

Attitudes of Law Students at Al-Istiqlal University-Jericho towards Learning Legal Terminology Course in English*

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Introduction

Over the past three decades, there has been a growing interest in learning legal terminology course in English in the Palestinian Universities. Studying legal terminology course had become essential in our modern world, because English is the second language in most of the world countries, and it functions as a bridge between different nations of different tongues. There are a lot of advantages that students can obtain from leaning English: The researchers can get information related to a certain problem under study, learning English can develop intellectual skills, and lastly it enables students in expressing their views in a correct English language (Telfah, 2010).

According to Affoun 2012, English dominates international communications in all areas of life: law, politics, business, economy, etc. It is also instrumental in learning different disciplines at the universities, and increasingly becoming the language of communication among lawyers throughout the world. In addition, most members of language teaching profession realize that students' learning potential increase when attitudes are positive and motivations run high (Affoun,2012). (Jail and Kamarudin,2009) argue that law students are required to learn and even be competent when it comes to English so as to be capable of attaining the basic knowledge of their specialization, master the skill of reading international declarations and agreements, keep up with the most recent updates of the international legislations and keep contact with qualified universal sources of law.

The process of learning English as a foreign language is influenced by many factors, such as students' attitudes and motivation (Al-Qamsh,2011). As viewed by Choy and Lam (2006), attitudes can help learners express whether they like or hate the objects and surrounding situations. The researcher underlined the inner feelings and emotions of foreign language learners that influence their perspectives and attitudes towards the target language. Thus, attitudes can highly influence how individuals approach different situations including foreign language learning.

The current study considers attitudes as one of the major effective factors of success in

Abstract:

This study aimed to shed light on the attitudes of law students at Al-Istiqlal University in Jericho Governorate towards learning legal terminology course in English. The researcher surveyed the perceptions of 105 (61 male, 44 female) students using a questionnaire developed according to a 5 –point Likert Scale. Cronbach Alpha Formula was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire.

A descriptive analysis was made to measure the target students' attitudes (percentages, means and standard deviations). Gender differences were also considered via an independent T-test. Results revealed that law students at Al-Istiqlal University have positive attitudes towards learning legal terminology course in English in general, especially the students who have got high accumulative average at the university, with no gender differences.

Key words: gender, attitude, motivation, EFL

ملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى إلقاء الضوء على اتجاهات طلبة القانون في جامعة الاستقلال نحو تعلم مادة مصطلحات قانونية باللغة الانجليزية. قام الباحث باستطلاع آراء 105 (61 ذكور، 44 إناث) من الطلبة باستخدام استبانة تم تصميمها وفقا لمقياس 5 –point Likert. وقد استخدم معامل Cronbach Alpha لقياس درجة صدق وثبات الاستبانة. كذلك تم إجراء تحليل وصفي لقياس اتجاهات الفئة المستهدفة (النسب المئوية، المتوسط الحسابي والانحراف المعياري). هذا وقد تم الأخذ بعين الاعتبار الاختلافات بين الجنسين أيضا عن طريق اختبار T-Test المستقل. خلص البحث إلى أن لدى طلبة القانون في جامعة الاستقلال اتجاهات ايجابية نحو تعلم مادة مصطلحات قانونية بلغة أجنبية بشكل عام ، ولا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الجنسين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الجنس، اتجاه، دافعيه، اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

learning legal terminology course in English. As a result, it seeks to identify the attitudes of law students at Al-Istiqlal University towards legal terminology course in English, with a particular focus on gender and the university accumulative average differences, if any.

Statement of the problem

English is considered the global language in many fields of knowledge, especially public law. As such, having positive attitudes towards learning English facilitates the learning process (Al-Qamsh,2011). It is assumed that attitudes are very decisive and essential factors in the second and foreign language learning process.

From many observations of law students at Al-Istiqlal University, the researcher had an impression that law students have negative attitudes towards learning legal terminology course in English. These students complain about studying legal terminology course in English, arguing that the legal system in Palestine does not depend on English in the suitcases at the Palestinian courts. Moreover, the students' marks, attendance, readiness, preparation and interest in English are unsatisfactory. This phenomenon has been noticed especially in legal terminology course. However, observations are not always informative, so a questionnaire must be applied to analyze the students' attitudes towards learning legal terminology course in English.

Research Questions

- » What are the attitudes of Al-Istiqlal University law students towards learning legal terminology course in English? What are the manifestations of these attitudes at the emotional, behavioral, cognitive and pedagogical aspects?
- » Are there any statistically significant gender differences between law students' attitudes towards learning legal terminology course?
- » Are there any statistically significant differences related to the university accumulative average between law students and towards learning legal terminology course in English?

- » What is the relationship between the legal terminology course learning and its association with their academic achievement?

Hypotheses of the study

1. There are no significant differences at the ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the mean scores of Al-Istiqlal law students, towards learning legal terms course in English as demonstrated in their emotional, behavioral, cognitive and pedagogical aspects.
2. There are no significant gender differences at the ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the mean scores of Al-Istiqlal law students, attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language.
3. There are no significant differences at the ($\alpha = .05$) in the mean scores of Al-Istiqlal law students, related to the university accumulative average towards learning legal terminology course in English?

Significance of the study

The findings of this study would hopefully familiarize law students at Al-Istiqlal University with the importance of the legal terminology course for their professional development and distinction, especially in the field of law. I hope that the results of this study would lay a solid foundation for a new legal terminology curriculum, which keeps up with the modern developments in law and the age of globalization, especially public law. I seek to encourage Al-Istiqlal University to recruit faculty members who are competent both in the fields of law and English language.

Definition of terms

EFL= English as a foreign language

Motivation: An intrinsic (internal) or extrinsic (external) stimulus for action.

Limitation of the study

The scope of this study is restricted to law students at Al-Istiqlal University for the second semester 2014/2015.

Review of the related literature

Since this research deals with attitudes, it is very crucial to define this term. Different scholars have tried to define it differently, and yet they do not have agreed upon the definition of attitude. Baker defined attitudes as a person persistent way of behaving in particular way (Baker, 1992). Ajzan claimed that the attitude of a person is positive or of negative attributes to anything (Ajzan, 1988). Gardner proposed that attitude is the overall feelings of a person towards any particular thing (Gardner, 1980). Beck (1985) added that, "Attitudes as the perception of self, of others and of the culture we are living in".

Attitudes can be categorized into thoughts (cognitive) and feelings (affective). Thus, it is generally assumed that the negative attitudes towards the foreign language can definitely impede the teaching and learning of that language. Conversely, positive attitudes towards the foreign language improve learning. The study found that the instructors, supportive attitude helped relieve students, anxiety and motivated them to exert more efforts in achieving the goals of learning the language.

All students possess positive and negative attitudes in varying degrees, and the negative ones can be changed by thoughtful instructional methods, such as using materials and activities that help students achieve an "understanding and an appreciation of the foreign culture", (Brown, 2000). Kara (2009) argues that positive attitudes towards any subject can enhance the students' interest and eagerness to solve problems as well useful for their daily life. In his pioneering research in the field of attitudes, Gardner (1985) found that students' attitudes are closely related to two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. He concluded that integrative motivation is key for predicting classroom participation, language proficiency and persistence in language learning.

Liu and Zhang (2013) conducted a study on the general patterns of Chinese EFL students, learning anxiety and motivation and their relationship to the students' performance in English. The sample of the study consisted of 1697 students (921 females and 776 males) from five universities. The researchers found that

learners who are high on integrative motivation worked harder and learned faster than those who are low. In addition, one third of the students were scared of English classes and feared of being negatively evaluated. The study subjects were largely integratively and instrumentally motivated to learn English, fairly strongly motivated to learn English by personal development, moderately motivated to learn English by going abroad, and not to learn English in their current learning situation.

A few years earlier, Moriam conducted a survey to find out what motivates the university students in Bangladesh to speak English. The study, conducted in 2008, involved 355 university undergraduate and graduate students (187 males and 168 females). Moriam was able to identify seven factors behind the drive to learn spoken English: foreign residence and friendship, second language speaking anxiety, determination to learn, securing a good job and gaining financial benefits, intrinsic motivation, the social appeal and increasing the social status.

(Javid ,2012) investigated Saudi undergraduates, motivational orientations for learning English as a foreign language. The participants of the study (709 male and female students), they showed higher extrinsic (instrumental) motivation with fairly high intrinsic (integrative) motivation. In comparison to their female counterparts, the male subjects were more positive towards both motivational orientations.

Rahimi and Favardin (2009) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between attitudes, self- confidence, teacher and class evaluation of Iranian university students. The study comprised 50 participants (28 male and 22 female students). The researchers concluded that the students who evaluated their teachers favorably also evaluated their classes positively and vice versa. What's more, students with high self- confidence evaluated their teachers positively and believed that their English teachers' role in their self-confidence was effective and crucial. In addition, the study showed that the students' attitudes can greatly affect students' evaluation of teacher and class. Even more, students who had more faith in teachers' abilities proved to have positive attitudes towards language learning.

In addition, many studies have been conducted to explore the nature of law students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language in particular. In his study of the Turkish ' Baskent University ', Colak (2008) found that most of the participants of the study had moderately positive attitudes towards learning English. In addition, Political Sciences students had the highest mean score. However, students from law faculty had the lowest mean score regarding the integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. The researcher also found that Political Sciences students got the highest scores because they study English not only in English language courses, but also in some political sciences courses. Furthermore, the students were required to do their assignments making use of articles written in English. By contrast, the students from law faculty had the lowest scores because they study English only in English courses and in their department only international law course in English. The researcher also noted that students of law do not need English in their job to be successful lawyers. In case they need English, they can ask for assistance from a professional translator.

Jalil and Kamardum (2009) stressed the necessity of English language in the legal profession and so they considered proficiency in the language as a prerequisite for effectiveness in law profession. Lawyers should be equipped with the necessary English language skills to be able to deal with the complex legal terms, textbooks, journals, and reports, they added. This argument was repeated by a previous study by these authors who investigated the needs of law students at the International Islamic University in Malaysia. The study surveyed 102 male and female students and concluded with the following: law students acknowledge the importance of English for both their academic success and future career; the students ranked writing skill as the most important followed by speaking, reading and writing; the students were highly motivated but lacked the confidence in using the language; and the majority of law students hardly use English outside the classroom. On the other hand, they use their mother tongue as the sole means of communications instead.

Garner (2013) asserted that the twenty first century is the age of globalization of law, and the South East Asia countries should rise to this challenge. One of the challenges is the use of English among lawyers. He cited some attempts being implemented in Thailand where the government and other educational institutions are offering some courses in English for undergraduate students. As a result, more and more of their lawyers now speak English well, and they are looking forward to improving their level in the four skills of English, especially writing.

Methodology

The researcher used the descriptive analytic approach since it fits the goals of study.

Sample of the study

The sample of the study comprised 105 law students who are studying law at the faculty of law in Al-Istiqlal University in Jericho-Palestine. They are students in the second, the third and the fourth years who had studied legal terminology course in their college.

Table (1)

Distribution of the sample of study (Gender),(year of study), (university average)

A simple random sample, selected by drawing numbers, comprised 105 (61 males and 44 females) law students as shown in the Table (1) below according to the gender, year of study and university average.

	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender	male	61	58.1
	female	44	41.9
year of study	second year	35	33.3
	third year	35	33.3
	fourth year	35	33.3
	from 65-65.9	9	8.6
university average	from 70-77.9	35	33.3
	from 78-84.9	47	44.8
	from 85 -100	14	13.3

Instrument of the study

The study is quantitative. So, a questionnaire was developed as a measuring instrument. The participants were asked to answer all the items of the questionnaire, stating their gender, university accumulative average, and attitudes (emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and pedagogical) towards learning legal terminology course in English.

The researcher had consulted several researches of attitudes and developed a 5-point Likert Scale. The questionnaire was developed in English and then translated into Arabic to make sure the students who have low English proficiency, would have more confidence in responding to the statements. The first part of the questionnaire included three variables: gender, the year of study, the university accumulative average; while the second part included thirty items largely adapted from the Attitude and Motivation Test Battery designed by Gardner (1985), while other items were developed by the researcher.

Reliability of the instrument

The reliability of the instrument was tested by using the Alpha Cronbach formula which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.90, which is significant and acceptable for the purpose of the study.

Validity of the instrument

To investigate the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to two faculty members from Al-Istiqlal University. They suggested some amendments on the questionnaire which was modified accordingly.

The statistical analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS Program aiming to answer the research questions quantitatively. To answer the first research question, descriptive statistics was conducted to determine the percentages, the means, and the standard deviation of the gathered data. Besides, since we needed to draw a comparison between the two variables (males and females, and the university accumulative average), an independent T-test and ANOVA were conducted to answer the

research question. Cronpach's Alpha formula was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire.

Results and discussion

To answer the four questions of the study, the researcher examined the null hypothesis: "There are no significant differences at the ($\alpha = .05$) in the mean scores of Al-Istiqlal University law students, attitudes towards learning legal terms course in English as demonstrated in their emotional, behavioral, cognitive and pedagogical aspects; while the students who have got high averages at the university have positive attitudes towards learning legal course, since the significance level (0.000) is less than (0.05), and the null hypothesis is rejected". The researcher analyzed the data using means, standard deviations and percentages.

The first Question: What are the attitudes of Al-Istiqlal University law students towards learning legal terminology course in English? What are the manifestations of these attitudes at emotional, behavioral, cognitive and pedagogical aspects?

Students' attitudes towards learning legal terminology course in English

The result of this descriptive analysis showed that the overall mean score of law students' attitudes towards learning legal terminology course at Al-Istiqlal University in the four aspects of attitudes is 3.45 (SD 0.534). This mean score is equivalent to 69% as shown in table (2).

Table (2)
Students' Attitudes towards legal course

Aspects of attitudes	N	Percent	M	Rank
The emotional aspect	105	72.8	3.64	Medium
The cognitive aspect	105	70.4	3.52	Medium
The behavioral aspect	105	68	3.40	Medium
The pedagogical aspect	105	64.6	3.23	Medium
overall Attitudes	105	69	3.45	Medium

N= Number of students M=Mean

This result reveals that the participants have positive attitudes towards learning legal terms course in English Language in general.

First: The emotional attitude towards legal course.

The emotional aspect represents the highest mean score (3.64), which means that the participants have positive emotional attitudes as shown in table 3 below.

Table (3)

The emotional attitude towards legal course (10 items)

Item no.	Item	Percent	M	Rank
1	I really enjoy learning legal terminology course in English.	73	3.66	Medium
2	I love learning legal terminology course.	76	3.78	High
3	When I leave college, I shall give up the study of English entirely because I am not interested in it.	48	2.39	Medium
4	I plan to get benefit as much as possible from the legal terms course.	70	3.50	Medium
8	Learning legal terms course is a waste of time.	42	2.08	Low
16	I hate learning legal terms course in English.	48	2.40	Medium
19	I think that learning legal terms course is useless.	48	2.38	Medium
24	Learning legal terms course is really great.	73	3.66	Medium
26	Legal terms course is an important part of the college program.	76	3.82	High

Item no.	Item	Percent	M	Rank
29	I would rather spend my time on subjects other than learning legal course.	56	2.81	Medium

There are 2 items which got a high rank, 7 got medium, and one got a low rank.

Items with the highest ranks are, “Legal terminology course is an important part of the college program” (3.82), and “I love learning legal terminology course” (3.78). The lowest item is, “ Learning legal terminology course is a waste of time “(2.08). The rest of the items got a medium rank. This reveals that law students at Al- Istiqlal University love learning legal course, and see that it is an important part of the college program although their instruction language is Arabic. This result is in line with Rajeswar (2006) who asserted that the first step in learning English Language is to have a positive behavioral attitude.

Second:- The cognitive aspect of attitudes towards legal terminology course

The cognitive aspect represents a high mean score of attitudes towards legal course (mean= 3.52). The majority of respondents showed positive cognitive attitude as shown in table (4).

Table (4)

The Cognitive aspect of attitudes towards legal terms course (8 items)

Item no.	Item	Percent	M	Rank
6	Studying legal course can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job in the field of law.	74	3.68	High
7	Studying legal course can be important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of law in a foreign language.	70	3.50	Medium

Item no.	Item	Percent	M	Rank
12	Studying legal course can be important to me because it will allow me to meet and communicate with more and varied people, especially people who are interested in law.	75	3.74	High
14	Learning legal course can be important for me only because I will need it for my future career.	54	2.69	Medium
15	Studying legal course can be important for me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.	75	3.76	High
18	Studying legal course can be important for me because it will allow me to be more at ease with fellow students who speak English.	73	3.66	Medium
28	Studying legal course can be important for me because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.	74	3.69	High
30	Studying legal course can be important because it enables me to understand and appreciate English or American legal system.	70	3.48	Medium

There are 4 items which got a high rank, and 4 items got a medium rank.

The results suggest that the motivations of legal course students at Al-Istiqlal University are both integrative and instrumental. That is, the overall mean score of items 12,30,28 and 18

(which represent the integrative motivation) is (3.38) On the other hand, items (6,7,14) and 15 (which represent the instrumental motivation in the questionnaire) have an overall mean score of (3.41). This signals the high motivation of law students at Al-Istiqlal University. More specifically, the differences in the mean scores of the eight items underline the importance of legal course in the field of law. According to Al-Istiqlal law students, legal course is a source of knowledge, a means for building relationships, understanding other legal systems, finding a job and booting intercultural communication, and an instrument for effective legal communication.

Third: The behavioral aspect of attitude towards legal terms course

With a mean score of (3.40), the behavioral aspect is quite different from other dimensions. As can be seen from table (5), the level of anxiety is considered fairly high when it comes to learning legal terms course.

Table (5)

The Behavioral aspect of attitudes towards legal terms course

Item no.	Item	Percent	M	Rank
17	It embarrasses me to participate by answering in our legal class.	44	2.22	Low
20	I never felt quite sure of myself when I am speaking in our legal class.	46	2.29	Low
21	I always feel that the other students speak English better than me in the legal class.	56	2.80	Medium
22	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my legal class.	52	2.59	Medium
25	I am afraid the other students will laugh at me when I speak English in the legal class.	46	2.28	Low

Two of the items got a medium rank, and the other three got a low rank.

This result reveals how much the participants feel and behave when they learn legal course in a foreign language though they have positive attitudes towards learning legal terms course. This study disclosed the common anxiety factor among legal course learners: confusion and nervousness, lack of confidence, embarrassment and fear of mockery. This is probably a result of the instructors' class management and lack of task – based instruction and student-centered activities such as role-play, dramatization, projects and creating a semi native speaker environment in the lecture.

Fourth:-The pedagogical attitude towards legal terms course

The pedagogical aspect is mainly related to teaching strategies. The mean score of this aspect is (3.23). Table 6 below shows the results in figures.

Table (6)

The Pedagogical aspect of attitude towards legal terms course

Item no.	Item	Percent	M	Rank
5	What I learn from the legal course does not help me to improve my English.	50	2.52	Medium
9	My English lecturers help me to learn legal course well.	72	3.58	Medium

Item no.	Item	Percent	M	Rank
10	I hardly learn English from my legal course lecturers.	58	2.91	Medium
11	My English classes are good places to learn legal course.	62	3.10	Medium
13	My legal course lecturers do not pay much effort to help me understand more legal terms in English.	60	3.00	Medium
23	My legal course lecturers know how to help me.	66	3.31	Medium
27	I know more English now because of what I am learning in my legal classes.	73	3.66	Medium

All of the items got a medium rank. This result verifies the importance of English instructors in promoting positive attitudes in their students towards learning legal terms course in English. The lowest mean score is for item 5, and the highest is item 27, where the respondents stressed that they learn from their legal instructors and they help them learn legal terms course well. This means that they benefited from the legal course and the instructors who implemented this educational process.

The second question:- Are there any statistically significant gender differences between law students' attitudes towards learning legal terms course in English?

Table (7)

The Results according to the (Gender)

	Gender	N	M	Std. Deviation	T-test	Significance
overall Attitudes	Male	61	3.48	0.497	0.721	0.473
	Female	44	3.40	0.585		

Since the significance level (0.473) is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. That is, the attitudes of law students at Al-Istiqlal University towards leaning legal terms course are not affected by their gender as shown in table 7.

The third question:- Are there any statistically significant differences related to the university accumulate average between law students towards learning legal terms course in English?

Table (8)

The means according to the (university average)

	N	M	Std. Deviation	F	Significance	Correlations
from 65-65.9	9	2.79	0.370			
from 70-77.9	35	3.29	0.600			
from 78-84.9	47	3.61	0.406	10.458	0.000	0.429**
from 85 -100	14	3.71	0.360			
Total	105	3.45	0.534			

Since the Significance level (0.000) is less than (0.05) , the null hypothesis is rejected That is, the students who have got high averages at the university have positive attitudes towards learning legal course .

Recommendations

In order to reinforce positive attitudes towards learning legal terms course in English, the researcher recommended the following:

1. More researches should be carried out to identify the attitudes of students in other majors towards learning English as a foreign language, such as psychology, criminology, MIS, security sciences, etc....
2. The faculty of law should hold competitions between law students with generous rewards for the best moot court, defense, pleading, etc...
3. Opening up future horizons for law students to take part effectively in local and international conferences, workshops, and the faculty can organize visits to other universities.
4. The university should recruit faculty law members who are competent in English in order to keep up with the modern developments in the law, especially public law.
5. The faculty of law should adopt two legal courses in its plan: The first one is legal terminology course, and the second one should be dedicated for the legal system in England and the U.S.A, to make the students

familiar with the legal systems in these two countries.

6. The university should make a kind of association between English courses at the university, “the requirement courses as English 1 and English 2”, and the legal terminology course, so as to integrate each other, and enhance the students’ knowledge in English.
7. Some courses at the faculty of law could be taught in English, especially public international law and international humanitarian law, since they are essential for the higher studies.
8. Promoting interaction between students. Interaction is essential if all students in the classroom possess have adequate practice. This can be achieved by getting students to help each other, allowing students to take over the teacher’s role, and encouraging students to talk in pairs or in groups about what interests them.

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