

## ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH

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### ABSTRACT

*Acquiring English Language Skills has become a challenge for regional medium learners. A majority of the students lack basic skills in English language. They are unable to read in English, if their teacher asks them to do so. They cannot understand if their teacher teaches them completely in English. The learners find it difficult if the lesson is taught without translating (explaining) the lesson in their regional language. Their understanding and comprehension levels are limited. This paper attempted to study the attitude of secondary school students of Hyderabad district in the state of Telangana in learning the English language. The study is based on the responses of the sample government secondary school students of Hyderabad district to a structured questionnaire.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Regional Medium, Language Skills, Structured Questionnaire*

### INTRODUCTION

English is taught as a second language in government secondary schools of Telangana state. Even though it is taught in schools, many students still have fear towards English. They only try to score pass marks in the exam. They do not show any interest to attend and interact in the classroom. In this paper, the researcher attempted to study the attitude of the secondary school learners of English towards the language.

### AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to understand the attitude of 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> class students studying in government secondary school in Hyderabad district of Telangana state towards learning English.

### METHODOLOGY

The present study used quantitative method of research. A primary data was collected by administering a structured questionnaire to 300 sample learners from different Government Secondary Schools of Hyderabad district. In the questionnaire, students were asked about their background, interest and purpose of learning the English language, usage and difficulty in understanding the target language, and so on.

### DATA ANALYSIS

The following are the responses and analysis of the data obtained through the structured questionnaire:

**Do you read storybooks in English?**

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

When the sample learners were asked whether they read storybooks in English just 7 per cent students stated that they *mostly* read storybooks. Another 15 per cent said they *sometimes* read storybooks; 78 per cent *never* read any storybook in their life. Reading habit improves learning and storybooks help in creating interest among learners. Teachers have to inculcate the habit of reading among students. Constant practice in the classroom helps in retrieving the information. Brown (1987) states “learning is retention of information or skill...learning involves some form of practice, perhaps reinforced practice” (p.6). Hence, teachers of English must focus on reinforced practice in the classroom.

**Do you enjoy reading in English?**

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

When the sample learners were asked whether they enjoy reading in English, 21.6 per cent of students stated that they *mostly* enjoyed reading in English while 5 per cent of the students said that they enjoyed reading *sometimes* and 73.4 per cent of the students said they *never* enjoyed reading in English. This is a serious problem that has to be tackled properly by the teachers. Learners have to be motivated to enjoy reading in English.

**Do you prefer to write in English?**

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

In response to this question, 14.6 per cent said that they *mostly* preferred to write in English, 16.6 per cent *sometimes* preferred to write in English and 68.8 per cent *never* preferred to write in English. Thus, from the analysis it can be stated that a majority of respondents (i.e. 68.8%) never preferred to write in English.

**Do you try to speak in English?**

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

When the sample learners were asked whether they try to speak in English, 37 per cent said *mostly*, 30 percent of the students said, they *sometimes* try to speak in English and 33 percent of the total students stated they never tried to speak in English. This shows that a majority are not even attempting to speak in English.

**Do you follow your teacher when he / she speaks in English?**

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

On being asked whether the students follow their teacher when he/she speaks in English, only 3 per cent students replied that they *mostly* follow when their teacher speaks in English; 55.1 per cent respondents said they follow only *sometimes*, and 41.9 per cent of the respondents said they *never* follow their teacher when he/she speaks in English. Thus, from the analysis, it can be observed that a majority of respondents have difficulty in understanding when their teacher speaks in English.

**Do you speak in English outside the classroom?**

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

To this question, 89 per cent of the total respondents said they *never* speak in English outside the classroom; 8.6 per cent of students said that they speak in English outside the classroom *sometimes*, and 2.4 per cent students stated that they mostly speak in English even outside the classroom. The data shows that very less number of students speak English even outside the classroom.

**Does your teacher correct you if you make a mistake in English?**

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

To this question, 13 per cent of the learners said that their teacher corrects *mostly* the mistakes made by them; 69 per cent said *sometimes* their teachers correct their mistakes and 18 per cent respondents said that their teacher *never* corrects their mistakes.

**Is the present textbook helping you in learning English better?**

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

In response to this question, 24 per cent learners said that the textbook is *mostly* useful; 10 per cent said it is useful *sometimes*; and 66 per cent said it is *never* useful. It can be understood from the responses that the present textbook is not helping the learners in improving their English language skills.

### Does your teacher motivate you to speak in English?

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

Out of the total respondents 43.2 per cent said that their teacher motivates them to speak in English *most* of the times; 6.8 per cent said that their teacher sometimes motivates them to speak in English; while 50 per cent learners said that their teacher *never* motivates them to speak in English.

### Do you make notes when your teacher explains difficult vocabulary or grammar?

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

To this question, 33.6 per cent replied that they *mostly* make notes when their teacher explains difficult vocabulary or grammar; 62.5 per cent said *sometimes* and 3.9 per cent said that they *never* make notes when their teacher explains difficult vocabulary or grammar. Making notes helps in better understanding of the subject. Students must make a habit of making notes as and when they come across difficult vocabulary as vocabulary is the key aspect of any language.

Madhavi Latha (2012) rightly points out

The problem encountered with ESL learners is that they often have to search for an appropriate word. They don't find one to fit into the context/content. This is because of lack of exposure to a variety of vocabulary. This also leads to failing in communicating fluently in the English language, which again leads to losing confidence and lack of motivation to speak. As a result, learners make an excessive overuse of fillers in their speech and conversation or give incomplete statements. (p.3)

### Does the present testing pattern help you in paying more attention on improving your English language?

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Never

In response to this question, 26.9 per cent students said that the present testing pattern helped them in paying more attention on improving their English language; 58.5 per cent said that the present testing pattern helped them *sometimes* in paying more attention on improving their English language; and 14.6 per cent of the students said that the present testing pattern *never* helped them in paying more attention on improving their English language.

## FINDINGS

The following are the findings of the study:

- Most of the sample learners never read storybooks in English.

- A majority of the sample learners never enjoyed reading in English. It may be due to lack of exposure or environmental factors.
- Most of the sample learners said they never preferred to write in English. This might affect their higher studies and other comprehension skills.
- Most of the sample learners said they never preferred to speak in English.
- A majority of the sample learners said they were unable to follow when their teacher speaks in English.
- The sample learners said that they do not speak in English outside the classroom. This might be because of the inhibition and lack of confidence, which can be removed with constant practice in the classroom.
- A majority of the sample learners said that their teacher 'sometimes' corrects mistakes made by them in English.
- A majority of the sample learners expressed that the present textbook is not helping them in improving their English language skills. If the teacher in the classroom uses the textbook appropriately, it would be an excellent source to improve the English language skills of the students.
- The sample students also said that their teacher never motivates them to speak in English. It might not be possible for the teacher to concentrate on every learner in the classroom due to the heavy workload. However, the teacher can make an effort in this direction.
- Most of the sample learners stated that they make notes sometimes when their teacher explains difficult vocabulary or grammar. Note making is a very important skill, which has to be concentrated on.
- A majority of the respondents stated that the present testing pattern did not help them in paying more attention towards improving their English language.

## CONCLUSION

The present study attempted to understand the attitude of the learners of English studying 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> classes in the government high schools in Hyderabad district of Telangana state. It is understood from the responses of the learners that they are not motivated enough in the classroom. If teachers can make the class interesting learners automatically reduce their fear towards English and try to show interest towards learning English.

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