Attitudes towards English Language Learning among EFL Learners at UMSKAL

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Abstract

This paper analyses the result of a survey on 238 undergraduate EFL students at a public university in Malaysia. The survey focused on their attitude towards English learning and causes that might have hindered their learning. For data collection, a 19 item questionnaire were designed and administered on 238 students. The objective of this study was to investigate (1) The attitudes of the learners towards the use of English in different areas; (2) Causes that may have influenced the effect of English learning for students (3) Perspectives of English learning among non-major English learners in Malaysia. Results of the qualitative analysis show that the attitude towards English language learning and using the language in various domains of usage is extremely positive. The data also revealed that most of the students had negative feelings or fear regarding classroom instructions in their learning experience. Students of different fields varied in attitudes towards English language learning in terms of domains of usage and focus of learning skills, which shows that a single curriculum or teaching methodology is not adequate. Several suggestions have been made regarding teaching methodology, curriculum, teaching materials, and the status of English in Malaysia from this point of view.

Key words: EFL learners, Learner attitudes, Learning environment, Language learning, Malaysia

1. Introduction

There are many possible reasons for studying a foreign/second language. Probably a major number of language students in the world do it because it is on the curriculum. Some people want to study English or another foreign language because they think it offers a chance for advancement in their professional lives. They will get a better job with two languages than if they only know their mother tongue. English has a special position here since it has become the international language of communication. Some language students find themselves living in a target language community either temporarily or permanently. The students would need to learn English to survive in that community. Students who are going to study at a university in the USA, UK, Australia or Canada, on the other hand, may need English so that they can write reports or essays and function in seminars. The term English for Special or Specific Purposes has been applied to situations where students have some specific reason for wanting to learn the language. Business executives need English for international trade. Waiters may need English to serve the customers. It will be clear from this list that there are many possible reasons for studying a language (Harmer, 2002).

People involved in language teaching often say that students who really want to learn will succeed whatever the circumstances in which they study. Motivation that students bring to class is the biggest single factor affecting their success. Motivation is some kind of internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action. In general strongly motivated students with long-term goals are probably easier to teach than those who have no such goals and therefore no real drive. For such students short-term goals will often provide the only motivation they feel. Students have motivation that is separated into two main categories: extrinsic motivation, which is concerned with factors outside the classroom, and intrinsic motivation, which is concerned with what takes place inside the classroom. Some students study a language because they have an idea of something which they wish to achieve. Many other factors have an impact upon a student's level of extrinsic motivation and most of these have to do with his or her attitude to the language. Another factor affecting the attitude of students is their previous experience as language learners. If they were successful then they may be pre-disposed to success now. Failure then may mean that they expect failure now.

In the changing scenario of language teaching theories and methodologies, where the learners, rather than the teachers, are gaining a central position, learners' attitude plays a vital role in maximizing learning and teaching output. Learners' attitude can be defined as a collection of feelings regarding language use and its status in the society. The feelings are good, bad and neutral. They can nurture or hinder the learning process effectively. Even after syllabus, teaching materials, teacher training programmes have been changed and made up to date from time to time, the overall output in the competence of the students has never been improved. One reason behind this is that the changes have always been powerfully constrained by the western cultural assumptions and lack of knowledge of the social contexts. Not much research has been directed to the topic of how the local educational/teaching environment has influenced students' learning when the students are not

English major, but studying English as non-majors due to educational requirements and professional needs. The notion of attitude, as a strong variable, applies in this situation.

1.2. Status and role of English in Malaysia

The use and importance of English in Malaysia has undergone many phases. English came into being in Malaysia during the seventeenth century when the British came and colonized the country. Their presence gave the English language pre-eminence in the government, business and social arenas. At this period, English was predominantly used as a language by the elites, communicated and used by a small group of people. After the independence in 1947, policies regarding education and the use of English began to change. The whole nation became aware of a need for a national identity. During the 1970s, Bahasa Malaysia became the principal language as the medium of instruction in schools and English was relegated to a minor role in the education system. The ever-increasing advancement of science and technology and the advent of globalization changed the whole scenario of the status and use of English in Malaysia. Ever since, English language has played an important role in the education system and different aspects of life especially in business and commerce. The whole country and its people are now very aware of the need to master the language in order to adjust and cater to the demand of English as a global language (Foo and Richards, 2004). This idea was further enhanced and reinforced by Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad in 2002 when he declared that mathematics and sciences will henceforth be taught in English from the first year of primary school (Rahman, 2008).

With its multiethnic background, the people of Malaysia have divergent attitudes towards the English language. The status of English in Malaysia has been in constant debate. The use of English is wide-spread in Malaysia even though it is not the official language of the country. Notwithstanding, the usage of English is widespread as a language of business, technology, and diplomacy and the language of everyday life for many people.

1.3. Study Objectives

This current study was done out of academic inquisitiveness and the desire to know the above learners' response and reaction to learning English as a second or foreign language at the tertiary level. The objective of this study was to investigate:

(1) The attitudes of the learners towards the use of English in different areas;
(2) Causes that may have influenced the effect of English learning for students at UMSKAL.
(3) Perspectives of English learning among non-major English learners at UMSKAL.

2. Literature Review

One of the most successful language learning experiences took place towards the end of the Second World War when the American military needed to train their personnel in the languages of the countries they would have to administer and/or deal with. In short intensive courses, the students learnt amazingly fast. Similarly in Britain, Air Force personnel were taken to Cambridge and taught Russian with enormous success. Whatever the teaching methods used- or the reasons for the language learning-the teachers and students in these cases had a number of things in favour of them. They were highly motivated, they really wanted to learn and they had strong reasons for doing so with a fear of failure. The desire to learn can come from many causes. Perhaps the students love the subject or are simply interested to see what it is like. On the other hand, they may have a practical reason for their study: learn English so they can watch American TV or work with English people or a proficient with English language can offer them a better chance at the job market.

The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching (2002, p.297) defines language attitudes as follows: "the attitudes which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other's languages or to their own language. Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, degree of importance, elegance, social status, etc. Attitudes towards a language may also show what people feel about the speakers of that language. Language attitudes may have an effect on second language or foreign language learning. The measurement of language attitudes provides information which is useful in language teaching and language learning."

Kachru (1992) discussed the role of learners' attitude in choosing the variety of English: "What does such an attitude imply? In Ghana, for example, educated Ghanaian English is acceptable; but as Sey (1973, p.1) warns us, 'it does not entail competence in speaking RP since in Ghana 'the type that strives too obviously to approximate to RP is frowned up on as distasteful and pedantic'. In Nigeria the situation is not different from Ghana or India (Kachru 1976 a). Bamghose (1971) emphasizes that "the aim is not to produce speakers of British Received Pronunciation (even if this were feasible) … Many Nigerians will consider as affected or even snobbish any Nigerians who speak like a native speaker of English." It is obvious that an agreement between learners' attitude and the type and amount of English that they learn is common in every L2 situation.

Sridhar (1994) points out: "SLA theory needs rebuilding from the ground up, in order to have a more functionally oriented and culturally authentic theory: why do models of second language acquisition (SLA) developed in the U.S. and Western Europe treat the vast majority of L2 learners, those that learn and use an L2 in non-native contexts, as marginal? The inescapable answer seems to be that current theories are powerfully constrained by Western cultural premises". Indeed, when discussing any issue about language teaching and learning, cultural differences should contribute tremendously to the initiative of the discussion. Issues may include the differences of educational systems, learning conditions, teaching and learning styles, learning differences between Western and Eastern cultures and differences in needs for language use in the job market.

There has been a great deal of research on the role of attitudes and motivation in second language learning. The overall findings show that positive attitudes and motivation are related to success in second language learning (Gardner, 1985). It is not clear whether it is the motivation that produces successful learning or successful learning that enhances motivation or whether both are affected by other factors. Skehan (1989) noted that, the question is, are learners more highly motivated because they are successful, or are they successful because they are highly motivated?

Motivation in second language learning is a complex phenomenon which can be defined in terms of two factors: learners' communicative needs and their attitudes towards the second language community. If learners need to speak the second language in a wide range of social situations or to fulfill professional ambitions, they will perceive the communicative value of the second language and will therefore be motivated to acquire proficiency in it. Similarly, if learners have favourable attitudes towards the speakers of the language, they will want more contact with them. Gardner and Lambert (1972) coined the terms integrative motivation to refer to language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment, and instrumental motivation for language learning for more immediate or practical goals. Research has shown that these types of motivation are related to success in second language learning.

On the other hand, an individual's identity is closely linked with the way he or she speaks. It follows that when speaking a new language one is adopting some of the identity markers of another cultural group. Depending on the learner's attitudes, learning a second language can be source of enrichment or a source of resentment. If the speaker's only reason for learning the second language is external pressure, internal motivation may be minimal and general attitudes towards learning may be negative. Moreover, one factor which often affects motivation is the social dynamic or power relationship between the languages. That is, members of a minority group learning the language of a majority group may have different attitudes and motivation from those of majority group members learning a minority language. Children as well as adults are sensitive to social dynamics and power relationships.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggested that students who felt most warmly about a language and who wanted to integrate into the culture of its speakers are more highly motivated (and learnt more successfully) than those who were only learning language as a means to an end (e.g. getting a better job). In other words, *Integrative* motivation was more powerful than *Instrumental* motivation. But whatever kind of motivation students have, it is clear that highly motivated students do better than ones without any motivation at all.

Mohd Sallehhuddin (1994) conducted a survey with 137 University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) English non-major undergraduates to evaluate their attitudes towards English. This study concentrated mainly on the learners' attitudes towards the University's English language policy, their attitudes towards English vis-à-vis Bahasa Malaya, their views on speakers of English and their attitudes towards the compulsory English language courses offered at UKM. The study showed that the UKM students have positive attitudes towards the learning of English.

Mahreez (1994) undertook a study with 130 University Utara Malaysia English non-major undergraduates to assess their motivation and attitudes towards English language. The study focused on some of the possible contributory factors that can affect the Chinese-Malaysian learners' attitudes and motivation, in relation to the comparatively poor performances of the Malay and Indian learners. The results indicated that the attitudes and motivation of the above learners are 'positive and instrumental in orientation'.

Yang (2012) conducted a short study with 20 University Malaya Master students to gauge their attitudes and motivation in L2. The main objective of the study was to find out what makes some people acquire and learn English better than others. The findings reveal that 'learners who were highly and positively involved in their English proficiency had positive attitudes and highly motivated towards learning English'.

Latifah et al. (2011) directed a massive research with 757 learners nationwide to assess how several factors like motivation, attitude, anxiety and instrumental orientation play role in influencing learners' performance in English language course in Open University Malaysia. The study shows that the above factors are correlated with learners' performance. While personal motivation plays an insignificant impact, attitude plays a positive impact on performance in the English course conducted at Open University Malaysia.

Al Mamun et al. (2012) conducted a questionnaire survey with 79 randomly selected non-major English undergraduate students from Khulna University, Bangladesh to gauge their attitude towards EFL. The research findings indicate that the learners have got a positive attitude towards English language and their motivational orientation were instrumental in nature.

Chalak & Kassaian (2010) conducted another study with 108 English translation major students at Islamic Azad Univeristy, Iran and investigated their motivational orientation and their attitude towards learning English. The findings showed that these EFL learners tend to learn English for both instrumental and integrative reasons and their attitude towards the target language is generally highly positive in nature.

Galloway (2011) piloted a research with 116 undergraduates from Kanda University of International Studies, Japan (a private university) to investigate these students' attitudes towards English and English teachers in relation to the use of English as a lingua franca. The findings suggest that the learners deem English belonging to the native English speakers and they want to learn native English. The results highlighted that a number of factors influence students' attitude.

Bobkina & Fernandez (2012) investigated the motivational patterns and attitude towards the use of English in social and educational contexts of 72 EFL engineering students at the Technical University in Madrid. They found that the predominant motivation among Spanish engineering students is extrinsic in nature and most of the students have positive attitude towards the social values and educational status of English. Moreover, students' have positive orientation towards the English language.

Tahaineh & Daana (2013) undertook a research with 184 Jordanian EFL female undergraduates to measure out their motivational orientation and attitude towards learning the target language and its community. The results showed that the learners' motivation was instrumental in nature having utilitarian and academic reasons with the least impact of culture in it, whereas their attitude towards learning the target language and its community was highly positive.

Goktepe (2014) examined 90 first-year business studies undergraduates at a Turkish university and their attitude and motivation towards learning English as a foreign language. The results showed that these learners learn English mostly for instrumental reasons and also integrative motivation is dominant motivational orientation for the learners in some degree.

Al Samadani & Ibnian, S.S (2015) led a study with 112 English major students from Umm Al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia to explore their attitude as well as study factors affecting towards learning English. It also investigated the relationship between their attitudes and grade points average (GPA). The findings of the study revealed that the learners have overall positive attitude towards English and that students with high GPA have the highest positive attitude towards English, followed by the medium and the low GPA students.

There are also a good number of researches on attitudes towards English language in different context (Al Asmari 2013, Hohenthal 2003, Rahman 2008), attitude and motivation towards learning English (Al-Tamimi and Shuib 2009).

No study has yet been undertaken to observe the attitudes of the under-graduates to English language learning at Universiti Malysia Sabah, Labuan International Campus. This current study was done with academic inquisitiveness and the desire to know the above learners' response and reaction to learning English as a second or foreign language at the tertiary level.

3. Methodology

Qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., events relating to or involving quality or kind. For instance, while investigating the reasons for human behavior, we tend to deal with research on motivation. This type of research divulge into discovering the underlying motives and desires using in-depth interviews for this purpose. Researches such as attitude and opinion are designed to find out how people feel or what they think about a particular subject or institution is also qualitative research. Qualitative research is specifically plays significant role in the behavioural sciences where the objective is to discover the underlining motives of human behavior. This type of research analyses the various factors which motivates people to behave in a particular manner or which make people like or dislike a particular thing (Kumar, 2008, p.8).

The questionnaire survey is one of the most common methods of data collection on attitudes and opinions from a large group of participation. It has been used to investigate a wide variety of questions in L2 research. Questionnaires allow researchers to gather information that learners are able to report about themselves that is typically not available from production data alone. One of the primary advantages of using questionnaires is that, apart from being economical and practical, they can in many cases bring about longitudinal information from learners in a short period of time. Questionnaires can also collect comparable information from a number of respondents. In addition, questionnaires can be administered in many forms, such as via e-mail, by phone, through mail-in-forms, as well as in person, allowing the researcher a greater degree of flexibility in the data collecting process. Based on the structure, questionnaires can provide both qualitative insights and quantifiable data, and thus are very flexible for use in a range of research (Macky & Gass, 2005).

According to Dörnyei & Taguchi (2010), questionnaires are one of the most common methods of data collection in L2 research. Questionnaires are very popular since they are easy to construct, extremely versatile, capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in such a way that is readily processable.

According to Brown, (2001, p. 6, cited in Macky & Gass, 2005), "Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers." Brown (2001, p. 2, cited in McKay, 2006) opines that language surveys are any studies "that gather data on the characteristics and views of informants about the nature of language or language learning through the use of oral interviews or written questionnaires".

Dornyei (2003, cited in McKay 2006) points out that survey can provide three types of information:
(i) factual information; (ii) behavioral information; and (iii) attitudinal information. Surveys also act as a very useful tool for researchers to gather a good deal of information in a short time with little cost. As a result, surveys are a particularly effective way for teachers to find out more about the background, habits, and preferences of their students and this kind of information can be used in curriculum development.

This current study employed a questionnaire to collect data on students' points of view regarding their attitude towards English language learning at the university. The data of this study were collected through a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire survey method was preferred since (i) this method is suitable for empirical research; (ii) collection of data through this method is easily quantifiable; (iii) this method enables informants enough time to provide accurate and correct answers; and (iv) this method is cost-effective and time saving. The research questionnaire was prepared based on a previous study by Hohenthal (2003) after modifications according to the objectives of this study. While preparing the questionnaire, special care was given to ensure standard and quality of the questions as well as the reliability, clarity, practicality and administerability of the instruments (Al Mamun et al., 2012).

3.1. Material

This study produced qualitative and quantitative data through questionnaire. The data was analyzed mostly following a qualitative approach. Averages were calculated from a scale of 1-4 and 1-5 (i.e. 1= Agree, 2= Somewhat Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Somewhat Disagree, 5= Disagree). The survey questionnaire consisted of 19 multiple-choice questions. Among them, two items, question numbers 7 and 15, gave the choice of open-ended answers also. The first five questions were set to measure the attitude of the learners towards use of English. The answers of these questions would range from 1 to 4. 1 was counted as a positive attitude and 4 as a negative attitude. Question numbers 6 and 7 are related to past experience of the learners regarding English language learning. The answer of the question number 7 gave a choice of common hurdles faced by a student in a classroom, and also the space to come up with own answers of the respondents. Questions from number 8 to 11 deal with the learners' preferences of teaching methodology. The questions were set in an indirect way, but they can be interpreted as learners' preference for a particular methodology. Question numbers 12, 13, 14, and 15 are questions regarding the focus of language skills in teaching curriculum. Questions from number 16 to 19 are direct questions regarding the learners' choice of language skills. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed among the undergraduate students during the Semester 1 Session 2012-2013, Semester 1 & 2 Session 2013-2014 at UMS KAL, Sabah, Malaysia. A number of 12 questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete and incorrect responses.

3.2 Limitations

This study is limited to one public university in Labuan, Malaysia, therefore, provides only a partial picture of the frame of mind of adult learners' attitude towards learning English as a non-major subject. It is assumed that students answered the questions honestly and sincerely. This current study was done with the hope that a much comprehensive research would be undertaken in the future to shade more light in this specific area.

3.3 The Participants

A total number of 238 students (male 66 and female 172) from Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Labuan International Campus, participated in the study. They were 1st and 2nd year students aged around 18-25 years (Malay 169 and Chinese 69). Most of them have studied English language around 10 years. The participating undergraduate learners were studying in Business and Information Technology majoring in International Finance, International Marketing, International and Offshore Banking, International Financial Economics, Islamic Finance, Multimedia Technology and E-Commerce etc.

3.4 Survey Instrument

The survey questionnaire consisted of 19 multiple-choice questions. Among them, two items, question numbers 7 and 15, gave the choice of open-ended answers also. The first five questions were set to measure the attitude of the learners towards use of English. The answers of these questions would range from 1 to 4. 1 was counted as a positive attitude and 4 as a negative attitude. Question numbers 6 and 7 are related to past experience of the learners regarding English language learning. The answer of the question number 7 gave a choice of common hurdles faced by a student in a classroom, and also the space to come up with own answers of the respondents. Questions from number 8 to 11 deal with the learners' preferences of teaching methodology. The questions were set in an indirect way, but they can be interpreted as learners' preference for a particular methodology. Question numbers 12, 13, 14, and 15 are questions regarding the focus of language skills in teaching curriculum. Questions from number 16 to 19 are direct questions regarding the learners' choice of language skills.

4. Data Analysis

Statistical analysis of the data will gives a general picture of learners' attitude towards English language learning in all its aspects. The following figure gives a quick glance at the overall min of the respondents:

Table 1: Min, Median and Standard deviation of the data

Question No.	Min	Median	Standard Deviation
1.	1.6	1	1
2.	1.6.	1	1.2
3.	1.1	1	0.5
4.	1.1	1	0.5
5.	1.3	1	0.7
6.	0*	0	0.5
7.	0	1	1.2
8.	1.6	1	1.3
9.	2	2	1.5
10.	2	2	1.5
11.	1.9	2	1.5
12.	1.8	1	1.6
13.	1.3	1	1.1
14.	3.2	5	1.6
15.	1.7	2	1.1
16.	3.4	4	0.9
17.	3.6	4	0.7
18.	3.7	4	0.7
19.	3.4	4	0.9

* 0 refers to negative answers and 1 refers to positive answers

While the mins are generally informative, they do not give much insight into difference in the attitude. A detail analysis with the number of respondents, their percentage is necessary for that matter. For question number 1 the median is 1 and the standard deviation is 1. The number of respondents who gave a very positive response by tick marking the 'agree' box is 122, i.e. 51% of the total data range. Out of the rest, 29% somewhat agreed with the proposition (70 respondents), 17.6% disagreed with it (42 respondents), and 1.67% (42 respondents) somewhat disagreed with the proposition. For question number 2 the percentage of the agreed responses is 55.2%, i.e. 132 respondents out of 238. 20.9% respondents disagreed with the proposition (50 respondents), while 20.9% (50 respondents) somewhat agreed with it. 88.7% (212 respondents) agreed with the question number 3, and only 0.84% disagreed with it (2 respondents). The number of persons somewhat agreed and disagreed are also few in question 3, they are 6.69% (16 respondents) and 3.35% (8 respondents) respectively. For question number 4, the agreed response is 87.9% (210 respondents), somewhat agreed are 9.21% (22 respondents), somewhat disagreed and disagreed are 0.84% and 1.67% respectively. 68.6% (164 respondents) agreed with the question number 5, 24.3% somewhat agreed and 3.5% disagreed with it. The table below gives a comparative view of the data analysis.

Table 2: Percentage and Number of respondents according to responses

Question No.	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
1. Do you think that learning English will help the growth of your mind?	51% (122)	29.3% (70)	1.67% (4)	17.6% (42)
2. Do you think that learning English will improve your personality?	55.2% (132)	20.9% (50)	2.51% (6)	20.9% (50)
3. Do you think that learning English will open more job opportunities for you?	88.7% (212)	6.69% (16)	3.35% (8)	0.84% (2)
4. Do you think that learning English will help you in higher academic achievement?	87.9% (210)	9.21% (22)	0.84% (2)	1.67% (4)
5. Do you think that learning English will help you in promoting business?	68.6% (164)	24.3% (58)	3.35% (8)	3.35% (8)

Question numbers 6 and 7 (Did learning English at your school or college give you any fear or unpleasant feelings?/If, Yes or Some, the source(s) of the fear was/were) were set to identify problems in learners' past learning experience. For number 6, 51% said they had unpleasant feelings in the past. 48.5% said they did not have any unpleasant experience. But one interesting thing was revealed while the data was being

processed. Quite a few number of respondents who answered in the negative for number 6 also answered the question number 7, that is, they identified some problems from the choices given there as theirs. Through some feedback from some of the respondents made it clear that the phrase 'unpleasant feeling' created the confusion, otherwise almost all of them had problems in learning English in the past. In identifying the problems 49% identified the classroom instruction as problematic. As it gave a choice to specify any other problem that may not mentioned in the questionnaire, some interesting problems came up. For example, mood of the teacher, uncommon questions, not interesting lessons, not practical textbooks etc.

Questions from number 8 to 11 were set to scale learners' attitude towards teaching methodology. These questions had a five point answer range. For question number 8, 52.7% (126 respondents) marked agreed, 8.37% marked disagreed, 5.02% marked somewhat disagree, 14.2% remained neutral, and the rest 19.2% somewhat agreed with the question. For question number 9, 37.7% agreed with the proposition, 15.9% disagreed with it, 14.2%, remained neutral and the rest are either somewhat agree or somewhat disagree markers. For question number 10, 37.7% said that they agree with the question, 33.5% somewhat agreed with it, 5.02% remained neutral, and 21.8% disagreed with it. 51% agreed with the proposition in question number 11, 6.69% remains neutral and 19.2% disagreed with it. A comparative view is given in the following table:

Table 3: Percentage and Number of respondents according to responses

Question No.	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
8. You think that being able to actually communicate with the foreigners in English is a very basic purpose of English.	52.7% (126)	19.2% (46)	14.2% (34)	5.02% (12)	8.37% (20)
9. You like to learn English through 'grammatical rules' and 'vocabulary memorisation'.	37.7% (90)	24.3% (58)	14.2% (34)	7.53% (18)	15.9% (38)
10. When you speak English the fear of making grammatical mistakes has great influence on you.	37.7% (90)	33.5% (80)	5.02% (12)	1.67% (4)	21.8% (52)
11. You like to learn English in an 'All English' environment.	51% (122)	18.4% (44)	6.69% (16)	4.18% (10)	19.2% (46)

Questions from 12 to 19 were all set to measure learners' attitude towards preferences of language skills. Question number 12, 13, 14, and 15 are indirect questions, which can be interpreted as learning preferences. Question number 16, 17, 18, and 19 are direct questions indicating learners' choice. 75.3% respondents agreed with the question number 12, 56.86% disagreed with the next question. For question number 14 and 15 agree percentages are 79.5% and 47.3%. The following table gives a detail and comparative view of the data:

Table 4: Percentage and Number of respondents according to responses

Question No.	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
12. You like to be able to listen to and understand everyday English.	75.3% (180)	13.4% (32)	3.35% (8)	1.67% (4)	5.86% (14)
13. You think that it is enough to be able to read in English.	18.4% (44)	9.21% (22)	10.9% (26)	5.02% (12)	56.1% (134)
14. You think that 'listening, speaking, reading, writing' are all important in learning English.	79.55% (190)	5.02% (12)	4.18% (12)	5.02% (12)	5.86% (14)
15. If you have to choose the most important skills or your favourite skills, what do you think is the best sequence?	47.3% (114)	17.6% (42)	25.9% (62)	7.53% (18)	0.84% (2)

Questions from 16 to 19 (In English learning you want to focus on 'listening' only/ In English learning you want to focus on 'reading' only/ In English learning you want to focus on 'writing' only/ In English learning you want to focus on 'speaking' only) were direct questions regarding learners' choice of learning skills. Surprisingly very little percentage of the respondents wanted to put stress on a particular skill. Most of the learners wanted to learn all the skills in an amiable way. For question number 16, the positive respondents are only 6.69% (16 respondents), while 78.7% (188 respondents) disagreed with the proposition. For 17, 18, and 19 negative (disagree) responses are 85.4% (204 respondents), 87.9% (210 respondents), and 81.1% (194 respondents) respectively. Very little percentage of the respondents answered in the somewhat agree or somewhat disagree manner.

5. Implications of the Analysis

It is observed that the questions are divided into 5 categories to measure learners' attitudes towards 5 different areas of language learning and teaching. Attempts will be made to provide information on possible implications of the attitudes in those areas and try to make suggestions in that regards.

The first set of questions was set to measure attitude of the learners towards status of the English language. From the data analysis it can be seen that the attitude is extremely positive in question number 3 and 4. For numbers 1, 2, 5 the result is again positive, as both the min and median are 1. This indicates to a favourable atmosphere of learning and teaching English for the learners. Students are also more likely to adapt to the bilingualism that is likely to be the result of English learning. This is a very positive factor in second language teaching.

Question numbers 6 and 7 were asked to know about any unpleasant experience that the learners might have faced in the past regarding English learning. Most of the respondents who answered in positive marked the ways of classroom instruction as a source of unpleasant feeling. Many of them marked both the ways of classroom instruction and fear of examination as viable sources. Classroom instruction refers to classroom interaction. The size of a large classroom at primary and secondary level is quite common phenomenon. There is little doubt the teachers become coercive in delivering the lessons, give less time for individual problems, and care less about individual learning strategies of the learners. So, even if the teacher is well spoken in theoretical and practical aspects of language teaching, s/he fails to apply it in the classroom. To resolve the issue, one way is to make quick decisions about the teacher-student ratio, more classrooms, more teacher training, and leave it there. The other way is to use whatever means available at hands. TV programmes can supplement classroom instructions. Also 'Self-Access Centres' could be developed in schools and colleges, and create the post of Teaching Assistants, who can help the students in solving their problems.

The next set of questions was set to measure the learners' attitude towards teaching methodology. Here the choices of the learners are running in all direction. In one hand, 51% of the respondents agreed with an all-English teaching environment, 52% agreed that the communication with the foreigners is the principal aim of learning English, which can be translated in favour of Communicative Language Teaching method. But, on the other hand, only 37% respondents went against the Grammar-Translation method. A quick glance over the history of the teaching methods will reveal that the methods have always been constrained by teaching, rather than learning needs, and other extra linguistic factors like, contemporary social situations, output expectations etc. For example, Direct Method was born out of a need to teach American soldiers different European languages at the time of Second World War. No one later questioned the applicability of the method in peacetime classroom. A method should be built keeping in mind the local context and the basic language teaching parameters.

Questions from number 12 to 19 are questions regarding skills preferences. It has been seen earlier that the overall attitude of the learners is motivated more by integrative force rather than by instrumental one. Actually, the language situation all over Asia has always been multilingual throughout the three thousand years of written history. Evidences from near history will also show that knowledge of a second language has always been treated as an extra quality. So, it is not surprising that the regular students will be eager to learn the language as a whole, i.e. without putting stress on any particular skill. Since the respondents are all from regular educational institution, it is possible that there are also a large number of students who need to develop a particular skill for their jobs. A large-scale survey is needed to cover all the segments to make any comment regarding the skill preferences. Incorporating listening or speaking skills to the general school and college syllabus will require additional textbooks, electrical equipment, specially trained teachers etc. Here, TV programmes can help in rebuilding the curriculum.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, the results of a study on learners' attitude towards English language have been discussed. Of special interest was the positive attitude of the learners who, despite having English courses in their educational institution still find the need for extra care and necessity to visit private language centres for learning English. Several suggestions have been made to bring back the learners into their class, which will save working hours and money as well. It has also been found that the learners are interested to learn all the language skills with equal emphasis, so, it is necessary to put lessons on listening and speaking in the mainstream English language curriculum.

The study clearly shows that the learners are not confused as to what they want or expect from a language class. They are aware of their needs very much and ready to go to any length to meet their needs. It is, now, a duty of the planners and policy makes to come up with viable and learner sensitive curriculum, teaching materials and methods.

Success or failure plays a vital part in the motivational drive of a student. Both complete failure and complete success may be de-motivating. It will be the teacher's job to set goals and tasks at which most of his or her students can be successful. Much of the teacher's work in the classroom involves tackling the challenges in a right way: this entails the setting of type of tasks in accordance with the proper pace from the student, etc. Ultimately, the students' success or failure is in their own hands, but the teacher can influence the course of events in the students' favor.

A teacher or instructor has got a very big role to play here. In this regard, Harmer (2002) points out that one of the main tasks for teachers is to provoke interest and involvement in the subject even when students are not initially interested in it. It is by their choice of topic, activity and linguistic content that they may be able to run a class effectively and successfully. It is by their attitude to class participation, their conscientiousness, their humour and their seriousness that they may influence their students. It is through their own behaviour and enthusiasm that they may inspire. However, teachers are not ultimately responsible for their students' motivation. They can only encourage by words and deed. Real motivation comes from within each individual.

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