

## Attitudes towards Learning English as a Foreign Language: Comparing Iranian and Iraqi EFL Learners

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### Abstract

The current study aims to assess the comparison attitudes toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners. This study involved 60 EFL students from Iran and Iraq who were between the ages of 20 and 25. They were selected randomly from two different universities Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran, and Public University, Diyala, Iraq. Most of them were studying the English language at the BA level. For data collection, Demographic Information of Sample and 5-point Likert scale of 30 items Attitudes towards English Language Learning Questionnaire were used. This study's design was quantitative and included both descriptive and inferential statistics. The data analysis encompasses means, standard deviations, frequency, and an independent t-test. This number indicated that although EFL students in Iran had higher positive attitudes toward language learning, those in Iraq had less positive attitudes. Regarding the three aspects of attitude i.e., cognitive, behavioral, and emotional, there was statistically significant difference between Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners' attitudes toward language learning. In fact, the level of cognitive and behavioral difference among Iranian EFL learners was more than among Iraqi EFL learners, but the level of emotional difference among Iraqi EFL learners was more than among Iranian EFL learners. The findings of this study have led to a number of recommendations regarding teaching strategies, curricula, instructional resources, and the state of English in Iran and Iraq from this perspective.

**Keywords:** Attitudes, Language learning, Iraqi EFL learner, Iranian EFL

## 1. Introduction

Learning a language demands dynamism and a significant amount of personal participation. Tódor and Dégi (2016) contend that learning a new language is a dynamic process. Dynamic refers to a person's positive attitude and the ongoing change that comes with learning. For all students, learning even one foreign language is a fantastic opportunity to experience different cultures, meet new people, and communicate with them (Rashid & Jabbar, 2017). Naturally, learning multiple languages has many advantages in both personal and professional spheres. Speaking more than one language boosts an employee's overall image in the eyes of the employer and provides many possibilities in the professional world. The major motivation, though, is to increase one's knowledge and become a better listener and learner. Lightbown and Spada (2006) asserted that a person's views are closely related to language learning. This supports beliefs regarding the link between attitude and language learning. There will be excellent outcomes in the end if there is a strong motivation to learn and a positive attitude about it. For someone to learn another language, motivation is crucial. Clearly, the motivation of students can be increased by the usefulness of the languages they study and learn. The historian Stearns (2009) claimed in his book, "Educating Global Citizens at Colleges and Universities" that Americans are "legendary" in their reluctance to study foreign languages. It might be because English is a language that is extensively spoken and studied over the world. But the truth remains that 75% of the world's population does not speak English.

For those who want to communicate and access information globally, having some level of English ability has become important. Many nations have resorted to utilizing English as a medium of teaching in schools and universities to ensure that people learn the language and improve their abilities (Mutar, 2019). Despite this, it has been shown that the majority of

learners continue to demonstrate an inadequate level of competency. Several key elements, including beliefs about anxiety, motivation, self-esteem, self-confidence, and attitudes, have been linked by some researchers (Baker, 1992; Dornyei, 2005; Gardner, 1972) to this lack of competency. The attitudes of language learners are a set of indicators that have a big impact on language policy and the language learning process (Snow, 2007; Young, 2006). Students have varied attitudes and motivations for studying a particular language. Numerous study projects have focused on learners' attitudes toward various issues and how they feel about them.

Attitudes can be characterized by cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Students' intentions can be determined, for example, by how positively they express their thoughts toward a language, if they view English as a helpful practical language rather than as a barrier to their studies, or whether they prefer to watch movies in English to their native language. In terms of societal factors, some students might view English as a beneficial language that promotes success and higher levels of academic and professional achievement, while others might think that learning a foreign language will ultimately destroy their culture, language, and heritage. People may be hesitant to socialize with an English-speaking community in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) environment like Iran or Iraq since there is little exposure to the English language outside of the classroom.

In this study, attitude is a crucial element affecting a language learner's proficiency and has drawn significant attention from both foreign and second-language scholars. Students' perspectives on language attitudes matter for a variety of reasons. For instance, Weinburgh (2000) held learning-related attitudes that have an effect on choices for books to read and speak a foreign language. Most experts agree that a learner's mindset will affect whether or not they can understand the complexities of the language (Eshghinejad, 2016). In other words, success in a target language depends on the learner's attitudes toward language learning as much as their intellectual prowess. This indicates that acquiring a language should not be treated solely as an academic endeavor but rather as a social and psychological one (Eshghinejad, 2016). According to research by Tella, Indoshi, and Othuon (2010), the most potent psychological

element causing a student's poor performance in English, is a negative attitude toward the language.

All participants gain benefits in different ways from research on linguistic attitudes. First off, examining students' attitudes is a useful way for researchers, education planners, syllabus designers, and language teachers to gain a deeper knowledge of the language learning and teaching process. Secondly, learners' needs, perceptions, views, learning styles, and educational experiences differ from one another, and forcing change on them can have unfavorable effects. Thirdly, students have opinions about the way they learn and can express them. However, studies have been done on attitudes toward English language learning both in Iran and Iraq as a whole, but this present study has not studied comparing attitudes toward English language learning between Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners, yet. So, there has not yet been a study done to observe comparing attitudes toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners. The purpose of the current study was to understand more about the responses and reactions of EFL learners to learning English as a second or foreign language.

The main objective of the quantitative study is to compare Iraqi and Iranian EFL students' attitudes toward English language learning. The study's aim is to investigate learners' attitudes toward learning English, provide educators with an understanding of those attitudes, and aid students in developing positive attitudes. In order to better support students' success in learning English, educators will be able to concentrate more on their needs and interests. The study attempts to investigate and identify factors that may have influenced how students learned English and create a positive attitude for students toward English language learning. So, the new aspect of this study helps institutes and educational organizations to improve EFL learners' attitudes toward English language learning. So, the study aims to respond the following questions:

1. What dimensions of attitudes toward language learning do Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners have in terms of their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral elements?
2. Is there any significant difference between Iraqi and Iranian EFL learners in terms of their attitudes toward English language learning?

## 2. Review of Literature

The ancient Latin term *actus*, which in English means to act, was the source of the word *attitude* (Navarro-Villarroel, 2011). According to Lennartsson (2008), learners believe that having a positive attitude toward learning is important and that it causes them to perform better. Past research has found a strong correlation between motivation and attitude (Todor & Dégi 2016). Some students have positive attitudes, but their motivation to learn isn't as high, or vice versa. Someone needs to give them a little push or direct them in the proper direction. The essential elements of a process that is known as language learning are attitudes that learners acquire throughout their lives. According to Yagi (1991), students' attitudes significantly influence overall foreign language learning. The nature of language acquisition includes psychological and social components in addition to an academic perspective, and it largely depends on the learners' desire and attitude toward learning the target language (Padwick, 2010). According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), a student's ability to learn language is determined by their mental aptitude or linguistic skills and attitudes and views on the target language. In addition, they contended that changing students' attitudes and behaviors as well as their perceptions of the foreign language, its culture, and its community may enhance the process of learning a language. If they are more likely to pick up the target language, this will help determine that.

According to Prabhu et al. (2019), an attitude is divided into three parts: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The thoughts on the subject of attitude are part of the cognitive component. The emotional component is concerned with how the person feels about a certain item, and the behavioral component is where the person's propensity to adopt specific learning practices is found (Ali, 2016). Anwar and Qadir defined (2017) found that attitude is an inference made based on a collection of thoughts about the attitude object. As stated by Abdullah and Rahman (2015), it is possible that the three attitude components are inextricably linked. Van Els et al. (1984) discussed whether there are three components or just one. The relationship between all of the components is so strong that analyzing just one of them would reveal enough information

on attitudes. Abdullah (2019) claimed that a person's attitude toward the target language affects their ability to learn a language. Regarding to Anwar & Louis (2017), positive language attitudes will help learners have a positive direction toward learning the language. A positive outlook will be crucial to learning a language successfully (Ali, 2014), and it will also play a beneficial part in the process (Ali & Anwar, 2021). According to Zainol Abidin et al. (2012), "negative beliefs may contribute to low cognitive achievement, negative attitudes, and anxiety in the classroom" (p. 120). Aliakbari and Gheitasi (2017) investigated the association between test anxiety and attitudes toward learning foreign languages. They discovered that there was a relationship between test anxiety and attitude and that females displayed more upbeat attitudes toward learning the English language (ELL).

### **2.1. The Nature and aspects of Language Attitude**

The development, restoration, and demise of a language all depend on attitudes. Learning outcomes are influenced by learners' internal states, or attitudes. The internal state is a degree of favorable/unfavorable or positive/negative reaction to an object. Some researchers (such as Stern 1983) made a distinction between three different types of attitudes in the context of learning a second language: "(a) Attitudes towards the community and people who speak the L2 (group-specific attitudes), (b) Attitudes towards learning the concerned language, and (c) Attitude towards languages and language learning in general" (pp. 376-377). The learner's personality, such as whether they are "ethnocentric" or "authoritarian," has an impact on these attitudes. They could also be impacted by the particular social environment (milieu) in which language learning takes place. For instance, different attitudes may be present in monolingual versus bilingual environments (Ellis, 1985). According to Brown (2000), the term "attitudes" refers to the viewpoints that the learner has toward others who speak the target language as well as toward his own culture.

When one learns a particular subject, one is expected to think and conduct differently and to have distinct beliefs, so learning is seen as a positive change in the person's personality in terms of the emotional, psychomotor (behavioral), and cognitive domains (Kara, 2009). In addition

to the cognitive approach, the learning process also contains social and psychological components. These three perspectives can be used to view the attitude concept. The features of each of these dimensions vary depending on the language attitude that results. The attitude notion, therefore, comprises three parts, namely behavioral, cognitive, and effective. These three characteristics of attitude are based on the behaviorism, cognitivism, and humanism schools of thought, respectively (Figure 2.1.).

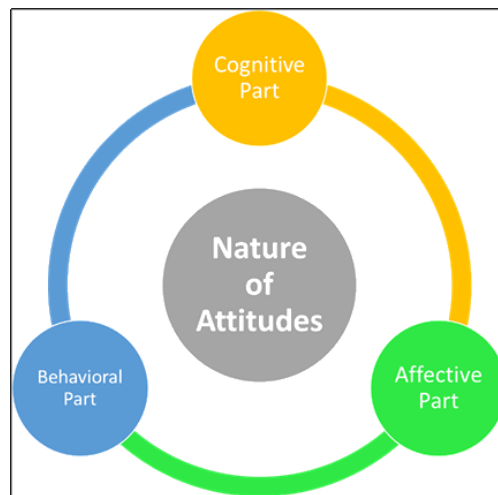


Figure 2.1. The characteristics of attitude

## 2.2. Factors affecting attitudes toward learning EFL

Numerous research has developed taxonomies of the factors that influence language proficiency in second- and foreign-language learners' attitudes. These variables include

personality variables, educational variables, social variables, as well as others like age and sex (Ehrman, 1996, p. 192; Ells et al., 1984, pp.115–124; McDonough & Shaw, 1993, pp. 7–8; Spolsky, 1989, pp. 25–29; Van). Furthermore, Conteh (2002) backed the idea put forth by some applied linguists that a variety of factors, such as social context, learner personality (self-confidence, risk-taking, and anxiety), learning environments, learning process, and learning outcomes, have an impact on students' attitudes and the way in which language is taught.

- **Social context:**

The social context includes the learners' families or homes, their peer groups, the community of speakers of the target language, and their cultures (Spolsky, 1989). Among the social factors to be considered are the many features of the parents, including their education, religion, culture, socioeconomic situation, place of birth, and fluency in the target language (Spolsky, 1989). These factors impact the parents' motives, goals, and priorities. In many studies looking at the parental role and the creation of attitudes toward speakers of the target language, it was found, according to Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), that learners' attitudes reflected their parents' attitudes about the target language.

- **Learner personality**

A good language learner receives an acceptable intake of the second or foreign language and has a low effective filter to facilitate input into language acquisition (Krashen, 1988). However, the unsuccessful language student has "neither acquisition nor learning happening to him," which could be the result of psychological factors (lack of interest in the target language and its speakers, lack of confidence, high anxiety level, as well as low aptitude or interest in grammar) (Krashen, 1988). Effective principles are the "foundation stones... on which procedures and learning material might be constructed," (Brown, 1994, p. 22). Along with the learner's attitude and motivation, personality traits like self-confidence, risk-taking, and anxiety are significant in the language acquisition process. People's Personality traits vary greatly among people, and personal traits are correlated with motivational and attitude traits. Personality is the "set of psychological characteristics to classify persons," according to Keuning (1998, p. 366-367).



- **Educational Context**

According to research, the learners' attitudes and success are influenced by the learning environment. According to Ehrman (1996), stress and rage can have an impact on students' attitudes and motivations, especially when English language studies are required. Littlewood (2001) found a link between students' attitudes toward teachers and authorities in a nation where English is a mandated subject and their ability to participate in class discussion. Under these circumstances, the teacher dominates the classroom and the students are not exempt from this control, which demotivates and discourages the students, which leads to failure.

### **2.3. Empirical Study**

In comparison to studies on ESL learner attitudes during the past 30 years, many research has been done to assess student attitudes about foreign language learning in general and EFL in particular. For instance, Gardner and Lysynchuk (1990) examined the role of attitudes in second language acquisition. Their research has yielded many insights. One result is that a positive attitude and increased motivation lead to better proficiency in the target language. Their results also indicated that having a positive attitude towards the target language helped the learner to develop proficiency in that language. Additionally, the learners' level of involvement and engagement in the target language learning process is determined by the kinds of attitudes (positive or negative) they have toward the target language or the target language's culture.

A more recent study was undertaken by Karahan (2007) in the setting of Turkish EFL. His research was inspired by complaints expressed by parents, teachers, administrators, and most Turkish EFL students regarding their inability to acquire the requisite level of English proficiency. As a result, he performed a study to determine the relationship between linguistic attitudes and linguistic learning, which he felt was absent from discussions of the issues with English teaching in Turkey. In more detail, Karahan looked for connections between linguistic attitudes, starting age for language learning, and the location of the learner's first language in the context of EFL in Turkey. Shams (2008) looked at students' motivations, attitudes, and worries motivations, attitudes, and worries of students when learning English. As a result, it

was emphasized that the learners had a positive attitude and high interest for English. This also underscores the positive attitudes most of them have toward English and its learning, highlighting the value of English's effectiveness in everyday life.

Some Iranian researchers have studied the nature and direction of motivation and learners' attitudes toward learning English and have come to different conclusions. For instance, Moiiinvaziri (2008) claimed that learners are extremely driven to learn in both instrumental and synthetic ways. On the other hand, research like that of Vaezi (2008) contends that Iranian students exhibit extremely high motivation, good attitudes, and motivation to learn English more positively. These conflicting results prompted researchers to conduct studies with different participants and different settings. Regarding the grade variable, Al-Zahrani (2008) surveyed to determine Saudi students' attitudes toward English. Statistical analysis revealed no clear difference between the three. Descriptive statistics showed the respondent had the same attitude during her three years.

Momani (2009), also investigated her attitudes toward ESL learning and reading performance as a junior high school student. The findings indicated that the respondents' attitudes toward learning English were both neutral and favorable. Additionally, reading proficiency and student attitudes toward learning English showed a significant association. According to the findings of a study conducted by Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) on the motives and attitudes of petroleum engineering students toward studying English, they exhibited a favorable attitude toward utilizing English in Yemeni social and educational situations. According to this study, they also had a favorable opinion of English-speaking cultures.

Ahmad (2019) investigated the perceptions and attitudes of EFL learners in Kurdistan region of Iraq towards online English courses. In this study, 100 Raparin University students from the Kurdistan region were chosen and subjected to online English language classes that were posted on Facebook.com. After that, a questionnaire with 12 questions was created and given to participants to gauge their attitudes and impressions of such an online course. The results of this analysis were quite significant and were used in the discussion. The study concluded with the following findings: participants have positive attitudes toward using the internet to learn

English; students can benefit from using the internet and applications as a platform for facilitating language learning; and social media is successful in fostering student competition.

Al-Amery (2020) looked at 235 students from two fine arts institutes in Al-Karkh, Baghdad, Iraq, and their attitudes toward using active learning methodologies in Arabic language courses and the difficulties that came with it. Learners were given questionnaire sheets. SPSS was employed. The implementation of active learning techniques in Arabic language classes in Iraqi fine arts institutes was found to be well received by respondents. It was discovered that AL methods will enhance the respondents' listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. It was discovered, that AL techniques don't give students the same opportunities for participation in the lecture. However, it was discovered that using such tactics in classes with a large number of students is challenging.

Sabbar Jebur (2020) looked into how Iraqi EFL college students used mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) and their attitudes towards it. 237 students from the English department took part in this study. Two questionnaires have been used, the first of which asked students about their attitudes about mobile assisted language learning. Next, a survey regarding the use of mobile assisted language learning. The initial questionnaire analysis's findings revealed the learners' positive attitudes regarding mobile gadgets. The second study found that students frequently utilize their mobile devices for research, data collection, and language acquisition, often using them as dictionaries. In order to encourage students and actively involve them in the learning process, it is advised to use MALL as a teaching aid and additional source in the teaching and learning process.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study's design was quantitative and included both descriptive and inferential statistics. As a result, a customized questionnaire was used as a measurement tool. The participants had to honestly respond to all of the questionnaire's questions, expressing their own opinions about their attitudes toward learning the English language in terms of the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of their attitudes as well as their demographic information, including their

gender, year of birth, and field of study. In addition, the design of this study was a survey study to investigate learners' attitudes and specify the dimensions of attitudes toward language learning and compare their attitudes among EFL Iranian and Iraqi learners.

### 3.2. participants

In this study, participants were 60 EFL students (30 Iraqis and 30 Iranian) aged 20 to 25 from Iran and Iraq participated in this study. They were selected randomly from two different universities Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran, and Public University, Diyala, Iraq. They were studying the English language at the BA level.

### 3.3. Instruments

In order to gather social and private data, a survey method was chosen to look into students' attitudes (Kerlinger, 1986). The study was quantitative in nature and adopted an attitude questionnaire that examined attitudes about learning English and served as the measuring tool. The following scale was employed to measure the research's variables:

- **Attitudes towards English Language Learning Questionnaire**

The quantitative investigation used a 30-item questionnaire created by Zainol Abidin et al (2012). Both the attitude and motivation test battery created by Gardner (1985) and the attitudes questionnaire test utilized in a study by Boonrangsri et al. (2004) were incorporated into its composition (Appendix D). A 5-point Likert scale was used to collect the necessary data (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, and 4=Agree). that was broken down into three categories (5=Strongly Agree), behavioral attitudes, cognitive attitudes, and emotional attitudes (Table 3.2.). Overall, 11 negative and 19 good items are present. The alpha Cronbach test will be used to determine the reliability of the research questionnaire items; it found that (0.818) was an acceptable level of consistency (Mehdi Mutar, 2019). The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for all dimensions of attitude toward language learning were shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of Attitude toward Language Learning's Dimensions.

Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha coefficients
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Behavioral	0.75
Cognitive	0.83
Emotional	0.88
General Attitude	0.97

### 3.4. Data Collection Procedure

For conducting this study, some instruments were prepared and used. The researcher accessed a total number of 60 EFL learners (30 Iraqis and 30 Iranians) from universities Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran, and Public University, Diyala, Iraq. They were required to complete questionnaires after selecting samples in order to gather data. The first data collection tool was the Demographic Profile of the Sample. It was composed of some demographic information which helped speed up the research process. Then, participants were given the Attitudes towards English Language Learning Questionnaire as part of the data collection process for one month. After data collection, the results were examined by assigning numerical values to the responses that got a score of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 for highly agreed, agree, undecided, and strongly disagree, respectively. Basic and advanced statistical analyses were computed by SPSS software to analyze the research findings.

In the data collection stage, the scores of all the tests were taken for analysis. With regard to the data collected during one month, the raw scores obtained from questionnaires were submitted to statistical analyses, and SPSS software version 25 was used. In fact, to provide quantitative answers to the study questions, the obtained data were examined by the SPSS software (Version 25). To analyze the collected data, descriptive statistics were used to calculate the frequency, mean, and standard deviation. Additionally, the independent samples t-test for inferential statistics was run.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

In the initial set of analyses, attitudes about language acquisition among EFL students from Iran and Iraq were described. This study, which represents mean, median, and standard deviation, included a frequency analysis of the descriptive data gathered from the questionnaires. As stated in Table 2, the mean value of negative attitude among EFL learners in Iran had the lowest mean (3.05), and in Iraq negative attitude among EFL learners had the highest value of mean (3.39). As presented in this table Iranian EFL learners had more positive attitudes toward language learning, but this value reported that Iraqi EFL learners had less positive attitude toward language learning.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics of Overall Attitude toward Language Learning

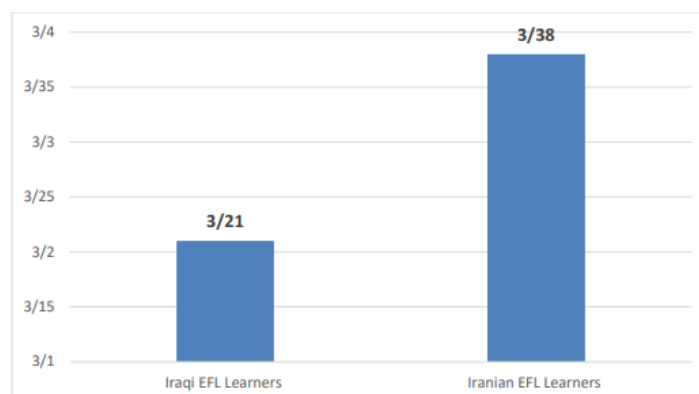
Variable		Mean	SD
Iraqi EFL Learners	Negative attitudes	3.39	0.69
	Positive attitudes	3.12	0.45
Iranian EFL Learners	Negative attitudes	3.05	0.81
	Positive attitudes	3.33	0.55

According to Table 3, there was a statistically significant difference in attitudes toward language learning between Iranian EFL learners ( $M= 3.38$ ,  $SD= 0.73$ ) and Iraqi EFL learners ( $M= 3.21$ ,  $SD= 0.56$ );  $t= -1.469$ ,  $p= 0.001$ , and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in English language learning attitudes between Iraqi and Iranian language learners was 0.001 and less than 0.05 ( $p<0.05$ ). As a result, a noticeable difference was between the attitudes toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL students. And based on the estimated averages, it could be said that Iranian learners had a different attitude toward learning English than students in Iraq.

**Table 3.** Independent Sample T-test for English Language Learning Attitude between Iraqi and Iranian EFL Students

		N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Sig.
<b>Attitude toward language learning</b>	Iraqi EFL learners	30	3.21	0.56	0.09	-0.17	-1.469	58	0.001
	Iranian EFL learners	30	3.38	0.73	0.12				

According to Figure 1, the mean score of attitudes among Iraqi EFL learners was 3.21, and among Iranian EFL learners was 3.38. So, this figure indicated that there was a significant difference between attitudes toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners.



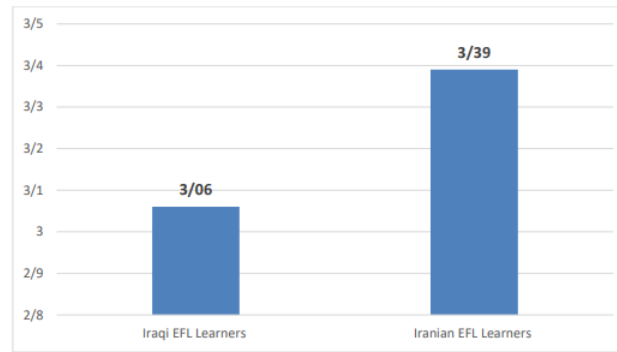
**Figure 1.** The Mean Score of Independent Sample T-test for English Language Learning Attitude between Iraqi and Iranian EFL Students

Based on the data presented in Table 4, there was a noticeable difference between behavioral dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iranian EFL learners ( $M=3.39$ ,  $SD=0.67$ ), and Iraqi EFL learners ( $M=3.06$ ,  $SD=0.87$ );  $t=-1.765$ ,  $p=0.001$ , and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in behavioral dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.001 and less than 0.05 ( $p<0.05$ ). As can be seen in Figure 2, it may be inferred from the calculated means that Iranian learners had more different behavioral dimensions of attitude toward learning English than students in Iraq.

**Table 4.** Independent Sample T-test for Behavioral Dimensions of Attitude toward Language Learning

Dimension of attitude toward language learning	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Sig.
Behavioral	Iraqi EFL learners	30	3.06	0.87	0.13	-0.33	58	0.001
	Iranian EFL learners	30	3.39	0.67	0.08			



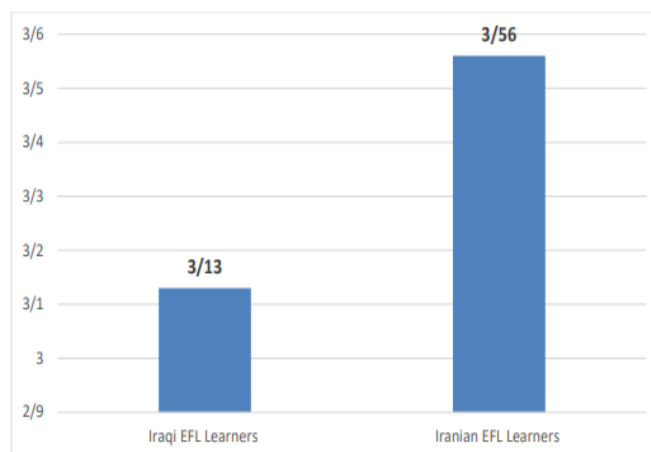


**Figure 2.** The Mean Score of Independent T-test for Behavioral Dimensions of Attitude toward Language Learning

To determine whether there was a difference in the cognitive dimension of attitude toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners, an independent t-test was used. Table 5, summarized that there was a noticeable difference between cognitive dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iranian EFL learners ( $M= 3.56$ ,  $SD= 0.49$ ) and Iraqi EFL learners ( $M=3.13$ ,  $SD= 0.90$ );  $t= -2.453$ ,  $p=0.001$  and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in cognitive dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.001 and less than 0.05 ( $p<0.05$ ). Figure 3 was clearly shown the level of the mean of cognitive difference among Iranian EFL learners was more than among Iraqi EFL learners.

**Table 5.** Independent Sample T-test for Cognitive Dimensions of Attitude toward Language Learning

Dimension of attitude toward language learning		N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Sig.
Cognitive	Iraqi EFL learners	30	3.13	0.90	0.15	-0.43	-2.453	58	0.001
	Iranian EFL learners	30	3.56	0.49	0.08				

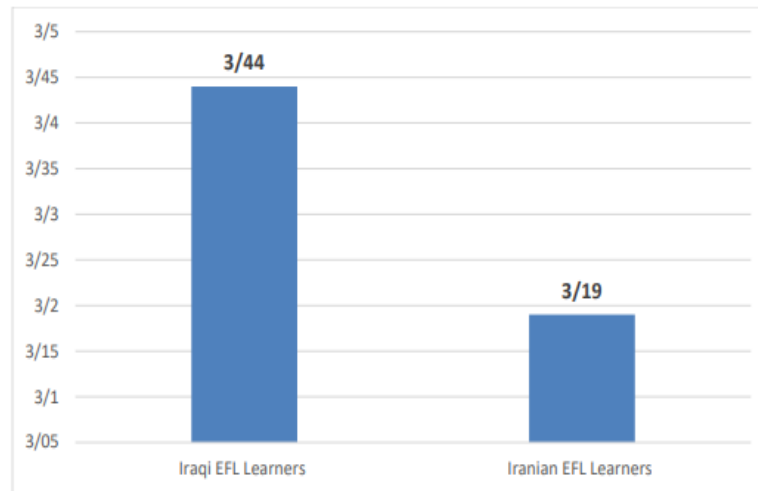


**Figure 3.** The mean score of Independent Sample T-test for Cognitive Dimensions of Attitude toward Language Learning

In order to measure the difference in the emotional dimension of attitude toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners, an independent t-test was utilized. Table 6, summarized that there was a noticeable difference between the emotional dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iraqi EFL learners (M=3.44, SD= 0.59) and Iranian EFL learners (M=3.19, SD=0.65);  $t=2.409$ ,  $p= 0.001$  and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in emotional dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.001 and less than 0.05 ( $p<0.05$ ). According to the value of means in Figure 4, the level of mean of emotional difference among Iraqi EFL learners was more than among Iranian EFL learners.

**Table 6.** Independent Sample T-test for Emotional Dimensions of Attitude toward Language Learning

Dimension of attitude toward language learning	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Sig.	
Emotional	Iraqi EFL learners	30	3.44	0.59	0.07	0.25	2.409	58	0.001
	Iranian EFL learners	30	3.19	0.65	0.09				



**Figure 4.** The mean score of Independent Sample T-test for Emotional Dimensions of Attitude toward Language Learning

The current study's purpose was to compare attitudes toward learning English as a foreign language among Iranian and Iraqi EFL Learners. In essence, the results of the descriptive analysis provided some valuable information. In this study, some factors such as age, gender, and other demographic factors weren't intended variables and weren't discussed. As the results showed the majority of Iraqi EFL learners preferred to have a negative attitude toward language learning and according to their answers on the questionnaire it may be because their teachers didn't motivate them to learn English or didn't encourage them to be engaged in practicing English language skills. According to a study by Ahmed et al. (2021), a large number of Iraqi EFL students believed that native teachers would not make it easier for them to learn the English language. The majority of Iraqi EFL learners claimed that their teachers did not teach

them to learn standard English. Many students complained that their teachers forbade them from taking part in class discussions (Ahmed et al., 2021). So, the findings of this descriptive analysis weren't in the line with some studies (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2021; Eshghinejad, 2016; Zainol Abidin et al., 2012). However, this study was in the line with some studies (Ali Ahmad et al., 2021; Ahmed, 2015; Al Noursi, 2013; Honkonen, 2020; Chairat, 2015; Mutar, 2019). The findings revealed that students have negative attitudes towards learning English.

Further, the findings of this study revealed that Iranian EFL learners had a highly positive attitude toward language learning. In fact, the majority of Iranian EFL learners believed that their teachers encouraged and motivated them to practice and take part in class activities and class discussions. The results of this study concurred with those of Chalak and Kassaian (2010). Their findings demonstrated that students' attitudes regarding the English language were overwhelmingly positive. It was clear that a lack of engaging and real-world learning materials and tasks frequently results in students developing unfavorable attitudes toward studying English as a foreign language (Richards, 2001). So, the findings of this descriptive analysis were in the line with some studies (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2021; Eshghinejad, 2016; Zainol Abidin et al., 2012; Mutar, 2019). Students were personally engaged by authentic information, which was important to them and tests their cognitive abilities. Additionally, it promoted internal motivation and curiosity. As a result of the focus on vocabulary and grammar, a lot of Iranian writings frequently have content that fails to pique students' interest (Rahimi & Nabilou, 2009). However, this study wasn't in the line with some studies (Ali Ahmad et al., 2021; Ahmed, 2015; Al Noursi, 2013; Honkonen, 2020; Chairat, 2015). The findings revealed that students had negative attitudes towards learning English.

Additionally, there were variations in the t scores of students' attitudes across the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains. The analysis of inferential statistics displayed there was a noticeable difference between behavioral dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iranian EFL learners ( $M= 3.39, SD= 0.67$ ), and Iraqi EFL learners ( $M= 3.06, SD= 0.87$ );

$t = -1.765$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in behavioral dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.001 and less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The behavioral component is the propensity to behave in a particular way that expresses the attitude toward the thing or circumstance (Ajzen, 2005).

Therefore, according to learners' responses, a lot of Iranian EFL learners strongly concurred with the positive comments that asked for information about sharing viewpoints, practicing English with a student who spoke the language well, how learning English enhanced their personality and the desire to be friends with many people who spoke English. Additionally, they disagreed with information about their anxiety while speaking English, putting off doing their English assignments, and feeling uncomfortable when required to speak English in class. In addition, findings revealed that when English was being taught, students were eager to attend in the classroom. This analysis demonstrated that Iranian EFL students' behavioral attitudes toward learning English were more positive than Iraqi EFL learners, and the findings of this part of the research were in the line with studies such as Faramarzi et al. (2015), Alam Khan (2016), Rahimi and Hassani (2012). A lot of Iraqi EFL learners had negative comments that asked for information about sharing viewpoints, practicing English with a student who spoke the language well, how learning English enhanced their personality, and the desire to be friends with many people who spoke English. Also, they agreed with the information about their anxiety while speaking English, putting off doing their English assignments, and feeling uncomfortable when required to speak English in class.

The analysis of inferential statistics demonstrated that there was a noticeable difference between cognitive dimensions of attitude toward language learning among EFL learners. According to the result, there was a noticeable difference between cognitive dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iranian EFL learners ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ) and Iraqi EFL learners ( $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ );  $t = -2.453$ ,  $p = 0.001$  and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in cognitive dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.001 and less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The level of cognition among Iranian EFL learners was more than this level among Iraqi EFL learners. It

indicated that Iranian EFL learners strongly agreed with the information about the value of English, how it benefited other courses, how people enjoyed using it, how it lead to new knowledge and ideas, and how people who were multilingual can learn new things. On the other hand, they disagreed with three negative statements disagreed with which aimed to learn more about the goal of learning English, how to use it in real-world situations, and how satisfied you were with your performance in the English course. The finding of this study was in the line with some studies such as Faramarzi et al. (2015), Alam Khan (2016), Rahimi and Hassani (2012), too, but wasn't in the line with Delić (2020), and Zainol Abidin et al., (2012) . Thus, it may be said that the cognitive attitudes toward learning English of Iranian EFL learners were more positive than Iraqi EFL learners. Because a lot of Iraqi EFL learners disagreed with the information about the value of English, how it benefited other courses, how people enjoyed using it, how it leads to new knowledge and ideas, and how people who were multilingual can learn new things. However, Iraqi EFL learners agreed with three negative statements disagreed with which aimed to learn more about the goal of learning English, how to use it in real-world situations, and how satisfied they were with their performance in the English course.

The analysis of inferential statistics demonstrated that there was a noticeable difference between the emotional dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iraqi EFL learners ( $M=3.44$ ,  $SD=0.59$ ) and Iranian EFL learners ( $M=3.19$ ,  $SD=0.65$ );  $t=2.409$ ,  $p=0.001$  and the significance level of the t-test, to investigate the difference in emotional dimensions of attitude toward language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was 0.001 and less than 0.05 ( $p<0.05$ ). The level of emotional difference among Iraqi EFL learners was more than among Iranian EFL learners. In fact, Iraqi EFL learners strongly agreed that learning English was pleasant, enthusiastic about studying English and desired to speak English fluently. Regarding positive sensations and emotions, pride, enjoyment, and confidence are of utmost importance (Eshghinejad, 2016). Most of the Iraqi respondents strongly agreed that studying English is enjoyable and interesting for them. The plurality of them said that one of their major life objectives was to learn English.

The results also showed that Iraqi EFL students had a positive emotional attitude toward language acquisition and that Iranian participants had a positive attitude in terms of two

elements, namely cognitive and behavioral. This finding was congruent with Eshghinejad's research on the cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes of Iranian EFL students toward learning English (2016). She claimed that the students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes were positive. The results, however, differ from those of a study by Zainol Abidin et al. (2012) that looked at secondary school students' views on studying English. They claimed that all three of the respondents' attitudes were negative. According to research, attitude was a critical component of successful learning, and extensive exposure to other languages speeds up language learning. It might be difficult, but also very important, to create opportunities for students to change their views and gain more exposure to the target language.

## 5. Conclusion

In this study, the attitude toward English as a foreign language learning among Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners was compared. After evaluating the data, it was clear that Iranian EFL learners had a highly positive attitude toward language learning. Additionally, there are differences in the attitudes' mean scores for the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains among EFL learners. The analysis of inferential statistics showed that there are distinct behavioral differences in EFL learners' attitudes toward language acquisition. The results showed that whereas Iraqi EFL students' mean value for behavioral components of attitude toward language acquisition was 3.06, Iranian EFL students' mean value was 3.39. An evident distinction in the cognitive aspects of attitude toward language acquisition among EFL learners was shown by the inferential statistics study. The findings indicated that Iranian EFL learners had a higher degree of cognition than their Iraqi counterparts. It showed that EFL students in Iran firmly agreed with the facts regarding the importance of English, how it helps other courses, how people enjoy using it, how it generates new knowledge and ideas, and how multilingual people may pick up new information.

According to an analysis of inferential statistics, EFL learners' emotional attitudes toward language acquisition differed noticeably from one another. The emotional difference between Iranian and Iraqi EFL students was actually higher. The truth was that Iraqi EFL students overwhelmingly concurred that learning English is enjoyable, are excited about doing so, and



want to speak the language well. Most of them said that one of their major life objectives was learning English. The findings corroborate Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) claimed that attitudes have a direct impact on people's behavior. Overall, the students seemed to have developed more confidence in themselves and their ability to speak the language fluently in a collegiate setting. Additionally, these students appeared to accept English more socially. This appeared to support Gardner's (1985) research, which showed that proficiency improved when people had positive views and were more generally motivated.

In this study, it was shown that Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners differed in three aspects of attitude toward language learning. In Iranian EFL learners, the mean value of the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of attitude toward learning English as a foreign language was higher than in Iraqi EFL students, but the emotional dimension of attitude toward learning English as a foreign language in Iraqi EFL students was higher than this value in Iranian EFL students. Students who had a positive attitude toward learning English were actually engaged in learning English topics and are aware of the status and significance of the language. Nevertheless, there were a number of factors that influence students' attitudes toward learning English as a foreign language in Iranian and Iraqi EFL classrooms, such as a dearth of a supportive learning environment, a lack of encouragement from English teachers, students' own fear of making errors and unhappiness, a lack of opportunities to practice English, a lack of resources, and the poor backgrounds of EFL teachers. Because experiences can change attitudes, effective language teaching techniques can motivate learners to have a more positive attitude about the language they are learning.

It is believed that attitude is an important component of language learning. In order to promote a positive attitude in students, it is crucial to create a positive classroom environment. The cognitions, emotions, and behaviors of English language learning should be taken into consideration by university instructors. If EFL students have a positive attitude and enjoy learning the language, they will perform cognitively (Zainol Abidin et al., 2012). Because of this, teachers play a crucial role in helping students learn a second or foreign language by encouraging a positive view of the intended language, English. Therefore, English as a Foreign

Language (EFL) teachers should understand that all students have a variety of positive and negative attitudes and that negative attitudes can be altered through careful teaching methods.

The findings reported here contribute to a wide range of issues and have ramifications for them, such as affective factors in second or foreign language learners, language attitude research, EFL students, and English education policies and practices in Iran and Iraq:

1. This study contributes to the increasing body of research on the spread of EFL by examining learners' perceptions of English.
2. This investigation illuminates the many dimensions of English that Iranian and Iraqi EFL students perceive. By providing insights into the opinions of Iranian and Iraqi EFL learners towards the English language, English education policy, and their reasons for learning English, this study significantly advances our understanding of English learning and teaching in Iran and Iraq.
3. The findings of this study suggest that the English curriculum and classroom activities should be organized in accordance with students' needs, emotions, and behaviors. Teachers should also show students respect and encouragement for their efforts in learning the language.

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