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# A Study on Attitude of Secondary School Students in Relation to English Language

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## Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the attitude of secondary school students towards learning the English language. English plays a significant role in education, communication and future career opportunities. Students' attitudes towards learning English influence their motivation, participation and academic development. The study was conducted using the survey method among 300 students studying in the eighth standard in selected secondary schools of Nanjangud Taluk, Mysore District, Karnataka. The sample consisted of 173 boys and 127 girls selected through cluster sampling. A five-point rating scale constructed by the investigator was used to collect the data. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, and the independent samples t-test. The findings revealed that the overall attitude of students towards learning English was low and unsatisfactory. Similarly, both boys and girls demonstrated a low level of attitude towards learning English. However, a significant difference was found between boys and girls at the 0.01 level of significance, with boys showing a more favourable attitude than girls. The study suggests adopting interactive teaching methods, remedial programmes and confidence-building activities to develop positive attitudes towards English language learning among secondary school students.

**Keywords:**
Attitude, English Language Learning, Secondary School Students, Language Learning, Gender Differences, Language Teaching, Educational Achievement.

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## Introduction

Language is not merely a medium of communication but also a vital instrument for academic development, personal expression, and global participation. In an increasingly interconnected world, the English language has emerged as a global lingua franca, occupying a significant role in education, science, technology, business, and diplomacy. Particularly in multilingual countries like India, English serves as a bridge language, connecting diverse linguistic communities and enabling students to access wider educational and professional opportunities.

In the context of secondary education, English is not only taught as a subject but also frequently used as a medium of instruction. Consequently, students' proficiency in English has a direct impact on their academic performance and future prospects. However, beyond linguistic aptitude, students' **attitude towards the English language** play a crucial role in shaping their learning experiences and outcomes. Attitude encompasses feelings, beliefs, motivations, and behavioral tendencies towards a particular subject, and in the domain of language learning, it strongly influences enthusiasm, engagement, and perseverance.

This study titled **"A Study on Attitude of Secondary Students in Relation to English Language"** seeks to explore the intricate relationship between students' attitude towards English and their academic achievement in the subject. While achievement can be objectively measured through test scores and examination results, attitude is a more subjective domain, shaped by numerous psychological, social, and environmental factors. These include students' self-perception, parental support, teacher effectiveness, classroom environment, societal perceptions, and exposure to English in everyday life.

The secondary school stage (typically grades 8 to 10) is a critical phase in a student's academic journey. It is during this time that foundational knowledge solidifies, academic interest matures, and learners begin to define their educational and career aspirations. Hence, the development of a positive attitude towards English at this stage can significantly enhance academic performance and open avenues for higher education and employability.

Despite the universal importance of English, disparities persist in how students perceive and perform in the subject. Students from rural or vernacular backgrounds often face greater challenges due to limited exposure, lack of resources, and instructional gaps, while their urban counterparts may have better access to English through digital media, bilingual households, and enriched learning environments. This study attempts to examine these differentials, providing insights into the attitudinal patterns and achievement levels among diverse student groups.

Several past studies have affirmed the strong correlation between student attitude and academic outcomes, yet context-specific research, especially in the Indian or South Asian context, remains relatively sparse. This research addresses this gap by analyzing the attitude of secondary school students towards English and determining how these attitude relate to their academic achievement in the subject.

Understanding this relationship is crucial for educators, curriculum planners, and policymakers aiming to improve English language education. If a positive attitude is found to significantly influence achievement, then interventions can be designed to enhance student motivation, foster learner confidence, and create more engaging pedagogical practices.

This study is grounded in the belief that attitude is a vital determinant of academic success, particularly in language learning. By systematically investigating the interplay between **attitude and achievement,** the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of learner behavior and provide recommendations for enhancing English language education at the secondary level.

## Meaning and Definitions of English Language

### Meaning of English Language

Language is the primary medium through which humans communicate ideas, emotions, and knowledge. Among the thousands of languages spoken across the world, English has acquired a distinct global status. The English language is a West Germanic language that originated in early medieval England and has evolved over centuries to become the most

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widely studied and spoken second language in the world. Its usage spans continents and plays a central role in international communication, education, media, science, commerce, and diplomacy.

In the educational context, English is not just a subject of study; it is also often a medium of instruction, a tool for cognitive development, and a gateway to global knowledge and opportunities. It is widely regarded as a language of empowerment—helping individuals to access information, express themselves effectively, and participate in national and international dialogues. For secondary school students especially, proficiency in English is crucial for academic achievement, personal development, and future employability.

The meaning of English language thus extends beyond grammar and vocabulary. It embodies a set of communicative skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), cultural understanding, and the ability to engage with the global community. It is a dynamic, living language that adapts to various socio-cultural contexts and evolves with technological advancements.

## Definitions of English Language

**Oxford Dictionary,** "English is the language originally of England, now spoken in many countries and used as a language of international communication throughout the world".

**David Crystal**, "English is a global language not because it has the largest number of native speakers, but because it is the most widely taught and used for communication between people who do not share a mother tongue".

**Merriam-Webster Dictionary,** "English is the language of the people of England and the principal language of the British Commonwealth, the United States, and most areas formerly under British control".

**UNESCO,** "English is one of the official languages of the United Nations and is widely used in international discourse, education, media, and digital technologies".

**Wren and Martin,** "English is a language that is characterized by a complex grammar, rich vocabulary, and the ability to adopt and absorb words from other languages".

## Contemporary Relevance of English Language

In today's globalized world, English serves multiple purposes:

- It is the language of higher education in many countries, especially in science, technology, engineering, and medicine (STEM).
- It dominates international business and trade communication.
- It is the primary language of the internet, software, and digital platforms.
- It is essential for participation in global citizenship, enabling intercultural understanding and collaboration.

In India and other multilingual societies, English functions as a second language and often as a link language between diverse linguistic groups. It is taught as a compulsory subject in most schools and plays a critical role in academic and career advancement.

The English language is more than just a medium of communication it is a powerful tool for education, expression, and interaction in the modern world. Its definitions vary across linguistic, historical, and functional domains, but its meaning remains consistently rooted in its role as a global connector. For secondary school students, mastering English opens the doors to academic excellence, broader perspectives, and increased life opportunities.

## Competencies Developed in Students through the English Language

- Understanding of grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation.
- Ability to read, write, listen, and speak effectively in English.
- Ability to use English appropriately in social, academic, and professional contexts.
- Skill in verbal and non-verbal communication, including tone, expression, and body language.

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- Ability to understand, analyze, and interpret texts ranging from literature to informational content.
- Development of critical reading abilities.
- Proficiency in various forms of writing: essays, reports, letters, emails, and creative writing.
- Clarity, coherence, and grammatical accuracy in written expression.
- Improved ability to understand spoken English in academic, casual, and formal settings.
- Development of concentration, retention, and note-taking skills.
- Confidence in public speaking, debates, group discussions, and oral presentations.
- Improved pronunciation, fluency, and intonation.
- Ability to evaluate ideas, arguments, and texts logically.
- Development of problem-solving and decision-making skills through discussions and analysis.
- Encouragement of original thought through storytelling, poetry, drama, and creative writing.
- Fostering imagination and self-expression.
- Exposure to diverse cultures, customs, and traditions through English literature and media.
- Promotion of tolerance, empathy, and global citizenship.
- Use of English in accessing online resources, e-learning platforms, and digital tools.
- Development of skills in email writing, blogging, online communication, and content evaluation.
- Teamwork and peer communication during group activities, projects, and language games.
- Development of negotiation, cooperation, and empathy.
- Ability to search, gather, evaluate, and present information using English.
- Use of academic English in reports, projects, and citations.
- Enhanced self-esteem and confidence through effective communication.
- Empowerment to express ideas, emotions, and opinions clearly.
- English proficiency as a prerequisite for many careers, interviews, and competitive exams.
- Development of skills like writing resumes, attending interviews, and workplace communication.
- Skills such as synthesis, evaluation, comparison, and abstraction through comprehension and language use.

## Relevance of English Language in Education

The English language holds immense relevance in today's educational landscape, particularly in an era marked by globalization, digitalization, and knowledge-driven economies. It serves as a universal medium of instruction in many academic institutions across the world and facilitates access to vast reservoirs of international literature, research, and scholarly resources. Proficiency in English enhances students' ability to pursue higher education, perform well in competitive examinations, and engage with global academic communities. It also supports digital education, as most e-learning platforms, MOOCs, and academic content are predominantly in English. Furthermore, it equips learners with essential communication skills needed for effective academic interaction, presentations, and collaborative projects. In multilingual and multicultural societies, English bridges linguistic barriers and fosters mutual understanding. It nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and clarity in expression skills crucial for academic excellence. Above all, the knowledge of English significantly increases students' employability and prepares them for careers in diverse professional fields. Thus, the English language is not merely a subject of study but a foundational tool for educational and personal advancement.

## Present Status of the Study

The current research landscape indicates a growing interest in the psychological and emotional aspects of language learning, particularly students' attitude towards English. Both international and national studies have confirmed that a student's attitude plays a decisive role in the acquisition and performance of English language skills. In many non-English-speaking countries, including India, students still perceive

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English as a challenging subject, often resulting in low motivation and poor academic outcomes. Urban students tend to demonstrate more positive attitude due to better exposure and learning resources, while rural students face challenges due to limited access and less interactive teaching methods. Socioeconomic factors, parental support, peer influence, and digital media also shape learners' attitude. While a few Indian studies have attempted to explore these aspects, most are either localized or lack comparative analysis across different student populations. There is still a need for comprehensive, region-specific studies that can inform curriculum development, teacher training, and language policy. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing current student attitude at the secondary school level, offering actionable insights for improving English language learning outcomes.

## Need for the Study

The study of secondary students' attitude towards the English language is vital in the current educational scenario, where English plays a central role in academic achievement and future employability. Despite its importance, many students especially in non-English speaking regions exhibit fear, disinterest, or negative perceptions towards learning English. Attitude is a crucial psychological factor that directly impacts students' motivation, participation, and performance in language learning. A positive attitude can enhance learning outcomes, while a negative one may hinder progress regardless of instructional quality. Moreover, disparities in attitude often emerge between students from urban and rural backgrounds due to differences in exposure, environment, and resources. Teachers and curriculum developers need a clear understanding of these attitudinal patterns to create more inclusive and effective teaching strategies. Currently, there is a lack of region-specific research focusing on students' attitude towards English, particularly at the secondary school level. This study addresses this gap and aims to offer insights that can inform targeted interventions and foster more positive and productive language learning environments.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To study the attitude of the students of 8$^{th}$ standard towards leaning English Language.
2. To study the attitude of boys towards learning English Language.
3. To study the attitude of girls towards learning English Language.
4. To study whether there is any significant difference between the attitude of boys and girls towards learning English Language.

## Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is a significant difference between boys and girls in relation to their attitude towards learning English Language.

## Methodology of the Study

The present study is a survey method study. In this study the investigator intended to find out the attitude of secondary school students in relation to English language among the students of standard eight of Nanjangud Taluk, Mysore District, Karnataka.

## Variables of the Study

- Attitude of students towards learning English Language.

## Population and Sample of the Study

Population of the study consisted of all the students studying in 8$^{th}$ standard students.

## Sample of the Study

The investigator used cluster sampling method to draw the sample of the study.

The investigator decided to choose a cluster sample from the local higher secondary school consisting of 300 students.

All of them were studying in 8$^{th}$ standard from rural area. All of them were of the age group of twelve-thirteen.

The sample of the study consisted of 300 students from different Secondary Schools of Nanjangud Taluk, Mysore District, Karnataka.

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**Table-1:** Showing the Sample Selected for the Study.

| Type of School | Boys | Girls |
|---|---|---|
| Aided | 33 | 67 |
| Unaided | 64 | 36 |
| Government | 76 | 24 |
| **Total** | **173** | **127** |
| | **300** | |

## Tool Used for the Study

The tools used in the study was five point rating scale to measure the attitude of the students towards learning English Language among the selected students of Mysore District constructed by the investigator.

## Statistical Techniques Used for the Study

The data was collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics. The following statistical procedures were used to analyze the data.

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Mean(M), Standard Deviation(SD), Frequency polygon, were used by the investigator.
- **Inferential Statistics:** "t" test was used by the investigator to interpret the data related to objectives four to find the difference between the boys and girls in relation to attitude.

## Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

## Analysis and Interpretation of objective One

The first objective was to study the attitude of the students of 8$^{th}$ standard towards learning English Language. This objective was analyzed using descriptive statistics viz; Mean(M), Standard Deviation(SD) and Frequency table. The aim of the investigation was to find out the attitude of the students and distribution of the scores. The data has been presented in the below table.

**Table-2:** Showing the Mean scores and Standard Deviation of the students towards Learning English Language.

| No. of Students | Mean(M) | Standard Deviation(SD) | Maximum Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| 300 | 56.28 | 17.97 | 160 |

**Table-3**: Frequency table showing the distribution of attitude scores of the students.

| Class Interval(CI) | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 23-27 | 5 |
| 28-32 | 6 |
| 33-37 | 12 |
| 38-42 | 31 |
| 43-47 | 29 |
| 48-52 | 36 |
| 53-57 | 29 |
| 58-62 | 45 |
| 63-67 | 28 |
| 68-72 | 27 |
| 73-77 | 26 |
| 78-82 | 16 |
| 83-87 | 4 |
| 88-92 | 5 |

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| | |
|---|---|
| 93-97 | 1 |
| **Total** | **300** |

**Interpretation:** From the above table shows that the Mean scores of the students in relation to their attitude towards learning English Language is 56.28 against, a maximum score of 160. This reveals that the attitude of students towards learning English Language is low and thus not satisfactory.

## Analysis and Interpretation of objective Two

The second objective was to study the attitude of boy's towards learning English Language. The data regarding this objective has been analyzed and interpreted with the help of descriptive statistics viz; Mean(M), Standard Deviation(SD) and Frequency table.

The below table showing the frequency table of the boys.

**Table-4:** Showing the Mean(M) and Standard Deviation(SD) of the boy's towards Learning English Language.

| Total No. of Boys | Mean(M) | Standard Deviation(SD) | Maximum Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| 173 | 59.91 | 18.93 | 160 |

**Table-5:** Frequency table showing the distribution of attitude scores of the Boy's towards Learning English Language.

| Class Interval(CI) | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 28-32 | 4 |
| 33-37 | 4 |
| 38-42 | 16 |
| 43-47 | 14 |
| 48-52 | 21 |
| 53-57 | 16 |
| 58-62 | 24 |
| 63-67 | 18 |
| 68-72 | 16 |
| 73-77 | 19 |
| 78-82 | 13 |
| 83-87 | 3 |
| 88-92 | 4 |
| 93-97 | 1 |
| **Total** | **173** |

**Interpretation:** From the above table shows that the Mean score of boy's in relation to their attitude towards learning English Language is just 59.91 (maximum score 160) which reveals that the attitude not seems to be very satisfactory.

## Analysis and Interpretation of objective Three

The thirds objective was to study the attitude of girl's towards learning English Language. The data regarding this objective has been analyzed and interpreted with the help of descriptive statistics viz; Mean(M), Standard Deviation(SD) and Frequency table. The below table showing the frequency table of the girls.

**Table-6:** Showing the Mean(M) and Standard Deviation(SD) of the Girl's towards Learning English Language.

| Total No. of Girls | Mean(M) | Standard Deviation(SD) | Maximum Score |
|---|---|---|---|

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 127 | 54.09 | 16.76 | 160 |

**Table-7:** Frequency Table showing the distribution of attitude scores of the Girl's towards Learning English Language.

| Class Interval(CI) | Frequency |
|---|---|
| 23-27 | 5 |
| 28-32 | 2 |
| 33-37 | 8 |
| 38-42 | 15 |
| 43-47 | 14 |
| 48-52 | 15 |
| 53-57 | 13 |
| 58-62 | 20 |
| 63-67 | 10 |
| 68-72 | 11 |
| 73-77 | 9 |
| 78-82 | 3 |
| 83-87 | 1 |
| 88-92 | 1 |
| **Total** | **127** |

**Interpretation:** From the above table shows that the Mean score of girl's in relation to their attitude towards learning English Language is just 54.09 (maximum score 160) which reveals that attitude not seems to be very satisfactory.

## Analysis and Interpretation of objective Four

The fourth objective of the study was to see whether there was any significant difference between the attitude of boys and girls towards learning English Language. The analysis and interpretation of this objective was done by using the descriptive statistics namely Mean(M), and Standard Deviation(SD). Inferential statistics "t" test was employed to test the hypothesis with level of significance at 0.01. For this purpose a null hypothesis was formulated as follows.

### Hypothesis One

- **H1:** There is a significant difference between boys and girls in relation to their attitude towards learning English Language.
- In order to test the above hypothesis it was changed into null hypothesis.
- **H0:** There is no significant difference between boys and girls in relation to their attitude towards learning English Language.

**Table-8:** Showing the Number of Students, Mean(M), Standard Deviation(SD) and "t" value and level of significance.

| Total No. of Students | | Mean(M) | Standard Deviation(SD) | 't' value | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boys | 173 | 59.91 | 18.93 | 11.90 | Significant at 0.01 level |
| Girls | 127 | 54.09 | 16.76 | | |

**Interpretation:** From the above table shows that the 't' value between two variable is found to be 11.90, which is more than the table value at 0.01 level (2.59). Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis was accepted. Thus it be concluded that there is a significant difference between boys and girls in relation to their attitude towards learning English Language. It has been found that the boys have higher attitude than girls towards learning English Language.

## Major Findings of the Study

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1. Attitude of Students in relation to learning English Language is low and thus not satisfactory.
2. Attitude of boys in relation to learning English Language is low and thus not satisfactory.
3. Attitude of girls in relation to leaning English Language is low and thus not satisfactory.
4. Attitude of boys is better than attitude of girls in relation to learning English Language.

## Educational Implications of the Study

1. Teachers should employ interactive methods such as role-play, storytelling, group discussions, language games and project-based activities to make English learning more engaging.
2. Schools should create opportunities for authentic usage of English through morning assemblies, English conversation corners, reading clubs, and language labs to build confidence and positive attitudes.
3. Low attitudes may result from weak basics. Strengthening vocabulary, phonics, reading comprehension, and functional grammar can improve both achievement and attitude.
4. Teachers may use materials that connect with boys' interests technology, sports, adventure stories, visual/interactive content to enhance motivation.
5. Schools can organise buddy-support groups, remedial coaching, and role-model interactions (e.g., alumni who excelled in English) to enhance boys' engagement and confidence.
6. Provide safe spaces for girls to speak, present, and participate in debates, elocution competitions, and English clubs to reduce hesitation and boost attitudes.
7. Teachers should be sensitive to home environments where girls may receive fewer opportunities for English exposure. Schools can arrange reading materials, library access, and after-school support for girls.
8. Teachers must ensure equal encouragement, classroom questioning, and feedback to boys and girls. Girls should be equally represented in classroom conversations and activities.
9. Remedial programmes, confidence-building sessions, spoken English workshops, and exposure to inspirational female speakers can improve girls' attitudes and performance.
10. Continuous training programmes should help teachers understand student attitudes, adopt inclusive teaching approaches, and use formative assessments to improve learners' interest.
11. Curriculum planners may include culturally relevant stories, contexts, multimedia content, and task-based activities appropriate to both genders at different learning levels.
12. Schools should periodically evaluate learners' attitudes using attitude scales, feedback forms, and reflective activities to identify learners needing additional support.
13. Parents must be guided to provide an English-friendly environment at home storybooks, English conversation practice, supervision of reading habits, and positive reinforcement.
14. Display English posters, conduct short English announcements, organise weekly "English Speaking Days," and use school assemblies to cultivate exposure and positivity.
15. Educational apps, audio-visual materials, animated stories, online quizzes, and interactive language platforms can make English learning attractive and engaging to both boys and girls.

## Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to only five higher secondary schools of Nanjangud Taluk, Mysore District, Karnataka State.
2. Only a limited number of variable was considered in the study i.e. attitude.
3. The study was conducted on a restricted number of secondary school students, which may not fully represent the diversity of attitude across broader populations.
4. The research was limited to a specific region or district, and the findings may not be generalizable to students

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from different cultural, linguistic, or educational backgrounds.

5. The study provides a snapshot of student attitude at a particular point in time, without examining how these attitude change over the course of their academic journey.
6. Factors such as parental attitude, peer influence, media exposure, and socio-economic background were not deeply explored, though they significantly impact language attitude.

## Suggestions for Further Research

1. Conduct comparative research between urban and rural secondary students or among different states to explore regional variations in attitude towards English.
2. Undertake long-term studies to observe how students' attitude towards English evolve over time and how they impact academic and career trajectories.
3. Investigate the role of digital tools, online platforms, and social media in shaping students' attitude and motivation towards learning English.
4. Explore the relationship between English teachers' attitude, teaching styles, and their influence on students' language learning attitude.
5. Design and assess the effectiveness of attitude enhancement programs, such as language clubs, drama, or communicative activities, on improving students' attitude and performance in English.

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