

LEARNERS' ATTITUDE AND ITS IMPACT ON LANGUAGE LEARNING

A Study of the Students Attitude towards English Language Pursuing Professional Courses in India

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Introduction

- The paper studies the attitude of learners towards language learning in a second language learning environment. The author has selected the group of students pursuing different under graduate courses after secondary examination in Uttar Pradesh (a state in India).

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- While the paper discusses learners' attitude it also highlights the teacher's approach and methodology to teach the pre-designed curriculum. Proficiency in English can only make you successful – this is the belief spreading all over giving rise to the study of learners' needs from the grass root level. Today learners want English Language Teaching to be customized according to their needs.

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- Pursuing a pre-designed syllabus does not always satisfy their needs. The paper studies the curriculum followed by different universities in the state in relation to the attitude of the learners learning English Language, who feel that learning English Language for their use and pursuing a syllabus to pass an examination

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are two different situations and it effect their attitude towards learning English. The paper also studies the sociolinguistic factors responsible for their attitude towards language learning.

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STUDENTS' ATTITUDE

- Students have a favourable attitude towards learning English Language
- They are 'instrumentally motivated' towards learning English.
- They know that English as a link language will help them more than their mother tongue or the national language Hindi
- They recognize its utilitarian value i.e. the 'functional role'.

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RELEVANCE OF ENGLISH

- Students pursuing professional courses know that –
- They are required to cover their curriculum in English.
- All prescribed books are in English.
- Lectures delivered are in English and in rare cases help of the mother tongue is sought in some distant colleges/institutes.

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- They need to write their examinations in English.
- They prepare for job interviews in English.
- They stress on Spoken English and communication skills as essentials of Personality Development.

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LANGUAGE LEARNING SITUATION AND ENVIRONMENT

- Students study English as a second or third language because the state follows the Three Language Formula according to the constitution of India.
- It is a Hindi (mother tongue/ national language) dominated state.
- State Board schools teach English from class VI onwards. Now it is being started from class III onwards since 2007.
- CBSE and ICSE Boards teach English from Class I onwards. Missionary convents and reputed public schools treat English as First Language, while schools in rural surroundings or teaching economically weaker section face problem in recruiting teachers good at English due to monetary reasons. They follow the same books in English but take the help of Hindi to explain.

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- Because a major number of students in professional courses are coming from state board schools, rural back ground or so called English medium schools, they do not have good knowledge of basic language skills.
- They face problem in class when they study Business Communication/ Professional Communication/Technical Communication.
- They have been in an environment of memorizing items without understanding at their school level and are less exposed to English in comparison to their counterparts from convents and reputed English medium schools.

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- Teachers are bound to complete university syllabus.
- Students pursue this syllabus with an intention that they have to pass their examination. Their intention is not to upgrade their knowledge of English at that level. Therefore, they do not concentrate on language skills in the class.
- In comparison to BBA and BCA students, MBA and B. Tech students are conscious of their knowledge of English and work hard to upgrade it as they are preparing directly for jobs and have to face group discussions and interviews in English.

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- In B.Tech Professional Communication, in MBA & BBA Business Communication and in BCA Technical communication is taught.
- Communicational skills as well as accuracy and proficiency in writing business correspondence, scientific article writing, abstract writing and report writing, thesis writing etc.

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ATTITUDE VS BEHAVIOUR

- Attitude necessarily do not determine behaviour
- Positive attitude facilitates the learning
- Attitude is only one variable.
- Learners' Attitude is important to be studied.

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TEACHERS' ATTITUDE

- Teachers' attitude plays an important role in the present context.
- In the professional courses, the teachers' have changed their role from being the controller of the class to the facilitator.
- They accept students mistakes in the language use as a necessary part of the language learning.
- They help and motivate students use more and more language in their daily life.

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STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS TEACHERS

- They want a teacher who can motivate them to speak more and more in the classroom and teach them how to use language outside the classroom.
- The teachers' English should be good. A teacher should be capable of correcting their mistakes.
- A teacher should be able to communicate and involve with the students.
- A teacher should be capable of creating an informal environment in the class where they can learn with fun.

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ROLE OF TEACHERS

- Learners learning outcomes are influenced by the interpretation of teachers' interpersonal behaviour. If they believe that the teacher is associated with them and their learning outcome, the teacher empathize with them, understands their problems, they react positively and this factor only contributes to their motivation level in the classroom.
- The teacher needs to make them realize that I am the one like you who also commits mistakes in the use of English and mistakes are a natural part of learning a language.

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SOCIAL SCENERIO

- A teacher need to remember that a demotivated student cannot learn.
- In our classes, we need to keep an eye on
 - i) What are my learners' problem in learning English?
 - ii) How these can be removed?
 - iii) Are they related to the grammar or to the student's perception about learning a language?
 - iv) What does my learner want?
 - v) Why he/she is learning English?

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- The social scenerio in Uttar Pradesh has changed from 'Banish English' to 'Welcome English'.
- A few years back the state government was trying to implement only Hindi in all offices and public places in place of English. It does not succeed.
- Now with the invent of multinational companies and the young professional getting a number of jobs with them need to know not only workable English but good presentational skills too.
- Therefore, English has become a 'welcome' phenomenon all around.

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PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

- Students are selected for jobs on the basis of their knowledge of English language as well as good presentational skills, communication skills and confidence level.
- Although universities have integrated all these skills alongwith the Business English syllabus in their professional course, a number of private institutions are mushrooming up in the state on small scale and large scale as well.
- They offer to make students proficient in Spoken English 90 hrs. Some good institutions are following task based language teaching following the communicative approach. They are more successful with the students who are self motivated.

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- Students prefer to join these institutions as they focus only on the learning outcome of the students.
- Students are not required to write a university examination, so they feel relaxed and find it flexible to attend on their convenience.
- They believe because these private institutions are charging a handsome amount to teach them English they are more accountable, whereas in the university system either the college or the teacher cannot be questioned.

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SYLLABUS

- The universities are following the syllabus of English with a mix of Business English, Communication Skills and Presentation Skills.
- Students normally prefer the Report Writing, Presentation, Mock Interviews and seminar part of the syllabus.
- Literature and grammar is not their interest.

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CONCLUSION

- Students are 'intrumentally motivated' as they are learning English for utilitarian purposes.
- 'Integrative motivation' also plays an important role as India is a multilingual country where English is being used to communicate with other people of cultures across 28 states.
Blooming tourism, missionaries, NGOs, BPOs and many spiritual speakers are some of the factors demanding communication in English.

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- 'Parental encouragement' and 'communication with teachers' in schools which provide English speaking environment are also among important factors to motivate students to learn English.
- Future of English in India is bright as we have got students who re aware of the usefulness of the target language.
- State board schools require a reorientation of its curriculum to make it practically useful for students and provide a strong base in English Language proficiency by the time they join any professional course.

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THANK YOU

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