by the researcher. Besides that, in order to gather more information of participants, 5 items asking their own evaluation about their English competence were shown on every survey as a form of preliminary questions which were not included for results analyses of this study.

### 4) Opinions on Level-based Class Placement (3 items)

Since this study aimed at investigating how attitudes and beliefs of EFL high school students were formed and changed under the level-based placement of English classes, it was necessary to examine students' opinion on level-based class placement and the differentiated curriculum. Three items were added by the researcher for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> surveys, which were carried out right after class groupings based on students' grades had taken place. However, those items were excluded in the process of result analyses such as factor analyses and T-tests.

### **3.2.2 Interviews**

As Block (2000) commented, in recent years, many researchers have shown a tendency to use interviews as an important part of triangulated data collection, along with observations, diaries, letters, and questionnaires (Cox & Assis-Peterson, 1999; Flowerdew, 2000; Morita, 2000). Dushku (1998; 2000) suggested two different types of interviews which are individual interviews and focus group interviews. For this study, two sessions of regular group interviews were conducted. One interview group consisted of four girls and the other consisted of four boys. Participants for group interviews were selected from both levels. One fourth of the interview participants had stayed in the same level for the year and three fourths of them had moved from one level to the other level at least once throughout the year (see Table 3.2). Interviews were conducted under agreements from the participants. Detailed schedule for the group interviews is shown in Table 3.4 in the following section. During the interview sessions, students had opportunities to talk freely about their opinions and feelings. Questions for the interviews were mainly about students' attitudes toward ability groupings and reflections on themselves such as proficiency, ability, and participation during classes. Students were also asked about the stresses or pressures they were given from teachers, peers, and parents.

### **3.3 Procedures**

The data of the study were collected in two ways. First, three successive surveys for the whole participants were carried out presented in Section 3.3.1. Section 3.3.2 demonstrates the data collection procedures of the group interviews in detail.

#### **3.3.1 Surveys**

The surveys were conducted three times (in May, August, and October) right after each level-based grouping was constructed and announced to the students. Since level-based groupings were based on the grades of each exam on the school calendar, the surveys were carried out after the exams (see Table 3.4). The same questionnaire items were used in every survey, but the order of items was randomly changed for each session in order to keep the students from recalling the previous questionnaire they were asked to fill out and giving the same answers. Participants were given about twenty minutes to fill out each questionnaire. Detailed school calendar and schedule of research procedures are displayed in Table 3.4.

**TABLE 3.4****Detailed Schedule of School and Research Procedures**

Semester	Month	School Schedule	Surveys	Interviews
Spring Semester	March			
	April	Midterm		
	May	First-grouping	1 <sup>st</sup> survey	
	June			
	July	Final		
Fall Semester	August	Second-grouping	2 <sup>nd</sup> survey	
	September			
	October	Midterm Third-grouping	3 <sup>rd</sup> survey	
	November			
	December	Final		group interviews

**3.3.2 Group Interviews**

As displayed in Table 3.4, two sessions of group interviews were performed in December after the final exam of fall semester. There were two interview groups of 4 girls and 4 boys each. Girls and boys were interviewed separately because existence of the opposite gender might affect their reactions especially for teens. Interviews were conducted in a small consulting room in the school with the comfortable atmosphere so that participants feel relaxed and express themselves. The whole process of each interview was audio-recorded and noted.

## **3.4 Data Analyses**

In relation to the two research questions of the study, Section 3.4.1 describes the procedures of analyzing the data gathered by three surveys including the process and results of factor analyses with survey questionnaire. Section 3.4.2 explains how the data from the focus group interviews were analyzed to support the results from the quantitative data.

### **3.4.1 Survey Analyses**

The analysis of survey results of the main study aims (1) to identify the relationship between level-based groupings and learners' affective factors such as beliefs and attitudes, and (2) to investigate the changes of beliefs and attitudes according to successive groupings. For these purposes, not only descriptions of changes of survey results but also T-tests among results of three surveys were conducted. Since there were 37 items categorized into three fields (Attitudes, Beliefs, and Self-Concepts) by the researcher in each questionnaire, factor analyses were conducted with the results of 1<sup>st</sup> survey in the beginning in order to check relationships among items and construct meaningful categories for explaining learners' affective factors. Validity of survey items were checked with newly constructed categories by Cronbach alpha.

As shown in Table 4.1, ten factors were extracted by factor analyses. Each

factor might consist of relevant items which are expected to measure the same affective factor of learners. In this research, only the items which have a relevancy over 0.6 (-0.6) were included and the factors which contain at least 2 items were chosen for the new dimensions. Detailed results of factor analyses and the procedures of choosing five new dimensions are presented in Table 3.5.

**TABLE 3.5**  
**Results of Factor Analyses with Survey Items**

Item No.	Component										New Dimensions	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
BSE1	.832	.170	-.158	.052	.102	.064	-.021	-.014	-.057	.070	Factor 1. Beliefs: Self-efficacy	
BSE2	.821	.156	.095	.027	.126	-.041	.095	.188	-.024	.106		
BSE8	.712	.238	.117	-.285	-.014	.012	-.011	.132	-.123	.232		
SC4	.645	.171	.199	-.310	.260	-.018	-.025	.150	-.028	-.121		
BSE6	.661	.229	-.011	.271	.064	.057	-.053	-.021	.203	-.054		
BSE7	.617	.302	-.266	-.026	-.052	.208	.151	.121	-.054	.002		
SC1	.612	.234	-.228	-.217	-.243	.118	-.380	-.127	-.032	.138		
BSE10	.607	.277	-.131	-.246	-.213	.265	.138	.172	-.119	.014		
BSE5	.553	.354	-.010	-.032	.177	.238	.096	.029	.151	.277		Deleted
AEC_P1	.266	.756	-.125	.039	.049	.128	.115	.060	.134	.156		Factor 2. Attitudes
AEL_P2	.398	.753	.039	-.095	.179	.000	.008	.206	-.059	-.156		
AEC_P2	.254	.734	-.086	.087	.035	.238	.117	-.075	.081	.116		
AEL_P1	.520	.665	-.021	-.098	.087	.026	.041	.226	-.178	-.136		
AEL_N1	-.114	.725	.300	.054	.003	.236	.110	-.052	.083	.038		
AEL_P4	.375	.590	-.060	-.302	-.103	.134	-.071	-.089	-.334	.080	Deleted	
AEC_N1	-.241	-.583	.418	.054	-.205	.082	.147	-.066	-.117	.089		
AEL_N4	-.245	-.397	.056	.368	-.350	.228	.250	.297	.119	-.123		

AEC_N2	.140	-.130	.810	.089	-.085	.076	.061	.115	.069	.151	Factor 3. Attitudes
AEC_N3	-.042	-.232	.705	.172	-.185	-.008	-.102	-.229	.187	-.101	
AEC_P3	.324	.213	-.624	-.007	-.069	-.024	.193	.259	.042	.254	
AEL_N3	.033	.020	.075	.728	-.035	.154	.074	.093	-.132	-.050	Deleted
AEL_P3	.209	.408	-.280	-.570	-.048	.132	.078	-.026	-.120	.038	
BLA3	.093	.017	.119	.504	.188	.373	-.336	-.063	.238	.318	
BEE3	.099	.086	-.061	.075	.672	.067	.129	.133	.118	.223	Factor 4.
BEE2	.358	.163	-.141	.045	.653	.092	.237	.136	-.010	-.126	Beliefs
BSE3	.364	-.003	.156	.292	-.562	.260	-.232	.033	.122	-.136	Deleted
SC3	.085	.065	.067	.158	.009	.756	-.115	.155	.081	-.022	
SC5	-.044	.027	-.002	-.124	-.369	.130	-.699	.096	.183	-.063	
BEE1	.330	.077	-.186	-.146	.138	.009	.597	.031	.090	.166	
SC2	.404	.006	-.170	-.024	-.057	.389	-.438	.314	-.106	-.045	
BLA2	.185	.024	-.119	.006	.083	-.024	-.214	.723	.041	-.075	Factor 5.
BLA1	.046	.198	-.019	.113	.115	.235	.156	.639	.111	.038	Beliefs
BLA4	.111	-.024	.136	-.058	-.058	.247	-.071	.100	.813	.150	Deleted
BSE4	.267	.080	-.048	-.045	-.180	.195	-.024	-.051	-.595	.428	
BSE11	-.085	-.018	.009	.033	-.170	.076	-.122	.034	-.010	-.816	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

a.10 components extracted

KMO =0.751, Result of Bartlett's Test  $X^2=5484.992$  (df=666, Sig.=0.000).

As shown in Table 3.5, some of the survey items were excluded for analyzing the results of this research since they were turned out not to be related to other items. In case that the items had minus figures like the ones of AEL\_N1 and AEC\_P3, the items were considered to have high relevancies with other items and categorized into the same dimensions. When the values of new dimensions were extracted later, the results of the items which had minus figures of relevancy in

Factor Analyses were reversed to make them correspond to their associates. As a result, all the effective items were re-categorized into five dimensions: Self-Efficacy (SE), Attitudes toward English Learning (AEL), Attitudes toward School English Education (ASEE), Beliefs about English Education (BEE), and Beliefs about Language Aptitude (BLA). Five dimensions and survey questions belonging to each dimension are presented in detail in Table 3.6.

**TABLE 3.6**

**Survey Questions and New Dimensions from Factor Analyses**

Item No.	Questions	New Dimensions
BSE1	나는 영어학습능력이 평균 정도는 된다 My English study proficiency is around average.	Self- efficacy(SE)
BSE2	내가 한 결과가 다른 사람에게 평가되는 것은 나에게 도움이 된다 It's helpful to me that my results are evaluated by others.	
BSE8	나는 내가 영어 말하기 잘하는 것을 배울 수 있다고 믿는다 I believe that I can learn how to speak English well.	
SC4	부모님은 내 영어실력에 만족하신다 My parents are satisfied with my English.	
BSE6	나는 영어를 공부하는 효과적인 방법을 찾을 수 있다 I am able to find effective ways to study English.	
BSE7	나는 영어 학습을 위한 특별한 능력이 있다 I have special competences for learning English.	
SC1	나는 다른 친구들보다 영어를 잘하고 싶다 I want to do better than other friends in English.	
BSE10	내가 한 결과가 다른 사람에게 평가되는 것은 두려운 일이다 I'm afraid that my results are evaluated by others.	
8 Items		

AEC_P1	영어수업시간이 기다려진다 I am looking forward to English classes.	
AEL_P2	나는 영어배우는 것을 매우 좋아한다 I really like learning English.	Attitudes
AEC_P2	학교에서 영어수업시간이 더 많았으면 좋겠다 I want that there are more English classes in school.	toward School
AEL_P1	영어배우는 것은 정말 재미있다 It's really fun to learn English.	English Learning
AEL_N1	나는 영어를 배우는 것을 싫어한다 I hate learning English.	(AEL)
5 Items		
AEC_N2	학교 수업과 영어 시험성적과는 상관이 없다 School English classes have nothing to do with grades of English Exam.	Attitudes
AEC_N3	학교 영어수업에 참여하는 것은 부담스럽다 It's burdensome to take part in English classes in school.	toward School
AEC_P3	영어수업시간에 열심히 하면 시험에서 좋은 성적을 얻을 수 있다 Working hard in English classes guarantee getting good grades in exam.	English Education (ASEE)
3 Items		
BEE3	영어를 잘하기 위해서는 학교교육이면 충분하다 School English Education is enough for good English.	Beliefs about
BEE2	내가 공부하는 시간을 고려하면 현재 나의 영어실력에 만족한다 Considering how many hours I study, I am satisfied my English.	English Education (BEE)
2 Items		
BLA2	어떤 사람들은 영어를 배우는 특별한 능력이 있다 Some people have special competence for learning English.	Beliefs about
BLA1	언어를 하나이상 말하는 사람들은 머리가 좋다 People who speak more than one language are smart.	Language Aptitude (BLA)
2 Items		
Number of Dimensions		5

As shown in Table 3.6, twenty items of survey questions were decided to be included for result analyses for this research. The dimension of Self-Efficacy conceives the highest number of the items, which is eight, and both beliefs about English Education and about Language Aptitude contain the same lowest number of the items, which is two. Self-Efficacy, the first dimension of the list, is

containing eight relevant survey items and originally belonging to the field of ‘Beliefs.’ For the further investigations from the next sub-chapter, two main fields of individual affective factors, which are ‘Attitudes’ and ‘Beliefs’ of learners, were decided to be maintained. Therefore, the order of the dimensions was adjusted regardless of the number of survey items which each item contains. Table 3.7 presents the summary of five newly extracted dimensions with the order adjusted according to the two bigger categories, Attitudes and Beliefs.

**TABLE 3.7**

**Summary of Newly Extracted Dimensions**

Categories of Individual Affective Factors	New Dimensions
Attitudes	Attitudes toward English Learning(AEL) Attitudes toward School English Education(ASEE)
Beliefs	Self-Efficacy (SE) Beliefs about English Education (BEE) Beliefs about Language Aptitude (BLA)
Number of Dimensions	5

After new categories or affective dimensions were determined through factor analyses, the mean scores of each dimension for three surveys were calculated in order to examine the changes of the results from three successive surveys – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> surveys – along the school year. Then, the statistical descriptions for each survey were carried out and demonstrated in the form of line graphs with the mean

scores of each dimension in order to check whether there had been changes of attitudes and beliefs with the whole participants. Furthermore, T-tests between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> surveys and between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> surveys were carried out to investigate whether the changes were statistically significant or not. Investigations of the results were conducted separately for learners' attitudes and beliefs. In addition, in order to check whether moving to the upper or lower levels affects the attitudes and beliefs of learners in focus groups, data of the focus groups were selectively investigated by descriptions and T-tests.

### **3.4.2 Interview Analyses**

All of the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and a content analysis was carried out on all of the data collected from the group interviews. What the participants talked about their experiences under the successive level-based class groupings was investigated by the researcher and categorized into the affective factors that each comment or answer represented properly. Comments and Answers of all interviewees were presented in the discussion sections in the form of excerpt in order to support what was revealed in the investigations of the survey analyses.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results and Discussion**

This chapter presents the results of the study. Section 4.1 summarizes the results of all the surveys based on new dimensions from factor analyses demonstrated in the previous chapter (Section 3.4.1). Section 4.2 provides the survey results of focus groups who moved up or down to different levels after each level-based class replacement. Focus groups are two kinds: one is a group of students who were sent from upper (Class A) to lower (Class B) level class, and the other was from lower to upper level class. Section 4.1 and Section 4.2 also contain further discussions on the results from the survey analyses.

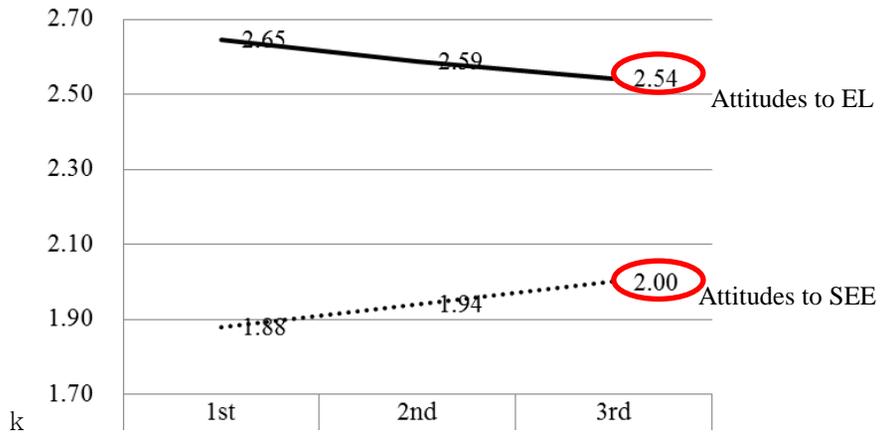
#### **4.1 Changes in Affective Dimensions of Whole Learners**

The first research question was to investigate how learners' attitudes and beliefs changed as the students were placed into level-based classes throughout the year and factor analyses were conducted as presented in the previous section (section 4.1) to answer the question. Based on the results of the factor analyses, five new affective dimensions were created as shown in Table 4.1 and 4.3 and the investigations were conducted based on the new dimensions separately for learners' attitudes and beliefs. Section 4.2.1 shows how the attitudes of whole participants changed along with the surveys and Section 4.2.2 demonstrates changes of their

beliefs with the results of T-tests. Finally, Section 4.2.3 presents the discussions on the changes in affective dimensions of the whole learners under the successive level-based groupings of English classes.

#### **4.1.1 Changes of Learners' Attitudes**

In the category of Learners' Attitudes, there are two dimensions, Attitudes toward English Learning (AEL) and Attitudes toward School English Education (ASEE). Shedivy (2004) states that learners' attitudes can be changed according to educational environments: in the present study the variable related to such environments is a level-based class placement. In order to investigate how learners' attitudes were affected by level-based class re-groupings, mean scores of two attitudes dimensions for each survey were calculated. Figure 4.1 displays the changes of two kinds of learners' attitudes with the form of a line graph with each mean score marked on it, which shows clear trend of the changes. The lower the means of each dimensions on learners' attitudes are, the more positive attitudes it indicates that learners have.



**FIGURE 4.1<sup>3</sup>**

### **Changes of Learners' Attitudes**

As shown in Figure 4.1, two different kinds of learners' attitudes changed toward the opposite directions. While the means of learners' attitudes toward English learning became continuously lower, those of learners' attitudes toward School English Education became higher throughout three surveys. Such results indicate that learners developed their AEL positively under the level-based class placement. On the contrary, learners' ASEE, which might be affected by school class management itself more than AEL, changed in a negative way.

Furthermore, it was necessary to examine whether the changes of learners' attitudes shown in Figure 4.1 were statistically meaningful or not. In order to test statistical significances, T-tests were conducted with the mean scores of learners' attitudes. The circles around specific values in Figure 4.1 indicate statistically

<sup>3</sup> The circle marks around some specific numbers in Figures from this page indicate statistically significant changes according to the results of T-tests.

significant changes. The results of the third survey which was conducted right after learners were placed into new groups based on their grades of fall semester midterm exam indicated significant changes compared to the results of the first survey. The results of T-tests among three surveys on two kinds of learners' attitudes are displayed in Table 4.4.

**TABLE 4.1**  
**Results of T-test with the Data on Learners' Attitudes**

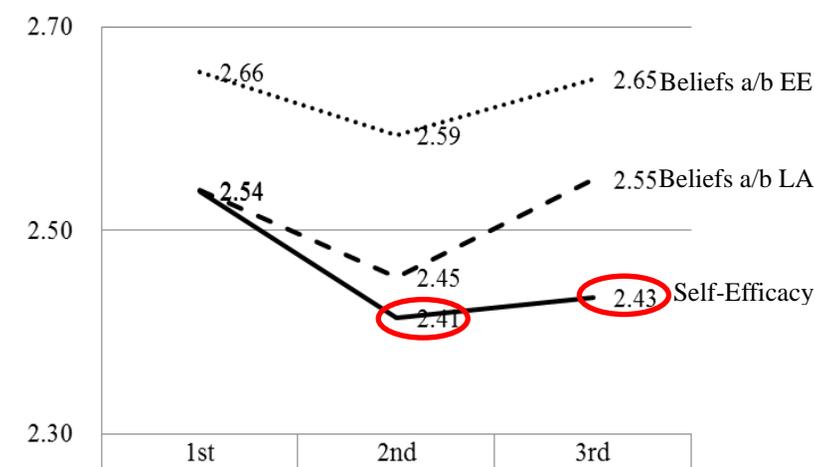
	Paired Differences						t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
1 <sup>st</sup> AEL-2 <sup>nd</sup> AEL	.0670	.5956	.0393	-.0104	.1443	1.705	229	.090	
1 <sup>st</sup> ASEE-2 <sup>nd</sup> ASEE	.0420	.7192	.0466	-.0498	.1339	.901	237	.368	
1 <sup>st</sup> AEL-3 <sup>rd</sup> AEL	.1184	.5226	.0364	.0467	.1902	3.253	205	.001*	
1 <sup>st</sup> ASEE-3 <sup>rd</sup> ASEE	.1164	.6453	.0436	.0305	.2024	2.670	218	.008*	

(M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation, p<.05)

Compared to the results of the first survey, the results of both AEL and ASEE of the third survey show significant changes as shown in Table 4.4. These changes show that level-based class placement might encourage students to develop their positive attitudes toward English learning, affecting learners' attitudes toward School English Education in a negative way.

### 4.1.2 Changes of Learners' Beliefs

In the category of learners' beliefs, three new dimensions – self-efficacy, beliefs about English education, and beliefs about language aptitude – were chosen for further investigations of this research. Like the cases of learners' attitudes, the means of each dimension for three surveys were calculated and displayed in the form of line graphs in Figure 4.2.



**FIGURE 4.2**

### Changes of Learners' Beliefs

As shown in Figure 4.2, both BEE and BLA changed presenting a similar pattern that learners' beliefs in 2<sup>nd</sup> survey became stronger than those of 1<sup>st</sup> survey, but their beliefs in 3<sup>rd</sup> survey were almost as weak as the results of 1<sup>st</sup> survey. Moreover, those changes showed no statistical significances according to the

results of T-tests displayed in Table 4.5. When it comes to self-efficacy (SE), however, participants' beliefs about their own potentials became significantly stronger after the 2<sup>nd</sup> grouping, retaining the strength after 3<sup>rd</sup> grouping. The results of T-tests on changes of learners' beliefs are presented in Table 4.5.

**TABLE 4.2**  
**Results of T-test with the data on learners' beliefs**

	Paired Differences		Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD		Lower	Upper			
1 <sup>st</sup> SE – 2 <sup>nd</sup> SE	.1188	.4782	.0315	.0567 .1810	3.769	229	.000*	
1 <sup>st</sup> BEE – 2 <sup>nd</sup> BEE	.0582	.7700	.0506	-.0414 .1578	1.151	231	.251	
1 <sup>st</sup> BLA – 2 <sup>nd</sup> BLA	.0797	.7681	.0504	-.0196 .1791	1.581	231	.115	
1 <sup>st</sup> SE – 3 <sup>rd</sup> SE	.0671	.3870	.0272	.0134 .1208	2.465	201	.015*	
1 <sup>st</sup> BEE – 3 <sup>rd</sup> BEE	.0124	.6454	.0454	-.0772 .1019	.273	201	.785	
1 <sup>st</sup> BLA – 3 <sup>rd</sup> BLA	.0000	.7364	.0518	-.1022 .1022	.000	201	1.000	

(p<.05)

According to the results of T-tests in Table 4.5, learners' self-efficacy became stronger after the second re-grouping based on the final of spring semester and the change was statistically significant. Also after the last re-grouping based on the midterm of fall semester, learners' self-efficacy showed little change, which means the change was still significant compared to the results of the first survey. The other

two dimensions on beliefs – BEE and BLA –, in contrast, also changed along the process of three level-based class placements, but those changes were not significant according to the results of T-tests. Therefore, it is revealed that level-based class placement promotes learners' self-efficacy but has nothing to do with learners' beliefs either about English education or about language aptitude.

### **4.1.3 Discussions on Changes of Whole Learners**

This section presents the discussions with the data on the changes of learners' affective dimensions demonstrated in the previous sections (section 4.1.1 and section 4.1.2.). Separate discussions on the changes of learners' attitudes and beliefs are presented in Section 4.1.3.1 and Sections 4.1.3.2 with the excerpts from the focus group interviews which support the quantitative data.

#### **4.1.3.1 On Changes of Learners' Attitudes**

As the participants of the present study experienced three successive level-based class placements throughout the year, their individual affective factors definitely changed along the year and those changes showed certain meaningful patterns. For the current study, learners' attitudes and beliefs were chosen for the close investigations and three successive surveys were conducted with EFL high school students. As revealed by the results from the T-test analyses in the previous sections, level-based placement of English classes affected learners' attitudes

toward English learning in positive ways. Even though students had to be placed into new classes after each exam, their attitudes toward English learning continued to become more positive than the beginning of the school year. On the contrary, learners' attitudes toward school English education – a kind of affective factor which is considered learners' perceptions about the relationship between English classes in school and their achievements in school exams – changed constantly in a negative way. Such results explain that level-based class placements may discourage students to develop their positive attitudes toward school education at its relations to their own learning accomplishments.

### **Interview Excerpt (1)**

- G4: *Students in the lower level class weren't focusing on the study. They didn't concentrate on the work, which distracted me as well. I felt like the teacher was not putting her full efforts on the work, either. **I think I got little help from the classes for my final.***
- G2: *Since I became a high school student, **I haven't registered for the private institute** and spent much time studying English. As a result, I got the grades that I had never imagined.*
- G1: ***I stopped going to a private institute** in the middle of spring semester, so I didn't solve many questions. It made me worried that I might be sent to a lower level class.*
- G2: *There are pros and cons about level-based class placement. One of the cons is that students in lower level classes don't work hard and it affects me. I don't like the fact that I have to study with an unfamiliar teacher.*

As shown in Excerpt (1), students tended to draw negative evaluations about lower level classes, especially the studying behaviors of the learners, which might affect negative changes of ASEE throughout the level-based groupings. In addition, some of the students talked about private institutes which they thought were helpful for their grades. It explained that the reason why students had negative attitudes toward school English education was not the school curriculum itself but their quite groundless beliefs about the private institutes constructed long ago. In addition, G2 mentioned difficulties of meeting new teacher when she was sent to different levels. For some learners, making relationship with friends and teachers is one of the important issues in their school and it does affect their achievements as well.

On the other hand, it was examined that students' attitudes toward English learning became constantly positive according to the Interview Excerpt (2).

### **Interview Excerpt (2)**

G4: *I felt a little discouraged at first when sent from Class A to Class B, but I had to accept that I didn't study enough so I deserved such results. I decided to work hard. I didn't give up and forced myself to study. Finally, I felt great that I got better grades in the fall semester.*

G3: *I didn't have specific plans or something in the beginning, but **after I went down to Class B, I realized that I need to be sharper and I worked hard.** Relieved, I got quite satisfying results at the final. Honestly, with my self-esteem hurt in Class B, I pushed myself much harder.*

Girls: *English is very important and we're planning to study English harder in the second grade!*

Boys: ***We would not give up and keep studying English in the second grade!***

As answered in Excerpt 2, learners' attitudes are affected by external factors, for example the level-based class placement in this research. It is revealed that class groupings offered opportunities the learners to reflect their study in the past and push themselves more. Such positive attitudes toward English learning, moreover, are somewhat related to learners' self-efficacy be discussed in the following section.

#### **4.1.3.2 On Changes of Learners' Beliefs**

Among three dimensions related to beliefs, learners' self-efficacy, which is assumed to play an important role in learning and to be the best predictor of students' language proficiency (Boakye 2015; Loo & Choy 2013), became significantly stronger in the 2<sup>nd</sup> survey than in the 1<sup>st</sup> survey. Moreover, the degree of learners' self-efficacy showed no big difference even in the 3<sup>rd</sup> survey, which means that students retained their beliefs in their own abilities to successfully perform tasks, a following school exam.

#### **Interview Excerpt (3)**

Q: *How did you feel when you were sent to Class B?*

G4: ***I decided not to give up and I put more efforts on studying English to move up to Class A.***

G3: ***After I went down to Class B, I realized that I needed a change. So I studied hard and I got satisfying results.***

In Excerpt (2) and Excerpt (3), students said that they tried harder to move to upper level class when they were sent to lower level class. It was because they had certain beliefs that they would go back to Class A if they studied more. Unless they developed their self-efficacy, they might give up or study no longer.

In case of the other two dimensions on beliefs, there were no significant changes found from the examination of the results. There might be several reasons for that. Most of all, since level-based class placement is considered a problem related to specific school curriculum policies (Kim, 2011), they don't affect much the changes of learners' beliefs about somewhat bigger and fixed issues, which are English education and language aptitude in the present study.

#### **Interview Excerpt (4)**

Q: *How did you feel when you were placed or moved into Class B?*

G4: *I didn't study hard. I thought I deserved it.*

G3: *I thought nothing was wrong.*

Q: *Do you think smart people are good at English?*

G1: *Well, that is somewhat true with math, but **as for English, being smart is not everything. I think that the harder, the better.***

G4: *English is influenced by intelligence not as much as math.*

G2: *I think **English is nothing to do with intelligence.***

G3: *I can get as much as I try in English.*

B1: *Compared to other subjects, it's hard to get good grades without certain basics in English.*

- Q: *Did you think that class placements well represented students' proficiencies?*
- B2: *Well, I thought **I deserved to go down to lower level.***
- B4: *I expected that I would be sent to Class B. I was just 2 points down from the border line, but **I thought that's my proficiency.***

Interview Excerpt (4) above shows that students have certain beliefs about English education and language aptitude which they consider quite different areas from other subject like math. They believed that the more they tried, the better results they could get in English. Therefore, they didn't complain about the grouping itself. Instead, they tended to accept the results of class placements and think they would need more work.

In short, when it comes to beliefs, it can be suggested from the findings that level-based class placements may contribute to positive changes in self-efficacy of EFL high school students. Learners showed tendency of not giving up but pushing themselves to study English harder for the next exam and level-based class grouping played a meaningful role in such individual affective processes. Particularly, learners' beliefs about their own potential became significantly strong along the way of level-based re-groupings.

## **4.2 Changes in Affective Dimensions of Focus Groups**

Since not all participants have been through the movements to different levels from their previous ones, this study put an important focus on the groups who were sent to the other level which was either lower or higher after final of spring

semester and midterm of fall semester. The numbers of participants in these focus groups are displayed in detail in Table 4.6.

**TABLE 4.3**

**Detailed Formation of Focus Group**

Period	Level-Down:		Level-Up:		Total
	A(high)→B(low)		B(low)→A(high)		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Grouping (after final in spring semester)	12	8	12	8	40
3 <sup>rd</sup> Class Grouping (after midterm in fall semester)	9	6	9	6	30

In May, participants were first grouped into Class A and Class B based on their grades from the midterm of spring semester. They took the final in July, and when they were re-grouped in August, twenty students were sent from Class A to Class B (level-down) and another twenty students moved from Class B to Class A (level-up). Forty out of two hundred fifty nine participants (approximately 15 % of the total participants) became the first focus group. The size of the second focus group, those who experienced level movements in October after the midterm of fall semester, became smaller. There were thirty students including both level-down and level-up groups, which was about 12% of the total participants. Actually, the levels of learners tended to be fixed at the end of the school year. These two focus groups were separately examined in terms of the changes of five new dimensions.

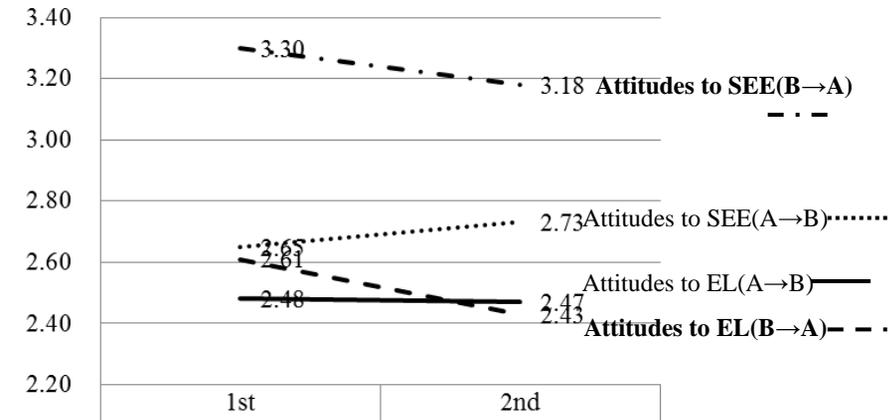
Within the same focus group, besides, the comparisons between level-up and level-down groups were the major issues for the deliberate discussions of this research.

The second research question of the current study was to examine how the affective dimensions of those who moved to different levels changed and to find out whether there were significant differences in the changes of level-up and level-down groups. In order to answer the question, investigations on the data of focus groups were conducted. This section presents the changes in affective dimensions of focus groups constructed after the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> groupings separately in Section 4.2.1 and 4.2.2. Finally, Section 4.2.3 presents the discussions on the changes in affective dimensions of the focus groups under the successive level-based groupings of English classes.

#### **4.2.1 Changes after 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Grouping**

After the participants had been assigned their first level-based class - Class A(high level) or Class B(low level) – in May, they took English classes with new classmates until the final exam in July. When they came back from summer vacation in August, some of the participants, who are called focus groups in this study, had to move into new level classes based on their final grades of spring semester. Forty out of the whole participants were sent to different levels: level-up or level-down groups. Like in the previous section where the survey results of the whole classes were investigated, the changes of five affective dimensions of the

focus groups were analyzed by the line graphs and T-tests.



**FIGURE 4.3<sup>4</sup>**

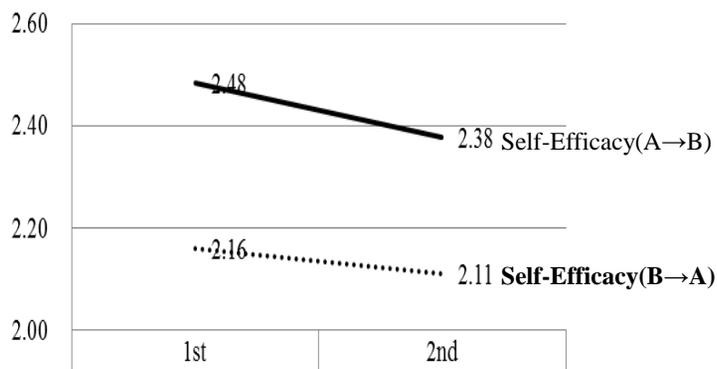
**Changes of Attitudes of Focus Groups (1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup>)**

Figure 4.3 shows the changes in two kinds of attitudes of those who were moved into lower or higher levels, using the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> survey. There are four different lines in one Figure because the kinds of attitudes and focus groups were two each. It is revealed that the attitudes of two groups changed differently moving to opposite directions. While the attitudes of level-up group became more positive for both AEL and ASEE, those of level-down group became more negative for two kinds of attitudes. Even though such changes are not statistically significant according to the results of T-tests, it may be said that going to upper level class affects learners' attitudes in positive ways.

The changes of learners' beliefs of focus groups, however, were not as

<sup>4</sup> In order to mark level-down and level-up groups easily, labels with bold font are used for the level-up groups besides the line graphs.

predictable as those of learners' attitudes. As shown in Figure 4.4, two lines presenting the changes of learners' self-efficacy move the same direction for both level-down and level-up groups which indicates that the beliefs about their potential became stronger regardless of level-up or level-down groups. The changes were not significant according to the T-tests, but the level-down group tended to show bigger change in their self-efficacy than level-up group. If such a trend of changes in learners' self-efficacy in focus groups would be repeated for the next re-grouping, further explanations for the tendency need to be added. Figure 4.4 displays the line graphs showing the changes of learners' self-efficacy of focus group who experienced the level changes in the first class re-grouping.

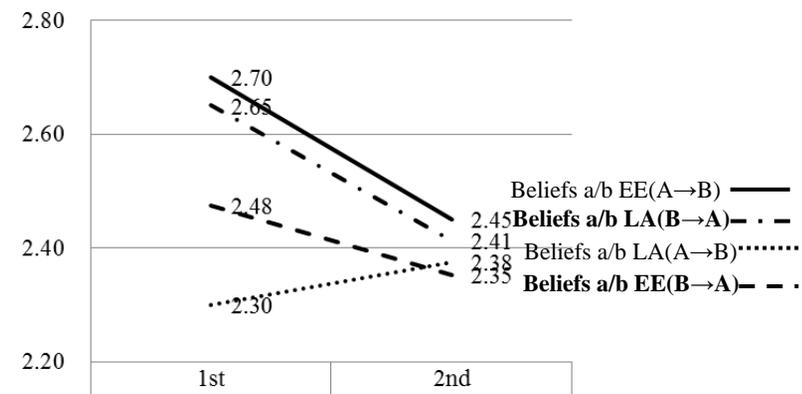


**FIGURE 4.4**

**Changes of Self-Efficacy of Focus Groups (1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup>)**

There are two more dimensions belonging to the category of belief, which are beliefs about English education and beliefs about language aptitude. Figure 4.5 presents the changes of these two dimensions for the focus groups after the 2<sup>nd</sup>

class grouping. Like the case of whole classes, BEE and BEA do not show specific tendency of changes which is statistically meaningful. As shown in Figure 4.5, both BEE and BLA of level-up group became stronger after the class re-grouping whereas only BEE of level-down group became stronger and its BLA became weaker.



**FIGURE 4.5**

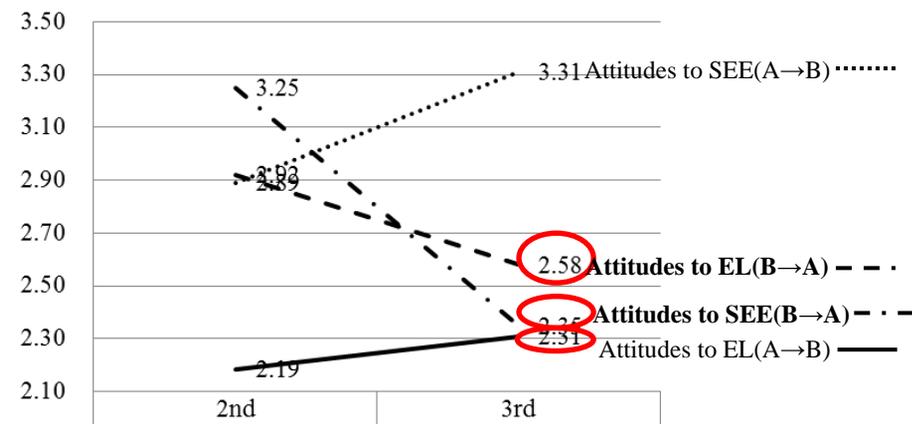
**Changes of Beliefs of Focus Groups (1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup>)**

In short, while self-efficacy and beliefs about English education became stronger for both level-up and level-down groups, beliefs about language aptitude changed toward different directions. In case of self-efficacy, the degree of the change for level-down group is higher than that for level-up group. All the changes, however, were not statistically significant.

### **4.2.2 Changes after 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Grouping**

After the participants took midterm in October, 3<sup>rd</sup> level-based class grouping was implemented, which resulted in movement of thirty students into the other level. The size of focus groups was not as large as that of the previous focus groups in August. However, the changes of affective dimensions of the participants were much more noticeable and statistically significant compared to the case of the previous focus groups.

Learners' attitudes were the first concern to be further investigated in the present study focusing on level-down and level-up groups separately. Noticeably, the attitudes for focus groups who had to move to different classes based on their grades of midterm exam in October showed the dramatic changes compared to the previous survey. Figure 4.6 shows the changes of two kinds of attitudes of focus groups with the form of line graphs and the numbers marked with the red circles indicate that those changes are statistically significant.



**FIGURE 4.6**

**Changes of Attitudes of Focus Groups (2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

As shown in Figure 4.6, the level-up group experienced the more drastic changes of attitudes than level-down group and the attitudes of two focus groups changed toward the exactly opposite directions. While both AEL and ASEE of the level-down group became more negative after the 3<sup>rd</sup> class grouping, those of the level-up group became a lot more positive. Moreover, such positive changes of attitudes are statistically significant according to the results of T-tests presented in Table 4.8. In case of the level-down group, although learners in the group became to have more negative attitudes, only the changes of AEL showed statistical significances. Table 4.7 and Table 4.8 displays the results of T-tests with the data on the changes of two kinds of attitudes – AEL and ASEE – of level-down and level-up group each.

**TABLE 4.4****Results of T-test on Attitudes of Level-down Group (2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

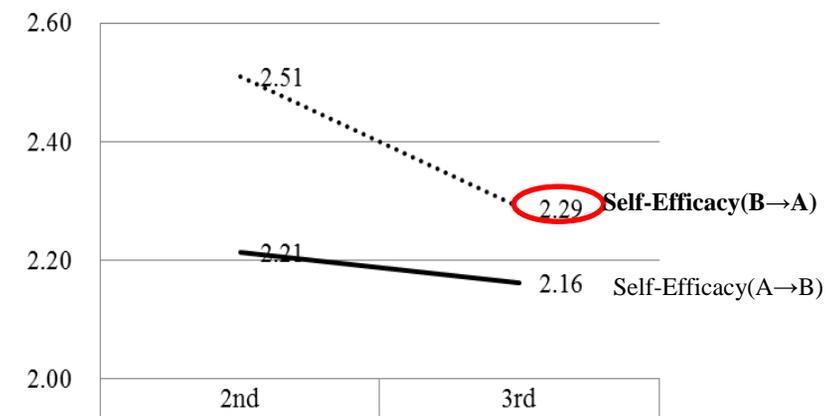
	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
2 <sup>nd</sup> AEL–3 <sup>rd</sup> AEL	-.1231	.1922	.0533	-.2392	-.0070	-2.309	12	.040*
2 <sup>nd</sup> ASEE–3 <sup>rd</sup> ASEE	.4231	1.0772	.2987	-.2278	1.0740	1.416	12	.182

**TABLE 4.5****Results of T-test on Attitudes of Level-up Group (2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
2 <sup>nd</sup> AEL–3 <sup>rd</sup> AEL	.3400	.2989	.0945	.1262	.5538	3.597	9	.006*
2 <sup>nd</sup> ASEE–3 <sup>rd</sup> ASEE	-.9000	.6583	.2082	-1.3709	-.4291	-4.323	9	.002*

Being identical with the results of the changes after 2<sup>nd</sup> class grouping (section 4.2.1), it can be checked that the directions of changes in attitudes of focus groups are exactly opposite in level-up and level-down groups. Level-down group showed negative changes, some of which are statistically significant based on the T-test analyses. Level-up group, in contrast, showed positive changes, all of which are statistically significant according to the results of the T-test.

Second affective category to be dealt with is learners' beliefs which contain three dimensions – self-efficacy, BEE, and BLA –. Like the changes of attitudes, the changes of self-efficacy were much bigger for the level-up group compared to the level-down group whose self-efficacy became a little stronger as well. Figure 4.8 displays the changes of self-efficacy of focus group including level-down and level-up groups after the 3<sup>rd</sup> grouping comparing to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grouping.

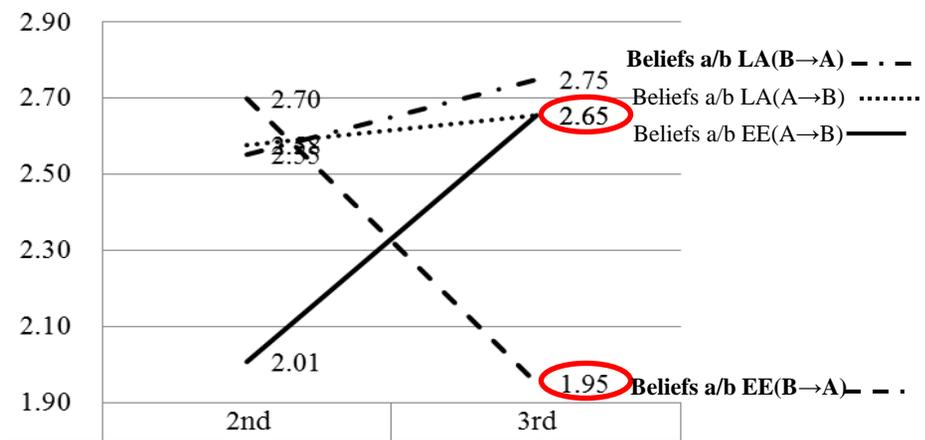


**FIGURE 4.7**

**Changes of Self-Efficacy of Focus Groups (2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

The changes of self-efficacy presented in Figure 4.8 are similar to both the results of focus groups after 2<sup>nd</sup> grouping (section 4.2.1) and the results of whole classes (section 4.1.2). Whether they were sent to the different levels in each groupings or not, learners' self-efficacy tended to become constantly stronger under the level-based class placements, which means that level-based groupings might encourage learners to develop their self-efficacy.

The other two beliefs dimensions changed not as constantly as the dimension of self-efficacy. Learners' beliefs about English education changed more dramatically than BLA for both level-down and level-up groups, presenting the opposite direction of changes. While the level-up group developed their strong BEE after the 3<sup>rd</sup> grouping, their partner weakened their BEE. More noticeably, the changes of BEE for both focus groups were statistically significant according to the results of T-tests presented in Table 4.9 and 4.10. As to the beliefs about language aptitude, both group showed the similar changes that they weakened their beliefs. The extent of the changes, however, was neither remarkable nor statistically significant. Figure 4.9 shows the changes of all kinds of beliefs for two focus groups after the 3<sup>rd</sup> grouping.



**FIGURE 4.8**

**Changes of Beliefs of Focus Groups (2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

Unlike the case of self-efficacy, it's not easy to find some specific trend of changes in BEE and BLA for focus groups. Compared to the results revealed in previous section (section 4.2.1), BEE of the focus groups changed in quite different ways. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> grouping, both the level-down and level-up groups developed their BEE although degrees of changes were not significant. However, the changes of BEE for the focus groups after the 3<sup>rd</sup> grouping became much bigger and statistically meaningful. More interestingly, the level-down group lost the strength of their BEE whereas the level-up group sharply developed their BEE. As to BLA, degrees of the changes were not noticeable enough to be examined and explained. Table 4.9 and Table 4.10 display the results of T-tests with the data on beliefs of the focus groups after the 3<sup>rd</sup> survey. T-test analyses were carried out comparing the results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> survey with those of the 2<sup>nd</sup> survey instead of the 1<sup>st</sup> survey since the students in the focus groups constructed after the 3<sup>rd</sup> grouping were not the same as those who moved to different levels after the 2<sup>nd</sup> grouping.

**TABLE 4.6****Results of T-test on Beliefs of Level-down Group (2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
2 <sup>nd</sup> SE–3 <sup>rd</sup> SE	.0513	.1674	.0464	-.0499	.1524	1.105	12	.291
2 <sup>nd</sup> BEE–3 <sup>rd</sup> BEE	-.5769	.7596	.2107	-1.0359	-.1179	-2.739	12	<b>.018*</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> BLA–3 <sup>rd</sup> BLA	-.0769	.5341	.1481	-.3997	.2458	-.519	12	.613

**TABLE 4.7****Results of T-test on Beliefs of Level-up Group (2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
2 <sup>nd</sup> SE–3 <sup>rd</sup> SE	.2222	.2342	.0741	.0547	.3898	3.000	9	<b>.015*</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> BEE–3 <sup>rd</sup> BEE	.7500	.5401	.1708	.3637	1.1363	4.392	9	<b>.002*</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> BLA–3 <sup>rd</sup> BLA	-.2000	.5869	.1856	-.6198	.2198	-1.078	9	.309

As shown in two Tables above, the level-up group showed the significant changes in their self-efficacy and beliefs about English education whereas the beliefs of the level-down group didn't change significantly except their BEE. Further investigations and explanations on such changes will be conducted in the following section.

### **4.2.3 Discussions on Changes of Focus Groups**

One of the main focuses of this research was on learners who were forced to move to either higher or lower level based on their grades from each exam and how their attitudes and beliefs changed after the level movements. The participants of this study were through level-based class groupings three times during the school year. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> grouping, some of the students were supposed to be placed into different levels and adjust themselves into an unfamiliar environment like new classmates and a new teacher. In order to investigate how the attitudes and beliefs of these focus groups changed, the data of five affective dimensions for each focus group – level-down and level-up groups, after the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> groupings – were extracted and compared, accompanying the T-test analyses to figure out whether the changes were statistically significant or not.

The findings from the data sampling and T-test analyses in the previous sections demonstrated that there were clear distinctions between level-up and level-down groups in terms of their attitudes. Comparisons between the results of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> surveys for the focus groups showed that the level-up group became to have positive attitudes and level-down group, negative attitudes, even though such changes were not statistically significant. Similarly, the results of comparing the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> surveys demonstrated same directions of changes for both the level-up and level-down groups. The gaps, however, were much bigger than before and showed significant differences especially for the level-up groups.

### **Interview Excerpt (5)**

Q: *How did you feel when you were sent to Class B?*

G4: *I thought **I would not give up and try hard** to move up to Class A again.*

G3: *First, I felt not so good and I lost a little bit of my motivation for studying.  
However, **I made up my mind soon and tried to study more than before.***

Q: *How did you feel when you were sent to Class A?*

G4: *I felt good! I think **there is a certain symbolic meaning of being in Class A.***

G3: *I thought I had to keep studying English like this.*

B1: *It was great! **I decided to work harder from then on.***

Q: *What if you failed to be placed into Class A due to only one or two questions on the exam?*

G1: *Well, it might be positive because **it would offer a kind of opportunity to study more.***

G3,4: *We would study harder!*

G2: *I actually experienced that and **I tried more after that.***

Most of the interviewees experienced level movements so their grades were quite near border lines. As shown in Excerpt (5), learners developed their positive attitudes especially when they failed to stay in Class A. Unlike those whose levels were very low, the students taking part in the interviews had high possibilities to be in Class A, which also affected the formation of their attitudes.

It's quite predictable that if the students moved to the lower level, they would be discouraged and develop their negative attitudes toward English learning. However, it was revealed that the level-down group did not lose all of their motivations to study English and they were even motivated to work hard for the

next chance to move up. Since the surveys in this study were conducted right after the level-based groupings took place, the attitudes of level-down groups might have changed in a little negative ways but it's possible for those groups to turn their direction of changes in the attitudes dimensions. With no doubt, moving to the higher level contributed to learners' positive attitudes and such contributions might encourage the learners to be motivated and study hard, which is definitely one of the good impacts of level-based placements of English classes.

In case of three dimensions on beliefs, the changes were quite different from the case of dimensions on attitudes. The changes in beliefs of focus groups, analyzed by two times of T-tests, didn't show any constant trends or directions except for the case of self-efficacy. As discussed in the section on the whole classes (section 4.1.3.2), level-based groupings promote learners to have strong beliefs about their potentials, that is self-efficacy, and such contributions might happen for the focus groups as well. In terms of statistical significances, only the change of the level-up group constructed after 3<sup>rd</sup> grouping was considered as meaningful. However, it might be revealed that being placed into different levels based on learners' grades encourage the students, especially those who move to the upper level, to develop their self-efficacy, which reflectively motivate them to study English hard for the next exam. In the following excerpt, some of the interviewees mentioned about their experiences of moving up or down and how those experiences affected their studies later on.

### **Interview Excerpt (6)**

Q: *What if you failed to be placed into Class A due to only one or two questions on the exam?*

B3: *I would feel a little sorry, but **I would accept it and decide to work harder.***

B1: *That really happened to me, but it was because I didn't do well on my exam, do **I thought I needed to study more.***

B4: *I couldn't move up only due to 2 points. I thought I deserve it. **That didn't discourage me.***

Q: *How did you feel when you were sent to Class B?*

G4: ***I decided not to give up.** I worked hard to move up to Class A.*

G3: *After I went down to Class B, I thought **I need to try harder and I did it!***

Q: *How about moving up to Class A?*

G3: *I thought I kept doing like that, but I am not a little tensed so I got poor grades in the next exam.*

As examined in the excerpt (6), most of the interviewees said that moving to the upper or lower levels motivated them to put more efforts on their future English learning. It might be revealed that the level-based placement of English classes influences more on those who are around the borderline and have higher possibilities to be sent to different levels. Most of the influences were investigated to affect the learners in positive ways, but the more careful considerations need to be put on the students who would be placed into a new circumstance regardless of their desires. In sum, when the students were sent to different levels, they strengthened their self-efficacy especially those who moved to lower level, and such changes actually lead them to work hard rather than discourage them,

eventually make them give up. Statistically, level-up groups developed their self-efficacy more than level-down groups so that they could stay in the upper-level class.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

Understanding the individual affective factors under the level-based placement of English classes is certainly no easy task. This research has aimed to investigate how learners' attitudes and beliefs changed through the successive level-based class groupings and especially how such affective factors of the focus groups – those who were sent to the different-level classes at least once – changed and differed from the whole participants. This final chapter briefly summarizes the major findings of this study and explores some of the pedagogical implications for teachers and educators in the field of EFL secondary schools and curriculum development. Finally, the limitations based on this research design and suggestions for future research are provided.

#### **5.1 Summary of Major Findings**

This study was designed to investigate (a) how EFL high school students' attitudes and beliefs change under the level-based English class placement throughout the year and (b) the extent to which level movements contribute to the attitudes and beliefs of focus groups who were sent to different-level classes at least once a year.

To examine the change of learners' attitudes and beliefs, three successive

surveys, modified from the forms of previous researchers, were implemented. Factor analyses with all the survey items reduced the factors to major five affective dimensions: attitudes (toward English learning, and toward school English education) and beliefs (self-efficacy, about English education, and about language aptitude). In addition, two sessions of group interviews with 8 students (four boys and four girls) were conducted to support quantitative data and investigate how students really felt under the level-based class placement.

In order to answer the research questions, survey data were collected and summed according to the five dimensions from the factor analyses. The changes of means of each dimension were demonstrated in forms of the line graphs and T-test analyses were conducted to examine whether such changes were statistically significant or not. In terms of attitudes, participants constantly tended to have more positive attitudes toward English learning than before when placed into new level-based classes. It shows that the level-based class placement affects students to form and develop more positive attitudes especially toward English learning, which might result in their putting more efforts on the future study to maintain or change their levels. Learner's attitudes toward school English education, however, didn't show positive changes for which several reasons can be charged. One of the reasons is that the level-down groups have been reported to be disadvantaged in the new classes due to the bad attitudes of their new classmates in several researches (Yu, 2008; Jung, 2011), so it is quite natural for them to develop their negative attitudes toward school English education, specifically here the level-based

curriculum. Self-efficacy among three dimensions related to learners' beliefs also showed significant changes that self-efficacy became constantly stronger. Thus, these results may imply that level-based class placement leads learners to improve their positive attitudes toward English learning and strengthen their self-efficacy, resulting in putting more efforts on their future study.

In regards to the second research question, sampling the data of participants who were through level movements and T-tests revealed that there were significant differences between the level-up and level-down groups. In terms of attitudes, while the level-up groups showed significantly positive changes in both AEL and ASEE, level-down groups developed their negative attitudes rather than positive ones for two kinds of attitudes. These changes, of course, might be expectable because it's a common sense that improvements in students' grades make them feel a sense of accomplishment, which results in positively changing their attitudes. The results from T-test analyses with the data on self-efficacy revealed that both the level-up and level-down groups showed the changes of having stronger self-efficacy right after level movements. The extent of changes was bigger for the level-up groups than for the level-down groups and they were statistically significant in case of comparing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> surveys of the level-up group. The other two dimensions on learners' beliefs (BEE and BLA) didn't show the constant trends of the changes, same as the whole classes, and were revealed not to be influenced much by the level-based class placement.

In short, the current research suggests that the level-based placement of

English classes might be playing an important role in the formation and change of learners' attitudes and beliefs, specifically self-efficacy. It is suggested that more attention needs to be paid to those who are continuously forced to move into different-level classes according to their grades in the school setting because the movements themselves might encourage some of them to 1) develop their positive or negative attitudes and 2) strengthen or weaken their beliefs about their own possibilities of success.

## **5.2 Pedagogical Implications**

The present study yields two important implications for the teaching English in the school setting and the implementation of the school curriculum of English classes, especially the level-based class placement. Firstly, although many researches about how the level-based curriculum affects students' English proficiency have been conducted, very little studies about the influences of the curriculum on students' individual affective factors have been carried out. The current research revealed that the level-based placement of English classes affects the learners' attitudes and beliefs in positive ways with only a few exceptions, so these findings offer many teachers and educationists with the insights that they need to consider carefully emotions of the learners as well as consequences of a certain curriculum setting. In addition, it's definite that the level-based class placement affects learners' attitudes toward English learning in a positive way, so a

well-organized implementation of the level-based placement of English classes should be encouraged in order to boost the effects of the curriculum, which would help the learners retain their positive attitudes toward English learning and eventually make them work harder.

On the other hand, since it was revealed that students tend to develop their negative attitudes toward school English education under the differentiated curriculum, it is necessary for educators to take into careful consideration some appropriate policy to improve learners' attitudes toward school English education. In order to yield the best results when implementing the level-based class placement in schools, teachers or educators need to examine the situations or learners' needs of the specific school and help the students understand the curriculum and what they can get from the curriculum. Moreover, not all of learners' negative attitudes toward school English education are due to the certain curriculum itself or the implementation of the curriculum. Such negative attitudes have been developed and encouraged quite for a long time throughout learners' experiences in schools for several reasons. Therefore, it is important to restore learners' trust in school English education, which is no easy task. The level-based class placement is revealed to have a bad influence on learners' attitudes toward school English education, so the curriculum needs to be modified for improving learners' ASEE.

Secondly, when implementing the level-based placement of English classes, some of the students are necessarily sent to different levels during the same school

year. Therefore, more interests should be put on those students especially in terms of their affective factors. Since it is revealed that level-down groups were discouraged and lost their positive attitudes toward English learning, teachers should take care of them in a way how they can minimize the learners' loss of their positive attitudes. Sometimes, it's not the best way to divide the classes just based on the grades or the class size. Some appropriate counterplans adjusted to the specific situation need to be suggested and considered when the school adopt and implement the differentiated curriculum. One of the plans could be to divide the learners into smaller classes rather than based on the students' grades or organize the class placement in accordance with learners' desire or just randomly. Another option is that, instead of constructing two-level classes, there could be three or more kinds of class based on the students' levels if the teachers are available.

### **5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

There are several limitations to the current study that raise questions to be addressed in future studies. Firstly, the current study collected the data from the successive surveys which were conducted right after the new class placement based on the students' grades was implemented. Even though the grouping itself might affected the survey results, there might be other variables that could influence the learners' attitudes and beliefs other than the class placement. Furthermore, no survey was carried out before the level-based class grouping was implemented, for

example, in the beginning of the school year. If there were the data of the students in early times, more precise comparison would be made and it could be explained whether the changes of attitudes and beliefs were really due to the level-based class placement or not.

Secondly, in order to complement weaknesses of quantitative method using survey data, more deepened qualitative research methods need to be adopted. For example, focus group interviews can be conducted after and before level-based groupings are carried out. Case study of chosen learners or groups is also suggested to examine how the learner's attitudes and beliefs are really formed and changed along with the successive class placements. Furthermore, future researchers can observe the actual classes and examine what is really happening in classrooms when students experience successive level-based class grouping and take English class with new classmates. In this process, a researcher can get more deepened insights about how the curriculum affects learners' affective factors and their participation in classroom activities.

Finally, the current research didn't put interests on the differences of gender and proficiency levels in conducting the surveys and analyze the results. It is expected that there might be different trends of changes in affective factors between boys and girls or between high and low levels. In order to investigate such differences and draw some meaningful results for teachers and educators, data of each group along with the surveys needs to be extracted and analyzed.

These limitations notwithstanding, the findings from the current research offer

detailed insights into the formation and change of learners' affective factors such as attitudes and beliefs when the students are in the school setting where they need to continuously move to different levels after each exam and call attention to the importance of putting careful considerations on learners' attitudes and beliefs when implementing the level-based English class curriculum.

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# APPENDICES

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# APPENDIX 1. Survey Form (1<sup>st</sup>)

1차 설문지

본 설문지는 학생 여러분들이 평소 영어 학습에 대해 가지고 있는 생각을 알아보고자 하는 설문입니다. 설문조사 결과는 고등학생들의 영어학습 자료를 개발하는데 유용하게 사용될 것입니다. 개인정보는 전혀 사용되거나 노출되지 않습니다. 본인이 평소에 생각하는 바를 성실하고 솔직하게 대답해주세요.

00고등학교 1학년 ( ) 반 ( ) 번 이름 ( )

※ 다음 문항들에 여러분에게 해당되는 것을 하나 골라 ○ 표시 하세요.

Q1 내 성별은 1) 남자 2) 여자 입니다.

Q2 언제부터 영어교육(개인교습, 학원과외 포함)을 받기 시작했나요?  
1) 유치원 이전 2) 유치원(6~7세) 3) 초등 1년~2년 4) 초등 3년~4년  
5) 초등 5년~6년 6) 중학교

Q3 영어를 사용하는 외국 국가에서 살아본 적이 있나요? 1) 예 2) 아니오

Q4 (3번 문제에 예라고 답한 학생들만) 얼마나 오래 살았나요?  
1) 6개월 미만 2) 6개월~1년 3) 1년~2년 4) 2년~3년 5) 3년 이상

Q5 지금 현재 학교 수업이외에 영어관련 학원을 다니거나 과외 수업을 받고 있나요?  
1) 예 2) 아니오

Q6 내가 생각하는 나의 전반적인 영어실력은? 1) 상 2) 중상 3) 중하 4) 하

Q7 내가 생각하는 나의 영어 말하기(speaking) 실력은? 1) 상 2) 중상 3) 중하 4) 하

Q8 내가 생각하는 나의 영어 듣기(listening) 실력은? 1) 상 2) 중상 3) 중하 4) 하

Q9 내가 생각하는 나의 영어 읽기(reading) 실력은? 1) 상 2) 중상 3) 중하 4) 하

Q10 내가 생각하는 나의 영어 쓰기(writing) 실력은? 1) 상 2) 중상 3) 중하 4) 하

※ 다음 항목들을 잘 읽고 여러분이 해당된다고 생각하는 것을 오른쪽 4단계 중에서 하나를 골라 체크표시(√) 해 주세요.

번호	항목	아주 그렇다	대체로 그렇다	대체로 그렇지 않다	아주 그렇지 않다
1	영어를 배우는 것은 정말로 재미있다.				
2	나는 영어 배우는 것을 매우 좋아한다.				
3	영어는 학교에서 배워야 할 중요한 과목이다.				
4	나는 영어를 계속해서 배우고 싶다.				
5	나는 영어를 배우는 것을 싫어한다.				
6	영어를 배우는 것은 어렵고 지겹다.				
7	영어는 배우고 싶은 사람만 배워야 한다.				
8	나는 영어에 관심이 없기 때문에 학교를 졸업하면 영어공부를 그만들 생각이다.				
9	영어수업시간이 기다려진다.				
10	학교에서 영어수업시간이 더 많았으면 좋겠다.				
11	영어수업시간에 열심히 하면 시험에서 좋은 성적을 얻을 수 있다.				
12	영어수업시간은 정말 지루하다.				

1페이지

1차 설문지

번호	항목	아주 그렇다	대체로 그렇다	대체로 그렇지 않다	아주 그렇지 않다
13	학교 수업과 영어 시험성적과는 상관이 없다.				
14	학교 영어수업에 참여하는 것은 부담스럽다.				
15	나는 다른 친구들보다 영어를 잘하고 싶다.				
16	우리 부모님은 영어공부가 중요하다고 강조하신다.				
17	영어를 못하면 친구들에게 인정받을 수 없다.				
18	부모님은 내 영어실력에 만족하신다.				
19	내가 남보다 영어를 못하는 것 같아서 걱정된다.				
20	나는 영어학습능력이 평균정도는 된다.				
21	나는 영어학습능력이 평균이상이다.				
22	내가 한 결과가 다른사람에게 평가되는 것은 두려운 일이다.				
23	내가 한 결과가 다른사람에게 평가되는 것은 나에게 도움이 된다.				
24	나는 영어를 성공적으로 배울수 있는 능력을 가지고 있다.				
25	나는 영어로 정확하게 글쓰기를 할 수 있다.				
26	나는 다음 영어시험에서 내가 노력하면 원하는 점수를 받을 수 있는 능력을 가지고 있다.				
27	나는 영어를 공부하는 효과적인 방법을 찾을 수 있다.				
28	나는 영어 학습을 위한 특별한 능력이 있다.				
29	나는 내가 영어 말하기 잘하는 것을 배울 수 있다고 믿는다.				
30	나는 다른 사람과 영어로 말할 때 소극적이 된다.				
31	언어를 하나이상 말하는 사람들은 머리가 좋다.				
32	어떤 사람들은 영어를 배우는 특별한 능력이 있다.				
33	여자가 남자보다 영어를 더 잘 배운다.				
34	수학,과학을 잘하는 사람은 영어를 잘 못한다.				
35	나는 내가 현재 받는 영어교육에 만족한다.				
36	내가 공부하는 시간을 고려하면 현재 나의 영어실력에 만족한다.				
37	영어를 잘하기 위해서는 학교교육이면 충분하다.				

## APPENDIX 2. Survey Form (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>)

2차, 3차 설문지

본 설문지는 학생 여러분들이 평소 영어 학습에 대해 가지고 있는 생각을 알아보고자 하는 설문입니다.  
 설문조사 결과는 고등학생들의 영어학습 자료를 개발하는데 유용하게 사용될 것입니다.  
 개인정보는 전혀 사용되거나 노출되지 않습니다.  
 본인이 **지금 현재** 생각하는 바를 성실하고 솔직하게 대답해주세요. (지난 번 설문과 일치하지 않아도 됩니다.)

00고등학교 1학년 ( ) 반 ( ) 번 이름 ( )

※ 다음 문항들에 여러분에게 해당되는 것을 하나 골라 ○ 표시 하세요.

Q1	내가 생각하는 나의 전반적인 영어실력은?	1) 상	2) 중상	3) 중하	4) 하
Q2	내가 생각하는 나의 영어 말하기(speaking) 실력은?	1) 상	2) 중상	3) 중하	4) 하
Q3	내가 생각하는 나의 영어 듣기(listening) 실력은?	1) 상	2) 중상	3) 중하	4) 하
Q4	내가 생각하는 나의 영어 읽기(reading) 실력은?	1) 상	2) 중상	3) 중하	4) 하
Q5	내가 생각하는 나의 영어 쓰기(writing) 실력은?	1) 상	2) 중상	3) 중하	4) 하

※ 다음 항목들을 잘 읽고 여러분이 해당된다고 생각하는 것을 오른쪽 4단계 중에서 하나를 골라 체크표시(✓) 해 주세요.

1차 구분	번호	항목	아주 그렇다	대체로 그렇다	대체로 그렇지 않다	아주 그렇지 않다
	1	AEL_P1 1 영어를 배우는 것은 정말로 재미있다.				
	2	AEL_P2 2 나는 영어 배우는 것을 매우 좋아한다.				
	3	AEL_P3 3 영어는 학교에서 배워야 할 중요한 과목이다.				
	4	AEL_P4 4 나는 영어를 계속해서 배우고 싶다.				
	9	AEC_P1 5 영어수업시간이 기다려진다.				
	10	AEC_P2 6 학교에서 영어수업시간이 더 많았으면 좋겠다.				
	11	AEC_P3 7 영어수업시간에 열심히 하면 시험에서 좋은 성적을 얻을 수 있다.				
	33	SC1 8 나는 다른 친구들보다 영어를 잘하고 싶다.				
	34	SC2 9 우리 부모님은 영어공부가 중요하다고 강조하신다.				
	35	SC3 10 영어를 못하면 친구들에게 인정받을 수 없다.				
	36	SC4 11 부모님은 내 영어실력에 만족하신다.				
	37	SC5 12 내가 남보다 영어를 못하는 것 같아서 걱정된다.				
	38	DC1 13 지금의 수준별 분반에서 나는 내 실력에 맞게 반이 배정되었다.				
	39	DC2 14 수준별로 반을 나누어서 영어수업을 하는 것이 도움이 된다.				
	40	DC3 15 수준별로 반을 나누는 것보다 어느 선생님께 배우는지가 더 중요하다.				
	5	AEL_N1 16 나는 영어를 배우는 것을 싫어한다.				
	6	AEL_N2 17 영어를 배우는 것은 어렵고 지겹다.				
	7	AEL_N3 18 영어는 배우고 싶은 사람만 배워야 한다.				
	8	AEL_N4 19 나는 영어에 관심이 없기 때문에 학교를 졸업하면 영어공부를 그만둘 생각이다.				
	12	AEC_N1 20 영어수업시간은 정말 지루하다.				
	13	AEC_N2 21 학교 수업과 영어 시험성적과는 상관이 없다.				
	14	AEC_N3 22 학교 영어수업에 참여하는 것은 부담스럽다.				
	15	BSE1 23 나는 영어학습능력이 평균정도는 된다.				
	16	BSE2 24 내가 한 결과가 다른사람에게 평가되는 것은 나에게 도움이 된다.				
	17	BSE3 25 나는 영어를 성공적으로 배울수 있는 능력을 가지고 있다.				
	18	BSE4 26 나는 영어로 정확하게 글쓰기를 할 수 있다.				

2차, 3차 설문지

1차 구분	번호	항목	아주 그렇다	대체로 그렇다	대체로 그렇지 않다	아주 그렇지 않다
	19 BSE5	27 나는 다음 영어시험에서 내가 노력하면 원하는 점수를 받을 수 있는 능력을 가지고 있다.				
	20 BSE6	28 나는 영어를 공부하는 효과적인 방법을 찾을 수 있다.				
	21 BSE7	29 나는 영어 학습을 위한 특별한 능력이 있다.				
	22 BSE8	30 나는 내가 영어 말하기 잘하는 것을 배울 수 있다고 믿는다.				
	23 BSE9	31 나는 다른 사람과 영어로 말할 때 소극적이 된다.				
	26 BLA1	32 언어를 하나이상 말하는 사람들은 머리가 좋다.				
	27 BLA2	33 어떤 사람들은 영어를 배우는 특별한 능력이 있다.				
	28 BLA3	34 여자가 남자보다 영어를 더 잘 배운다.				
	29 BLA4	35 수학,과학을 잘하는 사람은 영어를 잘 못한다.				
	30 BEE1	36 나는 내가 현재 받는 영어교육에 만족한다.				
	31 BEE2	37 내가 공부하는 시간을 고려하면 현재 나의 영어실력에 만족한다.				
	32 BEE3	38 영어를 잘하기 위해서는 학교교육이면 충분하다.				
	24 BSE10	39 내가 한 결과가 다른사람에게 평가되는 것은 두려운 일이다.				
	25 BSE11	40 나는 영어학습능력이 평균이상이다.				

## 국문초록

수준별 교육과정은 7차 영어교육과정의 중요한 특징 중 하나이다. 대부분의 국내 중등학교에서는 수준별 분반으로 이루어지는 영어 수업의 형태로 수준별 교육과정을 실행하고 있다. 본 연구는 수준별 영어분반 수업에서 영어를 외국어로 배우는 학습자들의 태도와 신념이 어떻게 형성, 변화되는지 알아보려고 하였다. 추가적으로, 수준 이동을 경험한 학습자들의 데이터 분석을 통해 수준이 올라간 학생들과 내려간 학생들 간에 변화의 차이를 면밀히 살펴보았다.

본 연구는 대한민국 서울 소재의 고등학교 1학년에 재학중인 259명의 학생들을 대상으로 실시되었다. 참가자들의 정의적 요인의 변화를 살펴보기 위해서 태도와 신념에 관한 문항들에 관한 설문조사가 연속적으로 3회 실행되었다. 요인분석에 의해 새로운 다섯 개의 정의적 요인이 정해졌고, 참가자들의 각 정의적 요인의 변화를 설문조사 결과간 비교를 통해 분석하였다. 또한 수준이 올라간 그룹과 수준의 내려간 그룹의 각 정의적 요인에 있어서의 변화 차이를 알아내기 위한 추가 분석이 시행되었다.

몇 가지 유의미한 결과가 본 연구로부터 도출되었다. 첫째, 학습자들은 영어 수준별 수업이 진행되는 동안 영어 학습에 대한 태도를 긍정적으로 발전시켰다. 반면에 그들의 학교 영어교육에 대한 태도는 다소 부정적으로 변하였다. 둘째, 신념과 관련된 요인 중 학습자들의 자아 효능감은 지속적으로 강해졌으며, 이는 학습자들이 그들의 향후

학습에 더 많은 노력을 기울였다는 것을 암시한다. 셋째, 수준 이동을 경험한 학생들은 태도와 신념의 변화에서 눈에 띄는 차이를 나타냈다. 수준이 올라간 학생들은 영어 학습과 학교 영어 교육에 대한 긍정적인 태도를 발전시킨 반면에, 수준이 내려간 학생들은 두 태도 요인 모두에서 긍정적 변화를 보이지 않았다. 자아 효능감의 경우, 두 그룹의 학생들 모두 자아효능감을 강화하였으나 변화의 정도는 수준이 올라간 학생들이 훨씬 크게 나타났다.

이러한 연구 결과들을 바탕으로, 본 연구는 영어교육과정의 시행과 학습자의 정의적 요인들에 관련한 이슈를 논의하였다. 또한 본 연구는 영어교육과정의 개발과 시행, 그리고 학습자들의 정의적 요인에 미치는 영향에 대한 교육적인 시사점을 제안하였다.

주요어: 수준별 교육과정, 수준별 분반, 영어 수업, 정의적 요인, 태도, 신념, 자아효능감

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