

Investigation the Attitudes of University of Duhok's Students towards Learning English as a Foreign Language

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at finding out the attitudes of non-English majors' students at University of Duhok towards English language and its learning, in general, and at University of Duhok in particular and exploring the reasons behind their attitudes. The study also investigates the differences in the participants' attitudes based on their major, gender, and studying level. For this purpose, a questionnaire mainly adopted from Gardner's (2004) "Attitude/Motivation Test Battery" was distributed to (259) students from six colleges affiliated to University of Duhok. These six colleges were divided into two groups: Sciences (College of Veterinary, College of Engineering, and College of Sciences) and Humanities (College of Law and Political Sciences, College of Economics and Administration, and College of Basic Education). The findings have revealed that students under study have expressed positive attitudes towards both the English language itself as a language and learning it as a subject of study. The study also has shown that there were no significant differences in the students' attitudes towards the study's variables due to gender and studying level, however, a significant difference based on the students' major was found.

Keywords: attitudes, studying level, gender, learning English language, major, non-English majors.

1. Introduction

English language is taught as a foreign language in Iraq and in Kurdistan region. Kurdish students in Kurdistan study English language (for 12 years) in primary and high schools in addition to one year at college (non-departmental English). English is also taught as a compulsory subject for one or more year at all Non-English departments and colleges affiliated to University of Duhok (henceforth UoD). Thus, the researchers think it is necessary to learn about those students' attitudes and to find out the reasons that contributed to developing their attitudes. It is worth

mentioning that this study could be one of the first studies to deal with learners attitudes at non-English departments in spite of the fact that a plenty of studies have been carried out on language and attitude, most of which dealt with schools and universities outside Iraq. Accordingly, the researchers believe that a study like this current one will be of significance to students, teachers, and syllabus designers in UoD as we will show later in the study.

1.1 Problem of the Study

We believe that English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL) students mostly join English language departments because they like the language and want to be more proficient and skilful at it, and in order to work in the career they have set for themselves. But what about non-English majors who take compulsory English language courses during their first year of

study in UoD? Do they like or dislike learning English language at college level after they have decided to be specialized in a field other than English language? Little attention has been given to this group of students and to their reactions towards learning English as a foreign language not only in UoD but, seemingly, at other universities and schools around the world. Liu and Warden (1998) referred to the insufficient research undertaken to investigate the attitudes of non-English major students towards English and pointed out that "the general lack of research on the issues surrounding non-English majors has led many language teachers in Asia to assume that all students can be treated with the same standard approach" (Liu & Warden, 1998, para.21). Thus, this study is designed primarily to discover the attitudes of non-English majors and the reasons behind their attitudes in order to be able to propose some scientific and pedagogical solutions for the purpose of achieving better English language learning outcomes.

1.2 Aims of the Study

The present study aims at investigating the attitudes of both EFL Science and Humanities' students at UoD towards learning English as a foreign language in order to find out the reasons behind those attitudes and propose suggestions and solutions that can help develop the learning of English at those departments.

1.3 Questions of the Study

This study will give answers to the following questions;

- What are the Science and Humanities students' attitudes towards English and learning English in general and in UoD in particular? And what are the reasons behind their attitudes?
- Are there differences in learners' attitudes towards learning English among UoD students due to gender?

- Are there differences in attitudes towards learning English among UoD students due to studying level?
- Are there differences in attitudes towards learning English among students' of UoD due to major?

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

This study puts forward the following hypotheses:

- Students at Science departments in UoD have positive attitudes towards English language whereas Humanities' students hold negative attitudes.
- In both types of departments female students hold more positive attitudes than male students.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will be of significance to students of UoD, English language instructors, syllabus designers, educators and applied linguists. Students will be aware of the reasons behind the type of attitude they hold towards learning English; thus, this awareness might motivate and help them work harder to improve and develop their language skills. For English language instructors, the results of the study will give them ideas and thoughts on how their students think of the subject they teach them (i.e., English language) and the learning of English. Accordingly, teachers might find better ways to help themselves and their students to overcome those problems that hinder learning English inside and outside classrooms and to choose suitable teaching methods and activities that would motivate and enforce positive attitudes among learners and promote better learning outcomes. For syllabus designers in the UoD, once students' attitudes are determined and the reasons behind them are identified, the researchers will be able to offer some possible solutions for assisting teachers and curricula designers to create a more efficient English language

teaching/learning environment that takes into consideration non-English majors' interests, needs and feelings. As for applied linguists, this study is expected to give them insights on how and why learners of EFL at non-departmental English develop certain attitudes towards learning English.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study will focus on (259) first and second year students both males and females chosen randomly from different departments representing Science and Humanities faculties in the UoD. The major participants include first year students who have been studying English during their first college year and second year students who studied EFL during their previous academic year.

2. Literature Review

2.1 A Brief Background on Attitude

Attitudes form an essential part of our daily life. The importance of attitude lays in its influence to "shape people's perceptions of the social and physical world and influence overt behaviours" (Albarracin, Wang, Li & Noguchi, 2008, p.19). This means that attitudes determine the way we perceive things and control and guide our actions. The effect of attitudes on our actions is prevalent in most of the decisions we make as in choosing what schools our children need to go to, what products to buy, what candidates to vote for, etc., (Ianos, 2014; Bizer, Barden & Petty, 2003). Hence, attitudes can make someone hate or love something, can make individuals act positively or negatively towards an idea, event, phenomenon, thing, people, and issues (Ajzen, 1989; Franzoi, 2003; Albarracin et al, 2008).

Up to this day, attitudes have been investigated in different disciplines including education, psychology, sociology, political science, economics, marketing, media, and linguistics (Ahmed, 1989; Ianos, 2014).

Specialists in these fields took interest in studying attitudes because of their effect on our "decisions and actions" (Ianos, 2014, p.95). In education and precisely in foreign language learning (henceforth FLL) contexts, attitudes have undergone a good amount of research. Attitudes towards the target language (TL) are considered as one of the most essential variables that affect FLL (Fakeye, 2010, p.206). According to Gardner (1960) and Lehmann (2006) during the process of FLL the learner is influenced by many variables including age, motivation, intelligence, anxiety, attitude, etc., (as cited in Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi & Alzwari, 2012, p.119). Researchers have also found out that attitudes have a strong impact on students' motivation which, in turn, affects learners' level of achievement in the TL (Gardner, 1985; Eshghinejad, 2016).

2.2 Definition of Attitude

The definition of attitude has changed over the course of its development and has been defined differently from different points of view (Ajzen, 1989; Albarracin, Zanna, Johnson, & Kumkale, 2005; Banaji & Heiphetz, 2015; Prislín & Crano, 2008). Some attitude theorists focus on the evaluative feature of attitude when defining it, some define the term based on its direction towards the attitude object, and others concentrate on referring to the three components of attitude in its definition as we will explain below.

In regard to the evaluative nature of attitude, despite all the changes that occurred on attitudes throughout the years, nonetheless, the idea of evaluation has remained intact (Ajzen, 1989; Albarracin et al, 2005; Banaji & Heiphetz, 2015; Prislín & Crano, 2008). Ajzen (1989) is one of the researchers who defined attitude from an evaluative perspective, stating that attitudes is "an individual's disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object" (p.241).

Attitude has also been defined in terms of 'direction'. In

this respect, Bogardus (1931) stated that an attitude "is a tendency to act toward or against something in the environment which becomes thereby a positive or negative value" (p.52). Furthermore, Murphy and Murphy (1931) defined attitude as "a way of being "set" toward or against things" (p.615). Such definitions clearly indicate the "double polarity" characteristic of attitudes- meaning that, attitudes have the ability to encourage behaviour that is positive or negative, favourable or unfavourable towards the attitude object (Allport, 1935, p.7).

The attitude concept has also been defined in terms of its components, i.e. affective, behavioural and cognitive (Breckler, 1984; Bizer et al, 2003). Greenwald (1989) said that social psychologists preferred a three component definition of attitude more than others because of its "breadth and its ancient philosophical roots" (p.6). Fazio (1986) indicated that a "tricomponent view of attitude" represents attitude as consisting of an affective component which includes "feelings about and evaluation of the attitude object", behavioural component referring to "intentions" and a cognitive component involving "beliefs about the object" (p. 204). The three components model of attitude is labelled as the ABC model and is also known as the tripartite model and was proposed by Rosenberg and Hovland in (1960) (Ianos, 2014, p.103).

Finally, as the above definitions indicate, attitudes are often directed towards or against an object. The attitude object can be a person, event, phenomena, thing, behaviour, institution (Ajzen, 1989, p.241; Franzoi, 2003, p.156; Albarracin et al, 2008, p.19). This means that the attitude object refers to any object in the world and it could be an abstract or a concrete entity.

2.3 The Importance of Attitudes in Foreign Language Learning Context

The importance of attitude in FLL context is manifested

in its ability to affect students' motivation, behaviours, and level of achievement (Gardner, 1985; Eshghinejad, 2016). According to Gardner (1985), attitude is one of the components of motivation; he defined motivation to language learning as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language" (Gardner, 1985, p.10). This means that attitude, in addition to effort and desire, gives birth to motivation. In the same way, Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggested that helping learners' develop positive attitudes towards the TL can, as a result, help enhance their motivation to learn the language (as cited in Fakeye, 2010, p.207). Therefore, attitudes have a major effect on students' motivation- positive attitudes towards the TL lead to high motivation for learning the language.

Second, attitudes have a major role in initiating, channelling, and directing behaviour (Ahmed, 1989). In fact, attitudes' influence on behaviours was the main reason behind social psychologists interest in investigating attitudes at the first place (Jain, 2014, p.2). The same influence is observed in language learning context-that is, attitudes affect learners' behaviours such as "selecting and reading books" in the TL, speaking in the TL, watching TL shows, movies and TV programs, etc., (Gajalakshmi, 2013, p.1; Eshghinejad, 2016, p.3). In this respect, Gardner (1985) argued that "attitudes are important in that they determine how active individuals will be in the language learning process" (p.60). Our positive attitudes towards learning a FL make us behave in a way that enables us to learn the language which could be by: attending TL classes, seminars, listening to TL audios, videos, music, and reading TL books, articles, newspapers and so on. Thus, from the above discussion one can conclude that students' positive attitudes and high motivation is

reflected in their behaviours inside and outside the classroom.

In addition to motivation and behaviours attitudes also have a major influence on students' achievement. Throughout the years researchers have investigated students' attitudes towards learning an S/FL and the findings confirmed that students' achievement is highly dependent on their attitudes towards the language (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Fakeye, 2010; Gajalakshmi, 2013). According to Abidin et al, (2012), learners' achievement in language learning does not depend entirely on "intellectual capacity, but also on the learner's attitudes towards language learning"; the authors, therefore, suggested that language learning needs to be "approached primarily as a social and psychological phenomenon rather than as a purely academic one" (p.121). By the same token, Naqeeb and Zaued (2014) pointed out that students' positive attitudes towards learning the FL will enhance their learning experience whereas negative attitudes are believed to "impede" their learning (p.4). Moreover, Gardner (1985) suggested that both attitudes and motivation contribute to learners' success in learning the TL

In conclusion, the importance of attitudes in language learning is reflected in their effect on students' motivation, behaviours and level of success in language learning. These factors upon which the influence of attitudes is exerted are interrelated- that is, learners' positive attitudes towards learning the TL will enhance their motivation which, in turn, will affect their behaviours in a way that would make them be "more attentive in the learning situation, would take assessments more seriously, would find it more rewarding to simply experience the language, and thus achieve more" (Gardner, 1985, p.41). Thus, attitudes are very important in language learning and language teachers need to realize this fact in order to be able to

help their learners' improve their English language proficiency.

2.4 Factors Affecting Learners' Attitudes towards Foreign Language Learning

The factors that affect students' attitudes towards language learning can be divided into three major classes: personal, educational, and social factors (Ahmed, 1989). According to Ahmed (1989), personal factors refer to those factors that are closely "related to the learner as an independent being having his/her own way of thinking, feeling about, and reacting to other objects in the social environment" (p, 118). These factors involve; previous experience with the learning of the language, the feeling of ethnocentrism, the feeling of anomie, and the learners' perceptions of the benefits students might get or the needs that can be fulfilled from learning another language can also influence their attitudes towards learning the language (Ahmed, 1989). The feeling of ethnocentrism according to Sumner (1906) is "the technical name for this view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it" (as cited in Neuliep, Hintz & McCroskey, 2005, p.42). Thus, in an FLL context, when a learner considers his native language to be superior to the TL, he/she will begin to develop negative attitudes towards the learning of the TL. In relation to the feeling of anomie, Unganer (2014) pointed out that the feeling of anomie can make learners' fear losing their first language and as a result develop negative attitudes towards the TL and its culture.

As regard to the educational factors, students' attitudes are usually affected in the educational setting by everything related to the language course such as the teacher, the curriculum, teaching materials, teaching activities, classmates, classroom environment, etc., (Gardner, 1985; Ahmed, 1989; Magogwe, 1995).

According to Brown (2007), in order for the language course to be "effective" it is important to "take into consideration the educational setting, class and faculty characteristics, governance of course content, assessment and evaluation requirements as well as needs analysis and specific goals" (as cited in Zavala, 2017, p.42).

The social factors, on the other hand, that affect students' attitudes are family, friends, the social environment (including the political, historical, economical, and linguistic situations), gender, etc., (Ahmed, 1989; Koç, 2015; Zavala, 2017; Özdemir & Çördük, 2018). The social factor that has been investigated in the current study is gender. In the context of attitudes and language learning, Baker (1992) stated that gender is one of the major determinates of language attitudes (as cited in Koç, 2015, p.15). It seems that researchers have taken interest in examining the differences in language learners' attitudes based on gender. Plenty of studies confirmed that females hold more positive attitudes towards language learning than males (e.g., Ghazvini & Khajehpour, 2011; Abidin et al, 2012; Ma, 2014; Tanni, 2015; Eshghinejad, 2016). A few studies, however, have reported the opposite- for instance, Soleimani and Hanafi (2013) and Gajalakshmi (2013) found out that males have higher positive attitudes than females. Nonetheless, a third group of researchers reported no differences in attitudes based on gender such as Tran and Duong (2013) and Naqeeb and Zaued (2014).

In conclusion, learners' attitudes towards language learning can be affected by many factors including personal, educational and social factors. Understanding what factors influence learners' attitudes is of great benefit for the teachers because it will help them understand their learners better and, as a result, prepare their lessons in a way that can help decrease

any negative attitudes that learners may have towards learning English as an FLL.

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

The population of this study consists of (240) first and second year students in addition to (19) male and female Law students from third year because at the College of Law and Political Sciences English language is taught up to the third stage as shown in table (1) below. The participants are both male and female university students whose ages range between (17-26) years. They have been chosen randomly from six colleges representing two main streams of specialization; Science (College of Veterinary, College of Engineering, and College of Sciences) and Humanities (College of Law and Political Sciences, College of Administration and Economics, and College of Basic Education), at UoD. One department was chosen from each college as a representative for that college. From each college (40) students were also randomly chosen to answer the questionnaire, twenty (20) of which were first year students (10 males and 10 females) and the other twenty (20) were second year students (also 10 males and 10 females). First year students were chosen to be the sample of this study due to the fact that English language at UoD is taught to this group of students, while the reason behind including second year students is to identify the differences in attitudes towards learning English between a group that is currently studying English language (first year students) and another that has studied it before (second year students).

attitudes towards learning English language at university level.

3.2 Instrument

In the current study, a quantitative method was adopted to learn about the attitudes of UoD students towards learning English language. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire adapted from Gardner's (2004) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section (section A) revolves around learners' demographic details including gender, age, mother tongue, high school branch, year of study, college, department, final mark obtained in English language in twelfth grade, final mark obtained in English language in the first year, final mark obtained in English language in the second year, and final mark obtained in English language in the third year. To avoid ambiguity the ninth item is only for the participants who are second year students and the last item is only for third year students at College of Law and Political Sciences. The second part (section B) consists of (20) close-ended questions adopted from Gardner's (2004) AMTB and distributed on a 6-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, moderately disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, moderately agree, and strongly agree). Most of the items express the reasons behind holding attitudes towards English language which can be helpful in understanding why students have positive or negative attitudes towards English language. The selected items were also chosen based on the fact that they address the following research variables; 1) Attitudes towards English language and the learning of English in general, and 2) Attitudes towards learning English language at college level. Thus, the first ten items (1-10) of the questionnaire reflect learners' attitudes towards English language; the second ten items (11-20) address learners'

Table 1 Male and female participants from the six

Faculty	College	Department	Year of Study	Participants		Total
				Male	Female	
Sciences	College of Veterinary	Veterinary	1 st	10	10	20
			2 nd	10	10	20
	College of Engineering	Surveying	1 st	10	10	20
			2 nd	10	10	20
	College of Sciences	Chemistry	1 st	10	10	20
			2 nd	10	10	20
Humanities	College of Law and Political Sciences	Law	1 st	10	10	20
			2 nd	10	10	20
			3 rd	10	9	19
	College of Administration and Economics	Economy	1 st	10	10	20
			2 nd	10	10	20
	College of Basic Education	History	1 st	10	10	20
2 nd			10	10	20	
Total = 259						

colleges

3.3 Validity

In order to examine the validity of the current study questionnaire in relation to the clarity of the questions and statements, the feasibility, structure, style and layout of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was viewed by a number of experts from different universities in Iraq including University of Duhok, University of Nawroz, University of Mosul, University of Baghdad, and University of Salahaddin (see appendix 4). Then, the questionnaire was modified according to the experts' comments and suggestions as well as the results of the pilot study.

3.4 Reliability

In order to test the reliability of the questionnaire, it had to be piloted. A sample was chosen based on the research variables and questions of the study. The

sample included the six colleges in UoD mentioned above chosen specifically for this study. The sample size for the pilot study was (24) students composed of four participants from each college- two males and two females (one male and one female from first year and one male and one female from second year). The questionnaire was administered with the presence of the researcher to answer any questions the participants might have. Finally, the collected data were analysed by using SPSS 25 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software and Excel. The results indicated a high reliability value that was up to (70%).

3.5 Administration

Due to the fact that the participants were non-English majors whose first language was not English language, the questionnaire had to be translated into their first language which was Kurdish for the majority of the subjects and Arabic for very few. Also, to ensure that the participants have understood the instructions of the questionnaire and to answer any questions the participants might have during the process, the questionnaire was self-administered by the researcher. It is worth mentioning that the researcher distributed the questionnaire to more than twenty students from every stage but have taken into consideration those which were completely answered.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using SPSS 25 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software and Excel. Excel was used to calculate the frequency and percentage of the data whereas SPSS 25 was used to find out the Mean, T-value, Significance, and Standard Deviation all of which are obtained using descriptive statistics. Section (A) from the questionnaire (the demographic profile) was analysed using the Variance tests which indicate the differences in the respondents' attitudes based on their personal variables such as age, gender,

year of study, major, etc. The data were fed in excel; this included the data obtained from the first (A) and second (B) sections of the questionnaire.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Research Question # 1

"What are the Science and Humanities students' attitudes towards English and learning English in general and in UoD in particular? And what are the reasons behind their attitudes?"

4.1.1 Attitudes towards English Language in General

Table (2) indicates that the participants hold highly positive attitudes towards English language. This is observed from their responses to the first ten questionnaire items which address the first research variable i.e., attitudes towards English language. The total Mean (M) value for these ten items is (50.7838) which is above the Mean test score for our scale which is (3.5) for every item separately and (35) for the ten items altogether and thus it indicates high positive attitudes. The low Standard Deviation (SD) value (6.92258) shows that the students' responses were clustered around the (M) which, in turn, indicates that there was consistency among the participants in their responses to this category of the questionnaire statements. This result is both statistically important and significant due to the value of the calculated t-test (T) (36.694) which is greater than the value of the tabulated (T) (1.651), and due to the calculated significance value (0.000) which is lower than the tabulated (Sig.) (0.05).

4.1.2 Attitudes towards learning English Language at University Level

Table (3) shows that UoD students have positive attitudes towards learning English language. This result is concluded from their answers to the last ten items of the questionnaire (items 11-20) which deal with the

respondents' attitudes towards studying English language at university level in the context of the current study. The (M) score for the ten items together is (42.4865) which indicate positive attitudes, although less positive than for the first ten items which was (50.7838). The (SD) value (10.22057) for this group of items is higher than that for the first group which means that here there is less consistency in the respondents' answers. The (T) and (Sig.) values which are (11.788) and (0.000) respectively, indicate that this result is statistically important and significant.

The above two sub-sections (10.1 and 10.2) answer our first research question. The participants have exhibited positive attitudes towards English language and its learning which makes the results of the present study

consistent with the majority of the results of studies conducted in this field such as Ahmed (1989), Lafaye and Tsuda (2002), Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009), Durer and Sayar (2012), Soleimani and Hanafi (2013), Naqeeb and Zaued (2014), Rukh (2014), Chairat (2015), Tanni (2015), Abu-Snoubar (2017), Charoensuk and Jaipetch (2017) among others. The students' responses to the questionnaire items also present the reasons behind their attitudes. The two items that received the highest percentage are item number (4) "*studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job*" where (84.2%) of students strongly agreed with this item and item number (3) "*knowledge about English language is important for the educated person*" where 80.7%

Table (2): Science and Humanities students' attitudes towards English language (items 1-10)

No	Item	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree		M	SD	T	Sig.
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%				
1	English language is useful for the development of Kurdistan.	11	4.2	6	2.3	4	1.5	14	5.4	51	19.7	173	66.8	5.34	1.249	30.2	0.000
2	English language is difficult and complicated to learn.	54	20.8	31	12	33	12.7	57	22	53	20.5	31	12	3.45	1.696	4.286	0.000
3	Knowledge about English language is important for the educated person.	7	2.7	3	1.2	4	1.5	9	3.5	27	10.4	209	80.7	5.6	1.042	40.125	0.000
4	Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.	2	0.8	1	0.4	1	0.4	8	3.1	29	11.2	218	84.2	5.76	0.685	64.832	0.000
5	I have no desire to learn English.	194	74.9	16	6.2	8	3.1	10	3.9	12	4.6	19	7.3	1.79	1.578	-12.322	0.000
6	When I leave college, I will give up the study of English because I am not interested in it.	183	70.7	18	6.9	14	5.4	14	5.4	7	2.7	23	8.9	1.89	1.625	-10.977	0.000
7	Learning English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English.	25	9.7	19	7.3	19	7.3	39	15.1	48	18.5	109	42.1	4.52	1.687	14.471	0.000
8	Learning English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.	7	2.7	4	1.5	9	3.5	15	5.8	48	18.5	176	68	5.4	1.138	33.912	0.000
9	Knowing English is not really an important goal in my life.	147	56.8	30	11.6	15	5.8	27	10.4	18	6.9	22	8.5	2.25	1.726	-7.022	0.000
10	I wish I were fluent in English.	7	2.7	7	2.7	5	1.9	6	2.3	26	10	208	80.3	5.55	1.131	36.314	0.000

Total attitudes; M= 50.7838, SD=6.92258, T=36.694, Sig.=0.000

(Tabulated T =1.651, P ≤ 0.05)

Table (3): Science and Humanities students' attitudes towards learning English at college (items 11-20)

No	Item	Strongly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree		Moderately Agree		Strongly Agree		M	SD	T	Sig.
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%				
11	I study English just to pass the exams.	129	49.8	28	10.8	19	7.3	23	8.9	15	5.8	45	17.4	2.62	1.964	-3.101	0.002
12	I cannot apply the knowledge from English subject to my real life.	69	26.6	29	11.2	22	8.5	41	15.8	40	15.4	58	22.4	3.49	1.934	4.113	0.000
13	English is one of my favourite subjects.	56	21.6	13	5	9	3.5	25	9.7	46	17.8	110	42.5	4.24	2.004	9.986	0.000
14	English is a very important part of the college programme.	27	10.4	7	2.7	12	4.6	29	11.2	39	15.1	145	56	4.86	1.661	17.995	0.000
15	I put off my English homework as much as possible.	98	37.8	20	7.7	24	9.3	29	11.2	28	10.8	60	23.2	3.19	2.05	1.486	0.139
16	I like to give opinions during English lessons.	31	12	12	4.6	13	5	33	12.7	46	17.8	124	47.9	4.63	1.737	15.134	0.000
17	When I hear a student in my class speaking English well, I like to practice speaking with him/her.	11	4.2	4	1.5	12	4.6	22	8.5	34	13.1	176	68	5.29	1.301	28.269	0.000
18	I would rather spend my time on subjects other than English.	88	34	35	13.5	28	10.8	41	15.8	33	12.7	34	13.1	2.99	1.832	-0.068	0.946
19	My English class is boring.	133	51.4	28	10.8	19	7.3	24	9.3	27	10.4	28	10.8	2.49	1.843	-4.449	0.000
20	I am sometimes worried as I think other students in class will laugh at me when I speak English.	71	27.4	16	6.2	22	8.5	33	12.7	41	15.8	76	29.3	3.71	2.016	5.701	0.000

Total attitudes; M= 42.4865, SD=10.22057, T=11.788, Sig.=0.000

(Tabulated T =1.651, P ≤ 0.05)

of students strongly agreed with it. This result helps us understand why students have positive attitudes towards English; it also indicates that the students have high cognitive attitudes i.e., they understand the importance of English. These results reflect our students' awareness of the importance of the English language in their academic and social life which also mean that they are motivated and hold positive attitudes towards learning English. It is worth mentioning that this finding is consistent with the results obtained by Charoensuk and Jaipetch (2017) and Rahimi and Hassani (2011) whose participants also reflected high cognitive attitudes.

4.2 Research Question # 2

"Are there differences in learners' attitudes towards learning English among UoD students due to gender?"

Table (4): Differences in attitudes according to Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SD Error Mean	T	Sig.
Positive	Male	130	4.6671	.87537	.07677	1.115	.266
	Female	129	4.7821	.78188	.06884		
Negative	Male	130	2.9035	.75124	.06589	0.213	.831
	Female	129	2.9257	.91198	.08030		

Tabulated (T) (257) = 1.651, $P \leq 0.05$

Table (4) above presents the differences in the attitudes (positive and negative) of male and female participants in UoD towards English language. The table indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the participants' attitudes according to gender due to the calculated (T) and (Sig.) values for positive and negative attitudes. The calculated (T) value for positive attitudes is (1.115) and for negative attitudes is (0.213) which are smaller than their tabulated (T) value (1.651). The calculated (Sig.) value for male and female students with positive attitudes (0.266) and those with negative

attitudes (0.831) are greater than the default (Sig.) value (0.05) indicating no significant difference. In other words, gender does not affect learners' attitudes towards English language.

Our results correspond with Fakeye (2010), Durer and Sayar (2012), Tran and Duong (2013), and Naqeeb and Zaued (2014) studies who also found out no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of the participants towards learning English language based on gender. In defence of our result, Heinzmann (2009) pointed that one of the major reasons that make girls better at language learning is because they are more motivated than boys to learn languages; however, this is not the case with all languages. Heinzmann (2009) cited a couple of studies that investigated male and female learners motivation for learning foreign languages and found differences in the languages the two sexes prefer to learn; for example, Carr and Pauwels (2006) reported that in Australia some foreign languages like French, German, Italian and Spanish are more feminine than Chinese, Japanese, Modern Greek, Russian and Latin which were more preferred by men (as cited in Heinzmann, 2009, p.21). In relation to English language, Heinzmann (2009) referred to Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh (2006) and Dörnyei and Clément (2001) who investigated Hungarian secondary school students motivation for learning English, German, Russian, French and Italian and reported that among these five languages English is the only "gender-neutral with respect to students' motivation" whereas German and Russian were favoured by men and French and Italian by women (as cited in Heinzmann, 2009, p.21). Thus, one can say that "English can attract both genders equally" because it is becoming a global language (as cited in Heinzmann, 2009, p.21).

The results obtained in relation to the gender factor refute our hypothesis number (2) which states "in both

types of departments, female students hold more positive attitudes than male students".

4.3 Research Question # 3

"Are there differences in attitudes toward learning English among UoD students due to studying level?"

Table (5): Differences in attitudes according to studying

Studying level		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Positive	Between Groups	.098	2	.049	.070	.932
	Within Groups	177.858	256	.695		
	Total	177.956	258	-		
Negative	Between Groups	3.317	2	1.658	2.412	.092
	Within Groups	175.975	256	.687		
	Total	179.292	258	-		

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Tabulated (F) (2,256) = 3.031, $P \leq 0.05$

In relation to differences in attitudes according to studying level, the results presented in table (5) above have indicated that there are no significant differences in the attitudes of the students towards learning English language from the three stages included in this study in spite of the fact that they all have positive attitudes towards learning English as shown in table (6) in the appendix. These results are consistent with the findings of Tanni (2015) who investigated the attitudes of Al-Quds Open University students in Palestine towards English language. Tanni (2015) found out that there are no differences in the attitudes of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year students. This finding indicates that students from the three academic levels have similar attitudes towards learning English language and that their level does not affect their attitudes.

4.4 Research Question # 4

"Are there differences in attitudes toward learning English among students' of UoD due to major?"

Table (6): Differences according to the college

College		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Positive	Between Groups	6.477	5	1.295	1.911	.093
	Within Groups	171.479	253	.678		
	Total	177.956	258	-		
Negative	Between Groups	13.762	5	2.752	4.207	.001
	Within Groups	165.530	253	.654		
	Total	179.292	258	-		

Tabulated (F) (5,253) = 2.250, $P \leq 0.05$

The results of the present study have indicated a difference in students' attitudes based on their major as shown in table (6) above. The table indicates that there are no differences in the attitudes of the students who expressed positive attitudes but there appears to be a difference among the students with negative attitudes based on its calculated (F) value (4.207) which is larger than the tabulated (F) value (2.250) and by its significance value (0.001) which is smaller than the default (Sig.) value (0.05). Scheffe post hoc test was used in order to discover this difference, which is (between which colleges which college's students have the highest negative attitudes as shown in table (7) below . The Scheffe post hoc test indicates that the differences are among three colleges including the College of Veterinary, the College of Law and Political

Sciences, and the College of Basic Education. Moreover, the difference is in favour of the College of Basic Education due to its high (M) (3.396) which is higher than the Means of the two colleges (Veterinary and Law) which are (2.711) and (2.712) respectively. From this, we can conclude that, as the major of study is concerned, the students with negative attitudes from the College of Basic Education have stronger negative attitudes towards learning EFL.

thus, students from history department will teach history lessons in Kurdish not English. This is probably why they think they do not need English for their future career. Also, at the College of Basic Education the language of instruction is Kurdish and Arabic which may add a third reason why those students hold stronger negative attitudes towards learning English. The same can be said about the Law students who mostly need Arabic and Kurdish in their study and for

Table (7): Scheffe test of differences in the negative attitudes of participants based on major

College	Vet.	Eng.	Sci.	Law	Eco.	Basic Ed.	M
College of Veterinary	-						2.712
College of Engineering	0.907	-					2.936
College of Sciences	0.991	0.998	-				2.842
College of Law and Political Sciences	1.000	0.871	0.987	-			2.711
College of Administration and Economics	0.804	1.000	0.986	0.739	-		2.966
College of Basic Education	0.016	0.269	0.100	0.005	0.404	-	3.396

This result can be interpreted assuming that the students of the College of Basic Education are not as competent at English language as the students from other colleges based on their ministerial exam's final results. If we can depend on that assessment as a criterion, then our interpretation can be supported by the fact that the majority of the students (around 26/40) of the College of Basic Education in the ministerial exam received scores between (50-59) whereas only six students got (60-69), seven got (70-79) and only one got (80-89). Another reason could be that these students think that English has no relation to their major. In other words, students from the College of Basic Education are prepared to be teachers in the future;

their jobs in the future as lawyers. Surprisingly, the students with negative attitudes from the College of Veterinary are among these three colleges whose negative attitudes have been identified as significantly different and strong. At this college, the language of instruction is English and most students are good at English language and have scored high in English language in the Ministerial exam. Thus, it was unexpected to find out that the Veterinary students hold strong negative attitudes towards learning English language. However, the reason behind this could be that the Veterinary students believe that they are already good at English and that there is no need to learn more English at the college level. Some

researchers worldwide have also investigated differences in attitudes towards English language among university students of different majors and revealed differences; for example, Alshaar (1997) found out that the Kuwait University students majored in sciences (i.e., Administrative Science, Engineering, and Science) and languages (English and French) had significantly higher positive attitudes towards learning English than, similar to our results, students majored in Education and Law. This is because in Humanities disciplines as Education and Law the language of instruction is Arabic unlike science disciplines where instruction is carried out in English.

Finally, the answer to hypothesis # (1) can be derived from the sixth question in the demographic profile section. Table (8) represents differences in attitudes based on the type of Faculty (in this case Science and Humanities). The table indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the participants' attitudes from Scientific and Humanities majors. This is concluded from the calculated (T) value that equals (1.087) and (1.522) for the students with positive and negative attitudes which are smaller than their tabulated (T) value (1.651) and from the calculated (Sig.) value of (0.278) and (0.131) for both positive and negative attitudes which are greater than the default (Sig.) value (0.05). This result refutes hypothesis number (1) which states "students at Science departments in UoD have more positive attitudes towards English

language due to their past learning experience and the scores they recorded at high school .On the other hand, Humanities' students hold negative attitudes also due to their English language scores at high school and their past learning experience".

5. Conclusions

Attitude is an abstract concept that is observed via individuals' verbal and non-verbal responses towards the attitude object. It represents the individuals' evaluation of the attitude object. Attitude has become an important topic worth investigating in the field of language learning due to its impact on students' motivation and achievement. The current study has investigated the attitudes of the students of UoD from six colleges (three Science colleges and three Humanities) towards learning English language and has arrived at the following conclusions:

- The general attitudes of the participants towards English language and the learning of English language at the college level are positive and there are no significant differences in the attitudes of Science and Humanities students since both have positive attitudes towards English language.
- Students understand the importance of English language for their future and they like to learn it mainly because: it can help them get better jobs in the future, will allow them to meet and converse with foreign people, English is important for the educated person, and they want to be fluent at it.

Table (8): Differences in attitudes according to faculty type

	Faculty	N	Mean	SD	SD Error Mean	T	Sig.
Positive	Scientific	120	4.7847	.83377	.07611	1.087	.278
	Humanities	139	4.6723	.82715	.07016		
Negative	Scientific	120	2.8299	.85803	.07833	1.522	.131
	Humanities	139	2.9876	.80794	.06853		

Tabulated (T) (257)= 1.651, $P \leq 0.05$

- There are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of UoD's male and female students towards learning English as a foreign language.
- There are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of UoD's students towards learning English as a foreign language based on their studying level.
- There are statistically significant differences in the attitudes of UoD's students towards learning English as a foreign language based on major. In other words, students' major can play a role in their attitudes towards learning English language. Students of the College of Basic Education have stronger negative attitudes than students from other colleges.

6. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study, as stated in the significance of the study section of the study, can be of benefit to the students of UoD, English language teachers, syllabus designers, and applied linguists. The students' attitudes towards studying English language as a compulsory subject in UoD has been identified and some of the reasons behind their attitudes have been highlighted. This study helps students recognize their own attitudes and the causes behind them, which might be taken into accounts when learning English and consequently encourage them to put more efforts in learning it. More

importantly, teachers and curricula designers can take these results into consideration as they teach and prepare syllabus for non-English majors in UoD. This means that the results of this study eventually lies in the benefit of the students whose attitudes and opinions regarding learning English language will be considered in any future improvements for the teaching and learning of English at the college level. In regard to applied linguists, this study adds to the field of scientific research and can function as a reference for applied linguists worldwide to learn about the attitudes of college students and specifically UoD students towards learning English language as a foreign language.

7. Suggestions and Recommendations for Further Research

The following topics are recommended for further investigation;

- The attitudes of English language teachers towards teaching non-English majors.
- The role of gender in attitudes towards foreign language learning.
- The role of age in attitudes towards foreign language learning.
- Further research can also be carried out to investigate attitude change where researchers can test students' attitudes towards English language

learning before taking English classes and another attitude test after the classes.

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Appendices

APPENDIX (1): THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

A) Demographic profile

This section of the questionnaire is designed to obtain some of your personal information. Please indicate your answers with a tick (✓) in the spaces provided and write your answer for the questions where a line is provided.

1. Age: -----

2. Gender:

Male	
Female	

3. Mother tongue:

Kurdish	
Arabic	
Other	

4. High School Branch (stream):

Scientific	
Humanities	
Vocational	

5. Year of study:

First year	
Second year	
Third year	

6. Name of your college:

Scientific	College of Veterinary	
	College of Engineering	
	College of Sciences	
Humanities	College of Law	
	College of Administration and Economics	
	College of Basic Education	

7. Name of your department: -----

8. Final marks obtained in English language Ministerial Exam in 12th grade: -----

9. Final marks obtained in English language in first year (if a 2nd year student): -----

10. Final mark obtained in English language in second year (if a 3rd year student): -----

B) Items in this section ask you about your attitudes towards studying English language in UoD. Please answer all the questions and do not leave out any. Tick the option you believe best reflects your attitude towards English language. Use the scale below to answer the questionnaire items.

1. Strongly disagree = SD
 2. Moderately disagree= MD
 3. Slightly disagree= SD
 4. Slightly agree = SA
 5. Moderately agree= MA
 6. Strongly agree= SA

Note: Please tick (✓) only one option for each item in the questionnaire.

No	Item	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1	English language is useful for the development of Kurdistan.						
2	English language is difficult and complicated to learn.						
3	Knowledge about English language is important for the educated person .						
4	Learning English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.						
5	I have no desire to learn English.						
6	When I leave college, I will give up the study of English because I am not interested in it.						
7	Learning English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English.						
8	Learning English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.						
9	Knowing English is not really an important goal in my life.						
10	I wish I were fluent in English.						
11	I study English just to pass the exams.						
12	I cannot apply the knowledge from English subject to my real life.						
13	English is one of my favourite subjects.						
14	English is a very important part of the college programme.						
15	I put off my English homework as much as possible.						
16	I like to give opinions during English lessons.						

No	Item	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
17	When I hear a student in my class speaking English well, I like to practice speaking with him/her.						
18	I would rather spend my time on subjects other than English.						
19	My English class is boring.						
20	I am sometimes worried as I think other students in class will laugh at me when I speak English.						