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Research Paper

Attitudes of University Students toward English Language Education Policy in Iraqi Kurdistan

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Abstract

Despite widespread coverage of language policy in the literature, there has been scant research probing into English language education policy at tertiary levels in general and higher education context of Iraqi Kurdistan in particular. The present qualitative study investigated EFL students' perceptions of English language education policy, current educational policies, and the purposes for learning in Kurdish contexts across genders and study fields. To this end, a version of Yang's (2012) questionnaire was adapted and administered to university EFL students majoring in soft and hard sciences (N=300, male 34%, female 67%) at two private and state universities in Iraqi Kurdistan. The statistical analysis of the obtained data revealed students' positive attitudes toward learning English as an international language in both soft and hard sciences. Notably, students stressed that all Iraqi Kurdish students should learn the English language in English- and Kurdish-medium classes. They also considered English competence as a significant academic accomplishment. However, some of them felt dissatisfied with the status quo of English education in their institutions. The findings of this study offer insights and recommendations for English education policymakers, administrators, and instructors at tertiary levels.

Keywords: Attitudes, EFL, English language education, Iraqi Kurdistan, Language policy

نگرش دانشجویان دانشگاه نسبت به سیاست آموزش زبان انگلیسی در کردستان عراق
علیرغم پوشش گسترده سیاست زبان در ادبیات، تحقیقات کمی در مورد سیاست آموزش زبان انگلیسی در سطوح عالی به طور کلی و زمینه آموزش عالی کردستان عراق به طور خاص انجام شده است. مطالعه کیفی حاضر به بررسی ادراکات دانشجویان زبان انگلیسی از خط مشی آموزش زبان انگلیسی، سیاست های آموزشی جاری و اهداف یادگیری در زمینه کردی در بین جنسیت ها و رشته های تحصیلی پرداخت. برای این منظور، نسخه ای از پرسشنامه یانگ (۲۰۱۲) برای دانشجویان انگلیسی زبان انگلیسی در رشته علوم نرم و سخت (N=300)، مرد ۳۴٪، زن ۶۷٪ (در دو دانشگاه خصوصی و دولتی در کردستان عراق اقتباس و اجرا شد. تجزیه و تحلیل آماری داده های به دست آمده نشان دهنده نگرش مثبت دانش آموزان نسبت به یادگیری زبان انگلیسی به عنوان یک زبان بین المللی در علوم نرم و سخت بود. شایان ذکر است که دانش آموزان تاکید کردند که همه دانش آموزان کرد عراقی باید زبان انگلیسی را در کلاس های متوسط انگلیسی و کردی یاد بگیرند. آنها همچنین صلاحیت زبان انگلیسی را به عنوان یک موفقیت تحصیلی مهم در نظر گرفتند. با این حال، برخی از آنها از وضعیت موجود آموزش انگلیسی در مؤسسات خود احساس نارضایتی می کردند. یافته های این مطالعه بینش ها و توصیه هایی را برای سیاست گذاران آموزش انگلیسی، مدیران و مدرسان در سطوح عالی ارائه می کند.

واژگان کلیدی: نگرش، زبان انگلیسی، آموزش زبان انگلیسی، کردستان عراق، سیاست زبان

Introduction

English has now turned into a worldwide language and consequently has become a daily speaking language used by many over a wide scope of nations. According to Nettle & Romaine (2000), it is a prevailing language in more than sixty of the states perceived by the UN. In addition, English is definitely the formal and major language of media around the world (Crystal, 2003). Likewise, English appears to be predominant in numerous scholastic orders, working environments, and global interchanges and distributions. Taking a close look at the ecology and diffusion of the English language in the twentieth century, one can recognize a dramatic increase in the number of English speakers due to globalization and the dominance of the United States in the world, especially in the Middle East and the Arabic world. As a result of this hegemony, globalization has been reinterpreted, and now people around the world use "Americanization" and "McDonaldization" as the alternative terms (Erling, 2002; Zughoul, 2003).

Numerous scholars have discussed the upsides of English popularity and globalization. For instance, Tollefson (2000) recommends that a worldwide language makes global correspondence more effective and yet additionally diminishes the likelihood of political clash and extensions of intercultural correspondence boundaries. As for Kirkpatrick (2009), like a daily language in the use of ASEAN, English significantly decreases the interpretation and understanding of proposals. On the other hand, numerous individuals allude to the philosophical, social, and elitist intensity of English and the favorable financial position it offers to inner circle states, which is a type of 'semantic colonialism' (Phillipson, 1992; 2003). Accordingly, English is typically considered the most globalized language for teaching domains in the world, and thus English vocabularies and pidgins have been sharply borrowed and produced in other languages. Furthermore, it becomes the language of economy, education, and communication in high manners, which is easily customized culturally. In terms of linguistic aspects, English tends to be the most influential language in translation fields (MaCallen, 1989; Kachru, 1991; Columas, 1992; Pennycook, 1994; Crystal, 1997; Canagarajah, 1999; Phillipson, 2003).

Literature Review

The number of teaching/learning agencies, universities, and institutions adhering to English language instruction increase daily. In addition, substantial use of social media and technology has led to a great shift in daily localized speaking languages, which hugely manipulate English terms and expressions.

Given the global popularity of English, a diverse number of aspects have been regarded to be influencing education and instruction. One important facet involves students' viewpoints on how language is taught and practiced. Many scholars have highlighted the importance of considering and incorporating student attitudes into educational issues (Friedrich, 2000; Gardner, 1985; Spolisky, 2000; Triandis, 1971). Gardner (1985) expressed that a student's degree of achievement in the acquisition of a second language is adequately identified with the indicators of perspectives toward that language. All in all, learners with inspirational perspectives will in general obtain the target language more adequately than those with negative mentalities. Inspirational mentalities could raise the limit of learning measures in a given period. Moreover, attitudes change across time due to the effects of encompassing contexts (Oxford, 1994; Gardner, 1985).

Obviously, educational systems need to address the so-called dynamic attitudes of students. In this regard, Soleimani and Hanafi (2013) argue that EFL teachers must be responsive to students' attitudes and value their preconceptions, which can affect their success in learning English as a foreign language. As Kesgin and Arslan (2015) interestingly put, the attitudes of a working group toward the English language, gender, educational and economic status of parents may considerably differ, which is not normally the case in terms of accommodation and graduation.



Thus, individual and gender differences in learning a language always have remained rather inconclusive. For example, Amin (2017) stated that EFL female learners have more positive attitudes toward learning and are more active in terms of following practical communication strategies. In the same vein, Akdamar (2020) concluded that female students particularly have more positive attitudes than male students in learning English as a foreign language. However, whether these results hold true across contexts and educational sites warrens a more comprehensive examination.

The diffusion of English and its versions in different countries, called world Englishes, has motivated a number of researchers to determine English students' attitudes towards its use in different contexts. An example worth following is Kachru's (1985) Concentric Circle Model, which motivated Matsuda (2000) to specify the attitudes of young Japanese learners towards the use of English. The results showed that these learners did not have positive perspectives on Japanese English as a variety of world Englishes and preferred to learn native speakers' versions. Similarly, Friedrich (2000) carried out a survey in order to determine Brazilian learners' English-related attitudes and found that the use of English empowered learners to take part in diverse international interactions. Mutar (2019) indicated that attitude plays a great part in determining and directing learner behavior and finally leading to second language achievement. Kirkpatrick and Xu (2002) examined university-level Chinese language learners' attitudes towards the Chinese and native-speaker English varieties and reported students' preferences of native forms. Hilliard (2014) also showed students' positive attitudes toward the English language and believed that English language education policy should be systematized in Asian countries. More in line with the context of this study, Abu-Snobar (2017) explored university students in Arab world countries and how they perceived learning English. Similarly, Mutar (2019) found Iraqi students' positive perceptions of English language learning, which were not different across genders and universities.

English Education in Iraqi Kurdistan: Policies and Improvements

These days, English has become the language used by millions of people around the world as a means of communication. In his paper on the English language pedagogy in the Arabic world, Zughaul (2003) noted that Asian countries, especially the Middle East, were developing rapidly in communication in terms of English education. However, students in the Kurdistan region of Iraq still face serious difficulties in communicating in English in secondary and high schools. Furthermore, it seems that students from the Kurdistan region need to learn English to communicate and interact internationally. In this regard, the Regional Government of Kurdistan KRG (2007) decided to develop a new English language curriculum called Sunrise for secondary and high schools, focusing on four important skills: writing, reading, listening and speaking (Amin, 2017).

As mentioned, the Kurdistan Regional Government has taken significant steps since KRG 2007 to improve educational standards. Accordingly, the English language was introduced in the elementary classes in the schools, and the promotion of creative thinking in the classrooms was included in the school curriculum. (Sunrise for Kurdistan) The official website defines the new curriculum as a complete English curriculum written specifically for elementary and middle school students. "The curriculum has an interactive approach that connects listening, speaking, reading, and writing with a clear focus on grammatical structures. It is an interesting approach to learning through inspirational topic-based units, adventure writin,g and more. Introduce languages and different activities "(Sunrise for Kurdistan).

The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Education (MOE) are responsible for language education policy in this region. Currently, MOHE supervises 18 public and 15 private universities, including various technical institutes in the

Kurdistan Region. Moreover, MOE supervises over 3000 state secondary and prep schools with more than a hundred private and international schools. MOE further directs essential and auxiliary instruction, and MOHE controls college and establishment-level training. State-funded colleges do not charge educational costs, and students furnish understudies from external urban areas with offices of complimentary quarters and enhancements (Amin, 2020). Thus, in Iraqi Kurdistan, the number of EFL learners increased dramatically in the first years and kindergartens and therefore demanded state and private institutions and schools that use English as the instructional medium to rise. In Iraqi Kurdistan, there are five different levels of colleges at state universities whose graduates are issued certifications to teach English:

- College of Languages in state universities (Available in all state and private universities)
- College of Art (Available in all state universities)
- College of Basic Education (Available in all state universities).
- College of Education and Human Sciences (Available in some state universities).
- College of English language teaching (Available in private universities)

Based on what was stated above, there is inadequate information on the students' perspectives on English use even though the KRG motivates them to acquire this language, and students' attitudes and the variables that influence their language learning process have received scant attention. Therefore, the present research might furnish sufficient information on the various aspects of English instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan. To address these gaps, this study has examined the attitudes of Kurdish EFL learners and their awareness of English varieties, especially Kurdish English. It has also explored the factors that may explain why their attitudes differ, and examined the purposes for which Kurdish university students learn English and their perceptions of the English education policies in Iraqi Kurdistan. The following research questions have, thus, been addressed:

Q1. What attitudes do university students hold toward English language learning?

Q2. What attitudes do university students hold toward English language education policy?

Q3. Do male and female students differ in terms of their attitudes toward English language learning?

Q4. Do students' attitudes towards English Language Learning differ across university majors?

Method

Design of the Study

The current study has exploited a mixed-methods design including qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research has a crucial role in behavioral sciences, where the aim is to recognize hidden motives of behavior. This kind of research analyzes numerous impacts that motivate learners to behave in a particular manner (Kumar, 2008, p.8).

Participants

For the purposes of this study, 300 university students (male and female) from Iraqi state and private Kurdistan universities (Sulaimanieh University and the University of Human Development) were selected as the participants based on convenience sampling. Almost all the participants had studied English for about ten years. They were students in different years of study majoring in soft sciences; namely, History, Kurdish Language and Literature, Arabic Language and Literature, Banking and Finance, and hard sciences, including Dentistry and Information Technology. It is to be noted that university students were selected due to their stability, validity, and active engagement with school, society, and career preparation (Kirkpatrick & Xu, 2002; He & Li, 2009).



Instruments and Procedures

For data collection, a questionnaire was utilized as the instrument of the study. According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), questionnaires are among the most reliable approaches to data collection in second language studies. The instrument produced both quantitative and qualitative data which was analyzed mostly following a quantitative approach. The Average scores were calculated on a scale of 1-6 (i.e. (SD) =Strongly Disagree (D) = Disagree (SLD) = Slightly Disagree (SLA) = Slightly Agree (A) = Agree (SA) =Strongly Agree). The questionnaire consisted of 40 multiple-choice questions in three categories; Part I: Your attitudes toward English, Part II: Your attitudes toward the current English education policy, and Part III: Your attitudes toward the purposes for learning English. Additionally, part four consisted of demographic information, such as gender, age, college grade, major, and the year to start learning English.

Results

Attitudes towards English Language Learning

The first research question investigated Iraqi Kurdish university students' attitudes toward English Language Learning. Table 1 below shows the frequency and percentages of the participants' responses in this regard.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Attitudes towards ELL

	Part I. Your attitudes toward English	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA
1	English is an international language.	2(%)	21	1	6	104	166
2	English is the language used most widely in the world.	5	5	7	27	120	136
3	Knowing English is important in understanding people from other countries.	0	0	8	40	112	140
4	Knowing English is important in understanding the cultures of English-speaking countries, like the USA or the U.K.		1	2	31	127	139
5	If I have a chance, I would like to travel to English-speaking countries, like USA or UK.	2			21	111	166
6	I do not like learning English.	235	51	2	0	0	12
7	British English and American English are the major varieties of English in the world.	0	0	9	51	117	123
8	Many varieties of English exist in the world.			8	43	170	79
9	Non-native English speakers can also speak Standard English. (Here, Standard English refers to English spoken in English-speaking countries, like USA or UK.)	0	3	8	27	181	81

10	As long as people understand me, it is not important which variety of English I speak.	28	31	20	43	113	65
11	Like —Singaporean English and —Indian English, Kurdistan should have its own variety of English: —Kurdistan English.	66	40	38	28	80	48
12	When I speak English, I want to sound like a native speaker.	29	30	12	3	110	116
13	When I speak English, I want to be identified clearly as Kurdish.	126	42	18	69	26	19

The analysis of the responses to item 1 indicated that 87% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the international popularity of the English language. Answers to item 2 revealed that 87% of the respondents, who specified agree or strongly agree on choices, believed that English is the most widely used language in the world. Likewise, 84% of the participants (item 3) showed the respondents' interest in knowing English to understand people from other countries. Item 4 targeted the perspectives on cultural aspects in English-speaking countries, like USA or U.K. The results indicated that 89% agreed or strongly agreed with this item. The obtained data for 5 statements investigating their desire to travel to English-speaking countries, like the USA or UK, showed that 92% agreed or strongly agreed. For item 6, which asked, "I do not like learning English, " the cumulative totals for the agreed and strongly agreed categories were only 4%. The results obtained for item 7 disclosed that 80% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that British English and American English are the wide varieties of English in the world. The responses to item 8 revealed 83% agreement concerning multiple current varieties of English in the world. The result obtained for item 9 revealed 68.7% agreement on the potential of non-natives to use standard English. Concerning item 10, the answers showed that 59% of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that it is not important which variety of English they speak as long as people understand them. For item 11, 43% of the participants selected agree or strongly agree with the answers. The result for item 12 indicated that 75% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that sounding like native speakers could be an important aspect in speaking settings. Finally, the results unraveled that just 15% of the participants preferred to be identified clearly as Kurdish while speaking in English.

Attitudes towards English Language Education Policy

The second research question addressed Kurdish university students' attitudes toward English language education policy in this region. Table 2 indicates the frequency and percentages of responses.

Table 2

Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Attitudes towards English Language Policy

Part II: Your attitudes toward the current English education policy		SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA
1	All Kurdish students should learn English.	2	0	61	61	89	138
2	Kurdistan college students should use English in either spoken or written communications with each other.	30	25	22	35	106	82
3	English education should start from	34	51	7	28	38	142

	elementary school in Kurdistan.						
4	English should not be a compulsory subject in the National College Entrance Examination in Kurdistan.	108	90	50	27	15	10
5	I would not take English if it were not a compulsory subject in school.	129	88	47	8	24	4
6	If English were not taught at school, I would study it on my own.	7	58	25	56	32	122
7	Oral language skills are more important than literacy skills in college English education.	21	41	42	56	123	17
8	College English classes should be entirely conducted in English.	25	42	21	15	121	76
9	College classes should be conducted in both English and Kurdish.	28	88	12	35	108	29
10	Besides English classes, other college classes, such as Math, should be also conducted in English.	13	23	8	67	119	70
11	I am satisfied with the English education policy in the Kurdistan region.	44	86	10	43	103	14
12	I am satisfied with the English education curriculum in the Kurdistan region.	31	73	21	45	93	37
13	I am satisfied with the English learning textbooks and other materials used in our school.	22	80	31	43	58	66
14	I am satisfied with the English teaching methods used in our school.	48	43	59	21	91	38
15	American English is the best model for Kurdish learners of English.	22	39	49	20	39	131
16	British English is the best model for Kurdish learners of English.	14	71	45	24	113	33
17	I prefer native speakers rather than non-native speakers as my English teachers.	23	37	28	42	84	86

The results for item 1 showed that 79% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that all Kurdish students should learn English. Results for item 2 revealed that 62% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Kurdistan college students should use English in spoken or written conversations. In addition, for item 3, 63% of participants insisted on starting an English education in a Kurdistan primary school. Topic 4 explores participants' perspectives on whether English should be a compulsory subject in the National College Entrance Examination in Kurdistan. The results indicated that 8% agreed or strongly agreed with this point. The results for item 5 indicated 9% consent to whether or not they will learn English as a non-compulsory subject in school. For item 6, 51% said they would read English. Results obtained for item 7 showed that 47% of respondents agree on the importance of language skills in college English education. Responses to item 8 showed 65% acceptance of English medium education in college classrooms. According to the results for item 9, 47% of participants agreed or strongly agreed to receive college classes in both English and Kurdish. For item 10, 63% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the instruction of other college classes in English, such as math, in addition to English classes. For item 11, 30% of participants expressed satisfaction with the English

education policy in the Kurdistan region. In addition, 43% of participants found that they accepted or strongly agreed with the general educational approach. The results for item 13 indicated that 43% of participants were dissatisfied with the English curriculum in the Kurdistan region. By answering item 14, 41% were satisfied with the English learning textbooks and other materials used in schools. For the next item, 43% were satisfied with the English teaching methods used in their schools. Based on item 16 results 60% of participants believed that American English was the best model for Kurdish English learners. As for the question, 'whether or not British English is the best model for Kurdish English learners', 49% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with one of the alternatives. Finally, for item 20, the results showed that only 57% of participants preferred to speak English to native speakers rather than non-native speakers.

Attitudes towards English Language Learning in Terms of Gender

The third research question examined Kurdish university male and female students' attitudes towards English language learning. To answer this question, at first, the normality of the collected data was examined. The results for the normality assumption are presented in the following table.

Table 3
Normality of the Collected Data

N	Skewness		Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error	
300	-2.122	.141	4.087	.281	
300	-1.927	.141	4.747	.281	
300	-.867	.141	.077	.281	
300	-.929	.141	1.024	.281	
300	-2.010	.141	8.224	.281	
300	3.700	.141	13.818	.281	
300	-.675	.141	-.309	.281	
300	-.541	.141	.393	.281	
300	-1.149	.141	2.893	.281	
300	-.826	.141	-.510	.281	
300	-.136	.141	-1.473	.281	
300	-1.135	.141	-.181	.281	
300	.523	.141	-1.126	.281	
Valid N (listwise)		300			

Since the amount of Skewness and Kurtosis is not between -2 and +2, it can be concluded that the collected data are not normal. Thus, to examine gender differences in perceiving English learning, the Mann-Whitney test was run as a non-parametric test. The descriptive statistics are reported in Table 4 below.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics across gender

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Attitudes	Male	180	147.97	26634.50
	Female	120	154.30	18515.50
	Total	300		

As the table shows, the mean rank for females is slightly higher than that for males. However, Table 5 below reports Mann-Whitney U results and reveals the significance of the differences.

Table 5
Difference between male and female students' attitudes

	Attitudes
Mann-Whitney U	10344.500
Wilcoxon W	26634.500
Z	-.621
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.535

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

According to the table, the p-value is less than .05 (5.35), and thus there is no statistically significant difference between the males' and females' attitudes regarding English language learning. In other words, based on the results, it may be inferred that both genders hold the same views about English language learning in the Kurdistan region.

Attitudes towards English Language Learning in Terms of Major

The final research question investigated whether there is any statistically significant difference in the perspectives of students across majors (English & non-English) on English language learning. Table 6 below depicts the descriptives for both major types.

Table 6
Results of Descriptive Statistics of the Data

	Major1	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Attitudes	En-Stu	180	152.49	27447.50
	No-En-Stu	120	147.52	17702.50
	Total	300		

As table 6 shows, the mean rank of the non-English group in terms of English learning perspectives is higher. Table 8 reveals statistically significant differences.

Table 7
Difference between English and non-English students' attitudes

	Attitudes
Mann-Whitney U	10442.500
Wilcoxon W	17702.500
Z	-.487
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.626

a. Grouping Variable: Major1

According to Table 7, it can be deduced that there is not any statistically significant difference between the English and non-English major students' attitudes toward English language learning ($p > .05$). In other words, in light of our results, it may be inferred that students' 'major' does not play a substantial role in affecting students' attitudes toward English language learning in the Kurdistan region.

Discussion

English language has become globally prominent and is used for mutual communication. This has led to its linguistic hegemony over other languages to a great extent. Numerous factors play a role in learning a foreign language, including attitudes, worry, learning results, talent, brilliance, personal identity, and age. However, learner attitudes are considered extremely important in language learning. The present study examined the attitudes of university students toward English language learning in a Kurdish context. To understand the attitudes of Kurdish university students towards English education in the Iraqi Kurdistan region, a questionnaire was administered to 300 students and their responses were analyzed. The findings showed that Kurdish students had positive behavioral attitudes and felt relaxed whenever they had to speak in English classes. Besides, The Kurdistan participants disagreed with the statement that speaking English makes them feel worried. They proudly liked to speak, study, and practice English and contact English-speaking friends. In addition, Kurdish university students disclosed their attitudes using such expressions as 'confidence', 'relaxed', 'power of expressing ourselves, and 'knowing English improves our personality. The majority of Kurdish participants strongly refused that speaking English in front of other students could result in embarrassed feelings.

The findings provided descriptive data about Kurdish university learners' cognitive attitudes towards English education, and as a whole, their attitudes are positive. The analysis of the data revealed that Kurdish students find studying English important and making them more educated and knowledgeable. According to the responses, Kurdish students in the Kurdistan region of Iraq think about better performance in English subjects. According to the findings of the study, the majority of participants agreed that knowing English is an important goal in their lives. Besides, they showed to enjoy studying foreign languages and feel more confident. This is mainly due to their desire for English language learning and practice.

The findings are in line with a study by Abu-Melhim (2019) which examined the attitude of Jordanian students towards learning English as a foreign language, in which 64% of students responded positively. Similarly, Getty (2020) examined the attitudes of EFL students towards learning English at Debre Markos Comprehensive Secondary School in Debre Marcos, Ethiopia and found that they had a positive attitude. The results of this study showed that mainly 10th graders had a positive attitude towards learning English. The findings of the study are also in line with other studies conducted in this field. Many studies have found that motivated students are more confident in their second language, resulting in an increased desire to communicate (Brown, 2000; Ellis 1994; Knowles, 2000).

The findings of the study concerning the positive attitudes of Kurdish students towards the English language education system are, however, in stark contrast to previous studies (Hama Karim, 2018; Abdullah, 2015). For example, this study found a dramatic change in the attitude of Kurdish students toward English (Ahmed, et al., 2021)

Finally, it should be noted that several factors could contribute to Kurdish students' positive attitudes toward English language education, such as native-speaker teachers, peer groups, and learners' parents. Also, politics, economy, media, and technology factors could highly affect Kurdish university students to develop positive attitudes towards English language education policy. It is also postulated that parents' positive attitudes toward English education could influence students' viewpoints in this respect.

Conclusion

Looking at language acquisition, scholars have tried their best to discover attitude as an important element in this process. In all disciplines, attitudes have been regarded as a component that has drawn more attention due to their crucial part in human behavioral development.

Oppenheim (1992) described the attitude as a situation of getting ready, a propensity to do or give a reaction to something in a particular way.

The present study has explored the attitudes of the English learners of Iraqi Kurdish universities toward learning English in terms of gender and major. The findings uncovered the uplifting attitude of the learners toward learning English with no critical contrasts among male and female learners. This indicates learners' consciousness of the importance of learning English as a vehicle of correspondence. The findings additionally revealed no great contrast among learners with respect to their discipline. Despite the fact that there was a subtle distinction in learners' answers, the larger part of the participants demonstrated their readiness and enthusiasm to learn English for their educational accomplishment.

The present study has theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it will be advantageous for researchers and scholars interested in language education policy as it sheds light on major issues in this field. Practically, it provides insights for decision-makers in the Iraqi Kurdistan region to reconsider English Language Education Policy and teaching and learning the English language in the region to set fresh rules. Besides, the framework used in this research can be adopted in other studies addressing similar issues. Also, the present study might receive attention in second language acquisition, world-Englishes, and English language instruction due to the guidelines for English teaching practices.

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