

Attitude of School Students Towards English – A Study of School Students of Teok Sub-Division of Jorhat District of Assam

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Abstract:

The objectives of the present study were to study the attitude of the school towards English subject, towards teachers teaching English and to study interrelation between attitude towards English and achievement in English. The population of the study constitutes high school students of Teok subdivision of Jorhat district. The sample of study constitutes 5 schools from Teok subdivision. In the study it was observed that students having more positive attitude showed better achievement in English while student with unfavourable or negative attitude showed low achievement in English.

Keywords: Attitude, English, school students

1. Introduction

1.1 Education is the powerful tool which helps to modify the behaviour of the child according to the needs and expectancy of the society. Student's attitude is an integral part of learning and it should therefore, become an essential component of second language learning. Attitudes towards learning are believed to influence ability of reading or speaking in a foreign language. If the student has positive attitude towards any subject, he 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. 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.

1.2 Importance of learning English: English is important language all over the world in this era. It becomes the international language and the Lingua Franca. Lingua Franca is a language that used for communicating by people who do not share the same language. Since the time of Macaulay's Minute (1835) followed by Bentinck's Educational resolution in respect to Indian Education, the significant position of English has been recognized in different stages of Indian education. It is compulsory for the school students to learn English in India. Besides, in higher education the Indian Students have a few alternatives than to choose English as medium of study. In respect of science education, the Indian students are left no choices except receiving education in English. In a globalised world acquiring proficiency in English is regarded as essential skill for

expansion of trade and service around the world. It has become a dominant language in business, finance, and banking and science and technology.

2. Rationale of the Study

Attitude is the determining factor in learning. American Psychologist E.L. Thorndike pointed out some laws of learning. He is of the opinion that the most significant law that determines learning is learners' readiness to learn. Readiness is of two kinds - physical and mental. Within mental readiness comes about learners' interest and attitude towards learning. Among the learning theories one significant theory is propounded by Ivan P. Pavlov. According to his theory of learning is the result of conditioning. Conditioning, according to him, is the process of establishment of a bond between two stimuli among which one is natural and other is artificial. The process of repeated presentation of artificial stimulus along with the natural stimulus would make the artificial stimulus to acquire the capability to evoke a response which could be produced by natural stimulus. For example, saliva secretion from the mouth of a dog when he sees meat can also be possible through sound of a bell if the bell is rung repeatedly at the time of giving his meat. Most of our acquired behaviour is the result of conditioning. If a person repeatedly wears a particular-coloured shirt, the colour that is disliked by someone else, it is possible the person may grow the feeling of dislike to that person also. In other words, the same feeling of dislike can be transferred or shifted from the particular colour that of the individual who wears the shirt of that particular colour. This theory has great bearing to understand the process of learning. It reveals the fact that if the attitude of student is not positive toward the elements of learning process i.e. subject of learning or the teachers, it will certainly influence their concentration, interest towards that subject will also influence the success in learning. On the basis of such theoretical background, the present study has great significance. It is hoped that the study will reveal the nature of attitude of the school children towards English learning and it will acquaint the teachers and educationists with the root causes of low-achievement of the school students in English which is reported by most of studies.

Statement of the Problem: The statement of the problem is Attitude of school students towards English – A study of school students of Teok Sub-division of Jorhat district of Assam.

3. Review of related literature

Many researches so far have been conducted in regard to attitude of the students. The previous research dealing with the students' attitude towards English was conducted by S. E. Safaye and Sanae Tsuda from Tokai Gakuen University, Japan in 2002. Safaye and Sanae tried to investigate the attitude of higher education students in Japan toward English. The result showed that the Japanese students had negative perception toward English. The students dislike English because it is hard to learn, and in addition the history of the background also influenced the students in learning English, nevertheless, the students had positive opinion about the usefulness of English. Another similar research dealing with the students' attitude towards English language was conducted by Akbar Azizifar, Iran 2014 conducted research to investigate the learners' attitude toward learning speaking in terms of cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects in Islamic Azad University. The result of the study showed that the learners have negative behavioural attitude towards speaking skill but have positive emotional and cognitive attitude.

4. Objectives of the Study: The study has the following objectives

- i. To study the attitude of the school towards English subject
- ii. To study the attitude of the school towards teachers teaching English
- iii. To study interrelation between attitude towards English and achievement in English

5. Research Questions: The investigator has undertaken this research in order to answer the following research questions

- I. Do the school students have desirable attitude towards English subject?
- II. What is the attitude of school students towards teachers teaching English?
- III. Do the students have adequate level of self-confidence towards learning of English?

Methodology

Introduction: Methodology refers to the methods followed in various activities of research. It includes the techniques of data collection, sampling design, tool construction etc. There are various research designs in research. It can be divided into experimental and survey type from the perspective of data collection. In experimental research experiment are conducted, a controlled environment is created and data are collected from the experimental phenomena while in survey type research data are collected from existing phenomena not by manipulating a phenomenon. The present work is fall under survey type research.

Population and sample: The population of the study constitutes high school students of Teok subdivision of Jorhat district. The sample of study constitutes 5 schools from Teok subdivision out of which three are govt. school and two are private schools. Purposive sampling technique has been used to choose sample schools. The sample schools include, Dagduar high school, Teok Girls' H.S school, Teok Rajabari High school, Jyoti vidyapith, Teok Jatia Vidyalaya.

Tool: A self-constructed attitude scale is being used in this research. The tool contains 16 statements with two options 'yes' or 'no' against each statement.

Scoring: Each item (statement) carries 1 or 0 mark on the basis of response type. A respondent will get 1 mark against statement no.1,2,5,6,7,8,9,12,15, and 16 if he chooses 'No' option and he will get '0' for each if he chooses 'yes' option. In respect to the item no. 3,4,10,11,13 and 14 a respondent will get 1 mark for each if he chooses 'Yes' option and '0' for his answer as 'no'. Thus, the tool consists both positive and negative statements.

Statistical Technique Used: The collected data are analysed by calculating percentage of average.

6. Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

Table No.1 Overall attitude of the sample students to English subject

Number of students	Total marks in Attitude scale	Average
50	655	13.1

Table No. 2 Comparison between boys and girls in terms of attitude to English subject

	N	Total Score	Average
Boys	19	257	13.1
Girls	31	412	13.29

Above table reveals that boys have better attitude than girls towards English subject

Table No. 3 Comparison between private and govt, school students in terms of attitude to English subject

	N	Total Score	Average
Private school	20	278	13.9
Government School	30	394	13.3

Above table reveals that students of private schools have better attitude than govt. scho towards English subject

Table No. 4 Attitude of school students to English teachers (item No 3) and English Subje (item no. 6)

Attitude	Type of Attitude	N	Average
Towards Subject	Positive attitude	40 out of 50	80%
	Negative attitude	10 out of 50	20%
Towards Teacher	Positive attitude	45 out of 50	90%
	Negative attitude	5 out of 50	10%

Above table reveals that students have good attitude towards English teachers as we towards the subject.

Table No.5 Achievement scores of students having high score and low score in attitude scale.

High score Group	High score Group	Low score Group	Low score Group
Scores in Attitude scale	Achievement scores	Scores in Attitude scale	Achievement scores
15	45	09	06
15	50	09	10
15	90	09	12
16	72	10	29
16	51	10	57
16	76	10	39
16	90	10	88
16	80	10	67

16	85	11	44
16	84	11	48
16	62	11	21
16	61	11	65
16	93	11	33

Table No.5.1 Comparison of achievement scores between students having high score and low score in attitude scale.

Category	N	Total Achievement score in English	Average
High score group	13	939	72.23%
Low score group	13	519	39.92%

Criteria of Grouping: High score and low score group constitutes 27% of higher and lower scores after arrangement of scores in ascending order

Above tables (table no. 5 & 5.1 reveal that students having high attitude scores have better achievement in English subject as compared to the students having low attitude scores.

Hypotheses Testing:

Hypothesis 1. The school students do not have desirable attitude towards English subject.

From the table no.1, it is revealed that the high school students have overall favourable attitude toward English 90% of the sample students have positive attitude towards English only 10% of the students have negative attitude. The research finding confronts out hypothesis and the hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2. The attitude of the school students towards English teachers is not satisfactory.

From the table no.4, it is revealed that students have positive attitude towards English teachers.90% of the students showed positive attitude, only 10% showed negative attitude towards English teachers. The result confronts with hypothesis and that is why we reject the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3. The low achievement of the students in English subject is due to their negative attitude towards the subject.

The table no 5 and 5.1 revealed that students scored high in attitude scale have high achievement in English subject while students with low scores in achievement have low level of achievement. This finding resembles with the hypothesis and thus we can retain this hypothesis and can conclude that attitude significantly influence upon achievement in English

Findings and conclusion:

The Findings of the study are as follows

1. High school students of Teok sub-division of Jorhat district of Assam have good attitude towards English subject.
2. Boys have better attitude than girls towards English subject
3. Students of private schools have better attitude than govt. school towards English subject
4. Students having high attitude scores have better achievement in English subject as compared to the students having low attitude scores.

Conclusion: Attitude is the determining factor in learning. Attitude has significant influence upon students' choice of subject, liking and disliking of subject, study habit and overall learning process. It is necessary for a teacher to develop positive attitude in the mind of the students towards the subject first instead of forceful and dull deliberation in the topic. Once desirable attitude towards subject is formed learning will become spontaneous and such learning will restore the mental health of the learner. In the study it was observed that students having more positive attitude showed better achievement in English while student with unfavourable or negative attitude showed low achievement in English. English language teaching has always been one of the interest areas in India. Increasing numbers of teachers' educators, linguists and researchers have devoted themselves to finding ways effective language teaching. Enhancing the level of attitudes will certainly be the fundamental means in this regard.

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