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**Submission date:** 17-Jul-2023 05:36PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 2132508962

**File name:** Artikel\_semnas\_Dwi\_Rahayu\_6.pdf (114.14K)

**Word count:** 2493

**Character count:** 13623

# INFORMATICS EDUCATION STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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## Abstract

*The attitudes towards language learning play a crucial role in language learning process as it influence learning success or failure. This research aimed to know the attitudes of Informatics Education Students towards English Language learning in term of cognitive and affective aspects. The researcher used descriptive quantitative research design. This research examined the sample of Informatics Education students of STKIP PGRI Pacitan from different grades that were selected using availability non-random sampling technique to collect the data of their attitudes towards English Language learning. The researcher applied an adapted questionnaire as an instrument. The participants required to answer all the items in the questionnaire to give their own perception about their attitudes towards learning English Language concerning cognitive aspects. The items were put in a 5-point Likert scale from level 1: Strongly Disagree to level 5: Strongly Agree. The result indicated that the Informatics Education students' attitudes towards learning English are favourable. They are well aware of the importance of learning English. They showed quite possitive attitudes toward learning English both in term of cognitive and affective aspects. However, some of the students feel unconfident and unsatisfied with their performance in English. It is recomended that English teacher should be responsive to learners' attitudes and value their students' attitudes and preconceptions, as it can affect their success in foreign language learning.*

**Keywords:** *Language learning, Cognitive and Affective Attitudes, Informatics Education Students.*

## INTRODUCTION

<sup>2</sup> In foreign Language learning context, there are various factors that influence the learning process such as motivation, attitudes, anxiety, learning achievements, aptitudes, intelligence, age, personalities, etc. (Gardner, 1960, cited in Shams, 2008). Among others, the learner's attitude is acknowledged as one of the most important factors that impact on learning language (Fakeye, 2010). The attitudes towards language learning play a crucial role in language learning process as it influence learning success or failure.

<sup>7</sup> In Indonesia, English is more likely to be taught and learnt only as a foreign language/FL. This means that learning and teaching English occurs mostly in classrooms, rather than during daily communication. English is also taught in all colleges in Indonesia, but it is just as a compulsory subject. Not all students, especially non-English major learners are highly motivated to learn English language as most of them thought that English is not largely relevant to their future job. In spite of studying English as a subject, the biggest factor is that students do not get exposure to

situations where they can use English or they can observe how English is used by others. Teachers usually use grammar-translation method and structural approach to teach.

The situation is also faced by the students of Informatics Education Program of STKIP PGRI Pacitan. They learn English as a compulsory subject in their college. Their knowledge is restricted to do an examination of English. They do not get English speaking environment in their college. They are not practiced to use English in day to day contexts. Students are introduced with the grammar-translation rules and they know reading and writing. But it has been observed that their knowledge to use written or spoken English is miserable.

This study looks into the concept of attitude as one of the major affective factors for success in learning a foreign language. More specifically, it investigates Informatics Education Program of STKIP PGRI Pacitan students' attitudes towards learning English language, taking into consideration the cognitive and affective aspects of learning attitude. The investigation needs to be taken into account to get better understanding of learners' needs and seeking the best strategies to develop in them positive attitudes towards language learning. Furthermore, the result would be something benefit to create the best way in assisting students to be successful in learning English.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Attitude is determined by the individual's beliefs about outcomes or attributes of performing the behavior (behavioral beliefs), weighted by evaluations of those outcomes or attributes (Montano and Kasprzyk (2008). Thus, a person who holds strong beliefs that positively valued outcomes will result from performing the behavior will have a positive attitude toward the behavior. Conversely, a person who holds strong beliefs that negatively valued outcomes will result from the behavior will have a negative attitude. Attitude can also be defined as a set of beliefs developed in a due course of time in a given socio-cultural setting (Sheorey, 2006). Although it is not so decisive behavior, but it could have an impact on it. It is studied that positive attitude facilitates learning. If the learner is reluctant to learn or he/she does not have a positive attitude, he/she does not produce any result. Kara (2009) stated that attitudes towards learning besides opinions and beliefs have an obvious influence on students' behaviors and consequently on their performance. It is argued that those students who possess positive beliefs about language learning have a tendency to increase more positive attitudes towards language learning. Conversely, negative beliefs may lead to class anxiety, low cognitive achievement, and negative attitudes (VictoriLockhart, 1995 in Abidin, 2012).

Gardner, 1985, cited in Abidin (2012) also points out that attitude is an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent. "Attitude is thus linked to a person's values and beliefs and promotes or discourages the choices made in all realms of activity, whether academic or informal." Wenden (1991) presents a comprehensive definition of the attitude concept. He classified the term "attitude" into three interrelated components namely, cognitive, affective and behavioral. The cognitive component involves the beliefs, thoughts or viewpoints about the object of the attitude. The affective component refers to the individual's feelings and emotions towards an object, whether he/she

likes or dislikes. The behavioral component involves the tendency to adopt particular learning behaviors.

The importance of investigating the students' attitudes is in line with Reid (2003) who declared, "Attitudes are important to us because they cannot be neatly separated from study." Attitude is considered as an essential factor influencing language performance (Visser, 2008). Achievement in a target language relies not only on intellectual capacity, but also on the learner's attitudes towards language learning. Thus, if a learner does not have the interest and tendency in acquiring the target language to communicate with others, this learner will possess a negative attitude and will not be motivated and enthusiastic in language learning. This means that learning language should be approached primarily as a social and psychological phenomenon rather than as a purely academic one.

Caine and Caine (1991) state that "teachers need to understand that students' feelings and attitudes will be involved and will determine future learning. Because it is impossible to isolate the cognitive from the affective domain, the emotional climate in the school and classroom must be monitored on a consistent basis, using effective communication strategies and allowing for student and teacher reflection and metacognitive processes." It means that how students feel about themselves as learners and how teachers help students develop self-confidence are important components in achievement. When students feel good about themselves as learners, they are willing to take the risks and focus the attention necessary for further learning.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher used descriptive quantitative research design. This research examined the sample of Informatics Education students of STKIP PGRI Pacitan from different grades that were selected using availability non-random sampling technique to collect the data of their attitudes towards English Language learning. The researcher applied an adapted questionnaire as an instrument. The participants required to answer all the items in the questionnaire to give their own perception about their attitudes towards learning English Language concerning cognitive and affective aspects. The items were put in a 5-point Likert scale from level 1: Strongly Disagree to level 5: Strongly Agree.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The results are differentiated into two categories: the cognitive aspect of attitude towards English language, and the affective aspect of attitude towards English language.

### 1. The Cognitive Aspect of Attitude towards English Language

Concerning to the first problem of the research, the result showed that Informatics Education students of STKIP PGRI Pacitan hold positive attitudes regarding English language learning. The result of questionnaire are displayed in the following table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Students' Learning Attitude in Term of Cognitive Aspects

Item No	Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
1	Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.	2	0	14	48	36
2	I have more knowledge and more understanding when studying English.	0	2	30	46	22
3	I like my English class so much; I look forward to studying more English in the future.	2	6	30	40	22
4	I cannot summarize the important points in the English subject content by myself	2	22	42	20	12
5	Frankly, I study English just to pass the exams.	20	52	14	10	6
6	In my opinion, people who speak more than one language are very knowledgeable.	2	8	8	42	38
7	Studying English helps me communicate in English effectively.	0	0	26	38	34
8	I am able to think and analyze the content in English language.	0	4	42	46	8
9	I am not satisfied with my performance in the English subject.	0	6	20	62	12
10	In my opinion, English language is difficult and complicated to learn	2	26	20	38	14

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents show the positive attitudes towards learning English as they agreed that studying English is important because it will make me more educated. They also agree that they have more knowledge and more understanding when studying English, only 2% of them disagree and 30% neutral. Furthermore, most of them (80%) thought that people who speak more than one language are very knowledgeable and 72% agree that studying English helps them communicate in English effectively. Besides, the respondents show that they ( 72%) disagree that they study English just to pass the exams. However, most of them thought that they are not satisfied with their performance in the English subject and some of them thought that English language is difficult and complicated to learn and 32% of them showed that they cannot summarize the important points in the English subject content by themselves.

## 2. The Affective Aspect of Attitude towards English Language

The responses of respondents regarding the affective aspects of attitudes toward English are slightly different from those of cognitive aspects. It can be seen in the following table 2.1

Table 2.1 Students' Learning Attitude in Term of Affective Aspects

Item No	Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
1	I feel excited when I communicate in English with others.	0	8	36	42	14
2	I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class.	0	18	44	30	6
3	Studying foreign languages like English is enjoyable	2	6	24	44	24
4	Studying English makes me have good emotions (feelings).	2	12	44	34	8

Item No	Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
5	I enjoy doing activities in English.	2	4	50	30	12
6	I do not like studying English.	26	48	16	8	2
7	I wish I could speak English fluently.	0	2	8	26	62
8	Studying English subject makes me feel more confident.	0	8	32	40	18
9	To be honest, I really have little interest in my English class.	0	26	34	28	10
10	Knowing English is an important goal in my life.	0	2	56	20	20

The table 2.1 revealed that in term of affective aspects, the participants generally showed the moderate attitudes toward learning English. 56% respondents feel excited when they communicate in English with others, 36% of them state neutral, whereas, 8% disagree. Concerning the item "I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class", 36% respondents agree, but 44% of them neutral and 14% disagree. It can be seen that 42% respondents agree that studying English make them have good emotion (feelings), 42% of the enjoy doing activities in English, and 40% of them thought that knowing English is an important goal in their life. However, the respondents showed quite positive attitudes as 58% of them agreed that studying English makes them feel more confident, 68% of them agree that studying foreign languages like English is enjoyable, and, 88% of respondents wish they could speak English fluently.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result of study, it can be concluded that generally Informatics Education students of STKIP PGRI Pacitan are well aware of the importance of learning English. They showed quite positive attitudes toward learning English both in term of cognitive and affective aspects. However, some of the students feel unconfident and unsatisfied with their performance in English. Regarding the attitudes as an essential component in learning, the students' attitudes should be a consideration for the lecturers in assisting the students to reach their goal in learning English. They should respect to the students' beliefs and feelings to develop curriculum and effective classroom activities which is in line with students' needs and make them enjoy the process of learning that lead them to have a good performance in English.

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