THE ROLE OF ENGLISH AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS OF APPLIED ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN

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Abstract
This paper reports the results of a qualitative survey of (250) female students representing the BA in Applied English program at the University of Jordan. It highlights the attitudes and perceptions of these students' towards the role of English in their lives. The data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with (50) of the students in addition to written self-reports submitted by (150) as compositions in university-level courses during the first semester of the academic year 2013-2014. The results showed that the overall attitudes of the students were unanimously positive towards the role of English in their lives. The study also found that these attitudes can be related to a number of intrinsic as well as instrumental factors, i.e. job market, personal development, cultural interaction, social status, travel, media, technology, and educational experience.

Keywords: English; attitudes; Jordan; university; students; perceptions

Introduction
No doubt that English is enjoying a prestigious place as a global language. There seems to be a consensus among many people that knowing English and being able to communicate in it can be a vital factor that can influence their lives as individuals or professionals. In Jordan, English is the major foreign language in use next to the national language Arabic. It is taught in almost all public and private schools starting from Grade One and in many cases from KG 1. In higher education institutions, English is the medium of instruction and learning in most academic disciplines. In addition, there are departments of English language, linguistics, literature, or translation, in nearly every university or community college in the country. English is used as a functional language in business, banking, journalism, tourism, and the social media. Therefore, it appears necessary to understand
how various sectors of the Jordanian community view the role of English in their personal and professional lives.

In fact, attitudes toward a foreign language and the motivation to learn a language have been of interest to many educators and researchers. Understanding students’ attitudes towards English is necessary before any decisions about curriculum reform can be made. Feelings about a foreign language may indicate various perceptions that can be related to a multitude of factors that may lie in the social or educational system in a particular society. Language attitudes may have an effect on foreign language learning. The study of language attitudes provides information which is useful in language teaching and language planning, Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 286). On the other hand, Johnson & Johnson (1999:19) see that "attitudes interact with other concepts such as motivation, learner training, personality, and acculturation."

However, the notion of 'attitudes' may prove hard to investigate because it seems rather fuzzy and illusive. According to Johnson & Johnson: (1999:14) attitudes "may be thought of as opinions, beliefs, ways of responding, with respect to some set of problems. They may not be formulated verbally until someone asks; they may not even be immediately available to common attention. They may be formed from haphazard experience. Or they may be the result of deliberate thought. They may conform to cultural or peer-group norms or not. As such, they are vague, loose and difficult to capture. They may exert considerable control over a learner's behaviour in numerous ways, and therefore may be related directly or indirectly to levels of achievement."

Research Problem:

The BA program in Applied English is different from the traditional BA in English and Literature programs usually offered in Arab universities. This program is offered within the Department of Linguistics which was established in 1997. The official overview on the program displayed on the University's website says:

"The primary goals of the program are to enhance the students' language skills (receptive and expressive) and to provide the Jordanian private and public sectors with professionals who can communicate in English in areas related to economy, finance, journalism, law, tourism, and medicine." Thus, it appears that the program has professional needs in mind. It is career oriented in nature and takes a pragmatic (ESP) perspective which may gives it its niche. The study plan indicates that the program in its latest version offers (12) credit hours of obligatory College Requirements and (9) credit hours as elective College Requirements. There are (69) credit hours offered as Obligatory Department courses in addition to (18) credit hours
offered as Elective Department courses. The Department courses include basic linguistics and literature courses in addition to a wide range of sub-specializations of concentration areas such as language teaching, translation, ESP, and a practicum.

Despite the fact that the BA program in Applied English was founded at the University of Jordan, in 2004 / 2005, there has been, to the researcher's best knowledge, not a single piece of research on how the students have been viewing the role of English in their personal and future professional lives. Thus, no feedback has been formally provided on this aspect of the program. We know virtually nothing, apart from intuitive or personal experience, about what the students think of English and what factors may be shaping their attitudes towards English. Therefore, this study comes to fill a gap in the research effort that relates to students perceptions and attitudes to the role of English in their lives bearing in mind the rationale supported by the theoretical views of Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 286) and Johnson & Johnson (1999:19) cited above in addition to the practical needs for curriculum modification that may be considered in light of useful insights based on analysis of what the students actually think and feel about English.

Questions of the Study:

This study aims at answering the following questions:
1. How do Applied English students at the University of Jordan perceive the role of English?
2. How can the attitudes of students of Applied English students at the University of Jordan concerning the role of English be categorized?
3. What are the possible factors that shape the students' attitudes about the role of English?

Literature Review:

Much research has been published on EFL learners' attitudes in relevance to many international contexts. Some useful investigations have been reported on the Jordanian context. For example, Hamdan and Abu-Hatab (2009) explored the status of English in Jordan as reflected in newspaper job advertisements published in 1985, 1995 and 2005, and English language documents in the educational domain. The study showed a steady increase in the percentage of English ads paralleled with a steady decrease in the percentage of Arabic ads. Further, it reported a significant increase in the percentage of ads that make English proficiency a precondition for employment. The study also showed a change in the jobs demanding English proficiency. The change in the size and headline of English ads over the years was assumingly a variable reflecting the growing
status of English. English was also seen as a means of attaining professional growth by all workers.

Also in Jordan, Abu-Melhim (2009) tried to determine what attitudes college students at Irbid University College in Jordan have towards learning English as a foreign language. The (45) female students involved in this project were from Irbid University College. The students were asked to explain why they wished to become English teachers. Notes were taken during these interviews and the responses were recorded. A student survey was designed and distributed to all (45) female students at the college and detailed instructions were given. The students' reasons for studying English revealed a wide range of attitudes and motivations. Almost half of the students exhibited negative attitudes towards learning English and entering the teaching profession. Other students demonstrated more positive attitudes.

Moreover, Tahaineh and Daana (2013) investigated motivation orientations of Jordanian EFL female undergraduates and their attitudes towards learning the target language and its community. A stratified random sample of (184) students majoring English language and literature at Al Balqa' Applied University-Princess Alia University College-Amman, Jordan, was surveyed using the Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery. The findings showed the subjects’ greater support of instrumental reasons for learning the English language including utilitarian and academic reasons. However, the results provided evidence that learning English as a part of the culture of its people had the least impact in students' English language motivation, whereas their attitudes towards the target language community and its members were generally found to be highly positive.

Similarly, Al-Saidat (2009) discussed the attitudes of (420) Jordanian university students towards English as a foreign language and the place it occupies in Jordan. The results showed that the dominant attitude is one of 'favourability' towards learning English. There was a definite degree of 'positiveness' towards English language in Jordan. English was seen as useful, enjoyable, and important and has no harm to Arabic language or to the Islamic religion. Within the wider Arab EFL context we find some useful studies. For instance, Vogt and Oliver (1999) studied perceptions of the English-language curriculum among University of Kuwait medical students. The study had three objectives: to compare their attitudes with those of Arabs from other Arab countries; elicit students' opinions of the English-based medical and science curriculum and the adequacy of their English language preparation; and assess the medical school's admission requirements. Subjects were (82) randomly-selected medical students studying English in the medical school program. The researchers administered a questionnaire concerning attitudes toward the English-language program, motivations for studying English, and educational
background. Nine students failing their first-semester English course were also interviewed. Results indicated the students generally favor English language instruction and science instruction in English. Students' attitudes and motivation were consistent with those of Arab counterparts in other countries and university settings. Students not performing well in their first semester of English felt they had inadequate secondary school English language preparation, despite adequate academic preparation.

ZainolAbidin et al. (2012) investigated Libyan secondary school students’ attitudes towards learning English in terms of the behavioral, cognitive and emotional aspects. They also explored whether there was any significant difference in the students’ attitudes towards English language based on their demographic profiles i.e., gender, field and year of study. (180) participants in the three study years from three specializations of Basic Sciences, Life Sciences, and Social Sciences took a questionnaire as a measuring instrument. The participants showed negative attitudes towards learning English. The findings also showed statistically significant attitudinal differences regarding gender and field of study but not year of study. Furthermore, Alkaff (2013) studied the attitudes and perceptions of Foundation Year students towards learning English, at the English Language Institute of King Abdulaziz University (KAU) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The researcher attempted to find out the students’ opinions regarding the importance of English, whether they think it is difficult or not, and where the difficulty lies. After the selection of a random sample of (47) female students of levels 3 and 4 (pre-intermediate and intermediate levels), a questionnaire was developed and students’ responses were tabulated and analyzed. The study showed that most students have a positive attitude towards learning English.

In Yemen, Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) reported the results of a survey which was carried out to identify Petroleum Engineering students’ motivation and attitudes towards learning the English language. The study investigated students’ motivation in terms of three motivational constructs: instrumental motivation, integrative motivation and personal motivation based on Gardner’s (1985) and Cooper and Fishman’s (1977) works. Learners’ attitudes, on the other hand, regarding 1) the use of English in the Yemeni social context, 2) the use of English in the Yemeni educational context, 3) the English language and 4) the culture of the English speaking world were identified. The sample consisted of (81) petroleum engineering students at Hadhramout University of Sciences and Technology (HUST). A questionnaire and interviews were used for data collection. The findings showed the subjects’ greater support of instrumental reasons for learning the English language including utilitarian and academic reasons. Personal reasons were also regarded as important motives by the students. However,
regarding the integrative reasons, the results provided evidence that learning English as a part of the culture of its people had the least impact in students’ English language motivation. On the other hand, data revealed that most of students had positive attitudes towards the social value and educational status of English. In addition, the findings showed the students’ positive orientation toward the English language. The also results indicated that a high number of the students showed their interest in the culture of the English speaking world as represented by English-language films.

Internationally and regionally, we find studies such as Fong (2004) who studied the attitudes of students in a local EMI school (English as the medium of instruction) towards the English language, the English culture and English-speaking people. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Results showed that the (105) subjects were positive towards the English language, English culture and English-speaking people. Their positive attitudes comprised affective, cognitive and behavioral components. Further, results showed that the subjects especially liked the sound of the English language and their Chinese identity was not threatened even if they were good at English. The results also showed that the subjects in this study held a more instrumental orientation towards English and that they were willing to learn the language even if it was not a compulsory subject in school.

Another study is found in Benson (1991) who surveyed (300) freshmen in a Japanese university to assess their attitudes towards English. The survey asked for a self-assessment of English skills, the motivation for studying English, and the functions for which English was felt to be most useful. The results showed students who have had little exposure to English, and whose self-rating of their own skills showed extremely low morale. Integrative and personal reasons for learning English were preferred over instrumental ones. English was seen as being useful for a selection of modern functions, but not useful for domestic and local ones. Such findings pose problems concerning the role of English language teaching at university level in Japan.

Also, Bradford (2007) explored Indonesian university students' motivational orientations toward learning English as a foreign language. (168) students responded to a questionnaire concerning their reasons for choosing to study English. Factor analysis of the data revealed (11) independent orientations. The students strongly endorsed orientations pertaining to pragmatic reasons for studying English, and were almost neutral toward identifying with native English speakers. Similarly, Buschcnhofen (1998) assessed the attitudes towards English existing among year-12 and final-year university students in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Using almost identical survey instruments for both groups, the author
surveyed approximately half of current year-12 and first-year university students in PNG. Both groups were contrasted in terms of their tolerance towards the use of English in a variety of contexts. The results indicated (1) a generally positive attitude by both groups towards English and (2) some significant attitudinal differences in relation to specific English language contexts. The differences in response patterns were representative of changes in attitudes among both groups of students that reflect the changing social, educational, and linguistic conditions which characterize the transition from year-12 to university education.

Moreover, Gajalakshmi (2013) investigated students’ attitudes towards learning English language. A standardized questionnaire was administered in the form of normative survey to (600) students selected randomly from various high and higher secondary schools in Puducherry region in India. The results revealed a significant difference based on the gender, locality of the school, type of school, type of management. On the other hand, Martínez, et al. (2013) examined the attitudes of Mexican American students towards learning English as a second language in a structured immersion program. They also analyzed the extent to which these attitudes differ in relation to the variables of gender and performance in English. Participants were (110) students (girls, n = 56, boys, n = 54) in grades 8-12 in the Compton Unified School District (California, USA). The study showed a general factor that defines the homogeneous structure of the instruments used in the assessment of student attitudes toward second language learning. In addition, a further factor, which the authors have termed “pressure to learn English”, was also identified. It revealed the motivation to learn a second language in the context of vital necessity where learning English is a key element for the integration in a territory in which the use of Spanish is prohibited by law.

Bhaskar and Soundiraraj (2013) tried to find out whether there was any change in the attitude of students towards English language learning when they come for college education after completing the school education. The transformation in the attitude of students from school to college was examined in terms of marks, interest towards English language, self-motivation to learn the language, participation in the class, understanding the importance of English in securing a job and learner-centered language teaching methods that ensure more freedom to the learners. About (52) first year Mechanical Engineering students from Tamil medium stream took part in this research. An attitude questionnaire was administered and a semi-structured interview was conducted. The findings of the study indicated that there was a significant shift in their attitude towards English at their college level.
Tsuda (2003) focused on the students’ attitudes toward English and tried to find why so many students do not like to study it by comparing the attitudes of the students who like English and those who do not and by reviewing their comments in the questionnaire. The study also pointed out that it was necessary to raise students’ awareness toward English that English is not only used by native speakers but it is extensively used among second and foreign language speakers as communicative tools. Al Mamun et al. (2012) investigated attitudes of the undergraduate students of Life Science School of Khulna University (Bangladesh) towards English language. The data of this study were collected through a questionnaire survey administered upon a total of seventy nine students. The findings suggested that the respondents were found to be positive towards English language and this could be attributed to the fact that respondents were instrumentally motivated towards English.

School students in China were surveyed by Wavo (2005) who investigated attitudes toward the English language of (1007) ninth-grade Chinese students in relation with the English performance. Results indicated that male and female students differed in their attitudes toward English language. ANOVA indicated significant differences between different schools in language attitude. The Pearson Correlation examined the relationship between attitudes toward English language and performance in English and revealed that the high performance of Chinese students in English language was related to their positive attitudes toward it. Also from China, Yu (2010) explored the attitudes of Chinese college students toward English, different varieties of English, and “China English.” The study also investigated their attitudes toward current English education policies and practices in China and their purposes for learning English. Furthermore, the attitudes of Chinese college students have been examined in relation to the factors that are likely to explain their attitudes, namely, gender, age, grade in college, major, starting age for learning English, years spent in English learning, experience with native English-speaking teachers and friends who are native English speakers, English knowledge of parents, and international experience. Quantitative data from questionnaires of (398) respondents and qualitative data from interviews of (20) students were collected. The study found that Chinese college students have positive attitudes toward the English language and “China English.” They are aware of different varieties of English and the majority of them consider nativization of English in China as a manifestation of Chinese culture. Regarding the English education policies and practices in China, attitudes of participants are complex. On the one hand, the students acknowledged that the Chinese government has attached much importance to English education; while on the other hand, they revealed concerns about this “utilitarian type of education,” since most
of the students focus solely on obtaining high scores on English exams. In addition, they expressed dissatisfaction with the current college English instruction and stated that developing and maintaining students’ interests in English and building up strong communication skills should be the main goals of English education in China. Results have also shown that the longer students have studied English, the more likely they are to have positive attitudes toward English. Their experience with native English-speaking teachers and their majors also explain their positive attitudes toward English.

Mahdavi and Jodai (2012) studied attitudes toward English and English learning at an Iranian military university. The subjects included (34) Iranian military personnel who took part in (4) different English classes at Iranian Military University's Foreign Language Center. The study employed a questionnaire based on the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery provided by Gardner R.C (2004), incorporating some new concepts in SLA research that have come to light since the time of previous surveys. Overall non-negative attitude toward English and English learning was the most important result of this study. Soleimani and Hanafi (2013) examined a sample of Iranian medical students' attitudes towards English language learning. Three aspects of attitude (emotional, cognitive, and behavioral) were taken into consideration. In addition, the effect of learners' demographics on their attitudes was investigated. A questionnaire was employed as a measuring instrument. The participants (N=40, medical students) were required to answer (30) items in the questionnaire concerning attitudes towards English language learning in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of attitude. The results showed that the attitude of male students was higher than females. The results of current study implied that Iranian medical students hold highly positive overall attitude regarding English language learning.

Hussein et al. (2009) studied the attitudes of undergraduate student's towards English language and also whether there are any significant meanings between their gender, nationality and the departments which they study in. The students who participated were from the Near East University, from the departments of CEIT (Computer Education and Information Technologies) and Nursing (N = 161). The results showed there was no significant meaning between the students’ attitudes towards English regarding their gender, nationality and the departments which they study in.

Using representative samples from two universities in Ghana, the University of Ghana, Legon, and the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Sarfo (2012) attempted to gain insights into the needs and feelings of Ghanaian university students towards English. The paper also attempted to find out the range of factors that motivate the students to study English. The study found that the motivations for studying English are more instrumental /
utilitarian than integrative; however, students expect to see English becoming integrative in future. Another study was reported by Galloway (2011) who investigated Japanese university students’ attitudes towards English and English teachers in relation to the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF). The findings suggested that English is seen as a language belonging to native English speakers and those students want to learn native English. The results highlighted a number of factors influencing students’ attitudes.

Bektas-Cetinkaya (2012) explored Turkish university students' motivation and orientations toward learning English in a globalizing world. The study utilized questionnaire responses and a focus group interview. Factor analysis of questionnaire data revealed three independent orientations, namely, "Integration into International Community," "Integration into L2 Community," and "Academic Orientation." Students' main orientation for learning English was to find a well-paying job, and to stay connected to the rest of the world through media and foreign friends. Also, Karahani (2007) examined the relationship between language attitudes towards the English language and its use in Turkey. The sample included (190) eighth grade students of a private primary school in Adana, Turkey, where English is intensively taught. It was found out that although these students are exposed to English in a school environment more frequently than other students at public schools, they have only mildly positive attitudes; especially female students have higher rates. They recognize the importance of the English language but interestingly do not reveal high level orientation towards learning the language. On the other hand, they have mildly positive attitudes towards the English based culture but they are not tolerant to Turkish people speaking English among themselves.

Gursoy (2013) investigated English Language Teaching (ELT) teacher trainees' attitudes toward the English language and their self-reported difficulties when using their foreign language skills in daily and academic language. Two hundred teacher trainees participated in the study. The study showed that trainees have mildly positive attitudes toward the English language, with females being more positive than males. The findings also suggested that trainees have stronger instrumental motivation than integrative motivation. Moreover, the results indicated that trainees do not differ significantly in terms of their difficulties in using daily language skills. Interesting results were reported by Lin and Warden (1998) who analyzed the results from a survey of (346) college-level English language learners in Taiwan focusing on some causes that may have hindered English learning in the past for students participating in the survey, and the students’ perspectives about English learning. Results showed that most of the students had either fear or unpleasant feelings about their past English
learning experiences, and that students of different majors had different perspectives about English learning.

An illuminating survey was reported by Erling et al. (2012) who investigated attitudes and needs in two rural communities in Bangladesh. Through the use of an ethnographic survey of two rural areas, it studies the needs and aspirations of the local community in order to better understand perceptions of whether and if so how English language education could productively contribute to development as part of a wider program of social and economic support. English was almost universally viewed among the entire cohort as being related to the global knowledge economy and important for employment prospects – both in the local area and elsewhere. There seemed to be no variation in this view, regardless of the location or occupation of the participant. A commonly-voiced reason for learning the language was in order to go abroad to work, not only in Anglophone countries, but also in the Middle East. English was particularly associated with information technology, especially mobile phones and the internet, and also for accessing information about medicines and pesticides, all of which is apparently written in English. English was also associated with higher level jobs and positions of authority.

Having reviewed some related studies, it is possible to note that EFL students' attitudes at the University of Jordan and the Applied English program in particular, have not received any research attention so far. Most of the previous research appears to have used questionnaires or interviews, but nothing has used self-reporting in the form of written compositions as a data-gathering technique.

**Sample and Method:**

Fifty students enrolled in Applied English courses during the first semester of 2013 / 2014 academic year were invited for semi-structured interviews that were carried out by the researcher. The students were required to answer the question: Describe your personal feelings about the English language. Based on the first answer, students were asked a variety of questions relating to how they see the role of English in their lives now and in their future professional lives. The interviews were conducted individually and each session took an average of (20) minutes. Later in the semester, (200) students, taking courses in Applied English program, were given the same question as a prompt for a self-reported composition task. The writing took place in ordinary class sessions and lasted for an average of (40) minutes. It should be noted here that the language of the interviews and the written task compositions were in English. The interview data were transcribed in the form of individual written statements or utterances. The compositions were skimmed through first for a general overview by the
researcher and later scanned where explicit views showing attitudes were highlighted using color-coding. Key words in every utterance or written statement were highlighted then matched with possible categories. Initial emerging themes were noted and later verified on a second scan. Two university colleagues were consulted as to the categorizing of students' attitudes.

Results:

Seven themes emerged from the data provided by the students. These themes are shown in ranked order in the following table according to the number of students who mentioned statements in relation to a particular area of interest or motivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Professional Concerns</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>94.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>85.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Educational Experience</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>83.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Social Status</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>75.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cultural Interests</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>58.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Travel &amp; Immigration</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Media &amp; Technology</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
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| Out of 250 |

**Theme One (Professional Concerns):**

The data shows clearly that the vast majority of students in the Applied English program are career oriented. Professional interests topped the list as (236) students (%=94.4) said they, some way or another, see the role of English as a chance for getting a good job. The students were quite explicit in acknowledging the value of English in their future careers. This is evidently an instrumental motivation. English is viewed by the majority of students in the program as a vehicle for income-generating jobs. The students seem to be quite aware of how English can help them obtain jobs with good salaries. Common and frequent key words used to indicate this kind of motivation were: earn promotion, work, jobs, business, career, salary, money, companies, school, and embassy. The quoted examples below show the professional attitudes of the students:

- "it's important in work"
- "We need foreign language for many purposes like work, "
- "People would have better work opportunities if they knew English."
- "They could have better jobs"
- "I get better promotion in my future job if I master the English language well"
"I can have my own business with my language skills"
"I will make more money with better English"
"I can have more than one job"
"With English I can do business"
"English language is good for my future job in translation"
"I can have online business with English"
"English enables us to have better jobs"
"I can obtain high degree of career"
"English is the symbol of a prestigious job"
"If you know English you can get good salary jobs"
"Knowing English makes doctors and engineers."
"I will study business after I finish English major."
"I want to work in embassy so I need good English."
"I think English is great for me so I can become a journalist."
"I can open an office for translation and English is my best way"
"You can teach private lessons in English and make more money"
"In big companies they all ask for English"
"If you English you can earn more money."
"Good job opportunities are based on good English"
"Jobs requiring English"
"English is requirement for any job"
"I will become a good teacher in a private school"
"I want to help my father in his company."

**Theme Two (Personal Development):**

The second favored motivation was related to the role of English as an impact factor in their personal growth. A big majority of the students (85.6%; n=214) expressed interest in English as a means of promoting their chances of personal development. The see English as a personal requirement, a need, and an inevitable necessity such as bread as put by one of the students: "English now became like bread." English is seen as important for future success. English is also associated with better life quality. English is simply a way of change in the life of an individual. Consider the following statements selected from the students' responses:

- "and improve ourselves."
- "Anything nowadays need English language."
- "English is important in every field of our life"
- "English is important to my future success"
- "My life will be more successful if I get better English"
- "I can compete with others if my English improves"
• "English increases your chances to have better life"
• "English is a useful skill for my ambitions"
• "English degree is a weapon in our hand"
• "English makes my life flexible"
• "English now became like bread"
• "They have the ability to change themselves"
• "Every innovation thinkers confirm for important learning foreign language to be successful in your life."
• "Learning English language has become very necessary in the recent years."
• "Learning English as a foreign language was a step for me to live a new experience"
• "They have the ability to change themselves"

Theme Three (Educational Experience):

The third factor shaping the students' attitudes toward the role of English pertains to education and learning. Still, a great majority (n=209; %83.6) of the sample students believe that learning English as an international language is an essential segment of their education. English is viewed in terms of a human need and a way of becoming literate and well educated in the modern society. The students proved to be aware of the vital role of English as part of their education. Some mentioned the effect of parents or past teachers who made the 'love' English. The general trend seems to be a clear positive appreciation of the role of learning English. This is an intrinsic motivation as it indicated an affective interest in the language itself and the way it was taught. It may be interesting to note the emotional vocabulary used in the students discourse such as: love, thank God, like, wanted, and encourage. The following quotations further illustrate how the students were thinking regarding this aspect of their attitudes:

• "My mother is a teacher of English."
• "Learning more than one language became an important need for humans."
• "Learning English language has become very necessary in the recent years."
• "Learning a language is an important issue especially these days."
• For me, the person who doesn't know how to use or speak English is the new illiterate nowadays."
• "I will become a good teacher in a private school"
• "Most scientific majors are taught in English"
• "In Jordan, the idea of learning second language it became improved."
"Learning English as a foreign language was a step for me to live a new experience"
"Learning English as a foreign language is very important."
"Jordanians have a motivation to learn English language…"
"now studying what I love"
"I thank God because I study English."
"I like to learn foreign language and English language"
"I wanted to learn English more and more"
"Goes back to my love of English as a kid"
"More people study English nowadays"
"I love English I will teach it"
"Many parents send their kids to private schools because of English"
"I am proud on myself because I study Applied English"
"I cannot forget that my father kept encouraging me all the time in the past to learn more about English and when I grew up I knew how much that English means in our society"
"Jordanian people motivate their children to learn English"
"English is for people who are educated and civilized."
"People admire me more because I study English"
"Without English you are really not educated."
"I can help my children in the future because I know English"
"I can now read books and novels"
Knowledge of English is the best way to get good education
"Every innovation thinkers confirm for important learning foreign language to be successful in your life."
"Foreign language the most important thing can we learned…"
"I love foreign languages"

**Theme Four (Social Status):**

In fourth position came the role of English as an indicator of social status. About three quarters (n=188; %=.75.2) of the students showed positive attitudes to English as a means of achieving a social position in the community. Here, the students equate a good knowledge of English with a good standing in the society. English is seen in terms of making friends and being able to interact with others especially those in 'higher' places. Some students mentioned they felt 'proud' as their family and relatives saw them using English. It can be a way of showing off and achieving admiration from others. The following quotations are examples on this aspect:

"It helps us to communicate, interact"
"it's important in social life"
"I can talk to foreign tourists so they become my friends"
"communicate with other people"
"Learning English can allow me to have many friends"
"English is a way for connecting the outside world"
"English will help me to achieve respectable status in the family and also society."
"Speakers of English have very much respect in work place."
"English is our way to feel modern and civilized."
"When I speak English I feel of high social status."
"I can make better life and get a high place in the community"
"English adds to my social status."
"People respect someone who speaks a foreign language"
"My family feel proud when they see me speak English"
"I could make many friends anywhere"
"People admire me more because I study English"
"I can know people from higher families"
"I can talk with people from other countries"
"Someone who lives in USA and knows English is respected from people"
"You make more relations if you know English"
"We use English as prestige in the high classes"
"we use English to make others know that we know English and can speak and communicate"
"English is correlated with youth"
"English is associated with wealth, power, and money."
"Rich high class influential figures in Amman use English"
"The English language can also be associated with prestige, education, and high society"
"Using English is symbol of civilization"
"it's important in work, social life, economic, and media."
"People will respect me more because I know other cultures"

Theme Five (Cultural Interests):

English was also perceived by the students as a way for connecting with other cultures. More than half of the sample (n=147; %6=58.8) realized that their affiliation with English as a world language provides them with cultural awareness. English, in the eyes of Applied English students, plays a role in connecting peoples and cultures. Knowing other cultures through English brings respect to the user of the language. 'Opening a new door' is a good way of relating to English as a means of cultural appreciation. The
students show here another aspect of intrinsic motivation as they see English adding more value to their personal lives. What follows are quotes from the data to illustrate this point.

- "Communicate with American people"
- "When you know other language you will be more cultured."
- "People will respect me more because I know other cultures"
- "by opening a new door for another world."
- "I like this language because it introduces me to other cultures".
- "Our religion says we must learn other tongue"
- "We can explain about our religion to other nations"
- "We can present our culture to others."
- "I can talk with people from other countries"
- "English is a way for connecting the outside world"

### Theme Six (Travel and Immigration):  

The role of English was also viewed by a substantial percentage of students in the sense of travel and immigration (n=115; % =46.0). This aspect of the students' attitudes was ranked here in sixth place. Many young Jordanians seem to want to find opportunities abroad and to achieve a goal like this necessitates a professional competency in English. It was clear in the data that the preferred destinations of the students were North America and the Arab Gulf countries. This kind of motivation seems to shape the attitudes of Applied English students. Here are some examples quoted from the data:

- "I can travel easily with good English"
- "I can travel and work in Dubai if I master English."
- "I want to immigrate to Canada and English is very important for me"
- "English is the main language to working and living abroad"
- "I have relatives who live in Canada."
- "even we travel to another country and so on."
- "You can travel more because you know English"

### Theme Seven (The Media & Technology):  

At the bottom of the scale came the attitude towards English as a means of obtaining access to social media and technology at large. Just above a third (n=89; %=35.6) of the students showed feelings in this regard. The students expresses desire to learn English because it serves as gate to social media such as the facebook and also to western films in English. They also see the role of English as a way to master technology in general. The following examples illustrate this aspect:

- "English makes me understand American movies."
• "it's important in work, social life, economic, and media."
• "Young facebook people see English associated with wealth, power"
• "I can use English in facebook"
• "With English I can master the technology"
• "Only with English we can understand new technology"

**Discussion and Concluding Remarks:**

The results showed very clearly an overwhelming majority of positive attitudes towards the role English plays in the lives of the students of Applied English at the University of Jordan. This confirms the generally held belief among Jordanians that English is a vital language that can make a difference in one's personal and professional life. It appears that almost all students majoring in Applied English at the University of Jordan have no quarrel with English as a language for communication. They agree with and appreciate the fact that English for them is not only a subject of theoretical study, but it is also a means to advance their opportunities. Taking the view of Richards and Schmidt, (2002: 286) that language attitudes may have an effect on foreign language learning and that the study of language attitudes provides information which is useful in language teaching and language planning, we can infer from the results of this study that the Applied English students find themselves in the right place. This positive orientation can be utilized as a motivating factor to the staff of the program because they can assume much cooperation from students. Also these results give reassurance that the Applied English major is worth offering as the majority of students seem excited and quite enthusiastic about pursuing personal and professional goals through it.

In answer to the questions of the study, it can be fairly said that the Applied English students perceive the role of English positively. As for the kinds of attitudes, the results showed that at least seven possible categories of orientations reflect the students' perceptions. These include both intrinsic and instrumental aspects of motivation. Professional concerns came on top ranking, followed by personal development, educational experience, social status, cultural interests, travel / immigration, and media /technology respectively. These same categories can also serve as a preliminary and provisional list or framework for factors that can have bearing on the students' attitudes.

We should also not here that the students of this study were all female and therefore the results here indicate a female attitude in addition to being students' attitudes. The BA in Applied English is comprised of females as a vast majority and the percentage of male students is very minimal indeed (probably not exceeding 5%). This reflects another attitude in the Jordanian society that studying English as a major is more suitable for women
candidates. However, this remains as merely a hypothesis that can be verified in future research. It is also expected that such impressive positive attitude to English should naturally be reflected in students' academic achievement and overall behavior as students. This point can be picked up in any further research effort. Indeed, this is the very first start of investigating this promising university program. More and, hopefully, better research should be conducted to complete the picture.

References:
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