

An Exploratory Study on the Relationship between Language Learning Attitude, Engagement, and Communication Skills Among Chinese EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

Language learning stands as a cornerstone in today's globally interconnected world, particularly for Chinese learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Nevertheless, the process of language acquisition is intricate and influenced by a myriad of factors. The primary objective of this study is to examine the current status of English learning attitudes, engagement, and communication skills among Chinese EFL learners and to explore the interrelationships among these variables. A total of 402 university students majoring in disciplines other than English, situated in central China, participated in this investigation. Three questionnaires—the Attitudes toward English Learning Questionnaire, the English Learning Engagement Questionnaire, and the English Communication Skills Questionnaire—were administered to assess their learning attitudes, engagement, and communication skills using a 4-point Likert scale. Following data collection, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were conducted using SPSS. The study revealed positive attitudes and high levels of engagement among students in learning English, along with proficient overall communication skills. Additionally, significant differences were observed in students' responses regarding attitude, engagement, and communication skills when categorized by demographic profiles. Furthermore, a robust correlation was identified among language learning attitude, engagement, and communication skills. Finally, recommendations have been proposed to assist educators in addressing students' challenges and facilitating improvements in their attitudes, engagement, and communication skills within their respective English classes.

Keywords: language learning attitude, engagement, communication skills, English learning, EFL learners

INTRODUCTION

As the predominant language in today's globalized world, English assumes a crucial role in global communication, commerce, and education. Proficiency in English has become indispensable for effective international communication, academic achievement, and career advancement. Consequently, language acquisition dynamics are of paramount importance in non-English-speaking countries like China, where an increasing number of students are pursuing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to enhance their academic and professional opportunities. Hence, grasping the intricate interplay between attitude, engagement, and communication skills is essential for formulating successful learning strategies and achieving academic

success among language learners. However, language learning transcends mere cognitive processes; it is profoundly influenced by psychological, emotional, and sociocultural factors (Hashemi & Ramesh, 2024; Osman et al., 2022). Among these factors, language learning attitude, engagement, and communication skills have garnered significant attention in research on second language acquisition (Arndt, 2019; Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2022; Oskoz & Gimeno-Sanz, 2020).

Language learning attitude is a concept in educational psychology that encompasses subject-specific attitudes. Many researchers share a similar perspective on the concept, regarding it as one's tendencies toward their effort in learning languages (Zulfikar & Sari, 2019). It involves learners' overall tendencies, motivation, and attitudes toward learning and using a foreign or second language. Another definition of attitude is how a person evaluates or tends to react positively or negatively toward an object or a person (Mazana et al., 2019; Maio et al., 2019). Learning attitude is a multifaceted concept, and numerous studies have investigated the components of it. For instance, Stern (2012) divided it into three categories: the attitudes toward the target community and native speakers, the attitudes toward the target language, and the general attitudes toward language and language learning. This classification outlines both general and specific aspects of language learning attitudes. Drawing from previous research, Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, and Alzwari (2012) summarized learning attitudes into three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The cognitive dimension pertains to an individual's knowledge, understanding, and evaluation of an object; the affective dimension encompasses an individual's emotional experience of and reaction to an object; and the behavioral dimension denotes the manifestation of cognitive and affective experiences of a particular object into certain outward behaviors, which are distinct but interrelated.

Aside from defining and categorizing attitudes toward language acquisition, different studies have investigated the relationship between attitudes, motivation, and outcomes in the context of language learning. Scholars have extensively examined the significance of attitudes and motivation in acquiring a second language (Rosiak, 2023; Hashwani, 2008; Oroujlou, 2011; Pham, 2021). Previous research indicates that successful second language acquisition is closely tied to positive attitudes and motivation for language learning. For instance, Yang surveyed 20 master students at the University of Malaya to determine what makes certain people more adept at learning and acquiring English than others. The research revealed that "learners who were highly and positively involved in their English proficiency had positive attitudes and high motivation toward learning English" (Yang, 2012, p. 13). Besides, language learners' attitudes are believed to be a significant determinant of language learning outcomes. Nyamubi (2016) investigated how attitudes influenced secondary school students' English language proficiency by examining how students' interests and practical attitudes toward English shaped their learning experiences. The study concluded by emphasizing the importance of using students' positive attitudes about English to improve language acquisition.

Language learning engagement, on the other hand, refers to the degree of a student's active participation and involvement in a learning process, along with the degree to which that physical and mental activity is goal-directed and purpose-driven (Hiver & Wu, 2024). It includes learners' willingness to put effort, time, and passion into language learning activities, surpassing mere attendance in classes or completion of assignments. Student engagement is a well-defined construct consisting of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects (Reeve & Tseng, 2011). The emotional engagement scale assesses students' emotional responses to teachers, classmates, and the English learning environment, while behavioral engagement measures the involvement of body behaviors, and cognitive engagement involves the utilization of psychological resources and cognitive techniques in learning. The three dimensions interact to influence the student's learning engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). Subsequently, agentic engagement gained prominence among scholars and was proposed as the fourth dimension for evaluating student engagement in learning, which is to assess students' beneficial contributions to the flow of education they receive (Reeve & Tseng, 2011).

As an important indicator for assessing learning processes and predicting academic achievement, substantial empirical studies have focused on the factors influencing learning engagement. For instance, scholars have primarily investigated the impact of internal factors on learning engagement, including gender (Lai & Yang, 2021), personality (Muenkset al., 2017), motivation to learn (Dörnyei, 2014), self-efficacy (Sökmen & Kilic, 2019), and emotions (Fredrickson, 2001; Marchand & Gutierrez, 2012). Regarding external factors affecting engagement in learning, scholars have predominantly examined perceived teacher support (Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2021) and environmental factors (Akbari et al., 2016; Neitzel & Connor, 2018). In addition, learning engagement is critical to student motivation, performance, and academic achievement. Previous studies have demonstrated its role in enhancing motivation (Collie & Martin, 2019), reducing dropout rates (Bernardo & Almeida, 2022), and correlating with perseverance, contentment, and subjective appraisal (Oxford & Bolaños-Sánchez, 2016). Notably, behavioral engagement surpasses emotional and cognitive engagement in significance, serving as a valuable indicator of teaching effectiveness and school environment (Lam et al., 2014).

As an integral component of language proficiency, communication skills empower individuals to express ideas, collaborate, and engage effectively with others. According to Srisawat (2015), communication skills include listening, speaking, and understanding messages to respond appropriately. Similarly, Tajuddin & Jauhar (2015) defined communication skills as the actual performance of behaviors and the ability to apply effective and appropriate behavior within the given communication context. In the language learning process, possessing advanced English communication skills can not only enhance the learning process in a classroom setting but also open up more chances in learners' personal and professional lives. Therefore, mastery of the four core language competencies—speaking, reading, writing, and listening—is considered necessary for developing learners' English communication skills (Riemer, 2002). Reading skills entail the capacity to interpret written symbols and derive meaning from them during communication. Listening skills involve effectively comprehending and interpreting information in the communication process. Writing skills encompass the ability to communicate ideas effectively through various written forms. Speaking skills denote the proficiency in utilizing verbal and non-verbal symbols proficiently during communication.

Studies on English communication skills encompass various fields, including language learning, competency evaluation, cultural issues, and technology's impact on communication in a globalized society. For instance, several studies have explored the relationship between people's communication talents and employability across diverse industries, highlighting the importance of having a solid command of communication skills in increasing employment and competitiveness (Thomas et al., 2016; Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2014; Kuosuwan, 2016). Besides, scholars have directed their attention toward improving students' English communication skills in language classes, recognizing their pivotal role in academic settings. Mahbub (2021) conducted an analysis of factors contributing to poor oral performance among EFL learners and proposed strategies for improving tertiary-level learners' oral English communication skills. Similarly, Al-Mahrooqi (2012) investigated the teaching of English communication skills in Oman's schools and higher education institutions, aiming to discover the underlying causes of students' communication difficulties from their perspective.

While extensive research has been conducted on language learning attitude, engagement, and communication skills separately, there has been comparatively less focus on exploring the interplay of these elements among Chinese EFL learners. Notably, Chinese EFL college students encounter unique challenges stemming from the intricate interactions between cultural traditions, educational systems, and changing requirements in a globalized society. Therefore, the present researcher contends that understanding the relationship between language learning attitudes, engagement patterns, and communication skills among Chinese EFL learners is imperative for optimizing language education strategies and learning outcomes. By investigating these variables within China's unique cultural and educational environment, the study hopes to

provide empirical evidence of the relationship between the three variables in language learning and contextual and cultural insights to support existing theories and improve language teaching practices in Chinese higher education.

Research Questions

This study will examine the relationship between language learning attitudes, engagement, and communication skills among Chinese EFL learners. It will specifically respond to the following questions:

1. How may the attitudes of Chinese EFL learners toward learning English be described in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and affective dimensions?
2. How may the Chinese EFL learners' engagement be described in terms of agentic, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions?
3. How may the communication skills of Chinese EFL learners be described in terms of reading, listening, writing, and speaking in the English language?
4. Are there significant differences in language learning attitudes, engagement levels, and communication skills among Chinese EFL college students when grouped according to sex, major, and grade?
5. What is the nature of the relationship between language learning attitudes, engagement, and communication skills among Chinese EFL college students? How do these factors interact to influence language learning outcomes?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used empirical research methods and a quantitative research design. Descriptive research, a quantitative research method, involves collecting measurable data for statistical analysis of a certain demographic segment. It enables researchers to describe the characteristics of the demographic category with frequencies, averages, and statistical calculations (Kapur, 2018). The researcher utilized a descriptive-correlational design to examine the relationship between the following variables with no modification or control by the researcher: language learning attitude, engagement, and communication skills.

Participants of the Study

Respondents of the study were non-English major first- and second-year students from Huainan Normal University in the central part of China to facilitate comparability among the learners. All participants had passed the College Entrance Exam and were enrolled in a four-year full-time undergraduate program. Throughout their two academic years, they were required to attend a 2.5-hour weekly English class. Given the diverse majors represented at the university, the participants were divided into liberal arts majors and science majors. The researcher employed random sampling to select participants, ensuring the objectivity and reliability of the research. Students got the questionnaire via Questionnaire Star, and those willing to engage in the study finished the questionnaire. In total, 402 responses were collected.

Instrument and Validation

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured survey to collect quantitative data on participants' language learning attitudes, engagement, and communication skills. The questionnaire comprised four parts: Personal Data Information, Attitudes Toward English Learning Questionnaire, English Learning Engagement Questionnaire, and English Communication Skills Questionnaire. It consisted of a total of 69 items presented on a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly

Agree). The Attitude Toward English Learning Questionnaire, developed by Jerusha (2020), was adopted to measure students' attitudes toward English learning, using a Likert scale with four criteria. With 29 items, the questionnaire assessed students' behavioral, cognitive, and affective attitudes, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward language learning. The English Learning Engagement Questionnaire, originally developed by Reeve et al. (2011), was modified to measure student engagement in their language learning process. It comprised 20 items divided into four subscales: agentic, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. The English Communication Skills Questionnaire, adapted from Rajprasit et al. (2015), was modified to assess respondents' communication skills. It had four subscales (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) and 20 items with a 4-point Likert scale. Validity and reliability tests were conducted on the survey to ensure the stability and consistency of the scales.

Data Gathering Procedure

The questionnaires utilized in this study were directly adopted or modified from previous studies to collect data on language learning attitudes, engagement, and communication skills among non-English major students at Huainan Normal University. They were validated through expert consultation and a pilot test. Following the pilot test, a large-scale investigation was conducted using the online survey platform Questionnaire Star. Direct survey links were distributed to respondents' emails. Out of the 402 valid questionnaires collected, the researcher analyzed the data to examine the relationship between the variables and propose recommendations for enhancing students' language learning attitudes, engagement, and communication skills.

DATA ANALYSIS

Each questionnaire was evaluated individually after gathering the data. The research questions were addressed by coding the valid survey data and conducting statistical analysis using SPSS. Quantitative data analysis was employed in this study. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to describe students' responses to language learning attitudes, engagement, and communication skills questions, as well as background data from the target participants. During data processing, the composite mean was first presented as a summary of the respondents' responses to each dimension, followed by sorting and determining the weighted mean for each indicator. In addition, correlation analysis was conducted to explore respondents' responses to the three variables when categorized by profile, as well as the relationships among these variables. Finally, the data was interpreted, and findings were derived.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part contains 18 tables. The results are categorized and presented in alignment with the research questions of the study.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile

Sex	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	213	53.0
Female	189	47.0
Major		
Liberal Arts	205	51.0
Science	197	49.0
Grade		

Freshman	205	51.0
Sophomore	197	49.0

Table 1 shows respondents' profiles regarding sex, major, and grade. Of the 402 respondents, 53% are females and 47% are males. Majors are classified into liberal arts and science, with 51% majoring in liberal arts and 49% in science. Similarly, the composition is relatively even in grades. In brief, the study reveals a clear male gender predominance and a relatively balanced distribution of respondents in terms of sex, major, and grade levels, indicating satisfactory sample representation.

Table 2 Attitudes toward English Learning in terms of Behavioral Attitude

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Speaking in English anywhere makes me feel worried.	3.02	Agree	9
2. Studying English helps me to have good relationships with friends.	3.15	Agree	6
3. When I hear a student in my class speaking in English well, I like to practice speaking with him/her.	3.28	Agree	2.5
4. Studying English helps me improve my personality.	3.28	Agree	2.5
5. I put off my English homework as much as possible.	2.99	Agree	10
6. I am not relaxed whenever I have to speak in my English class.	3.19	Agree	5
7. I feel embarrassed to speak in English in front of other students.	3.22	Agree	4
8. I like to practice English the way native speakers do.	3.11	Agree	7
9. When I miss the class, I never ask my friends or teachers for the homework on what has been taught.	3.07	Agree	8
10. I do not feel enthusiastic to come to class when English is being taught.	3.30	Agree	1
Composite Mean	3.16	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

As shown in Table 2, the composite mean of 3.16 indicates that students agree with all ten behavioral attitude items, with item 10 having the highest mean of 3.30. Similarly, items 6 and 7 reveal students' dissatisfaction with attending compulsory English classes, shedding light on their sentiments regarding speaking English within and outside the classroom. Items 5 and 9 reflect students' attitudes toward English class work, with item 9 having a weighted mean of 3.07 and item 5 receiving a weighted mean of 2.99. These results suggest that students are less motivated to complete English-related tasks, potentially affecting their overall motivation. Conversely, the study found that students value the importance of studying English in their lives. With a mean of 3.15 and 3.28, items 2 and 4 indicate that students improve their personalities and foster good relationships through English learning. Furthermore, the study indicates that conversing with native or non-native speakers makes studying English more manageable (as observed in items 3 and 8). However, respondents express negative sentiments regarding speaking and studying English, as evidenced by items 1, 6, 7, and 10, which reflect feelings of worry, discomfort, embarrassment, and a lack of relaxation during English class participation.

Table 3: Attitudes toward English Learning in terms of Cognitive Attitude

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Being good at English will help me study other subjects well.	3.26	Agree	3
2. I have more knowledge and more understanding when studying English.	3.22	Agree	4
3. Frankly, I study English just to pass the exams.	3.16	Agree	5
4. In my opinion, people who speak more than one language are very knowledgeable.	3.04	Agree	8
5. Studying English helps me communicate in English effectively.	3.30	Agree	1
6. I cannot apply the knowledge from English subject in my real life.	3.12	Agree	6
7. Studying English makes me able to create new thoughts.	3.00	Agree	9
8. I am not satisfied with my performance in the English subject.	3.08	Agree	7
9. In my opinion, English language is difficult and complicated to learn.	2.94	Agree	10
10. English subject has the content that covers many fields of knowledge.	3.29	Agree	2
Composite Mean	3.14	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 -1.49 = Strongly Disagree

The study revealed that students' cognitive attitudes toward learning English are similar to previous ones, with a composite mean of 3.14. It indicates that respondents agree with the ten indicators provided to them. Notably, item 5 has the highest mean (3.30), signifying that studying English enhances effective communication and highlights the importance of compulsory English courses for first- and second-year students. Conversely, the lowest mean of item 9 (2.94) implies the perceived complexity and challenges associated with learning English. Table 3 shows that six out of ten indicators (item 1, item 2, item 4, item 5, item 7, and item 10) underscore the advantages of English study, all receiving a weighted mean exceeding 3.00, with unanimous agreement among students. As seen from Table 3, students agree with the idea that being good at English will help them understand other subjects (item 1, 3.26), create new thoughts (item 7, 3.00), and cover many fields of knowledge (item 10, 3.29), while also agreeing that being able to speak more than one language makes them more knowledgeable (item 4, 3.04). In conclusion, students generally hold positive views regarding the importance and benefits of studying English. They perceive English as a valuable subject with content that spans various fields of knowledge, but they may not necessarily find immediate real-life applications for the knowledge gained.

Table 4: Attitudes toward English Learning in terms of Affective Attitude

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I prefer studying in my mother tongue (e.g. Chinese) rather than any other language (e.g. English).	3.28	Agree	3

2. To be honest, I really have little interest in my English class.	3.24	Agree	4
3. Studying English is enjoyable for me.	3.18	Agree	5
4. I feel proud when I can express myself in writing and speaking in English.	3.10	Agree	7
5. Studying English subject makes me feel more confident.	3.33	Agree	1
6. I am interested in studying English.	3.14	Agree	6
7. Studying English is important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a job.	3.05	Agree	8
8. I look forward to the time I spend in English class.	2.99	Agree	9
9. Studying English makes me have good emotions (feelings).	3.30	Agree	2
Composite Mean	3.18	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

From Table 4, it is evident that the composite mean for affective attitude is 3.18, indicating agreement with all statements, albeit with some inclination towards mother tongue use. Table 4 reveals that indicators 1 and 2 exhibit similar weighted means of 3.28 and 3.24, respectively, regarding affective attitudes. Conversely, indicator 7, with a mean of 3.05, suggests that students value studying English for job opportunities, as it is the lingua franca worldwide. Additionally, other indicators, such as item 3 (3.18), item 4 (3.10), item 6 (3.14), and item 9 (3.30), are all reflective of the respondents’ positive affective attitudes toward learning English.

Table 5: English Learning Engagement in terms of Agentic Engagement

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. During English class, I ask questions.	3.29	Agree	2
2. I tell the English teacher what I like and what I don’t like about my English class.	3.19	Agree	3
3. I let my English teacher know what I’m interested in.	3.34	Agree	1
4. During English class, I express my preferences and opinions.	3.01	Agree	5
5. I offer suggestions about how to make the English class better.	3.10	Agree	4
Composite Mean	3.18	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 5 presents students’ agentic engagement in their English course, with a composite mean of 3.18. The highest mean, indicator 3 (3.34), indicates students’ willingness to communicate their interests to their English teacher. Conversely, the lowest mean indicator, indicator 4 (3.01), reflects their openness to personal preferences and opinions during their English class. Besides, the study revealed that the majority of

student engagement in English classes is centered on addressing their needs, such as interests and preferences, while the lower means of indicators 4 (3.01) and 5 (3.10) focus on general suggestions and opinions, indicating a focus on individualized language learning. In summary, the data suggests that the respondents are not only actively participate in their English class but also seek to contribute to the class dynamics and improvement. Their willingness to ask questions, express opinions, and provide feedback demonstrates their engagement and commitment to their learning journey.

Table 6: English Learning Engagement in terms of Behavioral Engagement

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I listen carefully in English class.	3.23	Agree	2
2. I try very hard in English class.	3.13	Agree	3
3. The first time my English teacher talks about a new topic, I listen very carefully.	3.27	Agree	1
4. I work hard when we start something new in English class.	2.95	Agree	5
5. I pay attention in English class.	3.04	Agree	4
Composite Mean	3.12	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 6 reveals that students exhibit positive behavioral engagement in their English classes, with a composite mean of 3.12. The highest weighted mean, 3.27 for indicator 3, indicates attentiveness to new topics. Conversely, the lowest mean, 2.95 for indicator 4, suggests that students put in as much effort as possible when introducing new topics or activities. The other indicators, like items 1, 2, and 5, have a weighted mean above 3.00. All these indicate a verbal interpretation of agreement, which suggests that the respondents exert much effort to be attentive and hardworking in their English class. In summary, the respondents appear to be engaged and dedicated to their English class. However, they may benefit from enhancing their consistency in maintaining attentiveness and effort, especially when encountering new material.

Table 7: English Learning Engagement in terms of Emotional Engagement

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I enjoy learning new things in English class.	3.23	Agree	2
2. When we work on something in English class, I feel interested.	3.13	Agree	3
3. When I am in English class, I feel curious about what we are learning.	3.25	Agree	1
4. English class is fun for me.	2.94	Agree	5
5. I am proud of assignments I complete in English class /course.	3.04	Agree	4
Composite Mean	3.12	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

From Table 7, the study found that respondents' emotional engagement in English learning is moderate, with a composite mean of 3.12. The highest-weighted indicator, 3 (3.25), is about learning curiosity, indicating an active interest in understanding the subject. However, the lowest-weighted indicator, 4 (2.94), is about fun, suggesting that satisfaction from the class may not be the primary source of entertainment. Additionally, indicators 1 (3.23), 2 (3.13), and 5 (3.04) demonstrate how active and involved students are in their English class. Overall, the data in the above table suggests that the respondents are actively engaged in their English class and exhibit positive qualities such as curiosity, interest, and a sense of pride in their work. These qualities contribute to a productive and enriching learning experience.

Table 8: English Learning Engagement in terms of Cognitive Engagement

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. When doing English assignments, I try to relate what I'm learning to what I already know.	3.26	Agree	2
2. When I study English, I try to connect what I am learning with my own experiences.	3.16	Agree	3
3. I make up my own examples to help me understand the important concepts I study.	3.31	Agree	1
4. Before I begin to study English, I think about what I want to get done.	2.97	Agree	5
5. As I study English, I keep track of how much I understand, not just if I am getting the right answers.	3.06	Agree	4
Composite Mean	3.15	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 8 illustrates students' cognitive engagement in their English class, with a composite mean of 3.15. Among the five indicators, indicator 3 stands out with the highest weighted mean of 3.31. This indicates that respondents agree with the practice of creating their examples to comprehend the essential concepts they study. Conversely, indicator 4, with the lowest weighted mean of 2.97, reveals that students agree that before they begin to study English, they think about what they want to get done. Other indicators, such as item 1 (3.26), item 2 (3.16), and item 5 (3.06), reveal the ability of the respondents to relate, connect, and make sense of the concepts introduced to them in their English class. Overall, the respondents' approach to English study reflects an active engagement with the material and a willingness to go beyond surface-level learning.

Table 9: Communication Skills as to Reading Skills

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I can read simple English words and phrases used in everyday life.	3.16	Agree	2
2. I can read short, simple English texts for the gist or specific information.	3.07	Agree	3
3. I can read English texts written in everyday language, or relative to my English studies, at a rather slow pace.	3.17	Agree	1

4. I can read English articles or reports expressing a particular point of view, as long as there is adequate time.	2.92	Agree	5
5. I can read longer, complex, and more specialized English texts, and can appreciate differences in style, in a reasonable time frame.	3.00	Agree	4
Composite Mean	3.06	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

As depicted in Table 9, the composite mean of 3.06 indicates good reading skills among students. Indicator 3 stands out with the highest mean of 3.17, suggesting they can understand familiar vocabulary in context. However, they may require more time and effort to process information. On the contrary, indicator 4 records the lowest mean of 2.92, suggesting that they can read English articles or reports expressing a particular point of view with adequate time. Overall, the results reveal varying levels of reading proficiency among the respondents. While some demonstrate competence in reading simple words and short texts for specific information, others struggle with more complex articles or reports expressing specific viewpoints.

Table 10: Communication Skills as to Listening Skills

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I can understand English words, and basic, familiar expressions in a limited context.	3.19	Agree	2
2. I can understand English expressions and common vocabulary relative to my immediate environment.	3.10	Agree	3
3. I can understand key points in clear, standard English speech when people speak slowly on familiar topics.	3.25	Agree	1
4. I can understand longer talks and following complex lines of argument on familiar topics; an understanding of most news programs in standard dialect.	2.91	Agree	5
5. I can understand extended spoken English, whether broadcast live or prerecorded, as long as I have time to become familiar with a particular accent.	3.00	Agree	4
Composite Mean	3.09	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 10 presents the five indicators that gauge students' communication skills in light of their listening skills. The composite mean is 3.09, with a verbal interpretation of agreement. The highest mean, 3.25 for indicator 3, indicates respondents' better comprehension in familiar contexts at a slower pace. However, indicator 4 has the lowest mean of 2.91, suggesting that they struggle to follow more intricate discussions, although they can still comprehend most news programs delivered in standard dialect. Overall, the respondents have a foundational understanding of basic English but need improvement in complex and diverse materials. Continued practice and exposure to a variety of spoken English, coupled with targeted efforts to enhance comprehension of complex content and diverse accents, can further help develop their overall listening skills.

Table 11: Communication Skills as to Writing Skills

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I can write notes on short and specific pieces of information in English.	3.10	Agree	2
2. I can write short and simple notes and messages in English.	3.04	Agree	3
3. I can write coherent texts or notes on familiar subjects in English.	3.13	Agree	1
4. I can write clear and detailed texts, reports and essays on topics in my field in English.	2.91	Agree	5
5. I can write clear, well-structured texts, and developing my point of view on complex subjects in English.	2.97	Agree	4
Composite Mean	3.03	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 -1.49 = Strongly Disagree

As depicted in Table 11, the respondents’ communication skills in writing have a composite mean of 3.03, indicating good listening skills. Indicator 3 boasts the highest mean of 3.13, followed by indicator 1 (3.10), showing that they can explain critical concepts on known topics in a concise and organized manner. However, indicator 4 has the lowest mean of 2.91, suggesting their difficulty in providing comprehensive information in English. Overall, the respondents demonstrate good English writing skills and are adept at crafting concise notes, messages, and specific details. However, there are areas for improvement. The respondents may face challenges when writing clear and detailed texts, reports, and essays on topics within their field of study or expertise. They may encounter obstacles in providing comprehensive information or developing complex arguments effectively.

Table 12: Communication Skills as to Speaking Skills

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I can say basic expressions, phrases and ask simple questions on familiar subjects in English, as long as my interlocutor is willing to help me understand and express myself.	2.99	Agree	5
2. I can respond to familiar topics, such as describing my university course in simple terms, and carry on a very limited conversation in English.	3.18	Agree	3
3. I can generally explain my opinions; spontaneously participating in conversations on familiar topics in English.	3.31	Agree	1
4. I can express myself clearly and in detail, actively participating in conversations on topics relative to my interests.	3.27	Agree	2

5. I can describe complex subjects clearly and in an appropriate manner; express myself in either professional or social contexts in English.	3.08	Agree	4
Composite Mean	3.26	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 -1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Similar to their reading, listening, and writing skills, the respondents’ speaking skills, as depicted in Table 12, are rated favorably, with a composite mean of 3.26, the highest of all the skills assessed. Among the five indicators, indicator 3 has the highest weighted mean of 3.31, closely followed by indicator 4, with a mean of 3.27, indicating a near-parity. The data indicate that respondents have advanced spoken English proficiency, allowing them to communicate effectively and engage in in-depth discussions on familiar subjects. However, the indicator with the lowest mean of 2.99 is indicator 1, indicating that they may face challenges in expressing themselves without adequate contextual or interpersonal support. Overall, the respondents demonstrate a commendable range of English-speaking skills, with some showing higher proficiency levels. While they demonstrate basic and moderate abilities to communicate on familiar topics and engage in limited conversations, some also possess higher proficiency levels, enabling them to express opinions, actively participate in discussions, and communicate effectively in both professional and social contexts.

Table 13: Difference of Responses in Attitudes toward English Learning When Grouped According to Profile

Sex	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Behavioral Attitude	50.773	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive Attitude	29.885	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective Attitude	48.447	0.000	Highly Significant
Major			
Behavioral Attitude	60.733	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive Attitude	31.254	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective Attitude	15.776	0.000	Highly Significant
Grade			
Behavioral Attitude	41.982	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive Attitude	16.149	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective Attitude	8.865	0.003	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

As seen in Table 13, the study revealed significant differences in attitudes toward English learning among students based on their profile, with the obtained p-values being less than the alpha level. Findings indicated considerable variations in responses across various demographic categories, showcasing significant differences in attitudes toward English learning concerning gender, majors, and grades. It can be seen that male students taking science majors and sophomores exhibited more favorable attitudes compared to their counterparts. These findings highlight the importance of understanding and addressing these demographic influences in language acquisition.

Table 14: Difference in Responses to English Learning Engagement When Grouped According to Profile

Sex	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Agentic Engagement	47.373	0.000	Highly Significant
Behavioral Engagement	12.542	0.000	Highly Significant
Emotional Engagement	23.730	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive Engagement	38.216	0.000	Highly Significant
Major			
Agentic Engagement	9.324	0.002	Highly Significant
Behavioral Engagement	15.611	0.000	Highly Significant
Emotional Engagement	10.643	0.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Engagement	23.926	0.000	Highly Significant
Grade			
Agentic Engagement	7.844	0.005	Highly Significant
Behavioral Engagement	6.435	0.012	Highly Significant
Emotional Engagement	15.724	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive Engagement	9.088	0.003	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at $p\text{-value} < 0.05$

Table 14 reveals significant differences in English learning engagement among students based on their profile, with the obtained p-values being less than the alpha level. The results showed that male, science major, and sophomore students have better engagement compared to their counterparts. Specifically, sex showed significant differences in agentic, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement, while major also showed noteworthy differences, with agentic behavior receiving the highest p-value. In addition, the study concluded that engagement varies based on the year in college, with first- and second-year students showing varying levels of engagement.

Table 15: Difference in Responses to Communication Skills When Grouped According to Profile

Sex	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Reading Skills	15.078	0.000	Highly Significant
Listening Skills	16.002	0.000	Highly Significant
Writing Skills	3.989	0.046	Significant
Speaking Skills	0.359	0.552	Not Significant
Major			
Reading Skills	0.124	0.725	Not Significant
Listening Skills	10.795	0.001	Significant
Writing Skills	0.024	0.877	Not Significant
Speaking Skills	0.099	0.755	Not Significant
Grade			
Reading Skills	1.383	0.240	Not Significant
Listening Skills	3.948	0.048	Significant
Writing Skills	2.778	0.096	Not Significant

Speaking Skills	0.018	0.895	Not Significant
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Legend: Significant at p -value < 0.05

Table 15 presents the comparison of responses on communication skills when grouped according to profile. Based on sex, the study revealed that reading and listening skills are highly significant (p -values at 0.000), with writing skills being significant (p -value of 0.046) and speaking skills being not significant (p -value of 0.552), indicating that both genders have the same responses regarding their speaking skills. Regarding major, the study found that students' responses to communication skills, regardless of their major, were similar. However, a notable distinction surfaced in listening skills responses ($f=10.795$, $p=0.001$), suggesting divergent perceptions concerning listening aptitude based on majors. Finally, while no significant discrepancies were discerned in reading, writing, and speaking skills based on grade, listening skills significantly differed in responses across demographic profiles.

Table 16: Relationship Between Attitudes toward English Learning and English Learning Engagement

Behavioral Attitude	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Agentic Engagement	.540 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant
Behavioral Engagement	.496 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant
Emotional Engagement	.518 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive Engagement	.534 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive Attitude			
Agentic Engagement	.406 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant
Behavioral Engagement	.248 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant
Emotional Engagement	.367 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive Engagement	.384 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective Attitude			
Agentic Engagement	.466 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant
Behavioral Engagement	.311 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant
Emotional Engagement	.482 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive Engagement	.368 ^{**}	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p -value < 0.01

The computed r -values in Table 16 show a moderately direct correlation between attitudes toward English learning and engagement, which implies that the better the attitude toward English is, the more engaged the students are in English learning. Among the three dimensions of attitudes, behavioral attitude has the most robust correlation with engagement, as evidenced by the highest r -values. Within the four dimensions of cognitive attitude, agentic engagement stands out with the highest r -value of 0.406, signifying its strongest correlation with cognitive attitude. Additionally, other forms of engagement within the cognitive attitude domain, namely behavioral ($r=0.248$), emotional ($r=0.367$), and cognitive ($r=0.384$), demonstrates moderate to weak positive correlation. Among the four dimensions of affective attitude, agentic engagement similarly displays the strongest correlation ($r=0.466$), while other forms of engagement, including behavioral ($r=0.311$), emotional ($r=0.482$), and cognitive ($r=0.368$), display strong to moderate correlations. Overall, fostering a positive attitude toward English learning appears to enhance student engagement across various dimensions.

Table 17: Relationship Between Attitudes toward English Learning and Communication Skills

Behavioral Attitude	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Reading Skills	.485**	0.000	Highly Significant
Listening Skills	.511**	0.000	Highly Significant
Writing Skills	.434**	0.000	Highly Significant
Speaking Skills	.661**	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive Attitude			
Reading Skills	.357**	0.000	Highly Significant
Listening Skills	.329**	0.000	Highly Significant
Writing Skills	.318**	0.000	Highly Significant
Speaking Skills	.577**	0.000	Highly Significant
Affective Attitude			
Reading Skills	.333**	0.000	Highly Significant
Listening Skills	.402**	0.000	Highly Significant
Writing Skills	.306**	0.000	Highly Significant
Speaking Skills	.468**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at $p\text{-value} < 0.01$

The computed r-values presented in Table 17 reveal a moderately direct correlation between students' attitudes toward English and their communication skills. Among the three types of attitudes, behavioral attitudes received the highest r-values, indicating the strongest correlation. Notably, within the dimensions of behavioral attitude, speaking skills have the highest r-value of 0.661, suggesting a particularly robust correlation. Similarly, other skills such as reading ($r=0.485$), listening ($r=0.511$), and writing ($r=0.434$), also indicate a moderately positive correlation with behavioral attitude.

Among the dimensions of cognitive attitude, speaking skills also received the highest r-value of 0.577, which makes speaking have the strongest correlation with cognitive attitude. Conversely, the other skills, including reading ($r=0.357$), listening ($r=0.329$), and writing ($r=0.318$), show a moderately positive correlation with cognitive attitude.

Among the dimensions of affective attitude, speaking skills exhibit the highest correlation coefficient, with an r-value of 0.468. This finding mirrors the results observed for behavioral and cognitive attitudes. As a result, it can be inferred that speaking skills have the strongest correlation with affective attitude. Additionally, reading skills ($r=0.333$), listening skills ($r=0.402$), and writing skills ($r=0.306$) are all correlated to affective attitude.

Table 18: Relationship Between English Learning Engagement and Communication Skills

Agentic Engagement	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Reading Skills	.351**	0.000	Highly Significant
Listening Skills	.336**	0.000	Highly Significant
Writing Skills	.283**	0.000	Highly Significant
Speaking Skills	.753**	0.000	Highly Significant
Behavioral Engagement			

Reading Skills	.311**	0.000	Highly Significant
Listening Skills	.356**	0.000	Highly Significant
Writing Skills	.318**	0.000	Highly Significant
Speaking Skills	.495**	0.000	Highly Significant
Emotional Engagement			
Reading Skills	.307**	0.000	Highly Significant
Listening Skills	.370**	0.000	Highly Significant
Writing Skills	.191**	0.000	Highly Significant
Speaking Skills	.625**	0.000	Highly Significant
Cognitive Engagement			
Reading Skills	.303**	0.000	Highly Significant
Listening Skills	.365**	0.000	Highly Significant
Writing Skills	.280**	0.000	Highly Significant
Speaking Skills	.677**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

The computed r-values in Table 18 reveal a moderately direct correlation between English learning engagement and communication skills, which implies that the more engaged students are in English learning, the better their communication skills will be.

Among the dimensions of agentic engagement, the four communication skills showed a strong correlation. However, speaking skills have the highest r-value of 0.753, followed by reading skills ($r=0.351$), listening skills ($r=0.336$), and writing skills ($r=0.283$). Regarding the dimensions of behavioral engagement, correlations are evident across all four communication skills. Speaking skills ($r=0.495$) have the most substantial correlation, followed by listening skills ($r=0.356$), writing skills ($r=0.318$), and reading skills ($r=0.311$). In the emotional engagement dimension, all communication skills showed significant correlations, with speaking skills again demonstrating the strongest correlation coefficient of 0.625. Meanwhile, listening skills ($r=0.370$) and reading skills ($r=0.307$) showed moderate correlations. Within cognitive engagement dimensions, correlations are observable, with speaking skills showing the strongest correlation ($r=0.677$), followed by listening skills ($r=0.365$), reading skills ($r=0.303$), and writing skills ($r=0.280$). Similar to earlier results, speaking skills showed robust relationships. Overall, these results suggest a notable association between English learning engagement and communication skills. In essence, heightened engagement levels correspond to enhanced communication skills among students.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings elucidated within the study, several noteworthy conclusions emerge. Concerning the demographic composition of participants, there is a relatively even distribution of first- and second-year students across various majors, predominantly consisting of male students majoring in liberal arts. Overall, participants exhibit positive behavioral, cognitive, and affective attitudes toward English learning. Regarding attitudes toward language learning, it is noteworthy that all types of attitudes received composite means interpreted as “agree.” Remarkably, the affective dimension yielded the highest composite mean, juxtaposed with the cognitive dimension registering the lowest.

Moreover, affirmative engagement in English language acquisition is apparent among participants, as evidenced by the favorable weighted means across diverse engagement dimensions, all endorsing an interpretation of “agree.” Remarkably, within the spectrum of engagement dimensions, agentic engagement

emerged with the highest weighted mean, contrasting with behavioral and emotional engagement exhibiting relatively lower scores.

Furthermore, participants exhibit commendable proficiency in communication skills, as deduced from the composite means across the four skill dimensions, all indicating agreement. Among the four dimensions of engagement, agentic engagement garnered the highest weighted mean, while behavioral and emotional engagement received the lowest weighted means.

Additionally, a significant disparity surfaces in responses pertaining to attitude, engagement, and communication skills when participants are stratified based on demographic profiles such as gender, major, and grade. Specifically, male sophomore students taking scientific majors exhibit superior performance in these domains compared to their counterparts. Notably, a highly significant correlation exists among language learning attitudes, engagement, and communication skills. In summary, a positive attitude correlates with enhanced engagement and communication skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Building upon the comprehensive findings and conclusions outlined, several recommendations are proposed to further optimize the English language learning experience. Addressing English educators specifically, it is advisable to cultivate a nurturing and inclusive learning environment that fosters open expression and encourages active participation during activities and discussions. Such an atmosphere is pivotal in cultivating a positive attitude toward English among students. Moreover, English instructors are urged to seamlessly integrate technology into their teaching methodologies, particularly within writing classes, to enhance student engagement and foster active participation.

As for communication skills enhancement, English teachers can guide students toward self-reflection, empowering them to critically evaluate their own performance. This self-reflective practice instills a sense of autonomy and responsibility for their learning journey, potentially leading to significant improvements in their communication skills.

Looking forward to future research endeavors, researchers are encouraged to delve into the intricacies of English language acquisition within the context of English as a Second Language (ESL). A particularly fruitful avenue would involve conducting comparative studies between ESL and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, scrutinizing their attitudes, engagement levels, and communication skills. Such comparative analyses could yield valuable insights, informing and enhancing pedagogical practices across academic settings.

In summation, these recommendations are poised to fortify the foundations of English language education, fostering an environment conducive to positive attitudes, active engagement, and honed communication skills among students.

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