

# The role of student expectations in TESOL: Opening a research agenda

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*The idea of students having expectations of the courses they attend, although accepted as an important issue amongst language teachers, has limited research support. Students devoting time, money and energy to courses expect intellectual and practical gains from them. Expectations are also shaped by their language learning goals and previous learning experiences. Fulfillment of expectations can affect motivation, performance and general language learning experience. In the absence of existing theoretical perspectives on student expectations in second language acquisition (SLA) and TESOL, researchers turn to consumer psychology, with a history of research on expectations in relation to product, service and healthcare marketing. This article provides a formative base for further empirical research on student expectations in TESOL. After reviewing definitions of expectations in consumer behaviour, we propose one for TESOL. The theoretical background in expectation research is described and, based on findings of the doctoral research of the first author, a conceptual model for TESOL is proposed. This model of student expectations accounts for factors shaping expectation formation, interaction of expectations with curricula and pedagogy in courses and outcomes of met/unmet expectations. Constructs relevant to research on student expectations in TESOL and similar findings in consumer psychology are finally discussed.*