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EFL Students' Attitudes and Perception Towards English Language Learning and Their English Language Proficiency: A Study From Assa'adah Islamic Boarding School, Indonesia

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Abstract

The English language has been given the status of Foreign Language (FL) in Indonesia, unlike the language being a second language in its neighbouring countries. However, the language has becoming quite popular and dominant in certain parts of Indonesian schools, especially private schools and colleges. Thus, this investigation sought to examine the attitudes and perceptions of selected Indonesian English language learners. It also aspired to find out how these attitudes and perceptions towards the English language affect their proficiency. A qualitative research design employing the in-depth semi-structured interview was carried out with 12 students at the As'saadah Islamic Boarding School in Banten, West Java. Thematic analyses were also performed to analyse the data. The findings point to the direction of students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language. Students were found to have positive attitudes and were motivated to learn the language although learning the language might not stem from their own willingness to.

Keywords: *language learning, foreign language, analyses language*

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Introduction

Language plays a big role in the life of an individual and also in his/her social context. It functions as a tool in communication process, and also to show the status of the speaker in one's community. Language also is often associated with one's ability to communicate. For most people, speaking is as natural as waking up in the morning each day: it's a sub-conscious action which is rarely noticed. It is often associated with speech, sound, meaning, articulation, symbols and also rules. The definition of language has become a constant debate among linguists. An example of Noam Chomsky's interpretation of language is that it is associated with the innate capability of human being. He asserts:

In Chomsky's view, the most distinguishing feature of human language is "productivity" or "creativity", that is to say, human beings can produce and understand an infinite number of sentences with a limited set of grammatical rules and words. So the most important task for linguistics is to find the generative grammar of human language." (Qiu, 15).

Unlike Singapore, Malaysia and Philippine that were colonized by British, Indonesia was by the Dutch, therefore the status of English is as a foreign language in Indonesia. Since the Dutch colonized Indonesia for more than 350 years, only a handful of Indonesian received the formal education at the beginning of the colonisation. The majority of people were illiterate. The schools at that time were only attended by the Dutch's children and selected children that came from elite families and wealthy people. Western style elementary schools were introduced in 1907 and the junior high school were also established. The English language was first taught in 1914 (Lauder, 2008). During that time, English language was introduced by the school but since Indonesia was colonized by the Dutch, most of the upper class children were familiar only with Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesia Language) and Dutch language rather than English since English is not used as a medium of communication.

During World War II the Japanese came and colonized Indonesia and banned English language to be taught in school. After independence, the government set to make English as the foreign language that needed to be learned by the all students in Indonesia. This came into being as English is a Lingua Franca and used by people around the globe, not Dutch. Today, the position of English in Indonesia as a foreign language has risen in its importance and become a compulsory pass subject in examination. Students were formally taught about the basic rules and also structures about English language but it doesn't act as a medium of communication or instruction in school. Moreover, many were struggling to determine which English they should use, whether British or American. However, the more prevalent issue is that many have not been exposed to the English words, conversations or books. As Rini (2014) wrote in her article concerning the condition of English language in the Indonesian community

There is still no 'real' community of English speakers in Indonesia. A lot of people who do speak English are urban dwellers, in big cities or capital cities, generally in Java. English, having the status of a Foreign Language, has yet to go far in terms of its usage as a means of communication; it is a far-fetched and idealistic notion to change this status in the near future. The problem here is that the position of English language as a foreign language in Indonesia affects the students' motivation of learning English as it is not really being used in day-to-day communication. The students do use English in the formal education at the university level but not as much as the demand of the language on to the society.. Since English conversation is rarely used in daily life, the anxiety of using English for communication purposes such as presentations or public speaking is at all time high and has become a stigma for the students.

As'saadah Islamic Boarding School, Banten

Assa'adah Islamic Boarding school aspires to prepare and mould students to be knowledgeable Muslims who are preparing themselves to be Muslims scholars who are not only religious but also hold values as a core in life. They are also modeled to be articulate individuals, confident and believe in their abilities, valuable to the religion, the community and to the nation. The school also aspires to produce students who will then be able to disseminate the knowledge gained to the society at large.

The Purpose Of The Investigation: the objective of this study is twofold. First it seeks to examine the attitudes and perceptions of the selected Indonesian English language learners at Assa'adah Islamic Boarding. Then, it seeks to find out how these attitudes and perceptions towards the English language affect their proficiency.

This study will help teachers to consider the importance of knowing their students' aspirations in learning. There must be a connection between teachers and students in the learning process. Knowing students' aspiration in learning language will help students find their motivation, it will enhance the affective factors in learning. It is also will help teacher in creating effective classroom environment. Moreover, by understanding the students' attitude towards learning, school can improve the quality of teaching-learning process by providing more aids that can helps teacher and students to achieve the good learning outcomes. The resources are essential to help learners not only in learning, but also how to apply it in their daily life. For instance, the kindergarten students will learn vocabulary quickly using the pictures or the aids rather than just listen to the word that is given by the teacher.

Learners' Attitude in Language Learning

A good learner will try to find their own way in solving the problem that is faced by them. Attitudes are inclinations to like or dislike something – such as an idea, thing, person or behaviour – and the object of these tendencies (the thing that are being liked or disliked) is often called the attitude object (Hewstone, M., Fincham, F. D., & Foster, J, 2005). The attitude of the learners will determine the effectiveness of the learning outcome. At this point, whether male or female would have their own means to overcome the problems in dealing with language learning, especially English. Some of the experts in language learning believe that the good learner will find their own way of learning; organize the information they get about language; can feel the language by further studying the grammar and words; practicing the language inside and outside the classroom; learn from mistakes; try to communicate even though they know very little about the context as well as will learn various speaking styles to communicate differently in different situations, either formal or informal.

A study held in UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia by Muhammad Khoir (2014) stated that the students of English department in the university were aware about the importance of English language for their future. Unfortunately the awareness did not reflect the attitude of the learners. They only knew and understood the benefits of learning English but not the practical part of it. The study has also shown that there were aspects of cognitive dissonance present, which meant that there was no correlation between what they believe and their actual behavior or attitude. Khoir measured the motivational intensity of the students towards English language using Integrative and Instrumental orientation. As a result, the students dominantly studied English language based on instrumental orientation rather than integrative one. In relation to this, Lambert () has defined integrative orientation as personal interest to learn or study others' culture, languages or customs. However, instrumental orientation relates to the potential of second language learners proficiency, such as to get a better job, have a bright future or to pass a required examination.

The importance of attitude of the learners in improving the second/foreign language learning is undeniable. Brown (2000, p.160) stated that "it is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation". Furthermore, Gardner (2006, p. 241) posits that "students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels". He also said "if one is motivated, he/she has reasons (motives) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal, enjoys the activities, etc" (Gardner, 2006, p. 243). In short, the learning outcome of one person is highly determined by the level of attitude towards the subject either derived from the internal factors and he external factors such as parents, grades, and also public opinion. Both are having influence in motivating and boost the students' attitude toward learning.

The Position of English Language in Indonesia

English Language is totally foreign in the case of Indonesia. Reiterating, there are four types of languages that exist in Indonesia. Starting from Bahasa Indonesia as the main language which functions as the language of identification and the identity of the nation, regional language or Bahasa Daerah (Javanese language, Sundanese language, Batak Language, Madura language, Padang, etc), variant languages whereby the mixture of regional and Bahasa Indonesia, and lastly foreign language. Language variation that exists in Indonesia seems to affect the perception of the people regarding the priority of mastering the foreign language especially English. Thus, most Indonesians, with the exclusion of some people who live in the urban areas, are bilingual. They speak Bahasa Indonesia as the national language during formal occasions, variants of the Indonesian languages and the regional language as the mother tongue. Thus, the people who lived in the big cities such as Jakarta are those who are really concern about the importance of English language as a skill that needs to be mastered in

the pursuit of a better job and an increase of their status quo. With this in mind, some quarters tend to question the loyalty and identity of Indonesian as a whole when a foreign language is mastered.

However, according to Rini (2014) there is no conflict between preservation of the identity of the nation with the ability to sound like a native speaker in Indonesia. First, people are probably more appreciative of being able to sound more like a native speaker than like an Indonesian. They believe that sounding like a native speaker increases their status in the community as well as giving them an elevated identity. It will also build their network to the more open job prospects such as a manager, businessman and the like.

However, there is much yet to be done in the development of English language teaching and learning in the Indonesian setting. In the same vein, the enhancement of the students' ability in mastering English language also depends factors such as the books used (materials), the quality of the teachers, the students' motivation themselves, parental encouragement, surroundings and also the school curriculum. If the English language is treated to be the most essential language that every student in Indonesia must be proficient at, all of the factors mentioned must support the development of the skills in English language learning. Laufer (2008) asserts: in countries like Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines, there is a national language, or languages, and alongside this, English plays an important role as the administrative and business language of the country. This situation gives people these benefits. The policy in Indonesia has never recognized English as an official or second language. While the national language is spoken today by a majority of the population, the situation is multilingual with many also speaking one or more of the local vernaculars. (p.76)

The quote from Laufer above strengthens the argument that English language has always been seen as insignificant and irrelevant to the mass in Indonesia.

Learning English in the Formal Education in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the aim of teaching English is to develop communicative competence of the learners. This indicates the association between classroom learning and actual use of English to communicate efficiently not only with local population but mainly with the wider communities nationwide. Sahuruddin (2013) mentions that Indonesian education curriculum has changed several times during the past fifty years especially in the teaching and learning of English in tandem with the ELT methodologies development worldwide.

Sahuruddin continues by saying that the formal education obtained by Indonesian cannot be a determiner that one can have a good command of English language. The English language curriculum in Indonesia has a long way to go in terms of its implementation and practice. For example, almost every item of the English language in the junior high school is taught again in senior high school. The learning of English at schools and universities has not seen much difference over the years.

The changing of curriculum from 1984 to 1994 etc. did not really bring much difference in the real practice of teaching and learning, because both teachers and students were busy with one goal, namely passing the exam, now the national exam. If the aim of teaching of English in schools and universities in Indonesia is to make Indonesian students competitive internationally, materials used should have an impact to teachers and students and this has not happened (Rini, 2014). Linear approaches to teaching and learning would affect the motivation of the students and potentially decrease their positive attitudes towards the subject.

On the other hand, even though English is not widely used in Indonesia but it is still seen as a priority, as the most important of the foreign languages to be taught. English courses and classes can be found in many places in Indonesia, in big cities, small towns and also villages. People are willing to pay a lot of money so that they can join the course and improve their skills in English. This mismatch between the curriculum offered and the demand of the society has to be handled with caution and a lot more planning on the part of the curriculum developer in Indonesia.

Research Method

This investigation utilized the qualitative research design employing the in-depth interviews with the respondents. A set of interview questions were prepared in relation to the objectives of the study presented at the outset. 6 students from the Assa'adah Islamic boarding school who came from different states of Indonesia were selected. A convenient sampling procedure was selected to the limited given to the researchers to have access to the site and the respondents. The interview consisted of questions which aspired to inform the students' attitudes and also perceptions towards learning English in their English classroom and also outside of their classrooms. Teachers were also consulted for further discussions and approval for the interviews that were going to take place with the respondents

(students). The questions started with the basic type of queries or the warm up questions, such as their background, hobbies and the normal day-to-day schedule in the classroom.

Analysis of The Data

The data analysis and discussion of the findings are based on the investigation of the students in Assa'adah Islamic Boarding School and also their input from the in-depth interviews. The discussion is presented into several themes based on the research questions

Results and Analysis

The students' perceptions about benefits of learning the English language (Motivational Intensity, Instrumental and Integrative orientation)

Motivational intensity is defined as the strength of the tendency to either approach a positive situation or event or to escape from a negative situation or event. The Integrative orientation on the other hand is termed as "a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group" (Lambert, 1974), while instrumental orientation relates to the potential of second language learners proficiency, such as to get a better job, have a bright future or to pass a required examination. The questions posed to the respondents aimed to examine the students' interest in continuing their English language learning. Thus, the three elements stated above were used to frame the questions that will then informed the researches the types of elements they possessed in their quest for English language learning.

First, we asked the students' level of awareness of the importance of the English language in general, and based on their responses, most of them were aware about the advantages of learning the English language and the necessity of the language as well as the benefits of it. This could also mean that most of them shared the same interest about how English language can benefit them. At a first glance it was clear that the main reason of the students' motivation in learning English was related to the communication aspects of the language in that they believed English language can help them meet and speak with multitude of different people. C2 said: "English makes me... easier to make me... know about knowledge. And also if there's tourist we can communicate with them" (C2:14). The respondents felt that English will enable them to communicate with others who have the same interest, making it more enjoyable and effective. C3 added: C3: "English is important, we can speak with tourist, and communicate with other people.. very interesting." [C3: 26-28]

Moreover, there are a number of students who were concerned about their career and the path of the career that they have chosen would need a great amount of the English language. They believed the English language will help them in getting a better job, making them appear more knowledgeable and also enable them to secure a better paying job with the English language they have mastered. Ci 1 has this to say: "...my hobby is making [some] robots. Robot is technology, and the heart of technology is English (language)" [C3:36]. In the same vein C4 added: "I need to learn the English Language.. so that I can have high salary... with high salary, I can take care of my family...better" (C4: 66)

Some of the respondents said that they wanted to be accepted by the society. They believed that English language will really enable them to participate in the society freely as well as gaining respect from the community with their ability to speak in English. Besides that, they also thought that English language would help them to understand and also appreciate the western art and literature like enabling them to understand English poems, novels, movies etc. C1, C7 and C10 mentioned that they were very interested in poetry, drama and literature in English. Thus, having the knowledge in this language would enable them to appreciate the art better.

The most interesting answer that came out from the interviewee is perhaps what was commented by C6 in which he said that the advantage of knowing English is to view it as a deed or contribution as Muslims to the world. Based on his opinion, English would help a person to tell the knowledge of true religion to the world. Since Al-Quran is written in Arabic language, and not many people understand or know Arabic language as much as English, we have that duty as Muslim to share and spread the content of Al-Quran. He said:

...English is very important for us, as we know, English is the one of international language. And we, as a Muslim, we have strong book in the world that is al-Quran right? Al- Quran uses Arabic, to understand al-Quran we have to learn Arabic and to tell the knowledge from al-Quran to the world we have to use English. [C6: 10]

Two of the respondents stated that they like English because they were part of students' language council in the school. These two respondents were aware about the importance of English language, but their interests towards the language is not as much as Arabic language. There are 3 languages that are commonly used in Assa'adah Islamic boarding school; Bahasa Indonesia in general subjects like math, science, geography, history etc. Arabic language is used in Islamic studies and English in the English language subject. However, the major language that is used by the students is Arabic. Only two major English subjects taught in school, Grammar and English. Grammar is taught separately than the other skills. The English language syllabus emphasized on reading comprehension and grammar knowledge. As a result, students' fluency of the language is relatively low while Arabic language is used in the day to day conversation, therefore the fluency is higher than English. C2 and C3 said :

...it is because I am a part of language division in school so I need to learn English as example for my members. (C2: 45)

...actually, I don't really like English, because I like Arabic more than English. It is just because I took part in language council so I need to learn and speak by English. [C3: 37-38]

Parental Encouragement

Parental encouragement also plays an important role in children's motivation of learning English.. Since most of the respondents appeared to be interested in learning English, the parental encouragement is seen as vital. According to several studies done in the correlation of parental encouragement and students' proficiency in English stated that poor proficiency in English language do have correlation with level of encouragement that students receive from their parents (Krishnan. G, Nair. S , Setia. R , Mohamad. R , Zafri, Luqman. A , Vadeveloo. T & Che Ngah. H, 2014)

One of the interviewees stated that the main motivation of her to study English was her parents rather than her own will. The excerpt of the conversation with B1 is as follows:

A: alright, so what actually motivates you to learn English?

B1: the first is, my parents

A: did your parents encourage you? Or it is your own will?

B1: more to my parents' encouragement rather than my own will.. [B1: 44-47]

She also mentioned that in the past, she was only interested in math, science and chemistry subjects. However, since her parents pointed out to her about the importance of English language, she tried to be more involved in the subject related activities such as story-telling, public speaking, poem recital etc and it became her memorable experience in learning English. She added by saying:

...good experience, I can follow [participate] the story telling competition, maybe that is the first time I follow[ed] the competition in English [language] before this, I just follow[ed] competition like math, or chemistry, science, and yesterday I can follow the story telling competition. [B1: 58].

Parental encouragement does help students to develop their interest in particular subject. Most of the students felt that they received sufficient encouragement from their parents which could help them in learning English. Parents of academically motivated children have responsive relationship with their children. Research confirms that students have an eminence in school when their parents encourage and support their school activities. Although the parents are not wealthy or highly educated, they do have impact on students' impression towards English. Parents of high scorer found to be more engaging, rewarding, trusting, loving, and showed more tolerance towards their children than parents of low scorer. It is crucial for students to have the relevant and proper attitude towards learning English language in order to make the learning process smooth and effective.

Self-Efficacy

Albert bandura (1994) defined self-efficacy as:

...people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes (www. www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Bandura).

Additionally, Bandura postulates that a person who has good self-efficacy will accomplish his goal even though he found it difficult. He will face difficulties as challenges rather than threats that need to be avoided. In short, self-efficacy plays a big role in students' perception about their own ability

and made them to be more optimistic towards themselves. This is in line with the respondents in this current investigation in that they have faced an uphill battle to learn a language that is not common in the society. Despite the challenging encounter, they generally felt that they were able to carry on with the task of learning a language that is 'not popular' among many of the other students in the school. Some of the experiences are not quite pleasant. However, the expectation of the students towards themselves was very important to make sure they stayed positive about their ability. Students with poor self-efficacy will have low aspirations which might result in disappointing academic performances and thus becoming part of a self-fulfilling feedback cycle (Kirk, K., NAGT).

The respondents were aware of the benefits of learning the English language and understood the expectation on one's ability which will be high towards the targeted goal. To do well in English language is essential to achieve their personal aspirations and goals by having good proficiency in English. In the interview session all of the respondents were asked about the range of time or the possibility for a person to be fluent in English. The girls (6 respondents) tended to be more positive towards one's ability to mastering the language and mentioned the duration of 6-1 year for a fluent communication in the language. On the other hand, the boys (6 respondents) suggested a longer period in being proficient in the language ranging from 2- 4 years. The excerpts below detailed their responses to the question relating to the possible duration of time one can master the language.

The girls said:

B1: "Maybe around 3 months but with English surroundings. Like in the English village (Pare, East Java) we need to stay there for 3 months. It may help our English because it is also supported by the environment." [B1:81]

B2: "3 months... same as her. Maybe because we tend to use more Bahasa Indonesia and Arabic (in school) so it becomes a resistor for us." [B2 :82]

B3: "if it's me, maybe around 3 months. Same, might be it depends on the environment. If we go abroad. They use English and it might help us in our fluency. Rather than being here using Arabic and Bahasa Indonesia." [B3: 83]

What the boys said:

C1: "if we have good motivation, i think for the beginner it takes 2-5 years maybe." [C1:69]

C2: "that is how about us, 2-3 years maybe." [C2: 70]

C3: "maybe about 2-3 years with focus in English." [C3:71]

From the responses from both genders, we can generally conclude that the self-efficacy of the female respondents were much higher than their male counterparts.

English classroom anxiety

Anxiety is similar to fear in the sense that both implicate fairly high levels of arousal. Anxiety is often associated with the future threats. Similarly, when students are sitting for final examinations, many students will relate the difficulties they have experienced in the past and become anxious just before a test that they recognized will be difficult. Excessive anxiety in classroom will distract learners and prevent their attention on the task given. The emotional state of the students is very important in order to make teaching and learning process effective. The feelings towards English language classroom are also important to develop the students' interest towards it. The respondents in this investigation expressed similar though on the anxiety they faced whilst learning the subject. They had myriad of experiences concerning anxiety in the English language learning. Some of those experiences as stated below:

B1: "ok, the bad experience was, at that time I was trying to say 'perwakilan' in front of the class, 'perwakilan' in english is (paused) [int: delegation?] no eh, participant. But I said in front of the class 'okay every group must give one obligation.' [laugh]. Until Izza (one of her friend) questioned her..like 'what? Obligation?' Ohh..I was so ashamed..." [B1:56]

B4: "the bad experience was whenever I tried to give speech using English language. I will be very afraid that I will make mistakes. Especially if it is heard by those who can speak English better than me." [B4: 61]

B6: "so the bad experience when I became an announcer. That was my first time and very nervous. I had prepared the outline of my speech but nothing worked. It was very awkward and at last my speech was very short and straight to the main points. Everyone else laughed at me and I became very ashamed.. ya Allah.." [B6:62]

C2: "my bad experience was when I lost in a speaking contest. (C1: 39)

In short, being comfortable, relax and under unthreatening condition are very essential to help the students gain their self-trust and confidence about themselves. When a student starts doubting his abilities in a particular subject, anxiety can become a factor that gets in the way of his learning or

showing what he knows. Dr. Schuster from the Child Mind Institute notes that the students or children will show interest and engage with the teachers if there is a one-to-one activity rather than in group. They have a much easier time showing what they know in this condition rather than the whole class activity.

Students' awareness and attitude of the importance of English language

On the whole most of the respondents from the Assa'adah Islamic Boarding School were aware about the advantages of English language and the necessity of the language as well as the benefits of it. The only problem faced by the students is on the implication English language practice. Therefore, there are still a lot of improvements needed. Interestingly, most of the students associated the benefits of English language to something that they can contribute to the society. This resulted in the dominant aspect of the learners' motivation which is caused by the integrative orientation aspect rather than instrumental.

The students might see the benefit of English language which is greater in this globalization era. The awareness of the essentiality of English language is supported by the interview session with the students when they were asked about why English is important. Motivation requires activity, either physical or mental or more likely both. Physical activity entails effort, persistence and other overt actions whereas mental activity includes such cognitive actions as planning, solving problems, rehearsing, making decisions, organizing, monitoring, solving problems and assessing progression. The results displayed the basic efforts that students do to improve their proficiency in English. This means students' awareness of advantages of learning English is associated with good attitudes towards the subject itself. Students' perceptions, feelings and emotions do determine the attitudes towards something. This result is supported by the study conducted by Sekharan Nair, Roszainora Setia, Razita Mohamad, Zafri Bin Abdul Kadir, Azyanee Luqman, Thenmolli Vadeveloo & Haslina Che Ngah (2014) on the Attitude, Parental Encouragement and Perception of the Importance of English in English Language Learning.

There exists a strong positive correlation between the students' perception of the importance of English language and their attitude towards learning the language. When the students' are aware of the importance of English language, they are bound to have a positive attitude towards learning the language. The higher their degree of awareness or the more favourable their perception of the importance of English language is, the more positive their attitude towards learning the language would be...(p.21)

Gardner (2006, p. 241) also posits that "students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels". He also said "if one is motivated, he/she has reasons (motives) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal, enjoys the activities, etc" (Ibid).

However, these data have shown different results with the study held by Muhammad Khoir (2014) which said there is a cognitive dissonance between the students' awareness and attitude (the study of English department students of UIN Sunan Kalijaga). While he found there was no correlation between attitude and students' awareness of the benefits of English language, the students of Assa'adah have shown the opposite. From the interviews data of the students' attitude, it shows that they were in line with their realization of the advantages of English language. The students from Assa'adah were aware of the benefits of having fluency in English language and they worked really hard to make some improvements on their ability.

Based on the findings, most of the students have positive attitude towards English and also worked hard to improve their English language ability. However, those reasons did not imply that they were proficient in their English language. This finding is supported by Elham Dehbozorgi (2012:49) who said that "it can be concluded that attitude towards language learning and language proficiency cannot always affect each other." Nonetheless, when they were asked about their ability as compared to other students, most of them agreed that they felt other students were better than them. Even though some of them felt that they can write well enough in English to describe an event, or a person, or tell a story and they were also confident about their English comprehension and speaking skill, the anxiety still exists. Anxiety do have impact on the development of the English language proficiency. If the environment is threatening, the students will not be eager to try and practice their English language comprehension. This can result in the decreasing of their proficiency level. Although English language is considered as a foreign language in Indonesia, it can increase students' competency in passing exams, getting a good job or compete in this globalization era.

Conclusion

In conclusion, even though the researchers found that there are positivity in the respondents' attitudes and awareness of the importance of English language, it cannot be the only reason that determine learners' proficiency in English language. Johnston, (2005) on the encyclopedia on early childhood development stated that there were at least five factors that can affect language learning: social, perceptual, cognitive processing, conceptual and linguistic. Thus, attitude is not the only factor that determines students' proficiency in learning language but it can become a good starter to trigger students' desire to learn English.

Furthermore, the teachers' role in enhancing students' learning is paramount. A thorough study on how English language teachers in Assa'adah Islamic Boarding School perceive the English language teaching and learning should be carried out. In fact, the teachers' perception towards teaching the subject is vital to determine students' acceptance to the subject as well as identifying ways in which lessons can be effective given the environment such as the school understudy. Bearing in mind, positive attitudes will bring about a more motivated and enthusiastic students to participate in the learning activities, they should be more creative in their learning of the language and perhaps their expectations in learning also should change. That is why aspiration of the students towards English is also crucial, so that the goals that they have set at the beginning can be realized.

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