

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ATTITUDES OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
STUDENTS TOWARDS THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of students in the English Department towards the English language, using a quantitative research method. The study included students from the 2017, 2018, and 2019 academic years at UKI Toraja, and data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires consisting of 12 statements. The data collected was analyzed using a Liker scale, which measured attitudes on a scale of 1 to 5. The findings of this study revealed two main categories of language attitudes among students: positive and negative. Of the 25 respondents who completed the questionnaire, the majority held a positive attitude towards English. They recognized the importance of English in the global era, took pride in learning the language, and enjoyed using it. In light of these results, it is recommended that further research be conducted to explore the attitudes of students in the English Department towards the English language in greater depth.

Keywords: *Investigation, Attitude, English Language*

INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency is increasingly important in today's globalized world. As a result, many universities in non-English speaking countries have established English language departments to provide students with the opportunity to learn and improve their English skills (Powers, 2010), (Shi et al., 2009). However, despite the importance of English language proficiency, some students in these departments may struggle to develop positive attitudes towards the language, which can hinder their language learning and acquisition.

In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language and is taught to students from elementary school to university level. English language proficiency is particularly important for students in the English Department, as they are expected to have a high level of proficiency in the language. However, some students in the English Department may not have positive attitudes towards English, which can affect their motivation and ability to learn the language effectively.

Language attitude refers to an individual's mental position or feeling towards their own language or the language of others. The formation of language attitudes is similar to the formation of attitudes in general and is influenced by psychological factors. According to Chaer and Agustina (2010:149), language can be learned through behavioral requests or learned behavior. When someone has a positive attitude towards learning a language, it is likely to be reflected in their actions and result in a successful outcome. Conversely, a negative attitude towards language learning is likely to lead to negative actions and poor results.

In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language and is taught to students from elementary school to university as it is recognized as a lingua franca in the era of globalization (Lee McKay, 2003), (Shohamy, 2003). However, many students lack the

confidence and courage to learn English (Sampelolo et al., 2021). Some are even embarrassed to speak English to their peers, despite being English Department students (Golshan & Tafazoli, 2014).

The issue the writer has identified is that some students are confused about their attitudes towards English, and there is a discrepancy between their thoughts and actions. They rarely practice the four language skills - speaking, listening, reading, and writing - outside of the classroom, and they have limited communication in English with their classmates. The writer has observed that some students even struggle to speak English during English classes, indicating that they may have negative attitudes towards the language they are studying. While they have chosen to study in the English Department, it does not necessarily mean that they have a positive attitude towards English. Some students may only study English to fulfill the program requirements.

Therefore, this research is important as it raises awareness among students about the attitudes of English majors towards English and helps them understand how to approach language learning. It also emphasizes the importance of language attitudes in shaping one's thoughts and actions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted at the Indonesian Christian University of Toraja at Campus II, located on Jl. Poros Sa'dan-Tallunglipu in Kakondongan, Kecamatan Tallunglipu, Kabupaten Toraja Utara. Population of this study consisted of 150 students of from class of 2017, 2018 and 2019 at UKI Toraja. Researcher chose students from the English department class who are still active in their studies at UKI Toraja as a sample. The sampling technique used was stratified random sampling. In this research, the researcher chose 6 students from class of 2017, 5 students class of 2018, and 4 students from class of 2019 English Department UKI Toraja. In this quantitative research, the research instrument is a questionnaire. The elements listed in this research questionnaire, namely, the questionnaire used to measure students' language attitudes towards English.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the observation, the result of data obtained through the questionnaire there are some findings the researcher found referring to the language attitude of the English Department students toward English at UKI Toraja. The researcher tried to describe the findings based on the collection of students respond through questionnaire that they answered.

Through a survey conducted by researchers, the results described in the findings chapter are obtained. The results showed that from table 4.12 the most positive statements of the respondents of 43.33% strongly agree, 33.77% agree, 8% doubt, 0.44% disagree and 0% strongly disagree. In contrast, the results from table 4.13 show that most respondents strongly agree with 0%, agree 0.44%, 20% doubt, disagree 30.22% and strongly disagree 27.77%. It is clear that the percentages of both positive and negative statements have different percentage results. Based on the results of these percentages, most respondents have a positive attitude towards English.

This study has similarities in the results of research ((Alotaibi, 2020) which states that a positive attitude towards respondents attitudes and awareness of the

importance of English, this cannot be the only reason that determines students' ability to speak English. This positive attitude will indeed shape their interest in learning languages. (Muhammad Tangke, 2022) argues that a positive attitude towards language learning affects students' interest in language learning.

The theory from the results of this study is supported by using theory which states that positive and negative language attitudes can be identified through the following indicators:

- 1) Indicators of positive language attitudes are as follows.
 - a) Students are proud to use English.
 - b) Students like to use English.
 - c) Students believe that English can exist in the era of globalization.
 - d) Students prefer to use English in learning English.
- 2) Indicators of negative language attitudes, namely as follows.
 - a) Students are not proud to use English.
 - b) Students do not like to use English.
 - c) Students are not sure that English can exist in the era of globalization.
 - d) Students do not like to use English in learning English.

The results of the study have similarities from the results of the research (Setyo Wati, 2018) entitled "Language attitude of Indonesian undergraduate students towards English at English Education Department". A positive attitude was seen in some respondent's cognitive attitude. They claim a neutral stance to it, although they studied English at the Department of English Education for their bachelor's degree. That means they learn English not only to get a bachelor's degree, but they also strongly believe that they can create new ideas by studying English. In addition, they think that they can become more knowledgeable by learning English. They do not agree that learning English is a waste of time because they believe that playing English plays an important role in their life. They agree on that being good at English can help them learn other people's subjects. They also believe that learning English important for their future career. The language's prestigious status may be the reason they think they should learn English.

Al Mamun et al. (2012) conducted a study to investigate students' attitudes towards English in the Life Sciences of Khulna University Bangladesh. This study applies a five-point Likert scale questionnaire survey. They found that the respondents had a positive attitude towards English. Respondents reported that they recognized the global status and importance of English. They also argue that English should be a medium for tertiary studies, and they need English to succeed in higher education. This means that respondents are instrumentally motivated towards English

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and the discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher finally extended the conclusion that the students' language attitude are falling in to agree category (positive attitude) because the index percentage is 82% it means that language attitude of the English Department students toward English is positive.

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