

Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching English as a Foreign Language in the First Four Grades in Jordan

Rasmieh Khleel Haddad

Language Center- University of Jordan - Jordan

hani_s@yu.edu.jo

Received: 14 Jul. 2015

Revised: 09 Sept. 2016 , Accepted: 22 Nov. 2016

Published online: 1 (October) 2017



Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching English as a Foreign Language in the First Four Grades in Jordan

Rasmieh Khleel Haddad

Language Center- University of Jordan

Jordan

Abstract

This study aimed at exploring teachers' attitudes toward teaching English as a foreign language in the first four grades of the primary stage in Jordan. The participants of the study were 89 teachers of the English language (58 females and 31 males). They were randomly chosen from the primary schools in Irbid Second Directorate of Education in the second semester of the academic year 2009/ 2010. To answer the questions of the study, the researcher designed a questionnaire. Proper statistical analysis were used to analyze the results. The results of the study indicated that teachers' attitudes toward teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) were positive with a mean of 3.85. It also showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the EFL teachers' attitudes toward teaching English due to: educational level, gender, experience, and marital status. Based on the results, it is recommended for educators to conduct experimental studies to explore teachers' attitudes toward TEFL that best support children's positive attitudes toward English in teaching – learning process.

Keywords: Attitudes, Primary Stage, Teaching, TEFL.

اتجاهات المعلمين نحو تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الصفوف الأربعة الأولى في الأردن

رسمية خليل حداد

مركز اللغات - الجامعة الأردنية

المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف اتجاهات المعلمين نحو تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الصفوف الأربعة الأولى في الأردن، وكان المشاركون في الدراسة (٨٩) معلماً من معلمين اللغة الإنجليزية (٥٨ إناث و ٣١ ذكور) وقد تم اختيار المشاركين في الدراسة عشوائياً من المدارس الابتدائية في مديرية تربية اربد الثانية في الفصل الدراسي الثاني من العام الدراسي ٢٠٠٩/٢٠١٠. للإجابة عن أسئلة الدراسة، قامت الباحثة بتصميم استبيان و استخدمت التحليلات الإحصائية المناسبة لتحليل النتائج، وأشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى أن مواقف المعلمين تجاه تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية كانت إيجابية بمتوسط (٣,٨٥) وأظهرت أيضاً أنه لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في اتجاهات المعلمين نحو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية نظراً للمستوى التعليمي والجنس والخبرة والحالة الاجتماعية. وفي ضوء هذه النتائج، أوصت الباحثة أن يقوم الباحثين بدراسات تجريبية لدراسة افضل اتجاهات المعلمين نحو تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لدعم عملية التعليم و التعلم في وقت مبكر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاتجاهات، المرحلة الابتدائية، عملية التعليم والتعلم.



Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching English as a Foreign Language in the First Four Grades in Jordan

Rasmieh Khleel Haddad

Language Center- University of Jordan

Jordan

Introduction

English is now a global language. It has become a lingua franca of international trade and communication. Al-Abed Al-Haq & Samadi (1996) state that English is the language for wider communication nowadays. This spread of English is derived from the fact that English is used for teaching purposes, pursuing higher studies, understanding foreign cultures, reading foreign press, communication with English speaking people, and for professional and business matters. They add that English is a medium of instruction especially in medicine and engineering. According to Crystal (2003) English language indisputably the language of knowledge. It is the language of science and mathematics, politics, business, media and allied technology. Thus, it is important for children to acquire high English language proficiency as early as possible for procuring the information presented through this language.

Richards and Rodgers (2007) confirm that many educational leaders believe that English is an international language and it should be taught at the very beginning of formal education. Many of them believe that it is easier to acquire a language in the early childhood, and that it is imperative to ensure that young learners acquire a basic command of English before being influenced by the native language (Arabic Language).

At an early age, children have an inherited device to acquire the language, it is the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) which is a theory clarified by Noam Chomsky. The inborn

device that occupies within the brain of children at early age enables the rapid acquisition of the vocabulary and grammatical rules of a language such as Greek, French, English or any other language. The use of this device decreases as the child grows older, and also has the inclination to reject learning a new language (Yats, 2007).

This theory underlines the importance of teaching English at the primary level in government schools (in the first four grades). For this reason, educators in Jordan allocate a lion's share of their objectives to increased focus on teaching English as a foreign language at early age. Therefore, the Ministry of Education (MoE) (2000) in Jordan brought about a significant policy change in the status of English in public schools which took place when a new curriculum for the early primary stage was adopted along with the introduction of teaching English as a school subject to grades one to four, whereas English before 2000 was taught as a compulsory subject at government schools, starting from the fifth grade. Thus, the first grades attending Jordanian public schools in 2000/2001 studied the Jordanian MoE first book of English. In fact, one of the primary goals of MoE in Jordan is to improve students' English language proficiency as well as teachers' attitudes toward the teaching – learning process.

When teaching English as an international language, teachers should realize the value of including topics that deal with the local culture. This supports teachers' attitudes toward the choice of methods and strategies that are



suitable to the local educational setting, and recognize the capability of teachers based on the results of a questionnaire given to Chilean teachers of English. The researcher asserts that in Chile there is a growing reinforcement for such attitudes. Nowadays many countries where English is a required subject, it is important for local teachers to consider the local needs of the students, and to determine what methods are appropriate for the local context in English language teaching, so that learners will be able to use English to tell others about their own society and their own culture (Mckay, 2003).

Garrett and his co-workers (2003) study language ideology as an essential construct that closely related to language attitudes. Their study claims that by using a collection of several methods in the classroom, teachers and students may successfully access the powerful effect of a ideology running within community and society at large. The researchers add that knowledge of English as an international language is one of the most significant instruments that focus young learners attitudes to language in communicating between countries, cultural members, communities, societies, peers, and friends.

Lantolf (2006) concludes that language classrooms should serve as forums for developing language awareness, not only for students but also for teachers. Using language classrooms as forums is an important concept because teachers' language awareness and attitudes greatly affect the development of students language literacy.

Attitude is one of the most fundamental principles, in the teaching – learning process. It has been extensively studied. An attitude is defined as a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, attitudes and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols (Hogg & Vaughan 2005). Brown (2000) point out, that attitudes are cognitive and affective. They are related to ideas as well as to feelings and emotions. Attitudes start to evolve early and they are affected by many factors such as parents, peers, and dealing with people who have social and cultural differences. According to Gardner (Cited in Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009) attitudes

are constituents of motivation which refers to the collection of exertion and the tendency to accomplish the goal of learning plus encouraging attitudes towards learning the language. Matsuda (2000) defines attitude as a concept that consists of three categories: the cognitive category relates to beliefs or opinions held consciously about the language; the affective category relates to feelings about it; and the behavioral category relates to aim to contrive an action. Morries and Maisto (2005) state that attitudes are selectively acquired and integrated through learning and experience. They are enduring dispositions indicating response consistency. Positive or negative attitudes towards a social or psychological object represent the salient characteristics of an attitude. Ustuner (2006) defines attitude as a disposition which springs from teacher's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors about a psychological object. He also states that one of the important elements determining the teachers' attitudes is the characteristic of the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession.

To ensure language learning consistency, teachers should have positive attitudes towards students' psychological comfort. Watson (2003) describes teaching as an intensely psychological process, and believes that teachers capability to sustain an active classroom environments, encourage students, and make decisions rides on their own attitudes towards creating close relationships with students. These positive attitudes and practices performed by teachers it can make a positive effect on their students' lives. Finally, can affect students future plans for success. Baker (2006) states that teachers' caring attitudes could have along teown positive effect on supporting students' self-esteem. It could rise higher because it leads to future academic prosperity. He explains that teachers must value the students. Psychologically, students could be influenced if they don't get along with their teachers or have problems with them. One the of consequences is that students will keep away from going to school. It is important for professional language teachers to make students confide in themselves, and help them to get over the issues that annoy them about school in their own life. This will



make a big difference in students life to express themselves and their feelings. Finally, this will affect their future success.

An awakeing in teachers attitudes towards teaching English makes a glint of excitements in the students attitudes toward learning the language. Students who have enthusiastic teachers intend to put them higher than teachers who don't show interest in their teaching (Barkely & Bianco, 2006). According to Patrick, Hisley & Kemppler (2000) teachers who show enthusiastic attitudes towards the language they teach, can lead to students who are engaged, excited, active, and eager to learn. The researchers find a coefficient between teachers, enthusiastic attitudes and students intrinsic need to learn and being energetic in the classroom. As Wenglinsky (2002) suggests, a teacher cannot be defined to be competent by looking into his educational level or work experience. Teachers' affect students through motivation and mutual actions, particularly in the classroom. Thus, educational level, and experience only represent a portion of classroom management (and promote achievement. Driessen (2007) finds that teacher's marital status has no effect on student's achievement.) A teacher's effectiveness is one of the keys to enhance students accomplishment.

Several researchers have shown that learning English is affected by many factors, and motivation is one of these profound factors. Chiarantano (2007) concludes that teachers who have the attitudes of encouragement, motivation, and stimulation decreases the worries about learning English as a foreign language. The researcher also supports the idea of avoiding criticizing young learners and pointing out to their mistakes in pronunciation in class. They may become humiliated and may acquire a negative attitude and minimies their interest in learning English Little. (1999) observes that children learning their tribal language as a foreign language are often criticized by elders and peers for their poor pronunciation and grammar. As criticism can be fatal to language learning, teachers should keep children motivated especially during the early beginning of learning a new language such as English.

An early beginning of language learning will not guarantee a high proficiency. It should be supported by creative attitudes. In fact, educators have come to realize the development of creativity as one of the most important factors of English language teaching. Soh (2000) finds that the supportive teachers attitudes towards creativity can be fostered through teachers behaviors and teaching practices in classroom that keep children is interests. Well-chosen games are valuable as they give students a break and allow children to practice language through creative thinking, cooperative learning, and problem solving. Turner (2009) investigates the way teachers of English understand and carry out creative teaching in the first three years of schooling (7, 8, and 9 years old). The researcher finds that teachers who use creative tasks, create meaningful games, use cooperative learning, answer children's questions, and provide rich learning environment help children to love their lessons.

The Ministry of Education in Jordan currently incorporate, use, and match modern technology with teaching strategies in order to keep up with the ongoing educational development (Jordan Education Initiative, 2003). Researchers assure that technology use supports and improves young learners, skills in the social, cognitive, and language literacy. Children in early childhood classrooms interact with peers when using technology. They share and assist each other and cooperate to solve problems (Wang & Ching, 2003). Teachers can support children with media rich content and integrate technology learning outcomes such as letter recognitions, sounds forming, learning habits, and understanding cultural concepts (Nir-Gal & Klein, 2004).

Because language is closely related to culture, researchers have discussed the importance of understanding of the cultures that use the language. Moreover, students cannot master the language until they master cultural contexts in which the language occurs. Brown (2007), indicates that foreign language learners attitudes towards speakers of the target language enhance proficiency and play an important role in the process of their language acquisition. Students with positive attitudes towards the



target language speakers and their culture are found to be more successful in learning a foreign language. In addition, the negative attitudes can be changed by cognitive methods, such as using information through books or media, and activities that lead students to value English culture Gardner (2005) argues that because language is an integral part of culture, the learning of a foreign language is dependent upon the learners willingness to identify the culture of the target language, incorporate aspects of the target language culture, and to include linguistic repertoire into their own behavior.

This study finds that teachers attitudes toward teaching English in the first four grades are positive and there are no statistically significant differences in the EFL teachers attitudes towards teaching English due to educational level, gender, experience and marital status.

Finally, teachers working hand in hand with young learners fosters the positive attitudes to make English teaching effective and meaningful.

Statement of the problem

Based on the researcher's experience as a teacher of EFL, the researcher noticed that most students are weak in learning English. Teachers often complain about the weakness of their students in learning English language. To enhance students' level of proficiency in English the Ministry of Education decided to teach English in the first grade. However, some believe that learning a foreign language in the early stage may affect learning of the first language negatively. Teachers' attitudes towards teaching English in the first grade need to be studied in order to discern what type of attitudes they have toward teaching English in the first four grades.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the following objectives:

- 1-Teachers' attitudes toward teaching English as a foreign language in the first four grades.
- 2-Differences in teachers' attitudes based

on teachers' demographical variables: (Educational level, gender, experience, marital status).

Questions of the study

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are teachers' attitudes toward teaching English as a foreign language in the first four grades?
2. Are there any significant Statistical differences in teachers' attitudes based on their educational level, gender, experience, and marital status?

Significance of the study

This study derives its significance from the fact that:

- 1-Teachers' attitudes toward teaching English in the first four grades in Jordan has not been investigated before.
- 2- It provides findings on teachers' attitudes toward teaching English in the first four grades.

It becomes clear that this study aims basically at defining the EFL teachers attitudes toward teaching English in the first four grades. The decision of the Ministry of Education affects teachers' performance and consequently has an effect upon students' acquisition. It language may determine the teachers' negative attitudes to be modified through outstanding plans and teaching strategies designed by decision makers at the MoE. Besides, it's well-known that English is the language of the internet in addition to the fact that it is a universal language that is needed for communication and learning.

Definitions of terms

The following terms will have the following meanings wherever they occur in this study.

Attitude: Attitudes in this study are dictated by the EFL teachers responses to the items of the teachers' questionnaire.

Primary Stage: Primary stage in Jordanian schools extending from grade 1 at the age of six to grade 6 at the age of twelve.

Teaching – Learning process: “It is the most



powerful instrument of Education to bring about desired changes in the students" (Smith, 2008).

Method and procedures

Participants of the Study:

Participants of the study were 89 EFL

teachers (58 females, 31 males). They were randomly chosen from primary schools in Irbid Directorate of Education in the second semester of the academic year 2009/2010, seven teachers were not available, so they were dropped from the sample.

Table (1): Distribution of sample based on educational level, gender, experience, and marital status

Variable	Value Label	Frequency	Percentage
Education	Community College	9	10.0%
	Bachelors' Degree	60	67.4%
	Higher Education	20	22.5%
Total Case = 89			Total Per. 100.0%
Gender	Female	58	65.2%
	Male	31	34.8%
Total Case = 89			Total Per. 100.0%
Experience	Five Years and less	22	24.7%
	6 – 10	22	24.7%
	11 Years and above	45	50.6%
Total Case = 89			Total Per. 100.0%
Marital Status	Single	18	20.2%
	Married	71	79.8%
Total Case = 89			Total Per. 100.0%

Table 1 shows an overview of 89 teachers who responded to this survey. Despite the relatively small sample size, there is a wide diversity in terms of educational level, gender, experience, and marital status. It also shows the frequencies and percentages of the sample at each level of the four independent variables.

Instrument of the study:

The researcher developed a questionnaire in order to achieve the objectives of this study. The questionnaire consisted of two parts:

Part 1: consisted of four independent variables which were:

- a-Educational level: community college, bachelor's degree, or higher education
- b-Gender: males or females.
- c-Work Experience: five years and less, 6 – 10 year, or 11 years and above.
- d-Marital Status: single or married

Part 2: The attitude questionnaire toward

teaching English as a foreign language in the first four grades.

Based on previous research and instruments, the researcher developed a questionnaire consisting of 20 items to detect teachers' attitudes toward teaching English as a foreign language in the first four grades in Jordan.

The responses to these items range from strongly agree to strongly disagree in a 5 point scale. (See Appendix A).

Reliability of the questionnaire

The reliability of the questionnaire was computed for internal consistency of all the items by using Cronbach Alpha. It was found to be 0.95 for the questionnaire. The experimental sample of the study was 89 primary EFL teachers (males and females).

The Questionnaire correcting method

In order to understand the significance of means of teachers' attitudes toward teaching

English the following statistical norm was used:

- Positive attitudes = 3.67 – 5
- Neutral attitudes = 2.34 - 3.66
- Negative attitudes = 1.00 – 2.33

Validity of the questionnaire

To establish the content validity of the questionnaire, the researcher employed the method of trustees validity. The questionnaire was given to a jury of seven TEFL university professors at Yarmouk University, two English supervisors, and five experienced English teachers to judge its validity and to give their constructive comments and directions. They were asked whether the questions were comprehensive, enough, accurate, and appropriate.

The questionnaire was modified to be in harmony with the jury's comments and recommendations by adjusting some of the statements and five items were dropped, so the final version of the questionnaire consisted of 20 items.

Reliability of the questionnaire

The reliability of the questionnaire was computed for internal consistency of all items by using Cronbach Alpha. It was 0.95 for the questionnaire. This result was considered satisfactory to use the questionnaire to collect the needed data.

Administration of the questionnaire

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to all the EFL teachers of the Primary stage in Irbid second Directorate of Education in person, in the second semester of the academic year 2009/2010. The instructions were discussed with the teacher. The questionnaires were collected by the supervisors of English and by the researcher herself.

Findings and discussion of the results

Results of the first question

The first question asks about the teachers' attitudes towards teaching English in the first four grades. In order to answer this question the researcher calculated the means and the standard deviations of the items in the questionnaire. The results are presented in table 2.

Table (2): Means, standard deviations and the rank of teachers' attitudes toward teaching English as a foreign language in the first four grades.

Rank	Item ID	Item	Mean	S.D
	10	Teaching English in the first four grades provides help to build the student's mastery of the language for later stages of education	4.26	.82
	1	The decision of the Ministry of Education to teach English in the first four grades is a wise decision	4.19	1.00
	2	Teaching English in the first four grades improves proficiency in English for school graduates	4.19	.99
	3	Teaching English in the first four grades improves the student's social interaction	4.03	1.03
	4	Teaching English in the first four grades improves the student's overall education	4.03	.95
	8	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to build their confidence in language learning	4.01	.95
	11	Teaching English in the first four grades encourages them to pursue their education with enthusiasm.	3.91	.95
	18	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to use video games.	3.88	1.01



5	Teaching English in the first four grades provides students with westernized cultures.	3.87	1.11
20	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students participate in developing their society.	3.85	1.02
9	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to use the computer and the internet	3.84	1.17
16	Teaching English in the first four grades encourages students to adopt modern technology.	3.81	1.00
14	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to make new friendships.	3.74	1.10
12	Teaching English in the first four grades provides students with good habits.	3.73	1.16
13	Teaching English in the first four grades helps improve reasoning and creativity.	3.73	1.12
6	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students follow foreign TV and radio programs in English.	3.71	1.10
17	Teaching English in the first four grades improves students ability to deal with others.	3.70	1.12
19	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to plan better for their future.	3.57	1.14
15	Teaching English in the first four grades helps to change their patterns of behavior.	3.49	1.12
7	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students read foreign press.	3.45	1.30
Total Questionnaire		3.85	0.86

Table 2 shows that the total level of teachers' attitudes towards teaching English in the first four grades is positive as the mean is 3.85. The table also shows that the highest mean is 4.26 and the lowest mean is 3.45 with standard deviations that range between 1.30 and 0.82. The results of the individual item of the teachers' questionnaire are illustrated clearly in this table. For ease of interpretation, in table 2 the items are set out in a descending order, from the one which most teachers agreed with, to the one which fewest teachers' agreed with. This result clarifies the crucial role of teachers' attitudes toward teaching English in the first four grades in boosting the teaching – learning process. Waston (2003), Matsuda (2000), and Ustuner (2006) conclude that teachers' attitudes affect their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors that finally affect students future academic

prosperity. The teachers' responses to most of the items in the questionnaire showed their high positive attitudes toward teaching English in the first four grades. Teachers' attitudes towards the first six items were high positive. On the other hand, their attitudes towards the next eleven items were positive. While their attitudes towards the last three items were reasonably positive.

Despite the great diversity of teachers' in terms of educational level, gender, experience, and marital status, there was a strong agreement on teaching English in the primary stage (in the first four grades).

Perhaps the most interesting result, finding of this study is that most teachers agreed with the item: "teaching English in the first four grades provides help to build the student's mastery of language for later stages of Education". It has

the highest mean 4.26. the following five items also scored high agreement (4.01 to 4.19).

- The decision of the Ministry of Education to teach English in the first four grades is a wise decision (4.19).
- Teaching English in the first four grades improves proficiency in English for school graduation (4.19).
- Teaching English in the first four grades improves the student's social interaction (4.03).
- Teaching English in the first four grades improves the student's overall education (4.03).
- Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to build their confidence in language learning (4.01).

The results show, overwhelmingly, that respondents viewed teaching English in the first four grades provides help to build the student's mastery of the language for the later stages of education. These findings may relate to the decision of the Ministry of Education to teach English in the first four grades. Educators in Jordan realized the importance of teaching English as it is an international language, and an enriching experience for children who have the most to benefit from this opportunity. This (corroborates) with Crystal (2003), Yats (2007), who believe that starting early offers the widest collection of benefits and chances for education and vocation. Universities nowadays set more and gives property to knowledge of English language. As English becomes more globalized, it only becomes less and less of an option. According to Garret and his co-workers (2003) English language learning opens the door to better education as the pleasure of the experience of learning English may instil great confidence and motivate children's passion for learning in general.

The following item, which focuses on the role of English language in encouraging children to learn enthusiastically.

- Teaching English in the first four grades encourages students to pursue their education with enthusiasm (3.91).

Teachers who agreed with this item generate

a lot of enthusiasm, motivate children to learn English within a classroom setting, inspire them in a friendly competitions, and lead them to pursue their education with enthusiasm. Teachers who subscribe to this view may experience the spark of enthusiastic and attitudes noted by Barkely & Bianco (2006), and Chiarantano (2007).

The researcher believes that the following findings are particularly important in the contemporary Jordanian context. All the four items resonate with a new skill – based model, where English is learnt by modern technology such as computer, internet, video games, and entertainment devices.

- Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to use video games (3.88).
- Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to use computer and internet (3.84).
- Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to follow foreign TV and radio programs in English (3.71).

Teachers who agree with these items are very much aware with the worlds' rapid changes as English is the language of electronics, technology, and entertainment devices. As they are available in English first before being made available, in other languages. This suggests that technology is becoming ever more pervasive. The challenge for teachers is to keep up with students latest information technology, to create meaningful experiences and teach them how to apply this information to solve real life problems. To introduce children to the importance of technology teachers should give every child the opportunity to learn through games and to watch TV and radio programs. This will help students to sustain interest without being bored. This suggests that the traditional teaching of English is being moved from a rote learning to a more developed way of learning. This reflect, the perceptions of the Ministry of Education (2003), Wang & Ching (2003), and Nir-Gal & Klein (2004).

This item shows that learning a English provides not just websites to see, but also new and bigger view of the world.

Teaching English in the first four grades



provides students with westernized culture (3.87).

Teachers who saw value in an eclectic understanding of western cultural aspects, accept the cultural differences, appreciate it subscribe to this understanding of the different cultural experiences which are necessary for children to deal with English language speakers in respect to these differences. This will help children to be familiar with western culture and agree with Brown (2007) and Gardner (2005) findings.

Learning English enables students to contact people all over the world. The English language gives students a new way of thinking to develop their society. This undermentioned item boosted the development of the society.

- Teaching English in the first four grades helps students participate in developing their society (3.85).

This supports McKay (2003) that English helps children to better understand other cultures, expressions, and communication. This can open their mind and promote their self-esteem, self direction, and self confidence. Finally, it will lead to the development of the society.

This item asked respondents whether teaching English helps students to make new friendships and improve their ability to deal with others. The findings give us an indication of the strong attitudes of the teachers surveyed towards teaching English.

- Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to make new friendships (3.74).

The essence of friendship is about care and respect. If students accept that speakers of English have the right to be different, then they open themselves up to the possibility of experiencing new relationships that bring a fresh perspectives to their life. At the same time they can make friends inside the classroom when sharing activities in language learning classes. These items constant with Turner (2009) and Soh (2000) indication of how important for children to learn English in order to be able to express themselves, and learn how to deal with peers, teachers and others through openness and

trust. This is embedded in all language learning processes.

Learning English has been useful in opening a window into the perspectives of teachers to enhance creativity in the teaching – learning process.

- Teaching English in the first four grades helps improve reasoning and creativity (3.73).

Creativity and reasoning lead to new insights, understanding, and conceptualizing of things. The results shows that educators came to realize to promote different ways of creativity to motivate children to be able to success. This approves the ideas of Turner (2009) and Soh (2000).

The next item concerns with helping students to plan better for their future. It may account for the finding that the group of teachers sampled were least positive about whether or not children can plan for a better future at this early age.

- Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to plan better for their future (3.57).

This finding shows what EFL teachers do to ensure students success. They try to move students forward in life by fostering pleasure and confidence in their ability to learn and plan for their future when accomplish their tasks and put mistakes and other failures behind. This will lead students to a better more successful and plan for their futures. This gives evidence to what Watson (2003) and Baker (2006) assert.

Next comes the findings of the item that shows the effect of English learning on forming good habits.

Teaching English in the first four grades provides students with good habits (3.73).

Learning English helps in part with good habit formation. Because children are so young at this stage, mental energy is needed to commit to new habits to set a way it is of learning vocabulary or in reading a story. The result shows how important for teachers to encourage students for their good pronunciation or their nice handwriting in order to foster the various learning habits. At this point the learning of the



new habit will not be endangered. This will make students more receptive to the new habits. Good habit formation and self-control depends on the force of teachers encouragement and rewards, as well as the development of self-control. This finding proves what Wang & Ching (2003) and Chiarantano (2007) concluded.

The final item scored the lowest mean compared with the other findings in the questionnaire.

- Teaching English in the first four grades helps students read foreign press (3.45).

This finding asserts that children at this age may struggle with reading foreign press for a variety of reasons including limited experience with books, and little phonemic awareness. Children at this age needs a lot of efforts, and explicit instruction to improve the necessary phoneme awareness, phonics and spelling through using creative tasks, and providing rich

reading environment. Teachers should keep children motivated and develop appropriate reading activities. This seems to corroborate with the finding of Chiarantano (2007), Little (1999) and Turner (2009).

The results of the first question showed that EFL teachers have positive attitudes toward teaching English in the first four grades. The results agreed with the decision of the Ministry of Education to teach English in the first four grades.

Results of the second question

The second question asks if there are any significant statistical differences in teachers' attitudes based on their educational level, gender, experience and marital status. A four-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate teachers' attitudes toward teaching English due to the four independent variables at equal or less than 0.05.

Table (3): Four – Way Analysis of Variance of the teachers' attitudes toward teaching English as a foreign language based on the four independent variables

Independent Variables	Sum of Squares	D.F	M.	F.	Significant of F
Education	444.03	2	222.01	0.740	0.480
Gender	409.65	1	409.65	1.47	0.246
Experience	699.81	2	349.91	1.17	0.317
M. Status	53.01	1	53.01	0.177	0.675
Residual	24593.56	82	299.92		
Total	25896.00	88	294.27		

Table 3 shows that there are no significant statistical differences in teachers' attitudes based on their educational level, gender, experience, and marital status. The research believes that these results could be due to these considerations: The simplicity of the text book's language that doesn't need a high language teaching proficiency, time an effort. Other reasons could be related to the easiness of the general pedagogy, strategies, and techniques that are used to teach young children. Besides, children are easy to deal with.

As a matter of facts the results of this question are in agreement with Wenglinsky (2002) and Driessen (2007) who found that educational level, experience, and marital status don't affect

teachers' attitudes towards their teaching, and their students' achievements. To sum up, the researcher found that there are no statistically significant differences in teachers' attitudes towards teaching English among teachers with different levels of education. Both female and male teachers had positive attitudes toward teaching EFL. Teachers with different years of experience had the same positive attitudes towards teaching EFL in the first four grades. Married teachers were found to have the save positive attitudes the same as single teachers.

Finally, the researcher strongly believes that highly motivated teachers whose teaching efforts can make a big difference in students success, are characterized to be effective



regardless to their educational level, gender, experience, and marital status.

References:

- Al-Abed al-Haq, F., & Smadi, O. (1996). Spread of English and Westernization in Saudi Arabia. *Word English's*. Vol: 15, No: 3.
- Al-Tamimi, A., A & Shuib, M. (2009). Motivation and attitudes towards learning English: A study of petroleum engineering undergraduates at Handramout University of Sciences and Technology. Retrieved: March 19, 2013, from: <http://www.ukm/ppbl/pp%2029-55>. Pdf.
- Barker, J. (2006). Contribution of teacher – child relation – ships to positive school adjustment during elementary school. *Journal of School Psychology*, 44, 211-229.
- Barkley, S; & Bianco, T. (2006). The Wonder of Wows. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, H2 (H), 148-151.
- Brown, C. (2000). Identifying Factors Which Promote or hinder the Successful transfer of Staff Development to Classroom Practice. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Texas A and M University.
- Brown, D. (2007). *Principle of Language Learning and Teaching*, (5th eds). Pearson: Longman.
- Chiarantano, S. (2007). Field Under Teacher Technique TEGL.net.TEFL Article: Achive written by Stefan Chriacnat for TEFL.net. www.tefl.net.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a Global Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Driessen, G. (2007). The Feminization of Primary Education: Effects of Teachers' Sex on Pupil Achivement, Attitudes and Behavior. *International Review of Education*, 53(2), pp: 183-203.
- Gardner, R. (2005). Integrative motivation and second language acquisition. *Canadian association of Applied Linguistics*.
- Garrett, P., Coupland, N. & Williams, A. (2003). *Investigating Language attitudes: Social meanings of dialect, ethnicity and performance*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Hogg, M; & Vaughan, G. (2005). *Social Psychology*. (4th Edition), Prentice Hall London.
- Jordan Education Initiative. (2003). Ministry of Education. Amman – Jordan.
- Lantolf, J. (2006). Socio cultural Theory and L2: State of the Art. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28, 67-109.
- Little, R. (1999). Some Rare and Radical Ideas for keeping Indiagenous Language A live. InG. Reyhner, G-Gantini, R.Nst.
- Mastuda, A. (2000). *Japanese Attitude Toward English: A case study of high school students*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Purdue University, Indiana.
- Mckay, S. (2003). *The cultural basis of teaching English as an international language: Rethinking Gools and Perspectives*, 7, 1.
- Ministry of Education. (2000). *General Guidelines and Curricula for the Basic and Secondary Stages*. Amman: Ministry of Education.
- Morris, C., & Maisto, A,. (2005). *Psychology: An introduction* (12 thed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Nir-Gal, O; & Klein, P. (2004). Computers for Cognitive Development in Early Childhood – The Teacher's Role in the Computer Learning Environment. *Information Technology in Childhood Education Annual*, 97-119.
- Patrick, B; Hisley, J; & Kempler, T. (2000). What's Everybody so Excited about?: The Effect of Teacher Enthusiasm on Student Intrinsic Motivation and Vitality". *The Journal of Experimental Education*, Vol 68, Ivo. 3, pp: 217-236.
- Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (2007). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, E. (2008). *Appearances of power: Service user involvement in health research* (PhD thesis) (University of London).
- Soh, K. (2000). Indexing Creativity Fostering Teacher Behavior a Preliminary Validation Study. *Journal of Creative Behaviors*, 34, pp: 118-134.



- Turner, S. (2009). Novel and Engaging Versus Boring Stagnating: How do Pupils and Teachers alike perceive the Sate of Creativity in Secondary Schools? Inc. Turgeon (Ed). Creativity and the Child: interdisciplinary perspectives. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press.
- Ustuner, M. (2006). Reliability and Validity Study on an Attitude Scale of Teaching Profession. Educational Administration – Theory and Practice, 45: 109-127.
- Wang, X., & Ching, C. (2003). Social Construction of Computer Experience in a first Grade Classroom: Social Processes and Mediating Artifacts. Early Education and Development. 4(3): pp: 335-61.
- Waston, M. (2003). Learning to Trust: Transforming Difficult Elementary Classrooms Through Developmental Discipline. San Francisco. Jossey- Bass.
- Wenglinsky. H. (2002). How Schools Matter: The Link Between Teacher Classroom Practices and Student Academic performance. Educational Policy Analysis Achieves, 10-12.
- Yates, K. (2007). Towards a Taxonomy of Cognitive task Analysis Methods: A search for Cognitive and Task Analysis Interactions. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Southern California, Los Angles.

**Appendix A**

Questionnaire in English

Teachers' Attitudes Toward Teaching English in the First Four Grades in Jordan

Introduction:

Please answer the following questionnaire. You may be sure that it will be used for research purposes only. We are simply interested in your opinions. Read each statement and then put an (X) in the appropriate box:

Part 1: General Information

Please put an (X) in the box that best applies to you.

Educational Level:

Community College Bachelors' Degree Higher Education

Gender:

Male Female

Experience:

1-5 Years 6-10 Years 11 Years and above

Marital Status:

Single Married



Part 2: The questionnaire of teachers' attitudes toward teaching English as a foreign language in the first four grades in Jordan.

NO	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Teaching English in the first four grades provides help in building the student's mastery of the language for later stages of education					
2	The decision of the Ministry of Education to teach English in the first four grades is a wise decision					
3	Teaching English in the first four grades improves proficiency in English for school graduates					
4	Teaching English in the first four grades improves the student's social interaction					
5	Teaching English in the first four grades improves the student's overall education.					
6	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to build their confidence in language learning.					
7	Teaching English in the first four grades encourages them to pursue their education with enthusiasm.					
8	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to use video games					
9	Teaching English in the first four grades provides students with westernized cultures.					
10	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students participate in developing their society.					
11	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to use the computer and the internet					
12	Teaching English in the first four grades encourages students to adopt modern technology.					



13	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to make new friendships.					
14	Teaching English in the first four grades provides students with good habits.					
15	Teaching English in the first four grades helps improve reasoning and creativity.					
16	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students follow foreign TV and radio programs in English.					
17	Teaching English in the first four grades improves students ability to deal with others.					
18	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students to plan better for their future.					
19	Teaching English in the first four grades helps to change their patterns of behavior					
20	Teaching English in the first four grades helps students read foreign press.					