

The Attitude Towards Learning English Language After the American Invasion

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1-Introduction

Language carries information of language and information of culture. language reflects the feature of a nation, its attitude and philosophy in life. Individual factors play an important role in the range of acquiring pragmatic competence. This role does not necessarily be positive always. There are factors that are effective such as motivation , attitude and identity. Attitude which occupies a significant value in the process of acquisition varieties , does not have to be positive always towards adopting L2 pragmatic norms. Savignon(1976: 295)claims that attitude is the single most important factor in second language learning .

Gardner sees in attitude and motivation a principal cause of more or less successful learning (Stern,1983:377).Recently, it has been noticed that the number of students at Tikrit University /College of Education / English Department has increased considerably after the American invasion. Therefore; there is a need to trace this phenomena and to find out the real attitudes and reasons behind learning English at this vast rate. So the aim of the study is to investigate the reasons behind this increase in the number of the students who are studying English language and the reasons for wanting to learn English. The attitude toward ideology to reflect the degree of positive or negative affect of the respondents towards British and Americans. Besides, Investigating the attitude towards learning English and the attitude toward British /American English.

It is hypothesized that adopting a positive attitude helps in learning the target language and a adopting hostile

attitude hinders learning the target language. This study is limited to:-

1. The attitude area of personal factors of language learning.
2. The first ,second, and third year students in English Department /College of Education at Tikrit University during the academic year 2005/2006.

3-Literature Related to Attitude

Gardner and Lambert(1972) define motivation in terms of the second language learners overall goal or orientation , and attitude as the persistence shown by learner in striving for a goal. They argue that the type of motivation is distinct from the attitudes displayed to different learning tasks. However , Gardner(1979) suggests that attitudes are related to motivation by serving as supports of the learners overall orientation. Brown(1981)also distinguishes between motivation and attitudes , he uses the term attitude; to refer to the set of beliefs that the learner holds towards members of the target language group(i.e. whether they are seen as interesting or boring , honest , dishonest . etc.) and also towards his own culture. These also figure in Gardner and Lambert s later use of the term attitudes. It is clear that there is no general agreement about what precisely motivation or attitudes consist of nor of the relationship between the two. Stern(1983:376-7) classifies attitudes into:(1)attitudes towards the community and people who speak second language(i.e.group specific attitudes ,(2)attitudes towards learning the language concerned ;and(3)attitudes towards (language and language learning in general.These attitudes are influenced by the kind of personality of the learner, for instance whether he is ethnocentric or authoritarian. They may also be influenced by the social milieu in which learning takes place. Attitude is a complex theoretical construct which according to Baker(1992) is used to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour.

Ajzen(1988) states that an attitude is a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object , person , institution , or event.;

Most of the times an individual's attitude are dormant and can only emerge as reactions to specific stimuli in the form of stated beliefs , expressed feelings , or exhibited behaviours. These three psychological concepts make up the three components of attitude, which goes back to plato's distinction between cognition, emotion and action

Attitude can be described as systems of four interactive components:-behaviors,behavior intentions;cognitions; ndaffectiveresponses(Sambaed and Leippe). Behaviors are what we do ; how our attitudes manifest themselves. Similarly , behavior intention are what we intend to do. Cognitions are what we know. Affect is how we feel about things. The components are interconnected , and when one changes, the other components adjust to accommodate the new perception. Affective response is important since it deals with the gut feelings of the student.

Astudent likes whathe has a positive emotional response to.Also student s feeling about the language itself and the cultures in which that language is spoken(Mantle- Bromely 199; Hellriege,etal,2001:490).

The importance of attitude to motivation is supported by Tremblay and Gardner(1995) who cited Gandner's Socio-Educational Model , which refines motivation for second language learning into two categories: First is integrativeness which they are described as: an open and positive regard for other groups and for groups that speak the target language ;interest in other languages and their Integrative orientation. The next category is the attitude toward the learning situation, which involves the class itself and the teacher.These factors, which influence motivation ,are referred to as language attitudes..Attitude affect second language learning, so it is necessary to study the problems in acculturation and ethnocentrism and identity. Social distance refers to the degree

to which someone is willing to interact with those of another culture. Students with an ethnocentric outlook often have a fragile language ego, which may result in a defense mechanism that encourages them to resist issues that may disrupt their attitudes. This resistance manifests itself not only in interpersonal relationships with people of other culture , but also in the students ability and motivation to reproduce the unfamiliar sounds and the different Grammer of another language. In addition to these affective responses to language learning , beliefs about the learning process are important for teachers to address. Student s belief about the level of difficulty of learning another language. The importance of multicultural education for students of second language is also related to attitudes and motivation. Oskamp(1977:5-6) states the following importance of attitude:

- 1- An attitude is a shorthand term.
- 2- An attitude can be considered the cause of a persons behaviour towards another person or an object.
- 3- It helps to explain the consistency of a persons behaviour.
- 4- Attitudes are important in their own right regardless of their relation to a person s behaviour.
- 5- It includes the idea of unconscious determinants of behaviour and the dynamic interplay of conflicting motives , whose importance has been asserted by Freud and other psycho-analysts.
- 6- It bridges the controversy between heredity and environment as factors influencing behaviour for both instinct and learning can be involved in formation of attitude.
- 7- Within psychology , the concept attitude provides a common topic of interest for schools thought as diverse a s phenomenology and behaviourism.
- 8- Within the field of sociology , some authors have viewed attitude as the most central concept and the basis of all social behaviour , since they provide the mechanism by which cultural patterns influence individual behaviour.
- 9- Within political science, the concept public opinion is essential as a summary of the shared attitudes of the member

of society. This study will trace the attitudes towards the learning object itself as well as the reasons for studying the English language ; attitudes toward the target language group and ideology of Britain and America; And the attitude toward the British English and American English.

4--The Procedure

The sample of the study has been selected randomly from the first, second , and third year students who are studying English in English, Department College of Education at Tikrit University during the academic year 2005- 2006 . It consists of(60) students, males and females. A questionnaire of(11) items to find out the reasons for wanting to learn English and whether the students orientation is instrumental or integrative has been built. Its validity and reliability have been found out. See Appendix(A).

A scale of attitude has been built which contains four indexes ,has been exposed to a jury of experts to ascertain its face validity and its reliability has been found out. Modification of some of the items has been done and recommendations has been taken into consideration. See Appenix(B).

4- 1-The Questionnaire.

The first index, orientation, comprises(11) questions dealing with the views of the respondents regarding the reasons for wanting to learn English. Items: 2, 3, 8 and 11 have been classified as measuring integrative orientation; Items, 1, 4 , 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 were subsumed under instrumental orientation. They were asked to read each item reason carefully and indicate the extent to which they agreed disagreed with such reasons for studying English

4-2- The Attitude Scale

First index, attitudes toward the British and Americans was, constructed using the semantic differential technique. It is of bipolar adjectives. It consists of(8) items. The higher the score the more favourable the opinion. The second index

,ideology, comprises(11) statements which were developed to reflect the degree of positive or negative affect of the respondents towards Britain and America. The third index includes(4) statements to measure respondent's attitudes(favourable or unfavourable) toward learning English. The fourth index , attitudes toward British English/American English employs the semantic differential scale on which(4) pairs of adjectives(clear-garbled , rich-poor) were evaluated.

5--Analysis of Results

The data obtained has been analyzed statistically and it indicates the following :-

A- Orientation to English language learning.

The percentage of responses indicate that the responses of(60) students towards the items measuring integrative orientation suggest that the students are to a certain extent integratively oriented in the learning of English. This reflects that the students are aware of the social dimension of English as a language that can offer them the opportunity of cross – cultural exchanges. The results of the instrumental orientation indicate that pupils show a high degree of instrumental orientation. The highest ratio goes to items(1,6, 8), -respondents are strongly agree with.

B - Attitudes toward learning English.

The responses of students indicates, the total scores of students on the scale shows that most of them has got a mean which is higher than the hypothetical mean which is(75.5) ; so it points out that student shows a positive attitude toward learning English. Item(20) ,which is loving English has been responded by strongly agree.

C- Attitudes toward the British and American people.

The assumption underlying this scale is that attitude toward the second language community may have an impact on second language learning , the results of this study indicates that the student s attitude towards the American people is negative. While it is neutral toward s English.

D-The ideological index is developed to measure the degree of ideological distance of students to the American and British cultures.

The data indicates that responses are slightly neutral toward the British, but clearly negative responses to all the items. This may suggest a rejection of American culture. Items (2, 28) which are responded by not sure in a high range indicate that the students are not quite sure about the policy of America; this is due to the psychological and political factors after the American invasion-Attitudes toward British /American English

British English received more favorable ratings. The highest positive evaluation of British English for being clear and rich for learning.

6-Conclusions

- 1- Students at Tikrit university are instrumentally oriented in the English language learning task more than integratively oriented.
- 2- The respondents show favourable attitudes toward learning English
- 3- The attitudes of the respondents toward American culture is negative with regard to British and American people the respondents express negative attitudes toward American.
- 4-The results indicate that taking a negative attitude do not hinder learning English language.

7-Recommendations

Many English learners develop a love –and hate attitude toward English , but this affective factor shows that attitude is not a psychological factor only and it may be related to social and political factors. This idea is reflected in some contradictory results of this study . English is sometimes seen as a medium of communication. But English language brings cultural and political ideas that may cause conflict in social and cultural beliefs. So we should take into consideration that language is embedded in social-economic and political struggles.It is important for the teacher to recognize the

cultural diversity of the students and it is the responsibility of the teacher to diminish the distance between cultures with the preservation of the identity of the native culture of the students.

Appendix(A)

The Questionnaire

Items	Strongly agree	agree	Not sure	Strongly disagree	disagree
1-I think it will some day be useful in getting a good job					
2-I think it will help me to better understand English-speaking people and their way of life.					
3-It will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people					
4-Fluency in English is a sign of good education					
5-I want to study in an English-speaking country					
6-Studying English will make me a more knowledgeable person.					
7- It will enable me to be inform about the attitudes of other countries towards Iraq.					
8-I like English					
.9-English is the language of progress and modernization.					

10-I want to get an English EFL qualification.					
11-I want to be able to understand the lyrics of pop /rock					

Appendix(B) Attitude Scale

Items	Strongly agree	agree	Not sure	Strongly disagree	disagree
1-American people are interesting .					
2-Americans are brave					
3- American people are boring.					
4- American people are unfriendly					
5-American people are .honest					
6- American people are dishonest					
7-American people are cruel.					
8-American people are kind					
9- America is the greatest of progress					
10- I have great respect for Americans.					
11-The American attitude toward individual ambition and competition is a good thing.					
12-American foreign policy is in general .correct					

Items	Strongly agree	agree	Not sure	Strongly disagree	disagree
13-American influence on Iraqi culture is so little that I don't feel threatened by it					
14-Americans think only of money.					
15-I have great respect for the British					
16-British influence on Iraqi life is so little that I don't feel threatened by it					
17- I prefer Americans to the English.					
18- Iraq has more in common with Britain than the United States.					
19-Britain is one of the most liberal countries in the world.					
20-I love learning English					
21-I would rather spend my time on subject other than English.					
22-I think learning English is dull.					
23-I plan to learn English as much as possible.					

Items	Strongly agree	agree	Not sure	Strongly disagree	disagree
24-English is an important part of the school program.					
25-Learning English is a waste of time.					
26-British English is clear					
27-American English is garbled					
28-American English is rich.					
29-British English is poor.					

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الموقف تجاه تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بعد الغزو الأمريكي

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تحمل اللغة ثقافة الشعوب، وتعكس ميزة الأمم وموقفها وفلسفتها في الحياة. وتؤدي العوامل الفردية دورًا مهمًا في نطاق اكتساب الكفاءة اللغوية، وثمة عوامل فعالة مثل الدافع والموقف والهوية تحتل قيمة كبيرة في عملية أصناف الاستحواذ ، وليس بالضرورة أن يكون إيجابيًا دائمًا تجاه اعتماد المعايير الواقعية .

وقد لوحظ مؤخرًا أن عدد الطلاب في جامعة تكريت / كلية التربية / قسم اللغة الإنجليزية قد ازداد بشكل كبير بعد غزو الولايات المتحدة للعراق. وهناك حاجة لتتبع هذه الظواهر ومعرفة المواقف والأسباب الحقيقية وراء تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بهذا المعدل الواسع ، لذا فإن الهدف من الدراسة هو التحقق من الأسباب الكامنة وراء هذه الزيادة في عدد الطلاب الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية وأسباب الرغبة في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. الموقف تجاه الأيديولوجية ليعكس درجة التأثير الإيجابي أو السلبي للمستجيبين تجاه البريطانيين والأمريكيين. فضلًا عن دراسة الموقف من تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية والموقف من اللغة الإنجليزية الأمريكية البريطانية.