Chapter 4-Quantitative Results and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research design used in this study was described in detail. This included both the quantitative data collection involving the two questionnaires: BALLI and PELLEM, and the qualitative data collection which entailed a semi-structured interview. For the results section of this dissertation, the quantitative and qualitative results will be presented separately, in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, respectively. This chapter presents the results of the BALLI and PELLEM questionnaires in order to answer the first three research questions.

The first section of this chapter will present the descriptive statistics and factor analysis results of the BALLI questionnaire, thereby answering the first research question: *What are the language learning beliefs of international students learning English at a local college in Kuala Lumpur?* The next section will address the second research question: *What are their perceptions of learning English in Malaysia?*, with the descriptive statistics and factor analysis results of the participants' responses to the PELLEM questionnaire. The final section will show the results of the Pearson *r* Correlation analysis of the factor scores from the BALLI and PELLEM factor analysis in order to answer the third research question: *Is there a statistically significant relationship between their language learning beliefs and their perceptions about learning English in Malaysia?*

4.2. Results of BALLI questionnaire

As mentioned in the previous section, the discussion of the results of this study will begin with the descriptive BALLI results, since this study uses the instrument by Horwitz (1987) as a framework. The literature review in Chapter Two of this study has already established the significance of language learning beliefs in terms of their relationship to various aspects of language learning such as learners' choice of learning strategies and course satisfaction

(Horwitz, 1987; Ellis, 2008). Thus, the investigation into the learning beliefs and perceptions of international students learning English in Malaysia began by measuring the beliefs held by participants about language learning in general, using Horwitz's 34-item BALLI (1987). The results of the BALLI questionnaire are presented in this section according to the five themes as identified by Horwitz: 1) *Foreign language aptitude*; 2) *Difficulty of Language Learning*; 3) *Nature of Language Learning*; 4) *Learning & Communication Strategies* and 5) *Motivation and Expectations*. The frequencies and percentages of participants' responses to items on the BALLI are presented in Tables 4.1-4.5 with responses presented as follows: 1-*Strongly Agree* (SA); 2-*Agree* (A); 3-*Neither Agree or Disagree* (N); 4-*Disagree* (D); and 5-*Strongly Disagree*. Only two items, 4 and 15 in theme two, offer different response choices. Item 4 requires participants to estimate the difficulty of English and offers them choices ranging from a-*a very difficult language* to e-*a very easy language*. Item 15, on the other hand, measures participants' estimation of the time it would take someone to learn a language well, if he or she spent an hour a day learning it. Possible responses for item 15 range from a-*less than a year* to d-*5 to 10 years* and e-*You can't learn a language in one hour per day*. The detailed results of participants' responses to items in the five BALLI themes are presented in Tables 4.1-4.5 over the next five sections. The number of participants who selected a particular response is noted, followed by the percentage of participant responses in brackets. To facilitate discussion, percentages have been rounded up; and thus may not add up to 100%. The mean and standard deviation of each item are also reported. The results for each theme of the BALLI are presented according to their order identified by Horwitz, beginning with Theme 1, *Foreign Language Aptitude*, in the next section.

4.2.1. Foreign Language Aptitude

The descriptive results of participants' responses to the BALLI items will begin with the first theme, *Foreign Language Aptitude*, which relates to participants' beliefs about foreign

language aptitude and inherent individual characteristics that facilitate successful language learning, such as age and gender. In addition, two items, 11 and 30, aim to measure whether respondents ascribe to the notion of different types of intelligence. For example, item 11 states that people who are good at mathematics are not good at learning foreign languages, requiring participants to decide whether being good at mathematics means that one is not good at learning languages, or whether both abilities are related to overall intelligence. Table 4.1 shows participants' responses to BALLI items within this theme and the mean and standard deviation for each item.

Table 4.1. Frequency of Participant Responses to BALLI items on Foreign Language Aptitude

	1	2	3	4	5	M	S.D.
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	74(73%)	20(20%)	5(5%)	2(2%)	1(1%)	1.39	0.760
2. Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	37(36%)	49(48%)	11(11%)	2(2%)	3(4%)	1.87	0.897
6. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.	12(12%)	44(43%)	32(31%)	12(13%)	2(2%)	2.49	0.919
10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	20(20%)	43(42%)	29(28%)	8(9%)	2(2%)	2.31	0.941
11. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.	3(3%)	9(9%)	24(24%)	35(34%)	31(30%)	3.80	1.063
16. I have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	7(7%)	30(29%)	44(43%)	18(18%)	3(3%)	2.80	0.912
19. Women are better than men at learning languages.	8(8%)	14(14%)	46(45%)	18(18%)	16(16%)	3.20	1.108
30. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.	24(24%)	32(31%)	28(28%)	15(15%)	3(3%)	2.42	1.094
33. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language	30(29%)	42(41%)	19(19%)	9(9%)	2(2%)	2.13	1.002

1-Strongly Agree; 2- Agree; 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4-Disagree; 5-Strongly Disagree; M-Mean; S.D.-Std Dev

A majority of the participants believed that children were superior language learners, with 93% (n=94) strongly agreeing or agreeing with the item. In addition, the belief that foreign language aptitude exists appeared to be common, as 84% (n=86) responded positively to this item. However, a much smaller percentage of participants (36%, n=37) felt that *they* had this special ability and 43% responded neutrally to item 16-*I have a special ability for learning foreign languages*. Thus, even though most participants believed that some people have a natural talent for learning languages, most of them did not consider themselves as having this talent.

These findings closely resemble those of other BALLI studies in similar contexts. For example, a study of international EAP learners in Australia (Bernat, 2006) found that despite 92% of participants agreeing that some people have a special ability to learn foreign languages, less than a third (22%) agreed that they had this ability (item 16), with most responding neutrally. A similar pattern was also found by Siebert (2003), who administered the BALLI to a mixed group of foreign EAP learners studying English, as well as by Park (1995), who used the BALLI to measure the beliefs of English learners in Korea. However, in Truitt's (1995) study of Korean EFL learners, a rather large percentage (55%) disagreed that they had a special language learning ability. In addition, both the Korean EFL groups (Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995) found lower rates of belief in the foreign language aptitude, with only a slight majority (50-60%) endorsing this belief, compared to more than 70% in both the EAP studies and the present study.

While the participants in the present study seemed to believe that age was a factor in language learning, most tended not to believe the same about gender. The most common response to item 19-*Women are better than men at learning languages* was neutral (43%, n=44), and a slightly lower number (34%, n=34) disagreed. Only around 23% agreed with the statement. This pattern could be related to the gender of the majority of the participants, of whom 73% were male. Earlier, Bernat (2006) had suggested that respondents believed their gender was superior in language learning; her sample had a female majority and were more likely to accept item 19 (42% agreement) than Siebert's group, which had a male majority (28% agreement). The present findings seem to support Bernat's suggestion as the agreement to item 19 of 23% was roughly equivalent to the percentage of female representation in the sample. Like Siebert's (2003), Park's (1995) and Truitt's (1995) groups, participants in the present study were mostly male and they generally rejected the statement on female superiority in language learning. In addition, most of the participants in this study came from male-dominated cultures. For example, the female participants from

Libya were not allowed to travel alone to Malaysia and had to be accompanied by a male relative. Also, the Somali male students in the college often told the researcher that they faced difficulties in performing household chores in Malaysia, because these chores had always been performed by either their mothers or sisters. For these participants, the idea that women might be superior in language learning, something they connected with academic ability or intelligence, was something that they clearly rejected. In fact, during the pilot study, a number of participants had expressed dissatisfaction about this item to the researcher, asking her why such an item had been included in the questionnaire.

In terms of the items about different types of intelligence, participants' responses appeared to reject the idea that there are different kinds of intelligence. Most (64%) disagreed that people who are good at mathematics and science were not good at learning languages. Before Gardner introduced his theory of multiple intelligences, psychologists tended to view intelligence as comprising two forms, linguistic and logical mathematical (Brown, 2000). It is still a commonly held belief, particularly in Western cultures that people who are naturally good at mathematics tend not to be so good at languages and vice-versa. In addition, it is often said that girls tend to do better at language related subjects, while boys tend to perform better in mathematics and science, a notion that was rejected by the participants as can be seen by their responses to item 19 as described earlier in this section. Perhaps the notion of separate intelligences is one that is uncommon in the participants' cultures. In fact, 55% (n=56) of participants considered people who speak many languages as being intelligent, which could indicate that participants view the ability to succeed in language learning as being a sign of intelligence. Many of the participants were from countries where one language is dominant such as Libya, Iraq and Sudan; thus, they may not have been regularly exposed to multilingual people. In addition, as 37% of participants were monolingual, speaking multiple languages may be connected to having international

exposure through overseas education or travel. Thus, participants may associate being multilingual with being educated or intelligent.

Another significant finding was that the participants in the present study were far more enthusiastic about the language learning abilities of their countrymen when compared to past studies, with more than half responding positively to item 6. However, the most common response to this item in Bernat's (2006) and Siebert's (2003) studies was neutral and in Truitt's (1995) study, 47% of participants disagreed with this item.

Overall, the items in the first theme of the BALLI measured participants' views about inherent traits which might make a person a more successful language learner. The next section, however, asks participants to assess aspects related to the difficulty of language learning.

4.2.2. Difficulty of Language Learning

The second BALLI theme aims to measure learner beliefs about the difficulty of language learning, in general, and the specific difficulty of learning English. In addition, participants are asked to estimate how long it takes to learn a language and to compare the difficulty of various language skills.

The majority of participants (80%, n=82) agreed or strongly agreed that language learning varied in difficulty according to the target language and considered English a language of medium difficulty (56%, n=57). Most participants (54%, n=55) felt it would take between one and two years to speak English well if they spent an hour a day learning it. In terms of the comparative difficulty of language skills, participants had mixed views. Roughly one third of participants responded positively, neutrally and negatively to item 25-*It is easier to speak than to understand a foreign language*, which positioned a productive skill as being easier than a receptive one. However, slightly more participants disagreed with the item, with 39% choosing response 4 or 5, while 32% chose the neutral response and 30% agreed.

Participants' views were more cohesive when asked to compare reading and writing to speaking and understanding, whereby 46% disagreed with item 34 that positioned reading and writing as being easier than conversational skills. A significant proportion of around 30% also responded neutrally to this item, indicating perhaps that contextual details may be a factor in participants' assessment of the relative difficulty of the communicative skills. Table 4.2 shows the frequency of participant responses, means and standard deviations for BALLI items in this theme.

Table 4.2. Frequency of Participant Responses to BALLI items on The Difficulty of Language Learning

	1	2	3	4	5	M	S.D.
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	36(35%)	46(45%)	13(13%)	7(7%)	0(0%)	1.91	0.869
4. English is*: 1=a very difficult language; 2=a difficult language; 3= a language of medium difficulty; 4= an easy language; 5= a very easy language.	1(1%)	23(23%)	57(56%)	18(18%)	3(3%)	2.99	0.752
15. If someone spent 1 hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak the language very well*: 1=less than a year; 2= 1-2 years; 3= 3-5 years; 4=5-10 years; 5= you can't learn a language in 1 hour per day	14(14%)	55(54%)	20(20%)	5(5%)	8(8%)	2.39	1.043
25. It is easier to speak than to understand a foreign language	7(7%)	23(23%)	33(32%)	25(25%)	14(14%)	3.16	1.132
34. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	7(7%)	18(18%)	31(30%)	32(31%)	14(14%)	2.73	1.121

1-Strongly Agree; 2- Agree; 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4-Disagree; 5-Strongly Disagree; M-Mean; S.D.-Std Dev

Participant responses to several items were similar to those found in previous studies in EAP (Siebert, 2003; Bernat, 2006) and EFL contexts (Truitt, 1995; Park, 1995). Participants in all these studies also believed that languages varied in difficulty and rejected the idea that speaking is easier than comprehending. However, there was some variation in how different learners viewed the difficulty level of English. In this aspect, the present findings more closely resemble the EAP groups studied by Bernat (2006) and Siebert (2003), who also mostly rated English as a language of medium difficulty. The Korean ESL participants, in Truitt's (1995) and Park's (1995) studies, however, tended to perceive English as being more difficult. One exception was the Lebanese learners in a BALLI study conducted by Diab (2006), of whom 66% considered English an easy or very easy language.

A similar trend is also seen in the present group, which had a much larger percentage of 23% selecting either of these responses than in the EAP (Bernat, 2006; Siebert, 2003) and Korean EFL studies (Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995), in which 14% or fewer considered English as being easy or very easy.

In addition to rating English as being less difficult when compared to previous EFL studies (Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995), the participants in the current study significantly underestimated the time it would take to learn a language well, when compared to the studies carried out by Bernat (2006) and Siebert (2003) on mixed-nationality groups learning academic English. In Siebert's study, more than 40% of participants thought it would take between 4-10 years to learn a learn a language well if someone spent an hour a day learning it, while in Bernat's (2006) study, responses were distributed along all the possible responses, with around 20% selecting each response option. In contrast, close to 70% of participants in this study selected responses of 2 years or less. The most common time estimation selected by the Korean EFL students in Truitt's (1995) study was 3-5 years, which was not as conservative as the EAP studies (Bernat 2006; Siebert, 2003), but still more conservative than the present findings.

In her study of mixed-nationality international students, Siebert found that the Middle Eastern students tended to underestimate the time it takes to learn a language (Siebert, 2003). The present findings corroborate her assumptions because, although the majority of the participants were from North African nations, they shared a language, religion and certain cultural aspects with Middle Eastern students. However, this suggestion does not explain why other EFL groups such as the Taiwanese students in Yang's study (Yang, 1999) also responded similarly by underestimating the length of time necessary to learn English. This may indicate other factors, such as learning context or teaching and learning activities, or more specific factors including personality and past experience, play a role in learners' estimations of language learning difficulty. In addition, financial and time

constraints may lead learners to underestimate the amount of time needed to learn a language well. For example, the participants who were government sponsored students from Libya, were given eight months in which to improve their English prior to enrolling in academic courses regardless of their language proficiency upon beginning the programme. Underestimating the time needed to become proficient in English can cause the learner to minimize the challenges posed by their particular time and financial constraints. This could work in a positive way by keeping them motivated, but it could also affect them negatively by giving them unrealistic expectations which may lead to disappointment. Overall, participants' beliefs about the difficulty of learning English depict the learners in the present study as highly confident and optimistic, especially when compared to previous studies. This optimism was also echoed in participants' responses to the semi-structured interview, which will be presented in the following chapter. Whether these characteristics are due to socio-cultural factors or due to the learning context is unclear; however, these key findings have certain implications which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

While this section has presented the descriptive results of the participants' responses to BALLI items on the difficulty of language learning, the next section presents the results of the third BALLI theme, which comprises items related to the nature of language learning.

4.2.3. The Nature of Language Learning

The fourth BALLI theme refers to various issues related to learning English, including whether knowledge of English-speaking cultures and being in an English-speaking country are necessary to learn the language. Other items concern the perceived importance of vocabulary, grammar and translation in language learning. Table 4.3 presents participants' responses to items on the nature of language learning along with the mean and standard deviation for each item.

Overall, the participants tended to agree on some of the items concerning the nature of language learning. An overwhelming majority (92%, n=93) agreed that the ideal context for learning English is in an English-speaking country and 75% (n=76) felt that learning a foreign language was different from learning other subjects. In addition, 61% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that knowledge of English-speaking cultures was a necessity in learning English while 26% responded neutrally to this item.

Table 4.3. Frequency of Participant Responses to BALLI items on The Nature of Language Learning

	1	2	3	4	5	M	S.D.
8. It is necessary to know about English speaking cultures to speak English.	17(17%)	45(44%)	26(26%)	11(11%)	3(3%)	2.39	0.987
12. It is best to learn English in an English speaking country.	76(75%)	17(17%)	4(4%)	3(3%)	2(2%)	1.41	0.860
17. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning new words.	34(33%)	47(46%)	10(10%)	10(10%)	1(1%)	1.99	0.961
23. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning grammar.	35(34%)	32(31%)	21(21%)	11(11%)	3(3%)	2.17	1.107
27. Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects.	20(20%)	56(55%)	20(20%)	6(6%)	0(0%)	2.12	0.787
28. The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my own language.	18(18%)	37(37%)	18(18%)	21(21%)	8(8%)	2.65	1.216

1-Strongly Agree; 2- Agree; 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4-Disagree; 5-Strongly Disagree; M-Mean; S.D.-Std Dev

The Korean EFL students in Park (1995) and Truitt (1995) also agreed that it is best to learn English in an English-speaking country, with similar response rates of over 90% agreement. Interestingly, the Australian EAP students (Bernat, 2006) showed a slightly lower rate of agreement (83%-89%) and a slightly higher rate of disagreement with item 12. Perhaps, because the Korean groups and the present group had not experienced learning English in an English-speaking country, they tended to idealize it more. In contrast, the participants in the present study also considered cultural knowledge less important than both the EAP learners in English-speaking countries (Siebert, 2003; Bernat, 2006) and EFL learners in Korea (Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995). This could be due to their learning context, in which they are learning English to enroll in a Malaysian university; thus, knowledge of English-speaking cultures would not provide much of an advantage. Although the learners surveyed by Park

(1995) and Truitt (1995) were also not learning English in an English-speaking country, unlike those in the studies by Bernat (2006) and Siebert (2003), perhaps they had some long term goals of travelling to native English-speaking countries or of using English with native speakers.

Other items in the third BALLI theme were related to participants' beliefs about the importance of various language components in the language learning process. Participants' responses to items 17, 23 and 28 showed that they considered vocabulary, grammar and translation as important parts of language learning. Many participants rated vocabulary as being the most important part of language learning (79%), when compared to those who responded similarly about grammar (65%); and only around half (55%) felt translation was the most important part of language learning. These findings indicate that the learners could have misconceptions about effective ways to learn a language, preferring to focus on memorizing vocabulary lists and grammar rules instead of spending their time on real communicative practice. Moreover, very low percentages of participants rejected these statements, particularly those about the importance of vocabulary and grammar learning, with 11% and 14%, respectively, disagreeing with items 17 and 23. A little under one-third (29%) disagreed that translation was the most important part of language learning, which is a little more encouraging when compared to their views on grammar and vocabulary. Yet, it is clear that these participants have a view of language learning that may not be conducive to success in their efforts to learn English.

Overall, the beliefs of the English language learners in Malaysia were far more inconsistent with current teaching practices when compared to previous studies, particularly those in the EAP context (Bernat, 2006; Siebert, 2003). For example, although previous research also found a high regard for the role of vocabulary when compared to grammar and translation, the participants in this study were far more likely to consider these three items as being very important. In addition, 79% of the participants in the present study considered vocabulary

learning very important, compared to around 50% in the studies by Bernat (2006) and Siebert (2003). The study done by Park (1995) in an EFL context had roughly the same results (61%), while Truitt's (1995) findings were around 42%. Further, only 30% or fewer of the participants in the studies conducted by Bernat (2006), Siebert (2003), Park (1995) and Truitt (1995) agreed that grammar was important while the present study found a far higher agreement rate of 65%. In addition, slightly more than half the present sample considered translation important, while only the Korean EFL learners studied by Park (1995) and Truitt (1995) responded similarly, although with a lower rate of 38%. In contrast, more than half of the participants in the studies by Bernat (2006) and Siebert (2006) did not view translation as being important to language learning. Based on the findings in this theme, it can be concluded that the participants in the present study have certain beliefs that could be detrimental to language learning. It is interesting to note that the participants who participated in the interviews contradicted these findings since many of them expressed a definite preference for communicative activities instead of vocabulary or grammar learning, as will be described in Chapter Five dissertation. However, this could be due to the small sample of interview participants, which accounted for 16% of the overall participants.

The results discussed in this section have described the participants' beliefs about the nature of language learning. In the following section, participants beliefs' related to the strategies for language learning and communication will be discussed.

4.2.4. Learning and Communication Strategies

The previous three sections presented participants' beliefs about certain aspects of language and language learning. In other words, the previous three sections have attempted to describe learners' beliefs about the way things 'are', in terms of language learning. Items in the fourth BALLI theme, however, represent participants' conceptions on what they 'do' as

language learners, or, at least, what they believe they should do. Although what a learner believes may not always translate into his or her actions, the items in this part of the BALLI can provide a glimpse of how learners approach language learning. For example, item 13 is about practicing English in social situations and items 18 and 26 concern repetition and practice with audio cassettes. Other items in this theme measure participants' views about accuracy, making mistakes and guessing. Participants' responses as well as the mean and standard deviation for each item are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Frequency of Participant Responses to BALLI items on Learning and Communication Strategies

	1	2	3	4	5	M	S.D.
7. It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	69(68%)	29(28%)	1(1%)	2(2%)	1(1%)	1.40	0.707
9. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	12(12%)	15(15%)	16(16%)	34(33%)	25(25%)	3.44	1.324
13. I enjoy practising English with the people I meet.	45(44%)	43(42%)	9(9%)	5(5%)	0(0%)	1.75	0.817
14. It is okay to guess if you don't know a word in English.	32(31%)	44(43%)	16(16%)	5(5%)	5(5%)	2.09	1.055
18. It is important to repeat and practise a lot.	78(77%)	22(22%)	0(0%)	1(1%)	1(1%)	1.28	0.619
21. I feel shy speaking English with other people	2(2%)	17(17%)	18(18%)	32(31%)	33(32%)	3.74	1.133
22. If beginning students are allowed to make mistakes in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later..	20 (20%)	20(20%)	17(17%)	31(30%)	14(14%)	2.99	1.361
26. It is important to practise with cassettes.	32(31%)	50(49%)	16(16%)	2(2%)	2(2%)	1.94	0.854

1-Strongly Agree; 2- Agree; 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4-Disagree; 5-Strongly Disagree; M-Mean; S.D.-Std Dev

The results in this theme show some contradictory beliefs among the participants. For example, most participants are highly confident, particularly when it comes to verbal communication; 63% disagreed that they felt shy when speaking English and 86% said they enjoyed speaking English with other people. Another positive finding is that participants have consistent beliefs with at least one aspect of ESL methodology, with a majority (74%, n=76) agreeing that guessing is an acceptable strategy of dealing with unknown words. In addition, most (58%) participants also rejected item 9-*You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly* and item 22 (44%) about the need to correct beginners' errors to avoid fossilization. However, the participants who disagreed with these items were not an

overwhelming majority, which indicates that many participants may be anxious about making mistakes. This can also be seen in the way participants value accuracy in pronunciation; 96% percent agreed that excellent pronunciation was important. This anxiety about mistakes could hinder learners' attempts at communication for fear of making pronunciation errors.

The present findings differed quite significantly from the EAP studies conducted by Siebert (2003) and Bernat (2006) while having more similarities with past BALLI studies involving EFL learners. For example, studies of EFL learners in Korea, Taiwan, and Cyprus (Park, 1995; Yang, 1999; Kunt, 1998) found a similar overwhelming concern for correct pronunciation**.** However, in Bernat's and Siebert's studies, only 69% and 77%, respectively, expressed a high regard for excellent pronunciation. One explanation could be that learners of English in English-speaking countries may have encountered a larger variety of native accents than those in EFL contexts, and may therefore be more accepting of accent and pronunciation variations. Based on their responses to item 13 and 21, participants in the present study were similar to those in the studies by Bernat (2006) and Siebert (2003) in terms of confidence. Moreover, they were also slightly more confident about speaking English than the EFL learners in Korea (Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995). Around 20% of the participants in the present study felt shy when speaking English compared to around 40% of the Korean EFL learners (Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995).

This section, has discussed the participants' responses to the BALLI items in the fourth theme on language and communication strategies. Thus far, the BALLI responses presented in the four previous sections reflected participants' views on various aspects directly related to the language learning process. However, the fifth and final BALLI theme attempts to identify the motivations behind participants' decisions to learn a language as well as their expectations of success. The results of the last BALLI theme are presented in the next section.

4.2.5. Motivation and Expectations

While Horwitz's BALLI (1987) is viewed as an instrument to measure learners' beliefs about language learning, only four of its five themes directly measure beliefs related to language learning. The participants' responses to these four themes have already been discussed in the previous sections. The fifth BALLI theme, which will be discussed in this section, takes into account the role of learner motivations and expectations as an influential factor in their overall beliefs about language learning. Items in this theme cover various types of motivation as well as participants' own assessment of their potential success in language learning. For example, Item 31-*I want to learn to speak English very well* seeks to measure participants' degree of motivation, while items 24, 29 and 31 measure the type of motivation participants have to learn English. For example, item 24-*I would like to learn English so that I can get to know its speakers better* and item 29-*If I learn English very well, I will have better job opportunities* address integrative and instrumental motivation, respectively, while item 5 refers to participants' expectations of success in learning English. Table 4.5 shows participants' responses to the BALLI items in this theme.

Table 4.5. Frequency of Participant Responses to BALLI items on Motivation and Expectations

	1	2	3	4	5	M	S.D.
5. I believe I will learn to speak English very well.	50(49%)	46(45%)	4(4%)	1(1%)	1(1%)	1.60	0.707
20. People in my country feel that it is important to speak English.	39(38%)	40(39%)	12(12%)	8(8%)	3(3%)	1.98	1.043
24. I would like to learn English so that I can get to know its speakers better.	30(29%)	50(49%)	16(16%)	5(5%)	1(1%)	1.99	0.862
29. If I learn English very well, I will have better job opportunities.	53(52%)	40(39%)	5(5%)	2(2%)	2(2%)	1.62	0.831
31. I want to learn to speak English very well.	84(82%)	15(15%)	2(2%)	0(0%)	1(1%)	1.23	0.579
32. I would like to have English-speaking friends.	44(43%)	47(46%)	7(7%)	1(1%)	3(3%)	1.74	0.864

1-Strongly Agree; 2- Agree; 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4-Disagree; 5-Strongly Disagree; M-Mean; S.D.-Std Dev

Overall, participants' responses were generally positive. All the items had agreement rates of 77% or more, showing that participants had positive expectations and were highly motivated to learn English. Participants were optimistic about their ultimate success in learning English; 94% (n=96) believed that they would learn to speak English very well,

and only two participants disagreed with the statement. In addition, participants were highly motivated, with 97% agreeing that they wanted to learn to speak English very well.

In terms of types of motivation, an equally high proportion (91%, n=93) believed that proficiency in English would lead to better job opportunities and the four participants who disagreed were all government-sponsored Libyan students, headed for postgraduate degrees in Malaysia. As these participants were all university lecturers in their countries, perhaps they considered the main purpose of learning English was to complete their postgraduate qualifications and return to their jobs.

The items concerning integrative motivation, items 24 and 32, in addition to item 20 on the value of English, registered slightly lower rates of agreement when compared to most of the other items in this theme, which had more than 90% agreement. About 89% of participants stated that they would like to have English-speaking friends. Item 24, on integrative motivation, was one of the items with the lowest percentage of agreement in this theme, with 78% of participants agreeing that getting to know English speakers better was one of the reasons they were learning English. A similar response was recorded in the item about the value of English in participants' home country. While a high rate of agreement would be expected, considering the world-wide use of English, only 77% agreed that people in their country valued English proficiency. However, those who disagreed with the item were from different countries, such as Libya, Somalia and Sudan. As many participants of the same nationality also agreed with this item, the variance could be more a matter of individual perception than a representation of how English is viewed in these countries.

Participants in previous studies also registered a high level of motivation and expectation. With regard to items on motivation and expectation, findings varied mainly in the degree to which participants agreed to the items. When compared to previous studies, the present group was far more optimistic about their language learning success. More than 90%

believed they would eventually learn to speak English well, compared to the results of past studies: 88% (Bernat, 2006), 75% (Siebert, 2003), 72% (Park, 1995) and 59% (Truitt, 1995). Another interesting feature is that, in terms of items on integrative motivation, the participants in the studies conducted by Bernat (2006) and Siebert (2003) indicated a similarly low level of integrative motivation, although they were learning English in English-speaking countries where friendship opportunities with native English speakers would be more abundant.

4.2.6. Reliability of the BALLI

Although the BALLI themes were not statistically generated, and the items within one theme may refer to a wide range of language learning aspects, a reliability test of the BALLI results was performed to determine the overall reliability of the instrument. The individual themes showed low reliability with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.237 to 0.668. As discussed in Chapter Two of this study, the low reliability of BALLI themes has been attributed to its being designed by Horwitz (1987) without the use of statistically generated themes (Kuntz, 1996) in addition to the broad range of topics covered by items within each theme. However, several researchers, such as Nikitina and Furuoka (2006), have attempted to verify the reliability of this instrument and have concluded that despite certain weaknesses, the BALLI remains a reliable instrument for measuring learner beliefs. Overall, a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.728 was recorded for the BALLI, which is above 0.60, the acceptable Alpha level, according to Landau & Everitt (2004). While other statisticians advocate an Alpha level of 0.80 to be considered statistically significant (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994 as cited in Bailey, 2005), the very nature of the BALLI suggests that a lower Alpha would still indicate reliability because the instrument encompasses a wide range of beliefs about language learning, even within a single theme. The Cronbach's Alpha for the BALLI questionnaire in this study was slightly higher than those found by other researchers including Yang (1999), Park (1995), Truitt (1995) and Kunt (1998), who all

found values of between 0.60 and 0.70. One exception was the study by Hong (2006), who administered the BALLI and SILL to two groups of Korean EFL learners and found slightly higher Cronbach's Alpha levels of 0.74 and 0.77 for the BALLI results of her study.

In summary, the first part of this chapter has presented the descriptive results of the BALLI survey administered to a group of international students learning English in Malaysia. In the next section, the results of the factor analysis performed on participants responses to the BALLI will be discussed.

4.2.7. Factor Analysis of BALLI Results

While descriptive statistics of BALLI responses, as presented in the previous section of this chapter, have been widely used by researchers to describe the language learning beliefs of a group of learners, several researchers have also performed factor analysis of BALLI results. For example, Nikitina and Furuoka (2006) performed factor analysis on the BALLI responses of 107 Malaysian students learning Russian as a foreign language and found four factors that roughly corresponded to four of Horwitz's themes. As discussed in Chapter Two, their purpose of performing this type of statistical analysis was to verify the statistical strength of the BALLI in view of criticisms by researchers, such as Kuntz (1996), who pointed out that the five themes of the BALLI were not generated through statistical analysis but from focus group discussions with language teachers and learners. While Nikitina and Furuoka (2006) conducted factor analysis of BALLI result to determine the validity of the instrument, several other researchers, such as Hong (2006), Park (1995) and Truitt (1995) have used factor analysis as a means of reducing the BALLI responses to factors that could then be correlated to a second variable. These studies have already been reviewed in Chapters Two and Three and are relevant to the present study since it also involves the performance of factor analysis on both the BALLI and PELLEM results. In the present study, the main purpose of performing the factor analysis on the results of both questionnaires was to enable the correlations between the resulting factor scores to address

Research Question Three: *Is there a statistically significant relationship between the language learning beliefs of international students learning English in Malaysia and their perceptions of learning English in Malaysia?* However, the factor analysis results also provide more detailed answers to Research Questions One and Two since they show the strongest beliefs and perceptions among the participants of this study, as measured by the BALLI and the PELLEM. In this section, the factor analysis of the BALLI results will be presented.

Participants' responses to the BALLI items were analyzed using principal component analysis, to find an initial solution. This is the first step in the performance of a factor analysis, wherein the results of the initial solution are used to determine the number of factors upon which to perform the final factor analysis. The initial solution for the principal component analysis of the BALLI resulted in 13 factors based on those with an Eigenvalue of more than 1. Next, a scree plot test was applied to reduce the factors further, resulting in a final factor extraction of three factors which accounted for 31% of the total variance. A varimax rotation test allowed for easier interpretation of the factors. Table 4.6 presents the final factor loading of the BALLI items. The detailed results of the principle components analysis and factor analysis of the BALLI results, including the initial factor statistics and the scree plot are available in Appendices E and F of this dissertation.

Items with factor loadings below ±0.4 in the BALLI were eliminated from the factor analysis because items with loadings of under 0.40 are not considered to be significant. There were ten such items as listed below:

1. Item 14-*It is okay to guess if you don't know a word in English.* (0.380);
2. Item 2-*Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages.* (0.354);
3. Item 8-*It is necessary to know about English speaking cultures to speak English*. (0.323);
4. Item 21-*I feel shy speaking English with other people*. (-0.347);

5. Item 15-*If someone spent an hour a day learning English, how long would it take them to speak the language very well*. (0.230);
6. Item 11- *People who are good at mathematics and science are not good at learning foreign languages*. (0.270);
7. Item 19-*Women are better than men at learning foreign languages*. (0.268);
8. Item 27-*Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects*. (-0.267);
9. Item 25- *It is easier to speak than to understand a foreign language*. (0.206);
10. Item 34-*It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it*. (-0.79);

There was also one item which loaded above 0.40 on more than one factor. Item 30-*People who speak more than one language are very intelligent* loaded above 0.40 on Factor One and Factor Two. Although this item was included in the list of items for Factor One, the nature of the item was not taken into consideration when naming this factor. Nikitina and Furuoka (2006) also found a number of items which had high loadings on more than one variable in their factor analysis study on the language learning beliefs of Malaysian students learning Russian as a foreign language. These findings indicate complex structures and as a result affect the interpretation of the factor results (Coakes, 2005 as cited in Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006). Thus, item 30 was removed from the analysis to prevent problems in analysing and naming the factors.

Table 4.6 presents the final rotated structure of the BALLI items. As can be seen, three factors were identified for the BALLI. The first factor, *Motivational and Affective Aspects of Learning English*, included thirteen items with loadings of above 0.40, while the second factor, *Confidence and Assessment of Difficulty of Learning English*, comprised six items which loaded at 0.40 or higher. The third and final factor included five items related to *Formal Learning Beliefs*. Each of the three BALLI factors will be described in detail in the

following sections, with Tables 4.7 to 4.9 presenting the items which loaded at 0.4 or more for each of the three factors. Each section includes the name of each factor, the content of the items in the factor and their loadings, as well as a discussion of each factor with reference to previous findings.

Table 4.6. Rotated Factor Structure of the BALLI Variables

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

BALLI ITEM	Component		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
31	**.797**	-.112	-.128
7	**.681**	.239	.129
29	**.678**	.144	.068
12	**.578**	-.060	.059
18	**.573**	.042	-.190
33	**.515**	.173	.007
26	**.468**	-.063	-.308
1	**.464**	-.102	.003
32	**.461**	.208	-.094
24	**.454**	.287	.198
30*	**.441**	.438	.244
13	**.419**	.257	.038
20	**.415**	-.035	.121
14	.380	.220	-.213
2	.354	.217	-.227
8	.323	.168	.162
16	-.040	**.818**	.165
3	.155	**.571**	-.225
5	.312	**.548**	-.092
6	-.219	**.522**	-.039
10	.151	**.515**	-.198
4	-.159	**-.479**	-.008
21	.013	-.347	-.028
15	.075	.230	.221
23	.269	.116	**.725**
17	.328	-.135	**.585**
22	-.048	.000	**.585**
9	.105	.352	**.559**
28	.129	-.070	**.551**
11	.028	.021	.270
19	-.156	.029	.268
27	.096	.071	-.267
25	-.138	-.014	.206
34	-.019	-.038	.157

Factor One- Motivation and Affective Factors of Learning English

Factor Two- Confidence and Assessment of Difficulty of Learning English

Factor Three- Formal Learning Beliefs

Note: Extraction method: Principle Component Analysis
Rotation Method: Varimax Rotation
Item 30-loaded above 0.40 on Factors 1 and 2
The following items were not included in the analysis and discussion because their factor loadings were less than ±0.40: 14, 2, 8, 16, 21, 15, 11, 19, 27, 25 & 34.

BALLI Factor One-Motivational and Affective Aspects of Learning English

The first factor contains items related to two major aspects: motivational and affective aspects and beliefs about spoken communication. Firstly, six items were related to affective aspects of learning English, for example motivation, optimism and positive feelings. Most of these items were related to motivation; for example item 31-*I want to learn to speak English very well* had the highest loading of 0.797. Other items related to motivation were: item 29, which referred to the job-related benefits of English proficiency; item 32, about participants' desire to have English-speaking friends and item 20, about the value of English proficiency in participants' countries. Item 33-*Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language*, can also be considered as representing an affective construct as it indicates participants have an optimistic outlook towards their potential success in language learning. Finally, item 13 refers to participants' enjoyment of speaking English.

The second aspect represented in Factor One-*Motivational and Affective Aspects of Learning English* is beliefs about spoken communication. Items such as item 7, on the need for excellent pronunciation; item 18, on the need for repetition, and item 26, which refers to using audio cassettes for speaking practice, are all related to participants' views on the development of speaking skills. Items in these areas also appear to be related to the notion of a 'standard English' pronunciation and accent. The second highest factor loading was for item 7-*It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation* and the fourth highest loading was for item 12-*It is better to learn English in an English-speaking environment*. When combined with the other items in this factor which are related to integrative motivation (32, 24), these items can be interpreted as a representation of participants' beliefs about the need for regular spoken communication in order to develop their language skills. The high loading of these items under one factor may also be related to participants' desire for exposure to standard British or American English and their desire to

have the opportunity to interact with proficient English speakers. On one hand, when compared to participants' countries, Malaysia offers more of these opportunities. However, when compared to countries such as the U.K. and the U.S., participants may find Malaysia lacking in this aspect. Table 4.7 lists the items which had factor loadings of above 0.40 in Factor One of the BALLI results.

Table 4.7. BALLI Factor One: Motivational and Affective Aspects of Learning English

Item Description	Loading	M	S.D.
31. I want to learn to speak English very well.	.797	1.23	0.579
7. It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	.681	1.40	0.707
29. If I learn English very well, I will have better job opportunities.	.678	1.62	0.831
12. It is best to learn English in an English speaking country.	.578	1.41	0.860
18. It is important to repeat and practise a lot.	.573	1.28	0.619
33. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language	.515	2.13	1.002
26. It is important to practise with cassettes	.468	1.94	0.854
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	.464	1.39	0.760
32. I would like to have English-speaking friends.	.461	1.74	0.864
24. I would like to learn English so that I can get to know its speakers better.	.454	1.99	0.862
30. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.*	.441	2.42	1.094
13. I enjoy practising English with the people I meet.	.419	1.75	0.817
20. People in my country feel that it is important to speak English.	.415	1.98	1.043

* Item 30-Loaded highly on more than one factor

These findings closely resemble those found in other studies, despite the factors being given different names by other researchers. According to Horwitz (2007), factor analysis is both a science and an art, in that the statistical analysis performed is quantitative in nature; however, the naming of factors is qualitative. Thus, while the items in factors found by different researchers might be similar, the factor names given by each researcher could differ. The first factor in the factor analysis conducted by Hong (2006) on the beliefs held by monolingual and bilingual Korean ESL students was almost identical to the present findings. Hong named this factor *Motivation for and the Nature of Learning English*. Items 18, 31, 29, 20, 7, 32, 26 and 33 were all found in the first factor for both groups in Hong's (2006) study as well as in the present study. However, Hong's (2006) results also included some items more directly related to the language learning process such as whether guessing the meaning of unknown words was an acceptable strategy, the need to know about English-speaking cultures, learning vocabulary and memorization. Oz (2007) also had similar

findings in his BALLI study of Turkish ESL learners. The first factor, called *Beliefs about Social Interaction and Learning Spoken English*, contained several of the same items as in the present study, for example, items on the motivational aspects of learning English, as well as those items related to pronunciation and listening to audio cassettes (Oz, 20007). One difference was that items related to integrative motivation factored much higher in the Turkish ESL learners' beliefs when compared to the present study (Oz, 2007). Nikitina and Furuoka (2006), who conducted a factor analysis on the BALLI responses of Malaysian learners of Russian as a foreign language also found that motivational items formed the first factor of participants' beliefs. However, they only found three items in the first BALLI factor.

Overall, the present findings are very similar to the first BALLI factors found by Hong (2006) and Oz (2007), who performed factor analysis on the BALLI responses of ESL learners in Korea and Turkey, respectively. In addition, several items which were dropped from the first factor of this study's results due to a low factor loading or loading under more than one factor, also loaded under factor one in the previous studies mentioned. For example, the items on guessing (14) and knowledge of English-speaking cultures (8) found in factor one by Hong (2006) were dropped from the factor analysis in the present study as they had factor loadings below 0.40. Item 5-*I believe that someday I will learn to speak English very well*, found in factor one by Oz (2007) also loaded under factor one in this study, but was excluded from analysis since it also loaded under Factor Three-*Formal Learning Beliefs*. Thus, it can be concluded that motivational beliefs and those related to speaking skills are among the most significant constructs in the language learning beliefs of ESL learners.

BALLI Factor Two-Confidence and Assessment of Difficulty of Learning English

The second factor comprised six items which were related to participants' confidence and assessment of difficulty with regards to learning English. The item with the highest loading in factor two was item 16, about participants' belief about whether they possessed a special ability for learning foreign languages. Although the descriptive results showed that participants were more likely to believe that other people had this ability (item 2-84% agreement) than believe the same thing about themselves (item 16-36% agreement), participants in this study had a higher rate of agreement with item 16 when compared to previous studies by Hong (2006), Park (1995) and Truitt (1995). Also, the descriptive results showed that participants in this study appeared to be more confident and optimistic about their language learning success when compared to those of other studies. They also tended to underestimate the difficulty of learning English when compared to other studies, as described earlier in this chapter. The loading of items related to confidence and assessment as the second factor confirms the earlier descriptive findings. In addition to item 16, other items in this factor which measured participants' confidence were item 5-*I believe I will learn to speak English very well* and item 6- *People from my country are good at learning*. The other items, for example item 4, are related to the difficulty of learning English, which can also be said to be influenced by confidence. Highly confident learners would be more likely to assess a task as being less difficult when compared to less confident learners. Item 4 corresponded negatively to all other items in this factor, with a loading of -0.497 because the response choices ranged from *very difficult* (1) to *very easy* (5). Thus, those participants who tended to agree with the items on confidence (responses 1 or 2) would be more likely to select responses on the opposite end of the scale, (4-*easy* or 5-*very easy*) when responding to item 4. While the descriptive results show that the most common response for item 4 was 3-*neutral*, the negative factor loading of this item in relation to the other items in this scale shows that the participants' confidence is negatively correlated with

how difficult they perceive English language learning to be. Table 4.8 lists the items in factor two with the corresponding factor loadings, means and standard deviations.

Table 4.8. BALLI Factor Two: Confidence and Assessment of Difficulty of Learning English

Item Description	Loading	M	S.D.
16. I have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	.818	2.80	0.912
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	.571	1.91	0.869
5. I believe I will learn to speak English very well.	.548	1.60	0.707
6. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.	.522	2.49	0.919
10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	.515	2.31	0.941
4. English is*: 1=a very difficult language; 2=a difficult language; 3= a language of medium difficulty; 4= an easy language; 5= a very easy language.	-.479	2.99	0.752

When compared to past research, the second factor identified in this study has certain similarities with past research. Hong's (2006) study, mentioned earlier, also found similar items in the second factor of her participants' BALLI results, but only for the monolingual group. Hong named this factor *Self-efficacy and Confidence in Learning English*. However, many of the items are similar to those in the second factor of the present study. Items 16, 4, 5 and 6 also loaded in Hong's (2006) second factor for monolingual Korean ESL learners, and her findings also included item 21-*I feel timid(shy) speaking English with other people*, which also loaded under factor two in this study but was excluded from analysis as factor score was below 0.40 (-0.347). Furthermore, there were items on the enjoyment of speaking English with others and getting to know native speakers of English that fell within the second factor of Hong's study, which loaded on the first factor in the present study. On the other hand, the second factor for the bilingual Korean learners in the same study included items related to *Formal Learning Beliefs* (Hong, 2006). Other studies also had similar results as the present study in terms of items related to *self-efficacy,* or what is referred to in this study as *confidence*. For example, Truitt (1995) who conducted a factor analysis of the BALLI responses of Korean English learners also named the second factor as *Self-efficacy and Confidence in Speaking*, but only one item (16) was the same as those in this study. The results of Park's (1995) study also had a second factor with a similar name *Self-efficacy and*

Confidence in Learning English, although there were only two similar items in this factor when compared to Hong (2006) and the present study. There were also several studies which found different results. For example, Nikitina and Furuoka (2006), Campbell (1993, as cited in Kuntz, 1996) and Mantle-Bromley (1995) all found items related to *Aptitude* in the second factor of their factor analysis studies of BALLI responses of foreign language and English learners in different contexts. The following section presents the third and final factor of the BALLI responses of the international students learning English in Malaysia who were part of this study.

BALLI Factor Three-Formal Learning Beliefs

The third factor included items related to the importance of grammar, learning vocabulary and translation (items 23, 17, 22) in the language learning process. This factor was named *Formal Learning Beliefs*, using the same title proposed by Hong (2006). Two items on the importance of accuracy were also included in this factor: item 9-*You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly* and item 22-*If Beginner students are allowed to make mistakes, it will be hard to correct them later on.* Table 4.9 presents the BALLI items in Factor Three of this study and the corresponding factor loadings, means and standard deviations for each item.

Table 4.9. BALLI Factor Three: Formal Learning Beliefs

Item Description	Loading	M	S.D.
23. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning grammar.	.725	2.17	1.107
17. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning new words.	.585	1.99	0.961
22. If beginning students are allowed to make mistakes in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	.585	2.17	1.107
9. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	.559	3.44	1.324
28. The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my own language.	.551	2.65	1.216

Of note is the item with the highest factor loading, which was item 23 about the importance of learning grammar as part of language learning. One of the issues highlighted in the descriptive results of the BALLI responses was that the number of participants of the

present study who responded in agreement to item 23 was almost double those of studies by Bernat (2006), Siebert (2003), Park (1995) and Truitt (1995). Incidentally, the factor loading for this item (0.725) was much higher than those of the other items in this factor, which were between 0.551 and 0.585. In addition to the item on the importance of grammar, there were also items on the importance of vocabulary and translation, of which the former had the second highest loading and the latter had the lowest loading. The other two items in this factor were related to making mistakes. Earlier in this chapter, the descriptive results showed that participants in this study were quite concerned about making mistakes, which could be a matter of concern if it restricts their participation in conversation.

Once again, the present findings were almost identical to those found by Hong (2006) with regard to the learner beliefs of the monolingual Korean learners of English in her study. All the five items in the third factor of the present study also loaded under the third factor in Hong's study. There were also two other items in the third factor found by Hong (2006). One was item 34, which was dropped from the present study's findings due to a factor loading of 0.157, and the other was an additional item added by Hong to the BALLI questionnaire (Hong, 2006). In contrast, the second factor in the bilingual students surveyed by Hong was also called *Formal Learning Beliefs*, yet only three items were similar to the factor of the same name for the monolingual learner group in her study. Another BALLI study conducted in Korea (Truitt, 1995) also found similar items in the third factor called *Correct and Formal Language Learning*. Four of the five items (items 9, 17, 22, 23) found in this study also loaded under the third factor in Truitt's (1995) study. Tumposky (1991), who studied the learning beliefs of EFL learners in the USSR and French and Spanish learners in the U.S., also had three items (items 17, 23, 28) in common with this study under the third factor called *Nature of Language Learning*. Despite the similarities to the studies by Hong (2006), Truitt (1995) and Tumposky (1991), the present findings differed from the

third factors found by other researchers, which comprised items on different constructs such as *Foreign Language Aptitude* (Yang, 1999); *Nature of Language Learning* (Mantle-Bromley, 1995) and *Learning Spoken English* (Park, 1995).

Overall, the factor analysis of the BALLI responses of the international students learning English in Malaysia offered some insight on the structure of the language learning beliefs held by this learner group. The three factors showed that motivational beliefs and other beliefs related to affective factors, such as enjoyment and confidence, play a major role in participants' language learning beliefs. In addition, participants have strong beliefs about formal learning, with beliefs related to grammar, vocabulary, accuracy and translation making up a significant part of their belief structure. When compared to past research, the findings of this study bore a close relationship to those of one study in particular, that of monolingual Korean ESL learners (Hong, 2006). There were also some similarities to other BALLI studies of ESL learners in Asia (Tumposky, 1991; Truitt, 1995). However, the belief structures of the learner groups in other previous studies were both slightly and significantly different from the present findings. This confirms the contentions of researchers such as Nikitina & Furuoka (2007) that despite the common findings among the many BALLI studies in various contexts, there seem to be other factors, whether contextual, cultural or individual, that influence the beliefs about language learning held by language learners.

This section of Chapter Four has attempted to address the first research question by describing the language learning beliefs of the participants, who are international students learning English in Malaysia. This was followed by the results of the factor analysis of the BALLI responses, which shed some light on the construct of these learners' beliefs. The factor scores from the factor analysis were also used in the Pearson *r* Correlation to answer Research Question Three about the relationship between learner beliefs about language learning and their perceptions of learning English in Malaysia. The results of the Pearson *r* Correlation will be presented in the last section of this chapter. In the next section, the

results of the PELLEM questionnaire will be discussed, with the aim of answering the second research question of this study: *What are international students' perceptions of learning English in Malaysia?*

4.3. Results of the PELLEM Questionnaire

While the BALLI questionnaire looked at participants' language learning beliefs, the PELLEM measured the participants' context-specific perceptions about various aspects of their language learning experience in Malaysia. Items were generated according to four themes related to the participants' experience as language learners in Malaysia: *General Opinion of Learning English in Malaysia; Out-of-Class Experience; Use of English in Malaysian Universities and Learning English in a Malaysian Educational Institute*. In this section, the frequencies and percentages of participants' responses to items within each theme are presented in Tables 4.10-4.13. In section 4.2, the descriptive results of the BALLI also included comparison of the present results to those of previous BALLI studies. On the other hand, there are few relevant studies that can be referred to for comparison to the PELLEM findings as this questionnaire was specifically designed for use in this study. In the following sections, the discussion of the PELLEM results for each theme is followed by a brief comparison to past studies in two broad areas. Firstly, several relevant findings were found in previous studies which focused on international students learning English in Malaysia (Ali, 2007; Hamzah et al., 2009), Singapore (Young, 2003) and in English-speaking countries such as the United States (Christison & Krahnke, 1986). Secondly, the discussion included relevant findings of a number of studies on the learning experience of international students in the United Kingdom (Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005), Australia (Sawir, 2005; Ransom et al, 2005, Robertson et al., 2000); and New Zealand (Ho, Li, Cooper & Holmes, 2007; Wang et al., 2008).

4.3.1. General Opinion of Learning English in Malaysia

The items in this theme measured participants' overall perception of learning English in Malaysia. In addition, the items also sought to measure participants' perceptions of learning English in Malaysia when compared to their home countries and to English-speaking countries. The details of participants' responses are given in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10. Frequency of Participant Responses to items on General Opinion of Learning English in Malaysia

	1	2	3	4	5	M	S.D.
1. I would recommend learning English in Malaysia to my family and friends.	10(10%)	43(42%)	29(28%)	12(12%)	8(8%)	2.66	1.067
2. My English has improved since I came to Malaysia.	31(30%)	61(60%)	6(6%)	3(3%)	1(1%)	1.84	0.741
4. Learning English in Malaysia is better than learning English in my country.	36(35%)	34(33%)	17(17%)	11(11%)	4(4%)	2.15	1.138
7.You can only learn English well in a country where it is a native language (e.g. the U.S., the U.K., Australia, Canada, New Zealand & Ireland)	35(34%)	23(23%)	17(17%)	20(20%)	7(7%)	2.42	1.323
8. The English language instructors in Malaysia are qualified and experienced.	21(21%)	51(50%)	24(24%)	5(5%)	1(1%)	2.16	0.841
9. Malaysia is a good place to learn English.	7(7%)	38(37%)	41(40%)	10(10%)	5(5%)	2.68	0.922
10. I would be happier if I could learn English in another country (not Malaysia)	13(13%)	29(28%)	43(42%)	12(12%)	5(5%)	2.67	1.006
11. People who want to come to Malaysia to study should learn English in their own countries first.	25(25%)	40(39%)	23(23%)	12(12%)	2(2%)	2.27	1.026
12. My lack of proficiency in English causes me many problems in Malaysia.	16(16%)	35(34%)	26(25%)	19(19%)	5(5%)	2.65	1.131

1-Strongly Agree; 2- Agree; 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4-Disagree; 5-Strongly Disagree; M-Mean; S.D.-Std Dev

Overall, participants' responses were mixed in terms of whether they viewed their language learning experience in Malaysia positively or negatively. For example, 90% (n=92) agreed that their English had improved since arriving here; 68% (n=70) considered learning English in Malaysia as preferable to learning English in their own countries and 71% (n=72) felt that the English language instructors in Malaysia were qualified and experienced. However, despite positive perceptions in these areas, only 52% (n=53) would recommend learning English in Malaysia to their family and friends. In addition, less than half (44%, n=45) agreed that Malaysia was a good place in which to learn English (item 9) and a slightly lower percentage (40%) responded neutrally to this item.

One possible reason for these contradictory findings could be Malaysia's status as a country where English has a historical and official role, but is not a native language. This is corroborated by the current findings in which 57% of participants agreed with item 3-*You can ONLY learn English in a country where it is a native language*. In addition, 41% (n=42) stated that they would be happier if they could learn English in another country, while 42% neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 17% (n=10) disagreed with this item. Evidently, learning English amidst speakers of what participants consider 'non-standard' English, is viewed as inferior when compared to learning English in countries such as the U.K. or the U.S.A. Despite the fact the participants were engaged in learning English within a classroom setting, the opportunity to practice the language being learned outside the classroom is likely to be one of the components that make up their language learning experience. In fact, the extent to which they are able to engage in real life communication outside the classroom is likely to influence their perceptions of Malaysia as an English language learning destination.

Hamzah et al. (2009) also studied the perceptions held by international students of their English language course at a Malaysian university. As their study focused mainly on matters related to the language course, their findings will be discussed in more detail in the next few sections. A student in Hamzah et al.'s study also referred to Malaysia as not being an English-speaking country, and stated that although his English had improved, it did not meet his expectations (Hamzah et al., 2009). It appears that a similar sentiment could be felt by the participants in this study because despite the improvement in their English skills perceived by a majority of participants, they did not appear to be enthusiastic about Malaysia as a place to learn English. Ali (2007), who studied the speaking and learning motivations of international students in an intensive English programme in a university in Selangor, also found that participants held somewhat positive perceptions of learning English in Malaysia. However, participants in her study also made comments that implied

they did not have many chances to practice speaking English, particularly outside the university (Ali, 2007).

Participants' perceptions of whether living in Malaysia offers sufficient opportunity to practice English on a daily basis, may be an underlying factor in their seemingly contradictory responses to items in Theme 1. Therefore, the second theme in the PELLEM focuses on the participants' perceptions of their experiences of using English outside the classroom. Participants' responses to items within this theme are presented in the following section.

4.3.2. Out-of-Class Experience

The second theme of the PELLEM examines participants' perceptions about issues related to English language use outside the classroom. Being in a country where English proficiency tends to be limited to the educated middle and upper classes, participants' access to Malaysians who are proficient in English depends on where they live and the kinds of Malaysians they meet. Items in this theme examine participants' perceptions of the English language communication they experience outside the classroom, for example, whether they have enough opportunities for authentic interaction and whether they face problems in interacting with locals in English. Participants' perceptions on the local variety of English may also affect how they view their interaction opportunities. For this reason, items 6 and 13, which measure participants' perceptions on Malaysian English, were included. Table 4.11 shows their responses to items in this theme as well as the means and standard deviations.

Table 4.11. Frequency of Participant Responses to items on Out-of-Class Experience

	1	2	3	4	5	M	S.D.
3. I have lots of opportunities to practice speaking English in Malaysia.	15(15%)	31(30%)	30(29%)	21(21%)	5(5%)	2.71	1.104
6. I face problems understanding English when talking to Malaysians.	20(20%)	44(43%)	20(20%)	13(13%)	5(5%)	2.40	1.091
13. Speaking English to Malaysians does not help me improve my English.	25(24%)	32(31%)	25(25%)	17(17%)	3(3%)	2.42	1.121
14. The only time I speak English now is when I am in class.	12(12)	28(28%)	19(19%)	22(22%)	21(21%)	3.12	1.337
15. I find it hard to use English when I go shopping or when dealing with daily events(for example paying bills, at the doctor's)	10(10%)	13(13%)	19(19%)	43(42%)	17(17%)	3.43	1.198
18. Living in Malaysia is easier if your English is good	24(24%)	44(43%)	21(21%)	12(12%)	1(1%)	2.24	0.977

1-Strongly Agree; 2- Agree; 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4-Disagree; 5-Strongly Disagree; M-Mean; S.D.-Std Dev

In terms of opportunities to speak English, less than half (45%, n=46) agreed that they had ample opportunity to practice English in Malaysia, as measured by their response to item 3, and 40% (n=40) said that they only used English in the classroom (item 14). Moreover, a higher proportion indicated that they had problems with Malaysian English, with 63% (n=64) agreeing that they faced problems understanding the local variety of English (item 6). In addition, more than half (55%, n=55) felt that speaking English with locals did not benefit their English proficiency (item 13) and only 19% (n=13) disagreed with the same item. Despite results which indicated some issues in their everyday communication, only 23% of participants agreed that they had trouble using English for their daily needs. However, this could be a result of the wording of item 15, which places the focus on the participants' own ability to communicate in English. On the other hand, the other items such as item 6 and 13 focused on their perceptions of Malaysian English speakers and their English proficiency.

Based on the participants' responses to the items in this theme, a perceived lack of communicative opportunities combined with a negative perception of the local variety of English were major issues for the respondents in this study. Firstly, only a little over half of the participants felt that learning English in Malaysia offered them the chance to practice

speaking English outside the class. This might be particularly true for certain types of student groups such as the ones surveyed, many of whom were postgraduate students who were in Malaysia with their families and, therefore, had little time to spend socializing outside class. In addition, many of the students reported that they lived with other students of the same nationality, which not only limited their chance of speaking English outside class, but also isolated them from the local community. Moreover, these participants were enrolled in a small local college, which did not offer the social activities associated with campus life.

Secondly, participants were very conscious of the differences between standard British or American English and the variety of English used in Malaysia, and their responses to the related items indicate that the local variety of English was seen as inferior and flawed. Despite their limited interaction with locals, as reported by the interview participants, many participants felt that they could not benefit from speaking English with Malaysia or had problems understanding them. This may prevent them from actively pursuing interaction in English outside the class, as most would not have access to the native English-speaking expatriate communities that they seek to practice with.

The findings in this theme can be compared with existing research in a number of aspects. Firstly, one of the main findings in this theme concerns the opportunity to speak English outside class, which the participants find lacking. In addition, 12% strongly agreed that the only time they spoke English was in class. It is interesting to note that Christison & Krahnke (1986) who surveyed the perceptions of foreign ESL learners at a U.S. university also found 12% of participants stating that they never spoke English outside class. Another 20% said that they spoke less than an hour of English a day. However, the present study had higher rates of students who perceive a lack of speaking practice outside class, which is probably due to the different status of English in Malaysia when compared to the United States, as well as participants' perceptions of the local variety of English. In addition to linguistic

factors, this lack of opportunity for English conversation may also be due to social isolation, which has been a recurring theme in studies of international students learning experiences in countries including Australia (Robertson et al., 2000; Wang et al., 2008).

Secondly, the perceptions held by the participants with regard to Malaysian English and the English proficiency of Malaysians echo the results of another study in a similar context. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Young (2003) studied how Singapore English was viewed by students from China. The students in Young's study were in a similar situation as those in the present study in that they were also enrolled in an intensive English programme in preparation for university. Young (2003) also found that students had trouble comprehending the local variety of English and initially believed that Singaporeans should learn American or British English. The similarity between her findings and those of the second PELLEM theme show that perceptions of the local variety of English are significant issues for international students learning English in countries other than those commonly referred to as English-speaking countries. Interestingly, Young (2003) also found that respondents' perceptions of spoken Singapore English changed over a five-month period and that the students from China showed an increasing acceptance of the Singaporean variety of English. However, the shared ethnicity and the use of Mandarin by both the students from China and many Singaporeans could be a contributing factor in the accommodation of these Chinese students towards Singapore English. In contrast, many international students in Malaysia are ethnically different from most Malaysians and do not speak any common language with Malaysians other than English. Thus, their perceptions towards Malaysian English may or may not change over the time that they spend here.

While the second PELLEM theme focused on participants' experiences outside the classroom, the next theme was centred on participants' perceptions of English in Malaysian universities.

4.3.3. Perceptions of English in Malaysian Universities

The third theme of the PELLEM involves learners' perceptions regarding the use of English in Malaysian universities. As participants were learning English to prepare for enrolment in Malaysian universities, their perceptions of matters related to academic life in Malaysia were expected to play a role in their approach to learning English.

Among the issues looked at were the perceived importance of English proficiency for academic success and social integration at university. Items in this theme also focused on participants' expectations about language use at university, including whether they anticipated having language problems. The responses of participants, mean and standard deviation for each item are shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12. Frequency of Participant Responses to items on Perceptions of English in Malaysian Universities

	1	2	3	4	5	M	S.D.
5. I don't need to be very good in English to do well in a Malaysian university.	7(7%)	26(26%)	24(24%)	22(22%)	23(23%)	3.27	1.260
16. If I can communicate well in English, my results at a Malaysian university will be good.	48(47%)	41(40%)	9(9%)	3(3%)	1(1%)	1.71	0.828
17. If I can communicate well in English, I will make more friends at a Malaysian university.	40(39%)	47(46%)	10(10%)	2(2%)	3(3%)	1.83	0.902
19. My language skills are already good enough to join an academic programme at a Malaysian university.	11(10%)	34(33%)	29(28%)	24(24%)	4(4%)	2.76	1.055
20. I am worried about facing language problems when I start university.	13(13%)	31(30%)	29(28%)	18(18%)	11(11%)	2.83	1.186
21. Students who are going to do courses need to be better in English than those who are going to do research.	13(13%)	27(27%)	31(30%)	25(25%)	6(6%)	2.84	1.115
22. All the information foreign students need at Malaysian universities is available in English.	21(21%)	45(44%)	27(27%)	6(6%)	3(3%)	2.26	0.954
23. I don't expect to have any problems interacting with my lecturers or supervisor.	16(16%)	37(36%)	35(34%)	10(10%)	4(4%)	2.51	0.999

1-Strongly Agree; 2- Agree; 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4-Disagree; 5-Strongly Disagree; M-Mean; S.D.-Std Dev

Participants' responses to items in this theme appeared contradictory. Most significantly, less than half (45%) of the participants disagreed with item 5-*I don't need to be very good in English to do well in a Malaysian university*". Of the remainder, 33% agreed with this statement and 24% were neutral. Thus, it could be said that many of the participants were

not convinced that a high level of language proficiency is necessary for academic success. Conversely, 87% agreed that if they could communicate well in English, they would get good results in a Malaysian university. A possible explanation for this incongruity could be that participants made a distinction between "*very good*" and "*well*", and felt that while good language skills would help them academically, it was not necessary to be *very* good.

Participants also appeared quite confident about their present language skills as nearly half (43%) felt that they were already proficient enough in English to enrol in academic programmes. More participants agreed with item 19-*My language skills are already good enough to join an academic programme at a Malaysian university*, when compared to those who disagreed or were neutral (both 28%). Only 7% of participants were enrolled in the Academic Skills for IELTS (Upper Intermediate) level, which would place them at an estimated IELTS band of 5.5 after successful completion. Considering that 93% of the participants had language skills below this level, the results for item 19 show that participants either overestimated their language skills or underestimated the role that language skills will play in their future academic success. In Malaysia, the English entry requirement for university admission varies between band 4.5 and band 6.5, depending on the type of course and subject area. However, the average IELTS band required by most universities is around 5.5. As only 7% of participants had completed the Intermediate level at the time of the survey (estimated band 4 – 5), the fact that almost half the participants felt ready for university is a significant concern. In addition more than 50% of participants did not anticipate having problems in communicating with their lecturers or supervisors when they enrolled at university. These findings could be due to the high confidence of this particular group of students as shown by the BALLI results. Another possible reason is the participants' underestimation of the need for English in a Malaysian university as a result of their low regard for Malaysian English and the English proficiency of Malaysians. Regardless of the underlying factors that have contributed to the participants' optimism and

overconfidence, unrealistic expectations or overconfidence in one's language skills can have negative implications if the participants face academic problems once they start university.

The participants in the study by Hamzah et al. (2009) had already been accepted into university, but were required to take the English course offered by the university as they did not have the required IELTS result for direct admission into academic programmes. In addition, Hamzah et al.'s (2009) study focused on respondents' perceptions about teaching and learning in the English course, while the present study also examined factors outside the classroom. One interesting difference between the findings of this study and those of Hamzah et al.'s (2009) is in participants' self-assessment of their proficiency level and readiness for academic study. While a little under half of the international students surveyed in this study felt that that their language skills were already good enough for university, close to 60% of the students in Hamzah et al.'s (2009) study were unhappy with their English proficiency. While this difference may be due to the difference in wording of the items being compared, it can be said that the participants in this study were more confident about their language proficiency. This confidence could be because the participants in this study had not been admitted into university yet and may not have a clear idea of the type of tasks they would be required to perform. On the other hand, students in the study by Hamzah et al. (2009) were already in a university setting and had already started their academic courses. Therefore, they may have a better idea of the level of English expected of them. Previous studies of international students in English-speaking countries such as Australia (Ransom et al., 2005) and New Zealand (Wang et al., 2008) also showed similar results in the perceived importance of English for academic success as those found by Hamzah et al. (2009). For example, 99% of the 377 international students in an Australian university felt that English language skills were very important to do well academically (Ransom et al., 2005). The nursing students in Wang et al.'s (2007) study also felt that language issues were a problem that affected their academic achievement.

The importance of English proficiency as a factor in academic success seems to be widely accepted among groups of international students, whether in Malaysia or in English-speaking countries. The participants in the present study also recognized that being proficient in English can help them do well at university. However, they may have unrealistic views on the level of English proficiency that is necessary to perform academic tasks at university level. The qualitative results presented in Chapter Five also reflect a similar underestimation among participants with regard to the level of English needed to do well at university. This is a matter of concern, because students should at least have attained the minimum level of proficiency needed to cope with academic tasks before they commence their studies. Students who face language problems after they start academic programmes may not receive the support they need or may fail and repeat courses several times, which will cost them time and money.

While all the areas covered in each of the four PELLEM themes play a role in forming the participants' perceptions of their language learning experience, the next, and final, theme looks directly at matters related to the participants' language course. It is undeniable that participants' views of Malaysia as a place to learn English will be largely influenced by whether they are satisfied with their language course itself. In section 4.3.4, the results of final PELLEM theme, *Perceptions of Learning English in a Malaysian Educational Institute*, are presented.

4.3.4. Learning English in a Malaysian Educational Institute

As participants perceptions of their language learning experience in Malaysia would undoubtedly be influenced by their views of the language course they were enrolled in, the fourth theme involves participants' perceptions on various aspects of the language course. Items 24-30 aim to gauge whether participants had positive or negative perceptions about their course, teachers, course book and class activities and how effective they considered the

course in preparing them for academic programmes. Table 4.13. presents participants' responses to the items in theme four with the means and standard deviations for the items.

Table 4.13. Frequency of Participant Responses to items on Perceptions of Learning English in a Malaysian Educational Institute

	1	2	3	4	5	M	S.D.
24. The English language course I am taking has helped improve my English language skills.	29(29%)	62(61%)	7(7%)	3(3%)	1(1%)	1.87	0.740
25. The skills I am learning in this English course will help me when I start at a local university.	36(35%)	51(50%)	15(15%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1.79	0.680
26. The course book and materials we use in the English language class are useful and interesting.	23(23%)	56(55%)	18(18%)	5(5%)	0(0%)	2.05	0.776
27. The activities we use in the English language class give me the chance to practice my language skills.	32(31%)	52(51%)	13(13%)	5(5%)	0(0%)	1.91	0.797
28. I learn something new in my English class every day.	41(40%)	45(44%)	13(13%)	3(3%)	0(0%)	1.78	0.779
29. The teachers in my English class can show me how to improve my language skills.	39(38%)	49(48%)	12(12%)	2(2%)	0(0%)	1.77	0.730
30. The way the English language is taught on this course is easy to understand.	24(24%)	53(52%)	22(22%)	2(2%)	1(1%)	2.05	0.788

1-Strongly Agree; 2- Agree; 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4-Disagree; 5-Strongly Disagree; M-Mean; S.D.-Std Dev

Overall, participants' perceptions of their language course were positive. A vast majority strongly agreed or agreed that the course had helped them improve their language skills (90%, n=91) and that the skills they were learning would help them in their academic programmes at a local university (85%, n=87). In fact, none of the participants disagreed with the latter.

In addition, all the other items related to participants' present language course had a response rate of 76% and above. The item with the lowest rate of agreement was item 30-*The way English is taught on this course is easy to understand*, to which only 76% responded in agreement. The highest disagreement rate, on the other hand, was for item 26-*The course book and materials we use in the English language class are useful and interesting*, and item 27-*The activities we use in the English language class give me the chance to practice my language skills*, to which 5% of participants disagreed. While only a small percentage indicated negative perceptions of items in this theme, the neutral responses

to six of the seven items ranged from 12% to 22%, with the highest neutral response rate being for item 30, on teaching methodology. When combined with the negative responses, the relatively high rate of neutral responses could point towards areas that could be improved on the course.

The PELLEM results in this theme are significantly different from those found by Hamzah et al. (2009) in which a larger proportion of students had negative perceptions of their English course when compared to those with positive perceptions. Out of the 130 respondents in Hamzah et al.'s (2009) study who had taken the English course, only 19 had positive things to say, while 51 made negative comments about their course. Among the negative remarks included references to the teacher's accent, teaching style, the course book and the grouping of mixed-level students in one class (Hamzah et al., 2009). An item on the electronic questionnaire distributed by Hamzah et al. (2009), which stated "*The course highly improved my English language skills"*, was directly comparable to PELLEM item 24-*The English language course I am taking has helped improve my English language skills*. While the agreement rate on the PELLEM was 90%, the most common response from the group surveyed by Hamzah et al. (2009) was neutral (41%) followed by disagreement (37%).

Although Hamzah et al. (2009) did not give details of the participants' nationalities, the group they surveyed were all postgraduate students. Comparatively, more than 50% of the present group were also headed for postgraduate study. However, the learning context of both groups were quite different as the participants in the present study were working on improving their English for university admission, while those in Hamzah et al.'s (2009) study had already been accepted. Thus, the positive responses given by the participants in this study may also have been influenced by their overall motivation levels. On the other hand, the participants in the study by Hamzah et al. (2009) may already have passed through the earlier stage of taking an English course outside the university and may not have

expected to be required to take another English course after being accepted into university. According to Hamzah et al. (2009), students who failed the English course twice would be suspended from their academic programmes until they were able to pass it (Hamzah et al., 2009). This situation could have led to frustration and low motivation which may have caused the participants in Hamzah et al.'s (2009) study to have a higher level of dissatisfaction about their English course.

In addition to the contextual differences, differences in teachers, teaching practices and classroom activities could also have been the reason for the differences in the findings between this study and that of Hamzah et al. (2009). For example, more than a third of their participants had a low perception of the spoken English of their teachers, leading to the assumption that many of the teachers referred to were Malaysians or non-native speakers. In the present study, half the classes in the English programme were taught by native speakers from the U.K., the U.S. and Australia. As seen in the results of the second PELLEM theme, the international students in this study did not have a very positive perception of Malaysian English, which could also be true for other international students learning English in Malaysia. In this case, factors such as the nationality of teachers and students' perceptions of their teachers' accents would certainly influence their overall satisfaction with their language course.

4.3.5. Reliability of the PELLEM

The PELLEM questionnaire was developed through two pilot studies in which the reliability of the four themes was tested with item reliability tests, as described in Chapter Three of this study. After the final data was collected, a reliability test of the PELLEM was carried out to test the overall reliability of the instrument. The reliability of individual themes was quite varied, ranging from 0.340 to 0.844. However, the only theme which recorded a Cronbach's Alpha of less than 0.60 was theme 3, *Perceptions of English in Malaysian*

Universities. During the pilot study, it had already been established that this theme had a low reliability score, which was probably due to the many different issues covered with the theme. Nevertheless, a relatively strong Cronbach's Alpha of 0.831 was recorded for the overall instrument, which is well above 0.60, the acceptable Alpha level, according to Landau & Everitt (2004). As this questionnaire was developed for use in this study, there are no comparable statistics; however, the Cronbach's Alpha for the PELLEM was higher than that recorded for the BALLI (0.728). This indicates that the PELLEM is at least as reliable as the BALLI.

4.3.6. Factor Analysis of PELLEM Results

Factor analysis of the PELLEM was conducted with the main purpose of generating factor scores to be used in the regression analysis to address Research Question Three. As both the BALLI and the PELLEM questionnaires could not be reduced to a single score, reducing the dimensions was deemed as a necessary first step in order to determine whether there was a relationship between the language learning beliefs and perception of the participants. In addition, the results of the factor analysis of the PELLEM responses provide a glimpse of the underlying structure of participants' perceptions of learning English in Malaysia.

The initial solution for the principal component analysis of the PELLEM resulted in 9 factors based on those with an Eigenvalue of more than 1. These dimensions were reduced further by applying the scree plot test, which resulted in a final extraction of three factors which accounted for 39% of the total variance. A varimax rotation test allowed for easier interpretation of the factors. The detailed results of the principle components analysis and factor analysis of the PELLEM results, including the initial factor statistics and the scree plot, are available in Appendices G and H of this dissertation.

Items with factor loadings below ±0.4 in the PELLEM were eliminated from the factor analysis as they are considered not to have strong significance. There were six such items:

1. Item 24-*The language course I am taking has helped me improve my language skills.* (0.360)
2. Item 22-*All the information foreign students need at Malaysian universities is available in English*. (0.328);
3. Item 23-*I don't expect to have any problems interacting with my lecturers or supervisor*. (0.265);
4. Item 19-*My language skills are already good enough to join an academic programme*. (0.250);
5. Item 10-*I would be happier if I could learn English in another country (not Malaysia*). (0.351); and
6. Item 5-*I don't need to be very good in English to do well in a Malaysian university*. (0.316)

There was also one item which loaded above 0.40 on more than one factor. Item 9-*Malaysia is a good place to learn English* loaded above 0.40 on Factors One and Two. As items with high loadings on more than one factor complicate the analysis, this item was removed.

Table 4.14 presents the final factor loading of the PELLEM items. The first PELLEM factor, *Perceptions of Learning English in Malaysia: The Classroom and Beyond*, comprised twelve items with factor loadings above 0.40. Factor Two of the PELLEM included six items related to participants' views on Malaysian English and two items related to participants' expectations about English use at university. Because of this, the second factor was given the name *Perceptions of Malaysian English & its Speakers and Expectations about English Use at University*. The third PELLEM factor, *Motivation for and Benefits of English Proficiency in Malaysia*, included four items with factor loadings of above 0.40. Each of the three PELLEM factors will be discussed individually in the following sections. Tables 4.15 to 4.17 present the three PELLEM factors with details of the items which loaded at 0.40 or more, their contents, factor loadings, means and standard deviations as well as a discussion of each factor.

Table 4.14. Rotated Factor Structure of the PELLEM variables

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

PELLEM ITEM	Component		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
29	**.816**	.104	-.024
27	**.776**	.082	.011
26	**.717**	.182	.187
28	**.694**	.013	.082
8	**.638**	-.029	.023
30	**.588**	.125	-.008
25	**.583**	-.053	.319
1	**.574**	.332	.101
3	**.533**	.300	.190
2	**.528**	.209	.346
9*	**.505**	.495	.084
4	**.403**	.085	-.004
24	.360	.250	.250
22	.328	-.094	.032
23	.265	.046	-.142
19	.250	.101	-.125
13	.105	**.665**	.193
7	.067	**.661**	.087
14	.285	**.633**	.080
15	-.099	**.566**	.089
20	.063	**.515**	-.334
11	.291	**.491**	-.189
6	-.024	**.483**	-.070
21	.322	**-.404**	-.153
10	.170	.351	.025
5	.085	.316	-.122
17	.102	.093	**.792**
16	.160	.016	**.759**
18	.101	.098	**.733**
12	.118	.321	**-.478**

Factor One-Perceptions of Learning English in Malaysia: The Classroom and Beyond

Factor Two-Perceptions of Malaysian English & Its Speakers and Expectations about English Use at University

Factor Three-Motivation for and Benefits of English & Proficiency in Malaysia

Note: Extraction method: Principle Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax Rotation
Item 9-loaded above 0.40 on Factors 1 and 2
The following items were not included in the analysis and discussion because their factor loadings were less than ±0.40: 24, 22, 23, 19, 10, 5.

PELLEM Factor One-Perceptions of Learning English in Malaysia: the Classroom and Beyond

The first PELLEM factor contained twelve items which covered two main areas: items related to the specifics of the language course that participants were enrolled in and items related to participants' overall perceptions of learning English in Malaysia. Six of the items with the highest loading were related to participants' perceptions of the teaching and learning activities in their local English language course. The highest loading of 0.816 was for item 29, which concerned the teachers of the language course and their ability to help

learners improve their language skills. While most of the items in Factor One were from the fourth theme of the PELLEM, item 8-*The English language instructors in Malaysia are qualified and experienced* was from Theme 1-*General Opinion of Learning English in Malaysia*. Other items included those on the classroom activities, course book and teaching method in the present language course.

While the first group of items in this factor were related to participants' views about their present language course, the second group comprised four items from Theme 1-*General Opinion of Learning English in Malaysia* and one from Theme 2-*Out of Class Experience*. The items from Theme 1 covered areas such as whether participants would recommend Malaysia to family or friends who wanted to learn English, participants' perceptions of improvement in their English and whether Malaysia was a preferable place to learn English when compared to their home countries. One item on the practice opportunities available to English learners in Malaysia was also grouped with these items. The findings from the factor analysis of the PELLEM confirm the descriptive results of the study in which the fifth theme-*Learning English in a Malaysian Educational Institute* had the highest rate of agreement because these items also had the highest loadings under the first factor of the PELLEM. The grouping of items related to the participants' language course with items related to their general opinion of learning English in Malaysia also reinforces the assumption that participants' overall opinion of Malaysia as a language learning destination is closely tied to their satisfaction with the English course in which they are enrolled. One interesting finding is the loading of the item related to communication opportunities (item 3) under Factor One. This leads to the conclusion that life outside the classroom is also a significant part of the participants' perceptions of their language learning experience in Malaysia. Table 4.15. presents the items in Factor One of the PELLEM along with their factor loadings.

Table 4.15. PELLEM Factor One- Perceptions of Learning English in Malaysia: the Classroom and Beyond

Item Description	Loading	M	S.D.
29.The teachers in my class can show me how to improve my language skills.	.816	1.77	.730
27.The activities we use in the English language class give me the chance to practice my language skills.	.776	1.91	0.797
26.The course book and materials we use in the English language class are useful and interesting.	.717	2.05	0.776
28.I learn something new in my English class every day.	.694	1.78	0.776
8.The English language instructors in Malaysia are qualified and experienced.	.638		
30.The way English is taught in my language course is easy to understand.	.588	2.05	0.788
25.The skills I am learning in this English course will help me when I start at a local university.	.583	1.79	0.680
1.I would recommend learning English in Malaysia to my family and friends	.574	2.66	1.067
3.I have lots of opportunities to practice speaking English in Malaysia	.533	2.71	1.104
2.My English has improved since I came to Malaysia	.528	1.84	0741
9.Malaysia is a good place to learn English*	.505	2.68	0.922
4.Learning English in Malaysia is better than learning English in my own country	.403	2.15	1.138

*Item 9-Loaded highly on more than one factor

PELLEM Factor Two-Perceptions of Malaysian English & its Speakers and Expectations about English Use at University

Factor Two of the PELLEM results contained items related to participants' views on Malaysian English as well as their perceptions of communicating in English with Malaysians. Several items also reflected participants' expectations of English use at Malaysian universities. Earlier in this chapter, the descriptive results of the PELLEM had shown that participants tended to be very confident, perhaps unrealistically so, of their English language proficiency and appeared to underestimate the importance of English proficiency in Malaysian universities. Many of these participants felt that their language skills were already good enough for university, despite most of them not having achieved Intermediate level English proficiency at the time of the survey. One possible explanation given was the low estimation of Malaysian English held by international students. In the second factor of the PELLEM, items related to participants' perceptions of the local variety of English and local English speakers communicative abilities and items related to participants' expectations about English use at university loaded on the same factor. The item with the highest factor loading was item 13-*Speaking English to Malaysians does not*

help me improve my English. Other related items include items 14, about lack of English speaking practice outside class, 15, about difficulties in using English for everyday transactions and 6, about difficulties in understanding Malaysian English. Item 7, also appears to be related to perceptions of Malaysian English as it states that English can only be learned well in one of the countries which are normally associated with 'Standard English', e.g. the U.S.A. and the U.K, in other words, not Malaysia. Two items related to the second construct in this theme were items 20 and 21. The first item was related to whether participants were worried about facing language problems at university and the other item asked participants to decide whether students who are going to do course work need to be more proficient in English than those who plan to do research. This last item was negatively correlated to the others, with a factor loading of -.0404.

Table 4.16. PELLEM Factor Two- Perceptions of Malaysian English and its Speakers and Expectations about English Use at Malaysian Universities

Item Description	Loading	M	S.D.
13.Speaking English to Malaysians does not help me improve my English	.665	2.42	1.121
7.You can only learn English well in a country where it is a native language (e.g. the U.S., the U.K., Australia, Canada, New Zealand & Ireland)	.661	2.42	1.323
14.The only time I speak English now is when I am in class	.633	3.12	1.337
15.I find it hard to use English when I go shopping or when dealing with daily events(for example paying bills, at the doctor's)	.566	3.43	1.198
20.I am worried about facing language problems when I start university.	.515	2.83	1.186
11.People who want to come to Malaysia to study should learn English in their own countries first.	.491	2.27	1.026
6.I face problems understanding English when talking to Malaysians.	.483	2.40	1.091
21. Students who are going to do courses need to be better in English than those who are going to do research	-.404	2.84	1.115

PELLEM Factor Three-Motivation for and Benefits of English Proficiency in Malaysia

The third and final factor of the PELLEM appears to contain items related to motivation for learning English as well as the benefits of English proficiency in Malaysia. As depicted in Table 4.17 on the next page, three of the four items in this theme present English proficiency as a factor in social and academic success as well as a skill that facilitates life in Malaysia. The final item refers to whether participants have faced problems in Malaysia due

to their weakness in English. The loading for this item was a negative loading of -0.478, which seems unsurprising because higher levels of motivation would naturally result in participants being less likely to perceive problems with their proficiency. When the wording of item 12 is examined, it can be seen that the statement attributes problems in Malaysia to the participants' own lack of English proficiency. As has been seen in the descriptive results and factor analysis of the BALLI and PELLEM, participants in this study were highly confident and highly motivated. Thus, they were not likely to view their language skills as being a problem. In addition, the descriptive results of the PELLEM showed that while participants viewed the local English speakers as being less proficient, when it came to their own language skills, they did not seem to perceive a problem. Table 4.17 shows the four items that loaded under theme three with the corresponding factor loadings.

Table 4.17. PELLEM Factor Three-Motivation for and Benefits of English Proficiency in Malaysia

Item Description	Loading	M	S.D.
17.If I can communicate well in English, I will make more friends at a Malaysian university	.792	1.83	0.902
16.If I can communicate well in English, my results at a Malaysian university will be good	.759	1.71	0.828
18.Living in Malaysia is easier if your English is good.	.733	2.24	0.977
12.My lack of proficiency in English causes me many problems in Malaysia	-.478	2.65	1.131

The previous sections of this chapter have addressed the first two research questions of this study: *What are the language learning beliefs of international students learning English in Malaysia?* and *What are their perceptions of learning English in Malaysia?* The descriptive results of both questionnaires were presented followed by the results of the factor analysis for each questionnaire. In addition to describing the structure of learner beliefs and perceptions held by international students about their English language learning experience in Malaysia, the factor scores of both questionnaires also form the basis for the statistical analysis used to answer the third research question of this study: *Is there a statistically significant relationship between the language learning beliefs of this group of participants*

and their perceptions of learning English in Malaysia? The following section presents the results of the Pearson *r* Correlation of the factor scores of the BALLI and PELLEM.

4.4. Correlation Between the BALLI and PELLEM

Several studies have aimed to explore the relationship of language learning beliefs and other variables such as age and gender (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007) languages taught (Kuntz, 1996a, Diab 2006) learning strategy choice (Mokhtari, 2007; Hong, 2006) and stage of language learning (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2007; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). In recent years, research into learner beliefs has moved beyond merely measuring and describing these beliefs as was done in the earlier BALLI studies by Horwitz and other researchers (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2007; Ellis, 2008). Current research into learner beliefs has adopted a deeper and more contextual approach, viewing beliefs as more than stable constructs that can be measured by a number on a scale (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Ellis, 2008). Recent learner beliefs studies, whether using the BALLI, other questionnaires or more qualitative approaches, have attempted to study beliefs in context by exploring their relationship to other facets of individual learners such as their proficiency levels, personality types (Bernat et al., 2009) and past experience (Barcelos, 2000). Researchers who take the contextual approach to investigating these beliefs have also attempted to understand how these beliefs are formed. To do this, researchers have taken approaches to examine these beliefs in action in the classroom, by observing learners and using the think aloud approach to documenting beliefs as they are experienced by learners. Other researchers, such as Riley (2009) have sought to examine changes in beliefs as a result of manipulation by teachers and trainers. This change in approach to studying learner beliefs is a reflection of current trends in SLA research, which recognizes the learner as a complex, multifaceted being with affective and cognitive aspects. These learner variables not only affect their learning experience, but are themselves affected by other variables in the learning environment. Thus, the relationship between learner variables is the focus of the third research question of this study. With this question,

the researcher aimed to examine the relationship between learner beliefs and learner perceptions that are the focus of this study. More specifically, Research Question Three aims to investigate whether there is a relationship between participants' language learning beliefs, as measured by the BALLI, and their perceptions of learning English in Malaysia, as measured by the PELLEM. The nature of these questionnaires was a determining factor in the method of statistical analysis used to answer Research Question Three. As described in Chapter Three of this study, Horwitz (2007) states that factor analysis has been used by a number of researchers to reduce the many items of the BALLI and the SILL into a smaller number of salient factors. Correlation analysis is then performed on the factors representing both variables in order to determine whether there is a statistical relationship. Both questionnaires are made up of items within themes, and neither the whole instrument, nor individual themes can be summed up into a total composite score. Because of this, the factor scores resulting from the factor analysis of the BALLI and the PELLEM were used as a basis for the Pearson *r* correlation coefficient tests. These tests were performed using the three belief variables and three perception variables, which are summarized in Table 4.18 below.

Table 4.18. Summary of the BALLI and PELLEM Factors

Instrument	**Factor 1**	**Factor 2**	**Factor 3**
BALLI	Motivational and Affective Aspects of Learning English	Confidence and Assessment of Difficulty of Learning English	Formal Learning Beliefs
PELLEM	Perceptions of Learning English in Malaysia: the Classroom and Beyond	Perceptions of Malaysian English & its Speakers and Expectations about English Use at Malaysian Universities	Motivation for and Benefits of English Proficiency in Malaysia

As described in section 4.2.8 on the factor analysis results for the BALLI, there were several similarities between the factors found in this study and those of previous studies, such as Oz (2007), Truitt (1995) and Park (1995). More significantly, there were similarities between all three BALLI factors found in this study and those found by Hong (2006) in her study of Korean EFL learners' language learning beliefs and learning strategies. Table 4.19 on the

next page presents the correlations of the three factors of the BALLI and three factors of the PELLEM for the international students learning English in Malaysia. The Pearson *r* values showed that there is a statistical relationship between the three categories from both questionnaires, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.219 to 0.457. The highest correlation coefficient was recorded between BALLI Factor Two-*Confidence and Assessment of Difficulty of Learning English* and PELLEM Factor One-*Perceptions of Learning English in Malaysia: the Classroom and Beyond* with a Pearson's *r* value of 0.457. This was closely followed by BALLI Factor One-*Motivational and Affective Aspects of Learning English* and PELLEM Factor Three-*Motivation for and Benefits of English Proficiency in Malaysia*, which correlated at an *r* value of 0.415. Both themes are related to motivational factors, so it is not surprising that they would be strongly correlated. This is because a participant who scored highly on the PELLEM items for motivation would also be expected to express the same motivation level on the relevant BALLI items. Weaker correlations were also recorded between BALLI Factor One-*Motivational and Affective Aspects of Learning English* and PELLEM Factor One-*Perceptions of Learning English in Malaysia: the Classroom and Beyond* (*r*=0.219). Additionally, BALLI Factor Three-*Formal Learning Beliefs* was negatively correlated with PELLEM Factor Two-*Perceptions of Malaysian English & its Speakers and Expectations about English Use at Malaysian Universities* (*r*=-0.250). Table 4.19 presents the correlation table of the BALLI and PELLEM factor scores.

Table 4.19. Correlations of BALLI and PELLEM Factor Scores

		REGR factor score 1 for BALLI	REGR factor score 2 for BALLI	REGR factor score 3 for BALLI
REGR factor score 1 for PELLEM	Pearson Correlation	.219(*)	.457(**)	.101
REGR factor score 2 for PELLEM	Pearson Correlation	-.140	.106	-.250(*)
REGR factor score 3 for PELLEM	Pearson Correlation	.415(**)	-.122	-.056

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the 0.0.5 level (1 tailed)

In sections 4.2.8. and 4.3.8 only items with factor loadings of above 0.40 were included in the discussion of BALLI and PELLEM factors. In contrast, the correlations of factor scores included reported in this section included all items which fell within a particular factor. Based on the correlation values of the BALLI and PELLEM factors, further statistical analysis was carried out to identify specific items which contributed significantly to the correlations and to enhance interpretability of the data. In order to identify exactly which beliefs and which perceptions had a strong relationship, item-by-item correlations were performed. These correlations focused only on items within the BALLI and PELLEM themes with significant Pearson *r* values, of above 0.40, as shown in Table 4.19. The next section presents the results of the itemized correlations between the results of the items in BALLI Factor Two and PELLEM Factor One (r= 0.457) and BALLI Factor One and PELLEM Factor Three (r = 0.415).

4.4.1. Itemized Correlation of BALLI Factor Two and PELLEM Factor One

The itemized correlation table of the BALLI Factor Two and PELLEM Factor One is presented in Table 4.20 on the next page. The items for each of the factors below also include those items with factor loadings of less than 0.40 which were left out of the discussion of the factor analysis results in sections 4.2.8. and 4.3.8. As mentioned in the previous section, the correlation between BALLI Factor Two-*Confidence and Assessment of Difficulty of Learning English* and PELLEM Factor One-*Perceptions of Learning English in Malaysia: the Classroom and Beyond* had the highest Pearson's *r* value of all the correlations performed in this study. When analysed at the macro level, the correlation of 0.457 can be interpreted to mean that participants with higher confidence levels are more likely to have a positive view of their language learning experience in Malaysia. An itemized correlation of the two factors was performed to identify which items contributed the most to the high correlation coefficient. As described in Section 4.3.8. of this chapter, the items in PELLEM Factor One can be divided into two broad areas, namely those items

related to participants' perceptions of matters related to their language course (items 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30) and items related to their language learning experience in Malaysia (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 9). Item 8 of the PELLEM-*The English language instructors in Malaysia are qualified and experienced*, can be said to refer to participants' language course as well as to Malaysia as a language learning destination because it refers to participants' perceptions about English teachers in Malaysia, rather than those in the participants' language course.

Table 4.20: Itemized Correlation of BALLI Factor Two and PELLEM Factor One

Correlations										
		B16	B3	B5	B6	B10	B4	B21	B15	B23
P29	Pearson Correlation	.334**	.265**	.360**	.122	.014	.185	-.057	.269**	.097
P27	Pearson Correlation	.316**	.189	.253**	.276**	.010	.200*	-.112	.145	.118
P26	Pearson Correlation	.238**	.168	.289**	.216*	.047	.203*	-.087	.135	.071
P28	Pearson Correlation	.288**	.279**	.380**	.025	.117	.258**	-.011	.184	.148
P8	Pearson Correlation	.273**	.141	.323**	.092	-.123	.123	-.073	.223*	.216*
P30	Pearson Correlation	.261**	.194	.231*	.089	.020	.116	-.186	.217*	.104
P25	Pearson Correlation	.078	.153	.156	-.059	.006	.120	-.144	.129	.020
P1	Pearson Correlation	.164	.159	.222*	.052	-.004	.103	-.113	.086	.125
P3	Pearson Correlation	.276**	.169	.240*	.202*	.058	.075	-.119	.036	.218*
P2	Pearson Correlation	.144	.163	.200*	.070	.055	-.015	-.071	.012	.033
P9	Pearson Correlation	.126	.150	.078	.230*	.020	.162	-.161	-.009	-.045
P4	Pearson Correlation	-.001	.063	.013	.044	-.079	.091	-.190	-.014	.155
P24	Pearson Correlation	-.008	.059	.166	-.082	-.001	-.051	-.032	.080	-.056
P22	Pearson Correlation	.060	.064	.101	-.070	.163	.259**	-.030	.151	.107
P23	Pearson Correlation	.162	.176	.175	.075	-.005	.112	-.155	.151	.077
P19	Pearson Correlation	.456**	.236*	.217*	.385*	.172	.153	-.157	.036	-.076

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the 0.0.5 level (1 tailed)

Overall, the PELLEM items related to participants' present language course were more highly correlated to the BALLI items, which were related to participants' confidence and assessment of difficulty of language learning. Of the nine BALLI items in Factor Two-*Confidence and Assessment of Difficulty of Learning English*, item 16-*I have a special ability to learn a foreign language*, item 3-*Some languages are easier to learn than others* and item 5-*I believe I will learn to speak English very well* had significant correlations with several PELLEM items, as can be seen in Table 4.20. For example, BALLI item 16 had correlations of between 0.261 and 0.456 with eight PELLEM items and item 3 had correlations of between 0.20 and 0.380 with ten PELLEM items. This could be interpreted to indicate that participants who had a positive perception of their language learning course were more likely to be confident about language learning. Incidentally, the highest item correlation of 0.456 was found between PELLEM item 19-*My language skills are already*

good enough to join an academic programme and BALLI item 16-*I have a special ability to learn a foreign language*. PELLEM item 19 was among those items with factor loadings below 0.40 and was not discussed under Factor One for the PELLEM (*Perceptions of Learning English in Malaysia: the Classroom and Beyond)* in the results of the factor analysis in section 4.3.8. This is because items with factor loadings of below 0.40 are considered not to be significant items in a particular factor. The high *r* value between PELLEM item 19 and BALLI item 16 explains the high overall correlation between BALLI Factor Two- *Confidence and Assessment of Difficulty of Learning English* and PELLEM Factor One-*Perceptions of Learning English in Malaysia: the Classroom and Beyond*. The highly confident nature of the participants has been a key finding that has been discussed earlier in this chapter, in section 4.2.1. on the descriptive results of the BALLI and it will also be discussed again in section 5.7.2. of the following chapter, in which the analysis of the semi-structured interview data is presented.

In addition to the highest correlations between items 19 and 16, several other significant correlations were identified. Pearson's *r* values of 0.30 and above were found between several PELLEM items concerning participants' perceptions of their language course and BALLI items connected to confidence and assessment of language learning difficulty. For example, item 28-*I learn something new in my English class every day* on the PELLEM and item 5-*I believe I will learn to speak English very well* on the BALLI correlated significantly at 0.38. In addition, PELLEM item 29-*The teachers in my class can show me how to improve my language skills* had *r* values of more than 0.30 with BALLI items 16 and 5. As can be seen in Table 4.20, these two BALLI items, which were connected to participants' confidence in language learning also had significant correlations to several other PELLEM items, including item 27-*The activities we use in the English language class give me the chance to practice my language skills*, item 26-*The course book and materials we use in the English language class are useful and interesting*, item 8-*The English*

language instructors in Malaysia are qualified and experienced, item 30-*The way English is taught in my language course is easy to understand*, and item 3-*I have lots of opportunities to practice speaking English in Malaysia*.

These correlations indicate some link between participants' confidence and their perceptions of learning English in Malaysia, particularly in terms of their classroom experience. Although the cause-effect relationship between these constructs cannot be determined from the results of the Pearson *r* correlation, the results discussed in this section lead to the conclusion that highly confident participants are more likely to have positive views about their language learning experience in a Malaysian language course. The highest individual correlations were recorded between BALLI items on confidence and PELLEM items related to perceptions of teaching and learning in a Malaysian language course rather than those related to participants' out-of-class experience. Only one PELLEM item on factors outside the classroom had a high correlation with the items in BALLI Factor Two. This was item 3, on the availability of opportunities to communicate in English to learners in Malaysia. Since this item correlated significantly with item 16 (0.276) and 5 (0.240), this could be interpreted to mean that participants who are more confident about their language learning abilities are more likely to perceive that they have plenty of chances to practice speaking English in Malaysia. It would appear that confident learners are more likely to seek interaction opportunities, which may have led them to perceive Malaysia as offering many opportunities to communicate in English. Conversely, less confident learners may find it hard to seek out practice opportunities.

The relationship between participants' confidence and assessment of difficulty of language learning and their perceptions of learning English in Malaysia may also have been mitigated by their use of language learning strategies. In previous studies by Hong (2006) and Park (1995), the BALLI items related to self-efficacy, or referred to in this study as '*Confidence and assessment of difficulty of learning English*' were found to have significant correlations

to learner strategies as measured by the SILL. For example, Hong (2006) found a weak correlation of 0.17 between the same BALLI items and the reported use of cognitive strategies. She also found a moderate correlation of 0.24 between these items and reported use of social strategies of language learning. Park (1995) also found significant correlations between the BALLI items in the factor she named *Self Efficacy and Confidence in Speaking* and the reported use of metacognitive, memory and practice strategies (Park, 1995). These findings could provide an explanation of why participants with higher confidence levels had more positive perceptions of learning English in Malaysia. The use of language learning strategies such as social strategies or practice strategies may help improve their language proficiency and create more opportunities for practice. This, in turn, would give them a better perception of their language learning experience. However, the present study did not set out to measure participants' strategy use; therefore, the possible influence of learning strategies cannot be determined within the scope of this study. This section has presented the item-by-item correlations of the BALLI and PELLEM factors with the highest factor correlations. In the following section, the itemized correlation of the two themes with the second highest overall correlation will be presented.

4.4.2. Itemized Correlation of BALLI Factor One and PELLEM Factor Three

The factors with the second strongest correlations following those discussed in the previous section were BALLI Factor One-*Motivational and Affective Aspects of Learning English* and PELLEM Factor Three-*Motivation for and Benefits of Learning English in Malaysia*. As both factors were related to participants' reasons for learning English, it is expected that there should be a significant correlation between them. As can be seen in Table 4.19, a Pearson's *r* value of 0.415 was recorded between these two factors. Since this value is close to 0.50, it is considered quite a strong correlation. As described earlier in this chapter, the items in Factor One of the BALLI (*Motivational and Affective Aspects of Learning English)* actually fall into two broad areas, motivational and affective aspects as well as items related

to speaking and pronunciation. However, since the most significant loadings were for the items related to motivation, the factor was given a name that reflected this. On the other hand, the items in PELLEM Factor Three focused on participants' perceptions of what benefits they could gain from English proficiency as students in Malaysia. For example, item 17 stated *If I can communicate well in English, I will make more friends Malaysian university*, Item 16- *If I can communicate well in English, my results at a Malaysian university will be good*, was related to English proficiency and academic success, while item 18-*Living in Malaysia is easier if your English is good* was related to the overall benefit of English proficiency with regards to life in Malaysia. In 4.3.8 of this chapter, the factor analysis results for the PELLEM showed that Item 12-*My lack of proficiency in English causes me many problems in Malaysia* was negatively related to the other items in PELLEM Factor Three-*Motivation for and Benefits of Learning English in Malaysia* based on its negative factor loadings. Thus, this item did not correlate significantly with any of the items in BALLI Factor One. Overall, the three PELLEM items on the motivation for and benefits of speaking English in Malaysia (items 16, 17, 18) correlated highly with BALLI items 31, 7, 29 and 13. These items cover both motivational factors, for example item 31-*I want to learn to speak English very well* and item 29-*If I learn English very well, I will have better job opportunities*, and speaking, for example item7-*It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation* and item 13-*I enjoy speaking English with the people I meet*. The correlation of PELLEM items on motivation and BALLI items on motivation and speaking further strengthens the suggestion made in the previous section that there is a strong relationship between participants' motivation and their attitude towards practicing speaking English. In the previous section, one of the minor findings was that participants who were more confident in their ability to learn languages tended to perceive that they had plenty of opportunities to practice speaking English in Malaysia. In this section, both BALLI items 7 and 13 had Pearson's *r* values above 0.2 in their correlations with PELLEM items 16-18

concerning participants' motivations for learning English as international students in Malaysia. The significance of participant motivation has been a recurring theme in the findings of this study, since items related to motivation loaded strongly in the factor analysis of both the BALLI and PELLEM. Thus, it is interesting to note the relationship between the PELLEM items on motivation and the BALLI items which focused on learner beliefs about speaking and communication. Table 4.2.1 presents the itemized correlation values of BALLI Factor One and PELLEM Factor Three. The itemized correlations below include all items which loaded under each factor, including those with factor loadings below 0.40. Because of the large number of BALLI items which fell within Factor One, the table was divided into two parts.

Table 4.2.1: Itemized Correlation of BALLI Factor One and PELLEM Factor Three

Correlations									
		B31	B7	B29	B12	B18	B33	B26	B1
P17	Pearson Correlation	.338**	.277**	.233*	.217*	.210*	.188	.103	.111
P16	Pearson Correlation	.326**	.339**	.271**	.311**	.203*	.177	.003	.217*
P18	Pearson Correlation	.413**	.277**	.328**	.296**	.199*	.242*	.041	.155
P12	Pearson Correlation	-.017	.007	.046	.042	.053	-.119	.165	-.117

Correlations									
		B32	B24	B30	B13	B20	B14	B2	B8
P17	Pearson Correlation	.339**	.189	.132	.224*	.133	.078	.279**	.074
P16	Pearson Correlation	.171	.204*	.160	.240*	.119	.030	.176	.131
P18	Pearson Correlation	.306**	.215*	.110	.275**	.063	.105	.091	.078
P12	Pearson Correlation	.123	.044	-.033	-.030	.065	-.043	-.004	-.045

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the 0.0.5 level (1 tailed)

In addition to the BALLI items discussed earlier, one other BALLI item had significant correlations with items 16-18 on the PELLEM. BALLI item 12-*It is best to learn English in an English speaking country*, was highly correlated with PELLEM items 16 and 18, with Pearson's *r* values of more than 0.25, at 0.311 and 0.296, respectively. This item was also significantly correlated to PELLEM item 17 with an r value of 0.217. In addition, item 32 of the BALLI, which was related to participants' desire to have English speaking friends, was also significantly correlated to PELLEM items 17 and 18, with *r* values of more than 0.3. Both BALLI item 32 and 12 could also be related to participants' beliefs about speaking and

communication since the interview data showed that participants viewed the advantages of learning English in an English speaking country was largely the access they would have to native speakers for speaking practice. In general, the itemized correlation of BALLI Factor One and PELLEM Factor Three indicate that motivational factors play a role in participants' approach to speaking and communication.

The strongest correlations found by Hong (2006) in her correlations between beliefs and strategies were for BALLI items related to motivation for and beliefs about the nature of learning English. For the monolingual students in Hong's study, these BALLI items had a strong correlation of 0.48 to the reported use of compensation strategies, while the bilingual group had a strong correlation of r=0.47 between BALLI items on motivation for and the nature of learning English and cognitive strategies. Hong's first BALLI factor included items related to the nature of language learning unlike the first BALLI factor in this study; however, her first BALLI factor also included 8 of the 16 BALLI items that fell within the first BALLI factor of this study, as has been described in section 4.2.8. of this chapter. This means many of the items which fell under the first BALLI factor in this study, as depicted in Table 4.21, were found by Hong (2006) to have strong correlations to reported language learning strategy use (Hong, 2006). Park (1995) also found significant positive correlations between items the BALLI factor comprising items on motivation and the reported use of metacognitive strategies and communication strategies (Park, 1995). As discussed in the previous section, this link between beliefs and strategy use could also explain the link between the BALLI and PELLEM factors found in the Pearson *r* Correlations reported in this section. As language learning beliefs are said to affect the language learning process through the learner's choice of strategy (Ellis, 2008), it seems plausible that learner strategy choice could be the bridge that links participants' beliefs about language learning and their perceptions of learning experience in Malaysia. A participant who is using effective language learning strategies is more likely to succeed in language learning and this

improvement in language proficiency not only gives learners better perceptions of their language course, but also opens up more opportunities for social interaction and academic success.

In conclusion, the statistical analysis performed in this section has further emphasized the importance of motivation, confidence and other affective factors in the participants' experience of learning English. Significant relationships were found between participants' language learning beliefs and their perceptions of learning English in Malaysia. Previous research by Hong (2006) and Park (1995), which found links between language learning beliefs and strategy use, provide a possible explanation for the relationship found between BALLI and PELLEM items through the Pearson *r* Correlations.

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, the quantitative results of the study were discussed in detail. These included the frequency and percentage rate of responses to items on the BALLI and PELLEM questionnaires, along with a discussion of these results and comparison to previous studies in similar and different contexts. In addition, factor analysis was performed on these results to identify the underlying factors of participants' beliefs about language learning and perceptions of learning English in Malaysia. Finally, a Pearson *r* Correlation Analysis was performed to identify whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the participants' beliefs and perceptions. The results showed that participants' beliefs about language learning were statistically related to their perceptions of learning English in Malaysia. The descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and the Pearson *r* Correlations of the BALLI showed that motivation, confidence and individual learner characteristics play a more significant role in the participants' beliefs when compared to beliefs related to the language learning process. The PELLEM results showed that, in addition to matters related to participants' language course, factors outside the classroom such as opportunities for

interaction and perceptions of Malaysian English are important aspects of the participants' experience as learners of English in Malaysia. Certain characteristics that defined this particular group of learners also emerged from the BALLI and PELLEM results. More specifically, the learners in this study were found to be highly motivated, more confident than learners in some previous studies and likely to underestimate the task of learning English. They were also very optimistic about their language skills and felt that they were ready to cope with the language demands of academic programmes at Malaysian universities. In the next chapter, the qualitative results of the semi-structured interviews will be presented and discussed.