

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

This chapter consists of background of the research, identification of the problem, and limitation of the problem, research question, and the objective of the research. The significance of the research is also presented in this chapter.

### **Background of the Research**

Attitudes in language learning are important. As cited in Abidin, Mohammadi and Alzwari (2012), Reid (2003) stated that “attitudes are important to us because they cannot be neatly separated from study” (p. 33). It means that study and attitudes have relation so that it can influence students’ learning process. As said by Kara (2009) that “positive attitude toward any subject are frequently found to enhance students’ interest in the subject” (p. 102). In other words, there is a connection between students’ attitude and students’ interest to any subjects.

Students who have positive attitudes in learning language, especially English, are different from students who have negative attitudes. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) cited in Bartram (2010) argued that students who possess positive attitudes in learning language and target language community are called as successful learners, while unsuccessful learners tend to have negative attitudes. It can be seen from their performance in the classroom. For instance, the unsuccessful learners are often busy with themselves and they do not pay attention to teacher’s explanation.

Students' attitudes were influenced by some aspects such as innovation in the classroom, their gender and level of maturity (Gardner, 1985). First, McInnis (1976) as cited in Gardner (1985), stated that some innovations in the classroom can change the young students' attitudes. Their attitudes can change when the teacher uses various methods in teaching. Second, Gardner (1985) said that the gender difference also affects attitudes toward learning the second language. Female students are more successful in learning language than male students, and the female students also show more significantly positive attitudes than male students. Third, Gardner (1985) revealed that students' attitudes toward learning second language became less positive due to their level of maturity and education.

Teachers and parents also contribute to shape students' attitudes (Bartram, 2010). However, teachers' influence in students feeling of modern foreign language learning still have little doubt (Bartram, 2010) but Wrights (1999), cited in Bartram (2010), said "teachers are viewed by pupils as being influential agents in the forming of learners' attitude" (p.43). Instead, according to Aplin (1991), as cited in Bartram (2010), a key factor that made students drop out from the language class is because they dislike teachers. Students also have a concern on who their language teachers are. As Fisher (2001), as cited in Bartram (2010), point out some students view teacher in modern foreign language lesson as being more important than other subjects.

Parents' influence to students' attitude is significant (Bartram, 2010). However, Gardner (1968a) in Gardner (1985) differentiated two kind of parents' role to students' attitude. The first was active role.

He [Gardner] suggested that parents play an active role when they encourage their children to do well, when they monitor their language learning performance, and when they reinforce any successes identified by school. The mother who teaches additional words phrases or comments on some aspect of pronunciation is obviously displaying an active role (p.110).

Then, the other, he [Gardner] suggested a passive role which means by Gardner (1985) parents' attitudes are involved in the second language community.

To the extent that parents had a positive attitude toward the community, they would serve to support an integrative motive in the student. Parents with a negative attitude, on the other hand, would inhibit the development of such positive attitudes, even in a situation where they might actively promote second language achievement (p.110).

Based on the researcher's observation when doing an internship program at SMA Muhammadiyah 5 Yogyakarta, the students had different predilection in learning English. Students who liked English subject paid attention to the teachers' explanation. On the other hand, students who disliked the subject did not pay attention to the teachers and were busy with themselves. Those students sometimes used their phone to play games during the learning process or talked with other students so that the classroom became noisy.

The observation also revealed that male students tended to make noise, while female students tried to understand their teacher's explanation. Male

students also tried to disturb the concentration of female students by making some jokes. The observation was in line with Gardner (1985) stating that females have more positive attitudes than males in second language learning. Gardner (1985) also revealed that female students generally more successful in learning second language than do boys.

During the observation, the researcher noticed students' favorable and unfavorable attitudes. The attitudes were also known as positive and negative output from someone. If they had strongly positive desire to learn English, the output was positive or favorable attitudes. If they had less desire to learn English, the output was negative or unfavorable attitudes.

### **Identification of the Problem**

Students at Muhammadiyah 5 Yogyakarta Senior High School (*SMA Muhammadiyah 5 Yogyakarta*) who liked learning English subject showed strong desires for learning English. They attempted to understand the lesson and they concentrated in the classroom. Those students were active in classroom activities such as speaking in front of the class, working in a group and class discussion by asking something when they did not understand the teacher's explanation.

Yet, in the classroom, the researcher also met other students that showed low desires for learning English because they did not like the lesson. They felt bored and uninterested in the class. Some of them used their cell phone at the class. Instead, these students made a group consisting of students who did not like the English subject, so they felt that they had friends who had the same attitudes. The observation result showed that students had different attitudes or behaviors.

Some students liked learning English had positive attitudes, while those who did not like the lesson had negative attitudes.

The aforementioned problems found during the researcher's observation became the main discussion in this research. It focused on students' positive and negative attitudes in learning English based on factors influencing the attitudes.

### **Limitation of the Problem**

The researcher limited the problem to the students' positive and negative attitudes toward learning English at private school, called *SMA Muhammadiyah 5* Yogyakarta. Researcher decided to use senior high school students as respondents and selected private school than state school because researcher thought students at private school had different attitudes than students at state school.

### **Research Question**

Based on the aforementioned background, the researcher attempted to find out answers of a research question: what are the high school students' attitudes toward learning English language?

### **Research Objective**

Based on the research question, the researcher attempted to find out the high school students' attitudes toward learning English language.

### **Significance of the Research**

**For students.** The result of this research can enhance students' awareness of learning English. The students can also ascertain about their attitudes more deeply so that they have views what they have to do in learning English language.

**For school teachers and institution.** The result of this research can help teachers to design the lesson. Teachers can adjust the materials that are suitable with the students' attitudes or characteristics. Teachers can set up the based students' need on characteristics. The institution, here, is school can provide some policy which can support students' need in connection with learning English language. For example, is Friday English. Every Friday all of school members should use English.

**For other researchers.** This research is useful for other researchers who are interested in a similar topic. The result of this research can also be used as a reference. For example, the other researchers can find some reference from the reference list in this research as they need.

**For the researcher.** The result of this research is valuable for the researcher to increase his knowledge of students' attitudes or characteristics in learning and accepting English subject. This is very important for the researcher as a prospective teacher to be aware of and to prepare for how to teach students with many diversities of characteristics.