

## **Language Aptitude, Attitudes and English Proficiency of Students Beginning English in Different Grades**

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### **ABSTRACT**

#### **Objective**

This research is descriptive aiming at comparing the students who started learning English in Grades 1, 3 and 5 to find out whether there are differences in the following aspects :

1. their language aptitude
2. their attitudes towards learning English, towards the native speakers of English and their motivation for learning English
3. their English proficiency

#### **Procedure**

The stratified random sampling method was used with population Matayoms 1, 3 and 5. The schools were selected using the school standards criteria developed by the Office of Private Education Commission and the schools' M.S. 5 students English achievement test scores given by the Ministry of Education in the academic year B.E. 2521. The sample consisted of 1216 school students. The university sample group were 387 first-year Chulalongkorn University students who had been randomly selected at 10 percent ratio from the population of first-year students in all faculties. The data collection consisted of 3 steps : (1) questionnaires concerning students' background variables were administered to the target population for selection of those beginning English in different grades but with comparable backgrounds, (2) questionnaires concerning students' attitudes towards learning English, towards native speakers of English and their motivation for learning English were administered to the subjects, and (3) language aptitude and English proficiency tests were given. The findings could be concluded as follows :

### **1. Language Aptitude**

Generally, those beginning English in Grade 3 had the highest aptitude scores. Those beginning English in Grades 5 and 1 came in second and third respectively.

### **2. Attitudes towards Learning English, towards the Native Speakers of English and Motivation for Learning English**

It could be concluded that on the whole students beginning English in Grade 5 had the best attitudes and the strongest motivation. Those beginning English in Grades 3 and 1 fluctuated in ranking second and third.

### **3. English Proficiency**

On average those beginning English in Grade 3 had the highest proficiency. Those beginning English in Grades 5 and 1 had about the same level of proficiency.

### **Recommendations**

1. A longitudinal study conducted on the subjects beginning English in different grades should be carried out to find out whether they differ in their achievement in English learning, their attitudes and motivation, when they reach different levels of education.

2. Since language aptitude was proven to have a very strong relationship with English proficiency, a comparative study of students having high, medium and low language aptitude should be carried out to find out whether the three groups differ in their short-range and long-range achievement in learning English.

3. An experimental study with all independent variables controlled should be carried out in addition to a descriptive study like the present one.

4. Another study of the same nature as this one should be carried out with the population outside Metropolitan Bangkok to find out whether the findings will be similar as the ones conducted on the population in Bangkok.