



Assessing students' attitudes towards English language at Nepali and English medium higher secondary schools

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Abstract

The main objective of this research article is to assess the XI-Standard management students' attitudes towards English language at Nepali and English Medium Higher Secondary Schools. A cross-sectional survey design, which consisted of five-point Likert-type twenty attitude measuring statement items, was employed to carry out the research. The statement items were administered to the mass of 722 Nepali medium students at four Higher Secondary Schools, and 1119 English medium students at eight Higher Secondary Schools situated in Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City, Dang, Nepal in the Academic Year 2017-2018. The simple random sampling technique was used to select 440 students out of 1841 who comprised the population for the study. The collected data were statistically analyzed by using SPSS version 20. Median and Mode of the most of the statement items were greater than 3. Similarly, the percents of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" were greater than those of "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree" and "Undecided". It showed the students' positive attitudes towards English language within each school. The Mann-Whitney U Test showed that there was no statistically significant difference (two-tailed sig. =.523) between the two types of schools. It was concluded that the students had positive attitudes towards English language at both types of schools.

Keywords: attitudes, dang, English language, English medium, Nepali medium

1. Introduction

English language has been charming Nepalese people for a long time. Students are highly attracted towards learning English language. It has gained a prestigious place and high position in Nepal. Almost all people consider that knowledge of English language can open several job opportunities. It has become a global language of communication, science, literature, philosophy, trade and diplomacy. It is the most widely taught foreign language in Nepal. Many Nepalese students commence learning English from their early period at primary schools or even pre-schools. It is a bitter reality that financially sound parents send their children to the English medium schools, whereas the financially weak parents send their children to the Nepali medium schools. Nowadays even financially weak parents try to manage, by working hard and cutting other expenses, try to send their children to the English medium schools because they think that English must be known for progress, personality development and career advancement. The students of the English medium schools find English easy, but those of the Nepali medium students find it difficult to read, write and speak. It is so because students study all the subjects in English language except a Nepali subject at the English medium schools, but students at Nepali medium schools study all subjects in the Nepali medium except an English subject. English has normally been taught as a compulsory subject at the Higher Secondary level in the management stream in Nepal.

Different students have different attitudes towards English language. Some students are highly motivated towards learning English, whereas some are found to be indifferent to

English language despite the fact that they know English is important. English seems to be monotonous, tough, crazy and puzzling for weak students. Some students seem to have a strong yearning to study English language because they assume that knowledge of English offers chances for progress in their professional lives. They think that they will find a better job if they can read and write well in English language. But several weak students reckon that it is the language which has blocked their progress in the field of attaining higher education because they can pass their other subjects but fail the English subject in the examination.

The researcher adopted a cross-sectional survey design which consisted of five-point Likert-type twenty statement items to assess the students' attitudes towards English language.

This research study is new because nobody has carried out such a study to assess the XI-Standard management students' attitude towards English language at Nepali medium and English medium Higher Secondary Schools situated in Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City, Dang District. Several students from other districts such as Rukum, Rolpa, Salyan, Pyuthan and Argakhachi come to study here. The schools of this area cover students having different castes, religions, cultures, political backgrounds and local languages. This study is significant because it would provide the readers, parents and teachers or other researchers with the information about the Nepali medium and English medium students' general attitudes towards English language.

1.1 Null Hypotheses of the Research Study

The null hypotheses of the research study were:

1. There is no statistically significant difference in the distribution of attitudes of students towards English language across categories of campus type.
2. There is no statistically significant difference in the distribution of attitudes of students towards English language across categories of sex within each campus type.

1.2 Objectives of the Research Study

The objectives of the research objectives were

1. To examine the XI- Standard management students' attitudes towards English language at the Nepali medium schools and the English medium schools.
2. To find out if there is any significant relationship between the students' campus type and their attitudes towards English language.
3. To determine if there is any significant relationship between the students' sex and their attitudes towards English language within each campus type

2. Literature Review

Literature review encompasses English language in Nepal, language attitudes, and some studies on language attitudes.

2.1 English Language in Nepal

English is a West Germanic language that was first spoken in Anglo-Saxon England in the early Middle Ages. English has become the most important language around the world. There are more people who need to learn this language in order to improve their professional and academic lives. English has been used as the first language in some countries such as United States of America, Britain, Canada etc. It has been used as the second language in Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland etc. It has been used as a foreign language in Nepal.

Shrestha (1983 & 2008) ^[12] considers that English is not a second language in Nepal. It is not an official language or a language of group identification. However, it has been used as a medium of instruction at many private schools, colleges and universities.

In recent days, English has taken a new dimension in the higher learning institutions of Nepal. Private schools and universities have begun offering several courses in English whereas state-owned higher education schools and colleges deliver education in Nepali medium. The trend of sending children to English medium schools and or colleges has begun as a English mania today in Nepal. Shrestha (2008) ^[12] mentioned that 28.3 % of secondary schools are privately owned and the figure in higher education is considerably higher (83.1 %).

2.2 Language Attitudes

Language attitudes are the feelings people have about their own language varieties or language varieties of others. Richards and Schmidt (2002) ^[11] remark that language attitudes are the attitudes which speakers of "different languages or language varieties have towards each other's languages or to their own language" (p.297). Attitudes are crucial in language growth or decay, restoration or destruction. From a practical perspective, our language

attitudes are important because they affect our behavior. From a theoretical perspective, language attitudes are important because they show how people connect particular aspects of language to social meanings.

Many studies on language attitudes have revealed that there is a strong relationship between attitude and achievement. The research studies carried out by Hough and Piper (1982) ^[7], Simpson and Oliver (1990) ^[14] and Visser (2008) ^[16] reflect the prominent relation between the students' attitudes and their achievement in examination and speaking performance. Fakeye (2010) ^[5] and Visser (2008) ^[16] assume attitude as a vital factor that influences language performance. Similarly, Hohenthal (2003) ^[6] and Kara (2009) ^[6] assert that learners' attitudes, apart from opinions and beliefs, towards learning strongly affect their learning behaviors and consequently on their performance. They mean to state that learners' attitudes towards learning strongly affect their learning behaviors. In the simple words, language attitudes may have an effect on second language or foreign language learning.

2.3 Studies on Language Attitudes

Several research studies revealed students' positive attitudes towards learning English language. The research studies carried out by Mohd Sallehudin (1994) ^[10] with 137 University Kebangsaan Malaysia English non-major undergraduates, Kaharan (2007) ^[8] with 190 eighth grade students of a private primary school in Adana, Turkey, Chalak and Kassaian (2010) ^[3] with 108 English translation major students at Islamic Azad University, Iran, Yang (2012) ^[17] with 20 University Malaya Master students, Al Mamun, Rahman, Rahman, and Hossain (2012) ^[1] with 79 randomly selected non-major English undergraduate students from Khulna University, Bangladesh, Bobkina and Fernandez de (2012) ^[2] with 72 EFL engineering students at the Technical University in Madrid, Chew (2013) ^[4] with 111 students at the University of Malaya, China and Tahaineh & Daana (2013) ^[15] with 184 Jordanian EFL female undergraduates depicted that students had positive attitudes towards English.

3. Methodology

Methodology involves research design, population, sampling design, sample size, nature and sources of data, data collection technique, and processing and analysis of data.

3.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was used to carry out the study. In this research design, Students' campus and sex were assumed to be the independent variables, whereas students' attitudes towards English language were taken as dependent variables.

3.2 Population / Universe

The population of the study consisted of 1841 XI- Standard management students at 12 Higher Secondary Schools in Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City, Dang District of Nepal in the Academic Year 2017-2018.

3.3 Sampling Design and Sample Size

The researcher followed the simple random sampling technique and selected 440 students through the lottery

method.

3.3.1 Projection of the Sample Size by School

4 Nepali medium higher Secondary schools and 8 private English medium higher secondary schools that were situated in Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City, Dang formed the sample size.

3.3.2 Projection of the Sample Size by Sex and Age

There were 69 male and 79 female students aged between 16-19 years at the Nepali Medium schools as a whole. Similarly, there were 157 male and 135 female students aged between 16-18 years at the English Medium schools as a whole.

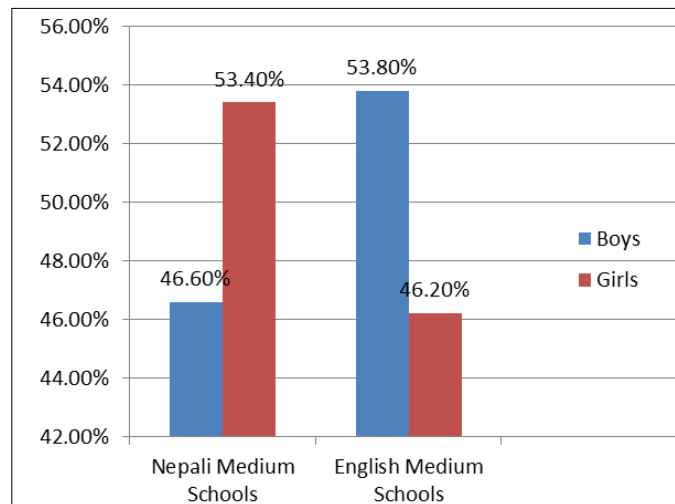


Fig 1: Percent of Students by Sex

This figure shows that the percent of boys students of the Nepali medium schools was almost same as the percent of the girls of the English medium schools and vice versa in the research sample.

3.4 Nature and Source of Data

The researcher employed ordinal scale data to assess students' attitudes towards English language through the use of five-point Likert-type statement items with Strongly Agree (SA) =5, Agree (A) = 4, Undecided (UD) = 3, Disagree (D) =2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The primary source of data was questionnaire in the form of the statements. The secondary source of data included books, journal articles, web-sites etc.

3.5 Data Collection Technique

The modified survey questionnaire was adapted from Gardner's (1985) 'Attitude Motivation Test Battery' (AMTB). The underlying principle of selecting Gardner's AMTB is its established validity and reliability. There were 20 statement items based on attitudes. The students were asked to provide their attitudes on the statements / questions regarding their

attitudes towards English language.

3.6 Processing and Analysis of Data

The researcher designed a series of Likert-type question items to measure students' attitudes towards English language. Being the Liker-type data or ordinal data, it was appropriate to use median, mode percentage scores to describe the scale. All the data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20 version. The researcher used the median, mode and percent scores to examine the students' attitudes towards English language. The Researcher employed the Independent Samples Kruskal-Wallis H Test to assess whether the distribution of the attitude was the same across categories of campus and religion or not. Similarly, the Mann-Whitney U Test was employed to assess whether the distribution of the attitudes was the same across categories of sex.

4. Validity of the instruments

Validity refers to the degree to which the measuring instrument measures what it is intended to measure. To appraise the validity of the instruments, the researcher received opinions and judgments from subject experts, teachers and authorities.

5. Reliability of the Instruments

The Cronbach's alpha was used to check the reliability of the survey instruments. The reliability of the pilot study questionnaire based on the attitudes of forty-four students was found to be.949 that was very highly reliable. The internal consistency of the questionnaire items of the research study at the Nepali medium schools as a whole was 0.949 and that at the English medium schools as a whole was.892. It indicated the instrument to be highly reliable in measuring students' attitudes towards English language.

6. Findings and Discussion

The findings were interpreted based on the median, mode, percent scores and the Mann-Whitney U Test of the statement items.

6.1 Median

Median is the point that divides the distribution in half. The median of most of the individual statement must be greater than 3 to show the students' positive attitudes towards English language.

6.2 Mode

Mode is a statistical term that refers to the most frequently occurring number found in a set of numbers or observations. The mode of most of the individual statements must be greater than 3 to show the students' positive attitudes towards English language.

Table 1: Median and Mode of the Statement Items Responded by 148 Students at the Nepali Medium Schools as a Whole.

S.N.	Attitude Measuring Statement Items	Median	Mode	Attitude Level Based on Median
1.	You would like to speak in English.	5	5	SA
2.	You would like to read English books, English magazines, English newspapers etc.	4	5	A

3.	You would like to listen to English news, English songs, English speeches etc.	4	4	A
4.	You would like to watch English movies and English programmes.	4	4	A
5.	You would like to write essays, stories, poems etc. in English.	4	5	A
6.	When someone speaks English, You think he/ she is educated.	4.5	5	SA
7.	When someone speaks English, it creates a good impression for him / her.	5	5	SA
8.	English is important because it is an international language of communication.	4.5	5	SA
9.	You think that learning English well will open more job opportunities for You.	3	3	UD
10.	Studying English can be important for you because you will need it for your future career advancement.	4	4	A
11.	English is important to you because it helps you understand the cultures, values, norms and traditions of foreign countries.	4	4	A
12.	Studying English enables you to transfer your knowledge to other people for giving directions to tourists, sharing new information etc.	4	4	A
13.	English is important because most of the books of science and technology are written in English.	5	5	SA
14.	Knowledge of English language develops confidence in you to understand other subjects as well.	3	4	UD
15.	English is an easy language to read.	4	4	A
16.	English is an easy language to speak or pronounce the words.	2	2	D
17.	English words are easier to write than Nepali words.	4	4	A
18.	English grammar is easier than Nepali language grammar.	4	4	A
19.	English as well as Nepali language should be used in advertisements, public signs, maps etc.	3	4	UD
20.	All official documents should be in both Nepali and English language.	4	4	A
Results		4	4	Agree

This table shows that median of every statement except 9, 14, 16 & 19 was greater than 3. Similarly, the mode of every statement except 9 and 16 was greater than 3. Both median and mode values of the most of the questions were greater than 3. They indicate students' positive attitudes towards English language.

6.3 Percent analysis of the students' attitudes towards English at the Nepali medium schools

A percent is a number or ratio expressed as a fraction of 100. The percentage can be used to describe a change and to make comparison. If the percents of "Agree" and / or "Strongly Agree" are greater than those of "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree" and "Undecided", they indicate students' positive attitudes towards English language.

Table 2: Levels of Agreement with Percents

Attitude Level	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8	Q.9	Q.10
SD	9.5%	10.8%	1.4%	15.5%	8.8%	8.8%	1.4%	8.8%	2.7%	14.2%
D	10.8%	9.5%	5.4%	10.8%	19.6%	2.7%	9.5%	11.5%	11.5%	6.1%
UD	8.8%	10.1%	2.0%	9.5%	2.0%	13.5%	7.4%	9.5%	43.2%	6.1%
A	9.5%	29.7%	50.0%	34.5%	27.7%	25.0%	28.4%	20.3%	31.8%	44.6%
SA	61.5%	39.9%	41.2%	29.7%	41.9%	50.0%	53.4%	50.0%	10.8%	29.1%
Attitude Level	Q.11	Q.12	Q.13	Q.14	Q.15	Q.16	Q.17	Q.18	Q.19	Q.20
SD	10.1%	10.8%	0.0%	29.7%	10.1%	2.7%	11.5%	10.8%	10.1%	14.9%
D	10.8%	9.5%	10.1%	18.9%	20.3%	54.7%	19.6%	10.1%	25.0%	16.2%
UD	4.7%	20.3%	0.0%	9.5%	0.0%	12.2%	9.5%	19.6%	20.3%	8.8%
A	50.7%	44.6%	26.4%	35.1%	44.6%	27.0%	49.3%	30.4%	31.8%	53.4%
SA	23.6%	14.9%	63.5%	6.8%	25.0%	3.4%	10.1%	29.1%	12.8%	6.8%

The Table No.2 shows that percents of either "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" were greater than those of "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree" and "Undecided" in the statements

except Question No. 16. This indicates the students' positive attitudes towards English language.

Table 3: Median and Mode of the Statement Items Responded by 292 Students at the English Medium Schools as a Whole.

S.N.	Attitude Measuring Statement Items	Median	Mode	Attitude Level Based on Median
1.	You would like to speak in English.	5	5	SA
2.	You would like to read English books, English magazines, English newspapers etc.	4	5	A
3.	You would like to listen to English news, English songs, English speeches etc.	4	4	A
4.	You would like to watch English movies and English programmes.	4	4	A
5.	You would like to write essays, stories, poems etc. in English.	4	5	A
6.	When someone speaks English, You think he/ she is educated.	5	5	SA
7.	When someone speaks English, it creates a good impression for him / her.	5	5	SA
8.	English is important because it is an international language of communication.	5	5	SA
9.	You think that learning English well will open more job opportunities for You.	4	4	A

10.	Studying English can be important for you because you will need it for your future career advancement.	4	5	A
11.	English is important to you because it helps you understand the cultures, values, norms and traditions of foreign countries.	4	4	A
12.	Studying English enables you to transfer your knowledge to other people for giving directions to tourists, sharing new information etc.	4	4	A
13.	English is important because most of the books of science and technology are written in English.	4.5	5	SA
14.	Knowledge of English language develops confidence in you to understand other subjects as well.	3	4	UD
15.	English is an easy language to read.	4	4	A
16.	English is an easy language to speak or pronounce the words.	3	4	UD
17.	English words are easier to write than Nepali words.	4	4	A
18.	English grammar is easier than Nepali language grammar.	4	4	A
19.	English as well as Nepali language should be used in advertisements, public signs, maps etc.	3	4	UD
20.	All official documents should be in both Nepali and English language.	4	4	A
Result		4	4	Agree

This table shows that median of every statement except 14, 16 & 19 was greater than 3. Similarly, the mode of every statement except 9 and 16 was greater than 3. Both median and mode values of the most of the questions were greater than 3. They indicate students' positive attitudes towards English language.

6.4 Percent Analysis of the Students' Attitudes towards English at the English Medium Schools

If the percents of "Agree" and / or "Strongly Agree" are greater than those of "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree" and "Undecided", they indicate students' positive attitudes towards English language.

Table 4: Levels of Agreement with Percents

Attitude Level	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8	Q.9	Q.10
SD	10.3%	10.3%	1.0%	15.4%	9.9%	2.4%	4.5%	9.6%	4.5%	18.5%
D	10.3%	10.3%	5.8%	10.3%	19.5%	3.4%	8.2%	10.3%	10.3%	9.9%
UD	8.2%	10.3%	1.4%	10.3%	1.4%	11.6%	5.5%	9.9%	32.2%	10.3%
A	9.9%	29.8%	49.0%	34.2%	21.2%	26.7%	28.1%	19.9%	38.0%	13.0%
SA	61.3%	39.4%	42.8%	29.8%	47.9%	55.8%	53.8%	50.3%	15.1%	48.3%
Attitude Level	Q.11	Q.12	Q.13	Q.14	Q.15	Q.16	Q.17	Q.18	Q.19	Q.20
SD	10.3%	10.3%	0.0%	30.1%	9.6%	6.5%	11.0%	10.6%	10.3%	16.1%
D	10.3%	10.3%	18.2%	18.2%	20.5%	29.5%	19.9%	9.9%	25.7%	17.8%
UD	4.5%	20.2%	0.0%	9.2%	0.0%	17.8%	9.9%	19.9%	20.2%	9.2%
A	51.4%	44.5%	31.8%	35.3%	44.5%	41.1%	49.0%	30.8%	31.5%	48.3%
SA	23.6%	14.7%	50.0%	7.2%	25.3%	5.1%	10.3%	28.8%	12.3%	8.6%

The Table No.4 shows that percents of either "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" were greater than those of "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree" and "Undecided" in the statements. This indicates the students' positive attitudes towards English language.

7. Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test

The Mann-Whitney U Test is the nonparametric test selected as the alternative to the Independent Samples T Test. The Mann-Whitney U test uses the data measured at the ordinal level. This test is employed to determine if there are statistically significant differences between two groups. In this study, boy students and girl students (Sex) or the school type stood for two independent samples or variables or Groups; whereas the attitude functioned as a dependent variable.

Table 5: Assessing Attitudes between the Boys and Girls at Nepali Medium Schools as a Whole Hypothesis Test Summary

Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The distribution of attitudes of the students towards English language is the same across categories of Sex.	Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.596	Retain the null hypothesis

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

This table shows that the probability figure marked as Sig (2-tailed) in the table was .536 which was larger than 0.05. It implies that the groups of the boys and the girls had the similar attitudes towards English language. This test hints at the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Table 6: Assessing Attitudes between the Boys and Girls at English Medium Schools as a Whole Hypothesis Test Summary

Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The distribution of attitudes of the students towards English language is the same across categories of Sex.	Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.327	Retain the null hypothesis

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

This table shows that the probability figure marked as Sig (2-tailed) in the table was .779 which was larger than 0.05. It implies that the groups of the boys and the girls had the similar attitudes towards English language. This test hints at the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Table 7: Nepali Medium Schools and English Medium Schools as Two Independent Groups Hypothesis Test Summary

Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The distribution of attitudes of the students towards English language is the same across categories of campus type.	Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.523	Retain the null hypothesis

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

This table shows that the probability figure marked as Sig (2-tailed) in the table was .488 which was larger than 0.05. It implies that the boys and the girls of both campus types had the similar attitudes towards English language. This test hints at the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

7. Conclusion

Median and Mode of the most of statements are greater than 3 and the percents of either "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" were greater than those of "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree" and "Undecided". This showed the students' positive attitudes towards English language. Hypothesis Testing Tools Mann-Whitney U Test shows that the distribution of the attitudes of the students towards English language was the same across categories of sex (Sig.=.596) at Nepali Medium Schools and that was (Sig.327) at English Medium Schools. The Mann-Whitney U Test further shows that there was no statistically significant difference between the Nepali Medium schools and the English medium schools (Sig.=.523) on the attitudes of the students towards English language.

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