

Quantifying the English Language Attitude and Classroom Engagement Levels Among Humanities and Social Sciences Students

ABSTRACT

Aims: To determine the correlation between the perceived attitude of Humanities and Social Sciences (Senior High School) students towards the use of the English language and its impact on their classroom engagement.

Study design: This study implemented a quantitative approach to gather statistical data between the independent variable (English language attitude) and the dependent variable (classroom engagement levels).

Place and Duration of Study: This study was conducted in Mapua Malayan Colleges Mindanao (Senior High School Department), Davao City, Philippines, from October 2023 to December 2023.

Methodology: The study primarily utilized a correlational research design. Adapted questionnaires that assessed the students' perceived English language attitude and classroom engagement levels were deployed to 150 respondents from the Humanities and Social Sciences track.

Results: Results show a direct correlation between the Humanities and Social Sciences students' English language attitude (mean=3.95) and classroom engagement levels (mean=4.09).

Conclusion: The study clearly found that Humanities and Social Sciences students' positive attitude towards the English language reflect towards their high participation levels within the classroom setting.

Keywords: English, classroom, engagement, HUMSS, language attitude, quantitative

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language significantly stands as the most prominent language used for communication across the globe, being so widespread geographically that it is recognized to be the universal language of the world [1]. As a student, learning to speak in English is important due to its frequent usage in academic conversations. Being well-versed in speaking English is also deemed as an indication of one's intellectual capabilities, an ideology that tends to undermine those who are not fluent

English speakers [2]. This can be a challenging thing for a lot of students who don't find themselves comfortable expressing their thoughts and ideas in class through the use of the English language, thus the fear of being regarded as ineffective English speakers can lead to hesitance of engaging in classroom discussions [3]. However, those students who can articulate themselves well in eloquent English speech may take classroom discussions as a chance to be expressive of their ideas. This comfortability in the spoken English language can determine the level of class engagement that a student partakes in.

Analyzing the global scope of the problem, study findings in Pontianak, Indonesia, states that students are challenged by lack of self-confidence and linguistic problems involving grammar (22.16%) and pronunciation (16.25%) in speaking English for academic conversations [4]. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, students have confirmed that committing verbal mistakes when speaking in English raise their fear of being made fun of [5]. This can create a linguistic insecurity that may put a barrier to the expression of their ideas in classroom discussions. A descriptive-correlational study conducted year 2019 in Davao Del Norte found that students demonstrate low levels of proficiency surrounding English comprehension, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation [6]. Low English proficiency may be an issue as students face limitations in communicating with other students and establishing a strong engagement to English-related academic subjects.

Failing to recognize language-use as a factor in a student's motivation to take part in their classes could deteriorate the quality and efficiency of classroom discussions. While various studies have investigated the English reading-and-writing proficiency skills of students among many educational institutions, focusing upon how the English language attitude of HUMSS students correlates to their classroom engagement particularly in the educational institution of Mapua Malayan Colleges Mindanao, is an area that is yet to be ventured. Ultimately, the overall purpose of this research is to examine the general attitude of HUMSS students on the English language and to determine whether it influences the participation they exemplify within classroom settings.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a correlational research design, a non-experimental method that allows statistical data to gather and measure the relative degrees between the associated variables [7]. This research design enabled to determine an existing relationship present between the HUMSS students' English language attitude and overall classroom engagement. The research gathered a total number of 150 respondents, all of whom were Humanities and Social Sciences students enrolled within the senior high school department of the university. The respondents were required to complete the ¹ESAQ and ²SESQ questionnaires: the ¹*English-Speaking Attitude Questionnaire* (adapted from a previous study conducted by Canceran & Temporal in 2018) aimed to identify how students felt towards the application of the English language across different contexts, while the ²*Student Engagement in Schools Questionnaire* (adapted from a previous study conducted by [8] Hart et al., in 2011) sought to analyze student participation within classroom set-ups divided into three indicators; *Affective Learning Engagement* focusing on their personal interest to engage [9], *Behavioral Learning Engagement* focusing on their observable manners such as hand-raising [10], and *Cognitive Learning Engagement* focusing on their intention to apply learnings into real-life contexts [11]. The questionnaires were based on a Likert-scale system that ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Ultimately, the survey results' interpretation followed the standard mean interpretation table:

TABLE 1
(Mean Interpretation Table)

Rating Scale	Description	Interpretation
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4.21 – 5.00	Very High	Students strongly express very positive levels that indicate strong approval
3.41 – 4.20	High	Students express positive levels that indicate a show of approval
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate	Students neither directly indicate nor deny approval showing neutral levels
1.81 – 2.60	Low	Students express low levels of approval
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low	Students strongly express very low levels that indicate weak approval

TABLE 1: *This table served as the basis for interpreting the data gathered through the questionnaires.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2
(English Language Attitude of HUMSS Students)

Variable	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation
1. You are anxious about being made fun of when you make mistakes in English.	3.33	1.084	Moderate	Students neither directly indicate nor deny approval, showing neutral levels.
2. You enjoy speaking in English. approval.	4.10	0.857	High	Students express positive levels that indicate
3. English allows you to be more detailed and descriptive with sharing ideas to the class.	4.10	0.925	High	Students express positive levels that indicate approval.

4. You understand the teacher's lessons more if they discuss in English.	4.20	0.827	High	Students express positive levels that indicate approval.
5. Being able to speak English accomplishes a feeling of success.	4.00	0.886	High	Students express positive levels that indicate approval.
OVERALL express positive levels that indicate	3.95	0.916	High	Students approval.

TABLE 2: *This table shows the results of the adapted English-Speaking Attitude Questionnaire (ESAQ).

In assessing the English language attitude of HUMSS students, the results show that while students display moderate or neutral levels of anxiety towards English, gathering an average mean of 3.33, they are more likely to have a preference towards utilizing it for its academic purposes. Students admit to having a better comprehension of the lessons if their teachers use English as a mode of communication for classroom discussions, showcasing a mean of 4.20 (*High*). In a statement that prompts their perceived enjoyment in the use of English as a language itself, HUMSS students also express high levels of approval (4.10). Overall, the results dictate that HUMSS students appear to demonstrate a generally positive attitude towards the English language.

Table 3

(Classroom Engagement Levels of HUMSS Students)

Variable	Mean	SD	Verbal Description	Interpretation
1. <i>Affective Learning Engagement</i>	4.03	0.5968	High	Students express positive levels that indicate approval
2. <i>Behavioral Learning Engagement</i>	4.04	0.6663	High	Students express positive levels that indicate approval
3. <i>Cognitive Learning</i>	4.21	0.5721	Very High	Students strongly express positive

Engagement

levels that indicate very strong approval

OVERALL	4.09	0.5355	High	Students express positive levels that indicate approval.
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TABLE 3: *This table shows the results of the adapted Student Engagement in Schools Questionnaire (SESQ).

The engagement levels among HUMSS students are measured and categorized into three main variables, each dedicated towards specific contexts of engagement. The Affective Learning Engagement shows an average mean of 4.03 (High). The Behavioral Learning Engagement gathered 4.04 (High). The Cognitive Learning Engagement, with an average mean of 4.21 (Very High), displayed the highest results among the three. The overall results reveal that HUMSS students are very engaged in various aspects within their classroom environment.

The results displaying the high levels of Affective Learning Engagement among HUMSS students, suggesting how personal interest greatly impacts learning, thus its affectivity. The Behavioral Learning Engagement results, pertaining to the observable actions exhibited by students, are aligned with the notion proposed by Boheim et al., (2020), in which engaged classroom behavior reflects positively on overall academic achievement. The results of the Cognitive Learning Engagement revealed the highest levels among the three indicators, in which the researchers assessed how the respondents interrelate their classroom learnings to real-life situations. This is comparable to Tucker's study (2019) which presented that engaged students have the capability to purposefully apply and contextualize classroom discussions to the demands of the outside world.

Table 4

(Correlation Analysis Between HUMSS Students' English Language Attitude and Classroom Engagement)

Classroom Engagement Levels				
	r	P-value	Decision on Significance	Decision on H₀
English Language Attitude	.414	.000	Significant	Reject H ₀

TABLE 4: *This table presents the correlation analysis between the two previously presented tables.

The corresponding results with an r-value of .414 and P-value of .000 concludes that there is a significant relationship between the English language attitude of HUMSS students and their expressed levels of classroom engagement. This shows that language attitude evidently influences the classroom engagement levels of HUMSS students at a directly proportional rate. The high positivity exemplified in their perceived attitude towards the English language constitutes to the equally high results reflected in their classroom engagement levels. This unveils a significant correlation that upholds pre-existing studies and literatures, as well as the common social construct surrounding the idea that HUMSS students deploy skillfulness in utilizing English as a language for the academic sphere.

4. CONCLUSION

As an academic strand held with such high regard for being well-versed in the English language, the students of Humanities and Social Sciences evidently showcase their positive attitude towards English as a communicative language that influences their similarly positive classroom engagement levels. The study's major findings highlight the significant impact of students' language attitude to the participative behavior they demonstrate. Through a correlational research design, the study confirms that HUMSS students agree to feeling sense of enjoyment and efficiency in using the English language. Respondents also agree to functioning in classroom environments with highly engaged behaviors. Overall, this study concludes that the implications of these two variables address the present correlation between the English language attitude and classroom engagement levels of HUMSS students in the institution of Mapua Malayan Colleges Mindanao.

CONSENT

All the respondents were given the opportunity to answer the online questionnaires anonymously or under any preferred 'nickname.' The respondents were also provided with consent letters which presented the terms and conditions of their approval to partake in this study, assuring that they can withhold participation at any given time.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

All the respondents were given the opportunity to answer the online questionnaires anonymously or under any preferred 'nickname.' The respondents were also provided with consent letters which presented the terms and conditions of their approval to partake in this study, assuring that they can withhold participation at any given time.

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