



## **Gender and Area of Specialization as Determinants of University Of Nigeria Undergraduates' Attitude towards the Use of English** **Eze, Virginia O.**

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### Abstract

*This study is a survey aimed at ascertaining the attitude of the University of Nigerian students towards the Use of English. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Five hundred and five undergraduate students newly enrolled in the subjects that cut across various departments were sampled using accidental sampling technique. A researcher-developed-24 item attitude scale known as Attitude to Use of English Scale (ATUES) was used in collecting data from the subjects. Data obtained was analyzed using means for the research questions and analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the hypotheses. Results show that the majority of the University of Nigerian students have positive attitude towards the subject, gender of the students does not influence their attitude towards the Use of English unlike their areas of specialization in the degree programme. Such recommendations as engaging the students in evaluation of the course at the end of the semester after teaching the course is one of the several strategies advanced for taking a proactive preventive measure against development of apathy towards the subject. Therefore, there is need for re-orientation and motivation because English Language is universal and compulsory in Nigerian education. There is also need for re-orientation and motivation on the students because English language is universal and compulsory in Nigerian society.*

**Key Words:** *Gender; specialization; undergraduate; Attitude; multi-lingual; multi-cultural, Lingua Franca; university*

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**Introduction:** Nigeria is a multi-lingual and multi-cultural nation with over 450 ethnic based languages (Adegbija, 2004). This, coupled with the absence of an indigenous Nigerian language as a lingua franca, (perhaps), made it possible for the adoption of English language as Lingua Franca (Fakeye, 2002). Thus, English Language became the official medium of teaching and learning from pre-primary to the tertiary levels of formal educational institutions in Nigeria including the universities. Its importance in Nigerian Educational system is so significant that its failure at the School certificate level is seen as a failure in that level of education since it is almost impossible to secure admission into the universities without a credit pass in the subject irrespective of the intended course of study.

In spite of the preeminent status of English language in Nigerian Education environment as the language of all the subjects, including the sciences, poor performance of students in English language at public examinations in recent times has been recorded and has been explained as a major cause of the decline in academic achievement and standard of education in Nigeria (Adeosun, 2004). This implies that Nigerian students are generally deficient in the English language. This may have led Fakeye (2002) to call for evolution of strategies for improving the quality of spoken and written English language, particularly among the Nigeria university students.

Perhaps, in realization of this critical role of English Language as the main instructional medium in the universities, the Federal government through the agency in charge of the academic programmes of the universities in Nigeria (NUC), introduced the Use of English as a compulsory course for all the undergraduates within two semesters in all the Nigerian universities irrespective of course of

specialization. In the University of Nigeria specifically, the Use of English is one of the several units in the school of General Studies. The course, according to Okwor (2010:17):

*...has three aims: the development of greater skill in reading, writing and speaking through the use of significant body of materials that handle important ideas from the Western and Nigerian cultural heritage and at the same time useful in training for a more Nigerian citizenry.*

The general low proficiency of the fresh undergraduates in the subject and its significant role in facilitating the students' studies in other university programmes underscores the need for exploration of more proactive strategies of forestalling their continued low performance in the course.

According to Hyde and Linn (1988) attitude is one of the several components of affective variables that can make or mar language learning. Attitude has been seen as a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's degree of like or dislike for something. They are generally positive or negative views of a person, place, thing, or event (Wikipedia). In fact to Osunde and Ogiegbaen (2005), student's poor achievement in English language is attributed in part to their negative attitude or apathy towards the subject. The corollary also subsists and that is: positive attitude towards English Language is a determinant of high achievement in the subject (Muhammad, 2004). This therefore justifies any effort aimed at ascertaining the direction of the attitude of students towards the Use of English Language as a basic strategy for predicting their performance and also evolving strategies for improving their performance in the course.

Even though achievement, and by implication, attitude pattern in English language particularly at the secondary school level has generally been shown to be disaggregated by students' gender in favour of females (Adeoye, and Adigun, 2010; Yusuf and Adigun, 2010;), there are relatively scarcity of such revelation in favour of males. The gender sensitivity of the university undergraduates' disposition to English Language, particularly the use of English is not yet clearly discernible. Furthermore, since the students' choice of discipline of specialization in the university are not imposed on them but are freely chosen by them based on their motivation and positive disposition towards such courses, is it likely that imposing the use of English on the students would manifest in their low drive and thus negative attitude towards the subject? In other words, does the compulsory nature of the Use of English in the university positively or negatively catalyze their drive and positive disposition towards studying the subject?

The take-off point towards valid responses to such posers as these would be to establish (i) the attitude of the university undergraduates towards the Use of English and (ii) the possible variation of the established attitudinal disposition by gender and their discipline of specialization in the university. An attempt to address these issues underscores the justification of this study. Meanwhile, the University of Nigeria, since its establishment over 50 years ago as the first indigenous university in Nigeria, pioneered the introduction of Use of English which is housed as a prerequisite programmes for all first-degree programmes in Nigeria universities. Thus, it is expected that all the factors capable of influencing the course's attainment of its set objectives, including students' attitude to the course ought to have been manifested. This justifies the restriction of this study to the University of Nigeria.

### **Research Questions:**

Therefore, this paper seeks answers to the following research question:

1. What is the mean rating and direction of the attitude of the University of Nigerian students towards the use of English?
2. To what extent does gender influence the mean rating and direction of the University of Nigerian students towards the Use of English?
3. What is the influence of students' areas of specialization on their mean rating and direction rating towards the Use of English?

### **Purpose of the study:**

The study is aimed at determining the attitude of university of Nigeria undergraduate students to the Use of English. The specific objectives are to:

- 1) Determine the mean attitude rating and direction of University of Nigeria students towards the Use of English;
- 2) Examine the extent to which their mean attitude rating and direction towards the Use of English is influenced by their gender;

- 3) Ascertain the possible influence of their area of specialization in the university on their mean attitude rating and direction towards the Use of English

### **Review of Relevant Literature on Attitude and Gender on the Use of English Language**

#### **The Effects of Attitude on learning of English Language**

According to Elham (2012), the widespread use of English as an international language makes it highly important even in foreign language contexts. In the learning process, affective variables have become an important issue. Considering the significance of this area, Noels, Pelletier, and Vallerand (2000:35) have agreed that affective variables, such as attitude, orientations, anxiety, and motivation, have been shown to be at least as important as language aptitude for predicting L2 achievement. Oxford (1996) asserted that the affective side of the learners is the most influential aspect in language learning success or failure. Based on the works of Dornyei (1990), Ehrman (1996), Gardner (1980), MacIntyre and Charos (1996), seven areas have been defined for affective factors encompassing acculturation, ego, personality, emotion, beliefs, attitude, and motivation. Among these variables, attitude is studied in this research. Thus, Popham (2011: 233) have considered the affective domain important because of its influence on learners' future behavior when he asserted that the reason such affective variables as students' attitudes, interests, and values are important is that those variables typically influence future behavior, because students who have positive attitudes towards learning today will be inclined to pursue learning in the future.

For the purpose of this paper, the attitude in context is language related because Language attitude is believed to be the factor that makes differences between underachievement and accomplishment academically. Spolsky (2000) states that the attitudes towards the language hint at the learners' fears, feelings, or prejudice about the learning of English as a second language. Generally, it is believed those learners' attitudes, skills and strategies dictate whether or not they will be able to absorb the intricacies of language (Oxford, 1990; Nunan, 2000).

**Conceptual Framework :** Brown (2000) uses the term 'attitudes' to refer to the set of beliefs that the learner holds towards members of the target language group and also towards his own culture. Baker (1992: 10) defines attitude as "a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour". Karahan (2007: 84) avers, "Positive language attitudes let learner have positive orientation towards learning English". Ajzen (2005) believes that attitude, like personality trait, is a hypothetical construct that is inaccessible to direct observation and must be inferred from measurable responses. These responses must reflect positive or negative evaluations of the attitude object. He further defined attitude as a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to the object, person, institution, or event.

According to Yousef and Hana (2012), attitudes are crucial in language growth or decay, restoration or destruction. Attitudes are internal states that influence what the learner is likely to do. The internal state is some degree of positive/negative or favorable/unfavorable reaction towards an object. Some researchers (e.g. Stern 1983: .376-7) distinguish three types of attitudes in second language learning situation: '(a) Attitudes towards the community and people who speak the L2 (group specific attitudes), (b) Attitudes towards learning the language concerned; and (c) Attitude towards languages and language learning in general.' These attitudes are influenced by the kind of personality the learner possesses - for example whether they are 'ethnocentric' or 'authoritarian'. They may also be influenced by the particular social environment/milieu/ within which the language learning process takes place. Different attitudes, for instance, may be found in monolingual versus bilingual contexts (Ellis 1985).

According to Fasold (1984), attitudes towards a language are often mirrored in the attitudes towards the members of that speech community. The attitudes play an eminent role in determining one's behavior, as the attitude has an impetus act, which stimulates the behavior and directs it in a particular direction. Attitudes are somewhat indirectly related to second language achievement. We can say that improving the positive attitude of the students towards a particular academic subject may increase their desire to learn it, and an ability to apply what they have been taught, as well as an improvement in remembrance. According to De Bot, Lowie and Verspoor, (2005:72), researchers, teachers and learners agree that a high motivation and a positive attitude towards a second language and its community help second language learning" In other words, all who are concerned, agree that high motivation and positive attitudes towards a language, its culture and people help to achieve a certain goal.

According to Starks and Paltridge, (1996), learning a language is closely related to the attitudes towards languages, hence “positive language attitudes let learner have positive orientation towards learning English”, (Karahana, 2007), because attitudes may play a very crucial role in language learning as they can influence students’ success or failure in their learning.

**Empirical Data:** A study by Yousef & Hana (2012) that investigated the two most important social psychological variables: The motivation orientations (instrumental & integrative) of the Jordanian EFL female undergraduates and their attitudes towards learning the target language and its community using the Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), with eight domains used {(1) Interest in Foreign languages (2) Parental encouragement (3) motivational intensity (4) Degree of Integrativeness (5) Degree of Instrumentality (6) Attitudes towards Learning English (7) Attitudes toward English-speaking People (8) Desire to Learn English} showed the subjects’ greater support of instrumental reasons for learning the English language including utilitarian and academic reasons. However, regarding the integrative reasons, the results provided evidence that learning English as part of the culture of its people had the least impact in students' English language motivation, whereas their attitudes towards the target language community and its members were generally found to be highly positive.

Latif, et al’s (2011) research to determine the relationship between various socio-psychological variables like attitude, motivation, anxiety and instrumental orientation on performance in English as a second language indicated that all of the four variables were significantly correlated with learners' performance in the English course conducted at Open University of Malaysia. Moreover, the regression analysis showed that all the variables except for personal motivation exerted significant impacts on performance with anxiety having a negative impact while attitude and instrumental orientation having positive impacts.

Chalak and Kassaian’s (2010) investigation on motivation and attitude of Iranian undergraduate

EFL students towards learning English focusing on the motivation orientations of the students and their attitudes towards the target language and its community, revealed that these Iranian nonnative speakers of English learned the language for both ‘instrumental’ and 'integrative' reasons and their attitudes towards the target language community and its members were generally found to be highly positive.

According to Oller (1979:138) "Attitudes are merely one of types of factors that give rise to motivation which eventually results in attainment of proficiency in a second language". O'Connell (1977); Gardner, (1985); Wenden, (1991) consider attitudes as components of motivation in language learning. According to Gardner, “motivation ... refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language”. Meanwhile, Wenden (1991) suggested a broader definition of the concept “attitudes”. He says that the term attitude contains three components namely, cognitive, affective and behavioural. A *cognitive* component is made up of the beliefs and ideas or opinions about the object of the attitude. The *affective* one refers to the feeling and emotions that one has towards an object, 'likes' or 'dislikes', 'with' or 'against'. Finally, the *behavioural* component refers to one's consisting actions or behavioural intentions towards the object. While, O'Connell suggests "that theorists who insist on distinguishing them should bear the burden of providing that the distinction is worthwhile. Baker (1988) believed that attitudes are not subject to inheritance because they are internalized predispositions. Attitudes towards a particular language might be either positive or negative, hence some learners may have negative attitude towards the second language and want to learn it in order to prevail over people in the community but generally positive attitude strengthens the motivation. Some individuals might generate neutral feelings. Attitudes towards language are likely to have been developed by learners’ experiences. It could refer to both attitudes towards language learning and attitudes towards the members of a particular speech community.

Attitudes differ in intensity and strength. Language attitude is an important concept because it plays a key role in language teaching and learning.

**The Effects of Gender on English Language Learning :** According to Babalola and Oyinloye (2012), Language gives a unique distinction to a person, a sex, a group (as in different professions, assemblies etc) and a nation. Focusing on the gender linguistic peculiarities, they investigated language learning between male and female. Through experimental procedures, empirical approach

was adopted through some selected teaching methods (Lecture, Discussion and Audio-tape mediated discussion) to determine the performance of male and female users of English language as obtainable in a subset of Nigerian multilingual society. A package of linguistic input was adopted through which some vital areas of speaking skills were considered in the experimental procedures.

Distinctions between male and female are prominent as regard the use of the tool of language. Language assumes different colours and tones between the sexes. Akindele and Adegbite (2005) echo the suggestion from linguistic research that in many societies, the speech of men and women differs. It has been observed by Kramman (1977) that men's speech is forceful, blunt, efficient, authoritative and serious as opposed to the weak, trivial, ineffectual, tentative, hyper polite and euphemistic nature of women's mode of communication. Hatman (1976) also reports that women's speech is flowery and full of the describers- modifiers and qualifiers – than men's speech. Jaspersen (1922) discovers that women use lots of intensifiers, which make the speech lack precision.

Thome and Harley (1975) and Trudgil (1975) affirm that women favour the prestigious or correct way of language use. They easily acquire or learn the standard form of a language than their men counterpart. It is discovered that women make greater use of pitch. Brend (1975) finds out that women use high pitch more than men in their daily communication. Women's discussion is more frivolous and domestic than that of men, although researches reveal that men talk much longer than women. Strodbeck et al, 1957; Wood, 1966; Argyle et al, 1968 and Swacker, 1975 say that private talk, gossiping, free flow domestic language interactions and language of banalities are common to women than men. The language of women is simple in vocabulary and grammar; easy for babies and infants to acquire in their early years of language formation.

Accordingly, Babalola and Oyinloye (2012) averred that there is a general conservative belief that nature favours females in the area of good language performance. This idea has given a wrong signal to most school children. Some male students believe that language and literature classes in the Arts group are for the females while Mathematics and Science classes are for boys who are worth their salt. Consequently, many have been misguided, scared or limited from doing well in the language class. And in the series of investigations into the root- cause of students' poor performance in English language, it was discovered that this negative idea may not be unconnected with the negative trend. It could be a corollary to students' consistent declines in their performance in English language despite the place of the subject in their academic life and its utility stature in Nigerian society. The above stated problem disallowed the students to develop the favourably rewarding learning attitude toward the acquisition of the needed linguistic skills, which can generate in them the good habits that can enhance good language performance. It is not an overstatement that attitude towards a learning task determines the level of attainment.

Akindele (1988) discovers that males interrupt females and even determine turn-taking procedures. The frequent interruption of females by males demonstrates males' dominance in communication system. Males gain the floor of discussion for themselves through interruption mechanism. The aforesaid notwithstanding, research findings do not affirm women inferiority in the area of language acquisition and language learning. Women tend to perform better in quick acquisition of language tool than men. They have the greater potentials to move closer to the native speaker of a language in the area of language learning.

The confirmation of this by the research works of some linguists like Trudgill, Thome and Halley (1975), Holmes (2008) reflect in their work that women favour the standard, correct and most prestigious form of the language of communication than men. The discovery that men talk longer and dominate the scene of any discussion only demonstrates men's authority, power and complete control of the world affairs. Masculine dominance cannot be demonstrated if language power is not overtaken and put under their control. Some words in English language are closely associated with women. Words like lovely, darling etc is relatively common to females than male (Finegan 2004). Though there is no experimental procedure that confirms the superiority of either of the genders in acquiring or learning human language, it can never be denied the structural distinctions and unique natural peculiarities of the linguistic use of the language of communication between the sexes. Carroll, (2004) identifies the differences in language ability rather than language learning and language acquisition. There was no empirical evidence as to special favour to any individuals on the ground of gender as regards the language competence and language performance. The idea of hormonal disparity

according to Gray and Buffery (1971) as cited in Haralambos and Holborn: Sociology Theme and Perspectives by Collins (2001) that the left hemisphere of the brain which is reserved for language activities in man is more dominant in girls after the age of two and that boys have greater abilities in those

functions concentrated in the right hemisphere is heavily criticized. For example, Collins (2001) quotes Bleier(1984) that:

*'comparable populations of males and females have the same range of test scores, the same range of abilities, and in some test situations the mean or average test scores may not differ at all, or ,differ by only a few percentage points'.*

Therefore, hormonal effects could not be relied upon to conclude that there is a superior stand by either of the genders in language acquisition or language learning.

According to Al-Mously et al. (2013), gender-based differences and English Language were found to be factors that may affect student's academic achievements. In Saudi Arabia, the number of female students is rapidly increasing in the universities. In addition, medical students suffer learning difficulties due to the adoption of English language as a medium of education in all schools, although schooling is mostly in Arabic. Ananya et al. (2012) has demonstrated that male gender and the inability to understand foreign language as the medium of instructions are among the factors that affect the academic performance of undergraduate medical students (Sawair, 2009). English language as a medium of education in medical schools for the non-English speaker students is considered one of these important challenges in our region. Despite having met general English requirements at high school, students from non-English speaking countries entering medical schools with a curriculum delivered in English often appear to encounter considerable difficulty with academic performance (Haist ,2000). English as a medium of instruction also affects the academic performance of non-English speaker students elsewhere in the globe (Greenfield, 2001; Omigbodun & Omigbodun, 2003; Case, 1993 ).

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses that were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

Ho1: The mean attitude rating towards the Use of English is independent of their gender.

Ho2: Students mean rating of their attitude towards the Use of English is independent of their areas of specialization.

**Methods:** The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This is because the study involved obtaining data from the subject in their natural setting without manipulation of any variable on the subjects' dispositions towards the Use of English Language.

The population consisted of all the 2010/2011 undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka who registered for and attend lectures on the Use of English in the University. Accidental sampling technique was used because it is most appropriate in a situation in which it is difficult to assemble such population human beings in a place for the purpose of drawing a sample (Ezeh, 2011). A sample of 505 distributed across 32 departments in the University was drawn as follows:

S/NO	DEPARTMENT	NUMBER SELECTED
1	Civil Engineering	3
2	Foreign Language	6
3	History/Archaeology	6
4	Sociology/Anthropology	6
5	Microbiology	39
6	Education English	6
7	Pure & Applied Chemistry	3
8	Combined Bio. Sciences	12
9	PALG	63
10	Economics	36
11	Social Work	24
12	Medical Lab. Science	6
13	Psychology	12

14	Political Science	12
15	Religion	6
16	Mass Communication	60
17	HPE	42
18	Philosophy	6
19	Nursing	6
20	Medicine	9
21	Electronic Engineering	6
22	Computer Science	12
23	Statistics	4
24	Agric. Extension	2
25	Animal Science	2
26	Edu. Inter. Science	2
27	Linguistics	18
28	English	2
29	Geography	2
30	Mechanical Engineering	23
31	Adult Education	3
32	Biochemistry	69
	TOTAL	505

A researcher developed attitude scale known as attitude to use of English scale (ATUES) was used in the study. ATUES is a 24 positively and negatively cued items designed to elicit information on the respondents' disposition to four (4) aspects of the Use of English as follows:

**Table 2: Subsections of ATUES**

S/NO	Aspects of Use of English	Number of Item Statements
1.	The Use of English Course Content	6
2.	Instructional Materials for the use of English	6
3.	Instructional methods used in the use of English Programme.	6
4.	The Teaching of the Use of English	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

ATUES was administered to the respondents and retrieved from them on the spot. The retrieved ATUES were collated, scored and the scores subjected to analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 6.0. Specifically, mean and standard deviation were computed which were used in advertising the research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed and used in addressing the hypothesis.

**Results:** The results of the study are hereunder presented according to the guiding research questions and hypotheses:

**Research Question 1:** *What is the mean rating and direction of attitude of the University of Nigerian students towards the use of English?*

**Table 3: Mean Rating and Direction of Students Attitude towards the Use of English by Areas of specialization**

S/No	Department	Number	Mean Rating (X)	Direction
1.	Civil Engineering	3	3.12	Positive Attitude
2.	Foreign Language	6	2.33	Negative Attitude*

3.	History/Archaeology	6	2.54	Positive Attitude
4.	Sociology/Anthropology	6	2.86	Positive Attitude
5.	Microbiology	39	3.12	Positive Attitude
6.	Education English	6	2.16	Negative Attitude*
7.	Pure & Applied Chemistry	3	2.54	Positive Attitude
8.	Combined Bio. Sciences	12	2.68	Positive Attitude
9.	PALG	63	3.16	Positive Attitude
10.	Economics	36	2.88	Positive Attitude
11.	Social Work	24	2.79	Positive Attitude
12.	Medical Lab. Science	6	3.25	Positive Attitude
13.	Psychology	12	2.84	Positive Attitude
14.	Political Science	12	3.07	Positive Attitude
15.	Religion	6	3.08	Positive Attitude
16.	Mass Communication	60	3.01	Positive Attitude
17.	HPE	42	2.89	Positive Attitude
18.	Philosophy	6	3.38	Positive Attitude
19.	Nursing	6	3.31	Positive Attitude
20.	Medicine	9	1.67	Negative Attitude*
21.	Electronic Engineering	6	3.46	Positive Attitude
22.	Computer Science	12	3.28	Positive Attitude
23.	Statistics	4	3.15	Positive Attitude
24.	Agric. Extension	2	2.96	Positive Attitude
25.	Animal Science	2	3.08	Positive Attitude
26.	Inter. Science	2	2.46	Negative Attitude*
27.	Linguistics	18	2.76	Positive Attitude
28.	English	2	2.83	Positive Attitude
29.	Geography	2	2.83	Positive Attitude
30.	Mechanical Engineering	23	3.26	Positive Attitude
31.	Adult Education	3	3.08	Positive Attitude
32.	Biochemistry	69	3.30	Positive Attitude
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>Positive Attitude</b>

KEY: X: 0 to 2.49 = Negative Attitude, 2.50 and above = Positive Attitude

Table 3 shows that the overall mean rating of the students' attitude towards the Use of English is 3.01. This value has been interpreted in the same table to mean that the students generally have positive attitude towards the use of English.

**Table 4: Mean Rating and Direction of Students Attitude towards the Use of English by Gender**

Sex	Number	Mean Rating(X)	Direction
Male	241	2.98	Positive Attitude
Female	264	3.04	Positive Attitude

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent does gender influence the mean rating and direction of the University of Nigerian students towards the Use of English?*

The mean rating of the attitude of the male and female students towards the Use of English are respectively 2.98 and 3.04 (table 4). This suggests that the female students have higher mean rating towards the Use of English than their male counterparts. Even though the female students appear to have higher mean attitude rating than the males, the two gender groups have positive attitude towards the subject.

**Research Question 3:** *What is the influence of students' areas of specialization on their mean rating and direction rating towards the Use of English?*

Evidence from table 3 above shows that students' areas of specialization influence their mean rating and direction towards the use of English. In the table it can be seen that despite the earlier observation that the overall mean rating of the students towards the Use of English, the mean rating of the 32



departments representing the areas of specialization of the students vary from one department to the other. For instance, the students from the department of Electronic Engineering have the highest mean rating of 3.46 followed by that of the department of Philosophy with a mean rating of 3.38. On the other hand, the students from Medicine have the least mean rating of 1.67 followed by the students from the department of Education English with mean rating of 2.16. The table further reveals that in addition to the observed variation of the mean ratings across the departments, the direction of their attitude towards the subject also varies. Specifically students from all the departments used in the study have positive attitude towards the Use of English except those from Education English, Foreign Languages and Integrated Science.

To further infer the validity of the above results, the data is subjected to hypotheses testing as follows:

**Ho1:** *The mean attitude rating towards the Use of English is significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) independent of their gender.*

**Table 5: Analysis of Variance of Mean Rating of Students towards the Use of English by Gender**

Sources	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	1	310.0839	310.0839	1.9281	.1656
Within Groups	503	80893.9755	160.8230		
Total	504	81204.0594			

Table 5 reveals that the F probability of the difference between male and female students in respect of the mean attitude rating in the Use of English is 0.1656. This value is higher than 0.05 at which the corresponding hypothesis is being tested suggesting that at the value of 0.05, the result is not significant. In other words, the above null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no actual difference between the male and female students in their mean rating and attitude towards the Use of English. Thus, their earlier observed difference in the mean rating of the male and female students is not actual difference but that attributed to error variance i.e. errors associated with aspects of the study procedure.

**Ho2:** *Students mean rating of their attitude towards the Use of English is significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) independent of their areas of specialization*

**Table 6: Analysis of Variance of Mean Rating of Students towards the Use of English by Area of Specialization**

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F ratio	F Prob.
Between Groups	31	27458.1653	885.7473	7.7952	.0000
Within Groups	473	53745.8941	113.6277		
Total	504	81204.0594			

Table 6 reveals that the F probability of the difference among students from various areas of specialization in respect of the mean attitude rating in the Use of English is .0000. This value is less than 0.05 at which the corresponding hypothesis is being tested suggesting that at the value of 0.05, the result is significant. In other words, the above null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is actual difference among students of various areas of specialization in their mean rating and attitude towards the Use of English. Thus, their earlier observed difference in the mean attitude rating among students of various areas of specialization is actual difference and not that attributed to error variance i.e. errors associated with aspects of the study procedure.

**Table 7: Scheffee Identification of Sources of Significant Differences between Paired Mean ratings by Areas of Specialization**

S/NO	SOURCE OF DIFFERENCES
1.	Economic (69.12) & Medicine (40)
2.	HPE (69.5) & Medicine (40)
3.	Mass Communication (72.35) & Medicine (40)

4.	Political Science (73.35) & Medicine (40)
5.	PALG (75.9) & Medicine (40)
6.	Microbiology (76.30 & Medicine (40)
7.	Computer Science (77) & Medicine
8.	Medical Lab (78) & Medicine (40)
9.	Mechanical Engineering (83) & Medicine (40)
10.	Adult Education (74) Medicine (40)
11.	Adult Education (74) & Chemistry (61)
12.	Electrical Engineering (83) & Medicine (40)
13.	Nursing (40) & Medicine (40)
14.	Philosophy (81) & Medicine (40)

Results of the sources of the significant difference are shown in table 7. It is seen that there are 14 sources with the Mean rating of 40 of the students differing significantly those from 10 other area except Adult Education that differs from Chemistry.

### Summary of findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

- 1) Generally students of the University of Nigeria have positive attitude towards the use of English
- 2) The students' attitude towards the use of English is not influenced by their gender
- 3) Their areas of specialization influence the students' attitude towards the Use of English. All the students used in the study have positive attitude towards the Use of English except the students of Medicine, Education English, Foreign Languages and Integrated Science.

**Discussion:** Finding of the study has shown that students generally have positive attitude towards the Use of English irrespective of course of study. Thus the question as to whether or not the compulsory nature of the course would hamper their attitude towards the course is debunked by the results of the study. The implication is that going by the common knowledge of the direct relationship between scholastic achievements and intrinsic psychological disposition (e.g. attitude, interest etc.) the students have the potential to excel in the course.

It is shown in the study that students of medicine, Education English, integrated Science and Foreign Language have negative attitude towards the use of English. This means that among others, these students dislike the subject and by implication exhibit apathy towards it. Apathy is one of several covert psychological constructs that overtly directs and controls human behavior in a negative direction. If the result of the study in this regard is anything to go by, it implies that the students in these departments will find any flimsy excuse to avoid lectures or anything to do with it. Since pass in the subject is a prerequisite for award of the university degree, they have to "sort" the course out, a parlance among the students that means passing the course by all means.

One unique surprise that emerged from the result of the study, that should be a subject for further investigation through research, is the fact that students in Education English and foreign languages exhibit negative attitude towards the use of English. Every discipline requires a special innate natural trait or ability to succeed in that course or not succeed in another. In other words, Languages as a discipline requires linguistic ability that propels one's interest and or attitude that motivates one to choose to study languages and succeed in it. It is along this line that a group of subjects that have related abilities are grouped together to form departments, schools faculties in educational institutions. Thus, since Education English and foreign languages belong to the same discipline of Language, they supposed to have Linguistic ability as a common factor, implying that the presumed positive attitude that influenced their specializing in Language ought to be reflected similarly in the Use of English. Unfortunately, the students in these areas of study exhibit negative attitude to the Use of English. Even though this line of thought is contradicted by the positive attitude observed in respect of students in such Science based disciplines as Engineering courses, Biological and Physical Sciences, and even Social Sciences, it is supported by the results of the students in Integrated Science and Medicine.

The study has shown that students attitude towards the Use of English is independent of their gender. In other words, both the males and the females like the Use of English and by implication are disposed towards studying the subject. This has implication for some of the observations regarding

gender disparity in achievement in English (Adeoye, and Adigun, 2010;). Going by the revelation from study of gender insensitivity in attitude towards English, then there is a likely negative intervention that interferes from their positive disposition of both gender in the course of studying the subject that manifests in the of the observed gender difference in achievement in the subject. Such negative intervention may likely be those associated with the curriculum of the subject, the quality of resources such as teachers, teaching methods, class size etc.

That students attitude to the Use of English is influenced by their courses of specialization in the university as shown in this study is in tandem with common knowledge earlier referred to that every discipline requires a special innate natural trait or ability to succeed in that course or not succeed in another. As there are such several disciplines, so are as many abilities that are likely at variance with that of English. This is the likely explanation for the observed variation of students' attitude by course of study.

**Conclusion and Recommendation:** The establishment of the Use of English as a prerequisite course for all the first degree students in the University of Nigeria and indeed any other university seems to be achieving the set objective of the course. The fact that students' exhibit positive attitude towards the subject, as evident in this study, is a valid attestation to this. Notwithstanding the fact that few students exhibit negative disposition towards the subject, and that their attitude towards the subject is influenced by their courses of specialization, these are solvable problems that subsequent studies and efforts within the universities such as the following can address so as to actualize the set objectives of the course:

1. Encouraging and funding further studies in the Use of English by the university, particularly through the University Senate research grant so as to explore factors capable of inhibiting effective teaching and learning in the course. This will further engender students' positive attitude towards the course.
2. It is likely that the personality of the teachers of the Use of English such as method of teaching, dressing mode, personal relationship with the students etc. could be such that distress some of the students leading to dislike for the course. This calls for the need for the administrators of the course to occasionally organize in-house reorientation of the teachers in the unit to acquaint them of some of these issues including the best practices of teaching the course.
3. Students should be given opportunity to assess the course anonymously as this approach has globally been shown to be one of the most valid and reliable approaches to programme evaluation. This can be done by the end of teaching a particular course. Questionnaires that target the evaluation of various aspects of the course are given to all the students to fill without provision in the questionnaire for the identity of the student respondent.
4. Staff in the unit should be encouraged through sponsorship to attend similar, conferences and workshop as this that targets brainstorming on General studies and the Use of English in other institutions locally and internationally.
5. The Use of English Unit should annually organize conferences or seminars in which academic staff of the Use of English from other universities should be invited to shares idea and experiences on how best to promote the teaching in the subject including strategies for promoting students interest and attitude in the subject.
6. Since the Use of English class is often characterized by very large class size, the university should endeavour to provide adequate classrooms and seats so to as to ensure comfortable seating in the class.

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