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Second Language Learners' Behavioral, Cognitive, and Emotional Attitudes Toward the Language and Their Second Language Competencies

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to determine the respondents' attitudes toward English language learning and how these affect the level of their second language competencies utilizing a descriptive-correlational method of research. Three hundred eight five (385) respondents from the different public and private Senior High Schools answered a researcher-made questionnaire that underwent reliability testing and validation. The findings revealed that the respondents have positive behavioral, cognitive and emotional attitudes toward English language learning and they have good second language competencies in terms of reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. Thus, it was also found that positive behavioral, cognitive and emotional attitudes toward English language learning resulted to good level second language competencies of the senior high school students. Good attitudes and feelings are needed to raise the efficiency of the students in language learning classes. The result made the researcher suggest that language teachers may continuously enhance the positive attitudes and perceptions of the students toward the language to further improve their macro-skills.

INTRODUCTION

With the coming of the K-12 program, acquisition of four major skills are expected among learners especially the Senior High Schools who should be ready for work, business and tertiary education right after completion. These include information, media and technology skills; learning and innovation skills; life and career skills and communication skills (Department of Education, 2013). To ensure the development of communication skills in the K to 12 curriculum, the areas of language and communication are embedded. The language and communication curricula of K to 12 Program help learners understand that English language is a dynamic social process which responds to and reflects changing social conditions, and that English is inextricably involved with values, beliefs and ways of thinking about oneself and the world where one dwells. To this effect, the Senior High School language and communication curricula expect for the learners' development of listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing competencies (K to 12 Senior High School Core Curriculum, 2013). Hence, the second language competencies can only be achieved by the students if they will be equipped with the five macro-skills such as reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing.

Yet, the expectations brought to the learner by this new scheme are demanding to achieve. Helping the learners develop the second language competencies requires language teachers to create within the students their positive attitudes to English language learning. Having positive attitude towards learning a language is a good start to learn a language but before learning can begin, learners must be ready to learn, that is, their positive attitudes toward English language learning

in terms of behavioral, cognitive and most especially emotional may be contributory factors to be equipped with the different English language competencies. This is strengthened by what Eshghinejad (2016) stated in his study that attitude greatly influences students' English language performance. Similarly, Todor and Degi (2016) and Flyildirim and Ashton (2016) in separate studies confirmed that students' English language performance is greatly affected by their attitudes toward learning the language, the reason why those who are positive that learning the language could benefit them, usually develop better than those who negatively perceived English. This triggered the researcher to identify the attitudes of the students toward the language and how these affect their second language competencies.

Objectives

This study determined the respondents' attitude toward English language learning in terms of behavioral, cognitive and emotional as well as their level of the second language competencies in terms of reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. Also, this tested the significant relationship between respondents' attitudes toward second language learning to the respondents' second language competencies.

METHODOLOGY

This part presents the methodology the researcher employed in analyzing and interpreting the data about the variables in the study.

Research Design

The descriptive-correlational method of research was used in this study. According to Ariola (2016), descriptive

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correlational method provides an explanation of the extent of relationship between two or more variables. In this study, the relationships among the variables were examined. Descriptive research involves the description, recording, analysis and interpretation of students' level of second language competencies and their attitudes toward English Language learning. Correlational studies were designed to estimate the relationship between respondents' attitudes and their second language competencies.

Research Site

The study was conducted in the target public and private secondary high schools in the fourteen municipalities in the province of Oriental Mindoro. There were 13 private and 14 public secondary schools identified having the total population of 5099 Grade 12 students.

Participants

The participants were the selected Grade 12 Senior High School Students from Public and Private Secondary Schools in the Province of Oriental Mindoro for they will enter college soon wherein English subjects required students to have good second language competencies in the five areas such as reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing. Having equipped with these skills, they will communicate effectively in oral and written conversation. There were 13 private and 14 public secondary schools identified having the total population of 5099 Grade 12 students. Yet for the purpose of this study, 385 respondents as the exact number of respondents needed, were identified through G* Power Sampling method with an effect size of 0.22, power probability of 0.95, alpha level of 0.5. G* Power Analysis is an excellent piece of software for performing statistical power analysis. It is particularly useful for applied researchers who need to perform a power analysis as part of the research.

Instrumentation

The study utilized a researcher made questionnaire with two parts as the main data gathering instrument. This was conceptualized based on the ideas obtained from the books, journals and other related reading materials. To test the reliability of the instrument, the twenty (20) non-respondents of the study were asked to answer the questionnaire wherein results were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha. Upon ensuring the reliability of the instrument, the researcher personally administered the instrument to the respondents. The respondents were oriented on the objectives and the contents of the questionnaire.

The first part is composed of questions dealing with the respondents' attitude toward second language competencies which is divided into three parts such as behavioral, cognitive and emotional with ten (10) questions each. Questions in each category were patterned from the study of Eshghinejad (2016), the researcher sought the author's permission to use the questionnaire but minor revisions were made.

On the other hand, the second part is composed of five parts to assess the respondents' level of second language competencies in terms of reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing, having 9, 9, 7, 7 and 8 items respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Second Language Learners' Attitudes toward the Language

Based from the data, it can be perceived that the overall composite mean of 2.96 is described as agree which confirms that respondents have positive attitude toward English language learning in terms of behavioral. This means that students are aware on the good things that English learning can bring to them and they are positive that showing enthusiasm in the entire process can make them acquire the necessary competencies and skills. They treat English as an important subject to deal with, so all their actions reflect how interested and willing they are to study. This is in lined with what Murir and Rehman (2015) stated that a behavioral feature of the attitude is concerned with the actions and reactions of the learner in a particular situation.

The data also revealed that students has positive attitude toward English learning in terms of cognitive considering the computed overall composite mean of 3.12 which is described as agree. This shows that intellectually, students observed how learning English helps them improve their comprehension and understanding of almost all second language competencies. This is of relevance to what Soleimani and Hanafi (2013) stated that this aspect of attitude involves the beliefs of the language learners about the knowledge that they receive and their understanding in the process of language learning.

It was also proven that respondents have positive emotional attitude towards English as indicated in the overall composite mean of 3.06 which is described as agree. The result suggest that respondents have positive feelings toward studying English, they treat any issue regarding their English performance as tool for improvement and their emotions greatly influenced their perception towards English. This clearly proves Munir

Table 1: Attitudes Toward English Language Learning

	Private		Public		Over-all	
	CM	VI	CM	VI	CM	VI
Behavioral	2.98	A	2.94	A	2.96	A
Cognitive	3.11	A	3.14	A	3.12	A
Emotional	3.08	A	3.04	A	3.06	A

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 = Moderately Agree (MA); 1.00 – 1.49 = Disagree (D)

and Rehman (2015) citation of Guilherme’s (2007) idea that students’ outlooks and attitudes to language learning are highly influenced by their heart, feelings and emotions.

Second Language Competencies

The respondents’ level of second language competencies is presented in Table 2.

Results showed that Senior high school students are good in reading based on the computed overall composite mean of 2.93. This indicated that the respondents acquired the necessary competencies needed in reading but there is still a need for more interventions for them to be excellent in this area. Language teachers still need to continue nurturing students’ competencies on this area to achieve mastery and excellence.

As manifested in the overall composite mean of 2.88, it is proven that respondents are good when it comes to writing. They are able to express their ideas, understand different forms of writing and familiar with the different competencies needed for producing a well-written text. Though they are proven to be good in reading, it means that there are still areas in this macro-skill needed to be mastered by the students. Language teachers still need to identify those lapses so teaching reading will be fitted to the needs of the learners. This verifies the notion of Masjhari (2011) that writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not

only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgmental elements.

In terms of writing, it is confirmed that respondents are good in speaking based on the overall composite mean of 2.93. Being good means that they can express their ideas in varied communicative situations with the information of the different factors to consider in speaking.

The overall composite mean of 3.04 confirmed the level of respondents in listening as good which means that respondents are familiar, equipped and knows how to apply the competencies, strategies and approaches on how to be an effective listener. This draws support to what Rost (2002) explained that to listen well, listeners must have the ability to decode the message, the ability to apply a variety of strategies and interactive processes to make meaning, and the ability to respond to what is said in a variety of ways, depending on the purpose of the communication.

Also, it is revealed that respondents have good viewing skills based on the overall composite mean of 2.98. They have the ability to construct meaning from images and from whatever perceived by their sense of sight which means that the respondents can fully meet the expectations from them as 21st century learner. This is of relevance to Gabinete’s (2016) call to continuously support schools in promoting viewing comprehension in basic education to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Table 2: Level of Second Language Competencies

	Private		Public		Over-all	
	CM	VI	CM	VI	CM	VI
Reading	2.95	G	2.91	G	2.93	G
Writing	2.89	G	2.87	G	2.88	G
Speaking	2.99	G	2.87	G	2.93	G
Listening	3.07	G	3.01	G	3.04	G
Viewing	3.02	G	2.94	G	2.98	G

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Very Good (VG); 2.50 – 3.49 = Good (G); 1.50 – 2.49 = Satisfactory (S); 1.00 – 1.49 = Low (L)

Table 3: Relationship between Attitude toward English Language Learning and Level of Second Language Competencies

	Behavioral			Cognitive			Emotional		
	r-value	p-value	I	r-value	p-value	I	r-value	p-value	I
Reading	.556**	0.000	HS	.655**	0.000	HS	.716**	0.000	HS
Writing	.599**	0.000	HS	.653**	0.000	HS	.711**	0.000	HS
Speaking	.624**	0.000	HS	.588**	0.000	HS	.573**	0.000	HS
Listening	.519**	0.000	HS	.502**	0.000	HS	.545**	0.000	HS
Viewing	.559**	0.000	HS	.577**	0.000	HS	.561**	0.000	HS

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01; HS = Highly Significant

Table 3 presents the relationship between attitude toward English Language Learning and level of second language competencies as to reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. It was observed that the computed r-values indicate a moderate positive correlation and the resulted p-values were less than 0.01 alpha level. Thus,

the null hypothesis is rejected and implies that there was a significant relationship exists between attitudes towards English language learning and the second language competencies. The result also reveals that positive cognitive, behavioral and emotional attitude toward English language learning resulted to high level of second

language competencies. Good attitudes and feelings are needed to raise the efficiency of the students in language learning class. This is in lined with the findings in separate researches of Orojlu and Vahedi (2011), Todor and Degi (2016) and Elyildirim and Ashton (2014) that language learners' attitude towards the language greatly influence the language process and outcomes. Moreover, Munir and Rehman (2015) mentioned that the association between attitudes and learning a language has been proved through number of studies while dealing with language learning, attitude is considered one of essential features to affect the performance.

CONCLUSION

The respondents were proven to have positive attitudes towards second language learning and with good second language competencies. Results also showed that having positive attitudes towards the language is significant in the second language skills development of the students. Thus, the researcher suggested that language teachers may continuously enhance the positive attitudes and perceptions of the students toward the language since it was proven that good attitudes and feelings affect the students' second language competencies.

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