

## **How is The Attitude towards English? Indonesian Vocational High School Students' Experiences**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Language attitude takes a pivotal role in their language learning practice. This research aims to investigate the students' attitude toward English as supporting language at vocational high school context and describe the impacts of the attitude toward English. The data was collected through observation, questionnaire and open-minded interviews. Six 12th grade students participated in this research. The analysis was carried out through data reduction, display and verification. The findings revealed that the students believed in their future carrier they need English. as tools to compete in work field later. The conclusion is students's attitude towards English for supporting language in studying at vocational high school is positif in each component of attitude. Beside that, the impact of students' attitude towards English for vocational high school are lack of serious and have a problem in self-confidence. It could be seen during the learning process some students face difficulties in learning English and they are also feel nervous and afraid to make mistakes when they were asked by the teacher to speak. This research is expect to help the researcher and able to useful in developing the next research from the other aspect towards English.

**Key words:** Students' Attitude; English; Vocational High School

### **INTRODUCTION**

Vocational high school students currently have challenges to be proficient not only for work skill but also the language skill which support their future carrier. To be well-skill in language, especially English they need to own good language attitude on it. Therefore, their language should enable them build to the language attitudes (Starks & Paltridge, 1994). It cannot be denied that English communication proficiency is an evitable for them. Accordingly, in English communication, the critical thing that must be highlighted is attitude because it can affect the perception or response.

Students think that English is important for them to master because English proficiency is one of the requirements to apply for a job in many technology-supported companies. Vocational high school students need more English than other international languages because English is known as most international worker used to globally interaction. Learning English for a specific purpose plays an important role in the success of workers in their workplace. The type of language used by each worker is influenced by his working environment and his professional goals and constraints, as well as his specialization and the type of tasks assigned to him.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Previous Related Study**

To create workplace English communication goes well, the workers need to build language attitude. Attitude needs to considered as an important factor in learning a language in particular English. This study explores the attitudes of vocational high school students towards learning English, considering the three aspects of attitude such as cognitive, affective, and behavioral. (Weinburgh, 1998).

Students with positive attitudes probably are happy towards learning and actively engage in learning. Those whose negative one may feel anxious in learning; they would get burdened, bored easily and difficult to enjoy their learning. This suggests that the negative attitude leads to lack of learning success. (Padwick, 2010).

Many students still feel uncomfortable and worry about the use of languages in practice, such as presentations and conversations. This indicates that students have problems with their attitudes in class. Body language, words (formal or informal), intonation, body language, and characters are considered in communication. So that the researcher takes the attitude of students towards English for vocational high school as an object of study. This study would contribute to the pedagogic aspects such as teaching strategies and material design development, particularly in the vocational English context.

Previous research has shown positive and negative impacts of attitudes on learning a second language. This study aims to fill the gap in studying the attitudes of vocational high school students. Students' attitude results in better proficiency in the target language, as well as their positive attitude towards learning. Student's attitude toward language learning is one of the leading predictors of success in learning English. So that, the teachers and educators should take attitude factors into consideration when designing English language training and instruction. Attitude towards English has three aspects namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral (Baker, 1992). The cognitive element refers to a person's values, thoughts, and beliefs towards a language (Matsuda, 2000). The affective aspect is based on the feelings and emotions of a person towards a language. Rajecki (1982) states that affective component is essentially the evaluation element in an attitude,

based on which attitude holder judges the objects to be good or bad. The behavioral aspect refers to behaviorally intended acts towards a language (Baker, 1992; Mastuda, 2000). Some people may have a more vital cognitive attitude towards a language than an affective or behavioral attitude.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Samples**

This research uses qualitative case study as a research design by involving six students of vocational high school in Indonesia.

The researchers use data collection technique by Hood (2009) which consists of interview, observation and questionnaire. The interview was chosen to facilitate the researcher in the data collecting process. All data were collected through online method, considering the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic. Questionnaire also needed to collect the data through online while joining the virtual class. To strengthen the data, an observation was carried out through online.

### **Instrument and Procedure**

The research instrument used were open-minded interview, observation and questionnaire, due to situations and conditions that do not allow direct physical contact, the researcher used online way as data collection. Furthermore, the researcher conducted open-minded interview, observation and questionnaire which included in a form of qualitative data collection methods, with the students by asking them through Zoom platform. Open-minded questions have advantages which students are able to answer the questions freely. Several questions in the interview were used to find out how vocational high school students' attitude towards English.

### **Data Analysis**

The last stage, the researcher analyzed the data by using Miles and Huberman (2014) model technique. The researcher analysed the obtained data from observations, interviews and questionnaire given to students of vocational high school using descriptive analysis. There were three steps in analyzing the data such as data reduction, data display and verification. In data reduction, the data taken from the result of the interview and observation. The researcher simplified, classified and discarded the data that was not needed. It was selected to get meaningful information and easy for researcher to make conclusions. The researcher only selected data that were relevant to the topic. The result of interview is in the form of sound and the result of observation is in the form of table. While data display is collecting the information that has been compiled from the observation and interview, the researcher made a table and described the data from the results of data reduction. The last is verification, the researcher is doing percentage of data by calculating

the number of indicators for each component to determine the percentage of positive or negative student attitudes.

## RESULT AND DISUSSION

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) described the concept of attitude in three components, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Each component had two points that become the focus of positive and negative. A student had a positive attitude if he/she had a tendency of good attitude or in accordance with the criteria and the other way, students had a negative attitude if it has a tendency of attitude that was not good.

Based on the research, regarded from the students' cognitive, students tended to had positive belief towards English for supporting language in studying at vocational high school. They believed that English able to help them for their future. The result of questionnaire was in positive students' attitude were 66,6 % who believes that English was supporting language in studying at vocational high school and for negative attitude was 33.3 %. It was also in line with the result of the interview.

[Actually, English was very useful especially for me who went to vocational school, the reason was that I will enter the work environment and English was a language skill that many companies were looking for. We also sometimes found English vocabulary in learning at school which used computers and the language used was English.] (P1)

Based on the excerpt above from the participant who state that English language was support them in studying at vocational high school. It means students showed positive attitude toward English.

In affective, based on the result of questionnaire was obtain that 66.6 % students tended to had positive attitude and 33.3 % students who had negative attitude. It means that most of students had feeling like in studying English, they did the task well, active and full of attention in studying. It was also in line with the result of the interview.

[I like to do the assignments given by the teacher when learning has complete, I also sometimes did it with my friends because it makes it easier and helps each other. I was also active and like to pay attention to the teacher when explaining material through Zoom meetings.] (P2)

The second participant said that she always did the task from her teacher with her friends if any troubles and she always active in learning process also pay attention to her teacher while the teacher was teaching. In a summary, most students had feeling like in following the class actively.

The last components were behavioural, it was obtain that the result questionnaire students had 83.3 % for a good responsible, they did their task by themselves and 16.6 % students had a problem in their responsible. Students had 100% for a good discipline, they followed the learning process well and complete the task on time to the teacher. Beside that, 66.6 % of students had a good self-confidence during learning process in a classroom and 33.3 % of students had problem in self-confidence and 83.3 % students tended to have a good courtesy during learning process. Students showed mutual respect, courteousness and behavior. There were

16.6 % students who had problem in courtesy. In a summary, courtesy is not a big problem for students.

The researcher found some impact face by students toward English for vocational high school. Some of students had negative side about English language, it was found two impacts of students' attitude toward English for vocational high school such as lack of serious and students' confidence.

First, one of six students did not take serious during learning process with their teacher. The result of questionnaire showed 33.3% students did not take serious. She thought that English was so hard to learn because she had trouble in pronouncing the words before memorizing it. It was strengthen by participants' answer below.

[English was difficult to pronounce, I did not have a lot of vocabulary either.

That was the reason why I was not too serious about learning English but in class I adjust it, even though I was not too serious but always did my assignments on time.] (P3)

According to statements above, there was a student whose trouble in learning English. She faced a trouble in pronouncing the vocabulary and memorizing it. The researcher proves it by observing her for 1 month in class, she was lack of seriousness and think that English was not too important to learn and also fear if she made mistakes.

Second, two participants were confident during learning English in class. Based on the result of questionnaire that 66.6% had a good confidence and 33.3% students had not good enough confidence. It caused they were feeling nervous, pessimism and fear made mistakes. The following vignette indicates it:

[When I spoke English, I did not feel confident because I think that I made mispronounced it, sometimes I was embarrassed because I often made mistakes and I did not know a lot of vocabulary in English.] (P6)

[I was shy and nervous when I asked by the teacher to speak English in front of the class, I also did not know a lot of vocabulary in English so it was hard to speak. In addition, I always made mistakes in pronouncing words in English.] (P3)

There were two students who had problem in self-confidence because they felt nervous and fear made mistakes. Even though they were shy and nervous but they accepted some motivation to study hard more from their friends.

The findings showed that students had positive attitudes towards English to support learning in vocational high schools. This was in line with opinion Gardner and Lambert (1972) that positive attitudes toward language enhance proficiency. Most of the students showed a positive attitude although there were some students who showed a negative attitude.

Students showed 66.6% who believes that English is supporting them in studying. Results of this study was in line with research by Kara (2009) that positive attitudes towards language learning affect students' interest in learning languages. The positive attitude of students affects the interest or desire of students in learning a language.

In affective, the students like English as evidenced by doing assignments before the deadline, being active and paying attention to the teacher. This was reinforced by

research of Zulfikar, Dahliana, Sari (2019) which states that English is an interesting lesson and provides many benefits for the future.

In behavioral, participants in the study showed responsibility, discipline, confidence and good manners during the process of learning English. The students show 83.3% for good responsible which means that most participants have good responsibilities to improve their English skills. This was in line with Gardner and Lambert (1972) that positive attitudes towards language surely enhance learners' proficiency.

Participants in this study had a very good discipline attitude, which was 100%, compared to other students. This is influenced by the school system which was similar to that of the military. The results of this study were in line with Alkaf (2013) that the provisions in the class affect students' attitudes.

The researchers found around 66.6% of participants had good self-confidence during the learning process and 33.3% of participants had low self-confidence. It is caused by anxiety or fear of making mistakes. This was supported by the research of Feng and Chen (2009) that students are not able to learn language effectively if they feel anxiety.

Additionally, it was found that the participants had good politeness during the learning process. This has a good impact on the learning process which will make them like the language and the people who speak it. This was relevant to the research conducted by Al-Mamun (2012) that students will like English when they see people who speak English.

Some students think that English was very difficult to learn because they have to memorize vocabulary and it was difficult to pronounce it. This was related to Chamber (1999) asserts that learning occurs more easily, when the learner has a positive attitude towards the language and learning. Difficulties experienced by P3 and P5 are not too serious in learning English. Some students feel nervous and afraid to mispronounce a vocabulary. As Shams (2008) study also explored that most of the participants were confused and nervous when they started speaking English.

### **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATION**

Every student has differences based on the desired character. Therefore, students have advantages and disadvantages in learning such as thinkers and others. As stated by As Shams (2008) stated that the study also explored that most of the participants were confused and nervous when they spoke English or did something different. Based on the attitude component of Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) that there are three aspects such as cognitive, affective and behavioral. These aspects appear in every student but have a positive impact on all students towards a positive attitude. This aspect is useful for teachers to know the language attitudes of students in learning English.

## CONCLUSION

It could be concluded from each component that students' cognitive of the total 6 students having percentage 66.6% for positive belief and 33.3% for negative belief. In affective component, there were only two indicators that were feeling like (positive) and feeling dislike (negative) with percentage feeling like 66.6% and 33.3% students feeling dislike. In behavioral component there were four indicators had a percentage 83.3% positive with details of responsible 83.3% from 5 students, discipline 100% from six students, self-confidence 66.6% from 4 students and courtesy 83.3% from 5 students. In negative had a percentage of 16.6% with details that was responsible 16.6% from 1 student, discipline 0% from 0 students, self-confidence 33.3% from 2 students and courtesy 16.6% from 1 student. The impacts of students' attitude toward English for vocational high school were lack of serious and self-confidence. Some students face difficulties in learning English. They face difficulties in pronouncing vocabulary and memorizing it. they were less serious and think English was not too important to be studied further and also, they face the fear if they make a mistake. Some students also have self-confidence problems because they feel nervous and afraid to make mistakes when they were asked by the teacher to speak. Even though they were shy and nervous but they receive some motivation to study harder from their friends.

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