

## **English Department Students' Attitudes towards Teaching Profession**

**Dr. Hanan Dhia Akef Alsalihi, (PhD in ELT Methodology & Curriculum)**

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### **Abstract**

Attitudes refer to the inside tendency and thoughts that reflect when a person is displayed to some phenomenon. The main objectives of the present research are to: discover EFL students' attitudes towards teaching profession, and find out if there is a statistical significant difference in attitudes between students at the college of Education "Ibn Rushd" and students at the college of Education for women in Baghdad University? and to discover, if there is a statistical significant difference in attitudes between males and females? The sample is 90 students are selected from in-service training teachers \ fourth stage at college of education Ibn\_Rushd and college of education for women. The researcher uses an attitude scale as a tool which consists of a 20 item "likert scale" consists of six subscales. Each one has a statement that pertains to a particular aspect of possibility and assessing teacher's vocational attitudes. The results show that EFL female students' as well as males do have real tendency toward teaching profession, the Mean values shows that no significant difference between the two colleges (college of education for women & college of Ibn Rushd) about their attitude which means both of them show favourable attitude toward teaching profession.

**Key words:** Attitudes, teaching profession, EFL training students

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## Section One

### 1.1 Introduction

English language has essential place in the human present life which happen over different roots; whether through technological or face to face, in addition to the importance of using the language in communication. Being able to communicate and exchange communication is mainly occurring because of language .

Of course, the most important global language that is being used all over the world as a means of communication is English; and the educational system in Iraq has given a prestigious place for it. Therefore, the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) is a very vital part of the Iraqi teaching - learning process. In the public and private schools, English is being taught for twelve years, from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade to the 12<sup>th</sup> "(Uzunboylu et al., 2009)".

Attitude can be used in understanding behavior of humans. "Anastasi (1957:43)" defines attitude as reaction tendency towards a designed class of stimuli in a specific way. "Gardner (1985:10)" defines attitudes as "achieving the goal of learning through integrating the effort plus desire plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language". "Baker (1992: 10)" defined Attitude as "explaining the direction and persistence of human behavior through a hypothetical construct". While "Matsuda (2000: 21)" mentioned that "attitude" has three combinations: cognitive, affective, and behaviour. The first one refers to thoughts, beliefs, and values about the language; the second one refers to feelings about it; and the third one refers to behavioral intention to plan an action. Positive trends in students' attitudes will lead them to spend more effort to learn the language and literature and manipulating some techniques such as ask questions, volunteering information asking question "(Baker, 1992)".

### 1.2 The problem and its significant

The present study seeks to shed light on students' attitudes towards teaching profession by giving a better look to the nature of attitude and how it's developed until it started to effect on the individual perception. And also, to understand the reality of whether selected sample have actually joined the study at English departments in college of Education in order to be a teacher in the future or they have just engaged to complete the degrees and get graduation certificate. Many said that the majority of the students at the mentioned colleges joint just to take the certificates and to please their parents about the educational qualification because their parents only wish

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them to be educated people which is considered as a main reason for getting marriage and to get job as fast as they could.

The present study aims to enable the prospective teachers to understand and comprehend the real needs of the EFL students and to modify their behaviour of the child according to the needs and experiences of the society.

The present study is conducted to show the importance of the teaching profession and to modify the idea of in-service training teachers towards their future work.

## 1.3 Aims

The present study aimed at finding out/ the following:

1. EFL students' attitudes towards teaching profession.
2. Is there a statistically significant difference in attitudes between students at the college of Education "Ibn Rushd" and students at the college of Education for women?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference in attitudes between males and females?

## 1.4 Limits

The present study limited to fourth stage students who study English as a foreign language in English department at both college of Education (Ibn Rushd) and College of Education for women.

## 1.5 Value

The value of this study is to shed light on the power of teaching profession and to show how it can make changes in many aspects of life. This important process of education is done through a unique figure known as a teacher with motivation and passion the learning - teaching process will be enhanced.

## 1.6 Hypotheses

In order to achieve the aims of this study, the following three null hypotheses will be tested:

- 1- There are no statistically significant differences at (0.05) level of significance between the mean scores of students' attitudes at both colleges of Education towards teaching profession.
- 2- There are no statistically significant differences at (0.05) level of significance between the mean scores of students' attitudes at college of Education (Ibn Rushd) and those at college of Education for women towards teaching profession.

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3- There are no statistically significant differences at (0.05) level of significance between the mean scores of female and male students' attitudes towards teaching profession.

## 1.7 Definitions of Basic Terms

"EFL": It is an abbreviation for English as a foreign language. "EFL" means to study English in a country that English is not the native, primary or national language of that country "(Al shamari, 2007:14)".

The operational definition of EFL: it refers to the fourth stage students who study English as a foreign language in English department at both college of Education (Ibn Rushd) and College of Education for women.

Attitude: is a continuous organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant events, groups, objects, or symbols "(Hogg & Vaughan, 2005:15)".

Also, it can be defined as expressing evaluation of a specific entity with a little degree of favors or disfavors through a psychological tendency (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993:1)".

The operational definition of attitudes is: the total sum of scores gained by the students of the study sample after answering all items in the attitudes scale towards teaching profession.

Teaching profession: "Is the process through which man attempt to pass along to his children his hard-won wisdom and his aspiration for a better world (Compton's Encyclopedia Vol. 8, 1983)".

The operational definition of teaching profession in this study refers to in – service teachers / students' trainers at the fourth stage who are going to be teachers in future and specifically students at colleges of Education (Ibn Rushd) and college of Education for women at Baghdad University.

## 2.1 Section Two: Theoretical Background

### 2.1.2 The Nature of Attitudes

An attitude is part of the personality because, it's integral part of the self, and a person may not show his attitudes by words neither by action if the revelation of his attitudes might cause him to lose his prestige in his group.

To understand the nature of attitudes is still quite difficult. An eclectic definition includes the following concepts: inclinations, feelings, values, prejudice, and convictions about any specific topic, all these being integrated and dynamic in the presence of an activating stimulus. There is considerable agreement among psychologists in their definitions of attitudes as a reaction patterns that are acquired and motive human behavior.

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Attitude of an individual are influenced by the established norms of or frames of reference and by individual experience (Daniel & Kulp, 1935:218).

## 2.2.2 Attitudes and Interests

Attitude and interest not only modify the behavior of a person; themselves are changed. They are strengthened and weakened by the cause of inner development and by the experience of life. Personal workers should have as much knowledge as they can it's important to have a background about the changes in students' attitudes and interests that associated with social changes.

Teachers should know how student's attitudes and interests could be changed during the years they spent in high school. Surly these changes will be noticed not just in their style and appearance but, also in their way of thinking and attitudes "(Edward et al., 1937:229)".

## 2.2.3 Attitudes of High-Schools and of College

Even if the relationship between learners' opinions and their behaviours can't be predicated in the exact way, it's still important to know what members of different groups are thinking. High school students are rapidly making opinion and building attitudes. The opinion of college students and the changes that happen in their ideas and attitudes are super important because, this group will supply many leaders of future. Certain ideas and beliefs set a limit to a student's conducting although s/he does not don't inevitably define his/her acts. A learner with decidedly radical ideas wouldn't be happy in teaching within a small, old-line community.

Attitudes seem to be, in general, more stable in older adults than in college age learners. There is some experiment evidence that older people are more "set in their ways". At least they appear to be more stable in their responses on certain attitudes scales than their younger intellectual peers. Although it is important but at the same time it is difficult area for investigation, because the struggle in beliefs and attitudes between the younger and their elders is one of the significant factors in adolescent adjustment. It's hard for the parents and still more difficult for grandparents, to understand the younger generation, especially when a conflict between two different cultures inter in (Strang, 1937:235).

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### 2.2.4 Types of Attitude

#### 2.2.4.1 Cognitive Component

It concerns with the thoughts, traits and beliefs that one associates with an object; it could be negative or positive for example, ones may form attitudes toward a certain politician based on their beliefs and thoughts about the politician's aim policy, intelligence and his/ her values (Aquinas, 2006:79).

#### 2.2.4.2 Affective Component

It concerns with the feelings and passions connected to an attitude object. Affective responses impact the attitudes in many directions for instance a person who believes that hard working earns a promotion and when he or she gets nothing that makes them feel upset or frustration "Affect" it refers to an attitude's emotional component "(Ibid)".

#### 2.2.4.3 Behavioral Component

It can be defined as the individual's behaviour that happens as a result of his or her feelings about person, situation or whatever. The measurement of an attitude's behavioral component can be done by asking a person about behavior or intentions or by observing behavior "(Ibid)".

### 2.3 Methods of Measuring Attitudes

There are many different methods or ways to measure the human attitudes as mentioned below by AL-Salihi (2008: 37-39):

#### 1) Likert Scale

It is named also as (Summated ratings): This scale has been discovered by "Likert" is commonly involved in measuring different issues or attitudes that related to woman, progressivism, scientific materials or subjects, etc.

#### 2) Bogradus Social Distance Scale:

This scale deals with real life events or social relations of an individual and it attempts to measure social respondent's degree of the individual tolerance, hostility and intimacy, aversion and closing to a group, a gender or specific community.

#### 3) Guttman Scale

This method bears some similarities with "Likert" scale methods that deals with measurements of different psychological attitudes of an individual. Items in Guttman scale are organized in a particular order so that an individual who agrees with a particular item of lower rank –order and eventually disagrees with items of upper rank – order.

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## 4) Project Text Scale

These texts are used to measure the different socio-psychological attitudes of an individual. It is designed to let an individual respond to social ambiguous stimuli scenes, images games, sentences or uncompleted stories. In a way it is aimed to direct the individual to the subject needed for the text, and it is also measure some of his personality or character traits that related to the text.

## 5) Thurston Scaling

It is named also as (Method of equal appearing intervals). This scale is designed to measure numerous subjects. It generates many scale items that s either common (favorable) or equal (unfavorable) to each other. This scale is made up of different items or sentences. Each one of them has its own value or effect on the whole process.

## 6) Semantic Differential Scale

Measuring the connotative meaning and the denotative meaning of objects, events and concepts can be applied in this type of rating scale. Charles E Osgood crated this scale to study perception of concepts, meaning and attitudes. The steps involved in this method include:

- The definition of concepts to be evaluated, ones are trying to find the meaning, the content and indication of the concept.
- The standards on which these concepts and indications were built.

## 7) Image Scale or Photographic Scale

Participants will be expos to some images which contain a picture of a leader, groups or workers' group ... etc., then he will be ask to say or write his opinion on each image.

## 8) Scale Expression (Word Statement)

This scale contains words, completing sentences, completing stories, completing sentences, game play mood and playing a social playing.

## 2.4 Related Previous Studies

Many studies and researches have been conducted to measure the attitude towards teaching profession on the performance of teachers whether inside or outside the class and all the related factors.

- A study by Cornelius (2000), he revealed that teacher trainees' competence can be affected by intelligence, attitude towards teaching and academic achievement.
- Devi's study (2005), she found in her research that two prime factors lead to success in the teaching profession, these two factors are: attitude towards profession and job.

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- Suja's research (2007), states that the confirmation was also on similar findings. Three elements can affect teaching defined as: first - attitude towards profession, second - interest in profession and third- teaching experience influence job commitment of the teacher.
  - Egwu study (2015:3), he emphasizes the correlation between both attitude towards profession and success in teaching.

## Section Three: Methodology

### 3.1 The Population and the Sample of the Study

All students' teachers in fourth stage at college of Education "Ibn\_Rushd" and college of "Education for women in Baghdad University". The present study sample is restricted to "90" students.

### 3.2 The Instrument of the Study

The researcher used a questionnaire for attitude which includes 20 items which consists of six subscales. For each subscale there is a statement concerned with a specific aspect of prospective and practicing teacher's professional attitudes.

These six aspects in the questionnaire are: teaching, the attitude towards teaching profession, practices, teachers, pupils and educational process. Ten statements are in positive declarative form and the other ten of them are in negative form.

Ten of these items are designed to assess attitude in favourable direction and the other ten are designed to assess attitude in unfavourable direction. Each item was supplied with the Likert scales strongly agree, agree, hesitant, disagree and strongly disagree. In the answer sheet, students' responses were by ticking mark in the chosen alternative against the serial number of the attitude statement.

There aren't any limitations for answering time on the answering sheet, but student teachers were asked to fill and complete it as fast as they could, see appendix (1).

#### 3.2.1 The Validity

In order to achieve the validity of the instrument, the researcher subjected the questionnaire to number of experts in the field of the study and they showed their agreement on the suitability of the instrument to measure attitudes for students at colleges of Education towards teaching profession.



### 3.2.2 The Reliability

In order to achieve reliability, Cronbach Alpha used to measure the reliability of the instrument after conducting a pilot study. The value of Cronbach Alpha was (alpha = 8395%) which is acceptable.

### 3.2.3 The Procedures of the Study

In the field of Education at a democratic system, many things are taken into consideration in order to reach the success of the democratic society. These things include: the opinions, desires, feelings, and attitudes of every person and the correct comprehension of individuals' attitude to it, is what success depends upon. Therefore, measuring and testing the attitude has taken a major status. Attitude is a "Mental set of responding to a situation, where a set may be temporary matters attitude denotes bias as pre-conception, conviction, feelings, emotions, hopes and fears" as stated by the new dictionary of Psychology.

Researches in opinions and attitudes generally used two classified scaling methods since 1930s. The first method is of, "Equal appearing intervals" which is connected with the name of Thurstone and the second method is of "Summated Ratings" which is wished by Rensis Likert. In the present research, the attitude scale was prepared according to Likert method.

#### - **Sigma Scale Method or Method of Summated Ratings**

The work of "Rensis Likert" is the associated one with this method. In this method, item analysis procedure is borrowed from test construction technique. The items are drawn up in the form of attitude scale. Multiple response categories were given for each item, categories of strongly agree, agree, hesitant, disagree and strongly disagree. Then the scale is distributed on the chosen sample of students.

The researcher asked the students to checking response to each item which represent their own attitude and mostly expresses their feelings on that item. The scoring system for the questionnaire showed five response categories assigned for each item in arbitrary weights 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 where strongly agree is assigned to the response that goes towards one end of the attitude continuum as the highest weight age while the opposite end is assigned to the lowest weight.

The questionnaire distributes to 90 students divided equally between college of Education for women (45) students and college of Ibn Rushd (45) students, the students has been selected randomly and the data in the attitude scale contains twenty (20) items. The following categories are supplied with

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each item as: “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “hesitant”, “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree” categories. The problem before researcher was to study the attitude of students towards Teaching Profession

In order to follow equitable procedures in measuring attitudes for students, and the need to show the importance of attitude scale which is obvious, and the importance of improving the effective usefulness of it in many studies, and to measure attitude towards teaching profession, the researches followed Likert's method for being more instrumental in: 1) nature so far as 2) administrative, 3) economic and 4) time facilities are concerned. Therefore, the present study followed the Likert's method in investigation for measuring the attitudes.

## - 3.4 The Scoring Scheme

The scoring ranges from 5 as (strongly agree) to 0 as (strongly disagree) for favourable items. While the scoring range is inverted, which means from 0 as (strongly agree) to 5 as (strongly disagree) in the case of unfavourable items. Therefore, the total sum of each item scores for all 5 sub scales will be the attitude score of a subject. The theoretical range of scores is from 0 to 360. The more favourable attitude towards teaching profession will show higher score indicates.

## Section Four: Results Analysis, Discussion, Conclusions, Recommendation & Suggestions

### 4.1 Results Related to the First Aim and Verification of the First Null Hypothesis

#### Data Analysis:

- 1- In order to achieve the first aim which is discovering EFL students' attitudes towards teaching profession, the researcher used the T-test for one sample to find out if there are significant differences between sample mean and hypothesized mean for the population. The sample mean value was (64.122) with standard deviation (7.218) while the hypothesized mean value for the population was (60) and the calculated T-value was (5.417) which is bigger than the tabulated T-value (1.99) at (89) degree of freedom which indicate the existence of attitude for students at colleges of Education towards teaching profession as shown in Table (1).

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**Table (1) T-test for one sample**

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Calculated T-value	tabulated T-value	Hypothesized Mean of population	Degree of Freedom	Significance at 0.05
90	64.122	7.218	5.417	1.99	60	89	significant

## 4.2 Results Related to the Second Aim and Verification of the Second Null Hypothesis

2- In order to achieve the second aim, the researcher used the T-Test for two independent samples to find out if there is significant difference in attitudes between students at the college of Education "Ibn Rushd" and students at the college of Education for women. The mean value for students at college of Education "Ibn Rushd" was (63.066) with standard deviation (7.484) and the mean value for students at college of Education for women was (65.6) with standard deviation (6.217) and the calculated T-value was (1.747) which is less than the tabulated T-value (1.99) at (88) degree of freedom which indicate that there is no statistical significant differences between the two colleges in attitude, as shown in Table (2).

**Table (2) T-test for two independent samples**

Colleges	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Calculated T-value	tabulated T-value	Degree of Freedom	Significance at 0.05
Ibn Rushd	45	63.066	7.484	1.747	1.99	88	Not significant
Women	45	65.6	6.217				

## 4.3 Results Related to the Third Aim and Verification of the Third Null Hypothesis

3- In order to achieve the third aim, the researcher used the T-Test for two independent samples to find out if there is statistical significant difference in attitudes between the two sexes males and females. The mean value for female students was (64.533) with standard deviation (6.715) and the mean value for male students was (63.300) with standard deviation (8.192) and the calculated T-value was (0.762) which is less

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than the tabulated T-value (1.99) at (88) degree of freedom which indicate that there is no statistical significant differences between both males and females in attitude towards teaching profession, as shown in Table (3).

**Table (3) T-test for two independent samples**

Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Calculated T-value	tabulated T-value	Degree of Freedom	Significance at 0.05
Females	60	64.533	6.715	0.762	1.99	88	Not significant
Males	30	63.300	8.192				

## Discussion

On the basis of the analysis of the data collected through questionnaire, the results prove the existence of attitude for students at both colleges of Education towards teaching profession. The Mean difference shows that there is no significant difference between the two colleges (college of education for women & college of education Ibn Rushd) in their attitude which means both of them show favourable attitude toward teaching profession. Sex variable show equal results in attitude because the results indicate that EFL female students as well as males do have real tendency toward teaching profession.

## Conclusion

Teaching profession is a powerful tool that makes changes in many aspects of life. The whole process of education is done through a figure known as a teacher with motivation and passion the learning - teaching process will be enhanced. Teaching is a noble and challenging career and for that teachers should have a strong positive attitude toward teaching profession because this attitude will be transferred to the next generation.

## Recommendation & Suggestions

- 1- Select qualitative nominees from those who want to study English at the colleges of Education and support them by providing guidance of professional principles in regard with their attitudes and wishes for their future profession and for both sexes males and females.
- 2- Choose students of high achievements and scores for studying at colleges of Education/ English departments in order to make teaching as a supreme profession.
- 3- Try to put teaching profession in its exact place at the beginning of all professions because all professions achieved by teaching.
- 4- Suggest high salaries for teachers and give them chance to participate in the educational system which will consolidate their profession.

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- 5- Make relationships between colleges of Education and society to provide all necessary updates concerning Education in public.

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#### Appendix (1)

N.	statement	Strongly agree	agree	hesitant	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I like being a teacher even if I will face lots of difficulties					
2	The teaching profession is considered to be less efficient and therefore less competitive					
3	The teaching job might never achieve any social prominence					
4	People see the graduates of the college of Education as less efficient					
5	most of the families refuse to let their sons and daughters to work as teachers					
6	I totally agree with the opinion that says "only the innovative and the creative students become teachers"					
7	I think that teaching profession is the best job ever					
8	I also think that graduates of our college feel proud when they will work as teachers in the future					
9	I feel discontent because I will be working as a teacher in the future					
10	I think the curriculum that we have been using is not concerned or related to the teaching profession					

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11	I'll be proud of myself when people know that I will be a teacher in the future					
12	It seems to me that teaching profession will increase self-confidence in me					
13	The main reason why I chose to be a teacher is because I like to deal with students in general					
14	If I had the opportunity of being able to choose another profession, I would choose teaching profession again					
15	I'm emotionally depressed because I will be a teacher in the future					
16	I believe that the teaching profession will develop and promote the scientific ability of the students					
17	In my opinion, I think that the college of education has been paving the way for the graduates' students to be leaders in the future					
18	I'm ready to perform all my teaching duties and responsibilities					
19	I really love being a teacher even if there is a limitation in its hierarchy					
20	Because of the teaching profession I will not be able accomplish my personal ambitions					

## اتجاهات طلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية نحو مهنة التدريس

د. حنان ضياء عاكف الصالحي (دكتوراه في طرائق تدريس  
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### الملخص:

يشير الاتجاه الى الميول والأفكار الداخلية لدى الفرد والتي تنعكس عليه عندما يتعرض الى بعض الظواهر. يهدف البحث الحالي الى: معرفة اتجاهات طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية نحو التدريس، وهل هناك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في اتجاهات الطلاب في كلية التربية "ابن رشد" واتجاهات الطالبات في كلية التربية للبنات في جامعة بغداد؟، وهل هناك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في الاتجاه بين الذكور والإناث؟

تضمنت العينة (90) طالبا وطالبة تم اختيارهم من المرحلة الرابعة في الكليتين المذكورتين (التربية ابن رشد والتربية للبنات). حيث استخدمت الباحثة أداة لقياس الاتجاه تتكون من (20) فقرة وهي مقياس ليكرت (Likert scale) والتي تحتوي على ستة مقاييس فرعية، كل واحد من هذه المقاييس يتعلق بجانب معين من الامكانيات وتقييم المواقف المهنية للمدرس.

أثبتت النتائج وجود اتجاه للطلاب في كليات التربية نحو مهنة التدريس. ويبين الفرق بين المتوسطين الحسابيين لكلا الكليتين أنه لا يوجد فرق كبير بين كليتي (كلية التربية للبنات وكلية التربية ابن رشد) في الاتجاه مما يعني أن كلا منهما يظهران موقفاً ايجابياً تجاه مهنة التدريس. يظهر متغير الجنس نتائج متساوية في الاتجاه لأن النتائج تشير إلى أن الطلاب الإناث والذكور الدارسين اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية لديهم ميل حقيقي نحو مهنة التدريس.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الاتجاهات، مهنة التدريس، الطلبة المتدربين الدارسين اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية