



Attitudes of Indian and Saudi Students in Learning English as a Second Language (ESL)/English as a Foreign Language (EFL): A SWOT Analysis

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This research studies the similarities and differences in the attitudes of students who studied English as a Second Language (ESL) in India and students who studied English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Saudi Arabia through the use of SWOT analysis. The data was collected from 165 ESL/EFL students through the use of two questionnaires that had 16 questions each. Out of the total of 16 questions, the first 3 were personal questions that included their names, courses they enrolled in, and their age, which were not mandatory to be answered. Of the remaining 13 questions, 4 had to be answered in order of their preference. The third part of the questionnaire had 5 questions based on LSRW skills, and 4 were open-ended questions based on SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) analysis. SWOT is used in different fields these days but it hasn't been used in the context of measuring students' level of learning a language till date, which makes this study unique. The results of this study showed that ESL respondents' views had been scattered over different ideas, but EFL respondents had been very focused about their strengths,

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weaknesses, opportunities and threats; though in most cases, both the category of respondents pointed out similar reasons. The attitudes of both the respondents towards learning English has been found to differ slightly depending upon their cultural backgrounds. The study stipulates some suggestions for helping students from both the backgrounds as well as their instructors in overcoming the issues that they majorly face in learning the English language.

Keywords: *Attitudes; English as a second language (ESL); English as a foreign language (EFL); SWOT analysis.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language today enjoys the privilege of being called the global language because it has become the part and parcel for business purposes all over the world. "Having command over English language in the twenty-first century is like sitting on a large heap of knowledge that is available at your fingertips. It is also believed that this heap of knowledge does not take much time in being transformed into a 'heap of gold'" [1]. This has triggered the interest of people from different parts of the world in learning it either as a foreign language or as a second language, depending on the country where the learner is residing. English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are two different categories in which the language is studied. It is indeed necessary to know that both are different in terms of language functions, learning and teaching methods, learning environment, and in the approach of learners towards the target language. ESL refers to the use of the English language in a country where it is used next to the mother tongue and is also implied as the official language of that country alongside L1, which means that their official documents are in both L1 and L2. These countries use their mother tongue for day-to-day interactions and use English in formal settings. India is a country that belongs to this category. On the contrary, EFL is used in countries where it does not enjoy the official status but is used for interacting with the native speakers of English, for interacting with the speakers of other languages residing in these countries, for opening up avenues for themselves in the world businesses, or for dealing in situations where they wish to go to the western nations for further studies or job. Saudi Arabia is a country that belongs to this category.

To analyse the interests of students in learning English, it's necessary to know the factors governing them. These factors include attitude and motivation. One's attitude is the driving factor behind successful learning of any

language [2]. A lot of research has been done on both attitude and motivation to get to the core of the matter. An example of motivation can be cited from the research conducted by Munipah [3]. In her study "The students' motivation in learning English", she analysed through the data collected on how high or low the motivation level is in learning English (for the students of Jakarta), and she found out that 9% had high motivation and 91% had medium to low motivation. It is indeed the motivation level of a student that decides what, how, and for how long he/she wishes to learn something. This, in turn, affects the attitudes of students towards that language or subject. Scholars believe attitude to be a part of motivation. According to Gardner [4], "motivation...refers to the combination of effort and desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language" (p. 10). The attitude of the learner has a major impact on the effort, orientation, and result of his/her learning a language. Along with this, learners' "personality, self-perception, beliefs, intelligence, classroom climate, etc., are also the important variables in acquiring foreign languages" [5], which must be congenial to them. Without seeing a strong purpose in learning the English language and its positive impact on one's career later on in life, it won't be possible for a learner to spend time and energy on it. It is indeed necessary to know the fact that all the four language skills in English, LSRW, cannot be easily acquired due to the reason that learners in India as well as in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seldom get the chance to interact with the native speakers of English, which would have automatically helped them in learning both the receptive and the productive skills. [6,7] believe that mastering the English language would require the students of ESL and EFL backgrounds to learn it consciously.

SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis was, initially, used in the business environment to analyse the position of a company in the market and to recognize its strengths and weaknesses so as to work on

them and improve the growth of the company [8,9]. SWOT analysis is not limited to business organizations now, but has spread to other areas where the experts have used it to improve the works in their fields, like in healthcare, agriculture, management, marketing, etc. In the education sector, higher educational institutions have started using SWOT analysis to conduct strategic planning [10]. Universities like California State University, Iowa State University, Montana State University, and Ball State University, used SWOT analysis to gauge their place in the academic market [11,12].

SWOT analysis is, similarly, also used to measure one's personal growth and figure out the reasons that create hindrances to that growth. Being fully aware of these areas [13] "assists in adding surmounting efforts to enhance these qualities" (p. 124). Similar approach can also be applied to the learning of the English language as ESL/EFL. It will surely become easy for learners if they are aware of their weaknesses and strengths in this area, and to know whether the issues are more from within (one's ability to learn the language) or from the environment. "Language... is not only related to cognition, psychology, emotion and interests but also influenced by the environment" [14]. The diagram of SWOT analysis (see List 1) has 2 internal factors- strengths and weaknesses; and 2 external factors- opportunities and threats:

Existing research has made comparisons in the approaches and situations of ESL and EFL learners from different theoretical frameworks, like Gardner's [4] Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). Gardner [15] talks about integrative and instrumental orientations: the first meaning "a desire, willingness, or ability to become psychologically closer to another language community" and the latter meaning if there are "practical benefits for individuals" (p.17). Researches have been done from such angles but no research has been taken up to analyse the differences and similarities in the attitudes of Indian and Saudi students in the learning of the English language through SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis is being used for the first time in this context to analyse the subjects' internal and

external factors that play a major role in developing their positive or negative attitudes towards learning the target language. Therefore, this research seeks to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the internal and external factors for Indian and Saudi students that play a major role in developing positive or negative attitudes in them in learning the target language?
2. What are the environmental threats that hinder them from learning the English language?
3. Which of the language skills (LSRW) do the ESL (Indian) and EFL (Saudi) students find easy to learn?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing literature on ESL/EFL study and SWOT analysis have been reviewed, which have direct connection to the present study. The literature review has been given under two sub-sections.

2.1 Second Language and Foreign Language Acquisition

Immense research has been done in the recent past on various facets of learning English as a second language and English as a foreign language. The researchers have studied both the categories individually as well as in comparison to each other. They have figured out that there are certain differences between the two from the perspective of methods, environment, and teaching practices. ESL learners seem to get more exposed to the target language (as compared to the EFL learners) because the pedagogical practices in such countries focus more on meaning and fluency rather than the grammatical structures [16].

The environmental backgrounds are responsible for the differences in the learning habits of ESL and EFL students. ESL learners freely seem to use English to communicate in their natural surroundings, but EFL learners don't tend to make use of English in situations where they can do without it [17].

List 1. Internal factors for SWOT analysis

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------|
| Internal Factors | Strengths | Weaknesses |
| External Factors | Opportunities | Threats |

Buschfeld and Kautzsch [18] compared EFL and ESL situations and stated that both have interconnectedness in society, ethnicity, age, and level of proficiency for which they developed the EIF model (Extra and Intra-territorial Forces). This model emphasized that language development was due to the influence of language learning context. The model further stated that the differences in the level of writing which arose because of language acquisition contexts must be analysed by considering a wider range of variables like education, social, and political factors.

The attitudes and motivational levels of students also determine their level of learning a language. It has been seen that ESL students have more intrinsic motivation than EFL students due to the fact that ESL candidates have to use English in their daily lives unlike the EFL candidates [19]. In a study, 112 students of English from Umm AL-Qura University in Saudi Arabia were examined in which their attitudes in learning the English language were studied. They reached the conclusion that most of the EFL learners had a highly positive attitude towards learning the language, which led them to acquire high Grade Point Average (GPAs). This was followed by the students whose attitude towards the language was average to low, which led them to score an average to low GPA [20]. A similar study was conducted in Iran on EFL learners and it was found that students have positive approach towards learning the language, which showed significant relationship between their attitudes and speaking proficiency [5]. Attitudes of students of some countries, like Turkiye, is positive towards learning English but they are not highly oriented in doing so as they prefer speaking Turkish among themselves [21].

Depending on their country, second language learners can choose to use a variety of dialects and accents while speaking in English, like Indian English, Nigerian English, Ghanaian English, instead of RP (Received Pronunciation), whereas EFL learners do not have to struggle with this because their complete focus is not on mastering the foreign language but being able to use it well enough to be able to make a career in it or just to communicate well [22]. Teaching the accent and pronunciation to the non-native speakers has invited different strategies to be used by the teachers in the classroom. J.M. Murphy [23] studied the non-native models in ESL/EFL pronunciation teaching and stated, "As teachers and other specialists explore

possibilities for including illustrations of I&CNNE [intelligible and comprehensible non-native English] pronunciation, it will be helpful if such efforts begin to serve as a basis for action research and more formal research in both teacher preparation and ESL/EFL programs". To help students of both ESL and EFL groups to improve their pronunciation, cognitive and social pronunciation learning strategies can be used in the classrooms [24].

2.2 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis originated from Harvard Business School in the 1950s, where organizational strategies were studied in relation to their environment [25,26]. In 1960s, Albert Humphrey analysed 500 companies in order to develop a system of change management and control [27]. After the 1960s, SWOT analysis started being used in different areas of research, such as healthcare, agriculture, management, and marketing. It, then, also became widely used in education for strategic planning as well as in decision-making [28]. By the 1990s, SWOT analysis was the major framework used in strategic management [29]. In the 21st century, researchers have combined different techniques and methods with SWOT analysis to produce powerful strategic decisions [10]. Currently, the researchers are using SWOT analysis to study the use of Artificial Intelligence (ChatGPTs) in academia [30].

3. METHODS

This study ventured on analysing the attitudes of the learners of English from two non-native countries through the use of SWOT analysis. Students from India (where they are learning English as a second language) and students from Saudi Arabia (where they are learning English as a foreign language) have been used as subjects of this study to find out the similarities and differences of the above mentioned factors in their learning English. The subjects of study were chosen from India and Saudi Arabia because both the countries are working hard towards coming into the main stream economy. The former is trying to raise itself to the international level by matching up with the developed economies of the world through advancement in technology, whereas the latter, already a developed country, is shifting its focus towards tourism by enhancing its geographical beauty. For the same reason, both the countries are giving significant importance to the English language.

The study used parallel design of mixed methods research design. The questionnaire designed for this study had questions which were to be answered on the Likert scale as well as questions that demanded subjective answers from the candidates.

The purposive sample method was used under which the maximum number of subjects with average intelligence and skills were chosen to represent the larger group of people. This method helped in getting to the core of the intentions and attitudes of the general population of students from both the countries regarding their purpose of acquiring the English language. The selection of the average category of students was done through analysing their previous grades in the courses they studied.

3.1 Participants

The subjects of this study were the students of BA (English major) and MA (English) in 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years conducted remotely (for Indian subjects) and face-to-face (for Saudi subjects) through the distribution of questionnaires. All the students selected for this study belonged to the average category. Their scores in previous exams were noted and the selected candidates' percentage of marks ranged from 55% to 78% (Indians- as they follow the UK grading pattern) and 60% to 88% for Saudis. Their age range was 18-25 years.

3.2 Instruments

The instruments used for collecting data were- questionnaire and students' percentage in previous exams. The marks of the students were collected from the teachers' mark sheets. Data was collected through the use of 2 questionnaires having similar 16 questions. These questionnaires were used to measure the attitudes of subjects through SWOT analysis. The attitudes of learners lead them to develop interests in either 1, 2, 3 or all 4 of the LSRW skills which have been measured in this study from the perspective of both the second language and foreign language learners through 10-point Likert scale. The 4 closed-ended questions in the second part of the questionnaire were analysed in the following manner:

The first part of the questionnaire had 3 questions that were not mandatory to be answered: their names, the courses they were studying, and their age.

The second part of the questionnaire had 4 questions that had to be answered in order of their preference: Totally, Very much, Average, Very little, Nil. The manner in which the result of these questions has been assessed is shown in the List 2. These questions judged the surroundings of the learners and the difference it made in their learning of the target language. It is to mention here that these questions were posed to the respondents so that their replies on the role of external factors could be judged, which refer to the pane of 'opportunities' and 'threats' in the window of SWOT analysis. The 4 factors were judged separately in the section of open-ended questions. The questions dealing with the environmental factors were as follows:

- 4 How important is the role of your school/college in helping you acquire the English language?
- 5 How important is the role of your teachers in helping you acquire the English language?
- 6 How much do you think you have learned about the English language from your friends or society?
- 7 How much have you learned the English language from TV, mobile, or other social media /networks?

The third part of the questionnaire had 5 questions based on LSRW skills. The first 4 questions had to be marked with preference on a linear scale ranging from 1-10, and in the last question the learners had to pick any of the four skills which they found easiest while learning the language. It is to mention here that these questions were posed to the respondents so that their replies on the role of internal factors could be judged which refer to the pane of 'strengths' and 'weaknesses' in learning the English language in the window of SWOT analysis. The 4 factors were judged separately in the section of open-ended questions. The questions dealing with the internal factors were:

- 8 How much are you interested in learning English in terms of "Listening"?
- 9 How much are you interested in learning English in terms of "Speaking"?
- 10 How much are you interested in learning English in terms of "Reading"?
- 11 How much are you interested in learning English in terms of "Writing"?
- 12 Which of the above skills is the easiest for you to learn/acquire? L/S/R/W

List 2. 4 closed-ended questions

| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | |
|---------|-----------|---------|-------------|-----|
| Totally | Very much | Average | Very little | Nil |

The fourth part of the questionnaire had 4 open-ended questions asking the subjects to state their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that they encountered while learning the language. The questions were as follows:

- 13 Do you find that learning English as a second/foreign language has been beneficial to you so far/will be in the future?
- 14 What are the weaknesses or problems that you face(d) in learning English?
- 15 What are the opportunities that you can attain through learning English?
- 16 What are the threats that you face around you when you use the English language to communicate in formal or informal settings?

3.3 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

The study was piloted after validating the data collection tools. The questionnaire was sent to a panel of experts to establish its face validity; and the questionnaire was piloted on 20 randomly selected candidates to “detect and rectify potential problems” [31]. The feedback of the experts was incorporated in the questionnaire for improvement as well as minor changes were made in the wordings of the questions to bring brevity in the content.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Responses from Indian Students Studying English as a Second Language

Out of the 85 total respondents, 73 chose to mention their personal details. The respondents were students of BA (English) and MA previous (English) at the University of Lucknow, India and Integral University, Lucknow, India.

The responses to the second section of the questionnaire are shown in the graph below. The graph represents the responses of the students with regards to the external factors that are based upon their surroundings or the environment in which they grew up. The students answered how much or how little was the role of

their environment in learning the English language. See Chart 1 for the responses:

In response to the next question (Q.12), “Which of the above skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) has been the easiest for you to learn/acquire?” 33.3% of respondents answered reading, 27.3% answered listening, 24.2% answered speaking, and 15.2% answered writing.

The fourth part of the questionnaire was open-ended. Its first question was - “Do you find that learning English as a second language has been beneficial to you so far/will be in the future? How?” This question was related to the first part of the SWOT analysis window pane - strength. The responses were analysed based on the criteria they thought were important in learning English, which gave them power and strength to deal with people and different situations in society. 100% of respondents answered “Yes” to this question and gave various reasons for why do they think that learning English is beneficial for them. The reasons include “India is a land of many languages, so English helps people in interacting with each other”, “English develops confidence”, “English is useful for career starting as well as advancement”, “English helps in one’s personality development”, and “English helps in pursuing one’s education abroad”.

The second question was based on the second pane of SWOT analysis- weakness. The question was - “What are the weaknesses or problems that you face/faced in learning English?” To this, there were a total of 9 ideas given by the 85 respondents out of which some referred to more than one weakness. These reasons include the following: 16 respondents stated, “lack of proper vocabulary” to be their weakness in learning the language; 20 said, “grammatical mistakes”; 13 believed, “lack of confidence in speaking proper English” is the problem; 3 remarked that the weakness was in the “education system that taught them ornamental English which led them away from the English used in real life”; 13 responded that their weaknesses lied in “not being able to find people who are wishing to communicate in English”; 5 found, “understanding the native speech due to their accents as an hindrance”; 5

stated, “lack of proper guidance and practice” to be the weakness; and lastly, 10 said, “they think they don’t have any weakness”.

The third question was based on the other pane of SWOT analysis- opportunities. The question was - “What are the opportunities that you can attain through learning English as a second language?” To this, there were a total of 9 ideas given by the 85 respondents, which are as follows: 8 stated that “using English on social media platforms helped them reach out to more people around the world”; 13 said that it opened “avenues for them to become either a

content writer or take up a job of a teacher”; 31 believed, “English can lead to getting good jobs, in career advancement as well as to personal growth too”; 3 stated, “It will help in skill development as more opportunities to enhance various skills will be available”; 7 found, “English generates opportunities to be heard by people around you”; 10 opined, “Education will be available easily (specially for studying abroad) if one knows English”; 3 remarked, “English will open up access to information”, and lastly, 10 found it hard to mention 1 or 2 opportunities and stated that the opportunities would be “infinite” if one learns the English language

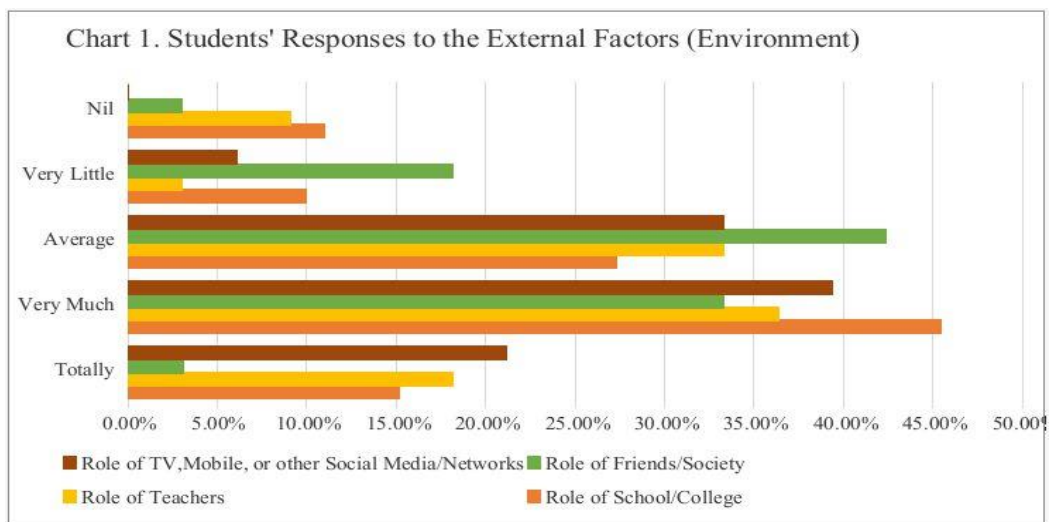


Chart 1. Shows the responses of the students for questions 4-7 in which they chose whether or not the environmental factors (role of school/college, role of teachers, role of friends/society, and role of television, mobile phone, or other social media/networks) impacted their learning of English as a second language.

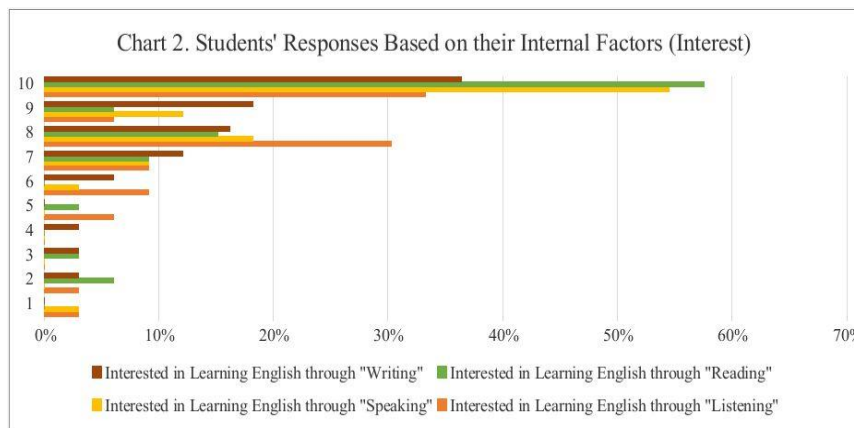


Chart 2. Shows the responses of the students for questions 8-11 in which they chose their level of interest in learning the 4 language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing). These are the internal factors that impact their attitudes towards the learning of English as a second language

The fourth question was based on the last pane of SWOT analysis- threats. The question was - "What are the 'threats' that you face around you when you use the English language to communicate in formal or informal settings?". To this, 7 threats were reported by the respondents that are as follows: 8 stated, "Being judged by others: the listeners think that I am over smart"; 10 said, "Misunderstandings happen if English is used in informal settings"; 10 believe that if incorrect "grammar" is used it'll act as a threat in both formal and informal settings"; 12 said, "Not many people can communicate in English in India, so it acts as a threat"; 6 respondents answered, "Feel insecure about one's own roots and language and culture"; 6 stated, "People are still thinking it as a parameter of intelligence, in spite of a medium to communicate"; 10 said, "Lack of vocabulary poses as a threat for them". Lastly, there were 23 respondents who stated, "They never faced threats when communicating in English".

4.2 Responses from Saudi Students Studying English as a Foreign Language

Out of the 80 total respondents, 71 chose to mention their personal details. The respondents were students of BA (English) course at the University of Bisha, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In response to the next question, "Which of the above skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) had been the easiest for you to learn/acquire?" 50% of respondents answered reading, 25% answered listening, 16.7% answered speaking, and 8.3% answered writing.

The fourth part of the questionnaire was open-ended. Its first question was - "Do you find that learning English as a foreign language has been beneficial to you so far/will be in the future? How?" This question was related to the first part of the SWOT analysis' window pane- strength. The responses were analysed based upon the criteria they thought were important in learning English, which gave them power and strength to deal with people and different situations in society. 100% of respondents answered "Yes" to this question and gave various reasons to why they think that learning English is beneficial for them. The reasons include: "English helps in communicating with more people on social media and also helps in understanding other cultures", "English will help in travelling around the world", and "It will help in finding a good job within Saudi Arabia as well as outside".

The second question was based on the second pane of SWOT analysis- weakness. The question was - "What are the weaknesses or problems that you face/faced in learning English?" To this, there were a total of 7 ideas given by the 80 respondents. These reasons include the following: 43 respondents stated, "lack of confidence in speaking fluently in English" to be their weakness; 8 said, "using correct grammar in speaking and writing"; 8 said, "using correct spellings of English" is their weakness; 5 stated, "lack of practice in speaking and writing" is the weakness; 5 responded that their weakness lied in "not being able to find people who are wishing to communicate in English". Lastly, 11 said, "they think they don't have any weakness".

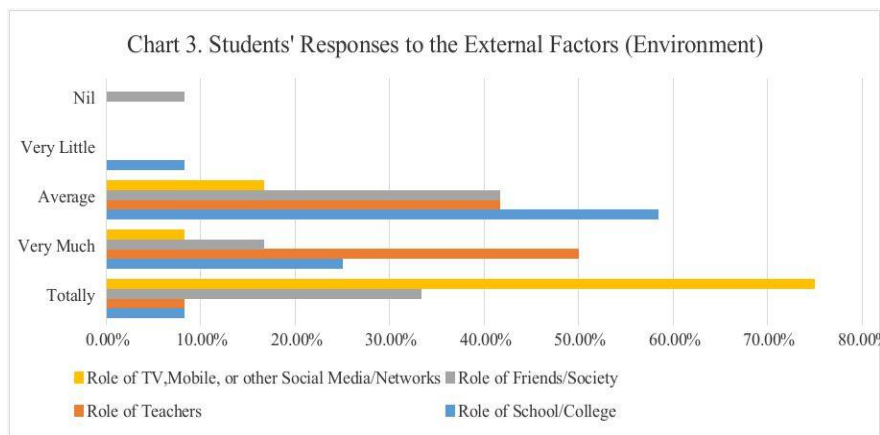


Chart 3. Shows the responses of the students to questions 4-7 in which they chose whether or not the environmental factors (role of school/college, role of teachers, role of friends/society, and role of television, mobile phone, or other social media/networks) impacted their learning of English as a foreign language

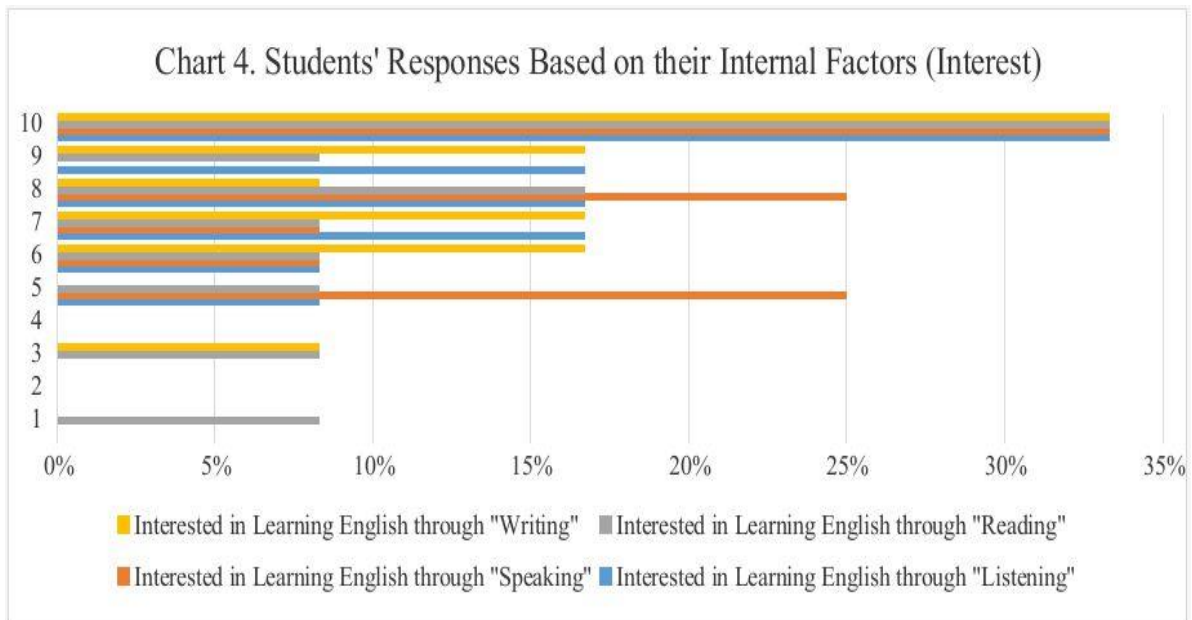


Chart 4. Shows the responses of the students for questions 8-11 in which they chose their level of interest in learning the 4 language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing). These are the internal factors that impact their attitudes towards the learning of English as a foreign language

The third question was based on the other pane of SWOT analysis- opportunities. The question was - "What are the opportunities that you can attain through learning English as a Foreign Language?" To this, there were a total of 5 ideas given by the 80 respondents, which are as follows: 20 stated that "using English will help them in getting more job opportunities"; 15 said that it opened "avenues for them to take up the job of a TEFL teacher"; 15 stated, "It will give them access to deal with large group of people both within Saudi Arabia (as it has lots of expatriates) as well as outside the country too". Lastly, 30 found it hard to mention 1 or 2 opportunities and stated that the opportunities would be "infinite".

The fourth question was based on the last pane of SWOT analysis- threats. The question was - "What are the threats that you face around you when you use the English language to communicate in formal or informal settings?" To this, 4 threats were reported by the respondents that are as follows: 23 stated, "They can't speak fluently so they get judged by listeners"; 8 believe, "using informal language in formal settings act as a threat"; 14 said, "Mispronouncing words gives a bad impression on the listener". Lastly, there were 35 respondents revealed, "They never faced threats when communicating in English"

5. DISCUSSION

This study analysed the similarities and differences in the learning behaviour and attitudes towards the English language of the students of India and Saudi Arabia as well as the internal & external factors that governed them. A total of 165 responses were collected: 85 from Indian students and 80 from Saudi students. The first 3 questions were based on their names, age, and courses they are studying: they were given the freedom to mention these details or skip them. Out of the 85 Indian respondents, 73 chose to mention their personal details. Their age ranges from 18 to 25 years and all the respondents are students of BA & MA courses at the University of Lucknow, Lucknow, India and Integral University, Lucknow, India. Out of the 80 Saudi respondents, 71 chose to mention their names and age. Their age ranges from 18 to 25 years and they are all students of BA (English) at University of Bisha, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The age range of both the groups was similar and the course they were studying was English majors.

The second set of questions (Questions 4-7) were compared with both the ESL and EFL respondents. The comparison has been shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Percentage of Responses (Role of External Factors in helping them Learn the English Language)

| Question | Totally | | Very Much | | Average | | Very Little | | Nil | | Result |
|---|---------|-------|-----------|-------|---------|-------|-------------|------|------|------|--|
| | ESL | EFL | ESL | EFL | ESL | EFL | ESL | EFL | ESL | EFL | |
| 1) Role of school/college in helping you learn English. | 15.2% | 8.3% | 45.5% | 25% | 27.3% | 58.4% | 10% | 8.3% | 11% | 0% | Positive= ESL(60.7%) EFL(33.3%) Neutral=ESL(27.3%)EFL(58.4%) Negative=ESL (21%) EFL (8.3%) |
| 2) Role of teachers in helping you learn English. | 18.2% | 8.3% | 36.4% | 50% | 33.3% | 41.7% | 3% | 0% | 9.1% | 0% | Positive=ESL (54.6%) EFL(58.3%) Neutral= ESL(33.3%) EFL(41.7%) Negative=ESL (12.1%) EFL (0%) |
| 3) Role of friends/ society in helping you learn English. | 3.1% | 33.3% | 33.3% | 16.7% | 42.4% | 41.7% | 18.2% | 0% | 3% | 8.3% | Positive=ESL (36.4%) EFL (50%) Neutral= ESL(42.4%) EFL(41.7%) Negative= ESL (21.3%) EFL (8.3%) |
| 4) Role of TV, mobile, or social media/networks in helping you learn English. | 21.2% | 75% | 39.4% | 8.3% | 33.3% | 16.7% | 6.1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | Positive= ESL(60.6%)EFL(83.3%) Neutral= ESL(33.3%)EFL(16.7%) Negative=ESL (6.1%) EFL (0%) |

Table 2. Percentage of Responses (Role of Internal Factors 'Interest' in helping them Learn the English Language)

| Interests | 1 - 4 (Least) | | 5 - 6 (Average) | | 7 - 10 (Most) | |
|---|---------------|------|-----------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| | ESL | EFL | ESL | EFL | ESL | EFL |
| 1) Level of interest in learning English through 'Listening' Difference | 6% | 6% | 15.2% | 1.4% | 78.8% | 83.4% |
| 2) Level of interest in learning English through 'Speaking' Difference | 3.1% | 3.1% | 3% | 30.3% | 93.9% | 66.7% |
| 3) Level of interest in learning English through 'Reading' Difference | 9% | 7.6% | 3% | 13.6% | 88% | 66.8% |
| 4) Level of interest in learning English through 'Writing' Difference | 9% | 7% | 6.1% | 10.6% | 84.9% | 75% |

Table 3. Percentage of Responses (Which of the 'LSRW' skills is the most easy to acquire?)

| Skills | ESL | EFL |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1) Listening | 27.3% | 25% |
| 2) Speaking | 24.2% | 16.7% |
| 3) Reading | 33.3% | 50% |
| 4) Writing | 15.2% | 8.3% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

Table 4. Percentage and Number of Responses Based on Strength (How learning English is/will be beneficial?)

| Responses | ESL | EFL | Total Percentage |
|---|------------|------------|------------------|
| 1) English helps people in interacting within the nation | 12.9% (11) | 0% (0) | 12.9% |
| 2) English helps in communicating with more people on social media and also helps in understanding other cultures | 18.8% (16) | 15% (12) | 33.8% |
| 3) English developed confidence | 3.5% (3) | 12.5% (10) | 6% |
| 4) English will help in travelling around the world | 3.5% (3) | 15% (12) | 18.5% |
| 5) English will benefit in starting career as well as in its advancement | 38.8% (33) | 57.5% (46) | 96.3% |
| 6) English helped in personality development | 18.8% (16) | 0% (0) | 18.8% |
| 7) English will help in pursuing education abroad | 3.5% (3) | 0% (0) | 3.5% |
| Total Respondents | 85 | 80 | |

Table 5. Percentage and Number of Responses Based on Weakness (Problems faced by the learners in learning English)

| Responses | ESL | EFL | Total Percentage |
|---|------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1) Lack of proper vocabulary | 18.8% (16) | 0% (0) | 18.8% |
| 2) Grammatical mistakes | 23.5% (20) | 10% (8) | 33.5% |
| 3) Lack of confidence in speaking fluent English | 15.2% (13) | 53.75% (43) | 68.9% |
| 5) Education system taught them ornamental English which led them away from the English used in real life | 3.5% (3) | 0% (0) | 3.5% |
| 6) Not being able to find people who are wishing to communicate in English | 15.2% (13) | 6.2% (5) | 21.4% |
| 7) Difficulty in understanding the native speakers due to their accent | 5.8% (5) | 0% (0) | 5.8% |
| 8) Lack of proper guidance and practice | 5.8% (5) | 6.2% (5) | 12% |
| 9) Using incorrect spellings of English | 0% (0) | 10% (8) | 10% |
| 10) No weakness | 11.7% (10) | 13.7% (11) | 25.4% |
| Total Respondents | 85 | 80 | |

Table 6. Percentage and Number of Responses Based on Opportunities (What opportunities can one attain through learning English?)

| Responses | ESL | EFL | Percentage |
|---|------------|------------|------------|
| 1) Using English on social media platforms help in reaching out to more people around the world | 9.4% (8) | 0% (0) | 9.4% |
| 2) Avenues to become either a content writer or a teacher | 15.2% (13) | 18.7% (15) | 33.9% |
| 3) English can lead to getting good jobs, in career advancements as well as for personal growth | 36.4% (31) | 25% (20) | 61.4% |
| 4) Helpful in skill development as more opportunities to enhance various skills will be available | 3.5% (3) | 0% (0) | 3.5% |
| 5) English generates opportunities to be heard and understood by the people around | 8.2% (7) | 18.7% (15) | 26.9% |
| 6) Education will be available easily if one knows English | 11.7% (10) | 0% (0) | 11.7% |
| 7) English will open up access to information | 3.5% (3) | 0% (0) | 3.5% |
| 8) Infinite opportunities | 11.7% (10) | 37.5% (30) | 49.2% |
| Total Respondents | 85 | 80 | |

Table 7. Percentage and Number of Responses Based on Threats (What threats one encounters while communicating in English in formal/informal settings?)

| Responses | ESL | EFL | Percentage |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| 1) Being judged by others: the listeners think that I am over smart | 9.4% (8) | 28.7% (23) | 38.1% |
| 2) Misunderstandings happen if English is used in informal settings | 11.7% (10) | 0% (0) | 11.7% |
| 3) Incorrect grammar & mispronouncing words while speaking | 11.7% (10) | 17.5% (14) | 29.2% |
| 4) Not many people can communicate in English in India, so it acts as a threat as they become aggressive when English is spoken in front of them | 14.1% (12) | 0% (0) | 14.1% |
| 5) Feel insecure about one's own roots and language and culture | 7% (6) | 0% (0) | 7% |
| 6) People are still thinking it (knowing the English language) as a parameter of intelligence, in spite of a medium to communicate | 7% (6) | 0% (0) | 7% |
| 7) Lack of vocabulary | 11.7% (10) | 0% (0) | 11.7% |
| 8) Using informal language in formal settings | 0% (0) | 10% (8) | 10% |
| 9) No threat faced | 27% (23) | 43.7% (35) | 70.7% |
| Total Respondents | 85 | 80 | |

On analysing the data in Table 1, it comes to light that both the ESL and EFL respondents are similar in their opinion regarding the role of teachers in helping them learn English, with 54.6% of ESL students & 58.3% of EFL students stating that teachers have a major role to play. 33.3% of ESL and 41.7% of EFL respondents said that teachers play an average role in helping them learn English. Other than this, it can be seen that there is a vast difference in the approach of ESL and EFL learners towards their surroundings that helped them to acquire the English language. On being asked about the role of school/college, 60.7% of ESL respondents and 33.3% of EFL respondents gave a positive answer. Others were either neutral ESL (27.3%) & EFL (58.4%) saying they had an average role to play or they voted for a minimum to no role of their schools and colleges in their learning the language (ESL respondents: 21% / EFL respondents: 8.3%). Therefore, it has been derived from the above data that ESL students (60.7% & 60.6% respectively) find the role of their school/college as well as TV, mobile phones, & social media/networks having a maximum impact on their learning the target language. Following behind with 54.6% stating the role of teachers and only 36.4% giving the credit to their friends and society. EFL respondents had a different opinion about their surroundings. They have given maximum credit to the role of TV, mobile phones, and social media/networks with 83.3% of them stating that they had a positive learning experience through these gadgets and media. Secondly, they voted for the role of teachers with 58.3% considering the teachers' role as important. Unlike the ESL respondents, the EFL respondents believe that their friends and society play more role in their learning the language than their school or college with 50% voting positively for the former and 33.3% voting for the latter. The order of factors that they found helped them in learning English is as follows:

ESL respondents: EFL respondents:

1. Role of school/college 1- Role of TV, mobile phones, or social media
2. Role of TV, mobile phones, 2- Role of teachers or social media
3. Role of teachers 3- Role of friends/society
4. Role of friends/society 4- Role of school/college

The responses of Table 2 can be decoded by analysing the comparison of percentage between

the ESL and EFL respondents on the scale of 1-10 with 1 being the 'least interested' and 10 being the 'most interested' in their level of interest in learning English through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the first category, where the respondents were asked about their interest in learning English through 'listening', the result differed in the final category only by 4.6% with 78.8% of ESL respondents selecting the scale from 7-10 and 83.4% of EFL respondents selecting the same scale which means that both the category of students are highly interested in doing listening activities and learning the language through it, like using podcasts, listening to the teacher in class, watching movies, listening to songs, etc.

It can be seen here that ESL students reported their maximum interest in learning the English language through 'speaking', with 93.9% of students selecting the band 7-10 and just 3% sticking to the least or average interest in the same. EFL students are divided in their opinion about the same between the average category and the most category. 33.3% stated that their interest in learning English through 'speaking' is average, whereas only 66.7% selected the band from 7-10, which displays a major difference of interest between the ESL and EFL students towards speaking. ESL students find it easy to pick up the second language through practice by speaking in the target language among themselves as well as with their teachers, whereas EFL students make use of their mother tongue at all times. They use the English language to communicate only in cases where they are left with no other option, for instance when they have to deal with people who don't know Arabic.

Interest in 'reading' also sees a vast difference between the ESL and EFL students. With a difference of 21.2%, EFL students reveal that they aren't as interested in reading as an activity as much as ESL students are. 16.6% of EFL respondents said that they are least interested and have average interest respectively in this activity, whereas ESL respondents with only 3% have average interest and 9% with least interest in reading.

As far as interest in writing is concerned, a similar percentage of respondents showed minimum interest in it, with 9% and 8.3% of ESL and EFL students respectively. The difference between the ESL and EFL students is that 9.9% of more ESL students find themselves 'most

interested' in writing as compared to the EFL respondents.

Therefore, it has been found that ESL and EFL respondents have the least difference in their level of interest in listening and writing. They both seem to prefer using activities that are related to these passive skills. But ESL students show more interest in active skills (speaking and reading) as compared to the EFL respondents.

As seen in Table 3, the result of the preference of the skills is same of both the ESL & EFL respondents, but with a difference in the variation of percentages. The maximum number of respondents believe that reading is the easiest skill to acquire. They both rated the 4 skills in the following order of ease in acquiring them: reading, listening, speaking, and then writing. In general, during the practice sessions too, it has been found that students of both ESL and EFL backgrounds find writing to be the toughest because it requires a lot of recollection of ideas and thoughts as well as needs a good command over the language (English) in which the content has to be produced. In listening, students sometimes have difficulty in understanding the accent and the correct pronunciation of words (which are generally being spoken incorrectly, for example, the word 'mischievous' has always been pronounced in India as /mɪs'tʃi:vɪəs/ instead of /'mɪstʃɪvəs/).

As shown in Table 4, the respondents reported 7 ideas that were their strengths in learning the English language. These are the points that they think have helped them succeed or will help them succeed in the future due to their knowledge of English. Both the respondents, 38.8% (ESL) and 57.5% (EFL), believe that English will benefit them in building a career as well as in its advancement too. The second beneficial aspect for them is being able to communicate on social media platforms. 18.8% of ESL and 15% of EFL respondents found that English has been helpful for them in communicating with people all over the world through social media as well as helping them in getting to know other cultures. Indian students believe that it is not only about interacting with people from other countries but also interaction with people from different states within India - it'll become easy when they know English. Indian students perceive learning English to be a factor in their personality development, whereas Saudi students believe that their strength in learning the language is that they'll be able to travel to other countries with

ease. Hence, both the ESL and EFL respondents mostly find that English is going to be helpful to them in their future career, which will be their strength.

Table 5 shows the data of ESL and EFL respondents about the weaknesses or problems that they found pulled them from successfully learning English as a second language or as a foreign language. ESL students stated 8 reasons, whereas EFL students stated 6 reasons with varying percentages. The ESL group was divided in its opinion, with a maximum number of respondents (23.5% only) finding incorrect use of grammar posing a problem in their learning, 18.8% finding that they do not have enough words to speak or write the language, 15.2% finding lack of fluency as well as not being able to find people who are willing to communicate in English respectively as major hurdles. Just 5.8% find lack of guidance, difficulty in understanding the native accent, and 3.5% said that flowery language taught in institutions is a problem. The EFL group had a maximum number of respondents (53.75%) talking about their not being able to speak in English fluently as a major issue. The other respondents spoke about other reasons, with just 6.2% of them pointing out that they do not have proper guidance and practice as well as are unable to find people willing to communicate in English. 10% stated that they make grammatical mistakes while speaking and writing, and use incorrect spellings in writing respectively. It is interesting to note here that a nearly equal percentage of students -11.7% of ESL and 13.7% of EFL respondents stated that they do not have any weakness that hinders them from learning the English language.

Table 6 displays the responses of both ESL and EFL groups wherein they mention the opportunities that they open for themselves through the learning of English. The maximum number of both the groups opined that their chances of getting a good job both within and outside the country will increase if they know English, and especially if they have their majors in the English language or literature. Nearly an equal number of respondents of both the groups believe that they stand more chances of getting a job as either a content writer or a teacher with the professional expertise of English. An equal number of EFL students (18.7%) and 8.2% of ESL students think that if they use English as a medium of communication, they are more likely to be heard and understood by the people around them than if they make use of their

mother tongue. With the availability of more standard books in the English language in India, ESL students think that education will be easily available to them if they know English, but EFL students don't have any such opinion. Lastly, there were 11.7% and 37.5% of ESL and EFL respondents respectively who found it difficult to state any one or two avenues that would open for them through the English language.

Table 7 shows the candidates' responses to the threats that they faced while learning or practicing English. Most of the respondents from both the ESL and EFL groups (total 70.7%) stated that they found no threats in their surroundings. The difference is in the percentage of responses - while most ESL respondents mentioned different environmental threats, 27% said they didn't find any threat. In the EFL category, 43.7% reported the same with just 3 other reasons that they found as threats in the environment: being judged by others, using incorrect grammar and pronunciation, as well as using informal language in formal settings. The ESL respondents mentioned various reasons that included the first two reasons mentioned by the EFL category, lack of vocabulary, misunderstandings if English is used in informal settings, feeling of insecurity about one's roots, and people thinking that it is a parameter of intelligence and not just a medium of communication. Hence, it can be clearly seen that Indians find various reasons that they treat as threats in their environment in the process of learning the English language, whereas Saudi students do not necessarily think that it's the environment that hinders them from learning the English language that's why only 45% of the total respondents mentioned threats, whereas others found nothing to report.

6. CONCLUSION

On analysing the data it has been found that in some instances there are lot of similarities in the thinking, approach, and attitudes of ESL and EFL students in learning the English language, whereas in some instances they differ from each other significantly.

It is interesting to note that ESL respondents' views had been scattered over different ideas and reasons under SWOT analysis, whereas EFL respondents had been very focused about their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; though in most cases, both the category of respondents pointed out similar reasons with maximum ESL respondents stating what most

EFL subjects said. Therefore, the attitudes of both the respondents towards learning English differs slightly depending upon the cultural background, but most of their approach remains the same. Indian respondents are found to be more insecure about their surroundings and environment when learning English as compared to the Saudi respondents, because in India they have to use English in official settings everywhere, which makes it mandatory for most of them to know the language correctly, but in Saudi Arabia the primary language being Arabic creates less insecurity and tension among students to know the language. It is also to be seen that it's not just the attitudes of the subjects that's to be considered in their pace and expertise of learning English but also the attitudes of the society in which they live, leading to creating ease or difficulty in their process of learning English.

7. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to remove the weaknesses and threats that the learners believe to be present within themselves as well as in their environment, it would become necessary for them to be highly motivated and have positive attitudes for the same. Then, they must try to master the English language by taking help from mentors and doing proper practice. In the process, the learners must understand that learning any language is not a child's play and it requires rigorous practice and training which needs time and patience - they must first of all recognize their weaknesses and drawbacks and then work towards improving them. Students' personal interests (internal factors of this study) in the language skills must be known to the teachers before they set out to design curriculum and syllabi in colleges and universities, whereas their environment (external factors of this study) need to be controlled (wherever possible) or the students must be taught to deal with them in a manner which doesn't affect their learning, for instance, in ignoring people who make fun of them when they speak in English.

EFL students believed that practicing with their friends and teachers helped them enormously, so they must be given more opportunities to do the same, whereas for ESL students opportunities at schools/colleges should be increased like organizing more on-stage programs and in-class activities in the medium of English. The respondents of both ESL and EFL noted that they face trouble in learning the

vocabulary and making use of appropriate grammar. One of the reasons is the impact of their MT (mother tongue) on the learning of English, which creates hurdles for them. This can be overcome by teaching the learners through direct method in childhood so that they learn to acquire the target language through the same, and in later years, digital teaching techniques should be used for their practice of the target language.

Further research and work should be done to develop content on social media, mobile phones, and TV that would help in the learning of the English language as the interest of both ESL and EFL candidates were found to be high in these mediums. More research is needed in the area of SWOT analysis of learners using English as a second language or foreign language in other countries to compare with the results procured in this research.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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