

## INPUT FOR CURRICULUM DESIGN: DETERMINING THE ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS TOWARDS ENGLISH COURSES

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### ABSTRACT

As a result of the importance given to English which is the world's most common communication language in science and trade, English courses have taken place in the curriculum as elective or compulsory courses. Personal traits of the individuals are among the items which must be taken into consideration while designing curriculum. The purpose of this research is to determine the students' attitudes towards English courses in order to use them as input in curriculum design. Explanatory Research Design among the Mixed Research Designs was used in this research. The qualitative and quantitative data of the research were obtained from 977 secondary school students and 6 English teachers. Man Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis H tests were used for the data analysis. In the analysis of qualitative data, descriptive analysis method was used. At the end of the research, it was found out that the attitudes of the students towards English course didn't change according to gender, grade level and having a family member knowing English. Considering the sub-dimensions of the attitudes, it was found out that the female students' attitudes were more positive than the male students' attitudes regarding the general aspects and importance of the course; the male students' attitudes were more positive than the female students' regarding the interestingness of the subject and the teachers' teaching styles. While it was found out that the students' attitudes towards the general aspects and importance of the course, the interestingness of the subjects and the teachers' teaching styles didn't change according to grade levels. Other components which take role as input while designing curriculum should be investigated in future studies.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Design, English Courses, Attitude of Students

### INTRODUCTION

In a globalizing world, inter-country relations have intensified, foreign language learning and teaching has become one of the important goals in education and daily life and has become a need for many people (Doğan, 2012). English, the world's common communication language, which is accepted as a universal language, is taught as a compulsory or elective course in education programs due to this need that arises in many parts of the world. A number of factors play a role in the success of learning English, which has become the target of the whole world. Ülgen (1997: 88) defines the attitude that is one of the influential factors in the success of language learning as 'the element acquired through learning, which directs the individual's behavior and causes bias in the decision-making process'. Our attitudes affect our emotions, thoughts and behaviors at every point of our lives as well as affect students' feelings, thoughts and behaviors in language learning and teaching. Whether students like to learn English as a universal language, their positive or negative feelings about the course, their thoughts and beliefs about the course, and their behavior towards escape or approach within or outside the course are important factors affecting their English proficiency and achievement.

When the literature was examined, it was found that there were studies about the power, change, consistency, confidentiality, knowledge and emotion based on the attitudes and individuality. The strength and degree of attitudes are different. The power of attitude is the result of the sum of cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses to an individual's object of attitude. It is easier to predict the behaviors that will be revealed by very strong attitudes than to predict the behaviors that will be revealed by moderate or weak attitudes (Binbasioglu, 1995). According to Ülgen (1997), attitudes may be strengthened, weakened or changed. Strengthening and changing attitudes vary from individual to individual, from society to society. Attitudes consist of observable and unobservable variables and behaviors. There is consistency and regularity among these variables. Attitudes are also related to other attitudes (Binbaşıoğlu, 1995). According to Kirel (2004), in an environment where an individual is present, some people are confronted with event institutions or objects. It interacts with these stimuli and thus forms a belief or thought system.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that interest is a form of attitude. Ormrod (2016) states that interest is an intrinsic motivation and positive affect is accompanied by interest and divides interest into personal interest

and situational interest. According to Ormrod (2016), personal attention is a relatively stagnant phenomenon within the individual, and there is consistency in preferences resulting from interest. Situational attention is stimulated by something surprising in the surrounding area. Interest causes information to be processed effectively. An individual who is interested in a subject is more careful about it and becomes more successful in learning. Personal interests are due to past experiences of individuals, and situational interests arise from instant situations.

Attitudes towards foreign languages have an important effect on language. Attitudes towards language in the life of a language are effective in the healing, maintenance, weakening or disappearance of that language. The attitudes of countries towards the second language reveal problems or possibilities related to the language in that country. The status, importance and value of language in that country are measured by attitudes (Baker, 1992). According to Lewis (1981), attitudes of people who may be affected by language policies should be taken into consideration. No policy can be expected to be successful in the long run unless the policy of the people involved is inconsistent, the people with negative attitudes are not convinced that the policy is correct or the reasons for the conflict are not eliminated. When establishing language policy, in order to ensure policy success, people's attitudes towards language need to be known (Baker, 1992). When the literature on foreign language is examined, it is seen that the attitudes of individuals towards the target language affect language achievement. Baker (1992) states that a positive attitude towards language learning is an important input in language achievement, and that attitude is a factor that provides pre-readiness and affects the outcomes of education. Kırkız (2010) and Kazazoğlu (2011) found that attitudes positively affect language achievement.

The student's positive attitude towards the target language community also affects the student's success. According to Doğan (2012), students who have a positive attitude towards the target language and want to see themselves as a member of the target language community learn the target language in a much easier and shorter time period than other students who do not have these characteristics. The attitudes of the people around the student towards the target language also directly or indirectly affect the student's language learning. If people around the student praise the target society, this encourages language learning and positively affects learning, and vice versa (Doğan, 2012). With a sense of need, there is a strong desire to learn, so that language can be learned very easily and well. Apart from the need and desire to learn, other factors affect language learning. According to Doğan (2012) and Gardner (2010), the success of the individual is influenced by the educational environment, classroom atmosphere, quality of teaching, materials, facilities and teacher factor. The effect of the age of the student should also be taken into consideration in foreign language teaching. The content of the curriculum and the arrangement of language materials in such a way that the age group of the students will be of interest will positively affect the success. Chambers (1999) states that factors such as target language learning experiences, travel experiences, friends, family and attitudes affect student values.

#### **Student Attitudes and Role of Teacher**

Teachers should use approaches and strategies in which the student can develop a positive attitude to the lesson (Ülgen, 1997). Chambers (1999) and Doğan (2012) state that students' attitudes towards teachers affect language learning. According to Ülgen (1997), students' attitudes towards school, lessons and teachers sometimes lead students to approach or move away from learning activities.

#### **Student Attitudes and Role of Family**

Attitudes are features that distinguish people from other people. Attitudes are part of personality. According to Fidan (2012), some behaviors that form the basis of personality are acquired in the family environment.

#### **Relationship Between Attitude and Behavior**

Binbasioglu (1995) states that the relationship between attitude and behavior is important in terms of education, and if one's attitude is known, one can predict his behavior. According to Ülgen (1997: 88), a person evaluates an object based on their perceptions, feelings, beliefs and value judgments. Attitudes affect decisions. Positive decisions are made about the event or object where a positive attitude is developed, and negative decisions are made about an event or object where a positive attitude is developed.

#### **Related Research**

In this section, the studies about the attitudes towards English course in Turkey and abroad and the results of these studies are given.

#### **Research Studies completed on topic in Turkey**

Kırkız (2010) used the relational survey model and stratified random sampling method in the study in order to determine the relationship between the attitudes of the 8th grade and 11th grade students of the high school and

their academic achievement. 402 8th grade and 402 11th grade students participated in the study. As a result of the study, it was found that the attitudes of 8th grade students were more positive than the 11th grade students. A moderate positive relationship was found between students' academic achievement scores and attitude scores.

Burgucu (2011), in order to investigate the relationship between university students' motivation, attitude and anxiety levels and their age, gender, department and education level, motivation for 242 first-year students studying in 8 different departments of a state university, anxiety and attitude scales. As a result of the research, it was determined that the motivation intensity levels of female students were higher than male students. However, no significant difference was found between male and female students in terms of intrinsic and instrumental motivation levels. There was no significant relationship between age and motivation variables. There was a significant relationship between motivation and department. While there was a significant difference between intrinsic motivation and motivation intensity and education level, there was no significant difference between instrumental motivation and education level. It was found that the students' attitude scores towards learning English were high and there was no significant difference between the attitude scores of female and male students. No significant difference was found between students' anxiety levels according to education level, motivation, attitudes and concerns of students and gender and age factor. Although students' anxiety level towards English was low, motivation and attitude scores were found to be high. It was found that the motivation and attitude scores of the female students were slightly higher than the male students and the motivation, attitude levels of the students studying in English related departments were higher and their anxiety levels were lower. In general, it was found that students' motivation and attitude scores were high and anxiety scores were low.

In this study, Kazazoğlu (2011) examined the effect of attitudes towards Turkish and English classes on academic achievement. Attitudes were examined according to variables such as class, gender, presence of English TV channels at home, presence of computers at home, internet access at home, father's foreign language knowledge, mother's foreign language knowledge and the period in which English was started. As a result of the research, it was seen that most of the students had positive attitude towards English and Turkish courses; It was determined that the attitude scores towards the English and Turkish lesson had a significant difference in favor of girls according to gender. The attitudes of eighth grade students were found to be more negative than the ninth grade students in terms of the negative judgments developed for the English course. It was found that the students who started to study English at the kindergarten had the most positive attitude towards Turkish lesson; It was found that the most positive attitude towards the English course belongs to those who started English during the primary education period and the most negative attitude to those who started English at high school.

Sarkmaz (2011) examined the attitudes of students in vocational high schools towards language learning, and applied an attitude questionnaire to 472 10th grade students in vocational high schools. As a result of the research, it was found that there was a significant relationship between attitudes and school type, department, taking English for special purposes and learning English variables and attitudes did not change according to gender.

Salman (2011) examined the attitudes of high school students towards English course, and applied the Attitude Scale towards English Course to 704 high school students. As a result of the study, it was found that there is a significant difference between the attitudes towards English course and gender in favor of girls. It was found that the attitudes of the students who started to take English lessons in primary school were more positive and the relationship between the number of years of English lessons and the attitude was higher than the students who took English lessons for a longer period of time. There was a significant difference between the attitudes of the family and the attitudes in favor of those living in the city center, and the difference between the attitudes of family and attitudes in favor of the students with high income levels. A significant relationship was found between the education level of the mother and the attitude in favor of the mother factor whose education level was low.

In a study conducted by Köyönü (2012) to examine the relationship between primary school students' attitudes towards English courses and their course achievements, a questionnaire was applied to 895 students studying at 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade levels in primary schools. As a result of the study, it was observed that attitudes on all classes affected the success of the course. According to gender, it was found that female students had more positive attitudes, attitudes were more effective on female students' achievement, and attitude scores decreased from 4th grade to 8th grade.

Kocadelioğlu (2013) examined the attitudes of primary and secondary school students towards English as a foreign language. As a result of the research, a significant difference was found between students' attitudes towards behavioral and emotional sub-dimensions and gender in favor of girls. However, there was no

significant difference between cognitive attitudes and gender. When the attitudes were examined according to the class variable, it was seen that 4th and 5th grades had more positive attitudes than 6th, 7th and 8th grades, respectively.

In the study where Erbaş (2013) examined the attitudes of primary and secondary school students towards the English course, an attitude scale consisting of love, interest, expectation and anxiety sub-dimensions was applied to 300 students in 1 primary and 4 secondary schools. As a result of the research, it was seen that anxiety scores of female students were higher than male students' anxiety scores, anxiety scores of 5th, 7th and 8th grades were higher than 4th and 6th grades, while the education level and income level of the mother or father increased and the anxiety level of the student increased. It was found that male students liked the English lesson more than female students and the love and success of the English lesson increased as the family education and occupation level increased.

Karabulut (2013) examined English attitudes towards learning English and English language according to age, type of education and gender in the study using the attitude scale consisting of three dimensions. As a result of the study, it was determined that students' attitudes towards learning English and using English did not change according to gender, type of education and age.

In order to examine the attitudes and concerns of university students against Pan (2014) 's English course, 280 first grade students applied foreign language anxiety scale, attitude scale, personal information form, open - ended questions form. As a result of the study, it was determined that students had positive attitude and high anxiety level, and there was no significant relationship between attitude and anxiety. In addition, it was seen that those with low parental education levels were more anxious than those with high educational level.

Aydoğdu (2014) examined the relationship between foreign language learning anxiety, attitude towards English, language learning strategies and foreign language achievement. Attitude questionnaire, language anxiety strategies, language learning strategies questionnaire and achievement test were applied to 100 randomly selected students. As a result of the study, it was found that students with high anxiety levels had low achievement and students with high attitude scores had higher achievements.

In the study, Kesgin and Arslan (2015) examined the relationship between high school students' attitudes towards English and gender, parental educational status, family monthly income, and graduated primary school factors, and a 56-item attitude scale was administered to 350 students from 7 schools. When the relationship between school type and attitude was examined, it was found that the highest attitude scores were found in foreign language-oriented schools and the lowest attitude scores were found in technical high schools. It was determined that female students' attitudes were more positive than male students' attitudes. The students whose parents have university and graduate degrees have higher attitude points than the ones whose parents have primary and high school graduates; It was found that the attitudes of the children of high-income families were higher than the attitudes of the children of low-income families.

Karatas, Alcı, Bademcioglu and Ergin (2016) examined the relationship between university students' attitudes towards learning English and gender, language level, whether they had previously taken preparatory education and the high school variables graduated from. In this study, Attitude Scale towards English was applied to 488 English preparatory class students, 320 male and 168 female. As a result of the study, it was found that students had an above-average attitude towards learning English, and their attitudes towards English were not affected by their gender, language level, previous preparatory education and high school types they graduated from.

Ataman (2017) used an attitude scale consisting of personal information, motivation and attitude sections in his study to investigate the relationship between motivation, attitude and achievement level of university preparatory students. In the 2014-2015 academic year, 364 English Preparatory School students studying at the University School of Foreign Languages participated in the study. According to the results of the study, it was found that the motivation levels of the students were good, the motivation towards learning English did not change according to gender, and the instrumental motivation of female students was higher than the male students. It was found that there was no significant difference between motivation and teaching type and department variables, and although the motivation levels of the students were positive, their academic achievement scores were low.

#### **Research Studies Conducted Abroad**

In the study conducted by Hussain, Shahid, Zaman (2011) to measure the attitudes and anxiety levels of high school students against foreign language learning, anxiety scale and attitude scale were applied to 720 10th grade

students selected from 6 regions in Punjab, Pakistan. As a result of the study, it was found that there was a significant difference between the anxiety and attitude scores of female students and the anxiety and attitude scores of male students.

In the study conducted by Ming, Ling and Jaafar (2011) to examine the attitudes and motivations of high school students towards English as a second language, Sibü studied in Sarawak with different ethnic identities (Chinese, Malaysian and Ibanian) and English proficiency levels. A questionnaire of 48 questions was applied to 111 male students. In the first part of the questionnaire, there are questions about the demographic characteristics of the students and in the second part there are questions about attitude and motivation. It was found that science students and students with high English proficiency were more interested in improving their English and there was a positive significant relationship between high level of English and attitude and motivation factors.

Soleimani and Hanafi (2013) applied the attitude scale consisting of 30 sub-dimensions of behavioral, cognitive and affective to 40 students from Iran Medical School in their study to determine the attitudes of university students towards learning English. As a result of the study, it was found that the attitudes of male students were higher than female students and that their students had a very positive attitude towards learning English. As attitude dimensions were examined, it was found that the lowest attitude score was in the behavioral dimension and the highest attitude score in the affective dimension.

Burgos and Perez (2015) applied attitudes scale consisting of five sub-dimensions to 154 students from two high schools in Puroto Montt in the study in which 12th grade students from Chile examined their attitudes towards English as a foreign language. As a result of the study, it was found that 12th grade students had a positive attitude towards English as a foreign language. In addition, it was found that the students wanted translation and mother tongue support in the English course, the lowest score of the students' attitude towards learning English, and the attitude towards English as a universal language was positive. In addition, students' attitudes towards learning English at school were found to be positive.

Samadani and Ibnian (2015) conducted a mixed-pattern study in which Saud students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language and their success in English lessons were studied with 112 randomly selected 2, 3 and 4 grade students from the University. As a result of the study, it was found that the attitudes of the participants towards learning English were moderately positive and the students with high achievement scores had more positive attitudes. During the interviews with the students, it was determined that the students wanted to learn English by instrumental factors such as finding a good job.

Ibnian (2017) applied the 20-item attitude scale to 144 9th grade students in public and private schools in Amman, and conducted semi-structured interviews with 8 students in their study, which examined students' attitudes towards English as a foreign language. According to the results of the study, it was found that the attitudes of the students attending both public and private schools towards English were positive, but the attitudes of the students attending private schools were more positive than those attending the public schools.

When some studies conducted in Turkey and abroad were examined, it was found that gender factor affects attitudes and in some studies it was found that gender factor did not affect attitudes. Kazazoglu (2011), Salman (2011), Koyonu (2012), Gorgun (2013), Delbesoglugil (2013), Kesgin and Arslan (2015), Celik (2015) found that female students' attitudes were more positive than male students' attitudes. In the studies conducted by Erbaş (2013) and Soleimani and Hanafi (2013) it was found that the attitudes of male students were more positive than female students. Atli (2008), Burgucu (2011), Sarkmaz (2011), Karabulut (2013), Hovhannisyanyan (2014), and Karataş, Alçı, Bademcioğlu and Ergin (2016)' studies did not show a significant difference between attitude and gender.

In the literature, there are researches showing that attitudes towards English course change according to grade level and do not change. In the studies conducted by Kazazoğlu (2011) and Salman (2011), there was no significant relationship between class level and attitude. In the studies of Kırkız (2010), Köyönü (2012), Kocadelioğlu (2013) and Hovhanisyan (2014), it was concluded that attitudes decreased as the grade level increased.

When the studies on whether the attitudes change according to the department are examined; In the studies conducted by Burgucu (2011), Sarkmaz (2011), Görgün (2013), Pan (2014), it was determined that the attitudes changed according to the departments. In addition, in the study conducted by Manachon and Eamoraphan (2015), it was found that the attitudes did not change according to the departmental factor.

When the studies examining the change of attitudes towards English according to whether or not someone knows English at home, there is very little research on this subject. In the study conducted by Kazazoğlu (2011), it was concluded that the attitudes of students whose parents speak English are more positive than those whose parents do not speak English.

When the related studies between attitudes and success factor were examined; In the studies conducted by Kırkız (2010), Kazazoğlu (2011), Erarslan (2011), Köyünü (2012), Delbesoğlugil (2013), Aydoğdu (2014) and Samadani and Ibnian (2015), a significant relationship was found between attitude and success.

In order to meet the needs of the individual and society, education programs must adapt to changing and developing world conditions. It is necessary to examine the changing interests, needs and attitudes of the society and individuals, which are the main sources of education programs, in order to gain the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors that are the target of education to individuals in changing world conditions. This change in educational programs is a requirement to ensure the continuity of the system and to meet the needs of society and people. Positive attitudes increase success in achieving the desired goals. Nowadays, the increasing need for learning English and the necessity or necessity of elective English courses in order to be successful in education and training programs' readiness input attitudes and factors affecting these attitudes need to be examined.

Individuals and their interests and needs are among the factors that should be taken into consideration in designing and evaluating curriculum. According to Sönmez and Alacapınar (2015: 61); " The basic element of every skill is the individual. Kucukahmet (2009) states that meeting the needs and interests of the students is the basis of the selection of the content and the education programs. According to Küçükahmet (2009: 22), " The students' interests should lead to special criteria in the selection of the content. For example, elective and compulsory course content may allow students to learn the content of their interest. "

According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2014: 246), some people believe that the curriculum should be designed based on information about how students learn, how they behave, what interests they have, and what values they care about. "Ornstein and Hunkins (2014: 246) "Progressive educational programmers and humanist educators with postmodern perspectives state that the student is the main source of program design."

Determining the interests, needs and attitudes of the students regarding the foreign language teaching and educational programs which are increasing day by day is important for program development experts, school administrators, English teachers and researchers interested in English lessons and attitudes.

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes of high school students towards English course according to gender, class, department and whether or not someone who knows English at home and to determine the teachers' perceptions about student attitudes. Within the framework of the mentioned problem, the following questions will be sought in this research:

- 1- Based on the opinions of the students, do the attitudes of the students towards English course change according to gender?
- 2- Do the attitudes of students towards English course vary according to their grade level?
- 3- Based on the opinions of the students, do the attitudes of the students towards English course change according to the presence of someone who knows English at home?
- 4- What are the teachers' perceptions about student attitudes in the English course?

## **THE STUDY**

This section provides information about the research model, participants, data collection tools and data analysis. In this research, explanatory research design which is one of the mixed research designs was used. Quantitative data were firstly collected in order of data collection. According to the results of the analysis of the quantitative data obtained, qualitative data were collected later (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

### **Participants**

Data for Research were obtained from 977 secondary school students and 6 teachers of English in the 2017-2018 academic year in the province of Zonguldak, Turkey. Stratified purposive sampling was used to determine the students. Purposeful sampling was also used in the selection of teachers (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

### Data Collection Tools

Personal information form and attitude scale towards English course were used as quantitative data collection tools in the research. Interview form was used as a qualitative data collection tool. The personal information form included the attitude scale application directive and demographic information about gender, department, English language, home variables, and class variables. In this research, students' attitudes towards English course were obtained by using " Attitude scale towards English course " developed by Kırkız (2010). The reliability of the 20-item scale applied to the sample group was found to be 0.93. The scale consists of three factors. According to factor analysis, attitudes scale is composed of three sub-dimensions: attitudes about general characteristics and importance of the course, attitudes towards interest pattern and attitudes towards teacher's course style. The answer options for the items in the scale were formed in five-point Likert type scale and the answer options vary between 'I completely agree ’ and “Never agree”. The highest score that students can get from the scale is 100 and the lowest score is 20 (Kırkız, 2010). Qualitative data about the study were collected by interview form in the interviews with 6 English teachers working in schools where attitude scale was applied. In the interview form, questions were asked about whether the students' English course, general characteristics and importance of the English course, the attractiveness of the subjects in the English course, whether the attitudes of the teacher towards the course style changed according to gender, department, class level and whether or not someone who knows English at home.

### Data Analysis

As the data were not normally distributed, Man Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis H tests were used for non-parametric tests. In the analysis of qualitative data, descriptive analysis method was used.

### FINDINGS

According to the descriptive statistics of the participants, the frequency distribution and percentages related to demographic variables stated in the personal information form such as school, gender, class and whether or not someone who knows English at home are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistical data of the participants**

| <b>Gender</b>          | <b>f</b>   | <b>%</b>   | <b>Someone know English at home</b> | <b>f</b>   | <b>%</b>   |
|------------------------|------------|------------|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Female                 | 588        | 60.6       | Yes                                 | 399        | 41.4       |
| Male                   | 382        | 39.4       | No                                  | 564        | 58.6       |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>970</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>Total</b>                        | <b>963</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <b>Grade Level</b>     | <b>f</b>   | <b>%</b>   |                                     |            |            |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> grade  | 179        | 18.3       |                                     |            |            |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> grade | 167        | 17.1       |                                     |            |            |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> grade | 302        | 30.9       |                                     |            |            |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> grade | 329        | 33.7       |                                     |            |            |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>977</b> | <b>100</b> |                                     |            |            |

Table 1 shows that; Among 977 students who participated in the study and stated their gender, 60.6% of 970 students were female and 39.4% were male students. When the gender variable is examined, it is seen that the number of female students is quite high compared to male students. According to the class variable, it is seen that the highest number of students is in the 12th grade group and the least number of students is in the 10th grade group. The number of students who do not speak English at home is more than those who do not speak

English at home.

**The opinions of the students, do the attitudes of the students towards English course change according to gender**

The results of the quantitative research findings for the research question that “Based on the opinions of the students, do the attitudes of the students towards English course change according to gender?” are presented at Table 2.

Table 2: Variation of general attitudes of students towards English course by gender

| Variables   | Gender | n   | Mean Rank | Sd | $\chi^2$ | p     |
|---|--------|-----|-----------|----|----------|-------|
| <b>General attitudes towards the course</b>                                       | Female | 588 | 477,71    | 1  | 1,158    | 0,28  |
|   | Male   | 382 | 497,49    |    |          |       |
| <b>Attitudes towards the general characteristics and importance of the course</b> | Female | 588 | 500,73    | 1  | 4,432    | 0,04* |
|   | Male   | 382 | 462,06    |    |          |       |
| <b>Attitudes of subjects towards attractiveness</b>                               | Female | 588 | 468,89    | 1  | 5,336    | 0,02* |
|   | Male   | 382 | 511,06    |    |          |       |
| <b>Attitudes towards course style</b>   | Female | 588 | 457,27    | 1  | 15,399   | 0,00* |
|   | Male   | 382 | 528,95    |    |          |       |

\* p < 0.05

According to Mann Whitney U test results, students' attitudes towards English course did not change according to gender ( $\chi^2 = 1,158$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). However, students' attitudes towards the general characteristics and importance of the English course vary according to gender ( $\chi^2 = 4,432$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Accordingly, female students' attitudes towards the general characteristics and importance of the English course are higher than male students. In addition, students' attitudes towards the subjects of interest in the English course vary according to gender ( $\chi^2 = 5,336$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). According to this, male students find the subjects in the English lesson more interesting than female students. Again, according to the results, the attitudes of the students towards the course of teaching in the English course vary according to gender ( $\chi^2 = 15,399$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). According to this, male students' attitudes towards the course style of teachers in English lessons are higher than female students.

**The attitudes of students towards English course vary according to their grade level**

The results of the quantitative research findings for the research question that “Do the attitudes of students towards English course vary according to their grade level?” are presented at Table 3.

Table 3: Variation of general attitudes of students towards English course by the grade level

| Variables                | Grade     | n   | Mean Rank | Sd | $\chi^2$ | p    |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----|-----------|----|----------|------|
| <b>General attitudes</b> | 9th grade | 179 | 509,06    | 3  | 1,413    | 0,70 |



|   |            |     |        |   |       |      |
|---|------------|-----|--------|---|-------|------|
| <b>towards the course</b>   | 10th grade | 167 | 480,44 |   |       |      |
|   | 11th grade | 302 | 479,62 |   |       |      |
|   | 12th grade | 329 | 491,04 |   |       |      |
| <b>Attitudes towards the general characteristics and importance of the course</b> | 9th grade  | 179 | 522,18 | 3 | 4,025 | 0,26 |
|   | 10th grade | 167 | 462,40 |   |       |      |
|   | 11th grade | 302 | 487,20 |   |       |      |
|   | 12th grade | 329 | 486,10 |   |       |      |
| <b>Attitudes of subjects towards attractiveness</b>                               | 9th grade  | 179 | 475,28 | 3 | 5,242 | 0,26 |
|   | 10th grade | 167 | 489,28 |   |       |      |
|   | 11th grade | 302 | 518,01 |   |       |      |
|   | 12th grade | 329 | 469,69 |   |       |      |
| <b>Attitudes towards course style</b>   | 9th grade  | 179 | 479,96 | 3 | 4,871 | 0,18 |
|   | 10th grade | 167 | 519,06 |   |       |      |
|   | 11th grade | 302 | 465,13 |   |       |      |
|   | 12th grade | 329 | 500,58 |   |       |      |

\* p < 0.05

According to the results of Kruskal-wallis H Test, the attitudes of the students towards English course did not change according to their grade level ( $\chi^2 = 1.413$ .  $p > 0.05$ ). In addition, students' attitudes towards the general characteristics and importance of the English course did not change according to their grade level ( $\chi^2 = 4.025$ .  $p > 0.05$ ). In addition, the results showed that the attitudes of the students in the subjects of interest in English course did not change according to their grade levels ( $\chi^2 = 5.242$ .  $p > 0.05$ ). In addition, the attitudes of the students towards the course style of the teachers do not change according to grade level ( $\chi^2 = 4.871$ .  $p > 0.05$ ).

#### **The opinions of the students, do the attitudes of the students towards English course change according to the presence of someone who knows English at home**

The results of the quantitative research findings for the research question that “Based on the opinions of the students, do the attitudes of the students towards English course change according to the presence of someone who knows English at home?” are presented at Table 4.

Table 4: Variation of general attitudes of students towards English course according to the presence of someone who knows English at home

| <b>Variables</b>  | <b>Presence of someone who knows English at home</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Mean Rank</b> | <b>Sd</b> | <b><math>\chi^2</math></b> | <b>p</b> |
|---|--|----------|------------------|-----------|----------------------------|----------|
| <b>General attitudes towards the course</b>                                       | Yes  | 399      | 492,49           | 1         | 0,973                      | 0,32     |
|   | No   | 564      | 474,58           |           |                            |          |
| <b>Attitudes towards the general characteristics and importance of the course</b> | Yes  | 399      | 513,08           | 1         | 8,548                      | 0,00*    |
|   | No   | 564      | 460,01           |           |                            |          |
| <b>Attitudes of subjects towards attractiveness</b>                               | Yes  | 399      | 467,51           | 1         | 1,88                       | 0,17     |
|   | No   | 564      | 492,25           |           |                            |          |
| <b>Attitudes towards course style</b>   | Yes  | 399      | 476,06           | 1         | 0,315                      | 0,57     |
|   | No   | 564      | 486,20           |           |                            |          |

\*p<0,05

According to the results of Mann Whitney U test, students' attitudes towards English course did not change according to the presence of someone who knows English at home ( $\chi^2 = 0.973$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). In addition, according to the results, students' attitudes towards the general characteristics and importance of the English course varies depending on whether or not someone who knows English is at home ( $\chi^2 = 8,548$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Accordingly, the attitudes towards the general characteristics and importance of the English course of students who speak English at home are higher than those who do not speak English at home. In addition, the students' attitudes towards the interest of the subjects in the English lesson did not change according to the presence of someone who knows English at home ( $\chi^2 = 1.88$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). In addition, the attitudes of the students towards the way teachers work in

English lessons do not change according to the presence of someone who knows English at home ( $\chi^2 = 0.315$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

### **The teachers' perceptions of student attitudes in English courses**

"Did you perceive changes in students' attitudes towards English course by gender?" In the qualitative data analysis of the question, all the participants stated that the attitudes of female students were more positive than male students. One of the participants said, 'When the attitudes of the students are taken into consideration, the attitudes of the female students to the male students are more positive than the male students. In the question "Did you perceive changes in students' attitudes towards English course according to their different grades such as 9-12? ", all of the participants stated that there were changes in student attitudes according to class level and that interest decreased as the level of class increased. This situation can be understood from the following sentences.

*" As class grows I think there is an inverse proportion to attitude ratio. The attitude is negative. So when they come to the 9th grade, they are more positive. It's a little less in the 10th grade, a little less in the 11th grade, and a little less in the 12th grade. "*

In the qualitative data analysis of the question "Did you perceive changes in students' attitudes towards English course depending on whether or not someone knows English at home?", the majority of the participants stated that having English at home affects attitudes positively. This situation can be understood from the following sentences.

*"My general opinion of whether someone who speaks English is at home is obviously very effective. I think it affects attitude. In other words, speaking with someone who knows English and having a vision of this family inevitably affects the student inevitably."*

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

In this study, in order to examine the potential of using high school students' attitudes towards English course as an input in educational programs, it was determined by using the attitude scale whether the attitudes of the students changed according to gender, class and whether or not someone who knows English in the family. In addition, the opinions of the English teachers working in schools where attitude scale was applied were taken and the quantitative findings were tried to be supported. The findings of this study are discussed and evaluated with the support of the literature.

According to the quantitative data of the study, it was found that there was no significant difference between the attitude scores of the students towards the English course and the gender variable. Atlı (2008), Burgucu (2011), Sarkmaz (2011), Karabulut (2013), Hovhannisyan (2014), Karataş, Alçı, Bademcioğlu and Ergin (2016) found no significant difference between attitude and gender in their studies. This finding of the research and the studies mentioned in the literature support each other. However, there are studies in the literature that do not support this finding and that there is a significant difference between attitude and gender. In the studies conducted by Hussain, Shahid and Zaman (2011), a significant difference was found between gender and attitude. Kazazoğlu (2011), Salman (2011), Köyönü (2012), Görgün (2013), Delbesoğlugil (2013), Kesgin and Arslan (2015), Çelik (2015) in the research conducted by the attitudes towards the English course, it was found that the attitudes of female students were more positive than male students. In the literature, there are studies showing that male students' attitudes towards English lessons are higher than female students. Erbaş (2013) found that male students liked the English lesson more than female students and had higher expectations from the lesson, while Soleimani and Hanafi (2013) found that male students' attitudes were higher than female students.

Quantitative research findings and qualitative research findings differ from general attitudes towards English course. In the qualitative research dimension, the teachers stated that female students' attitudes towards English lesson were more positive than male students. In the research, the relationship between the sub-dimensions of attitude towards English course and gender variable were also examined. According to the quantitative findings of the study, it was found that the attitudes of female students regarding the general characteristics and importance of the English course were higher than male students' attitudes. The teachers who participated in the study stated that the attitudes of female students about the general characteristics and importance of the English lesson were higher than the male students. It is seen that the qualitative and quantitative findings about the general characteristics and importance of the English course support each other. However, it was found that there was a significant difference between the attitudes towards the interest of the subjects in the English course and the way the teacher worked and the gender variable in favor of the male students. However, as a result of the interviews with the teachers, there was no significant difference between the attitudes of the subjects in the

English lesson and the way the teacher worked. It is seen that quantitative and qualitative findings do not support each other regarding the attractiveness of the subjects in the English course and the way teachers work.

In the quantitative data analysis, it was determined that students' attitudes towards English course, general characteristics and importance of English course, attractiveness of subjects in English course and teacher's course style did not change according to grade level. In the literature, there are researches showing that attitudes towards English course change and do not change according to grade level. In the studies conducted by Kazazoğlu (2011) and Salman (2011), there was no significant relationship between grade level and attitude. These findings support the findings obtained in the study. In the study conducted by Kırkız (2010) to investigate the relationship between 8th grade and 11th grade students' attitudes towards English course and their academic achievement, it was concluded that 8th grade students' attitude scores were higher than 11th grade students' scores.

However, in the qualitative data analysis, the teachers who participated in the research stated that the students' attitudes towards the English course, the general characteristics and importance of the English course, the attractiveness of the subjects in the English course, and the attitude of the teacher towards the course style changed according to the grade level.

In the quantitative data analysis, it was concluded that the students' attitudes towards the English course, the attractiveness of the subjects in the English course and the style of the teacher did not change according to the situation of the students who knew English and whether or not someone was at home, but the attitudes towards the general characteristics and importance of the English course changed in favor of the students who knew English at home. . In the study conducted by Kazazoğlu (2011), it was found that the attitudes of the students whose father speaks a foreign language to their mother tongue and foreign language were more positive than the students whose father did not speak a foreign language. In addition, the mother's knowledge of English students. It was determined that attitudes towards English course positively affected.

According to the qualitative findings of the study, teachers stated that the general attitudes of the students who speak English at home were more positive. This finding does not support the quantitative findings. The teachers stated that the attitudes towards the general characteristics and importance of the English course were positive in favor of the students who are a family member who knows English. This data coincides with the quantitative data findings. According to the teachers' opinions about the attractiveness of the subjects in the English lesson and the way the teacher operates the lesson, does not significantly affect the attitudes. These findings support our quantitative data.

Female students' attitudes towards the general characteristics and importance of the English course are more positive than male students. In the design of the curriculum, teachers should take care to create activities in the classroom that will make male students enjoy and appreciate the importance of the English course. The attitudes of male students towards the attractiveness of the lesson are more positive than female students. Therefore, the subjects and activities that will attract the interest of female students can be included in the design of the curriculum. The attitudes of male students towards the way teachers work are more positive than female students. Interesting activities that address different learning styles should be added to the classes in order to increase the attitudes of female students towards the way teachers work. According to the quantitative data, the general characteristics and importance of the English course, the attractiveness of the subjects in the English course and the attitudes towards the course of the teacher change according to gender, structured interviews should be conducted with male and female students in the future studies and the sources of the changes should be investigated.

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