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ENGLISH AS AN OBLIGATORY SUBJECT: SCIENCE HIGHER SECONDERIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Interest and positive attitude towards particular subject is developed by many factors, like employment opportunity, market orientation, gender, age, culture, social status, teaching methodology, besides its preference for particular selection/admission. For the admission in any stream, be that medical, science or arts, no consideration is laid on English subject achievement so affecting motivation and perception for it. Although sufficient studies have been conducted over English language learning focusing aforesaid factors but science higher seconderians (11th & 12th) perspective has been hardly studied. The present study attempts to explore viewpoints of higher secondary science students towards English taught as compulsory subject in their curriculum. Sample of 180 students were chosen through random sampling from the population. A modified version of Attitude/Motivation Battery Test (AMBT Likert scale) was used for eliciting information from sample respondents. T-test and percentage techniques were used for analysis data. The interpretation of data revealed that there is no or very low attitude towards learning English with insignificant differences with respect to gender. The non-consideration of subject achievement for medical entrance is main reason that can be attributed to low positive attitude for learning English at higher secondary level.

Keywords: Anantnag, AMBT, Perception, Higher Seconderians.

1. Introduction

Language is the inherent capability of the native speakers to understand and form grammatical sentences. A language is a set of (finite or infinite) sentences, each finite length and constructed out of a finite set of elements. This definition of language considers sentences as the basis of a language. Sentences may be limited or unlimited in number, and are made up

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of only limited components. (Noam Chomsky). Language according to the words of Sapir is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of system of voluntarily produced symbols. Linguistically, Charles Hockett believes that system must have six features (displacement, creativity, arbitrariness, cultural transmission, interchangeability, and discreteness) to called language. These features make human language different from other animal communications.

English has become a dominant language in business, finance and banking, science and technology, popular culture and international relations around the world. It is widely accepted that fluency in the English language is a key to success in life. A student's attitude toward learning the language is one of the leading predictors of success in learning English. So, teachers and educators should take motivation and attitude factors into consideration when designing English language training and instruction (Hall, 2009). Attitude is accepted as an important concept to understand human behavior and is defined as a mental state that includes beliefs and feelings (Latchanna & Dagneu, 2009). Beliefs are among the essential points that have a relation with learning (Ajzen, 1988). Students' beliefs can be an obstacle if they believe that they cannot learn the new language successfully (Lennartsson, 2008). Negative attitude can impede learning a language (Ellis, 1994). But a student's negative attitudes can be changed and turned into positive ones and facilitate getting a positive result (Lennartsson, 2008). Having positive attitude towards learning a language is a good start to learn a language. As Kramsch (2006) points out "language learners are not only communicators and problem-solvers, but whole persons with hearts, bodies, and minds, with memories, fantasies, loyalties, identities". Kumbhar, A. 2001 carried out a study of the proficiency in English of English and Marathi Medium secondary school students in Kolhapur district. He concluded his study with major conclusions that Majority of EM students is not sufficiently proficient in English and almost all MM students appear to be at the developmental stage of L2 acquisitions, besides that English language teachers in both types of secondary schools are not satisfactory. Karekatti, T. (2002) carried out study entitled, "Exploration in Second Language Learning: A Comparative Study of Child and Adolescent Marathi Learners of English." The objective of the study was both understanding of the nature and content of mental processes and structures behind the overall activities of second language learning.

Attitudes has a direct effect on learning a language as well. According to Lennartsson (2008) motivation and the will to learn a second language are the factors that were considered much more important than the social ones. Csize'r et al. (2010) remark that positive attitude enhances learners' motivated behavior. Pointing out the importance of

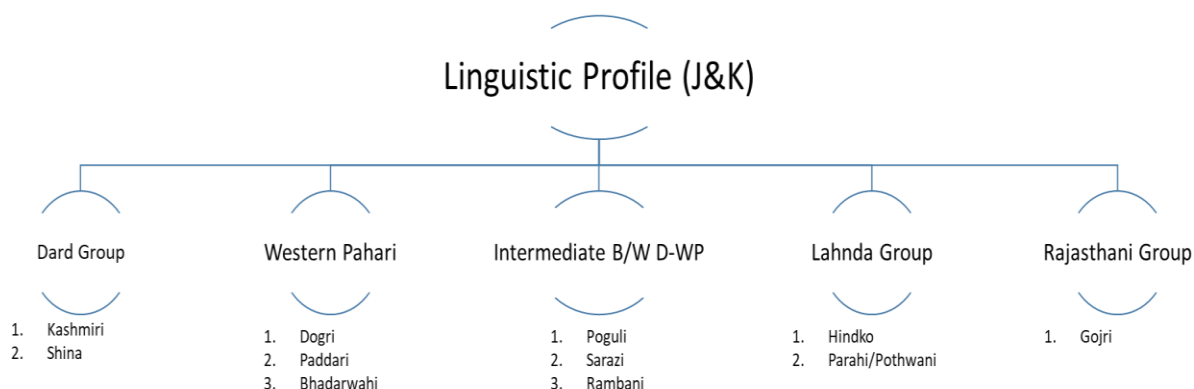
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motivation, Saville-Troike (2006) claims that the more motivated students are, the better they will learn a new language. “How fast they learn a new language depends on the individual learner’s motivation.

1.1 Exploring Problem terms in problem: In order to gain proper insights about the study, explanation of terms included in title must be comprehended primarily. The terms used in the title have some connotation meanings.

1.1.1 Perception vs perceptive: These two terms are used interchangeably, seems to have similar semantics but they are quite different. Perception is what you interpret. It is your understanding of a given situation, person, or object. It is the meaning you assign to any given stimulus. Perspective is your point of view. It’s the lens you see the world through and determines how you view yourself, others, and everything else around you. It is a particular way of considering something (Cambridge Dictionary). In present study the viewpoint of higher secondary students is taken to know their attitude for English subject.

1.1.2 English: Coming to word “English” in the title refers to English as a language subject (not the English speaking People) taught in Govt. Higher Secondary Schools in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir. The syllabus and course material with aims and objectives has been developed by Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education. According to the research by the British council “English as official or special status in at least 75 countries with total population over two billion. Speakers of English as second language will soon outnumber those who speak English as first language. A language other than the mother tongue that a



person or community uses for public communication, especially in trade, higher education, and administration is second language. So, English can be considered as second language for the people of Jammu and Kashmir so for the Anantnag district. The overall linguistic profile of UT of JK is figured in **Table-1.1.2.**

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1.1.3 Higher Seconderians:Anantnag is a district in the Indian union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. It is one of ten districts which make up the Kashmir Valley. The district headquarters is Anantnag city. As of 2011, it was the third most populous district of Jammu and Kashmir (out of 22), after Jammu and Srinagar. There are about 60 higher secondary schools in Anantnag district with the enrollment not less than 50000. All these enrolled students are higher seconderians for my study.

1.1.4 Objectives and Delimitations of the research: The investigator in present study endeavors to identify attitudes of science stream students of 11th& 12th grade enrolled in higher secondary schools of Anantnag district toward english taught as a compulsory subject in their course. Further research is designed to address and identify difference in attitude among students with regard to gender and inhabitation (urban/rural).

The research has been executed in only one district (Anantnag) of UT of Jammu & Kashmir. Only the science stream students were considered and sample size too is not satisfactory for inference to be applied to whole state.

2. Methodology

The nature of study is descriptive but it falls under the domain of quantitative paradigm as per data collection and analysis procedures. Mainly the study quests for finding facts about demeanor and motivation of Paddari students towards English language taught as a compulsory subject for their course. Following are ways and means, tools and techniques employed by investigator or as demanded by study for collection of data.

2.1 Participants: All the students (11th&12th) enrolled in higher secondary schools in Anantnag district be that government, private, girls or boys for the year 2020-2021 comprise population for the study.A sample of 180 students was chosen from the population through stratified and random sampling. The sampling was conducted in such a way that equal number of male students and female students were included for administration of tests. The sampling procedure was very simple, in first stage all the higher secondary Schools were identified and listed and systematically categorized. In second stage, equal number of boys and girls (10-10 each) were chosen by employing simple random sampling from sampled schools.

2.2 Instruments and Techniques: Considering the main objectives, various relevant methods, procedures, tools and techniques were thoroughly viewed; t-test and percentage techniques were finally chosen by the investigator for the study. T-test was employed to find the significance of difference between two sample groups while percentage was employed to explore attitudes among sample respondents in general sample. The modified Attitude

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motivation test Battery(Likert Scale) as a data gathering tool was used to elicit information from the samples. The target items in the Attitude Motivation Test Battery were used to attain information. The modified Likert scale questionnaire consisting of 60 items, with five point measuring range (Strongly agree to strongly disagree) has been applied for knowing mode, median and mean.

2.3 Administration and Data Analysis: The investigator printed the required material and visited the selected higher secondary schools, personally. After getting the permission from concerned principals and then with the help of English subject teachers introduced himself to the sampled students. He then explained the purpose of visit and provided them the information about tools. With simple instructions students were asked to fill in the bio-data form and asked to fill the response sheets within one hour. After completion of time response sheets were collected by the investigator himself and scoring were done by using scoring key.

All the data so collected from the respondents were examined, errors and omissions were corrected as per norms. The collected data, collected by employing mean and t-test techniques and the results were tabulated on the basis of framed objectives. During analysis of the data various parameters were thoroughly considered. The validity and reliability of the tools were again ensured. The processed data was tabulated for easy understanding. Some portion of analysis was done on SPSS-18 and excels 2016 ms word.

3. Findings & Discussion

Following are the main findings of the research.

3.1 Attitude towards English Subject: The analysis of data by calculating mean, mode, median, standard deviation and average percentage shows negative or very low attitude towards learning English subject. The Table-3.1 shows mean=13, mode=12, median=12, standard deviation=7.7 and average percentage=21, it clearly shows that higher secondary school students of Anantnag have low to very attitude towards learning english as a mandatory subject. Taking mean of 13 and standard deviation4 into the consideration most respondents show very low attitude for English.

TABLE-3.1 Descriptive statistics of learners’ attitudes toward learning English

N=180	Median	Mode	Mean	SD	average %
	12	12	13	4	21

3.2 locality and attitude relationship: The variable locality refers to inhabitation, whether higher secondary schools are located in urban or rural settings and the investigator here wants

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to know is there any relationship in connection with locality. The interpretation data below in table 3.2, shows that the calculated value 0.3 is less than tabulated value 1.9, therefore, there is no significant difference in attitudes towards english subject between urban and rural respondents. There is very little difference between the means and standard deviations. Thus, it can be inferred from the analyzed data that location does not matter or location has no role in attitudes towards English subject. Science stream students be they from urban or rural setting possess very low attitude towards English subject. The full description is shown in **table 3.2**.

Table-3.2 T-test results of the learners' attitudes with respect to locality

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	Table t-value	Calculate t-value	Sigf. At 5% level
Urban	90	12	4.3	1.97	0.3	insignificant
Rural	90	13	4.1			

3.3Gander and attitude relationship: Here investigator wants to know whether means of boys and girls differ significantly from each other in English learning. T-test as a statistical technique was applied to the data for knowing the learners attitude towards English subject. The statistical results showed mean (M1) =13 for male and mean (M2) =13.7 for female, therefore (M1-M2=0.7), we can admit that the difference of 0.7 is merely a chance deviation not true difference in attitudes but standard deviations of 3.9 and 4.1 respectively for male students and female students reveal that two groups have insignificant difference between each other with regard to english subject.

Table 10.3 T-test results of the learners' attitudes with respect to gender

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	Table t-value	Calculate t-value	Sigf. At 5% level
Male	90	13	3.9	1.97	0.7	insignificant
Female	90	13.7	4.1			

From the **Table -10.3**, the calculated value of t is 0.7 while table value is 1.97, thus the value of t- calculated is smaller/lesser than table value. It is therefore clear that gender has no role, so far the attitudes towards English subject is concerned among science stream students of 11th and 12th grade. Both have low or no attitude for English subject.

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“English as an obligatory subject: science higher seconderian’s perspective towards English” subject taught as mandatory subject in higher secondary schools in UT of Jammu and Kashmir, so in district Anantnag. The spotlight of the study was to explore attitude of 11th and

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12th grade science stream students towards English subject besides finding significance of difference between boys versus girls and urban versus rural science stream students. The results of the statistics revealed insignificant differences in attitudes be that gender variable or locality variable.

Teachers can play a vital role inculcating positive attitudes towards English subjects. They should provide a more active, free learning environment for their students. Poor attitudes towards learning English prevent students from participating classroom activities actively. So it is important to understand how negative attitudes to learning English can be avoided to develop students' interests, self-confidence and positive attitude towards learning English. To do that, teachers should be aware of the factors affecting students negatively and should take the needs of students into consideration. But unfortunately most of the teachers are incompetent be the reason of untrained or mathematics or science teachers teaches English or English is taught as a content subject not as a language or faulty course aims etc. The role of the teacher is an important factor to develop positive attitude towards learning English. Moreover, if the weightage be given to English subject at entrance level for undergraduate level courses, it can surely develop positive attitude among science stream students towards English subject.

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