

INVESTIGATING STMT (*SEKOLAH TINGGI MANAJEMEN TRANSPORTASI*) STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH FOR TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTIC

Novi Indah Susanthi¹, Yanu Rarasati Indraning Tiyas², and Siti Fadiah³

¹State University of Jakarta

²State University of Jakarta

³State University of Jakarta

Email: oct4th2003@gmail.com

Abstract

The positive attitudes are expected from students when they are learning English. These positive attitudes will help them to get the benefit of learning the language easily and smoothly. When students have positive attitudes meaning that they are at ease to learn and accept the material from the lecturer. This is important since learning process takes place when they are at ease. On the other hand, if students already perform negative attitude towards the language, they will stuck with the barrier, the difficulties to master the language. Consequently, students are de-motivated in mastering the language. For this reason, teaching learning process in the class is not optimum. If this is happen, students do not learn the language at their best. Hence, they are not capable to learn the material that they need to master. Language mastery, in the future, will help them to be able to cope with the language related to their career or job. This study is aimed to find out whether there is a relation between their attitude towards English learning and the mastery of English in their work field. The students are asked to fill in the questionnaire and the researchers are observing the students' attitudes in the classrooms when they are studying. The implication of this study is to influence the students' attitude in the teaching learning process. Therefore, the result reveals that the participants indicate some negative attitude towards learning English.

Keywords: *Positive attitudes, learning English, ESP, Transportation and Logistics, STMT Trisakti*

INTRODUCTION

STMT (Sekolah Tinggi Manajemen Transportasi) Trisakti has just celebrated its 47th anniversary last April 2017 which means that it has been competing in the education field for more than 30 years. There is not ideal age for an institution of education to stop growing and expanding especially for an institution that focuses on specific subjects. STMT Trisakti provides four majors which are Air transport management, Land transport management, Sea transport management, and Logistics management. There has been a change in the industry. At first, air transport management was chosen by most of the students due to its future work field at the

airport or airline industries. However, as the fast growing industry, all transportations and people activities around the world are circled around logistics. The trend of students' choices is changing to logistics management.

Based on the particular majors provided, STMT Trisakti should also provide the specific language learning with its specific activities to cope with the needs in the transportation and logistics industries. In that case, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) should be delivered to students. Munby (1978) stated that there are two major categories of ESP which the first one is related to our institution. He claimed that someone who studies English

for the purpose of working such as in civil aviation or tourist hotel management could be considered as taking ESP or EOP (English for Occupational Purposes). Hyland (2002) reassured previous statement that ESP has differences in ELT (English Language Teaching) because ESP gives specific language instruction to fulfil the purpose of English language learning.

Talking about ESP related to English for transportation means talking about targeting the specific needs. Teachers need to creatively design the class activities and the test that will achieve the target needs. The present needs of STMT students are the same as any other university students that is basic needs in communicating. However, due to their future organizations, students need to have communicative competencies in workplace. Airports, airlines companies, ports, freight forwarding companies, travel agencies, and others need students to be able to actively communicate in English. Belcher (2009) stated that teachers have the responsibility for finding out what their learners will likely need (want) to be able to read, write, speak, and comprehend as listeners to achieve their goals.

Depending on the teachers is only the beginning but the rest of the lesson will need much investment and effort of the students themselves. In this case, STMT students need to have high motivation and positive attitudes in learning the language to get the best achievement. Students should build their own way in gaining the benefit and reaching their purpose of doing the activities in the class. They should not depend entirely the result on others; teachers, classmates, university condition, etc. Candlin and Mercer (2001) examined that attitudes of language learners towards the EFL activities, its speakers and the

learning situation all play its role in describing their success or failure.

Attitude is taken into account in this study because attitude along with motivation, personality, etc could affect the level of proficiency achieved by the students (Gardner, 1980, 1985; Oxford & Shearing, 1996) although the way it affects varies from situation to situation (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). In addition, Brown (2000, 181) describes several studies about the effects of attitude on language learning and concludes that “positive attitudes towards the self, the native language group, and the target language group enhanced proficiency.” ESP, for this matter, is suitable with the statements above. ESP should focus on the student and the purposes for which he requires the target language, and the whole language program follows from that (Munby, 1978).

Based on teachers’ academic report every quarter, it can be found that students’ attitude towards learning English affect their learning achievement. It affects their presence and their performance in the classrooms and of course when they are having the tests. Though, this report is only evidence that cannot be proven related to teachers’ objectivity until there is a research conducted to discover the real situation. In line with the teachers’ report, some research conducted in some universities proved that though there is a lot of thing teacher could do in the class, “at the end of the day, it is all up to the students whether or not to participate positively in the lesson. In other words, it all boils down to your attitude” (Abu Melhim, 2009).

Many research conducted about students’ attitude towards English learning showed positive impact on how students perform their ability in acquiring the

language and in using their skills in communicating (Meenakhshi H. Verma, Amal Ali Alkaff, 2013, Ming, Ling, and Jaafar, vol. 17, Gajalakhsmi, 2013). In “Learner’s attitude and its impact on language learning”, Verma concluded that only less percentage of college students in India are indifferent to learning English.

Their reasons of learning are to pass the examination and to get a job while Alkaff (2013) in “Students’ attitudes and perceptions towards learning English” showed the result of his research as an inspiring result. He stated that the students of King Abdul Aziz University are willing to improve their language ability despite their insufficient time, pressure of the intensive course, long hours course, and the demand of other subjects in the same semester. In line with the previous researchers, Ming, Ling, and Jaafar (2011) in “Attitudes and motivation of Malaysian secondary students towards learning English as a second language: a case study” concluded that their students have positive attitude towards the learning of English.

They realized the importance of English in the school programme and have the desire to learn English. Gajalakhsmi (2013) in “High school students’ attitude towards learning English language” mentioned that students perform different attitude based on the gender, the locality of the school, type of school, type of management, and also the parents’ occupation.

However, SirikunNookua and Abu Melhim (2009) research showed different results with those studies. SirikunNookua in “An investigation on English language learning attitudes of Siam University students” found that the weaker students have wrong belief and less self-confidence on themselves. Positive attitudes will be

enhanced by eliminating wrong belief, building self-confidence and creating motivation by using more effective approaches to classroom teaching. Abu Melheim in “Attitudes of Jordanian college students towards learning English as a foreign language” conducted three open-ended survey items that the result was about a growing motivation towards learning the language.

There are some definitions of attitude. Hogg and Vaughan (2005, p.150-151) provided several different but, still related definitions. From many of their definitions, the researchers took only two that were considered suitable with the research. The first one is “a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols.” The second is about positive and negative attitude. The positive attitude is “taking decision of acceptance or reaction that agrees the attitude we met or it is the attitude that reveals the advantages of the subject to take up its value.” On the contrary, the negative attitude is “the attitude that reveals the disadvantages of the subject to dismiss it and to weaken its strong attitude.”

Furthermore, Holmes (1992) believes that when people feel positive attitude towards target language users, they will be highly motivated and consequently more successful in acquiring the target language. Contributed the same belief as Holmes, Gardner (1985), seven years before, had stated that students with positive attitude and high level of motivation will be more successful compared to those with negative attitudes and no motivation.

According to Gardner (1985), attitude has three components which are the affective component, the behavioral

component, and the cognitive component. The first is the feeling about the attitude object. The second component is predisposition to act towards the attitude object in a certain way.

The last one is beliefs about the attitude object. From those three components, it can be concluded that attitudes are related to thoughts as well as to feelings and emotions. Attitudes govern how the student approaches learning that in this case requires exposure to a different culture and also to the difficult task of mastering a foreign language. Attitudes begin developing early and are influenced by many things, including parents, peers, and interactions with people who have social and cultural differences. Therefore, attitude “forms a part of one’s perception of self, of others, and of the culture in which one is living” (Brown, 2000).

METHOD

This quantitative study employed a questionnaire survey to collect data. The classroom observations were conducted to support the data taken from the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two parts: the first one is about the demographic profile of the students (the gender, the major, and the school year) and the second part is the statements of students’ attitude towards learning English for transportation and logistics. The second part used Likert Scale ranged from 1 to 5 with definition strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA).

The second part consists of 15 statements of behavioural aspect of attitude, 15 statements of affective aspect of attitude, and 15 statements of cognitive aspect of attitude. The items in the questionnaire were partly adapted from the attitude questionnaire test employed in a

study by Boonrangsrietal (2004). Other items were taken from Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) designed by Gardner (1985). Moreover, there were some items based on the teachers’ report every quarter about teaching and learning English in the classrooms. All items were composed in English and if necessary, the researchers explained some statements in Bahasa. The questionnaire was completed in class and collected immediately.

The procedure was carried out in STMT (Sekolah Tinggi Manajemen Transportasi) Trisakti, Kebon Nanas, Jakarta Timur. The 55 participants are 38 female and 17 male. They are 19 students of Air transport management and 36 students of Logistics management. There are not any of Land and Sea transport management students because the sample is small. The students were in the second year (41 students) and third year (14 students). They were studying English 2 and 4 when the study was conducted.

The collected data was analysed by the SPSS Program version 19 aiming to answer the research questions quantitatively. Descriptive statistics was conducted to determine the mean, median, modus, variance and standard deviation of the gathered data. One-way ANOVA analysis test was the other type of statistical analysis to examine the research questions. The findings are indicated in the next section.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Attitudes of STMT Trisakti students towards learning English for Transportation and Logistics regarding participants’ demographic profile

This part discusses whether there is any statistically significant difference in the students’ attitudes towards English for

Transportation and Logistics in terms of their demographic profile.

a) Language Attitudes and students' Gender

The inferential statistical analysis was employed to answer question concerning the differences in the students' attitude towards English for Transportation and Logistics by gender variable.

The results in Table 1 show that the mean score of language attitude among female students is 2.8599 and standard deviation is 0.64763 while they are 2.5856 and 0.70298 respectively among male students. These descriptive results show that the attitudes of female STMT Trisakti students towards English are slightly higher than that of male ones.

Table 1. Language attitudes and students' gender

Statistics				
Gender				
N	Valid	55		
	Missing	0		
Mean		1.3091		
Median		1.0000		
Mode		1.00		
Std. Deviation:				
Female		.64763		
Male		.70298		
Variance		.218		

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	38	69.1	2.8599	69.1
	Male	17	30.9	2.5856	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

The findings are in line with a study by Shoaib and Dornyei (2005). They supported that gender is an important perspective under second language learning investigations and concluded that females show more interests, positive behaviours and performances compared with the males.

The differences between the male and female respondents' attitudes may be due to the diversity of English teaching strategies and classroom activities employed by English language teachers to teach female and male students. On one hand, male respondents do not show a positive reaction towards Learning English for Transportation and Logistics.

b) Language Attitudes and students' Major

Table 2 indicates that the mean score of attitudes among Air Transport Management (ATM) students is 2.4566 (SD= 0.52877), the mean score of attitudes among Logistics Management and Material (LMM) students is 2.7446 (SD= 0.56557). It is clear that Logistics Management and Material students showed the highest attitudes towards English contrasted with the Air Transport Management students who indicated the lowest.

Table 2. Language attitudes and students' major

Statistics				
Major				
N	Valid	55		
	Missing	0		
Mean		2.9636		
Median		4.0000		
Mode		4.00		
Std. Deviation:				
ATM		.52877		
LMM		.5657		
Variance		2.073		

Major					
		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Cumulative Percent
Valid	ATM	19	34.5	2.4566	34.5
	LMM	36	65.5	2.7447	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

The investigation of the probability of the difference in the students' attitudes towards English for Transportation and Logistics regarding

their specialization was conducted by using One-way ANOVA test. Table 3 shows the test of homogeneity of variances. The results displayed that the p-value of homogeneity of variances is 0.214. Thus, the assumption of equal variances is met because p-value is greater than the Alpha level (0.05).

Table 3. Probability of the difference in the students' attitudes towards English

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P-Value
First year	2022.16	12	412.966	3.523	0.032
Second year	2118.61	13	440.245		
Third year	1457.23	6	95.115		
Total (Corr)	5598.00	31			

One-way ANOVA analysis was to look into the differences in the attitudes of respondents towards English in terms of their specializations. In Table 3, the SPSS output shows that there is a difference in language attitude among the three groups of specializations ($F= 3.523$, $p= 0.032 < 0.05$).

So, it is concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in the participants' attitudes towards learning English language regarding their major. The analysis of Multiple Comparison was also conducted to determine which groups are statistically different. In Table 4, the students test demonstrates that the statistical difference is significant between Air Transport Management students and Logistics Management and Materials students since the p-value is less than Alpha level ($p= 0.025 < 0.05$). Moreover, the mean difference between the two groups of Logistics Management and Materials students and Air Transport Management ones is

0.28807. This result shows that the Logistics Management students' attitude towards English is higher than that of Air Transport ones.

These findings are in line with a study conducted by Rad (2009) to probe the English Language Major Student's beliefs and attitudes towards learning English. Regarding the specialization variable, the SPSS results showed that there was a significant difference in the respondents' perceptions about English as a foreign language. It was concluded that Literature students' beliefs about three aspects of studying English i.e., aptitude, difficulty, and nature represented a higher level than that among students.

The current research results point that the differences in the attitudes regarding the majors may be influenced by the content of the curriculum and the nature of these specializations. The Logistics Management and Materials students study Supply Chain Management, Warehousing, Safety Issues, Multimode Freight Forwarding while the Air Transport Management students study mathematics, Air Transport Economics, Airport Management and Civil Aviation and Regulations. Hence, it is proposed that specialization can influence the nature of attitude towards the major in general and English language in particular.

c) Language Attitudes and Participants' Year of Study

Table 5 shows that the attitudes mean scores among first, second and third-year students are 2.6985 (SD= 0.51455), 2.5941 (SD= 0.55893), and 2.5572 (SD= 0.70107) respectively. It

can be seen that there is a difference among the three groups in their attitudes towards English. The first year students showed a slightly higher attitude, compared with the other two groups.

Table 5. Language Attitudes and Participants' Year of Study

	N	Minimu	Maximu	Mean	Std. Deviation
First year	55	1.24	3.91	2.6985	0.51455
Second year	55	1.33	3.87	2.5941	0.55893
Third year	55	1.07	4.00	2.5572	0.70107
Valid N	55				

Al-Zahrani's (2008) study also revealed similar findings and the descriptive statistics showed that the respondents in the three years had the same level of attitude towards learning English. Perhaps, the result of the current study highlights the similarity in the content and design of English curriculum among the three years in each specialization. Therefore, all STMT Trisakti students from three years showed no difference in their attitudes towards learning English for Transportation and Logistics.

B. Students attitudes towards Learning English for Transportation and Logistics

The result of descriptive analysis shows that the overall mean score of English Language Attitude (ELA) among the participants is 2.6167 (SD= 0.59177). This result reveals that the participants have a negative attitude towards learning English. In addition, the mean scores of the three aspects of attitudes towards English among the respondents differ. The mean score of Behavioral Aspect of Attitude (BAA) is 2.5711 (SD= 0.60468), that of the Cognitive Aspect of Attitude (CAA) is

2.6722 (SD= 0.63402). Yet, the mean score of responses regarding the Emotional Aspect of Attitude (EAA) is 2.6067 (SD= 0.63262).

C. The behavioral aspect of attitude towards Learning English

The behavioural aspect of attitude towards English language represents the lowest mean score (2.5711). That is, the participants have negative behavioural attitude and feel not relaxed whenever they have to speak in English class. The item "studying English helps me to have good relationships with friends" obtained the second rank (M= 2.89, SD= 1.153), while the lowest mean score is (2.22) and demonstrates that the participants do not pay any attention when English teacher is explaining the lesson with standard deviation of 1.231.

Besides, the results of the current study disclosed that some of the students agreed that they do not pay any attention when English teacher is explaining the lesson. Thus, they show negative behaviors in the English classes. This could be due to the belief among the ESP students that learning English is not needed and important as other results of this study showed that most of the students never ask their friends or teachers for the homework and what has been taught when they miss the English class (M=2.27) and they put off English homework as much as possible (M=2.71).

D. The cognitive aspect of attitude towards English language

The cognitive aspect represents the highest mean score of attitudes towards English (M= 2.6722, SD= 0.63402). The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents showed negative cognitive

attitude and agreed that they could not summarize the important points in the English subject content by themselves. This response among the respondents represents the highest mean score 3.02 with (SD=1.153).

This result is similar to the findings of a study by Boonrangsri et al. (2004); the descriptive statistics revealed that 55 students showed a moderate attitude in their ability to summarize the important points in English subject. Besides, the respondents showed that they could not apply the knowledge from English in their real lives (M= 2.99, SD= 1.081). However, some of them believed that people who speak more than one language are very knowledgeable. This response represented the lowest meanscore 2.35 with (SD=1.179).

E. The emotional aspect of attitude towards learning English

The responses regarding the emotional aspect of attitude towards English are quite different from those of cognitive aspect and the mean score is 2.6067 (SD= 0.63262). Most of the participants showed that they preferred studying in their mother tongue rather than any other foreign language, representing the highest meanscore (3.81) with (SD= 1.157).

This result is in line with that in Al-Nofaie's (2010) that examined the attitudes of Saudi teachers and students towards using Arabic as a facilitating tool in English classes. It was revealed that the teachers and the students showed generally positive attitudes about using Arabic rather than English language. However, few of the respondents in this study had a positive attitude and wished to speak English fluently. This finding highlights the importance of encouraging the students to

participate in collaborative dialogues and activities in which they can acquire the language effectively and this can enhance EFL learners to observe and assess their progress in learning English language.

CONCLUSION

The students' obvious negative attitude towards learning English for transportation and logistics such as worried to speak English, prefer to speak in mother tongue, study English only to pass exams, etc may lead to conclude that they are not well aware of the importance of English and learn it as a compulsory subject. Briefly, attitude concept is considered as an essential component in language learning. So, a positive attitude should be the umbrella of language learning. ESP teachers should respect and think about students' feelings, beliefs and behaviors before the cognitive abilities.

English teaching and learning in the classroom should involve affective aims according to the students' needs and their individual differences to build up positive attitudes towards English. It is very important to learn students' personalities. Cognitive performance can be achieved if the ESP students possess positive attitudes and enjoy acquiring the target language. For that reason, the affective perspective, especially attitude, should be considered in language research.

Regarding the observed negative attitude towards English, the ESP teachers are recommended to create an encouraging atmosphere in the English classes to promote the students' positive attitudes towards learning English. They should also motivate the students to learn English, highlighting its importance. This can be achieved by implementing the appropriate methods and activities of teaching English

effectively. Moreover, they should integrate up-to-date materials and supplementary resources related to transportation and logistics. This could help them capture students' attention to learn English successfully. Moreover, the ESP teachers should consider the role of gender perspective in language learning, exposing various approaches to improve the students' attitudes, motivation and language performance as well.

They are also recommended to teach the English curriculum as it is supposed to be taught, focus in got the communicative approach. The ESP teachers must be aware that communicative approach encourages ESP learners to collaborate and discuss their experiences and other issues regarding transportation and logistics subjects. This can increase their attitude, enthusiasm and their motivation to acquire the language.

Furthermore, syllabus and content developer should review the content and the design of the syllabus to meet the needs and the interests of the students. They are recommended to consider that the ESP learners have different perceptions about learning other languages due to their differences regarding gender, major, year of study, etc. Thus, taking all these issues into account, the syllabus development should be re-evaluated so that students could see something different concerning the activities, content, topics, teaching practices etc. and be more motivated to learn English.

REFERENCES

Abu Melhim, AR. (2009). *Attitudes of Jordanian College Students towards Learning English as a Foreign Language*. Jordan: College Student Journal, 43(2).

- Alkaff, AA. (2013). *Students' Attitudes and Perceptions towards Learning English*. Jeddah: AWEJ, Volume 4, Number 2, p. 106-121.
- Al-Nofaie, H. (2010). *Attitudes of Teachers and Students towards Using Arabic in EFL Classrooms in Saudi Public Schools- A Case Study. Research on Youth and Language*, 4(1), 64-95. Retrieved August 9, 2017, from http://www.novitasroyal.org/Vol_4_1/al-nofaie.pdf
- AlZahrani, M. (2008). *Saudi secondary school male students' attitude towards English: An exploratory study*. J. King Saudi University, Language and translation, 20, 25-39.
- Alzwari, H. et al. (2012). *EFL Students' Attitudes towards Learning English Language: the Case of Libyan Secondary School Students*. Asian Social Science, 8 (2).
- Boonrangsri, K. et al. (2004). *The Attitude towards English Language Learning of the Students in Vocational Certificate Level under Curriculum in 2002. A Case Study of Ayutthaya Technical College*. Thailand: Naresuan University.
- Brown, H. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching (4th edition)*. White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Gajalakshmi. (2013). *High School Students' Attitude towards Learning English Language*. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 3 (9).
- Gardner, R. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: the Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Gonzales, A. (n.d). *Journal of Attitude towards English and ESP acquisition as an L2 / L3 at University of the Basque County*.

- Hogg, M. & Vaughan, G. (2005). *Social Psychology* (4th edition). London: Prentice-Hall.
- Holmes, J. (1992). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. New York: Longman Group UK Limited.
- Ming, Ling, & Jaafar. (2011). *Attitudes and motivation of Malaysian secondary students towards learning English as a second language: a case study*. *Ejournal Universitas Kebangsaan Malaysia Vol. 17 No. 1*
- Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative Syllabus Design*. Cambridge: the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- Nookua, S. et al. (n.d). *An Investigation on English Language Learning as a dynamic Process*. In P. Benson & D. Nunan (eds.), *Learners' Stories: Difference and Diversity in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 22-41.
- Attitudes of Siam University Students*. Thailand: Siam University.
- Rad, N. (2009). *Evaluation of English Students' Beliefs about Learning English as Foreign Language: A case of Kerman Azad University*. International Conference "ICT for Language Learning". 3rd edition. Retrieved August 9, 2017, from http://pixel-online.org/ICT4LL2010/common/download/Proceedings_pdf/SLA25-Fatehi_Rad.pdf
- Shoaib, A. & Dornyei, Z. (2005). *Affect in lifelong learning: exploring L2 motivation*
- Verma, M.H. (n.d). *Learner's Attitude and its Impact on Language Learning*. India: Invertis Institute of Engineering and Technology.