

## English Departments Students' Attitudes toward Learning English Language at Paktia University

Saifullah Muslim<sup>1</sup> and Saifurahman Rohi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Junior Teaching Assistant, Department of English, Paktia University, Paktia, AFGHANISTAN.

<sup>2</sup>Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Senior Teaching Assistant, Department of English, Paktia University, Paktia, AFGHANISTAN.

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding Author: [ssaifmuslim@gmail.com](mailto:ssaifmuslim@gmail.com)



[www.ijrah.com](http://www.ijrah.com) || Vol. 3 No. 2 (2023): March Issue

Date of Submission: 22-02-2023

Date of Acceptance: 15-03-2023

Date of Publication: 22-03-2023

### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to discover the attitudes of English language and literature departments' EFL students toward learning English language at Paktia University. The study aimed to study the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of students' attitudes and also to find out if there are any differences in students' attitudes based on some of their demographic factors such as Kankoor (university entrance examination) selection, type of faculty, level of study, and level of pre-university preparatory education. A 24 item questionnaire survey was administered to 60 students selected conveniently from English language and literature departments of both education and language and literature faculties. The mean score and median were analyzed in order to determine the central tendency of the respondents' attitudes. Moreover, the standard deviation was analyzed to count the dispersion of the responses. The results showed that students had generally positive attitudes toward learning English, but their attitudes in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects were slightly different. No significant differences were found in students' attitudes based on their demographic information, but very slight differences were discovered based on their Kankoor selection, type of faculty, level of study, and pre-university preparatory knowledge.

**Keywords-** Afghan, EFL Learners, attitudes, English Language Learning.

### I. INTRODUCTION

English as a foreign language is considered as an obligatory subject to primary, secondary, and high school students as a foreign language in Afghanistan. Moreover, English is also taught at least two semesters to undergraduate students of each faculty. Therefore, it is important to investigate the factors which influence English learning process in language learning settings. Getie (2020) has stated a number of studies which have noted that attitude is considered the most effective factor than others such as motivations, anxiety, learning achievement, intelligences, age, aptitude, and personality on learning English language. Attitude is consisted of a person's enactment which includes the way he thinks, acts, and behaves, so it means that attitudes shape an individual's feelings and beliefs (Mensah, Okyere, & Kuranchie, 2013). Moreover, Eiser (as cited in Orfan

(2020)) has said that "to say that we have a certain attitude towards something or someone is a shorthand way of saying that we have feelings or thoughts of like or dislike, approval or disapproval, attraction or repulsion, trust or distrust and so on" (p. 24). Zulfikar, Dahliana, and Sari (2019) has defined attitudes as a person's reaction or response regarding a thing, thought, or state, so attitude is an individual's propensities toward his struggles. Mensah et al. (2013) also stated that the way a person think, act, behave is determined by his/her attitudes. Moreover, Montano and Kasprzyk (2015) have stated that attitudes determine an individual's quality of performance; if a person positively values the outcome of something, he has positive attitudes toward it, and he/she will have good performance, and if a person negatively values the outcome of something, he/she has negative attitudes toward it and will have unsatisfying performance.

Moreover, Getie (2020) has studied attitudes of Ethiopian high school students and found that attitudes play an important role in language learning and that there are many factors which affect students' attitudes. The target of mastering the second or foreign language is not only challenged by intellectual qualifications but also by students' attitudes toward the language and its learning process (Abidin et al., 2012). In addition, according to Coşkun and Taşgin (2018), the level of students' ease and achievement in learning a foreign language is determined by their level of positive perception toward the language. According to a study conducted by Farooqi (2022), because of the COVID-19 outbreak, ministry of higher education in Afghanistan facilitated online platforms to help students continue their studies. Hence, students who had positive attitudes for utilizing digital facilities for learning worked harder than others. It means that the positive mindset results students to be succeeded and vice versa the negative results make them to be failed in learning the language.

Therefore, a great number of researchers have studied EFL students' attitudes toward learning English language in different parts of the world. Eshghinejad (2016) has conducted a study on 30 randomly selected EFL students and found that if a learner is not motivated to be engaged in interaction with others in the target language, he may have negative attitudes of the language, so teachers, practitioners, and learners should know that negative attitudes toward the target language negatively affect the learning process. He has further added that attitudes which include students' emotions, likes, dislikes, needs, and beliefs should be taken into consideration by the teachers. Therefore, he believes that language learning should be considered more as a psychological process than an academic one because the majority of students' successes, besides their qualifications, rely on their positive mindset regarding the learning process. Çimen (as cited in Coşkun and Taşgin (2018)) has also concluded based on his research, that policy makers and educational units should consider the individual differences of learners when designing the course contents and environments because the individual learners hold different experiences, psychological characteristics, and social conditions with each other; therefore, these variations may influence a language teaching process positively or negatively.

Based on a study in Vietnam, Sundkvist and Nguyen (2020) have found that students who had good proficiency in English were able to get better jobs, so it generated students' positive attitudes toward learning English language. Moreover, Abidin et al. (2012) have stated that students' perception of the language they are learning and the culture that belongs to the language determines their level of participation in the language.

As a result, a great number of studies can be found in the literature which discovered the attitudes of students toward learning English language in different parts of the world, so this study will add to the

knowledge in this regard investigating the attitudes of Afghan EFL students toward learning English language. Moreover, as teaching and learning English language has been experienced since two decades in Afghanistan, this study will help teachers, policy makers, and curriculum developers to develop further quality of language learning settings by analyzing the learners' views and perspectives.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Wenden (1991), a person's attitude is formed of three aspects including cognitive, affective, and behavioral. He has further added that the cognitive aspect includes someone's opinions and ideas about something, the affective or emotional aspect includes a person's mental state or emotions, and the third one, the behavioral aspect shows his acts regarding the object or idea. Moreover, Kara (2009) has stated that positive behaviors are shown by a person's positive attitudes toward a discipline where the learners are willing to endeavor more in order to learn more. He has further added that consequently, students are interested to be engaged in solving problems and getting everyday life skills. Eshghinejad (2016) has stated that the cognitive aspects of a learner's attitude include his belief of usually the importance and usefulness of the knowledge he is getting in a setting. Furthermore, the cognitive process can be categorized in four steps which include relating the previous and new knowledge, building new knowledge, examining new knowledge, and implementing new knowledge in everyday life. With respect to the emotional aspect, learning is a process in which the feelings of learners are involved, which includes the likes and dislikes of the object, idea, or situation. Pabro-Maquidato (2021) has stated that students' participation in language classes is often affected by their mindset.

### 2.1. EFL Students' Attitudes toward Learning English Language

Eshghinejad (2016) has conducted a research on Iranian EFL learners at Kashan University and found that students had positive attitudes toward learning English language. He also stated that students' attitudes varied based on behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of attitudes. Orfan (2020) has also studied 210 EFL students' attitudes of Takhar University in Afghanistan, where he discovered that the overall perceptions of learners' toward learning English language were positive, but the levels of students' attitudes were different in terms of affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects. These results are also supported by a number of other studies conducted in different countries such as Utami and Husein (2021); Sayadian and Lashkarian (2010); and Siddiq, Miri, and Sarwarzada (2019).

However, the research conducted by Abidin et al. (2012) has concluded that the attitudes of secondary

school students in Libya had negative attitudes toward learning English language. Students in this study marked different attitudes in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects. EFL student's negative attitudes are also supported by some of the other studies such as Abidin et al. (2012) and Al-Zahrani (2008). They have concluded that the traditional techniques and methods used by the teachers caused negative attitudes in students toward learning English language.

### **2.2. EFL learners' attitudes Based on their Demographic Factors**

A great number of researches have been conducted to analyze the differences in EFL learners' attitudes based on their demographic information such as type of school, level of study, and pre-university preparatory education of the target language. Coşkun and Taşgin (2018) in their research found that there was not any significant difference in student attitudes based on their type of school. They have conducted their research with students from both a vocational school of higher education and a university; hence, no significant difference was analyzed. No significant difference in students' attitudes toward learning English language based on their school type was also concluded by Doğan (2016).

In addition, Abidin et al. (2012) have discovered that students' had significantly different attitudes toward learning English language based on their level of study. He concluded that freshmen were more interested in learning English than other levels of school. Coşkun and Taşgin (2018), on the other hand, have found that the first two levels of university students (freshmen and sophomore) had higher anxiety of learning English language than the last two years of undergraduate level. As a result, this result is in contradiction with the result of Abidin because in the first study freshmen had higher attitudes, and in the second study, fresh students had higher anxiety on learning English than other levels.

Orfan (2020) has concluded that EFL students' attitudes toward learning English language were different based on their level of studying English in private centers; students who had more experience of English had more positive attitudes. Çimen (as cited in Coşkun and Taşgin (2018)) has also concluded the same result. Moreover, in another study, Coşkun and Taşgin (2018) have stated that pre-university preparatory education has a vital role on student success in second or foreign language learning because they concluded that students who had more preparatory education before coming to university had less anxiety than students who had less preparatory education. This is because students with preparatory education usually have self-confidence with certainly affect their attitudes (Le & Le, 2022). However, study conducted by A. Doğan (2008) contradicts this result.

Very few efforts that cannot be generalized across the country are made to investigate EFL learners'

attitudes toward learning English language in Afghanistan. Orfan (2020) has studied 210 non-English major students behavioral, cognitive, and affective aspects of attitudes at Takhar University located at the northern zone of Afghanistan. He has also examined if there were any differences in students' attitudes based on their field of study, gender, age, first language, and access to the internet. Manap, Othman, and Ramli (2018) have studied Afghans students' motivation toward learning English language and Siddiq et al. (2019) have studied Afghan students' motivation toward English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for General Purposes (EGP). Therefore, the number of researches which have been conducted to study Afghan EFL learners' attitudes toward English language have not examined English language and literature departments students' (English major students) attitudes based on different considerable demographic factors such as Kankoor selection, type of faculty (education and languages and literature), level of study, and pre-university preparatory knowledge.

The purpose of this study was to discover EFL learners' attitudes toward learning English language at English language and literature departments in Afghanistan. The study also attempted to determine if there are any differences in students' attitudes in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects. Moreover, learners' attitudes were also discovered considering some of their demographic factors such as Kankoor selection, faculty, level of study, and pre-university preparatory education. The study was led by the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of EFL students toward learning English language at English languages and literature departments at Paktia University in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects?
2. Do EFL learners' attitudes toward English language learning differ based on Kankoor selection, type of faculty, level of study, and level of pre-university preparatory knowledge?

## **III. RESEARCH METHOD**

### **3.1. Research Design**

As the study aimed to discover students' tendencies, ideas, and feelings toward learning English language and is quantitative in nature, a survey design was employed. Participants were asked to faithfully respond to the questions asked about their demographic information as well as the 5 points Likert scale items in the questionnaire which was adopted and edited based on the realities of the students.

### **3.2. Participants**

Participants of the study were 60 male students of English language and literature departments at Paktia University who were conveniently selected and voluntarily participated in the survey. There are two departments at Paktia University. One is at the

framework of education faculty and the other is at the framework of languages and literature faculty. Students of both faculties were included in the study. 34 students from education and 26 students from languages and literature faculty participated in the survey. Moreover, students of all four classes as shown in table 1 participated in the survey, freshmen (9), sophomore (8), junior (20), and senior (23). Participants were from different provinces studying together at Paktia University, and they were native speakers of either one of the two national languages of Afghanistan (Pashto or Dari).

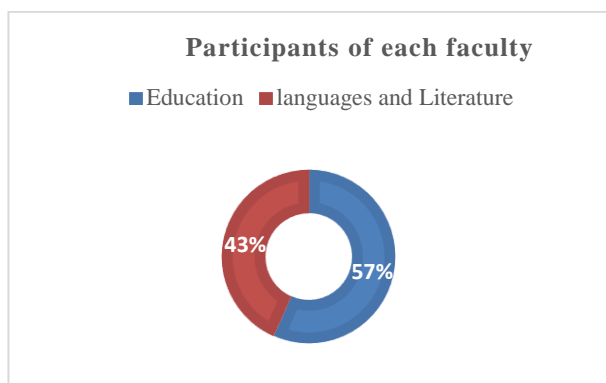


Figure 1: Percentage of participants based on faculties

Source: processed data by MS Excel (2016)

3.3. Instruments

The only instrument used in this survey was a 24 item questionnaire. The questionnaire was partly adopted from Abidin et al. (2012) and partly from Orfan (2020). Moreover, some of the changes were made in the items based on the researcher’s own experience of teaching English language and his understanding of students’ realities. The questionnaire was consisted of two parts. Initially, students were asked to give some demographic information about their gender, Kankoor selection (university entrance examination), faculty, level of study, and duration of pre-university English language knowledge. After that, respondents were asked to respond on a 5 point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=no opinion, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree). This part of the questionnaire was consisted of 24 items (behavioral aspect 8 items, cognitive aspect 8 items, and emotional aspect 8 items). The questionnaire

was written in simple lexical and linguistic structures in English language.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

After the researcher has done the literature review and made sure that the items are satisfactory, reliable, and can build a validity questionnaire of 24 items consisting 8 items for behavioral aspects, 8 items for cognitive aspects, and 8 items for emotional, the survey was initiated by a consent letter which was explaining the purpose of the study, the content of the study, time needed to respond the items, and confidentiality of participants. Then, the questionnaire was administered online through Google forms. Three lecturers from both departments and representatives of all classes were asked to make sure all levels of students participate in the survey. After that, the data was downloaded to an excel sheet where it was analyzed statistically for students’ attitudes. Mean and median were analyzed in order to determine the central tendency of students’ responses for each aspect and factor. Moreover, the standard deviation was analyzed to determine the dispersion of the data. Consequently, students’ attitudes were analyzed in terms of behavior, cognitive, and emotional aspects, and the results were also interpreted for each of the factors such as Kankoor selection, faculty, level of study, and pre-university preparatory knowledge.

IV. RESULTS

4.1. Participants’ Overall Attitudes toward Learning English Language

A descriptive analysis of the overall responses showed that the general mean score is 3.83 (SD=1.2). This result shows that students had positive attitudes toward learning English language at Paktia University. This is because the scale of agreement was ranged between 1(strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree), so over 3.5 shows agreement, and as the score of standard deviation is not much bigger, the data is also not much widely spread. However, as shown in Table 1, students’ attitudes toward learning English language were slightly different in terms of different aspects because the mean score of behavioral aspect is 3.91 (SD=1.189), the mean score of cognitive aspect is 3.73 (SD= 1.214), and the mean score of emotional aspect is 3.97 (SD=1.189).

Table 1. Analysis of central tendency and dispersion in terms of the three aspects

Items	No	Central Tendency and Dispersion		
		Mean	Median	SD
Behavioral Aspect	60	3.91	4.375	1.189
Cognitive Aspect	60	3.73	4.062	1.214
Emotional Aspect	60	3.97	4.375	1.189
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>1.20</b>

Source: processed data by MS Excel (2016)



**4.1.1. Behavioral attitudes of students**

The first 8 questions were designed to elicit students' attitudes based on their actions and behaviors. After students responded to the questions, the analysis revealed that students had positive attitudes (mean=3.91) toward learning English language in terms of behavioral aspects, and it was the second highest mean score after emotional aspect (3.97). 75 % of the students strongly agreed that talking in English feels them happy, and 58%

of the students strongly agreed that they are happy when the teacher speaks English; moreover, 51% of them have also shown strong agreement on feeling proud of studying English. The lowest score of students' agreement was 21.67% (strong agreement) and 31.67 (agreement). Thus, it can be said that EFL students' attitudes toward learning English language are positive in terms of behavioral aspects at Paktia University.

**Table 2: Behavioral attitudes toward leaning English language**

No	Items	No	SD	D	NI	A	SA	Total
1	I feel proud when studying English	60	10.00	1.67	13.33	23.33	51.67	100
2	I feel happy when I talk in English with others.	60	1.67	1.67	11.67	10.00	75.00	100
3	I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question by English in the class.	60	5.00	11.67	13.33	35.00	35.00	100
4	I enjoy most of the teaching methodologies used by our teachers.	60	11.67	8.33	15.00	38.33	26.67	100
5	I prefer studying in English rather than my mother tongue.	60	18.33	1.67	26.67	31.67	21.67	100
6	I feel happy when the teacher speaks English.	60	6.67	3.33	3.33	28.33	58.33	100
7	To be honest, I have a lot of interest in my English classes.	60	8.33	1.67	13.33	35.00	41.67	100
8	Majority of the textbooks and other course materials used by our teacher best fit our needs.	60	11.67	6.67	16.67	38.33	26.67	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>9.17</b>	<b>4.58</b>	<b>14.17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>42.08</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: processed data by MS Excel (2016)

**4.1.2. EFL Students' attitudes in Terms of Cognitive Aspects**

Items 9-16 obtained students' cognitive attitudes and data analysis revealed that almost 50% of the students strongly agreed that they study English language because it helps them in education, assisting other subjects, getting a job, and being as a good profession. Moreover, 50% of the respondents agreed

that studying English could create new thoughts for them. However, students' showed little interest in studying English just to get B. A. degree and pass the exams. As a result, even though the mean score of cognitive aspect is lower than behavioral and emotional aspects, the analysis revealed that students had positive cognitive attitudes toward learning English language at Paktia University.

**Table 3: Cognitive attitudes toward learning English language**

No	Items	NO	SD	D	NI	A	SA	Total
9	Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.	60	5.00	0.00	6.67	26.67	61.67	100
10	I study English because it help me to learn other subjects well.	60	6.67	5.00	1.67	36.67	50.00	100
11	I study English because it can help me to get a better job.	60	11.67	0.00	3.33	28.33	56.67	100
12	Frankly, I don't study English just to pass the exams and get a B.A. degree.	60	28.33	20.00	6.67	21.67	23.33	100
13	I study English just to speak another language.	60	18.33	26.67	20.00	25.00	10.00	100
14	Studying English makes me create new thoughts.	60	8.33	8.33	8.33	50.00	25.00	100
15	I think I am studying a good profession.	60	5.00	0.00	11.67	36.67	46.67	100
16	In my opinion, learning English is very difficult and complicated.	60	8.33	25.00	13.33	28.33	25.00	100

<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>11.46</b>	<b>10.63</b>	<b>8.96</b>	<b>31.67</b>	<b>37.29</b>	<b>100</b>
--------------	-----------	--------------	--------------	-------------	--------------	--------------	------------

Source: Data processed by MS Excel (2016)

**4.1.3. EFL Students’ Attitudes in Terms of Emotional Aspect**

As shown in Table 1, students’ had the highest emotional mean score (3.97) of agreement among the three aspects of attitudes. The last 8 items in the questionnaire were intended to get students feelings toward learning English language. The descriptive analysis of the data showed that more than 60% of students were strongly agreed that they feel happy when they are engaged in doing activities in English language,

and that they are willing to join the conversation where English is spoken. Almost 50% of the students also showed strong agreement that it is interesting for them when they come to the university, and that they do not feel embarrassed when speaking English. Moreover, 43% of students strongly agreed that they want to pursue their studies in English after graduation. Hence, as also shown in Table 5, students had positive emotional attitudes toward learning English language at Paktia University.

**Table 4: Percentage of EFL students’ emotional attitudes toward learning English language**

No	Item	No	SD	D	NI	A	SA	Total
17	I am very interested coming to university for studying English.	60	6.67	1.67	3.33	31.67	56.67	100
18	I am very happy when doing activities in English classes.	60	6.67	1.67	1.67	28.33	61.67	100
19	When I hear classmate speaking English well, I also like to practice speaking with him.	60	6.67	0.00	6.67	21.67	65.00	100
20	Majority of our course books are finished at the end of each semester.	60	11.67	25.00	18.33	35.00	10.00	100
21	I do almost all of my homework as early as possible.	60	10.00	1.67	5.00	45.00	38.33	100
22	I do not feel embarrassed (shamed) when I speak English in the class.	60	10.00	16.67	8.33	13.33	51.67	100
23	I can do all of the homework and assignments needed for each skill of English language.	60	10.00	6.67	11.67	35.00	36.67	100
24	I want to peruse further my studies in English language after graduation.	60	6.67	1.67	20.00	28.33	43.33	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>8.54</b>	<b>6.88</b>	<b>9.38</b>	<b>29.79</b>	<b>45.42</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Data processed by MS Excel (2016)

**4.2. Demographic Factors**

The following subsequent sub-headings show that students showed different statistics of attitudes toward learning English language based on the differences in their demographic information.

**4.2.1. Kankoor (Entrance Examination) Selection**

The analysis revealed that students’ whose first selection was English language and literature department mean score was 3.793 (SD=1.122), students who had selected English language and literature department as their second or third choice marked 3.846 mean score (SD=1.107), and the mean score was 3.868 (SD=1.113) whose fourth or fifth selection was English language and literature at Kankoor examination. The analysis of this

data resulted that students as a whole had positive attitudes toward learning English language during their study. However, the results revealed an unexpected order in their mean scores. As also seen in Table 5, students whose first selection was studying English language scored lesser, and students who had selected English language and literature as their fourth and fifth selection scored higher. Nevertheless, there are not any significant differences in their standard deviations, so it showed that they had similar dispersion of responses. Moreover, the statistics of median and standard deviation are not considerably much higher, so it means that the responses for all three selections were not much spread.

**Table 5: Central tendency and dispersion of students’ attitudes based on their Kankoor selection**

Kankoor Selection	No	Mean	Median	SD
First Selection	15	3.793	4.08	1.122
Second or third	23	3.846	4.12	1.107
Fourth or fifth	22	3.868	4.15	1.113

Source: Data processed by MS Excel (2016)

**4.2.2. Faculty**

The descriptive analysis of the data showed that students' attitudes toward learning English did not have any significant differences based on the type of faculty. The mean score of education faculty was 3.871 (SD = 1.107) and the mean score of languages and literature faculty was 3.819 (SD = 1.116), so the mean score of

students' attitudes to education faculty is very slightly higher than languages and literature faculty. Moreover, as students' median score is higher than the mean score, it means that the majority of the responses were at the positive degree of agreement, and the data was also not much considerably dispersed.

**Table 6: Central tendency and dispersion of students' attitudes based on faculties**

Faculty	No	Mean	Median	SD
Education	34	3.871	4.18	1.107
languages and Literature	26	3.819	4.07	1.116

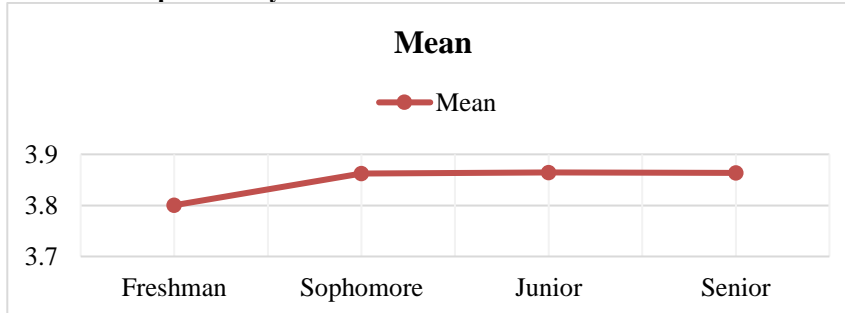
Source: Data processed by MS Excel (2016)

**4.2.3. Level of study**

The descriptive analysis of students' responses indicated that their attitudes toward learning English language were increased in the sophomore and junior levels but were stopped again at the senior level of their studies. The mean score of freshmen students was 3.800 (SD = 1.115), sophomore 3.862 (SD = 1.115), junior

3.863 (SD = 1.145), and senior 3.863 (SD = 1.117). The median scores of the four levels of studying English language were also higher than the mean scores, so students' responses were more on the positive scale of mean. Consequently, as also indicated in Table 7, students' attitudes toward learning English language were positive with slight differences based on their level of study.

**Table 7: Descriptive analysis of students' attitudes based on their level of study**



Level of Study	No	Mean	Median	SD
Freshman	9	3.800	4.07	1.115
Sophomore	8	3.862	4.15	1.115
Junior	20	3.864	4.15	1.145
Senior	23	3.863	4.15	1.117

Source: Data processed by MS Excel (2016)

**4.2.4 Level of English Studied in Private Courses**

The descriptive analysis of the data gathered from EFL students revealed that pre-university preparatory education or studying English language at private centers besides the university had a slight impact on their attitudes toward learning English language at Paktia University. The mean scores of the first two

categories (Less than three months = 3.834 and three months = 3.837) were very slightly lower than the mean scores of the last two categories (six months = 3.862 and more than three months = 3.851). However, as also shown in Table 8, there were not any considerable differences in their median scores and standard deviations.

**Table 8: Central tendency and dispersion of students' attitudes based on their pre-university preparatory knowledge**

Duration of private courses	No	Mean	Median	SD
Less than three months	6	3.834	4.09	1.116
Three months	11	3.837	4.12	1.111

<b>Six months</b>	16	3.862	4.15	1.115
<b>More than six months</b>	27	3.851	4.12	1.106

Source: Data processed by MS Excel (2016)

## V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to discover the attitudes of EFL learners' toward learning English language at Paktia University. The results indicated that the overall attitudes of students toward learning English language were positive; however, the attitudes were slightly different in terms of each aspect. Students showed the highest mean score in emotional attitudes and the lowest mean score in cognitive attitudes. The students' behavioral attitudes were between emotional and cognitive attitudes. This result is parallel to the result of Orfan (2020) who has conducted a survey on 210 randomly selected students at Takhar University located at the Northern zone of Afghanistan. He has found that the overall attitudes of students toward learning English language were positive, but the analysis indicated some slight differences in terms of the three aspects of attitudes. Moreover, the same result goes parallel with the results of Muthanna & Miao (2015) and Eshghinejad (2016). However, this result contradicts the result of the studies conducted by some other researchers such as Al-Zahrani (2008) and Abidin et al. (2012). Abidin et al. (2012) conducted a study on secondary school students in Libya to discover their attitudes toward learning English language and found that the overall attitudes of students were negative.

Moreover, the study resulted that there was not a statistic significant difference between students' attitudes based on their selection at Kankoor and the type of faculty. Students showed a very slight differences in their attitudes. This result goes right with the results of Coşkun and Taşgin (2018) and Doğan (2016). They have also concluded that students did not have significant differences in their attitudes toward learning English language based on the type of school they were studying in except some slight differences in their attitudes.

Students' attitudes toward learning English language were not significantly different by their year of study, but the analysis indicated that their attitudes slightly moved higher when their level of study was increased because students in the last two years of their study had more positive attitudes than students at the first two years of university. In addition, the same slight movement toward a more positive scale of agreement was found in students' attitude to their pre-university preparatory knowledge. Students who had studied English language in private language centers for six months or more had more positive attitudes than students who had studied English for three months or less. The result which indicated that the students' attitudes become more positive as their level of study is increased is parallel with the findings of Coşkun and Taşgin (2018).

In addition, the positive increase in students' attitudes based on the increase in their preparatory education of English language also came right with the results of research conducted by Coşkun and Taşgin (2018).

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study found that EFL students of English language and literature departments at Paktia University had positive attitudes toward English language learning. However, there were some slight differences in their attitudes in terms of the three aspects of attitudes. Students' cognitive attitudes were the lowest, but their emotional attitudes were highest. This result concluded that students had good feelings for learning English language; however, they were rather little aware of the importance and usefulness of learning English. Students strong agreement in items which elicited their attitudes about talking in English with others, listening to the teacher who is speaking English, getting more education through English, getting a better job, being engaged in language activities, practicing English with others, and not feeling embarrassed when talking in English helped students to develop positive attitudes toward learning English language. However, students showed rather less positive attitude in the items which elicited their attitudes about using mother tongue inside the class, not knowing the answer to their teacher's questions, no match of course materials with their needs, and not finishing up the courses till the end of the semester. This result concluded that students have a willingness to learn English language, but the quality of teaching English may negatively affect their attitudes.

In addition, the slight positive increase of students' attitudes based on the increase in their level of study and experience of private courses concluded that the more students engage with learning English language, the more they get a positive mind set of that. According to a report prepared by Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) and the British Council in 2014, if the classes are not interesting and understandable, students' level of attitudes and motivations decrease as their level of study increases. As a result, it concluded that students had an interesting experience of the ease of classes at Paktia University which caused their level of attitude to be increased during their studies.

The findings of this research can contribute more to the teachers, universities, ministry of higher education, curriculum developers, and policy makers in Afghanistan. As very few studies have been conducted which investigated EFL learners' attitudes toward learning English language, this study adds more



knowledge to the analysis of student views and perceptions toward the ongoing process of English language studies in public universities. Moreover, this research opens the door to other researches in order to deeply investigate the factors affecting students' attitudes toward learning English language.

### LIMITATIONS

The findings of this result cannot be generalized to both genders because female students were not included in the research. This is because of the fact that there are usually 3-11 female students, out of 50-80 students in undergraduate classes at Paktia University and as the questionnaire was administered online through Google form, none of the female students participated in the survey. Female students in rural areas often do not have access to the internet or not willing to be engaged in social and collective matters. Therefore, female students' attitudes toward learning English language were not included and analyzed in this study.

### SUGGESTIONS

1. Students' the cognitive aspects of attitudes should be raised by providing them the importance of learning English language through orientation and other programs.
2. Curriculum development and quality assurance and accreditation committees should assess teachers' courses if the course contents do not match students' needs, they cause negative attitudes.
3. Teachers should provide an English speaking environment in undergraduate classes.
4. Students' the level of English language should be tested before coming to English language and literature faculty.
5. Further research is needed to investigate how every individual factor affects students' attitudes toward learning English language.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all, we highly appreciate all instructors of English departments at Paktia University who have helped us to collect the data from participants. Their support has really helped this study to be fulfilled. In addition, we thank the welcome remarks of the leadership of Paktia University and deanships of languages and literature and educations faculties regarding this study. Their positive perspectives have enabled us to access the participants.

### REFERENCES

[1] Abidin, M. J. Z., Pour-Mohammadi, M., & Alzwari, H. (2012). EFL students' attitudes towards

learning English language: The case of Libyan secondary school students. *Asian social science*, 8(2), 119. doi:10.5539/ass.v8n2p119

[2] Al-Zahrani, M. (2008). Saudi secondary school male students' attitudes towards English: An exploratory study. *J. King Saudi University, Language and translation*, 20(1), 25-39.

[3] Coşkun, G., & Taşgin, A. (2018). An investigation of anxiety and attitudes of university students towards English courses. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 14(2), 135-153. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/jlls/issue/43364/527930>

[4] Doğan, A. (2008). Foreign language anxiety affecting secondary school students' English learning. *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil Dergisi*, 139, 49-67.

[5] Doğan, Y. (2016). Examination of prep-class students' metacognitive awareness, self-efficacy beliefs, foreign language anxiety levels, foreign language attitudes and academic achievement in foreign language. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation*. Firat University, Elazığ, Turkey.

[6] Eshghinejad, S. (2016). EFL students' attitudes toward learning English language: The case study of Kashan. *Cogent Education*. doi:10.1080/2331186X.2016.1236434

[7] Farooqi, M. Q. (2022). Teaching and learning of English as a foreign language: The impact of COVID-19. *Journal of Social, Humanity, and Education*, 2(4), 357-366. <https://doi.org/10.35912/jshe.v2i4.979>

[8] Getie, A. S. (2020). Factors affecting the attitudes of students towards learning English as a foreign language. *Cogent Education*, 7(1), 1738184. doi:10.1080/2331186X.2020.1738184

[9] Kara, A. (2009). The effect of a learning theories' unit on students' attitudes toward learning. *Australian journal of teacher education*, 34(3), 100-113. doi:10.14221/ajte.2009v34n3.5

[10] Le, X. M., & Le, T. T. (2022). Factors Affecting Students' Attitudes towards Learning English as a Foreign Language in a Tertiary Institution of Vietnam. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 2(2), 168-185. doi: 10.54855/ijte.22229

[11] Manap, M., Othman, N., & Ramli, N. (2018). *Motivation in English language learning: A case study of Afghanistan students in Malaysia*. Paper presented at the 4th International Conference ILANNS 2018Radzi.

[12] Mensah, J., Okyere, M., & Kuranchie, A. (2013). Student attitude towards mathematics and performance: Does the teacher attitude matter. *Journal of education and practice*, 4(3), 132-139.

[13] Montano, D. E., & Kasprzyk, D. (2015). Theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behavior, and the integrated behavioral model. *Health behavior: Theory, research and practice*, 70(4), 231.

[14] Muthanna, A., & Miao, P. (2015). Chinese students' attitudes towards the use of English-medium instruction into the curriculum courses: A case study of a national key university in Beijing. *Journal of Education*

and *Training Studies*, 3(5), 59-69.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.11114/jets.v3i5.920>

[15] Orfan, S. N. (2020). Afghan undergraduate students' attitudes towards learning English. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 7(1), 1723831. doi: 10.1080/23311983.2020.1723831

[16] Pabro-Maquidato, I. M. (2021). The experience of English speaking anxiety and coping strategies: a transcendental phenomenological study. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 1(2), 45-64. Retrieved from <https://ijte.org/index.php/journal/article/view/32>

[17] Sayadian, S., & Lashkarian, A. (2010). Investigating Attitude and Motivation of Iranian University Learners toward English as a Foreign Language. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 3(1), 137-148. doi:10.19030/cier.v3i1.170

[18] Siddiq, K. A., Miri, M. A., & Sarwarzada, T. (2019). Afghan Students' Attitudes and Motivations Toward ESP and EGP Courses. *Language in India*,

19(6). Retrieved from [v19i6june2019part3.pdf](http://v19i6june2019part3.pdf) (languageinindia.com)

[19] Sundkvist, P., & Nguyen, X. (2020). English in Vietnam. *The Handbook of Asian Englishes*, 683-703: Wiley Blackwell Publisher. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118791882.ch30>

[20] Utami, S., & Husein, R. (2021). *Students' Attitude in Learning English Conversations*. Paper presented at the 6th Annual International Seminar on Transformative Education and Educational Leadership (AISTEEL 2021).

[21] Wenden, A. (1991). *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy*. New York: Prentice Hall.

[22] Zulfikar, T., Dahliana, S., & Sari, R. A. (2019). An Exploration of English Students' Attitude towards English Learning. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 2(1), 1-12. Retrieved from [SebuahKajianPustaka:\(ed.gov\)](http://SebuahKajianPustaka(ed.gov))

**APPENDIXES**

**Consent Letter**

**Consent Letter**

Dear participant,

Many researches have concluded that students' attitudes toward language learning substantially influence their success in learning process, so this survey is intended to find out the attitudes and beliefs of English language and literature departments' students toward learning English language at Paktia University. Therefore, your participation and punctual responses will help us discover correct conclusions about students' perceptions toward English language. Please select the answer that best suits your own view; please do not select an answer that you think is right, but you yourself do not do it. Your personal identification is well-secured and will not be used either during or after the study.

Thanks for your consideration,

Saifullah Muslim

**Questionnaire**

Mark each statement below to the best of your knowledge and feelings.

SD	D	NI	A	SA
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

No	Items	SD	D	NI	A	SA
1	I feel proud when studying English					
2	I feel happy when I talk in English with others.					
3	I don't get anxious when i have to answer a question by English in the class.					
4	I enjoy most of the teaching methodologies used by our teachers.					
5	I prefer studying in English rather than my mother tongue.					
6	I feel happy when the teacher speaks English.					
7	To be honest, I have a lot of interest in my English classes.					
8	Majority of the textbooks and other course materials used by our teacher best fit					

	our needs.					
9	Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.					
10	I study English because it help me to learn other subjects well.					
11	I study English because it can help me to get a better job.					
12	Frankly, I don't study English just to pass the exams and get a B.A. degree.					
13	I study English just to speak another language.					
14	Studying English makes me create new thoughts.					
15	I think I am studying a good profession.					
16	In my opinion, learning English is very difficult and complicated.					
17	I am very interested coming to university for studying English.					
18	I am very happy when doing activities in English classes.					
19	When I hear classmate speaking English well, I also like to practice speaking with him.					
20	Majority of our course books are finished at the end of each semester.					
21	I do almost all of my homework as early as possible.					
22	I feel embarrassed (shamed) when I speak English in the class.					
23	I can do all of the homework and assignments needed for each skill of English language.					
24	I want to peruse further my studies in English language after graduation.					