CHAPTER II

STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE BASED ON GENDER

A. The Nature of Learning English Language

1. Definition of Learning English Language

When a person is a child or a baby, all vowel sounds have been produced also most of the consonant sounds of any language in the world. Whatever language is, eventhough the language is not parents speak, when a baby hears a language, that baby will learn to speak it and does not care about pronounciation that can make different meanings. That is how first language learning process, without any conscious effort that is done by language speaker itself. "Much of your own L1 acquisition was completed before you ever came to school, and this development normally takes place without any conscious effort" Troike (2006: 12). Means that learning first language does not really need any hard effort compared with learning second language.

Different with learning English that as second language in this country. Learning English language needs strong efforts, because the students will face new things that relate to that second language. According to Brown (2000: 7 cited in Ghania, 2013: 6), "Learning a second language is a long and complex undertaking. Your whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your

first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting".

In conclusion, it is understood that learning English language is a process to get a new language knowledge (English) which is not easy; needs strong and real efforts that possibly can take long time; because there will be new things such as culture, feeling caused the English atmosphere itself, behaviours and a new way of thinking that need to be learned and will be had.

2. **Factors Influencing Learning English Language**

There are many factors that might cause students' proficiency whether good or bad in learning language. Based on McDonough (1983: 142, cited in Al-Tamimi, 2009: 30), who states "Motivation of the students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language." Al-Tamimi adds "Another factor is students' attitudes. This is because an ESL/EFL student's motivation in language learning is affected by his/her attitudes towards learning the language." It means that motivation has been the key factor that influences learning language and the important thing is that motivation is affected by attitude.

In addition, eventhough it is claimed that attitude affects motivation that as the most important factor, attitude also has an important role in influencing learning language as Fakeye (2010)

defines in Abidin, (2012: 119) "The matter of student's attitude is acknowledged as one of the most important factors that impact on learning language". Attitude is considered as one of the most important factors that influence learning a language.

Furthermore, factors that might cause English students' success in its learning can be whether internal or external or from inside or outside the person or student. According to Ghania (2012: 28-46), who has conducted a research to find out the main factors influencing the students' achievement in English, there are six main factors influencing the students' achievement in English. There are intelligence, perception, self esteem and learning styles which are considered as internal factors, and for external factors includes motivation and socio cultural states which includes attitude towards learning language in it.

a. Internal Factors

Internal factors means factors that are from inside a student.

1) Intelligence

a) Visual Spatial Intelligence

The students who have this ability tend to perceive the world in images that are prefered to be taught through pictures, video, maps, charts, etc. In fact the students create mental Images in order to retain information.

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b) Verbal Linguistic Intelligence

This type of students tends to think in words rather than pictures. The students have highly developed auditory skills and an extra ordinary ability to develop speech. Students of such ability have a strong tendency to become fluent language users.

c) Logical Mathematical Intelligence

Students with this ability have the reason to think in logical way. The capacity is had to connect pieces of information. Such students have experiments and are always completely conscious and aware about everything and about learning.

d) Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence

The students have the ability to use movements and gestures in order to learn, students have a strong balance and a sense of eyhand, coordination. The students interact with the physical space and people around and throughout this theory are able to process and retain information.

e) Musical Rhythmic Intelligence

This kind of intelligence deals with the ability to produce and appreciate music. Such students think in sounds, rhythms and patterns.

f) Interpersonal Intelligence

Students are possessing this ability like interacting with others and have a strong capacity to understand the people around. The students always try to see how the others think and feel, and try to create cooperative between group members and encourage communication.

g) Intra Personal Intelligence

These students have a strong awareness of inner state of being. The students can understand the dreams that are had, desires, relationship with the others, and furthermore strengths and weakness had.

2) Perception

Perception is an inner process related to senses that has its connection with external world. It is an ability that makes students react to stimulus in the environment, in order to understand what is going surround the students.

3) Self-esteem

Self esteem is considered as an important affective element in the process of scholastic and educational achievement. Hence forth, its absence results the mistrusting of students own abilities which lead the students to perform low as an outcomes of this lack of confidence.

4) Learning Styles

    a) Visual (spatial): this kind of students cannot learn something till see it.

    b) Aural (auditory musical): students prefer learning by heart.

    c) Physical (kinesthetic): students prefer using the body, hands and sense of touch in learning any other subject.

b. External Factors

External factors deals with the things that are from outside a person.

1) Motivation

    Motivation has a close relation to students' needs which lead to the satisfaction of those needs and realization of those goals. In students case the needs to be satisfied and the aims to be achieved are learning a language. Being motivated to learn a second language is a way to fulfill many goals.

2) Socio Cultural Status

    a) Attitude towards Language Learning

        The student's attitude towards the language whether positive or negative has a direct impact on learning. In fact, if it is good, it will foster learning, whereas, if it is bad, it will hinder it and results in failure. So the language student should be aware of the historical background of that

language, its culture, and its political economic and social status in his country as well as all over the world.

b) Socio Economic Status of Students

This part indicates that the teacher should know the social background of the students, because learning such a language does not depend only on the student's ability, but also on the attitudes shared by either the members of the society where the students or students live or the closest people whether parents or friends.

In conclusion, there are many factors that can influence learning language. Factors that can influence learning language in form of both internal and external factors. Internal factors include intellegence, perception, self-esteem and learning style; while external factors include motivation and socio cultural status which attitude towards language learning is in there. Each factor is needed to be focused in learning language including attitude. Attitude might cause students' proficiency. If the attitude is good or positive, it will foster learning, whereas, if the attitude is bad or negative, it will hinder learning process and results in failure.

3. **Language Knowledge**

In learning a second language, students surely have to own and develop level of second language knowledge itself, whether the

students' aims are for academic competence or interpersonal component. There are five components of language knowledge that have been divided by linguists (Troike, 2006: 137).

a. Vocabulary (lexicon)

Vocabulary is importantly needed in learning a second language. According to Troike (2006: 138), who states that vocabulary is considered as the most important level of second language knowledge for all students to develop. For every language that is learned, firstly students need words to be spoken, then the students also need function words such as in English there are determiners like the, that, this; preposition to, of, for; conjunction and others. Students also need to know and differenciate between academic vocabulary and interpersonal vocabulary.

b. Morphology (word structure)

Morphology deals with the structure of word. Language students need to know that the words can be formed by several processes (Troike, 2006: 140). English for example, there are affixation which forms a new word by addition of an affix (prefix and suffix) to an exist word; compounding which forms a new word from two exist word; blends which forms a new word by blending two words that can take the beginning or the end of one word; back formation and others.

c. Phonology (sound system)

In learning a second language exactly a student will learn about pronounciation of words in the target language. The first thing will be done is listening. In listening students hear the way native speakers say or pronounce the words well. If a person says a word incorrectly, so the meaning also will be different, next if a person or a student's speech sound has no suitable stress, pitch, others, it cannot differ between first and second language (Troike, 2006: 143). That is the reasons the second language students have to master about phonology.

d. Syntax (grammar)

Sentences in a language that humans use or speak are not only a set of words but the sentences that are set by rules. According to Troike (2006: 145), who explains "acquiring the syntax of another language may be seen as an issue of internalizing new construction patterns, generative rules, different parameters for innate principles, or collocational probabilities and constraints". It means that language students have to be able in recognizing the sentences, because it is not only about combination of word, every language has the requirements to arrange the elements of sentences.

e. Discourse (ways to connect sentences and organize information)

Language students need to know well this part considering there will be relationship between language forms and situations. In English spoken for example, students shall think about the comma or pause, which will indicate connection among the sentences. Based on Troike (2006: 150), who says "At a microstructural discourse level these include sequential indicators, logical connectors, and other devices to create cohesion. At a macrostructural discourse level we go beyond linguistic elements to knowledge of organizational features that are characteristic of particular genres, and of interactional strategies".

B. The Nature of Attitude

1. Definition of Attitude

Generally, attitude is what a person's view towards something that is being faced or processed whether it is in academic side or informal. According to Gardner (1985, cited in Soleimani and Hanafi, 2013: 3917), "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." Attitude that is made can be favorably or unfavorably depends on a person realizes its advantage or disadvantages.

Attitude is also an evaluative reaction towards an object, infer on the basis of such as the person's actions or beliefs toward a target or can be a choosen thing. According to Dornyei (2010: 5), he interprets "Attitudes concern evaluative responses to a particular target (e.g., people, institution, situation)". Can be said that attitude has function to evaluate an object that can be a person, institution, situation and other targets.

Furthermore, attitude is determined by the person's feelings and beliefs about outcomes or attributes of an object's performing. When a feeling and a belief described and refers to an object means that it is the attitude. "Attitude is what a person feels or believes in. In fact it is the inner feelings of an individual which is difficult, if not impossible to describe" (Singh, 2006: 207). Attitude also as an inner feeling of individual which is not easy to just say but needs description.

In addition, attitude has a role in helping a person to express opinions, beliefs, feelings, and even to behave towards an object persons are encountering. Here, to know attitude by expressing opinions, feelings and behaviors toward an object is not useless besides the object considered valuable. Hogg and Vaughan (2005, cited in Kitjaroonchai, 2014: 6), "Attitude is defined as a system of beliefs, feelings, and behaviours toward objects, groups, events, or symbols which are considered valuable".

Based on the statements above, the researcher concludes that attitude is accepted as an important concept to understand and also evaluate person behaviors in responding an object encountered and is defined as a mental condition that includes beliefs and feelings whether favorably or unfavorably.

2. **Importance of Attitude**

Language students are not only communicators, but whole persons with hearts, bodies and minds, with memories, fantasies, loyalties, identities. While learning and acquiring a language, such as English, the students exactly behave and act whether favorably or unfavorably toward English, that for then invite the students think of the things are being done whether helpful for students' education nowdays, giving a brighter future relates to or divertingly. From what being studied, students or students behave, think and also feel at how exactly atmosphere of that language, that is a complete attitude students have towards a language. Reid (2003:33, cited in Abidin 2012: 121) declares, "Attitudes are important to us because they cannot be neatly separated from study."

Whatever the language, attitude has an important role in effecting the result of studying a language. According to Savignon (1976, cited in Krashen, 2002: 38), who states "Attitude is the single most important factor in second language learning". Attitudes showed by the students will reflect students' language acquisition. A study by

Karahan (2007: 84, cited in Al-Tamimi and Shuib, 2009: 33) avers "Positive language attitudes let students have positive orientation towards learning English."

There is exact relationship between students' attitude and the result of students' learning process. Achievement does not only rely on intellectual ability, but also on students' attitude towards the target language, means that is supposed to reach not only academic side but also social and psychological. A study that is conducted by Kiptui and Mbugua (2009, cited in Tella *et al*, 2010, cited in Abidin 2012: 121), investigates that negative attitude towards English is the most affective and psychological factor that result in the students' poor performance in English among the secondary schools in Kenya. Based on Krashen (2002: 38),

> "There seem to be three sorts of bad language students. The very worst has neither acquisition nor learning going for him. This might be the result of both attitudinal factors (lack of interest in the target language and its speakers and/or self-consciousness, high anxiety, etc.) as well as low aptitude or interest in grammar. The second language student who seems to get nothing from the class or the natural environment may be of this sort (the "remedial ESL student")."

According to this explanation, it is clearly that positive attitude is important to built or to have by students. Having positive or negative attitude infects the result of learning process. Positive attitude will

result the success in learning process and negative attitude will result failure in learning process.

3. Components of Attitude

There are some components that define an attitude towards whatever the object is. According to Wenden (1991 cited in Soleimani and Hanafi, 2013: 3817), Wenden classifies attitude into three components namely cognitive, affective and behavioral. A cognitive component is made up of the beliefs and ideas or opinions about the object of the attitude. The affective refers to the feeling and emotions that a person has towards an object, whether like or dislike, whether with or against. Finally, the behavioural component refers to a person's consisting actions.

The same components are also stated as contain of attitude in Abidin, "Accordingly, the attitude concept has three components i.e., behavioral, cognitive and affective. These three attitudinal aspects are based on the three theoretical approaches of behaviorism, cognitivism and humanism respectively" (Abidin, 2012: 121).

a. Behavioral Component

The behavioral component of attitude deals with someone's reaction and behavior toward an object or particular situations. Here is about behavioral component of attitude towards English that means dealing with how students react and behave toward

English. The reactions and behaviors that students express can be favorably or unfavorably.

b. Cognitive Component

This cognitive component of attitude deals with students' beliefs, thoughts or opinions about English that students receive and understand in the process of language learning. According to Wenden (1991) cited in Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009: 33), he defines "A cognitive component is made up of the beliefs and ideas or opinions about the object of the attitude".

c. Affective Component

Affective component that also known as emotional component refers to feelings someone has towards an object. This component deals with what students feel during English learning, whether like or dislike, with or against. Based on Feng. R and Chen. H (2009) cited in Gajalakshmi (2013: 2) states, "Learning process is an emotional process. It is affected by different emotional factors. The teacher and his students engage in various emotional activities in it and varied fruits of emotions are yield."

Based on that explanations, it can be concluded that attitude has three components. There will be actions or behaviors that are considered as the behavioral component of attitude; from someone's opinions also can be representative of attitude; and the last is a

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person's feelings when encounter the atmosphere of an object also will refer to that person's attitude. All of those three components of attitude will be included in questionnaire which is data collection tool of this research. Those three components will be measured as students' attitude.

C. Gender in Language Learning

There will be some differences in acquiring and processing a second language done by male and female, and some studies have carried out about differences in acquiring and processing a second language done by male and female. There are some kinds of differences that are investigated such as difference in doing a speech or investigation verbal fluency of both male and female, studies on male and female's mental representations in the lexicon versus the grammar, etcetera. Troike (2006: 84) states "There do appear to be some sex differences in language acquisition and processing, but the research evidence is mixed."

Considering the above concern, the researcher intends to find out whether there is difference between male and female in term of attitude towards English, especially between male and female students of SMPN 1 Boyan Tanjung. Encountering a new linguistic knowledge has not been documented as whether it is the students' most interest at or not, but both male and female surely has each way react to, feelings to also opinion to.

D. Review of Related Studies

Many studies had been conducted to explore students' attitude towards English internationally over the past years. For examples, Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) investigated Motivation and Attitudes Toward Learning English which was a Study of Petroleum Engineering Undergraduates At Hadhramout University of Sciences and Technology. The study sample consisted of 81 Petroleum Engineering Students. A questionnaire and interviews were used for data collection. The findings showed the students' positive orientation toward the English language and data for the students' attitudes revealed that most of students had positive attitudes towards the social value and educational status of English.

The findings of study by Abidin (2012) on Libyan Secondary School Students' Attitudes towards Learning English Language revealed that students had negative attitude towards English. Abidin took 180 participants in the three study years from three specializations of Basic Sciences, Life Sciences and Social Sciences as the sample and questionnaires as the instrument. Abidin also explored wheter there was significant difference in the students' attitudes towards English language based on their demographic profiles (gender, field and year of study), the finding was there are statistically significant differences regarding gender and field of study but not year of study.

Soleimani and Hanafi (2013) also conducted a study attempting to investigate Iranian Medical Students' Attitudes towards English Language

Learning. A questionnaire that consisted of 30 items is given to 40 Iranian Medical Students as data collecting instrument. The result of the study implied that Iranian Medical Students hold highly positive overall attitude regarding English language learning. There, Soleimani and Hanafi recommended that teachers should be responsive to students' attitudes and value students' attitudes and preconceptions, as attitudes could affect students success in second language learning.

Regarding the gender variable again, Gajalakshmi (2013) conducted a study on High School Students' Attitude toward Learning English Language based on gender, locality of the school, type of school, type of management. Gajalakshmi takes 600 students that were selected randomly from various high and higher secondary schools in Puducherry region. From the study that Gajalakshmi conducted, the result showed that students had average attitude towards Learning English Language and there was a significant difference based on the gender, locality of the school, type of school and type of management.