

THE ROLE OF ATTITUDE TO LANGUAGE LEARNING IN READING COMPREHENSION

Slamet Riyanto, Ag. Bambang Setiyadi, Budi Kadaryanto
zynere@gmail.com

Abstrak. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui korelasi antara sikap siswa terhadap pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dan pemahaman membaca mereka. Desain *ex post facto* dipakai dalam penelitian ini. Sampel dipilih dengan *random sampling* dan terdiri dari 32 siswa kelas XI MIA 3 SMAN 1 Sumberejo. Data diperoleh dengan cara menyebarkan kuesioner dan melaksanakan tes pemahaman membaca. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, sikap siswa terhadap pembelajaran bahasa berkorelasi dengan pemahaman membaca mereka (r value: 0.638). Analisa korelasi antara sikap terhadap pembelajaran bahasa dan aspek membaca mengungkap bahwa sikap terhadap pembelajaran bahasa berkontribusi paling besar terhadap pemahaman kosa-kata (r value: 0.599). Temuan ini menunjukkan salah satu faktor yang mempengaruhi pemahaman kosa-kata siswa adalah sikap terhadap pembelajaran bahasa. Oleh karena itu, guru perlu mengingat bahwa meningkatkan sikap terhadap pembelajaran bahasa penting untuk memperbaiki kemampuan membaca siswa, terutama pemahaman kosa-kata mereka.

Abstract. The aim of this research was to investigate the correlation between students' attitude towards language learning and their reading comprehension. Ex post facto design was used in the study. The sample selected through random sampling consisted of 32 students of XI MIA 3 SMAN 1 Sumberejo. Data were elicited through distributing questionnaire and administering reading comprehension test. In reliance to the result of the study, the students' attitude to language learning correlated with their reading comprehension (r value: 0.638). The analysis of correlation between attitude to language learning and aspect of reading revealed that attitude to language learning most contributed to understanding vocabulary (r value: 0.599). This finding showed that one of the factors exerting an influence upon learners' understanding vocabulary was their attitude to language learning. Therefore, teacher needs to bear in mind that enhancing attitude to language learning is essential to boost learners' performance in reading comprehension, particularly their understanding vocabulary.

Keywords: *correlation, attitude to language learning, reading comprehension*

INTRODUCTION

Having been widely observed as one of the issues in researches on language learning, attitude which belongs to affective domain can be considered as one of the main determiners which affect the learners' capability in using the language. Gardner (1980: 267) defines attitudes as the sum total of a man's instincts and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, fears, threats, and convictions about any specified topic. From this perspective, attitude pervades not only the aspect of human's cognition but also the affective values towards particular object. Hence, attitude significantly influences what is going to be done as a part of behaviour when someone encounters certain situation.

Baker (1998) in Hosseini and Pourmandnia (2013: 6) states his wide view on attitude, elaborating attitude as dimensional rather than bipolar – they vary in degree of positive or negative. However, in relation to this study, the researcher categorized students' attitude to language learning based on their tendency to have positive or negative attitude. In terms of its influence to students, positive attitude bolsters up the process of learning; the negative one hampers the learning process.

In common, attitude is constructed by some distinguishable aspects. Wenden (1991) divides attitude into three components namely cognitive, affective and behavioural. The first one, cognitive component consists of the beliefs and thoughts about an object, people, behaviour, event, and knowledge. This component seems to affect the learning very much since it relates to one's mind, in this case, perception. The second one, the affective component covers the person's emotions and feeling towards an object. This affects one's preferences

such as to stand for or against, or to like or dislike. The last one, the behavioural aspect deals with an individual's actions or disposition to take up and practice special behaviour(s) when one is in certain situation.

Generally, attitude, in relation to language acquisition, can be divided into three types: attitude towards the language, attitude towards the native speaker of the language, and attitude towards language learning – as the focus in this study. Attitude towards language learning is the conviction, feeling, and response emerged by the language learner to any item, material, situation and even the teacher while the process of learning is occurring.

It is stated that attitude towards language learning plays a crucial role in language learning as it influences learners' success or failure (Zainol, et al., 2012 and Finch, 2008). This notion stands to reason in the sense that if students have positive attitude towards the process of learning a language, they will enjoy more the lesson and, as a result, they can catch up more knowledge and skill of the language. On the other hand, when the students' attitude towards language learning is negative, they will be reluctant and pay less attention during the teaching-learning activity.

Nowadays, in Indonesian educational milieu, however, a number of students still hold negative attitude to language learning. As an empirical data, the researcher found out that most of students at SMA Negeri 1 Sumberejo considered learning English as a complicated activity. Disadvantageously, this phenomenon greatly influenced their achievement. When the researcher administered a reading test to the students, for instance, the result was unsatisfactory; particularly for those who

thought learning English was uneasy and tended not to pay full attention in the class while the lesson was going.

Reading is clearly an important skill for the students to be competent at. Having good reading comprehension will make the English learners possible to extract new knowledge from varied disciplines in numerous literary works as they are rich sources of science. Reading, as one of the receptive skills in learning language, in fact is not simply saying out loud what is written and printed, but it involves the capability to comprehend the text. Thus, here emerges the idea of reading comprehension. Harris et al. (2004: 321) state that reading comprehension is the process of understanding the message the author trying to convey. The writer communicates the ideas in his mind through text and the readers grasp the message the author intends to express.

There are some aspects that a reader must fulfil if he/she wants to really conceive a written work. Nuttall (1985) believes that there are five kinds of reading skill at which the readers need to be completely proficient in order to deeply comprehend a text. Those skills –thus can be called as the aspects of reading– are (a) identifying main idea, (b) identifying details, (c) determining inference, (d) understanding vocabulary, and (e) reference.

In a study conducted by Novianti (2006) on the correlation between students' attitudes in language learning and their achievement implies that attitude towards learning a language has relationship with students' reading comprehension. Although the study only focused on attitudes during the learning, assumingly it can be regarded as a representation that the students' attitude towards language

learning consisting of the cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects has an effect on their reading comprehension.

Referring to the previous elaboration, the researcher aimed to investigate whether there was an effect of learners' attitude to language learning on their reading comprehension. If the correlation between attitude to language learning and reading comprehension is apparently positive, then teacher needs to firstly improve their students' attitude to English language learning if he/she expects the students' reading comprehension to become better.

METHOD

This study was descriptive quantitative. Ex post facto design was applied since it seemed appropriate to investigate the correlation between students' attitude to language learning and their reading comprehension. One class of 32 students was employed as the sample by using random sampling. The data were collected through distributing questionnaire and administering reading comprehension. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items, which was taken from Soleimani and Hanafi (2013), covering 19 positive statements and 11 negative statements. The reading test administered in the research assigned the students to answer 35 questions based on passages within 70 minutes. The passages were formal invitations, personal letters, and procedure texts.

In the effort of finding out the role of attitude towards language learning on the students' reading comprehension, the researcher passed the following steps in analyzing the data. Firstly, the score of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test was tabulated and scored. Secondly, the tabulated data were

analyzed by using *Pearson product-moment* through SPSS 16.0 program. In this research, there were some analyses done by the researcher involving the analysis of (a) the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test, (b) level of difficulty and discrimination power of the reading comprehension test, (c) the effect of attitude towards language learning on students' reading comprehension. Thirdly, the researcher inferred the relationship of attitude to language learning towards students' reading comprehension by referring to the result of the *Pearson product-moment* analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the current research, there were some analyses carried out by the researcher. In the following section, there will be elaborated the results of the study.

Validity and Reliability of Attitude Questionnaire

In reliance to the analysis of validity by using Pearson Product Moment formula, all items in the questionnaire of attitude to language learning were valid (Appendix 3). The r values of the 30 statements were above the r table (0.361). Having been calculated by using Cronbach Alpha formula, the reliability of the questionnaire of attitude to language learning can be considered very high because the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was apparently 0.916 (Appendix 5).

Validity and Reliability of Reading Comprehension Try-out

Analyzing the data by means of Pearson Product Moment formula, the researcher found out that there were 5 invalid items (36, 37, 38, 39, and 40) for their r values were below 0.312 (Appendix 6). 40 items of reading comprehension test was

administered in the try-out session. The reliability of the test calculated by using Split Half method is 0.980 (Appendix 12).

Difficulty Level and Discrimination Power of the Reading Comprehension Try-out Test

The researcher, after analyzing the level of difficulty of the reading comprehension try-out test, found out that there were 9 easy items, 25 average items, and 6 difficult items in this instrument. For the discrimination power of the reading comprehension try-out test, there were 8 good items, 27 satisfactory items, and 5 poor items. The following table presents the distribution of discrimination power of this instrument.

Result of the Questionnaire of the Students' Attitude to Language Learning

Based on the scoring calculation, the highest score of students' attitude to language learning was 127 and the lowest score was 86 (Appendix 12). The researcher classified the students' attitude into 2 categories: positive attitude (those who got score 107-127) and negative attitude (those who obtained score 86-106). In summary, there were 19 students (59%) had positive attitude and 13 students (41%) had negative attitude

Result of Students' Reading Comprehension

The largest students' reading comprehension score was 80; the smallest one was 20. The researcher categorized the scores of reading comprehension test into three categories: high (68-80), moderate (48-67), and low (20-47). In short, the result of students' reading comprehension is that there were 9 students achieved high score

(28%), 8 students achieved moderate score (25%), and 15 students achieved low score (47%)

The Correlation between Students' Attitude to Language Learning and Their Reading Comprehension

The researcher used Pearson Product Moment formula to investigate the correlation between attitude to language learning of the students and their reading comprehension. The following table exhibits the result of correlation analysis through the use of SPSS version 16.0.

Table 1.3 Result of Correlation through the use of SPSS version 16.0

		Correlations	
		Reading Comprehension	Attitude to Language Learning
Reading Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	1	.638**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	32	32
Attitude to Language Learning	Pearson Correlation	.638**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	32	32

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between attitude to language learning and reading comprehension is positive with coefficient correlation 0.638 at significant level 0.01. Besides the correlation analysis, the researcher also did regression analysis to know the coefficient influence between independent and dependent variable and correlation analysis between attitude to language learning and each aspect of reading was also accomplished in the attempt to find out to what reading skill students' attitude to language learning most contributed. The regression analysis and the correlation result between attitude to language learning and aspects of reading can be seen in the following section.

Table 1.4 Result of Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.638 ^a	.407	.388	13.3161

a. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude to Language Learning

In reliance to the table 4.4, the regression value indicates that the coefficient influence of attitude to language learning (variable X) towards reading comprehension (variable Y) is 0.407. It means that the contribution of learners' attitude to language learning on their reading comprehension is 40.7%.

Table 1.5 Result of Correlation Analysis between Attitude to Language Learning and Each Aspect of Reading

Correlations

		Attitude to Language Learning
Identifying Main Idea	Pearson Correlation	.456**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009
	N	32
Identifying Details	Pearson Correlation	.519**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	32
Determining Inference	Pearson Correlation	.408*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020
	N	32
Understanding Vocabulary	Pearson Correlation	.599**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	32
Reference	Pearson Correlation	.471
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007
	N	32

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of students' attitude to language learning, it was found that there were eight students who possessed positive attitude and achieved high score in the reading comprehension test. In the meanwhile, there were 10 students who had negative attitude and got low achievement in the reading test (Appendix 12). Taking into consideration the table 1.3, it is obvious that learners' attitude towards language learning strongly affects the reading comprehension. In relation to the result of the study, the coefficient correlation between students' attitude to language learning and their reading comprehension was 0.683.

According to the results of a study by Latif, Fadzil, Bahroom, Mohammad, and San (2011) to determine the relationships between attitudes, motivation, anxiety and instrumental orientation and English language learning, all these variables were correlated with learners' achievement, with attitude to language learning having a positive impact. In regard with the finding, attitude to language learning is one of the main factors in second language learning that determine students' achievement. This affective domain eventually directs to the success or failure in the study of language including in comprehending text because learner's attitudes towards the learning situation contributes to the way students behave towards their present-ability and further reaching higher level of learning.

Learner's attitudes towards the learning situation in fact can be elicited through their evaluation of the course, the teacher, the materials and/or teaching environment. The relationship between students, the teacher, and the instructional condition considerably influence the students' attitude to language learning.

Therefore, providing convenient, encouraging, and enjoyable atmosphere during the learning is a matter of importance to be taken seriously by the teacher to boost learners to have positive attitude towards English language learning. If the students' attitude towards the learning language has reached an enhancement, learners will find ease to engage themselves with the subject.

Although attitude to language learning correlates significantly with reading comprehension; however, in reality, having positive attitude to language learning is not sufficient in gaining success of learning language. This phenomenon was caused by a variety of factors that has some effect on students' reading comprehension besides attitude to language learning. Those factors can be classified into internal and external factor. Internal factor refers to innermost or personal factor because it is concerned with the learner himself. Intelligence and personality are some of that factor.

On the contrary, the external factor deals with the environmental situation outside the person, for example: the reading material and the English teacher him/herself. Furthermore, interaction at school and home as well as in society and wider social context might reform learners' attitude to language learning and their engagement in scholarly communities can advocate learners to enhance their contact and interest to reading. Students who have a rich exposure to literacy experiences are more likely to success (Snow, 2002: 8).

According to the table value of regression (table 1.4), the coefficient influence value of independent towards dependent variable is 0.407. According to Ellis (2008: 287), learner's attitude to language learning has an impact on the level of

second language success achieved by individual learners and is itself influenced by this success. By considering the result of regression analysis, the result of correlation analysis which exhibits the high correlation between students' attitude to language learning and reading comprehension, and that theory, the researcher assumed that there is cause-and-effect relationship between attitude to language learning and reading comprehension. Though Ellis idea does not clearly affirm that attitude to language learning is cause-and-effect-related with reading comprehension, but reading comprehension factually belongs to one indicators of students' success in language mastery. So, it can be inferred that attitude to language learning has cause-and-effect relationship with reading comprehension.

Referring to the result of correlation analysis between learners' attitude to language learning and aspects of reading revealing that attitude to language learning had the highest correlation with learners' ability in recognizing the meaning of English words, it can be taken into account that learners' attitude to language learning influence their understanding vocabulary, yet not very strongly. According to Soleimani and Hanafi (2013), attitude to language learning affects the ability to master the language. By fact, one of the indicators that someone is successfully proficient in a language is his level of vocabulary knowledge. The deficiency of vocabulary will result in limited capability in the receptive and productive skills of language. In short, the more English words and their meanings one can keep in mind and can actively recall, the greater possibility of being able to understand vocabulary while he is reading he will possess.

The correlation result between attitude to language learning and students' understanding vocabulary also implies that one of the ways the English teacher can bring about to improve students' understanding vocabulary is by advocating those learners to have more positive attitude to learning English. A student with positive attitude to language learning is more possibly to yield more attempts to learn English words as Liuolienė and Metiūnienė (2006) believe that positive attitude towards the learning situation will likely produce greater enjoyment in the study of the language, desire to learn the language, and effort expended in learning the language.

In addition to attitude to language learning, however, it is absolutely noteworthy that students' understanding vocabulary is also predisposed by other causes, for instance, intelligence, interest, vocabulary mastery, and reading material. Nonetheless, it is necessary to take into account that the effect of attitude to language learning on students' understanding vocabulary is indubitable by correlation.

In summary, stimulating students to have more positive attitude towards language learning is of great significance in foreign language learning. In addition to improving learners' knowledge and skills, teacher should as well be able to arouse their students' attitude to language learning by giving awareness about the positive value they can take after learning English and by presenting comfortable and more enjoyable learning activities that can increase learners' involvement in learning so that they can altogether reach the goals of learning as the existing curriculum demands.

CONCLUSION

Considering the result of correlation analysis showing that learners' attitude to language learning significantly correlates with their reading comprehension achievement and understanding vocabulary, it can be inferred that students' attitude to language learning has a role in their reading comprehension capability, particularly in the skill of making sense of English words. Hopefully, teachers enhance their ability to present enjoyable learning activities and to give more awareness about the positive outcomes from English learning so that the students' attitude to language learning can be more positive. Every student should also try to arouse their attitude to the study of language, especially English, by realizing positive outcomes of learning English. Future research on similar issue can be conducted in lower or higher level of education. Additionally, further researches can also be aimed at investigating the role of attitude to language learning in other skill-achievements or finding out teaching method that can arouse students' attitude to English language learning.

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