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Entitled

EXPLORING EMIRATI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS READING IN L2 (ENGLISH)

By

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Abstract

Reading in a second language (L2) is a crucial skill for high school students as it helps to develop their second language proficiency and broadens their understanding of the world. It also holds substantial significance in both their personal and academic endeavors. Additionally, proficient L2 reading skills pave the way for promising prospects and professional opportunities. This study examines students' attitudes towards reading academically and recreationally in L2 and the factors that contribute to these attitudes. The study sample comprised of 20 grade 11, UAE national male students (16-17 years old) enrolled in a public Applied Technology School (ATS) in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates. The study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing an open-ended questionnaire to gain insight into the students' attitudes towards reading in their second language (English), as well as the various factors contributing to these attitudes. The thematic analysis of data employed an inductive approach to identify prominent patterns within the dataset. The study revealed that students had favorable attitudes towards reading in general, citing personal reasons such as entertainment and exploration of new worlds, as well as academic benefits including improved language skills, acquisition of new information, and enhance subject-specific understanding. However, the study revealed that most students preferred Arabic, their first language, citing reasons such as comfort, ease, and cultural connection. The study also revealed diverse attitudes among students towards reading in their second language (L2), with some holding favorable, negative, or neutral attitudes. Positive attitudes were associated with expanding horizons, cultural exposure, improving language and comprehension skills, and academic success, while negative attitudes were associated with difficulty or lack of L2 proficiency, disinterest in the subject matter, and a preference for activities perceived as more enjoyable or immediately rewarding. In terms of L2 reading genre preferences, the study revealed that the students preferred science fiction, non-fiction, and novels; however, in terms of medium preferences, the study revealed that there were many differences between students preferring traditional books and those preferring technology-based reading methods. The findings show the importance of recognizing and catering to students' diverse attitudes towards reading in L2. By understanding the complex nature of L2 literacy development and providing culturally relevant materials, teachers can create inclusive learning environments that foster intrinsic motivation and engagement. Moreover, curriculum designers should prioritize the integration of diverse reading materials and mediums to support students' L2 literacy development and encourage a positive attitude towards reading.

Keywords: Second language proficiency, diverse attitudes, recreational attitudes, intellectual attitudes, primary determinants, genre preferences, curriculum designers.