Students' Attitude towards English Language Learning and Academic Achievement: A Case of Business Students in Punjab

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Abstract:

   English language is now considered as global language, and with every single day its users are increasing numerously. The present study is exploratory in nature, investigating the business students' attitudes towards English language learning and its association with their academic achievement. The study incorporates quantitative approach and has used close ended questionnaire to collect data from the participants. A total number of 200 business students participated in the study. From the findings of the data, the study concludes that business students have a positive attitude towards English language learning and its' association with their academic achievement.

Key words: attitudes, academic achievement, English language, confidence, association

1. Introduction

The present study aims at investigating business students' attitude towards English language learning and its association with their academic achievement. More than half of the world population is bilingual (Grosjean, 2010). Bamgbose claims that English language is a global language now a day (Bamgbose,

2001) . According to David Crystal, there are about 430 million non-native English speakers, whereas native speakers are 330 million, excluding those who are learning English language (Crystal, 2003). Bottery, claims that globalization is mostly associated with English Language supremacy (Bottery, 2000). As English is becoming more and more global language, it's becoming more and more associated with academic achievements for the students in any field. The present study is an investigation of business students' attitude towards English learning. Attitude is one of the key elements for learning a language (Karahan, 2007), (Starks, D., & Paltridge, B., 1996).Attitude is a variable thing and it can be changed governing to many external as well internal personality factors of a person. After the British left India, even than people of the sub-continent and particularly in Pakistan do not want to study English as they considered English language learning as a mark of slavery. But this attitude about English language learning is now changed as English has acquired a status of global language (Bamgbose, 2001). The present study is an attempt to find out business students' attitudes towards English language learning and its' association with their academic achievement. Business students need more command on English language as compared to other disciplines as their nature of job demands more interaction globally.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Attitude

The very term attitude is a fishy one. Different scholars have tried to define it differently, and yet we do not have a single agreed upon definition of attitude. Gardner Proposed that attitude is the overall feelings of a person towards any particular thing (Gardner, 1980). Ajzan claimed that attitude of a person is positive or of negative attributes to anything (Ajzan, 1988). Baker defined attitudes as a person persistent way of

behaving in particular way (Baker, 1992). Gardner proposed that attitude is an important element in language learning (Gardner, 1985) Wenden gives a new dimension to attitude concept by dividing into three elements, namely: cognitive, evaluative and behavioral which all works together (Wenden, 1991).Bernat and Gvozdenko while discussing social factors upon language learning, place attitude with them for having its effect on language learning (Bernat, E. and Gvozdenko, I, 2005). Csizer and Donyei draw same conclusion in their research and place attitude at an important position for language learning (Csizer, K and Dornyei, Z, 2005).

2.2 Related Studies

Studies upon attitudes related to language learning got much attention after Gardner influential work in 1985 (Gardner, 1985), and there is a bulk of work on attitudes of people regarding different languages and language learning, (Benson, 1991) (Balcazar, 2003), (Malallah, 2000) , (Marley, 2004), (Al-Kahtany, 1995), (Assaf, 2001), (Dalton-Puffer, C and Kaltenbock, G, 1995) (Gibb, 1999), (Karstadt, 2002), (Starks, D., & Paltridge, B., 1996), (Villa, 2002).

In Pakistan, English normally has a status of second language in most of the official work, and there is sufficient research particularly exploring the attitudes of learners towards ESL and EFL context. (Pritchard, M & Nasr, A, 2004), (Joseba, 2005) (Venkatraman, G., & Prema, P, 2007) through their studies show the positive aspects of attitudes for language learning and higher academic achievement. Attitudes, English learning and academic achievement is studied in relation with other aspects as well. Levine tried to established relationship between first language usage anxiety with respect to second language learning (Levine, 2003). Yang and Lau studied attitudes of learners towards English at secondary (Yang, 2003). Graham pays particular attention to attitude with respect to achievement and language learning (Graham, 2004).

Karahan while investigating Turkish students' attitudes towards English concludes that social factors as well as economic needs greatly affect the attitudes of the students for learning English Language. At the beginning, Turkish learners do not have a positive attitudes for English learning, but in adulthood, when they become more aware of the economic and global needs of English, they becomes more motivated in learning English. So, attitudes can vary due to social and economic factors. Atef and Munir investigate relationship between role of motivation and attitudes to learn English among petroleum students and conclude that students have a positive attitude towards English Learning. (Atef Al-Tamimi & Munir Shuib, 2009) . The present study focuses on relationship between English learning and academic achievement of the business student.

3. Research Design

The present research is exploratory in nature and quantitative approach is employed to get empirical evidence of business students' attitude towards English language learning and its association with their academic achievement.

3.1 Research Questions

The study while focusing on attitudes of the business students towards English language learning and its' association with their academic achievement intends to answer the following research questions:

Q. What is the business students' attitude towards English language learning?

Q. What is the relationship between their English language learning and its' association with their academic achievement?

3.2 Hypothesis

The study hypothesis is:

H: There is a positive attitude among business students regarding English Language learning and its' association with their academic achievement.

3.3 Population

Population for the present study is all business students of MBA in their Final Semester/ year in Province, Punjab, Pakistan. The rational for selecting final semester/year students is that, they are almost ready to get complete their postgraduate degree, so they will be in a better position to give authentic data for the study.

3.4 Sample

Out of the whole population, a total 200 hundred participants were selected, using convenient sampling technique, from four districts of Province Punjab. The districts from where data was collected are: Sargodha, Lahore, Multan and D.I. Khan.

      The districts were selected keeping in mind to cover up maximum population of the study. From each district, 50 participants were selected, and out of these, 25 from public sector and 25 from private sector were selected. Moreover, gender discrimination is not being used in the present study.

3.5 Data collection Tool

A close ended 3-point Likert scale questionnaire is used to collect data from the participants of the study. As questionnaires are more expedient in language learning research, keeping in view: the time, space and resources of the researcher (Dörnyei, 2003).

3.6 Questionnaire

The questionnaire for measuring business students is adoptive and items were selected from three survey instruments used by (Atef Al-Tamimi & Munir Shuib, 2009), (Karahan, 2007) and (Mohamad Jafre Zainol Abidin,Majid Pour-Mohammadi, Hanan

Alzwari, , 2012). Questionnaire items were selected from these surveys and modified to meet present study necessities and context. A total 10 items are used to measure business students' attitude about English language learning and its' association with their academic achievement. Out these, first five items measure students' attitudes towards English language learning, whereas the next five items measure association between English language learning and their academic achievement. Questionnaire scale range is ***agree, disagree, neutral.*** See appendix 1. Questionnaire consists of two parts:

A: Biographical/ Educational information of the respondents and instruction for filling out the questionnaire.

B: Respondents attitude towards English language learning and its association with their academic achievement consisting of 10 items.
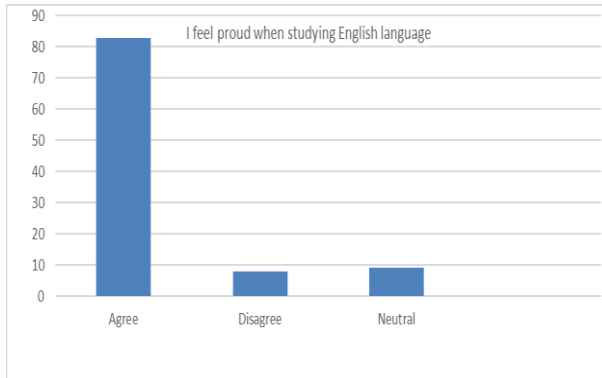
4. Results

4.1 Data collection

The data is being collected by the researcher himself from all the participants, monitoring and guiding the participants for correct filling of the questionnaire. Participants were selected from Public as well as Private sector universities, so as to represent both sectors equally. A total number of 200 students participated in the present study. The study does not utilize gender base discrimination as well and both male/female genders have equal value in the study. After collection of the data SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is being utilized to interpret the data, after interpretation of data, its frequencies were also measured. For the present study, graphic presentation of the results of the findings is incorporated. First 5 graphs show business students' attitudes towards English language learning, and rest of the 5 graphs represent their
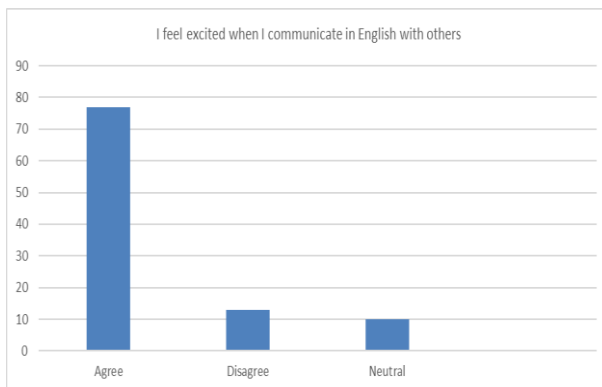
attitude towards English language learning's association with their academic achievement.

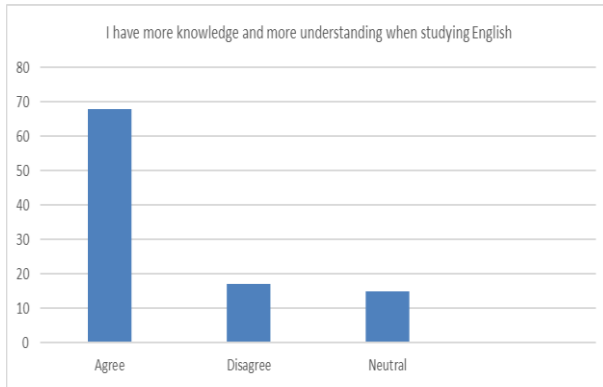## 4.2 Graphic Presentation of Study Findings

Graph 1.

Graph 1 shows that 83% of the participants were agreed to notion that they feel proud while studying English, 8% disagreed to this very notion whereas 9% of the participants remain neutral.
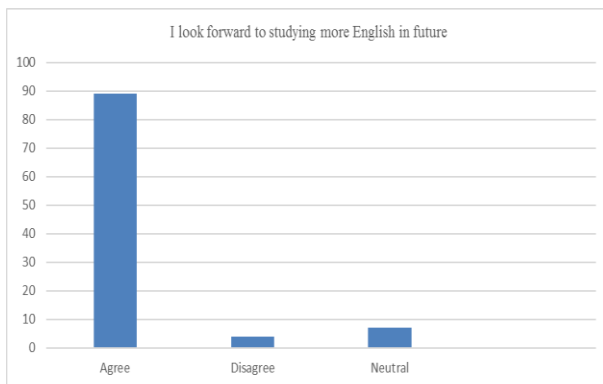

Graph 2.

Graph 2 depicts that 77% of the respondent were of the view that they feel excited while using English in communication, 13% disagree to this notion, and 10% remain neutral about this.
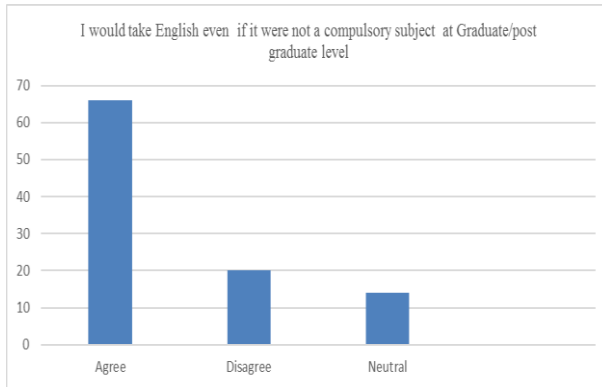
Graph 3.

Graph 3 illustrate that 68% of the participants think that studying English enhance their overall knowledge learning , 17% disagree to this and 15% have a neutral attitude towards this notion.
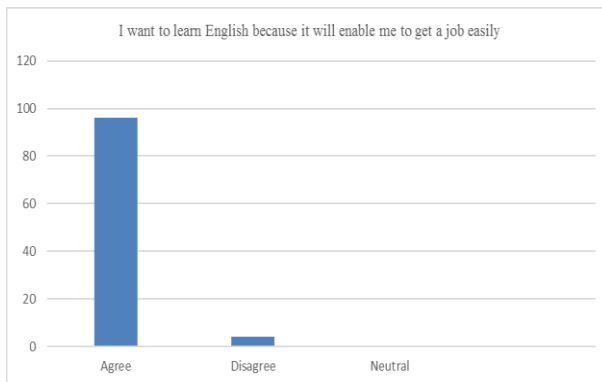

Graph 4.

Graph depicts participants' attitude towards English language learning. 89% of the respondents want to study English more in the future, whereas 4% disagree to this, and 7% of the participants have a neutral attitude about this.
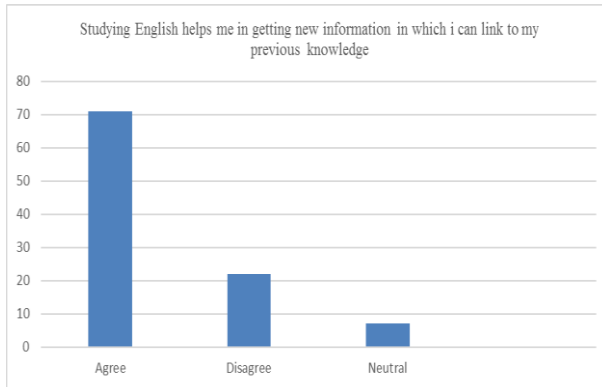
Graph 5.

Graph 5 is about business students' attitude towards English language learning if it's not a compulsory subject in their studies. 66% want to study English even it is not a compulsory subject, 20% disagree to this, whereas 14% participants have a neutral attitude about this.
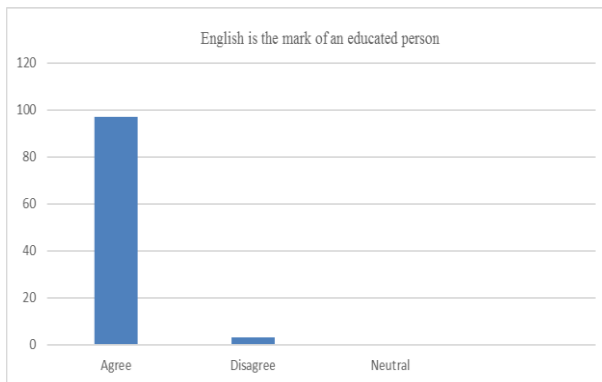

Graph 6.

Graph 6 shows English language Importance for job availability. 96% of the participants agree to the notion that English language learning will be beneficial for them to net a new job, whereas only 4% disagree to this notion.
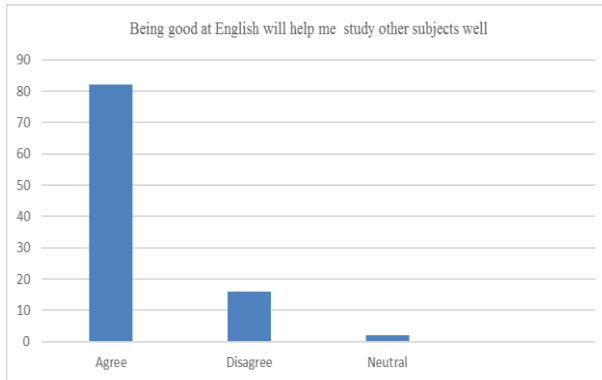
Graph 7.

The 7th graph depicts participants' attitude about English language learning and its' association with other disciplines. 71% of the respondents agree that studying English is helpful for them for the understanding other discipline of knowledge, 22% disagree to this and 7% have a neutral attitude about this.
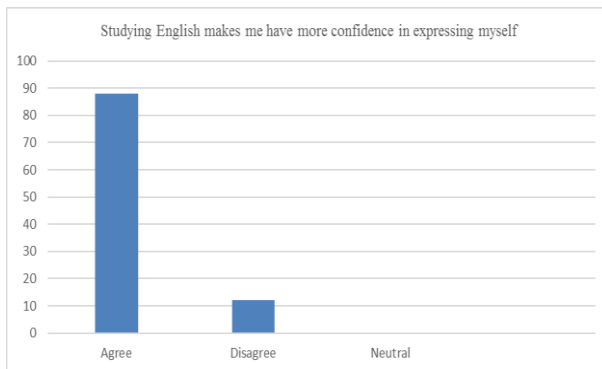

Graph 8.

Graph 8 is about English language learning and its association with the very notion of education. 97% of the respondents think that English language is the very mark of an educated person in the society and only 3%participants of the study disagree to this.

Graph 9.

Graph 9 shows English Language learning and its impact on the learning of other subjects. 82% of the participants were of the view that learning English language will be helpful for them for studying other subjects, 16% disagree to this, and 2% have a neutral attitude about this.

Graph 10.

Graph 10th is about participants' attitude about English language learning and its' relation with personality confidence. 88% of the participants were of the view that studying English gives them more confidence while expressing themselves in any forum while 12% participants did not agree to this notion.

4.3 Discussion

The first 5 graphs are about business students' attitudes towards English language learning and graphs 6-10 show business students' attitude towards English learning's association with their academic achievement. The findings of the study as presented through graphs clearly demonstrate that business students have positive attitudes towards English language learning. Graph 1 shows that 83% participants feel proud while studying English, graph 2 shows that 77% participants feel excited when communicating in English, graph 3 shows that 68% participants consider English language learning has positive effect on other subjects learning as well, graph 4 shows that 89% participants want to study English further in future and graph 5 depicts that 66% participants were of the view that they would take English even if it is not a compulsory subject at graduate and post graduate level. This all data interpretation shows that overall there is a positive attitude for English language learning among the business students and it provides answer for the first research question of the study, asserting that, business students have a positive attitude towards English language learning.

Graphs 6-10 show students attitudes towards learning English language's association with their academic achievement. Graph 6 illustrates that 96% participants consider English learning as beneficial for them to get new job, graph 7 shows that 71% participants consider English learning as beneficial for getting new information and knowledge, graph 8 depicts that 97% participants consider English language learning as a mark of education, graph 9 shows that 82% participants consider English as a good tool in learning other subjects as well, graph 10 shows that 88% participants hold the view that studying English give them more confidence while expressing themselves in any forum.

All this shows that business students view English language learning as closely associated with their overall academic achievement and there is a positive attitude prevailing among the business students about the association between learning English language and their overall academic achievement. Items from 6-10 in the questionnaire as their interpreted data presented in the graphs 6-10 give answer to the second question of the research , asserting that, there is a positive attitude among the business students about English language learning's association with their academic achievement.

4.4 Delimitation

Present study explores academic achievement of the business students with respect to English language learning only. The academic achievement of the business students can be studied in a number of different ways as well, for example with respect to institutes, with respect to educational background and likewise in a number of different ways. Moreover this study is being conducted in Punjab Province of Pakistan, so the findings of the study can only be generalizable to this population only.

5. Conclusion

The overall findings of the study prove the hypothesis of the study, as clearly illustrated in the graphic presentation of the data. The present study from the data findings concludes that business students in Punjab, Pakistan, have a positive attitude towards English language learning and its association with their overall academic achievement.

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Appendix 1

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE
SECTION (A)

Personal Information
1. **Name:** ……………………………
2. **Gender:**   M/F
3. **Program:** …………………………
4. **Institution**: ………………………...

Guideline:
Please answers the questions in the below honestly, the information you provide will not be disclosed to anyone, not to your teachers as well and will only be used for research purpose.

S.No	Statement	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1	I feel proud when studying English language			
2	I feel excited when I communicate in English with others			
3	I have more knowledge and more understanding when studying English			
4	I look forward to studying more English in the future			
5	I would take English even if it were not a compulsory subject at school			
6	I want to learn English because it will enable me to get a job easily			
7	Studying English helps me getting new information in which I can link to my previous knowledge			
8	English is the mark of an educated person			
9	Being good at English will help me study other subjects well			
10	Studying English makes me have more confidence in expressingmyself			