



FACTORS AFFECTING THE ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY  
SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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**Abstract**

Language learning is a habit forming process. It is a specialized skill, which can be developed in the child spontaneously, without any conscious effort or formal instruction. Language is a system of arbitrary conventionalized vocal, written or gestural symbols that enable learners to communicate intelligibly with one another. Language Learning is a conscious study of learning the rules and the grammar of a language. Second Language Learning (SLL) refers to the learning of any language in addition to the learning of one's first language or mother tongue. The attitude of students towards English language learning plays a significant role in acquiring the skills of English language learning. Most of the students in the regional medium schools find it difficult in learning English. There are various factors that contribute for the learning of Second Language in school curriculum. The present study is an attempt to explore the factors that affect the attitude of secondary school students towards English language learning. The researchers used Descriptive Survey method for the present investigation. The data were collected using a well developed and standardized questionnaire from a sample of 1000 students (500 Boys and 500 Girls) studying in the Secondary Schools located in the Rural as well as Urban areas in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. The sample was selected using Stratified Random Sampling technique. Mean score values, standard deviations; t-tests and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used for analysis of data. The findings of the study revealed that the demographic variables – gender, type of school management and location of the institution have no influence on the attitude of secondary school students towards English language learning.

**Key words:** Attitude, Curriculum, Secondary School Students, Second Language Learning

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**Introduction**

English is a widely spoken language today. It has often been referred to as 'global language', the language most often taught as a second language across the globe. Due to the linguistic diversity found within our nation, English acts as an indispensable 'link' language. With the revolution in Information and Communication Technologies, most software and operating systems are being developed in the English language. English is said to be the world's most important language having communicative and educative value. In higher education, the use of English is inevitable while teaching subjects like agriculture, medicine, engineering and technology, education, law etc.

English plays a very crucial role in the Indian context. It is not simply because of its status as a link language, a language of trade and commerce, administration and management; but

because of its association with the life of people. The social, cultural and educational exchanges in every walk of life have been taking place through English language. English is an International language, a library language and a language of scientific advancement. It is a language which is rich in literature – humanistic, scientific and technical. It is one of the six official languages of the UNO; and the link language of the commonwealth countries. It is the language of international politics, trade, commerce and industry. English in India is used not only for communicating with the outside world, but also for inter-state and intra-state communication. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) throws light on the importance of English. According to the Commission's report, "English is no more a foreign language to us; it is a second language. It is a language of instruction in schools and colleges. It continues to be the *lingua-franca* of India. It is a living language". The Commission recommended that English should be given a right place in our school curriculum.

### **English Language Education**

'English language education' is a concept relating to the use of English in the teaching-learning process. It starts with the field of English language teaching (ELT), which encompasses ELT methodology and the teaching of various skill areas. It crosses the border of education and touches on the domains of curriculum and assessment. English language education also involves the immediate stake-holders, viz., the teachers and the students. Finally, the outcome of teaching and learning of English depends on certain factors like the use of English language, the standards of English and their impact on teaching and learning.

Language is a specialized skill, which can be developed in the child spontaneously, without conscious effort or formal instruction. It is a system of arbitrary conventionalized vocal, written or gestural symbols that enable learners to communicate intelligibly with one another. Language education is the process and practice of teaching a language; and is primarily a branch of applied linguistics. There are four main learning categories in language education. These categories include communicative competencies, proficiencies, cross-cultural experiences and development of multiple literacy skills. The teachers of English are expected to develop these competencies among their students in the English classroom. A teacher, who is good at English, alone, can deliver the goods properly to the students while teaching these subjects. Teaching of English and teaching of other subjects should go hand-in-hand in school education.

### **Second Language Learning in School Curriculum**

English as a second or foreign language is the use of English by speakers with different native languages. People, whose native language is not English, learn English language under different contexts, viz., 'English as a second language' (ESL), 'English as a foreign language' (EFL), or 'English as an additional language' (EAL).

Language Learning is a conscious study of learning the rules and the grammar of a language. Second Language Learning (SLL) refers to the learning of any language in addition to the learning of one's first language/mother tongue. In SLL, the language plays an established and shared role in the community, the members of which speak some other language as their mother tongue. Learning a second language necessarily involves comparison with the learner's first language, but the latter is generally perceived as causing 'interference' in the learning of additional one(s).

Language basically involves training students through practicing patterns to form 'habits'. Hence, language learning is said to be a habit forming process. Teachers should

work with these pre-conceptions while developing right speech habits of language among their students. The students need to understand how they learn a language. They need to reflect on their learning continuously and develop self-awareness of themselves as learners. They need to negotiate constantly who they are and how they should be with the culture of the language they are learning. Then only, they will be able to learn the language effectively and efficiently.

### **Factors Affecting English Language Learning**

English language learning is very much influenced by various factors under different contexts, viz., Learner Personality context, Educational context, Social context and other related factors.

Factors relating to Learner Personality context include learner's self-confidence, anxiety and risk-taking ability. Factors relating to Educational context include Learning situation, the foreign language teacher and the teaching material used in the classroom. Factors relating to the social context include the attitude of the learner towards his/her parents, peer groups and the community around. The other factors like the learners' gender and age also influence the second language learning.

### **Need for the Present Investigation**

The teaching and learning of English today is characterized by the diversity of schools and linguistic environments, and by systematically pervasive classroom procedures of teaching a textbook for success in an examination. This does not really serve the purpose of English language learning. Every student, by the time he/she comes out of a secondary school successfully, should be able to converse in English freely with the same ease as how he/she converses in mother tongue.

The attitude of students towards English language learning plays a significant role in acquiring English language besides providing a congenial learning environment in the school, good physical facilities, provision to study under the guidance of a professionally competent teacher and exposure to a lot of teaching-learning material. In this context, the researchers felt the need to explore the factors that influence the attitude of students towards English language learning at secondary level. The present investigation is an attempt in this direction.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the present study is to find out the factors that affect the attitude of secondary school students towards English language learning in school curriculum.

The following are the other specific objectives of the present investigation.

- (i) To study the influence of gender, type of school management and location of the institution on the attitude of secondary school students towards English language learning.
- (ii) To study the influence of different factors such as the Learning Situation, the Language Teacher, the Teaching Learning Material and the Feelings of Parents on the attitude of secondary school students towards English language learning.

### Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Boys and Girls studying in secondary schools towards English language learning.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of students studying in the Government, the Local Body and the Private secondary schools towards English language learning.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of students studying in Rural and Urban secondary schools towards English language learning.
4. There is no differential influence in the attitude of secondary school students towards English language learning with regard to the dimensions, 'the learning situation', 'the language teacher', 'the teaching-learning material' and 'the feelings of parents'.

### Scope of the Study

The study is intended to know the influence of different demographic variables, viz., gender, type of school management and location of the institution on the attitude of secondary school students towards English language learning. Further, the study is intended to know the differential influence of factors such as 'the learning situation', 'the language teacher', 'the teaching-learning material' and 'the feelings of parents' on the attitude of secondary school students towards English language learning.

### Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to find out the factors affecting the attitude of students studying in the 'Regional medium Secondary Schools' (Schools in which the medium of instruction is 'Telugu') located in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. These students include both boys and girls studying in Government, Local Body and Private schools located in rural as well as urban areas.

### Methodology

- a) **Method:** Since the study is intended to know the attitude of students studying in secondary schools, the researchers used **Descriptive Survey method** for the present investigation.
- b) **Sample:** The sample of the study consisting of 1000 students (500 Boys and 500 Girls) has been taken from the selected secondary schools located in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh using **Stratified Random sampling technique**.
- c) **Research Tool**
- d) The researchers used a well-organized and standardized **questionnaire** consisting of 30 items as the tool of research for the present investigation.
- e) **Administration of the Tool**
- f) The tool was initially administered to 100 students (50 Boys and 50 Girls) under Pilot study. The measures of reliability, validity and objectivity of the tool have been calculated. Further, the researchers conducted item analysis for the items included in the tool. Out of 35 items selected for the tool, the discriminating power of 30 items has been found positive and is negative in respect of 5 items. The items whose discriminating power is negative have been removed; and the final tool consists of 30 items, which are fool proof in all respects. The final tool has been administered to 1000 students (500 Boys and 500 Girls) from the selected secondary schools in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh.
- g) **Statistical interpretation of data**  
Mean score values, Standard Deviations, t-tests and F-ratios have been calculated to analyze data; and are presented in the following table.

**Table-1**

**Table showing t-values of different variables relating to the factors influencing the attitude of secondary school students towards English Language Learning**

S. No.	Variable		N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio/ F-value	Result
1	Gender	Boys Girls	500 500	108.30 108.94	29.35 30.12	0.34*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
2	Type of school management	Government Local Body Private	120 560 320	110.33 109.32 110.19	27.63 29.61 28.96	0.008*	* Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
3	Location of the school	Rural Urban	640 360	109.63 109.61	26.91 29.46	0.01*	* Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

**Table-2**

**High acceptances (Score value of 80% and above) of the respondents for different items included in the scale**

S.No.	Description	No. of items with High score value	Percentage
1.	Learning situation (7)	4	<b>57.1</b>
2.	English Language teacher (8)	6	<b>75.0</b>
3.	Teaching-learning material (8)	4	<b>50.0</b>
4.	Feelings of parents (7)	3	<b>42.8</b>
	Total (30)	17	

### Findings of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Boys and Girls studying in secondary schools towards English language learning.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of students studying in the Government, Local Body and Private secondary schools towards English language learning.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of students studying in Rural and Urban secondary schools towards English language learning.
4. The students studying in secondary schools have a high favorable attitude towards English language learning with regard to the dimensions, 'English language teacher' (75%) followed by the other dimensions, 'Learning situation' (57.1%), 'Teaching-learning material' (50%) and 'Feelings of parents (42.8%)'.

### Educational Implications

1. The study helps the students understand their difficulties in different aspects of learning English language; and suggests measures to overcome these deficiencies.
2. The study helps the teachers to bring about necessary changes in the Pedagogy of English suitable to the learning needs of the students.
3. The study helps the teachers take up remedial teaching basing on the needs of the students.

4. The study helps the school managements to provide necessary infrastructural and instructional facilities in the school for effective learning of English language by the students.
5. The study helps the administration organize in-service training for working teachers on the latest developments in teaching English.

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