

## ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS: GENDER WISE ANALYSIS

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this research was to measure the attitude of higher secondary students towards English language learning and also to find out the level of attitude of male and female higher secondary students towards English language learning. It was also investigated the significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in their attitude towards English language learning in this research. The present study has been done by descriptive survey method. The research population was male and female higher secondary students who were studying in all the higher secondary schools of Tenkasi District. The sample of research was consisted of 151 male and 149 female higher secondary students. They were randomly selected from randomly chosen 10 higher secondary schools in the Tenkasi District. This study produced quantitative data through questionnaire. This current study employed a questionnaire to collect data on higher secondary students' points of view regarding their attitude towards English language learning at higher secondary level. The questionnaire used in the present study was "Attitude towards English language learning Scale". This scale was developed and validated by the investigator (2019). This survey questionnaire consisted of 26 statements. The calculated reliability co-efficient value was 0.728. It was found from descriptive analysis that more than 72.2% of male and 64.4% of female higher secondary students have average level of attitude towards English language learning. And also the findings from the one sample t-test of the research revealed that the attitude towards English language learning is high. Further, inferential analysis of higher secondary students' responses showed that the female higher secondary students have greater positive attitude towards English language learning than female higher secondary students.*

**Keywords:** *Attitude, Language Learning, English, Higher secondary students*

### **Language Learning**

According to Crystal, language is the most frequently used and most highly developed form of human communication we process. Learning is a modification in behaviour. A great deal of behavior is regular or habitual comprising in replicated actions of what was aggressively learned or obtained in the precedent.....The term learning refers to the sum of knowledge or skill that is accessible to be learned, but where it refers to a human activity, it implies definite or capability modification in behaviour (McFarland, 1971). Learning, therefore, is a process by which one's ability is modified as a result of experience and it also leads to a modification in behaviour. And also learning takes place as an outcome of practice. It is also a retention of information or skill. On the other hand, what has been learned may be abandoned, if it is not underpinned by practice or proper training. These concepts give path to a number of subfields within the area of psychology, like the acquisition processes,

perception, memory, recall, theories of forgetting and the role of practice. Nevertheless, what is of importance here is to discuss the concept of language learning. All human beings need a language for communication within their society and outside their societies. Language is important because through it, we can express and preserve the culture of our societies. A society may exist without literature but we cannot think of any society that does not have a language. Each individual needs to learn a language to become an effective member of his society. At the same time society needs a language to carry out all its functions. Therefore we can say that for anything, one needs a language and this automatically anticipates that when one needs a language, one has to learn the language, be it a mother tongue, a second language or any other language. According to Wilkins, language learning is a process in which the learner is able to induce a grammatical system from the data exposed to him. (Wilkins, 1974) Stern, on the other hand, is of the view that for all kinds of language learning no formal provision is made through teaching. (Stern, 1983)

### **Attitude**

Attitude refers to someone's opinions or feelings about something, especially as shown by their behaviour. An attitude is a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event. And also attitude is a hypothetical construct that, being inaccessible to direct observation, must be inferred from measurable responses. Given the nature of the construct, these responses must reflect positive or negative evaluations of the attitude object. Beyond this requirement, however, there is virtually no limitation on the kinds of responses that can be considered. To simplify matters, it is useful to categorize attitude-relevant responses directed at others and responses into various subgroups. Thus, we might distinguish between responses into various subgroups. Thus, we might distinguish between responses directed at other and responses directed at the self, between behaviours performed in public and behaviours performed in private, or between actions and reactions. (Ajzen, Icek, 2005).

### **Language Learning and Attitude**

Various research studies highlighted that the process of language learning depended on the physical, intellectual and emotional commitment of the learners. A persons' success or failure in learning a language is a most important side in human behaviour. This kind of human behaviour is controlled or manipulated by affective domain of human being. From that we concluded that affective domain may influence the learning of language by human being. Several models of language learning and teaching have been proposed in an effort to describe the relationship among variables that can affect the rate of achievement in the learning of a language. The models have included variables - psychological, socio-economic, socio-cultural and pedagogic. Some of the variables that have been widely discussed includes age, personality factors (empathy, anxiety, aptitude) and of course, attitude and motivation. An area of research into the affective domain in Second Language acquisition which have however, contributed immensely to an understanding of acquisition and learning is the work on language attitude.

### **English Language Learners**

It is estimated that native English speakers acquire something like 3,000 new words every school year. This increase in vocabulary accounts for a significant portion of their language and reading comprehension growth. As more words are acquired, students are able to draw finer distinctions in meaning among words, develop a stronger understanding of how words work together, and increase their sensitivity to context and communicative intent. In turn, this growing sophistication with language aids vocabulary development, making it possible to acquire words through exposure to text and conversation. Helping English Language Learners (ELTs) catch up and keep up with the steady growth experienced by their English – proficient peers over years of exposure to their native tongue is imperative. We use the term English Language Learners (ELLs) to refer to students who come from home where a language other than English is spoken and who are still acquiring proficiency in English. Research suggest that ELLs can indeed experience accelerated growth in vocabulary instruction (Graves, Michael. et. al.,2013). In the present study, the English language learners are higher secondary students.

### **Significance of the Study**

Ajzen (1988), who move towards attitudes from a social-psychological constructs, reverberates this in explaining attitude as the individuals' positive or negative assessment of executing the specific behaviour of interest. Due to that, the bondage between attitude and behaviour is clearly exhibited. This bondage has offered the fundamental for a large amount of enquiry, spotlighting on the association between attitude and performance / achievement. These kinds of research has in sequence assessed the bivariate relationships between attitude and language proficiency by gender, by school type, by age, etc. (eg., Wright 1999; APU 1985; Clark and Trafford 1995). Moreover, the bondage between attitude to language learning and performance may not be as uncontentious as it at first sight appears, since attitude does not necessarily translate into observable behaviour or performance. Successful second language learners might tend to achieve positive attitudes towards both language learning and the target language community as a result of doing well, whereas relatively unsuccessful learners might achieve negative attitudes (Bartram, Brendan, 2010). So there is a need to study the attitude towards English language learning among higher secondary students. In India most of the school students are in English Language Learners at all the levels of school education. All teachers should know the levels of language proficiency for each of their English Language Learners. Knowing these levels will help to plan instruction. But at higher secondary level, the teachers don't have time to know the language proficiency levels of higher secondary students. They are mainly focused on their students' best academic achievement scores in English subject. From the learners point of view it will also be necessary to get some feedback of their attitudes towards English language learning. In the present context of analysing the attitudes of higher secondary students towards English, its study is generally for finding the attitudes towards learning English, where it is learnt as a second language and not for finding the attitudes towards the speaking community or for that

matter integration. So the present study is an effort to find out the bearing of factors like gender (Male/Female) on the attitude of higher secondary students of Tenkasi district.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To find out the level of attitude towards English language learning of male and female higher secondary students.
- To measure the higher secondary students' attitude towards English language learning.
- To find out whether there is any significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in their attitude towards English language learning.

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

- There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in their attitude towards English language learning.

### **Research Design**

The present study has been done by descriptive survey method. The questionnaire survey is one of the most widespread methods of data collection on attitudes and opinions from a large group of contribution. The research population was male and female higher secondary students who were studying in all the higher secondary schools of Tenkasi District. The sample of research was consisted of 151 male and 149 female higher secondary students. They were randomly selected from randomly chosen 10 higher secondary schools in the Tenkasi District. This study produced quantitative data through questionnaire. This current study employed a questionnaire to collect data on higher secondary students' points of view regarding their attitude towards English language learning at higher secondary level. The questionnaire used in the present study was "Attitude towards English language learning Scale". This scale was developed and validated by the investigator (2019). This survey questionnaire consisted of 26 statements. For positive items, the response Strongly Agree is given 5, Agree is given 4, Undecided is given 3, Disagree is given 2 and Strongly Disagree is given 1 and for negative items, the response Strongly Agree is given 1, Agree is given 2, Undecided is given 3, Disagree is given 4 and Strongly Disagree is given 5. The reliability was computed by using split half method. The calculated reliability co-efficient value was 0.728.

### **Statistical Techniques used in the Study**

The investigators were used the statistical techniques namely, Mean, Standard Deviation to made the descriptive analysis of data. The statistical means used by the researchers for inferential analysis were the t-test for one independent sample and t-test for two equal independent samples.

### **Descriptive Analysis of Data**

**Objective 1:** To find out the level of attitude towards English language learning of male and female higher secondary students.

**Table 1: Level of Attitude towards English Language Learning of Higher Secondary Students**

Variable	Gender	Low		Average		High	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Attitude towards English language learning	Male	19	12.6	109	72.2	23	15.2
	Female	17	11.4	96	64.4	36	24.2

It is inferred from the above table that with regard to male students, 12.6% of higher secondary students have low level, 72.2% of them have average level and 15.2% of them have high level of attitude towards English language learning. With regards to female students, 11.4% of them have low level, 64.4% of them have average level, and 24.2% of them have high level of attitude towards English language learning.

**Objective 2:** To measure higher secondary students' attitude towards English language learning.

#### Inferential Analysis of Data

After distributing the questionnaire among male and female higher secondary students, it is found that the calculated t-value for the variable of attitude towards English language learning (107.43) which is greater than the table value of the t-test that is about (1.96) for degrees of freedom (299) at 5% level of significance, cf. Table (2).

**Table 2: T-test Results of the Research Sample**

Variable	Sample Size	Degrees of freedom	Mean	SD	Calculated t-value	Tabulated t-value	Remark
Attitude towards English language learning	300	299	83.51	13.43	107.43	1.96	S

S – Significant at 5% level of significance

The results of the first objective showed that there is statistically significant differences at significant level of (0.05). On the other hand, the calculated t-value is (107.43) and the tabulation value is (1.96). That is, the attitude towards English language learning is high.

**Null Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in their attitude towards English language learning.

**Table 3: T-Test showing the Significant Difference between Male and Female Higher Secondary Students in their Attitude towards English Language Learning**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S D	Calculated 't' value	Tabulated 't' value	Remark
Attitude towards English language learning	Male	151	81.8874	12.69727	2.125	1.96	S
	Female	149	85.1678	13.99971			

S - Significant at 5% level of significance

It is inferred from the above table that, the calculated 't' value (2.125) is greater than the table value (1.98) for degrees of freedom (298) at 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. It indicates that there is significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in their attitude towards English language learning. And also, the mean difference in the table revealed that the female higher secondary students have greater attitude towards English language learning than their counterpart.

### Findings of the Study

- 72.2% of Male higher secondary students have average attitude towards English language learning. But, 64.4% of female higher secondary students have average level of attitude towards English language learning.
- There is significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in their attitude towards English language learning The female higher secondary students have greater attitude towards English language learning than their counterpart.

### Conclusion

It was found from descriptive analysis that more than 72.2% of male and 64.4% of female higher secondary students have average level of attitude towards English language learning. And also the findings from the one sample t-test of the research revealed that the attitude towards English language learning is high. Further, inferential analysis of higher secondary students' responses showed that the female higher secondary students have greater positive attitude towards English language learning than female higher secondary students. Much of the potential for success depends on attitude. So to succeed in learning English language, the higher secondary students need a positive attitude towards English language learning. There appears to be little uncertainty that a teachers' responsibility is enormously significant in impacting how students feel about English Language Learning. Teachers play a key part in giving motivation and reinforcement towards learning English language. So the teacher is named as the reason for student's positive attitude as well as negative attitude towards English language learning. So this study may stimulate the English language teachers to measure the attitude of their students before going to teaching English in classroom. Hence the information obtained from the present study will be supportive to get suitable footsteps to fortify learning of English among male and female higher secondary students. The consequences of this attitude study are expected to assist policy planners to take appropriate

steps to improve the English syllabus and to provide instructions for teachers and administrators to deal with the difficulty of English Language Learning.

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