

# EFL Adult learner's attitudes towards learning speaking

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**ABSTRACT:** The skill of speaking in English as a non-native language is arguably an important and challenging one which is affected by a substantial number of linguistic and non-linguistic factors. The aim of this study was to investigate the EFL adult learners' attitudes toward learning speaking. To this end, the measuring instrument was a questionnaire which focused on the attitudes towards learning speaking in terms of cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects. This study took place at state university in Ilam, Iran. The participants were EFL students, both male and female, with the mean age of 20. At the end of the study, the collected data analyzed by using SPSS. The results showed that these participants have negative behavioral attitude towards speaking skill while they have positive cognitive and emotional attitude.

**Key words :** EFL Learner , Speaking Skill , Behavioral Attitude , Cognitive Attitude , Emotional Attitude

## INTRODUCTION

In order to get a deeper insight into the minds of language learners there is no more certain way than to study their beliefs. Learners' attitudes and beliefs are to join the growing body of research in the field. When learners step in a language classroom, they bring all their personality features including their beliefs, attitudes, and language styles to the learning environment.

Almost all of the scholars admit that how successful people are in learning a language is exactly and directly influenced by what they think and how they evaluate the target language, the target language speakers, culture, and of course, the learning setting. Though merely investigating the attitudes and beliefs of learners may not guarantee any success, they, in turn, can be the guidelines for the next steps taken, as learners play the main role in any learning environment. A large number of studies have also investigated the relationships between attitude and proficiency in the language (Bachman, 1990; Malallah, 2000; Coleman, Strafield, & Hagan, 2003).

Attitudes towards a particular language might be either positive or negative. According to Pan, Zang and Wu (2010), a successful learner is one who possesses positive attitudes towards the target language. This study looks into the concept of attitude as one of the major affective factors for success in learning a foreign language. More specifically, it investigates Ilam state university students' attitudes towards learning English language, taking into consideration the three aspects of attitude i.e., emotional, cognitive, and behavioral.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to Biyaem (1997), learners face many obstacles in English language learning, for instance, inadequately equipped classrooms and educational technology. As for the students, they lack confidence to speak English with their teacher and classmates because of the effect from their mother tongue, particularly in pronunciation. They also lack of opportunity to use English in their daily lives. Some EFL Iranian learners may not use English skills effectively, specially listening and speaking. Moreover Punthamsen (2007) found that most of students do not want to learn English because they find the subject matter boring and also teaching methodology in the classroom is not interesting. As Prapphal (2003) stresses that technology is a good instruction to help students communicate, although it cannot be a substitute for a good language teacher. These reasons support an idea that English language teachers at all levels should use more interesting activities, technology, web-based projects, online self-tests, and electronic portfolio to supplement their teaching.

### **Research questions and Hypotheses**

The research seeks to answer the following questions

what is the effect of EFL adult learner' s attitude towards learning speaking?

Which types of attitudes EFL adult learners have towards speaking (in terms of behavioral, cognitive and emotional aspects of attitude)? Their attitude is positive or negative one?

3 .Is positive attitude promote learning speaking, while negative attitude block it?

Hence, the addressed hypotheses are:

EFL Ilam university students attitudes(behavioral , cognitive and emotional) has no effect on learning speaking .

There is no significant relationship between Ilam university student 's attitudes and emotional aspect of attitude .

there is no significant relationship between Ilam university student 's behavioral attitude and learning speaking .

there is no significant relationship between Ilam university student 's cognitive attitude and learning speaking .

### **Significance of the Study**

Attitudes towards language is extensively studied phenomenon in sociolinguistics. It is the attitude towards language that appears to be important in the restoration, preservation, decay or death in the life of the language (Baker, 1992).

Attitude has been a subject of research interest among the sociolinguists and social scientists over the years and they have done significant contributions. The findings of different attitude studies state that attitudes vary from favorably to unfavorably or vice – versa in language learning and acquisition, choice and use of language in different domains and thus, surveys of attitudes provide social indicators of changing beliefs about language and the chances of success in language policy implementation.

Attitude has been studied from various perspectives with reference to a number of languages in a variety of settings such as attitude towards mother tongue ; attitude towards a second or foreign language ; attitude towards national language ; attitude towards variety of languages ; attitude towards language in education policy ; relationship between attitudes and motivation , the relationship between attitudes and learning strategies ; the relationship between attitudes and level of achievement and so on .

Studying language attitudes benefits all stakeholders in different ways. Firstly, an investigation into students 'attitudes is an effective method by which language teachers, education planners, syllabus designers and researchers can obtain greater understanding into the language learning /teaching process. Secondly, students have different needs, preferences, beliefs, learning styles, and educational backgrounds, and that imposition of change upon these factors can lead to negative reactions. Thirdly, learners have views on the learning process and can articulate them. Lastly, studies on attitudes that are conducted on the UAE students towards English learning, in the researcher's view, is limited .This study also aims to investigating attitude of the EFL adult learners of Ilam state university towards learning speaking and hence , the specific objective of this study is to discover the attitudes of the EFL students of public university of Ilam.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was confined to investigating student's attitudes towards learning English and speaking skill. The study was confined to the EFL learner ' s of Ilam university .

### **Review of Literature**

In recent years, researchers have realized the important influence of language beliefs in foreign language learning process and have increasingly focused on students' beliefs about language learning and their effect on students' motivation, anxiety and the use of strategy (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Kuntz, 1996; Banya and Chea, 1997; Mori, 1999; Sakui & Gaies, 1999; Yang, 1999; Horwitz, 2001; Bernat, 2002; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Lee, 2002; Liao & Chiang, 2003; Le, 2004; Diab, 2006; Hong, 2006; Huang, 2006; Camille Bakker, 2008).

Horwitz (1985) developed the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) to assess students' opinions on a variety of issues and controversies related to language learning via free-recall protocols and group discussions with both foreign language and ESL learners and teachers.

Brohy (2001) investigated the attitudes of students in Switzerland to learning French. She found differences between native Rumansch speakers and native German speakers. Rumansch speakers had more positive attitudes towards learning French than the German speakers did.

Buschenhofen (1998) in his study assessed the attitudes towards English language existing among year 12 and final-year university students in Papua New Guinea. The results of the study indicated: (1) a generally positive attitude by both groups towards English and (2) some significant attitudinal differences in relation to specific English language contexts.

By 1985, Baker had introduced the idea that attitude toward language is related simultaneously with students' home-language and cultural background, as well as with other factors: age, gender, achievement, and type of school. In his first study, he included Welsh secondary students (between the ages of 11 and 18) in schools with varied characteristics.

Baker (1985) argued that in previous studies, the focus had been uni-directional and only considered one factor at a time in a uni-directional way. A two-way effect was not considered; neither was it considered that several factors together and at the same time could be affecting students' attitudes toward learning a second language. In his study, Baker proposed the input-output model to show the bi-directional (or causal) effect of more than one factor. His study involved three schools: one school, where over 70 percent of the students had Welsh-speaking backgrounds; the second school was situated where the predominant culture was Anglo and the students had varied language backgrounds; and the third school was situated where less than one percent of the population had Welsh-speaking background and most of the students were other than Welsh-speaking. As Baker suggested, studies were done previously that considered one factor at a time. For example, in 1949 and 1950, Jones showed that students between 11 and 14 years of age had more positive attitudes toward the Welsh language if their parents were Welsh speaking.

On the other hand, recently Ehala and Niglas (2006) in Estonia found that students between 15 and 18 years of age living in rural areas had less positive attitudes toward the Estonian language (minority language) than students in urban areas. Therefore, the geographical characteristic of the place where a student is learning a second language could affect their attitudes toward the language itself.

Some studies have reported that attitudes toward a foreign language are also related with ethnic background. For example, Sakuragi (2008) found that attitudes of U.S. college students toward a second language (Chinese, French, Japanese, or Spanish) were related with social distance. Sakuragi (2008) defines social distance as the willingness that a person has to accept and relate with people from a different ethnic background. The time that students spend learning a language is another factor that the research literature indicates could impact students' attitudes, particularly their cross-cultural attitudes.

## METHODOLOGY

The population selected for this experimental study was EFL adult learners, the students at state university of Ilam, Iran. The total number of the participants in this study were 70. These participants were both male and female. The number of male participants are 25 and the number of female participants are 45. Their selection was quiet randomly.

It is needed to define two terms: adult language learner of English, foreign language learner of English. The definition for the term adult language learner has long been discussed (see e.g. Knowles, 1973; Joiner, 1981); however, there is not one universally accepted definition of adult language learner in second language acquisition studies. In this study EFL learner involves the following features:

\*an individual who is above the age of 18.

\*an individual who studies at courses organized by a university.

Also in this study foreign language learner means an individual whose mother tongue is other than English and who does not learn English in the native environment but attends classes of English on a regular basis in the first language context.

In this study the attitudes of these students towards learning speaking skill were investigated.

The students have different attitudes towards this skill. There is a distinction between three types of attitudes: cognitive, emotional and behavioral.

### **Instrument**

In this study a questionnaire has been used. This questionnaire focused on the attitudes of EFL adult learners towards learning speaking skill. The items were partly adapted from the attitude questionnaire test employed in a study by Boonrangsri et al (2004).

Other items were taken from Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) designed by Gardner (1985). On the whole there were 45 items concerning language attitudes in terms of: behavioral, cognitive and emotional aspects of attitude. 15 items of this questionnaire related to behavioral aspects of attitude, 15 items related to cognitive

aspect of attitude and remaining 15 items related to emotional aspect of attitude. Overall 30 items were positive and 15 items were negative .The items were put in a 5-point Linkert scale .The numerical values of 5 , 4 , 3 , 2 , 1 were assigned to Strongly agree , Agree , Neither agree nor disagree and Strongly disagree, respectively .

**Procedure**

The required data was collected at the state university of Ilam , Iran .As mentioned earlier, the plan was to use learner attitude questionnaire . The total number of 70 questionnaire was handed to the participants . The participants were required to answer all the items of the questionnaire honestly, giving their own perceptions about their attitudes towards learning speaking skill in terms of behavioral, cognitive and emotional aspect of attitudes. At the end for the statistical analysis of the data SPSS were used.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Students' Attitudes towards Learning Speaking**

Table 1.Participants' Attitudes towards Learning Speaking .

Number	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
70	2	4	3/37	0/331	0/110

Results of descriptive analysis shows that the overall mean score of students' attitudes is (3/37) (SD=0/331).According to this mean ,positive or negative attitude of participants towards learning speaking were determined. In addition, the mean scores of the three aspects of attitudes towards English among the respondents differ. As seen in Table2, 3 and 4the mean score of Behavioral Aspect of Attitude (BAA) is 3/313, that of the Cognitive Aspect of Attitude (CAA) is 3/5, respectively. Yet, the mean score of responses regarding the Emotional Aspect of Attitude (EAA) is 3/566.This aspect of attitude received the highest mean score. According to these findings it is so clear that these participants have positive cognitive and emotional attitudes while they have negative behavioral attitudes towards speaking skill.

**Behavioral Aspect of Speaking Attitude**

Table 2 .Descriptive Statistics of Behavioral Aspect of Speaking Attitude

	Items of Behavioral aspect of speaking attitudes	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance
1	Speaking English anywhere makes me feel worried.	70	1	5	3	1/149	1/321
2	Studying English helps me to have good relationships with friends.	70	1	5	3	1/006	1/012
3	I like to give opinions during English lessons.	70	1	5	4	0/943	0/889
4	I am able to make myself pay attention during studying English.	70	1	5	4	1/014	1/029
5	When I hear a student in my class speaking English well, I like to practice speaking with him/her.	70	2	5	4	0/957	0/016
6	Studying English makes me have more confidence in expressing myself.	70	1	5	4	0/880	0/775
7	Studying English helps me to improve my personality.	70	1	5	3	1/161	1/349
8	I put off my English homework as much as possible.	70	1	5	2	0/967	0/936
9	I am not relaxed whenever I have to speak in my English class.	70	1	5	2	0/973	0/947
10	I feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other students.	70	1	5	2	1/186	1/406
11	I like to practice English the way native speakers do.	70	1	5	3	1/274	1/622
12	I wish I could have many English speaking friends.	70	1	5	5	1/072	1/149
13	When I miss the class, I never ask my friends or teachers for the homework on what has been taught.	70	1	5	4	1/007	1/014
14	I do not feel enthusiastic to come to class when the English is being thought.	70	1	5	2	1/133	1/284
15	I do not pay any attention when my English teacher is explaining the lesson.	7	1	5	2	0/98	0/965
	Behavioral Mean =3/133	0				2	

As shown in Table 4.4., the behavioral aspect of attitude towards learning speaking represents the lowest mean score (3/133) . That is , the participants have negative behavioral attitude and feel not relaxed whenever they have to speak in English class. One of the behavioral items of the questionnaire such as "I wish I have many English speaking friends " obtained the score rank (M=5 , SD =1/072 ) , that is , it is the highest mean score , while behavioral items with the lowest mean score are 8,9,10,14,15 and demonstrates

that they put off their English homework as much as possible , they are not relaxed whenever they have to speak in front of others , and feel embarrassed to speak . They do not enthusiastic to come to English class and do not pay any attention when English teacher is explaining the lesson .Thus they show negative behaviors in the English classes .

**Data Analysis**

The data collected through the questionnaire were converted to empirical values . For this purpose the numerical values of 5 , 4 , 3 , 2 ,1 were assigned to Strongly Agree , Agree , Neither Agree Nor Disagree , Disagree and Strongly Disagree , respectively .

The collected data was analyzed by the SPSS Program aiming to answer the research questions quantitatively. To answer the first research question, descriptive statistics was conducted to determine frequency, mean, variance and the standard deviation of the gathered data. Besides, for each of the aspects of the attitude (behavioral, cognitive, emotional) the frequency, the mean, the standard deviation are determined. Also for positive and negative attitude these statistical descriptions were determined.

**Cognitive Aspect of Language Attitude**

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Cognitive Aspect of Speaking Attitude

Items of Cognitive aspects of speaking attitude	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance
1 Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.	70	2	5	4	0/760	0/557
2 Being good at English will help me study other subjects well.	70	2	5	4	0/737	0/543
3 I have more knowledge and more understanding when studying English.	70	1	5	4	1/37	1/129
4 I like my English class so much; I look forward to studying more English in the future.	70	1	5	4/5	0/783	0/614
5 Studying English helps me getting new information in which I can link to my previous knowledge.	70	1	5	4	0/965	0/932
6 I cannot summarize the important points in the English subject content by myself.	70	1	5	2	1/24	1/048
7 Frankly, I study English just to pass the exams.	70	1	5	2	1/196	1/430
8 In my opinion, people who speak more than one language are very knowledgeable.	70	1	5	4	1/307	1/707
9 Studying English helps me communicate in English effectively.	70	1	5	4	1/000	1/000
10 I cannot apply the knowledge from English subject in my real life.	70	1	5	3	1/086	1/180
11 Studying English makes me able to create new thoughts.	70	1	5	4	1/132	1/280
12 I am able to think and analyze the content in English language.	70	1	5	4	1/094	1/197
13 I am not satisfied with my performance in the English subject.	70	1	5	3	1/046	1/094
14 In my opinion, English language is difficult and complicated to learn.	70	1	5	2	1/187	1/410
15 English subject has the content that covers many fields of knowledge.	70	1	5	4	1/265	1/599
Cognitive Mean = 3/5						

According to the table 3, the total mean score of cognitive aspect of attitude of Ilam university students towards learning speaking is (3/5). Thus , it can be concluded that on the whole the participants have positive cognitive attitudes towards learning speaking . One of the cognitive items of the questionnaire “ I like my English Classes so much ; I look forward to studying more English in the future” obtained the score rank (M=4/5 , SD=0/783) ,that is , its the highest mean score . Also it represents that the participants who agree with this item have a high positive cognitive attitude towards learning speaking . Some items of the questionnaire such as 6,7,10,13,14 obtained the lowest mean scores . That is the participants cannot summarize the important points in the English subject content by themselves . Some of them study English just to pass the exams. They cannot apply the knowledge from English in their real life. They didn't satisfy with their performance in the English classes, in their opinion English language is difficult and complicated to learn. Therefore these cognitive attitudes have negative impact on Ilam state university participants to learn English language , specially speaking skill.

Thus it can be conclude that those participants with these negative attitudes maybe cannot progress in speaking skill , and their speaking skill learning will blocked.

**Emotional Aspect of Speaking Attitude**

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Aspect of Speaking Attitude

	Items of Emotional aspect of speaking attitude	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance
1	I feel proud when studying English language.	70	1	5	4	1/196	1/430
2	I feel excited when I communicate in English with others.	70	1	5	4	0/935	0/875
3	I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class.	70	1	5	3	1/059	1/121
4	Studying foreign languages like English is enjoyable	70	1	5	4	0/892	0/795
5	To be inquisitive makes me study English well.	70	1	5	4	1/059	1/21
6	Studying English makes me have good emotions (feelings).	70	1	5	4	1/059	1/21
7	I prefer studying in my mother tongue rather than any other foreign language.	70	1	5	2	1/257	1/580
8	I enjoy doing activities in English.	70	1	5	4	1/053	1/110
9	I do not like studying English.	70	1	5	1/5	1/081	1/168
10	I wish I could speak English fluently.	70	1	5	5	1/211	1/467
11	I am interested in studying English.	70	1	5	5	0/858	0/736
12	Studying English subject makes me feel more confident.	70	1	5	4	1/166	1/360
13	To be honest, I really have little interest in my English class.	70	1	5	2	1/154	1/333
14	Knowing English is an important goal in my life.	70	2	5	4	0/663	0/440
15	I look forward to the time I spend in English class.	70	1	5	3	0/922	0/851
Emotional Mean = 3/566							

As shown in the Table 4, the emotional aspect represents the highest mean score of attitudes towards learning speaking skill (M= 3/566). According to some of the emotional items of the questionnaire used in this study such as 1,2,4,5,6,8,10,11,12,14 are positive emotional attitudes items . Those participants who agreed with these items , feel proud when studying English language , feel excited when communicating in English with others .For them studying foreign languages like English is enjoyable .Their inquisitive makes them studying English well and it makes them have good feelings . They enjoy doing English activities .Their wish is that they could speak English fluently .These participants are interested in studying English and feel more confidence when studying English subjects .In their opinion knowing English is an important goal in their life . These participants who were agreed with these items have positive emotional attitudes towards learning speaking .It is clear that positive attitude can improve participant 's English learning , in this case speaking skill .Also participants with positive emotional attitudes will become successful language learners .

### DISCUSSION

This section addresses the study's three research questions by first summarizing key results and then providing interpretations of these results.

What is the effect of EFL adult learner 's attitude towards learning speaking?

In the process of language learning one of the important factors that can strongly effect on it is learners attitude. Attitude concept is considered as an essential component in language learning. So, a positive attitude should be the umbrella of language learning. EFL teachers should respect and think about students' feelings, beliefs and behaviors before the cognitive abilities. In this study the effect of this factor on learning speaking among Ilam university students were investigated .The results showed that language learning process is influenced by students attitude. Thus it can be conclude that the learners attitudes have important effects on learners success or failure in language learning, that means positive attitudes of learners can guarantee successful language learning, while negative one delay or block the language learning process and learners fail in learning.

Which types of attitudes EFL adult learners have towards speaking (in terms of behavioral, cognitive and emotional aspects of attitude)? Their attitude is positive or negative one?

In the present study Ilam university students attitudes in terms of cognitive, behavioral and emotional aspects were investigated. Data analysis results revealed that The participants have negative behavioral attitude towards learning speaking while they have high positive emotional and cognitive attitudes towards this skill .Therefore it can state with confidence that positive attitudes can enhance language learning and negative one have bad effects on learning and block it .

Is positive attitude promote learning speaking, while negative attitude block it?

One learners attitudes towards learning a language or towards a language skill can be positive or negative .Positive attitudes are good and positive behaviors, emotions and thoughts towards a language while language

negative attitudes may be bad feelings or wrong understandings towards structure of a language, language teacher and people who speak with a language for instance. According to most of the research about attitude and based on the findings of this study it is so clear that language learners positive attitudes can help them to progress in the process but negative attitudes are very dangerous for language learning. So it is a good recommendation to find the ways to decrease negative attitudes and to change them to positive one.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the study (section 5.1) and then provides implications in determining the positive or negative attitude of EFL university students in Ilam (section 5.2), and recommendations for further research (section 5.3).

### **Summary**

The overall aim of the present research was to determine the Ilam State University student's attitude in terms of cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of attitude. In order to achieve this aim a language attitude questionnaire was handed to the total number of 70 participants. Results of data analysis show that these participants have negative behavioral attitude towards learning speaking skill, while they have positive cognitive and emotional attitude. It is clear that positive attitude towards learning a language, in this study English and specially learning speaking, can easily improve language learning process, while EFL learners negative attitude (emotional, cognitive and behavioral) is one of the main factors in blocking language learning.

According to data analysis and the findings of this research EFL learners of Ilam state university students pay little attention to do their English home works probably its reasons is that they are not very interested in studying English language or they are not familiar with content of home works. The participants of this study cannot speak easily in front of others and feel not relaxed. Maybe the reason for this behavior is that they have not enough speaking practice before the class or during the semester and their language knowledge is not sufficient. Some of them have no interest to come to English class. Possibly its reason is that they don't study English well and therefore have no preparation to attend the class so feel embarrassed to speak in English class.

Findings of cognitive aspect of speaking attitude show that participants of this study show positive cognitive attitude towards learning speaking although some of them ticked the negative cognitive items in the questionnaire. It can be concluded that on the whole the participants have positive cognitive attitudes towards learning speaking. Most of the participants like their English classes so much and they want to study English more in the future. This finding shows that they are very interested in studying a foreign language such as English, and their goal is that speak English fluently. Their high positive attitude towards learning English resulting in to improve their speaking skill and probably they will become good, skilled and successful language learners. On the other hand a few of them show negative cognitive attitude towards language learning process. It was difficult for them to summarize the content of English subjects. Maybe it's due to that their language knowledge is not sufficient to understand the content of English materials. Some of the students study English just to pass the exams. Probably it's due to that they have little interest to learn a foreign language like English or maybe just taking a university degree is the most important end for them. Their opinion is that English language is difficult and complicated to learn. So it can be concluded that these cognitive attitudes will have negative impact on the EFL learners in general, and on the Ilam state university students in specific.

The emotional aspect of attitude represents the highest mean score of attitudes, it means that Ilam state university students have a very positive emotional attitude towards learning speaking than cognitive aspect. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents showed positive emotional attitude. According to the study findings when study English language they feel proud, this feeling arouse because of the social status of those people who can speak in a foreign language like English, or due to that those who can speak a language other than their mother tongue are more educated and intelligent in the minds of people. In communication with others in English they feel excited and according to their opinion studying and doing English activities are enjoyable. Maybe its reason is that they are very interested in learning foreign languages such as English as this is obvious in other items of the questionnaire. The results indicate that they are very inquisitive and interested to study English well and it makes them have good feelings and feel more confidence when studying English subjects. It is so clear that in order to progress in foreign language learning two important factors are interest and inquisitive. Those learners with these factors will success in language learning and with the help of these they can improve all language skills.

### ***Implications***

The overall aim of this research was to determine the type of attitude of Ilam state university students towards learning speaking skill. The aim of determining positive or negative attitudes in terms of cognitive, behavioral and emotional aspects it will find the participants degree of success or failure in the process of language learning. Also it will specify that which factors or features of the learners make that they have positive or negative attitudes towards learning English and speaking skill. Determining the positive and negative attitudes of EFL learners make that specify different factors and reasons in language learning. With determining them it can be conclude that which one of the students will become successful language learners and which one will fail in language learning process. Also it can determined that which factors leads to positive or negative attitudes and how can reduce the negative attitude and promote positive attitudes of EFL learners.

### ***Recommendations***

Attitude is considered as one of the most important components of language learning. Regarding the learners' attitude towards English language learning, it is obvious that most of the learners in EFL contexts learn English as a compulsory subject. It is recommended that the teachers in EFL classrooms motivate learners towards English language learning by highlighting its importance. Teachers should be responsive to learners' attitudes and value their students' attitudes and preconceptions, as it can affect their success in foreign language learning. Briefly, EFL teachers should involve learners in activities which build up positive attitudes towards English language learning. Curriculum designers and policy makers should be aware of the influences of learners' attitudes on foreign language learning. The problems of learners' attitudes are rooted in the culture of Iran society. Curriculum designers who understand these problems, have a responsibility to share their knowledge of solutions associated with attitude, with educators who should use this knowledge in their classrooms to enhance learners' positive attitudes towards English language learning and reverse any negative attitudes that may harm learners' motivation.

Because the lack of research in this regard has led many English language teachers to assume that all learners can be treated with the same approach, it is recommended to replicate this study with larger sample sizes of university students. Thus educators should adopt methods which better fit with the target learners, to fill the gap in their attitudes towards English language. One of the main problems in teaching English in Iran universities and more specially in Ilam is that speaking skill were ignored and students have little chance to speak in English classes so most of them are not very well in speaking skill. Maybe one of its reasons is that course books that were taught in universities cannot enhance this skill or EFL teachers pay little attention to engage students to communicate in the class. Some of the students speak in front of others without any problem, but some delay this activity until learn enough knowledge, and some delay it forever and never speak foreign language. The respondents' obvious negative behavioral attitude towards English may lead to conclude that they are not well aware of the importance of English and learn it as a compulsory subject. Briefly, attitude concept is considered as an essential component in language learning. So, a positive attitude should be the umbrella of language learning. EFL teachers should respect and think about students' feelings, beliefs and behaviors before the cognitive abilities. English curriculum and classroom activities should involve affective aims according to the students' needs and their individual differences to build up positive attitudes towards English. It is so important to study learners' personalities. Cognitive performance can be achieved if the EFL learners possess positive attitudes and enjoy acquiring the target language. For that reason, the affective perspective, especially attitude, should be considered in language research.

Finally it is hoped that the attitude of Iranian students towards English language learning could be improved specially at universities. Also it is hoped that the present study may encourage further research in the area of EFL learners' attitudes towards English language learning.

The EFL teachers are recommended to create an encouraging atmosphere in the English classes to promote the students' positive attitudes towards English. They should also motivate the students to learn English, highlighting its importance. This can be achieved by implementing the appropriate methods and activities of teaching English effectively. Furthermore, they should integrate up-to-date materials and supplementary resources in addition to the English text books. This can help them capture students' attention to learn English successfully. Moreover, the EFL teachers should consider the role of gender perspective in language learning, exposing various approaches to improve the students' attitudes, motivation and language performance as well. They are also recommended to teach the English curriculum as it is supposed to be taught, focusing on the communicative approach. The EFL teachers must be aware that communicative approach encourages EFL learners to collaborate

and discuss their experiences and other issues regarding language learning. This can increase their attitude, enthusiasm and their motivation to acquire the language.

Furthermore, curriculum makers should review the content and the design of the curriculum to meet the needs and the interests of the students. They are recommended to consider that the EFL learners have different perceptions about learning other languages due to their differences regarding gender, specialization, year of study, etc. Thus, taking all these issues into account, the curriculum design should be reevaluated so that students could see something different concerning the activities, content, topics, teaching practices etc. and be more motivated to learn English.

Based on the outcome of the current study, the following suggestions identify possible areas for further research:

1. This study focused on Ilam state university students' attitudes who study English as a foreign language. Further investigation should focus on EFL students in other universities. It is a very useful suggestion to investigate high school and secondary student's attitudes towards English language learning. It can be done an interesting research with those EFL learners who study English in Ilam institutions.
2. Regarding the observed negative behavioral attitude towards English, the EFL teachers are recommended to create an encouraging atmosphere in the English classes to promote the students' positive attitudes towards English. They should also motivate the students to learn English, highlighting its importance. This can be achieved by implementing the appropriate methods and activities of teaching English effectively.
3. According to the positive cognitive and emotional attitude of participants it can be done an interview with new participants in future research and find the reasons of these positive attitudes. Also it can find the ways to promote these positive attitudes to enhance English learning.
4. The aim of this research was to determine the EFL university students' attitudes in terms of cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects. More research should focus on more and different aspects of attitude. In other words it can be investigated FL learners' attitudes based on other aspects and perspectives.
5. The present study was to investigate the EFL university students attitudes towards learning speaking skill. Further research to determine the EFL learners' attitudes towards other language skills (writing, listening and reading) and also language sub skills (pronunciation, stress) is worthwhile.
6. In the present research the attitudes of male and female students towards learning speaking were investigated, altogether, without gender separation. Hence, further research should elicit male and female attitudes, separately in order to find is there any attitudinal difference in terms of gender towards foreign language learning?
7. Although attitude is one of the main and most important factors in foreign language learning process like English, but it is worthwhile to determine the effects of other factors such as age, gender, anxiety, aptitude, intelligence, etc in future research.

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