

Language Attitude Analysis Research in Normal University

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Abstract

It is obviously that language attitude often affects and even determines the use of language in our daily life all the time. It can be said that language attitude is closely related to our study and life. Therefore, this paper will not only introduce my understanding of language attitude, but also introduce my practical application of this knowledge theory. From the perspective of three factors in language attitude: cognition, emotion and behavior (tendency), this paper will show the English language attitude of English Majors in our university by using the questionnaire survey method and taking English Majors in our university as the survey object.

Keywords

Sociolinguistics; Language Attitude; College English.

1. Introduction

Sociolinguistics is one of the important research fields in modern linguistics. It studies the relationship between language and society. The study of the relationship between language and society can be said to have existed since ancient times, but sociolinguistics in the sense of modern linguistics should have been born in the 1960s, when transformational-generative grammar was popular. Transformational-generative grammar emphasizes innate language competence. It believes that the corpus can be collected without field investigation. The corpus can be introspective by researchers. As long as it conforms to the grammatical rules, even sentences that cannot exist in the actual language can also be used for research. The purport of transformational -generative grammar is to study how an idealized man generates infinite sentences with limited rules, focusing on language ability while sociolinguistics emphasizes communication competence. Therefore, we must deeply realize that the purport of sociolinguistics is to study how a social man uses language when communicating with others, focusing on language performance. Among them, language attitude is closely related to language use. The problem of language attitude has always been a research topic valued by sociolinguists and an important aspect of sociolinguistic research. So, this paper will introduce what is language attitude, the research status at home and abroad, the main survey methods, how to use language attitude to design a questionnaire, and analyze the survey results of English language attitude of English Majors in our college.

2. Language Attitude

2.1. Section Headings

2.1.1. Sub-section Headings

In modern linguistics, language attitude is one of the topics often talked about by domestic scholars. Wang Yuanxin (Wang, 1999) pointed out that in a bilingual or multilingual society individuals often form a certain understanding or evaluation of the social value of a language or character. This understanding and evaluation is usually called language attitude. Lao Yundong (Lao, 2004) pointed out that language attitude is the attitude of speakers of different languages or variants towards their own language and each other's language. Expressing

positive or negative emotions about a language may reflect a person's views on the difficulty of language, the importance of language and the social status of language, as well as people's attitude towards people who speak a language. Language attitude can exert a certain influence on the learning of a second or foreign language. Testing language attitudes can provide useful information for language teaching and language planning.

In short, language attitude refers to an individual's value evaluation and behavior tendency of a certain language or dialect, such as a person who can speak Mandarin's value evaluation of Cantonese and his behavior tendency of actually using Cantonese, that is, what scene he uses Cantonese, the actual frequency of using Cantonese, etc. This attitude may be positive or negative. For example, Liu Hong (Liu, 1993) asked all the respondents the same questions during the survey on the language use and language attitude of local people in Dalian: (1) what do you think of Dalian Dialect? (2) What do you think of Mandarin? (3) What do you think of Shandong dialects, Shenyang dialects and other dialects? The result of the survey is that except those who think Dalian dialect is Mandarin, almost all people think Mandarin is pleasant to hear, soft, clear and civilized. This shows that most Dalian people have a positive attitude towards Mandarin and a negative attitude towards dialects.

There are three main factors affecting language attitude, including cognition, emotion and behavior (tendency). Among them, cognitive factors refer to the recognition and understanding of a language, in favor or against; Emotional factors are the feelings towards language, like or hate, respect or contempt, etc. Intention factor refers to the behavior and tendency of language.

2.2. Page Numbers

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3. Language Attitude Research Status at Home and Abroad

In sociolinguistic research, the main content of language attitude research focuses on identity, language identity and language acquisition, which is of great significance to language education and language policy. The following will introduce the theoretical discussion and Research on language attitude by scholars at home and abroad.

3.1. Foreign Research Status

Foreign research on language attitudes began in the 1950s. In 1955, Fitman Oberwen chose the words of black residents as his research object, so that people outside the black community could listen to the words of these black residents, make judgments, and judge the speaker's status (Wu, 2005). Subsequently, American psychologists Lambert and Gardner established a method to study language attitudes – matched-guise technology. This method was used to study individual language attitudes through self-report questionnaire in areas with high French and English proficiency in Canada. The emergence of matched-guise technology has prompted the study of language attitude to enter the period of empirical exploration. Gardner, Lambert and other scholars have repeatedly used empirical research methods to show that language attitude is of great significance to second language acquisition. In 1963, Preston added gender factors to the paired language change experiment and studied the influencing factors of language attitude in Montreal. Lambert, Gardner, Barik and Tunstall investigated the changes of attitude

and emotion of college students and postgraduates in the summer advanced French course of McGill University during the six week study period.

Since the 1980s, with the development of economic globalization, foreign research on language attitude mainly focuses on two aspects: first, the research on language attitude and its behavior. As a local language, dialect is an important embodiment of a national traditional culture. If the world is regarded as a complex, each country has its own unique language, and more and more people will learn the languages of other countries. People's cognition and emotion of language will have a certain impact on their language choice. Second, the study of language attitude and culture. Language attitude has a great relationship with the cultural development of the region. Under the social background of economic globalization, the exchanges between countries are becoming more and more frequent, which makes the languages of various countries show regional and global characteristics. Language attitude has an important impact on the social language development and local economic development of the region.

3.2. Domestic Research Status

The study of language attitude in China started late, and there is no relevant monograph so far. Based on the information of the highest cited literature and the highest downloaded literature of language attitude in CNKI, it shows that most of the research perspectives on language attitude in China focus on the following points: (1) theoretical research on language attitude; (2) Research on the language attitude of ethnic minorities; (3) Research on language attitude of dialect and Putonghua; (4) Research on language attitude of bilingual teaching and Trilingual Teaching; (5) Research on language attitude in specific regions; (6) Research on the influence of language attitude; (7) The study of College Students' language attitude and the study of foreign students' language attitude in China.

According to the data of CNKI, the earliest research on language attitude in China was Liu Hong (Liu, 1993)'s survey on the language use and language attitude of local people in Dalian, and Shen Yiqing (Shen, 1997) introduced Lambert's paired language change experimental method, taking some bilingual Chinese young people as the research objects, using the paired language change experimental method to study their influence on English The attitude of Chinese speakers.

As scholars at home started to be concerned about this field, they summarized and analyzed the definitions and theories of language attitude given by former scholars abroad. Furthermore, they gave their own various definitions. Wang Yuanxin (Wang, 2002) assumed that in a bilingual and multilingual society, under the effect of social and national identification, affective tendency, aims, motivation and behavioral intentions, people would evaluate some language or gain their perception of some language. The perception and evaluation are considered as language attitude. It is generally regarded as an organic compound that consists of recognition, affection and behavioral tendency. Zhang Wei (Zhang, 1988) specified that social developmental level, cultural background, population size, population density, age and social status could affect language attitude. According to Chen Songcen (Chen, 1999), language attitude can be divided into affective and rational aspects. In terms of affective respect, factors include language environment, culture and tradition and personal experience of speakers and listeners, while in light of rational aspect, social choice, language function, and the social status of speakers are crucial factors.

4. A Survey on the Language Attitude of Undergraduates Majoring in English in University

4.1. Research Objects and Methods

This study adopts ABC model to explore the language attitude of respondents. This paper investigates the respondents' attitude towards English from three aspects: emotional component, behavioral component and cognitive component (Shen, 2021).

The data were collected by filling in an online questionnaire. The respondents were freshmen to seniors majoring in English at the school of foreign languages of Nanning Normal University. A total of 15 questions were set in the questionnaire. Questions 1 to 3 ask respondents about their background information, including grade, gender and frequency of exposure to English. Questions 4 to 15 are designed based on ABC model to investigate the respondents' evaluation of 12 features of English that can reflect emotional, behavioral and cognitive components. Among them, topics 6, 7, 8 and 12 are about emotional components, and the key words of the problem are "gentle", "friendly", "kind" and "pleasant"; Topics 5, 9, 10 and 11 are about behavioral components, and the key words are "easy", "convenient", "accurate" and "efficient"; Questions 4, 13, 14 and 15 are about cognitive components. The key words are "useful", "prestigious", "authoritative" and "elegant". There are three question modes, namely "Do you think English is prestigious?" "Is English good for you?" "Is it efficient for you to use English?" The answers are set as "not gentle at all", "not gentle", "general", "gentle" and "very gentle", corresponding to 1 to 5 points respectively. The most negative answer is 1 point and the most positive answer is 5 points. After inputting the data into SPSS online analysis software, the data is analyzed.

The survey data also need to be explained, because the number of questionnaires collected is mainly concentrated in freshmen and juniors, especially freshmen; There are few seniors and sophomores, so the following data analysis will analyze the data of freshmen and juniors in detail, and the data of seniors and sophomores will be briefly explained.

4.2. Data Analysis

This survey involves freshmen to seniors majoring in English in the school of foreign languages of Nanning Normal University. The specific information of respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The specific information

Item	Options	Frequently	percentage(%)	Cumulative percentage(%)
Grade	Freshman year	73	57.48	57.48
	Sophomore year	4	3.15	60.63
	Junior year	37	29.13	89.76
	Senior year	13	10.24	100.00
Gender	man	22	17.32	17.32
	woman	105	82.68	100.00
Daily English usage frequency scoring (1-5 points)	1	8	6.30	6.30
	2	21	16.54	22.83
	3	49	38.58	61.42
	4	20	15.75	77.17
	5	29	22.83	100
Total		127	100.00	100

As can be seen from table 1 , there are 127 students participating in this survey, including 73 freshmen (57.48%); There are 4 sophomores, accounting for 3.15%; There are 37 junior students, accounting for 29.13%; There are 13 senior students, accounting for 10.24%. It can be seen that freshmen have a high degree of participation and activity in the questionnaire survey. In terms of gender composition, there are 22 boys, accounting for 17.32% of the total; There are 105 female students, accounting for 82.68% of the review, which is in line with the gender proportion of English majors. From the frequency of exposure to English, there are 8 respondents with a score of 1, accounting for 6.3%; 21 respondents with 2 points, accounting for 16.54%; 49 respondents with 3 points, accounting for 38.58%; 20 respondents with 4 points, accounting for 15.75%; There are 29 respondents with a score of 5, accounting for 22.83%. Among them, 29 respondents with a score of less than 3 points (excluding 3 points), accounting for 22.83% of the total number, and 98 respondents with a score of 3 or more, accounting for 77.17% of the total number. It can be seen that most English Majors in our school have a high frequency of exposure to English in their daily life, that is, in addition to classroom learning.

4.2.1. Attitude Towards English of Undergraduates Majoring in English

Figure 1-3 below shows the survey of 127 respondents on 12 characteristics of English.

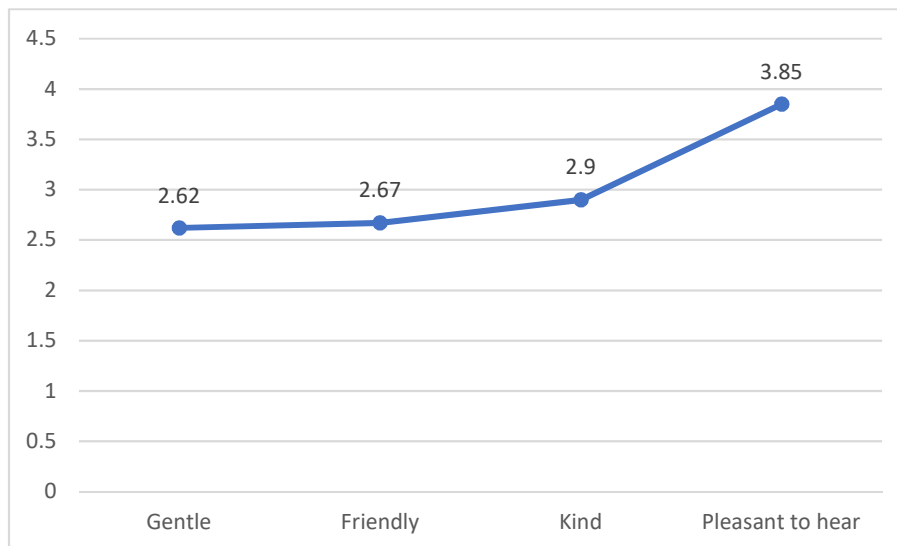


Figure 1. Emotional Components

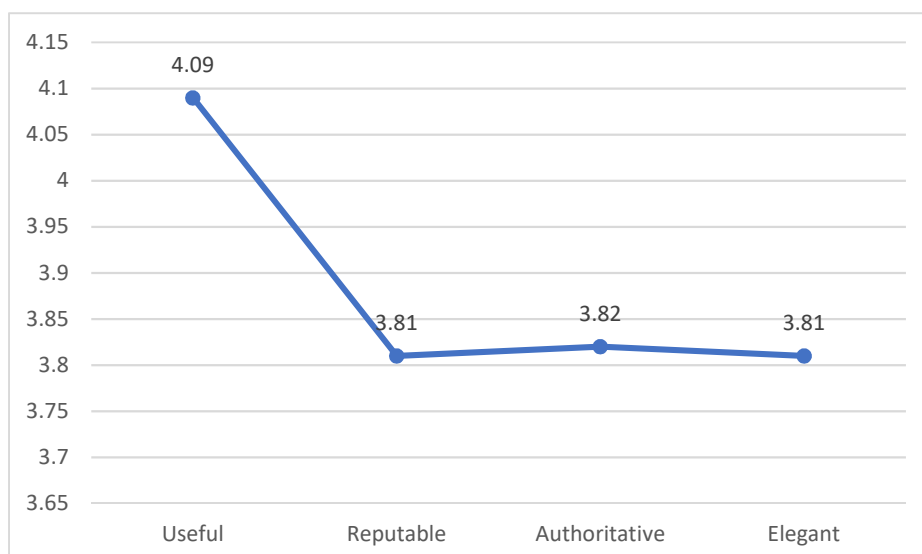


Figure 2. Cognitive Components

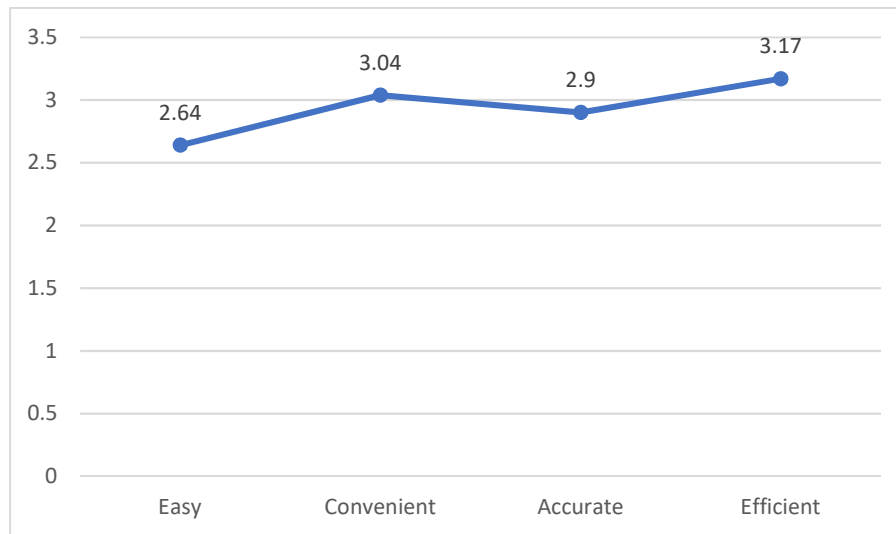


Figure 3. Behavior Components

Based on the data in Figure 1-3 above, the survey data of 127 respondents on the 12 characteristics of English are analyzed as follows: in terms of emotional components, the "pleasant" score is the highest, showing a very positive attitude, but the "gentle" and "friendly" score is the lowest; Among the cognitive components, "useful" scores are the highest, and the characteristic scores of other cognitive components are also higher; On the behavioral component, the "easy" score is the lowest, and the scores on other behavioral components are also low. Generally speaking, the English Majors in our school have the highest scores in cognitive components, the middle scores in behavioral components and the lowest scores in emotional components. It can be seen that although the respondents agree with the functionality of English, on the one hand, as second language learners, they have extreme contradictory attitudes towards English. On the other hand, the negative evaluation of the four characteristics that can reflect the behavioral components implies a lack of confidence in their English ability, and there is still much room for improvement and improvement in language output.

4.2.2. Attitudes Towards English of Undergraduates Majoring in English in Our University Differences in Attitudes Towards English among Different Grades

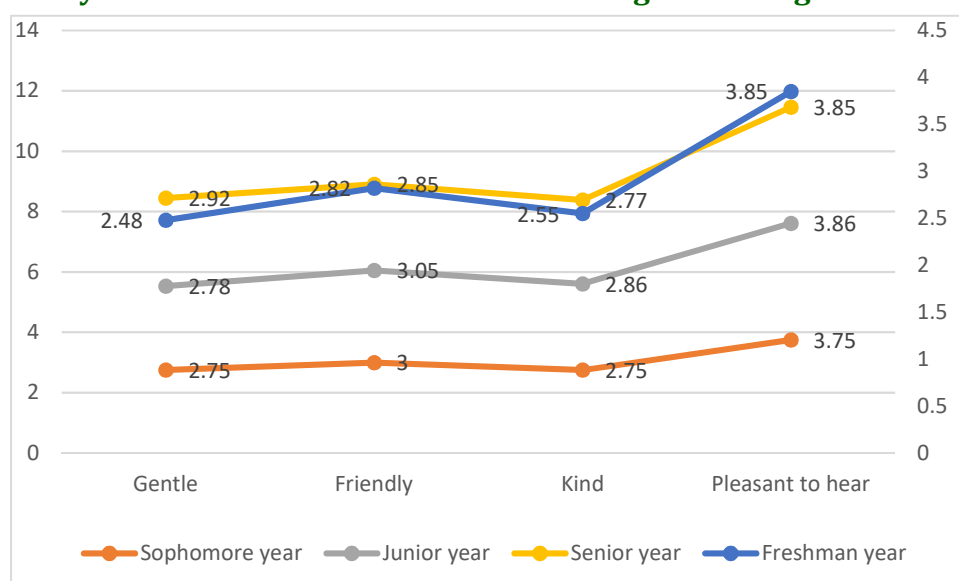


Figure 4. Emotional Components

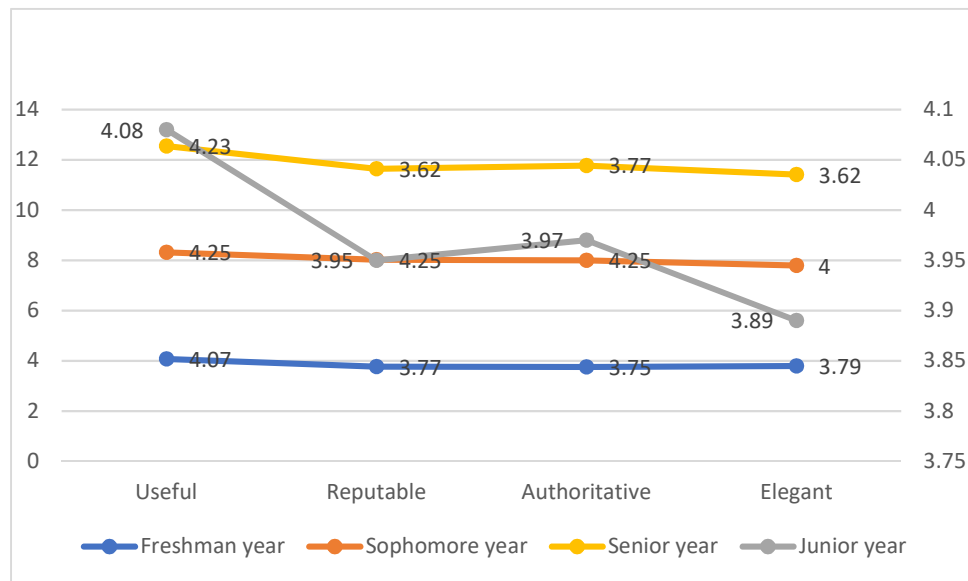


Figure 5. Cognitive Components

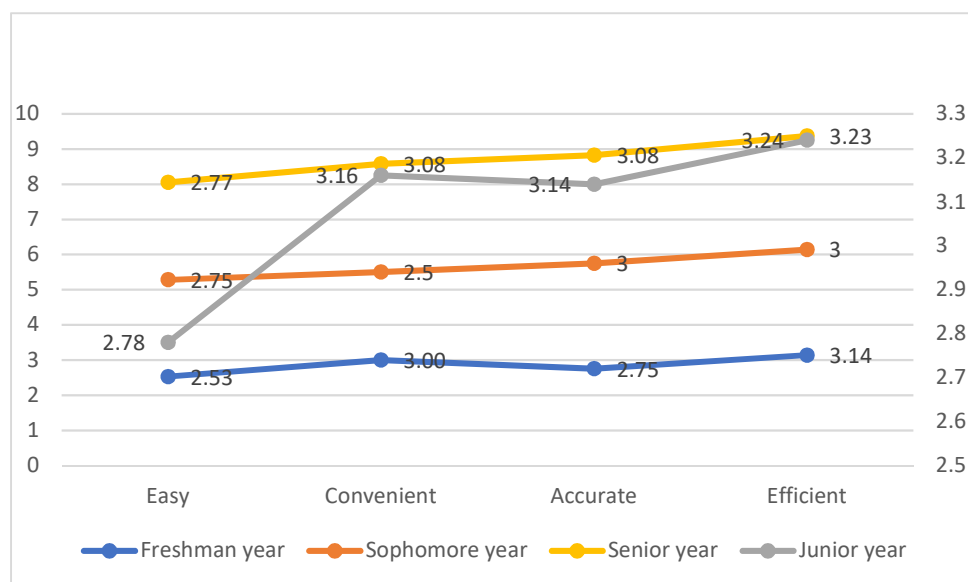


Figure 6. Behavior Components

Respondents of different grades show significantly different language attitudes towards English. Figure 4-6 the scoring of 12 characteristics of English by respondents of different grades.

Based on the data analysis in Figure 4-6, freshmen to junior students' attitude towards English is on the rise, but senior students' evaluation of English in the emotional component is reduced. Senior students' evaluation of the characteristics of the other two components is generally higher than that of the other three grades, especially in terms of cognitive components. Among them, senior students scored 4.23 on the "useful" evaluation of features. Facing the realistic pressure of looking for a job, senior students begin to pay more attention to the function of English, so senior students pay unprecedented attention to English. The score of cognitive component is much higher than that of behavioral component. It can be seen that the function of English itself is recognized by English majors, but the difficulty of English itself discourages non-English majors, so the score of behavioral component is low.

5. Conclusion

Through the above investigation and analysis, it is not difficult to find that from the emotional dimension, it reflects the complex and contradictory attitude of college students majoring in English as a second language learner in our university. When it comes to the characteristics of input, such as "nice" and "intimate", their evaluation is positive, but it involves the characteristics of output, Such as "gentle" and "friendly", their evaluation is negative. From the cognitive perspective, as English majors, they have a positive attitude towards the practicability, authority and importance of English. From the perspective of behavior, influenced by the output ability of English language acquisition, their evaluation is relatively negative. On the whole, I have a serious attitude towards English, affirm the practical value of English and have a certain motivation for English learning, but I am not confident about my English level, and my emotional evaluation of English is also extreme and contradictory.

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