

High School Students' Attitude towards Learning English Language

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Abstract: A study was attempted to investigate the IX-standard students' attitude towards learning English language. A standardized questionnaire was administered in the form of normative survey to 600 IX standard students (selected randomly from various high and higher secondary schools in Puducherry region) to collect their attitude towards learning English language. The collected data was statistically analyzed by SPSS ver-16. The results revealed that there is a significant difference based on the gender, locality of the school, type of school, type of management. Hence it was concluded that more classroom activities in the study of English enhance pupils' attitude to learn English.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the powerful tool which helps to modify the behavior of the child according to the needs and expectancy of the society. Student's attitude is an integral part of learning and that it should, therefore become an essential component of second language learning pedagogy. Attitudes toward learning are believed to influence behaviors such as selecting and reading books, speaking in a foreign language etc. Especially in Education, if the students have positive attitude towards any subject, they can achieve many things in that specific area. There is an interaction between language learning and the environmental components in which the students were grown up. Both negative and positive attitudes have a strong impact on the success of language learning.

“Attitude is determined by the individual's beliefs about outcomes or attributes of performing the behavior (behavioral beliefs), weighted by evaluations of those outcomes or attributes. Thus, a person who holds strong beliefs that positively valued outcomes will result from performing the behavior will have a positive attitude toward the behavior. Conversely, a person who holds strong beliefs that negatively valued outcomes will result from the behavior will have a negative attitude.” Attitude concept can be viewed from these three dimensions. Each one of these dimensions has different features to bring out language attitude results. Accordingly, the attitude concept has three components i.e., behavioral, cognitive and affective. These three attitudinal aspects are based on the three theoretical approaches of behaviorism, cognitivism and humanism respectively.

II. BEHAVIORAL ASPECT OF ATTITUDE

The behavioral aspect of attitude deals with the way one behaves and reacts in particular situations. In fact, the successful language learning enhances the learners to identify themselves with the native

speakers of that language and acquire or adopt various aspects of behaviors which characterize the members of the target language community.

Cognitive Aspect of Attitude

This aspect of attitude involves the beliefs of the language learners about the knowledge that they receive and their understanding in the process of language learning. The cognitive attitude can be classified into four steps of connecting the previous knowledge and the new one, creating new knowledge, checking new knowledge, and applying the new knowledge in many situations

Emotional Aspect of Attitude

Feng .R and Chen .H (2009) stated that, “Learning process is an emotional process. It is affected by different emotional factors. The teacher and his students engage in various emotional activities in it and varied fruits of emotions are yield.” Attitude can help the learners to express whether they like or dislike the objects or surrounding situations. It is agreed that the inner feelings and emotions of learners influence their perspectives and their attitudes towards the target language (**Choy S.C & Troudi .S, 2006**).

III. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Though the 10+2+3 pattern of education had introduced in Tamilnadu as early as 1978, not many empirical studies have been conducted on the various aspects of this newly introduced pattern of education. It is well known that this pattern of education was introduced in a hurry without caring for even the most essential of the hour. Hence the investigator has made an attempt in this study. It has become imperative to study the level of students’ attitude towards English as it has become a main subject of competency. As a subject it has become a pivotal in the education system. It is also important to study the methods and approaches in learning English. The level of 9th standard school students’ standard in English and study their attitude become the need of the hour. Hence the investigator has made an attempt in this study. High school period is an important stage to the students to face lot of competition and it is a gate way for them to enter into the higher studies. So they are aware of the importance of English, how it is mainly helpful to them to do well in the academic study and their professional life in future. Since they want to continue their higher studies in Puducherry, the English is considered as the second language in every school. It is tough for the students to understand the English language. Hence the investigator feels that the class room activities in the study of English should develop the pupils’ attitude towards the study of English and it should help them to enhance interest to learn English.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the 9th standard school students’ attitude towards English.
2. To find out the attitude of 9th standard school students towards English in relation to the following variables.
 - Gender

- Medium of Instruction
- Religion
- Locality of the school
- Type of school
- Type of management

V. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. The attitude of the 9th standard students in English is high.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of 9th standard students in learning English with respect to the following variables
 - a. Gender (male/female)
 - b. Medium of Instruction (Tamil and English medium)
 - d. Religion (Hindu/Christian/Muslim)
 - e. Locality of the school.(Rural/Urban)
 - f. Type of school (Boys/Girls/Co-Educational)
 - g. Type of management.(Government/Private)

VI. TOOL USED

Likert type of attitude scale designed with the help of the standardized tool prepared by Dr. Lilly Epsy Bhai and S. Magethiran was used for this normative survey. The five point scale consists of 28 test items with 14 favorable and 14 unfavorable statements against five different responses viz "strongly agree" (SA) "Agree" (A) Undecided (UD), Disagree (DA) and "Strongly Disagree" (SD).

VII. SCORING PROCEDURE

A score of '4', '3', '2', '1', and '0' are given to the responses of the sample in the given order for the favorable statements and they are reversed for the unfavorable statements. The grant score was used to interpret the overall attitude of the individual.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

To measure the reliability of the tool, the researcher has adopted retest method. The same attitude scale is administered to different occasions for the same population with a month interval. The 't' value for the scale was found to be significant at 0.01 level. To measure the validity of the tool the researcher has

received opinions and judgment from experts and authorities. In this way the validity of the tool is measured.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

Random Sampling method was used to select the samples. 600 IX standard students (include both gender) are selected from 14 High School and Higher Secondary Schools in Puducherry region was used as the sample for the present study.

VIII. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the sample are statistically analyzed by using SPSS Ver.16 package. The results are presented in the following tables 1 and 2.

Table – 1: The Mean, Standard Deviation Scores of The 9th Standard Students Attitude Towards English

GROUPS	N	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Total	600	54.41	32.69

The above table shows Mean, SD of 9th standard students attitude towards English subject. The result reveals that, students have average attitude towards English. Hence the above stated hypothesis is rejected.

Table-2: Shows the attitude of 9th standard students towards English related to their demographic variables

VARIABLES	SUB VARIABLES	N	MEAN	SD	t-VALUE	SIGNIFICANCE AT THE 0.05 LEVEL
Gender	Male	216	57.91	35.82	2.88	Significant
	Female	384	52.44	30.67		
Medium of Instruction	Tamil Medium	59	52.56	33.13	0.452	Not Significant
	English Medium	541	54.61	32.67		
Religion	Hindu	541	54.04	32.91	1.032	Not Significant
	Christian	38	58.76	26.87		

	Hindu	541	54.04	32.91	0.249	Not Significant
	Muslim	21	56.10	37.33		
	Christian	38	58.76	26.87	0.289	Not Significant
	Muslim	21	56.10	37.33		
Locality of the School	Rural	185	50.65	26.11	2.103	Significant
	Urban	415	56.08	35.13		
Type of School	Boys	91	55.31	27.51	1.595	Not Significant
	Girls	216	49.65	30.40		
Type of School	Boys	91	55.31	27.51	0.656	Not Significant
	Co-education	293	57.63	35.37		
	Girls	216	49.65	30.40	2.732	Significant
	Co-education	293	57.63	35.37		
Type Management	Government	300	59.23	35.53	3.651	Significant
	Private	300	49.58	28.85		

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From the above table -2, it is observed that there is significant difference at 0.05 level in the attitude of the sample towards learning English language with respect to Gender, Type of management, Locality of the school and type of school (girls/Co-education type).

The Medium of instruction, Religion, Type of school (Boys/girls; boys/co-education) does not have a significant impact upon the attitude of the sample towards learning English language.

IMPORTANT FINDINGS

- Male students have high attitude towards English than female students. (Mean value Male: 57.91, Female: 52.44).
- Urban area students have high attitude towards English than rural area students. (Mean value Urban: 56.08, Rural: 50.65).
- Co-Educational school students have high attitude towards English than other school students. (Mean value Co-Educational Students: 57.63 Boys: 55.31, Girls: 49.65).

- Government school students have high attitude towards English than private school students.
(Mean value Government School: 59.23, Private School: 49.58).

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Teachers can make a valuable contribution in developing a friendly relationship with their students, in order to develop a positive attitude towards learning English language,
2. Positive psychological classroom atmosphere needed for learning language, and the errors are considered as a natural part of the process of learning English language.
3. Teachers should motivate the students to learn better English, by highlighting its importance as they need English for getting employment purpose in future.
4. Educators and parents should always encourage learners to read materials written in English like newspapers and magazines.
5. Educators who qualify to teach English must have received a relevant training and qualification in English. If the above condition is taken care of learners would receive proper knowledge which would help them to develop confidence and they will be competent in the world.

IX. CONCLUSION

The Government, Educationalist and Teaching Community are interested in providing quality education, which will lead to produce more achievement. Students are significantly differing in their attitude based on the gender, locality of the school, type of school, type of management and also in father's and mother's occupation. This clearly underlines the need for special attention in this area. As in depth study may be conducted to find out the reasons for significant differences in their attitude. It is widely accepted that an important predictor of success in learning English language is the attitude of the students.

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