

Secondary Students of ESL Learners' Frame of Minds towards ESL Learning

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Abstract—English Language has become another important skills that today's younger generations need to acquire. However, learning a language is not an easy process. It takes good attitudes and enthusiasm for learners to be able to master the language. In conjunction to that, this study is conducted to investigate the secondary students of ESL learners' frame of minds towards ESL learning. Their level of attitudes and motivations towards learning English language is measured through a likert-scale questionnaire which was adopted by Gardner's AMTB questionnaire (1985). The sample of this study consists of thirty secondary students of ESL learners in an urban area. The findings have found out that there are varieties of attitudes and level of motivation given by the sample of respondents. Different students have different attitudes towards English language and have different levels of motivation towards ESL learning.

Keywords— Attitudes, ESL Learning, Motivation, Secondary students

I. INTRODUCTION

English language is very crucial in today's world. Learning English is equally important as English language is now used not only in primary and secondary level of education, but also in tertiary level of education. In tertiary level of education especially, English language is used as the medium of instruction. However, learning a language is quite of a complex process and it takes time for the learners to learn the second language. In today's era, a majority of students also fail to converse proficiently in English language. It is important to note that there are many factors that might contribute to the success of second language learning. Attitudes and motivation are to be considered as among the factors that contribute to the success of language learning. Motivation and attitude are two elements that are important in learning a second language.

In an English teaching and learning session classroom, it is viewed and observed that different students' development and level of proficiency in English are different. Some students in a classroom are very proficient in English and willing to participate in class while there are also students who do not want to participate at all during the teaching and learning session. One of the reasons behind this situation is because different students show different attitudes and motivation towards ESL learning. Students with higher level of motivation and positive attitudes will do better than the students with lower levels. If one is motivate, he or she has reasons for engaging in the classroom, have more efforts in the tasks given, attends to the task, shows desire to achieve the goal, enjoys the activities and etc. Hence, this study intends to examine the

attitudes and motivation of secondary school students ESL learners towards ESL learning.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The first investigation conducted involving attitudes and motivation on second language learning was conducted by [1]. The relation between attitudes and motivation has been considered as a prime concern in language learning research. [1] Stated that the learners' motivation to learn is thought to be determined by his attitudes towards his orientation towards the learning task itself. Attitudes and motivation have a very clear link with the language learning process [1]. [1] Believes that students with positive attitudes and high level of motivation will be more successful compared to those with negative attitudes and no motivation. Both motivation and positive attitudes are to be said as needed to coexist for learners to achieve a successful language learning experience.

There has been a lot of researches that have put their efforts and time doing research on attitudes and motivations in learning a second language. In a case study done by [2], the resulted of their study has indicated that most of the students have positive attitudes towards the learning of English. Most of them really realise the importance of English in the school program done by the school and they have the desire to learn English language despite the thinking of how English language is difficult and stressful for them to learn. They also figured that the higher proficiency students, the Science and Arts class students are more interested in improving their English and they have more positive attitudes towards English language.

Another study done involving attitudes and motivation towards learning English language involving undergraduate students by [3], their findings have shown that the students demonstrated the idea of them seeing English language as a vital role in their lives, either currently or in the future. Whilst, concerning the students' English language attitudes, it is not surprising that the students agreed that English language is very important to the development of the country. They might be aware of the international role English language has been playing on the world arena as the language of technology and science. However, there are still students who don't see English as equally as important and have negative attitudes towards the English language.

Other than that, [4] have also done their research on attitudes and motivation towards learning English among FELDA school students. In Malaysian context, FELDA is to be considered as a rural area thus this study intended to investigate FELDA primary school students' attitudes and motivation

towards English and the learning of the language. The results of the study have indicated that generally students in rural areas have positive attitudes towards the learning of English. They realize the importance of English and they have the desire to learn and improve their proficiency in the language. They have concluded that the respondents' obvious positive attitudes towards English language may lead to conclusion that students are well aware of the importance of English, besides learning as it is as a compulsory subject in school. Finally, complete content and organizational editing before formatting. Please take note of the following items when proofreading spelling and grammar.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is a survey design of study and the setting of this study is in a tuition centre located in Bandar Seri Putra, Kajang, Selangor. The setting chosen for this study is considered as an urban area. This study consists of 40 respondent's age 17 years old and from a mixed level of proficiency. The respondents consist of 31 boys and 9 girls. Questionnaire is used as the instrument in this study. The questionnaire was adopted from Gardner's AMTB (1985) and consists of three sections; Respondents' Profile and Background, Section A on attitudes towards learning English and Section B on the attitudes towards the English language. The questionnaire constructed contains 20 items altogether with a three point-likert scale ranging from 3=strongly agree, 2=neutral and 1=strongly disagree.

Researcher distributed the questionnaire to the respondents in the classroom. Researcher then briefly explained to the respondents regarding the questionnaire and the respondents were given 10-15 minutes to answer the questionnaire. Researcher analyzed the data collected through frequency and mean.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part will be divided into three parts; a. Students' profile and background, b. Students' attitudes towards the English language, c. Students' motivation in learning English language.

A. Students' Profile and Background

The questionnaire were distributed to one class of form 5 students consists of 31 boys (77.5%) and 9 girls (22.5%). (100%) of the respondents are Malays and they use Malay language as their medium of language at home.

B. Students' Attitudes towards ESL Learning

The questionnaire were distributed to one class of form 5 students consists of 31 boys (77.5%) and 9 girls (22.5%). (100%) of the respondents are Malays and they use Malay language as their medium of language at home. The analysis of the data was based on students' responses to ten statements which they need to tick any of the three alternatives of strongly agree, neutral and strongly disagree and percentage were given to indicate the data analysis.

The findings shows that about 97.5% of respondents have a positive thought towards learning English. 45% of the respondents really love learning English language and only one (2.5%) respondents does not have a positive attitude towards

learning English. About half of the respondents (52.5%) realize the importance of English language in the future and majority of the respondents (90%) find learning English interesting and fun. Other than that, from the data collected, it can be seen that only seventeen (42.5%) respondents have the attitude of always practicing English whenever they have the time and only a number of three (7.5%) of respondents do not like to speak English in class. A number of six (15%) respondents think that learning English language is difficult and two (5%) respondents tend to give up and not pay attention when they do not understand their English teacher's explanation. There are also eight (20%) respondents have the attitude of being afraid people will laugh at them when they do not say things right. However, regardless of that, it can be concluded from the table that quite a large number of the respondents have positive attitudes towards English language.

The findings of the study have shown quite of an interesting attitudes given by students towards English language. Out of 40 respondents, it can be seen that majority of the students have positive attitudes towards English language despite the small amount of respondents who have negative attitude towards English language. Majority of the students realize the importance of English language in today's world as English language is widely known for its international language and English language is not only used in primary and secondary level of education but also in the tertiary level of education. Most of them realize how English language is important in their life and for their future regardless of how they think that learning English language is quite hard and difficult. This results are parallel to the findings by Thang [2] that have indicated how their respondents realize the benefit of English language and willing to participate in the English programs provided by the school. The findings in a study done by [3] have also shown and indicated pretty much the same issue on how the respondents seeing the vital role of English language in their life and there are also respondents who think that English language is not as equally important and have negative attitudes towards English language.

C. Students' Motivation towards ESL Learning

The respondents were asked to answer ten statements regarding their motivation in learning English language. Based on the findings, it can be seen that majority of the respondents with a percentage of (87.5%) realize the importance of learning English and (85%) respondents realize how English language is important for their future. About ten (25%) respondents and two (5%) respondents think that they learn English only for the sake of passing the examination and think that English is not really an important goal in their lives respectively. (70%) respondents have their parents encourage them to be good in English language and about (31%) of respondents really wish that they could speak English fluently. Other than that, it can also be seen that (75%) respondents take their English teacher as their great source of inspiration and (42.5%) respondents have English as one of their favorite subjects. However, there are still about six (16%) respondents that do not assume English as one of their favorite subjects for some reasons and 1 (2.5%) respondents think that learning English is a waste of time.

The study has shown that in conclusion, majority of the respondents have high motivation in learning English language. Majority of the respondents did not take learning English to

only pass the examination. This has shown that the respondents have the passion towards learning English and really think that English is important for their future, not only for the sake of passing the examination or only for the school subject purposes. A large number of respondents have the motivation to learn English language for their future as they are aware of how important English language are for their career opportunities in the future. In today's world, it is undeniable how English language plays an important role in securing a job place. Those who have good communication skills in English will have a better chance at getting a job. Other than that, it can also be seen from the findings how parents play an important role in providing motivation to their children in learning English language. Majority of the respondents have their parents encourage them to learn English language. However, there is a small number of respondents who think that learning English language is a waste of time and do not have the motivation to learn English language. It is believed that this small number of respondents came from the low level of proficiency students as their motivation level of learning English is not as high as the rest of the respondents.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it can be seen that there are varieties of attitudes and level of motivation among the respondents. Different students have different attitudes towards English language and have different level of motivation towards learning English. This has proven the reasons behind the problem statement of this study and at the same time has answered the research questions constructed.

The findings of this study suggest that there are some serious implications that students themselves, as well as teachers and parents should consider about. As for students, it is very important for students and learners to understand and having the awareness of how important English language is in order to motivate them more to learn English language for their future. One of the best ways to acquire English language is through a lot of reading, and also not being scared to talk to people or communicate with people in public using English language. Through reading, one can improve their vocabulary and also will expose the students to more knowledge regarding English language. Students or learners should have more effort in improving their English language as English language is one of the international languages and widely used in all over the

world. Other than that, students also should have positive attitudes towards English in order for them to better acquire the language because the positive attitudes will lead them to have more motivation and eventually get better in English language.

On the other hand, teachers or instructors also play an important role in nurturing learners' positive attitudes and motivation towards English language. Teachers should try to improve on their classroom and language instructions. Teachers need to improvise their teaching and learning session to make it more interesting for students to change their perspective of learning English language is hard. A fun and meaningful session of teaching and learning will make students to have more interest in learning English language and turns out to be more motivated to acquire the language. Other than that, teachers also should be able to try to guide students to become more autonomous and more self-centered which is required for them to have a lifelong learning experience. Teachers also should pay more attention to the low proficiency learners, gaining their attention and interest for them to have more interest in learning English language. They tend to lose interest in learning English language because they find learning English hard and difficult. This is the part where teachers play an important role in approaching them and attract them with fun yet meaningful activities in the classroom instead of going with the traditional way of teaching. Activities in the classroom should be able to capture students' interest and cater to students' different needs so they can be continuously interested and engaged in learning.

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