

Vol. 2, No.2, July - December 2013

ISSN 2277 - 1786

*DJ*

THE DAWN JOURNAL

Reforming Beliefs

**PRACTICAL VALUE OF UNDERSTANDING THE MINDSET OF SECONDARY SCHOOL  
TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

**Noora Abdul Kader**

**ABSTRACT**

Understanding the mind set of students and teachers seeks much more importance in the present scenario. The present study is intended to find the type of mindset of secondary school students in learning English language on the select areas and also made an attempt to find out the effect of fixed mindset of students on the attitude of students towards English language. Understanding the mind set of secondary school English teachers regarding the performance and attitude of students in learning English language on select areas revealed the result that most of the teachers are having fixed mind set and there is an urgent necessity to change the situation. A sample of 100 secondary school students and 20 secondary school English teachers were selected randomly from the state of Kerala. Majority of students are having fixed mindset in select areas and they believe that it is talent which is worthwhile and their effort won't do anything in learning English language. A shift in this situation is the need of the hour. For that the teachers should change their mindset and motivate the learners to assure themselves that their intelligence is not static.

**Introduction**

When students and educators have a growth mindset, they understand that intelligence is not static and believes that it can be developed and they spend time for that. People with growth mindset are highly dedicated and hardworking .Students focuses on improvement instead of worrying about how smart they are. Their hard work is focused to get more knowledge and thereby to become smart. Students with a growth mindset were more motivated to learn and exert effort, and outperformed those with a fixed mindset in math (Blackwell. L.S., Trzesniewski. K.H. & Dweck, C.S, 2007). Recent research has shown that students' mind-sets have a direct influence on their grades and that teaching students to have a growth mind-set raises their

grades and achievement test scores significantly (Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003). In addition, studies demonstrate that having a growth mind-set is especially important for students who are laboring under a negative stereotype about their abilities (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002). In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities cannot be altered even if they work for that. Time is consumed for documenting their intelligence despite of developing it. They strongly believe that effortless talent is the only stepping stone for success.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The present study is intended to study the mind set of students in English language classroom. The need for conducting such a study will be worthwhile as English is a foreign language and many of the students of our state are finding it difficult to get through the spelling, pronunciation, grammatical structures etc. of English language. Mindset that students hold may have significant influence on their achievement and success in English language. It is an essential fact that students should have a growth mindset in which they believe that their effort and hard work will be resulted once and they could achieve higher academic success. Fixed mindset of the students should be identified and steps should be taken to develop a growth mindset to see their effort as a positive behavior.

### **Objectives**

- a) To find out whether there exists significant influence of secondary school student's fixed mind set on attitude towards English language.
- b) To understand the mind set of secondary school English teachers regarding the performance and attitude of students in learning English language on select areas.
- c) To understand the mind set of secondary school students, whether fixed or growth, in learning English language classroom on select areas

### **Hypothesis**

There exists significant influence of secondary school student's fixed mindset on attitude towards English language.

**Sample**

The investigators selected 100 secondary school students and 20 secondary school English teachers from 2 government schools of the districts of Malappuram and Kozhikode from the state of Kerala. The investigator followed random sampling technique.

**Tools Used**

Self- assessment Questionnaire for teachers

Self- assessment Questionnaire for students

Attitude scale for students

**Statistical Techniques**

One way ANOVA

Percentage analysis

**Analysis and Interpretation**

Investigation of the Effect of Fixed Mindset on Attitude towards English Language among Secondary School Students

**TABLE - 1**

**Summary of One-Way ANOVA of Fixed Mindset of Students on Attitude towards English language**

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3062.035	2	1531.018	60.978	0.01
Within Groups	14989.230	97	25.108		
Total	18051.265	99			

As it is clear from the inspection of the table 1 that the main effect of fixed mind set on Attitude towards English language in the total sample was found to be significant. Students having fixed mind set in select areas have a negative attitude towards learning English language. They believe that there is nothing important in this language and they could never improve their skill of communication.

**Data and Result of the Identification of Mindset of Secondary School Teachers and Students**

**TABLE - 2**

Data and results of the mindset of secondary school English teachers regarding the performance and attitude of students for the select six areas of learning English language.

SL NO	SELECT AREAS	FIXED MIND SET (In %)	GROWTH MIND SET (in %)
1	Need for English language	86	14
2	Development of skills	59	41
3	Effective communication	89	11
4	Understanding grammatical concepts	92	8
5	Facing challenges	77	23
6	Taking effort	88	12

From the responses of the teachers it is revealed that they have fixed mindset regarding the performance and attitude of students on the six select areas of learning English language. They believe that their duty is to impart knowledge and it is difficult to develop communicative skills in students. According to them making effort to make them speak in English without grammatical mistake is just waste of time and it is s better to avoid challenges. Most of them believe that struggling students are not sufficiently talented or bright and it is difficult to conduct group activities as most of the students will not respond in English language.

**TABLE - 3**

**Data and results of the mindset of secondary school students for the select six areas of learning English language**

SL NO	SELECT AREAS	FIXED MIND SET (In %)	GROWTH MIND SET (in %)
1	Need for English language	73	27
2	Development of skills	68	32
3	Effective communication	86	14
4	Understanding grammatical concepts	90	10
5	Facing challenges	78	22
6	Taking effort	79	21

From the table, it is revealed that secondary school students are having fixed mind set in select areas of English language compared to growth mind set. They believe that their efforts are just in vague and they could not develop the skills in English language as their intelligence is not enough for that. They believe that language skills are not going to develop even if they work hard.

**How to Foster Growth Mindset among Students?**

- a) If we encourage our student’s efforts, acknowledging their persistence and hard work, we will support their development of a growth mindset.
- b) Let the teachers change their mindset first. Trust in each and every child in front of you. Believe that each and every one in front of you has their own talents and if given proper motivation and a little attention they could be bloomed to achieve the target.
- c) Equipping the learners on how to learn more and more by persisting and picking themselves up when things do not go their way.
- d) Make them understand that it is much more important for them to attain the skills of English language than to get top grades.
- e) Teachers should give them the message through their teaching process that the harder they work mastering English language, the more effort they put to learn grammatical concepts and communicative skills, the better they shall be at it.

- f) They should get that courage to capitalize on mistakes and confront deficiencies
- g) Arrange the arena for them to focus on effort, struggle, and persistence despite setbacks by choosing difficult tasks so that let them realize themselves that their intellectual capacity is not static.
- h) Teachers should focus on garden variety of strategies for teaching English language and do reflect on different strategies that work and don't work
- i) Focus should be on learning and improving their language. Continuous assessment and realization of their potential may in turn pave way for the realization of their information gap.
- j) Never abuse or insult the learners for their mistakes. Make them realize that if they are not better in a particular skill they could improve the other one.
- k) Motivate the learners by making them aware about the importance of this target language. They should get the message that English language is not just learning grammar alone and if they try hard they could communicate fluently.
- l) Never give over reinforcement to the learners. Tell them that they could do much difficult task and face more challenges through their whole hearted effort.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear from the study that students are having fixed mind set compared to growth mindset in the select areas of learning English language. Teacher's mindsets influence students' mindsets and a growth mindset in educators results in higher performance for their students (Brooks 2005). The teachers should change themselves at the onset. Only a teacher with growth mindset could empathetically approach his/her students. Mindset is a simple psychological concept, developed by Carol Dweck, Psychologist, working at Stanford University, which has a great impact on achievement in the classroom. An extremely important finding of Dweck's long research into Mindset is that the particular mindset a person has is not necessarily permanent. Mindsets can be changed. Note that her work shows that they can change in either direction Carol Dweck (2006). So teachers should go hand in hand to foster a growth mindset in learners for learning English language and thereby creating a positive attitude among them.

## REFERENCES

- Aronson, J., Fried, C. B., & Good, C. (2002). Reducing the effects of stereotype threat on African American college students by shaping theories of intelligence. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 113–125.
- Blackwell, L., Trzesniewski, K., & Dweck, C. S. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and intervention. *Child Development*, 78, 246–263
- Brooks, Robert. (2005). The Educator's Mindset: The Basis for Touching a Student's Mind and Heart. (Online article) Available:  
<http://www.drrobertbrooks.com/writings/articles/0509.html>
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.
- Good, C., Aronson, J., & Inzlicht, M. (2003). Improving adolescents' standardized test performance: An intervention to reduce the effects of stereotype threat. *Applied Developmental Psychology*, 24, 645–662.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Noora Abdul Kader** is presently pursuing Ph.D. in Education from the Department of Education, University of Calicut, Kerala. Noora is specialized in the area of teaching and learning of English grammar. Her area of interest includes English language teaching, Linguistics, Research methodology and Educational Statistics. She has attended several seminars and published research papers in many reputed journals. She holds a BA and MA in English from the University of Calicut. She has the credit of organizing seminars in Research methodology and Educational statistics.