

**EFL STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING**

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SUBMISSION TRACK	A B S T R A C T
Submitted : 31 December 2022 Accepted : 21 February 2023 Published : 18 March 2023	Attitude revealed as a serious issue in foreign language learning. It is a way for someone to behave on a situation, whether like or dislike, good or bad, and positive or negative. This study investigates the EFL students' attitude toward English language learning. This study aims to identify the students' attitude toward English language learning in three aspects; they are behavior, cognitive and affective. A close-ended questionnaire was distributed to 10 students of post-graduate Program of Ahmad Dahlan University. Then, an interview was also conducted with three students as representatives from every aspect of attitude. The results of this qualitative study showed a positive attitude toward English language learning in three aspects; behavioral, cognitive, and affective. Furthermore, the result also showed the influence of attitude toward students' achievement and motivation in English language learning.
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**Introduction**

English is the International language that spoken in many countries as native, second and foreign language. It has official status even in countries where it is not the essential language. Moreover almost every country in the world taught the English language in the schools and colleges. In Indonesia, English is taught and learned as a foreign language in every level of education.

There are several aspects that affect the learning process in foreign language context as well as motivation, attitudes, anxiety, learning achievements, aptitudes, intelligence, age, and personalities. Attitude is considered as an important concept to determine the success or failure in English language learning. Attitude holds the crucial role and also affects the students' achievement in English language learning. A positive attitude towards an object of learning is one of the important factors that determine the student's mastery of learning (Fakeye, 2010). In addition, attitudes also influence student behavior, attitude determines whether students can understand English language lessons or not. As said that attitudes toward learning will influence learning behavior (Weinburgh, 1998). Therefore, it is very important to know the attitudes of students towards English lessons, so that the teacher gets a reference in preparing appropriate method to be used in further learning.

Since attitude is considered as an essential factor that influence the language performance, therefore the researcher conduct this study. the objective of this study is toinvestigate students' attitudes toward English language learning (taking the three aspects of attitude i.e, cognitive, affective and behavioral). The researcher will dig as many informations from students of Postgraduate of English Language Program of Universitas Ahmad Dahlan.

Attitudes is an impact of impression of the surrounding environment and deciding how to respond to such substances of the world (Jabeen and Shah, 2011). The term attitude was depicted by Likert as a derivation which is made dependent on a complex of convictions about the disposition object. A substitute significance of frames

of mind as an aura to react positively or horribly to an item, individual, organization, or occasion (Ajzan, 1988).

A Research stated that attitude is constrained by the individual's feelings about outcomes or properties of playing out the direct (social feelings), weighted by assessments of those outcome or characteristics (Montano and Kasprzyk, 2008). Thusly, an individual who holds solid convictions that decidedly esteemed will have an inspirational frame of mind toward the conduct. Conversely, a person who holds strong beliefs that negatively valued will have a negative attitude.

Gardner (1985) points out that attitude is an evaluative response to some referent or attitude object, surmised based on the person's convictions or assessments about the referent. Attitude is linked to an individual's qualities and convictions and advances or disheartens the decisions made in all domains of action, regardless of academic or informal. Gardner's argument led Wenden (1991) to present a comprehensive definition of the attitude concept. He classified the term attitude into three interrelated parts to be explicit; affective, behavioral and cognitive.

Starks & Paltridge (1996) stated that attitudes may affect the language learning process. As indicated by the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1992), attitudes are defined as perspective in which speakers from different culture speak or interact with their own dialect or own language. Furthermore, Karahan (2007) states that positive language attitudes may also bring positive orientation for students' learning. Moreover, Dornyei and Csizer (2002) said that positive attitude facilitates foreign language learning and negative attitude acts as a psychological barrier against it. Thus, we can say that attitudes is a detrimental factor for students' successful or failure in their learning.

There are three aspects based on the theoretical approaches of behaviorism, cognitivism, and humanism respectively. They are classified into the interrelated aspects: affective, behavioral, and cognitive

The affective aspect relates to individual's feelings and emotions toward an object. The learning process is an emotional and it is affected by different emotional factors (Choy & Saleh, 2006; Harn, 2015; and Liu 2016). Attitude reflect students' feeling on something, whether they like or dislike the objects or the surrounding environment. Besides, Choy and Salah (2006) stated that the inner feelings and emotions of foreign language learners can influence students' perspectives toward the target language.

The behavioral aspect deals with the style in which individual behaves and reacts in a particular situations. In other words, behavioral refers to the tendency to adopt another learning behaviors (Abidin et al., 2012). According to Kara (2009), good attitude may lead students to perform better in the learning process. If learners possess positive attitudes in the language learning process, they will focus on the learning, so they can acquire information as many as possible and engage themselves emotionally.

The cognitive component involves the beliefs, thoughts or perceptions about the object of the attitude (Abidin et al., 2012). In the language learning process, this aspect of attitude includes the beliefs of the language learners about the knowledge that they have received and understand. The cognitive attitude can be classified into four steps of a) connecting the background knowledge with the new one, b) creating new knowledge, c) checking new knowledge, and d) applying the new knowledge in many situations.

Finally, these three attitudinal aspects are called the ABC model of attitudes (McLeod, 2009), which consists of what we feel, what we do, and what we think about someone or something. For example, "I'm scared of my English teacher," "I'll avoid

speaking English to him,” and “I think he is too strict.” Johnston (2014) states that feelings, behaviors, and thoughts are all related, but the last two are easier to change than the first one. This is because we have more control over what we think and what we do.

Several studies have been carried out to indicate students' attitudes towards English language learning in general and EFL in particular. For example, Shams (2008) conducted a study of student attitudes, motivations, and anxieties about learning English. He found that students possess good attitude and enthusiasm in learning English. The students also practice English frequently in their daily lives. Then, A study by Momani (2009), here researched on students' attitudes in learning English as a foreign language and their achievements in reading comprehension. The results revealed that students have a positive attitude towards learning English and it has a strong correlation with the reading ability. Furthermore, Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) examined about students' motivation and attitudes in learning English. The results showed that students possess a positive attitude towards the use of English in the Yemeni social and educational context. They also showed an affirmative attitude toward English language learning.

### **Research Method**

This research was conducted to reveal students' attitude toward English language learning. The attitude needs to be presented comprehensively in order to get a deep explanation of the real condition. For this reason, the researcher applied a qualitative study as the research design. Through the study, the researcher can identify an event in deep, not just its surface picture. This method aims to understand students' attitude about an object and how students behave on the object.

According to Litosseliti (2010), qualitative research is concerned with structure and patterns, and how something is Happened. The qualitative method investigates not just about what, where and when, but it is also about why and how the event in done. The partisipants of this study were 10 students of second semester of Post-graduate students of English Education Program at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta. They are 22 to 27 years old and are non-native speakers.

In this study the researcher used a detailed 1-paged close-ended questionnaire and open-ended interview to collect the data. A close-ended question is a questionnaire which can be answered by a simple answer 'yes' or 'no'. The questionnaire was prepared by the researcher by adapting ideas from the instrument of previous studies, but with some modifications based on the objectives of this study. At first, the researcher distributed 10 close-ended questionnaires consisting of 30 items to investigate students' attitude toward English language learning to 10 students. The researcher used close-ended questions because it helped the researcher to know exactly how students' feeling about English language learning. It divided into 3 aspects of attitude. After getting the result of the questionnaire, the researcher did the interview with 3 students as the representative from every aspect of the attitude. The researcher choose them based on their high positive attitude toward English language learning in every aspect. Then, an open-ended interview is used to know studnets' feeling and thought in deep.

In analyzing the data, the researcher had several data analysis techniques such as:

- Reading all responses of the questionnaire from all students
- Classifying the data in every aspect of attitude

- Analyzing the data to get the representative participants
- Interview the representative participants
- Elaborating all data to get the findings of the study
- Discussing all findings to get the conclusion of the study.

## Findings and Discussion

### Findings

#### The Findings from Questionnaires

After the researcher distributed the close-ended questionnaires, the researcher got the result that mostly students gave good responds toward English language learning. The findings from the questionnaires are presented below under the following categories:

#### *The affective aspects of students' attitude toward English language learning.*

Students' attitude toward English language learning are demonstrated in Table 1.

No	Statements	Respondents	
		YES	NO
	Affective Attitude Aspect		
1	I did not feel nervous when the teacher asked me questions in class	1	9
2	Learning English is fun	10	0
3	Learning English for me is a pride	10	0
4	Learning English makes me more confident	10	0
5	I am interested in learning English	10	0
6	One of my important goal in my life is knowing English	10	0
7	I always cannot wait for English lessons	7	3
8	Learning English makes me have a good mood	10	0
9	I prefer learning my mother tongue rather than learning a foreign language	0	10
10	Honestly, I am not interested in learning English	2	8

Based on table 1. the researcher found that students' learning attitudes is affected by English language. Most of them stated that English is fun and bring positive effect in the learning process. Even there are also some students who do not really exited with English language.

#### *Behavioral aspects of students' attitude toward English language learning.*

Students' behavioral attitudes toward English language learning is demonstrated in table 2.

No	Statements	Respondents	
		YES	NO
	Behavioral Attitude Aspect		
11	I like practicing English like a native speaker does	10	0
12	I have more good friends after learning English	10	0

13	I like to speak in English in the class	10	0
14	By learning English my personality gets better	10	0
15	I am worry too much if I use English in a public space	7	3
16	I often procrastinate to do English homework	4	6
17	I was very nervous if I had to speak English in class	3	7
18	I feel ashamed to speak English in front of the class	2	8
19	I never asked for homework or additional assignments to the teacher if I was not present in class	3	7
20	When English was taught, I was not eager to attend in the class	0	10

The table 2. shows students' attitude toward English language learning. All statements enlivened students' recognition and impression about English language learning. Table 2 indicates that students are more exited when English come. As such, it can be obviously said that students' behavioral attitudes towards English language is positive.

***The cognitive aspect of students' attitude toward English language learning.***

The participants' responses toward English language learning in cognitive aspect is demonstrated in table 3.

No	Statements	Respondents	
		YES	NO
21	By mastering English, I can easily learn other lessons well	10	0
22	I have more information and comprehension of alternate subjects when learning English	9	1
23	As I would like to think, individuals who talk more than one language are entirely learned	10	0
24	Learning English encourages me to convey in English adequately	10	0
25	Learning English makes me able to create new considerations	6	4
26	English subject has the substance that covers numerous fields of learning	10	0
27	Honestly, I consider English just to pass the exams	0	10
28	I cannot have any significant bearing the information from English subject in my reality	1	9
29	I am not happy with my execution in the English subject	5	5
30	As I would see it, English language is troublesome and entangled to be learnt	1	9

Based on table 3. we can see that all statements above are obtained students' viewpoint on status and significance of English language. Table 3. showed that students percieve that the status and significance of English in this globalization era is somehow important for their future. The questionnaire indicated that many respondents reveal positive cognitive attitude toward English language learning.

The general results of the questionnaire reveal that students possess high positive attitude rather than negative attitude in English language learning. Every student own the positive attitude in learning English. They learn English because it is important for their life and future. Thus, if students have high positive attitude toward English language learning, they will have high motivation to learn English too. The attitude is a mirror for students, it shows who they really are.

### **Findings from Interviews**

In this study, the researcher used interview to know students' attitude in-deep based on every aspect that have been possess in the questionnaire. The researcher did the interview by phone calling to the three representative from every aspect of attitude.

#### **Respondent 1 (Affective aspect)**

Respondent 1 has a positive affective aspect toward learning English. She loves English very much since elementary school. She is very happy when English become a subject in the class.

*".....I feel happy. I know that English is precious. I really enjoy when learning English....."*

It is accordance with Krech, et al (1962) opinions about the components of students' feeling for the affective aspect of attitude. they stated that feeling component of this attitude alludes to the feelings associated with the object. The object is felt to be pleasing or dissappointing. It is like or disliked. It is an enthusiastic stacking, which gives attitudes their obstinate, stirred up, persuading character. The affective domain is the enthusiastic side of human, and if may be compared to the cognitive sates or feelings includes a variety of identity factors.

Respondent 1 agree that English student is impressive. She likes English regardless of the benefits she gets. The researchers concluded that she is a pioneer and encouragement in learning English.

*"..... I am not getting anxious when teacher asking me to do the presentation in front of the class by using English. I totally really proud to learn English language in my life....."*

The positive affective attitude toward English language learning has motivated the respondent 1 to improve her performance in mastering the subject. She always eager in English language learning, despite many challenges that have to face by her.

#### **Respondent 2 (Behavioral aspect)**

Respondent 2 has positive behavior aspect toward English language learning. She is very fond of English from elementary school, since he listened to western songs, like Westlife band. She also revealed the benefits of learning English, like she can establish communication with people outside the country.

*".....When hearing everything about English I am happy. I like English very much because by learning the English I got many advantages like having a good relationship with another person, especially people that their formal language is English....."*

Then she also attended the course to get fluency in the English as native speakers. She always excited about learning English although there are some challenges

to be faced, such as her friend in class who hesitates to speak English because not confident.

*“.....I never get bored in learning English, Sometimes I want to speak English in the class with my classmates, but they do not want because They are not confident.....”*

She has a strong determination to master English. If she makes mistakes in English, she will not resign and assume this is a lesson for her. Students who have a positive attitude towards English will increase their understanding of the language and will always try to understand the lesson well and quickly. The students are also more passionate about achieving her goals in the future.

### **Respondent 3 (Cognitive aspect)**

Respondent 3 identified that he has a positive cognitive aspect of learning English. He learned English from 12 years ago, he expresses that English has an important role in all aspects of life. By learning English, he can learn other knowledge suchlike science and technology.

*“..... I know that English will help me in mastering the other lessons because the most subject (science and technology) are mostly using English as the language in explaining. My opinion is learning English makes me able to create a new world.....”*

He also admired people who are able to discuss English well. He applied English everyday, such as when playing games and chatting with his friends. He expressed that learning English is not a difficult thing, especially nowadays we have many applications that support learning English.

*“.....I really admire the people who are fluent in English, they are cool and I really want to be like them.....”*

By having a positive cognitive attitude, students will find any way in mastering English language. The students will learn and practice English frequently to

### **Discussion**

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that students have a high positive attitude toward English language learning. The researcher found that students' attitudes is influenced by some aspects like affective, cognitive and behavioral aspects. The highest result revealed on the affective aspect because students enjoy the English learning. They realize that English is very important for their education. This similar to the study of Maio and Haddock (2010) which showed that students possess good attitude towards English. Surprisingly, the results of this study contradict to the results of Abidin's (2012) which examined the behavior, cognitive, and emotional as the factors that influence students' attitude in learning English. In his study, Abidin (2012) found that students possess a negative attitude in those three aspects.

Students' affective attitude toward English language learning is the highest positive responds from the finding of questionnaire. The students have good emotions/feelings, pride, and confidence in learning English. The researcher concluded that the respondents really love and enjoy English language learning process. They are

enthusias in listening English language. In line with this, a study conducted by Shams (2008) which investigated students' attitudes, motivations, and anxieties toward learning English also found that students have good attitude and high enthusiasm in learning English.

The questionnaire and interview results of students' behavioral attitude toward English language learning also revealed as a positive one. Students have a high commitment and confidence in learning English. As one participant said in the interview, the researcher inferred that student extremely like English and felt numerous points of interest through acing English. This finding was supported by Kara (2009) who stated that positive attitudes can make positive behaviors towards learning, which makes students explore the lessons and make them want to learn more about it. Students showed more enthusiasm for completing assignments and eager to practice the lessons in everyday life.

Students' cognitive attitude toward English language learning, based on questionnaire and interview results is positive. The most of the respondents opined that they appreciate English language learning for passing their exams as well as for expanding their selves-information. Interestingly, all respondents concur that more learning and comprehension are conceivable with learning English, for example, Science and Technology. As indicated by the respondent 3 said in regards to his attitude toward the cognitive aspect, the researcher affirmed that he cherishes English due to his need. He understood the significance in English language learning in this contemporary time.

Finally, the researcher concludes that most of students possess a positive attitude toward English language learning. They realize that English will help them in education and it will help them to reach the better future as English is used in many fields of life in the world.

### **Conclusion**

This research was done to know students' attitudes towards English language learning. The findings revealed that students' possess positive attitudes on affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects. The positive attitude can be seen from students' responses to questionnaires and interviews conducted by researchers. The attitude of students is a reflection of their beliefs or opinions about learning English. this recent study revealed that students really like English and always try to improve their achievement in mastering English.

Furthermore, the researcher concludes that students' attitudes will greatly influenced their level of achievement in language learning process. Only the students who have a high positive attitude that will reach English mastery. Besides, student motivation in learning English is also influenced by students' attitudes. The more positive attitude that students have, the higher motivation that students will have to learn English. Miftahul Jannah (2022) also in her research stated that it is possible to establish that one of the factors that influence how well students learn English as a second/foreign language is motivation

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