

**A STUDY INTO THE ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS RECEIVING
TOURISM EDUCATION AT DIFFERENT LEVELS TOWARDS
ENGLISH COURSES**

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ABSTRACT

In Turkey, tourism education is offered basically at three levels; high school level, pre-bachelor's degree level, and B.A. level. English courses are of great significance in the implemented curriculum of tourism education. In this study, the attitudes of students receiving tourism education at different levels were measured towards English courses. Attitude is one of the key factors that affect learning and is directly related to the students involved. The attitude scale developed through the study was implemented to the students and the data obtained were assessed via various statistical analyses.

Key Words: education, students, tourism education, English, attitude

**Farklı Öğrenim Düzeylerinde Turizm Eğitimi Alan Öğrencilerin İngilizce
Derslerine İlişkin Tutumları Üzerine Bir Araştırma**

ÖZET

Türkiye'de turizm alanında ortaöğretim, önlisans ve lisans düzeyinde olmak üzere 3 düzeyde örgün turizm eğitimi yapılmaktadır. Örgün turizm eğitimi kapsamında uygulanan programlarda da özellikle yabancı dil dersleri büyük önem arz etmektedir. Bu çalışmada örgün turizm eğitimi veren öğretim kurumlarında öğrenim gören öğrencilerin İngilizce derslerine ilişkin tutumları ölçülmüştür. Tutum, öğrenmeyi etkileyen faktörlerden birisidir ve doğrudan öğrenci ile ilgilidir. Çalışma kapsamında geliştirilen tutum ölçeği, ortaöğretim, önlisans ve lisans düzeyinde turizm eğitimi alan öğrencilere uygulanmış ve elde edilen veriler çeşitli istatistiksel analizlere tabi tutulmuşlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: eğitim, öğrenci, turizm eğitimi, İngilizce, tutum.

Introduction

When the factors concerning learning pertaining to students, it will be hardly surprising that that one of them will be the attitude students take towards a course (Wang, Geneva and Herbert, 1990:84). Defined as the tendency attributed to an individual and which makes up the thought, feelings and behaviour of an individual about a psychological object, attitude encloses cognitive, affective and behavioral elements. Knowledge on the attitude-object forms cognitive element, and behaviour which can be observed towards attitude-object outlines behavioral elements (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1977:87).

Attitude of a student to a course cannot only on its own have an effect but his/her experience associated with the course will shape the magnitude or the direction of his/her attitude as well. No comprehensive study has been run into as regards the attitudes of students receiving tourism education towards English lessons. However, research at high and higher schools carried out and

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published by (Kabadayı, 2003), (Aşkın ve Onur, 2003), (Bağçeci, 2004), (Seferoğlu, 2004) and (Can, 2004) may hint something about the subject. On the other hand, in the study done by Ünlüönen, students' assessments on the conformity of English courses to the curriculum at tourism education faculties between 1998-1999 and 2003-2004 were found out to be "average on the whole" (Ünlüönen, 2004:124).

The Objective of the Study

This study sets out to determine the attitude levels of students receiving tourism education at different educational levels to English courses. To serve this purpose, answers to the following questions will be sought.

1. What is the attitude level of the 8th grade high school students towards English courses?
2. What is the attitude level of last year pre-bachelor's (associate) degree students towards English courses?
3. What is the attitude level of senior students towards English courses?
4. Is there a difference between the attitude levels of the high school, pre-bachelor's degree, and senior students towards English courses?

Methodology

The study is a descriptive one. Participants at high school level are from Ankara, Bolu, Fethiye and Rize Tourism Vocational High Schools, 8th grade students; at pre-bachelor's (associate) level from Hacettepe, Başkent and Muğla Universities, last year students; at undergraduate level from Gazi, Başkent and Muğla Universities, senior students. Table 1 introduces the participants in terms of gender.

Table 1: Distribution of Students by Gender and Education Level

Education level	Female	Male	Total
High school	91	209	300
Pre-bachelor	80	220	300
Undergraduate	150	150	300
Total	321	579	900

An attitude scale was employed in order to find out the level of students' attitude to English courses, in developing the scale, 30 statements thought to represent the attitudes towards English courses were set. Subsequently, in an attempt to contribute to the validity of the scale, each statement were examined and assessed by 5 field specialists through a 5-grade scale. In order to further confirm the validity of the scale, a pre test was administered to students at high school level (n= 87) and undergraduate

*A Study Into The Attitudes Of Students Receiving Tourism Education At Different Levels
Towards English Courses*

level(n=84) and the difference was found to be 0,05 significance level (i.e. high school level $x=72,04$ and undergraduate level $x= 71,89$), which signifies that the scale is of significance validity. To support the reliability of the scale test-retest method was employed. Subsequent to administering the scale to 61 students at Anatolian Tourism Vocational Schools at a two-week interval, reliability coefficient was found to be 0,86. the minimum point is 20, the maximum being 100 in the scale.

In analyzing the data, variance analysis and scheffee tests were drawn on.

Findings and Interpretations

Arithmetical averages, frequency and standard deviation obtained through the analysis of the data is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Arithmetical Averages and Standard Deviation

Level	f	\bar{X}	S.S.
High School	300	72.14	12.07
Pre-Bachelor Degree	300	63.57	14.41
Undergraduate	300	73.04	11.58

As seen in Table 2, the highest attitude level belongs to undergraduate students. And this is followed by high school and pre-bachelor degree students.

Table 3: Statistical Analysis towards the Students' Assessment of English Courses

Variance Origin	TS	DF	AS	f	α
Inter-groups	42269.7	4	10567.5	16.29	0.001
Intra-groups	118856.1	257	462.5		
Total	161125.8	261			

In order to perform the test to see if the attitude averages vary by grades, one-way variance analysis was employed. Afterwards, taking the ensuing values into account, "t" test was applied so as to find out the source of the difference. Findings pertaining to this are displayed in Table 3.

As can be seen in Table 3 concerning attitude averages, the difference was at 0.001 significance level. Results displaying the cross-comparison of the grades can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Statistical Analysis towards the Students' Assessment of English Courses

Levels	Pre-bachelor	Undergraduate
High School	-7,10*	-0,66
Pre-bachelor		-7,02*

* 0.001 significance level

As can be seen in Table 4, no significant difference rose in terms of attitude averages among students at high school and undergraduate levels, whereas when it comes to high school and pre-bachelor students, there appeared a significant difference at 0.001 level.

Results and Suggestions

Data obtained through statistical analysis reveal that undergraduate senior students have the highest attitude averages. That is to say, while undergraduate students exert a considerable level of attitude, whereas the attitude averages fall at especially pre-bachelor level.

These findings indicate that students at high school and undergraduate levels have a decisive attitude towards English lessons, but the attitudes of pre-bachelor students are not consistent.

The negative aspects in the attitude of pre-bachelor students result from the tedious and monotonous atmosphere of the courses, having the same subjects at different levels in a similar manner, problems led by instructors, and lack of standardized objects in the curriculum, which is currently used performed for almost all vocational courses.

The ensuing results mentioned above entail that English courses at pre-bachelor level should be opened to discussion in order to re-design in a fashion that they meet the demands of the industry and the students.

For undergraduate students with the highest average (73.04), this situation has a normal nature, for these students chose to be a student at a tourism department on their own initiative. Despite the fact that the average high school students have seems high, the underlying reason why they are having tourism education can be put down to the influence of their family.

Attitudes of pre-bachelor students' towards English courses point to an important fact. While research is being conducted into the courses of these negative developments, instructors of English should be illuminated on the

*A Study Into The Attitudes Of Students Receiving Tourism Education At Different Levels
Towards English Courses*

negative influence of this present situation on the vocational developments and personalities of the students involved.

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App. Questionnaire form used

**A STUDY INTO THE ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS RECEIVING
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This questionnaire is conducted solely for scientific purposes to reveal the attitudes of students towards English courses. No mention of person(s) and institution(s) will be made in the study. Thank you for your contributions in advance.

**Dr. Yasin BOYLU
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A. Your Present School:

(.....)

B. Gender:

male

female

Please put (X) on the corresponding column

Statements related to opinions	Definitely don't agree	Don't agree	Not sure	Aagree	Definitely agree
English is an interesting subject					
I like English					
There is no creativity in English. All you have to do is to memorize structures					
English is easy for me					
English is not beneficial since it is not used					
I try to do my best in English courses					
I don't like English					
English is important in daily life					
English is essential in order to pursue worldwide events					
English courses are boring and monotonous					
I never read English books other than course books					
I would not study English if I did not have to					

*A Study Into The Attitudes Of Students Receiving Tourism Education At Different Levels
Towards English Courses*

English is beneficial in solving daily life problems					
English is not essential in order to be a cultured person					
I like studying English					
I do not pay attention to English other than studying it					
I read English publications (journals, newspapers) proper to my level					
I am proud of my achievements in my studies and test scores in English					
I do not like participating in English courses					
English is of great importance in modern communities					