

Language Attitude among Form Four Students in ESL Classroom at Tebedu Secondary School, Sarawak

ESTELLA SHARON BAMBOL

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

stellayra.dorus@gmail.com

NUR AINIL SULAIMAN*

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

nurainil@ukm.edu.my

**Corresponding Author*

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ABSTRACT

Language attitude is one of the important aspects in language learning. It is the understanding of the linguistics position, perception and action towards the language. Therefore, as part of a significant role in language learning, this study is aimed to identify the language among the Malaysian secondary school students in ESL classrooms. A total of 30 participants from the form four classes in Tebedu secondary school participated in the study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data by determining the mean score. The study was employed by survey questionnaires. Overall, the finding suggested that the students have moderately positive language attitudes towards English language learning. The cognitive attitude obtained the highest mean score followed by the affective and conative attitude. The study also highlighted a few implications which concern the role of the teacher, parents and the school authority in developing a positive language attitude among the students. The findings of the study will be beneficial to those in the education field to develop an effective remedy for the problem.

Keywords: language attitude; rural school; language learning; ESL classroom; target language

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, people's mobility and connectivity has increased all across the nation. It has made the English language an important necessity as the main tool of communication. It has access to many knowledge fields, good command in the target language has become part of the requirement in order to maintain the social and international relationship. The language proficiency becomes a privilege for individuals to adjust and survive into the restructuring global. Many English speakers in many regions use English as their daily medium of communication. It has been placed as one of the highest demands to enter the field of higher education, better future jobs, and business (Imsa-Ard, 2020).

After 6 decades of independence, English language is made a compulsory subject in the Malaysia education system. The main goal of learning the target language is to develop effective and efficient communication in both social and professional situations. It is vital in order to be competitive in academics and career. As the lingua franca of the world, it is a must-know language in today's globalisation as it is a fundamental aspect in achieving a better living. By mastering the language competency, it enables people from various backgrounds and differences to communicate and socialise together.

Thus, numerous efforts have been implemented by the Ministry of Education to achieve a proficient language user. The implementation includes High Immersive Programs (HIP), Reaching for the stars, Language Carnival and even special speaking day “English Day” for the target language. Apparently, the efforts do not show any positive impact and English language is still recorded as one of the lowest passes candidates in Malaysia Education

certificate (SPM). The worrying situation has attracted varying attention from all levels. Researchers are trying to come up with solutions by searching the real issue experienced by students in ESL classrooms and found out one of the major aspects that affect language learning is the language attitude (Li & Ting, 2021). The factors should be studied well as it has been identified as one of the key features that are able to determine students' language achievement

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The poor language proficiency in rural schools is not a new issue in Malaysia. The students are known to have a poor perception towards English due to insufficient language exposure. It has blinded the students to see the importance of the target language for their future needs. The subject also has been labelled as a killer subject and becomes the main hurdle to achieve a flying colour result. Most students are reluctant to use the target language as they may fear being mock by their friends. In addition, mother tongue is favoured in the group discussion and class activities as it is more comprehended. The circumstances have made the language practice harder as students have lost their interest and began to stop practicing the target language. The subject is unfavoured due to the language complexities and comprehension difficulties (Zulkefly & Razali, 2017). Students with poor attitude tend to have problems with different areas in the target language and it was reflected in their examination performance (Mohd Nor et al., 2019). Due to the situation, this paper is aimed to investigate the language attitude secondary school students in ESL classrooms in one of the rural secondary schools in Sarawak in terms of cognitive, affective, and conative aspects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF ATTITUDE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

The role of attitude is very crucial as it is able to determine the student's success or failure in their language learning. It has a strong connection between thoughts, feelings and emotions. It governs the learning approaches exposed to a different culture and language complexities in mastering the target language. Spolsky (2000) claimed that attitudes towards language learning hints at the student's fears, feelings or thoughts in language learning. The decision in participating in language learning depends so much on learning experiences in the language learning or acquiring development stages. As a result, students with better attitudes have better proficiency compared to those who are not (Mohammad Isa et al., 2018).

Attitude is important as a social factor. It is associated with motivation as a guarantee to the students in language learning. Stern (1983) presented three types of attitudes in language learning, attitude towards community and the native speaker, attitude towards the language concern and language learning in general (Abdul Kadir et al., 2020). Reid (2003) highlighted attitude as a very important aspect because it gets along with the development of learning. It is very essential in influencing language learning achievement. The achievement is not only merely based on the student's intellectual capacity but also contributed by the positive language attitude. It is not influenced by the psychological ability and language skills but the perceptions and attitude towards the target language. The impact of negative attitude towards English is affectively and psychologically causes poor language performance beyond the boundaries. Attitude can enhance the development of learning experience, the nature of a student's behaviour and belief, culture and community which lead them to identify their tendency to learn the language (cited in Abidin et al., 2012). In the other words, successfully language proficiency can only be achieved by providing both students with a positive social and psychological aspect rather than pure academic aim.

Language attitude is between the act and the thought which can promote certain behaviours. The study of language attitude is able to expose how the students should behave to the target language that is being learned and applied in daily use. Students with a positive attitude in the target language will learn and comprehend the language at ease. In terms of linguistics, language attitude is crucial in language growth, restoration, status in the society and the student individually. It is earned from the learning experience and varies from favourability to unfavorability. In a complex construct that can be both positive and negative (Desy, 2019).

In the other point of view, attitude is one of the personal variables affecting language learning. Students with a positive attitude will have a positive direction towards the target language. It has a crucial role in language learning success and their future. Abdullah & Afshar, (2019) highlighted attitude as a capable aspect in developing the student's capability, strategy and clarifying the accomplishment for language learning. The capability to learn the target language does not only affect language and mental skill, but it also develops based on the student's attitude, opinions and perception towards the target language which can improve the whole learning environment. Students with lack of tendency and concentration in language learning will face negative attitude and discouragement (Ahmed et al., 2021).

THEORIES AND COMPONENT OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDE

Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) introduced the Cognitive-Affective-Behaviour (ABC) Model of attitudes. Rosenberg and Hovland defined attitude as a response to an early stimulus or attitude object which may or may not be observable. It is interpreted as beliefs, thoughts and opinions, emotion and relationships and behaviour towards schools and learning. The structure is strictly associated with further constructing categories as cognitive and non-cognitive foundations of learning and academic achievement. The components of attitude are associated with students' academic achievement (Veresova and Mala, 2016). It comprises three components of attitudes which are Affective, Cognitive and Behaviour. Affective component referring to the students' preferences of the language either he likes or dislikes. Meanwhile, cognition resembles how the language is accepted by the students. Behaviour component reflecting the power of a person's behavioural force which can lead to the positive or negative attitude. Affective component of attitude is known as the emotional aspect of attitude. The component is a great influence in shaping the student's language attitude towards the target language. The next component is known as the conative component or known as a behavioural attitude. It influences the positive behaviour of language learning which implicates the interest in problem-solving, information acquiring and passionately in environment learning (Liu et al., 2020).

Zulkifli and Said (2020), described three components of attitudes in hierarchy starting from cognitive, affective and cognitive. Cognitive component of attitude is described as a person's acceptance towards a subject which is founded in four interrelated steps. The steps are connecting the student's prior with the new knowledge before creating a brand-new outcome. The steps then underwent the checking stages before it could be applied on a daily basis. Cognitive attitudes are responsible for determining the student's belief and thoughts towards language learning development. On the other hand, the affective aspect is known as the emotional aspect of attitude. It has a great influence shaping the student's attitude in language learning. Conative attitude is a behaviour towards specific events that could lead a positive behaviour to be more motivated to pursue the learning goal.

Abidin et al., (2012) referred to three components of language attitude supported by the theoretical approaches of behaviourism, cognitivism and humanism. Behavioural component of attitude related to the student's behaviour and reactions in learning situations. As successful language students, they are able to promote their learning accountability on their own. They

will attempt to acquire and adopt the various features which are characterised in the target language. The component of cognitives concerns the student's perception and learning development in the target language. It is classified in situations. As successful language students, they are able to promote their learning accountability on their own. They will attempt to acquire and adopt the various features which are characterised in the target language. The component of cognitives concerns the student's perception and learning development in the target language.

Ahmed et al. (2021) indicated that component of attitude is classified as cognitive, evaluative and behavioural. Cognitive attitude is representing the impression of the language in the form of knowledge they obtained. It is classified into four stages of linking the students' prior knowledge and the current one. The behavioural component explained the manner of individual response and act in particular conditions. An effective language learning will adapt themselves in the native speaker situations, features of behaviours. Therefore, individuals with a positive attitude will demonstrate a positive behaviour towards language learning. Students are more enthusiastic in problem solving, knowledge and competencies which is valuable and encouraging emotionally. It managed to show the student's inner feelings and emotion of language learning.

Jain (2014) identified the component of language attitude as a triadic scheme. The first component, the affective attitude is claimed as the deepest component related to emotional aspect that is able to predict the students dislike and likes towards the target language. The second component, the behaviour is related with the student tendency towards an object either in verbal or non-verbal action. It comprises both action and responses which can be favourable and unfavourable towards the subject matter. It can be in the form of behaviour, statements or words. Students who have a negative language attitude would not show their dislike only by being absent during the class. Sometimes they prefer to stay in the class but do not pay attention and have no attempt to accomplish their homework. Meanwhile the students with a positive attitude will make sure to finish their homework and stay focused the whole lesson. Their positive behaviour developed from their positive experiences, friends, classrooms, teacher and their belief towards the respective lesson. On the other hand, the cognitive component is classified as an evaluation of individual opinion. However, the individual belief is not always accurate as it is formed due to the lack of information towards the subject matter. Therefore, if the students are unable to see the benefits and the significance of learning English, it may lead the students to a negative belief towards the language (cited in Setianengsih et al., 2017).

FACTORS INFLUENCES LANGUAGE ATTITUDE IN ESL CLASSROOM

For most students in rural areas, English is labelled as a foreign language. As the second language, it requires the students to learn the system of the language rules and the skills. They have no idea of proper sentence structures, pronunciation, spelling and grammar rules. More pathetically, due to insufficient practices, students find themselves unable to express themselves in the target language compared to their urban companions. These obstacles have made them unable to see the significance of second language learning. Kumar and Malekar (2017) pointed out that students in rural areas face a lot of problems in ESL classrooms. English is labelled as a difficult subject. The difficult complex of the language system has made the students unable to express themselves appropriately with proper language structures. This includes the language pronunciation, spelling, grammatical rules and language skills. Therefore, hidden behind the language complexities, these students find it pointless to learn the language and affect their actual language learning purpose.

Setianengsih et al. (2017) highlighted several factors related to language attitude which includes the language complexities, the pleasure of the students and the role of the teachers.

English has been labelled as a dry subject because it is taught in a foreign language. The mindset has been fossilised in students' perception and made it difficult to comprehend. The factors create a dull and boring learning environment due to lack of learning enjoyment. Enjoyment in language learning can be initiated by the teacher who can influence the students' language attitude. A good relationship between students and the teachers is necessary in developing a fun learning atmosphere. On the other hand, researcher also pointed out other factors such as the geographical area, sex and parent's role related to the phenomena of language attitude.

According to Damit et al. (2019), attitude is a complicated psychological aspect and the most significant contributor towards the success of language learning. The study underlines the student's motivation as the main factor that contributes to the learning attitude in ESL classrooms. It is associated with the students' preferences which involves the goal, reinforcement learning task, strategic planning and problem solving. Students with motivation will be able to decide on what to learn and how to learn. It also enables students to improve their learning behaviour and work on appropriate plans to upgrade themselves. A motivated student will always obey the instruction, completing their task and involve any learning discussion. The aspect is categorised into integrative and instrumental factors. Instrumental factor is driven when the students learn the language in order to obtain a certain goal. In contrast, integrative factors occur when students establish their relationships with the native speakers. It is related to a positive attitude towards the target language while instrumental factors are aimed at the functional reason in language learning.

Language learning is easier when the language context is in their immediate environment. Spolky and Gadner and Lambert (1959) stated that successful language learning is attached with the attitudes of the target language. On the other hand, Zulkefly and Razali (2019) discovered that in some parts of Malaysia, English is labelled as foreign language and it is insignificant to be learned formally. Therefore, the poor acceptance by the community creates a limited exposure for the students to practice the target language. Related to the situation, students in rural schools perceive English negatively because they feel more accepted to use their mother tongue or their first language. The use of English outside the class will make them alienated by others. In most rural areas, the students are largely influenced by shy mentality as well as the small mindedness of the society. The status of social context is one of the biggest influences in shaping the attitude of learning. It is the result of their parents' roles, peers and their surroundings. Other related aspects highlighted are the geographical features, lack of facilities and learning resources (Zulkefly and Razali, 2017).

RELATED EMPIRICAL STUDIES

A quantitative study conducted by Zulkiflie and Said (2020) in Kluang Secondary school, Johor, indicated a moderate positive language attitude towards English and its learning. The study identified the cognitive aspects that represented the highest mean score of attitudes towards English language learning. It indicated that the students do agree on the necessity of language learning in helping them to communicate effectively. The study however achieved moderately in affective language attitude. Students and teachers were found prefer to communicate in their mother tongue compared to other foreign languages which portrayed a negative affective attitude. On the other hand, the conative aspect of attitude indicated a negative attitude with the lowest mean score. The findings revealed that the students are not relaxed whenever they have to speak in the target language. They also admitted that they felt embarrassed to speak in the form of the class. Their act is caused by their experience being offended, embarrassed and laughed when they try to speak in the target language. However, whenever they hear their

friends being able to speak fluently and confidently, they admit they wish to have more English-speaking friends so they can practice the target language without fear.

A study conducted by Zulkefly and Razali (2019) found out that students who use English in their community will help the students to practice the language outside the ESL classroom. Meanwhile a community who does not apply English in their communication tend to develop poor language attitudes among the students. Another reason is the language complexities. Students with poor language attitude admitted they dislike the language because it is hard to comprehend. Despite knowing the necessity, the language difficulties have made the students lose their interest, feel discouraged and have no confidence to improve and learn the target language. Due to the situation, the student found it hard to pay attention and was reluctant to take part in the group discussion because the language is very difficult to comprehend. Zulkefly and Razali (2019) also discover self-motivation in language learning. Based on the interviews, students mostly do know the importance of English for future needs. Despite the unsupportive environment and parents, they have an effort to learn the target language by reading material provided in the library, watching movies, listening to English songs and even try to communicate with others. Zulkefly and Razali (2019) also stated other factors that influence language attitude in ESL classrooms including students experience, environment, equality of practices and parent roles and self-motivation.

Anwari (2019) findings emphasized on the teacher's poor teaching methodologies in ESL classrooms. Teachers were claimed to be too dominant in the class(teacher-centred) causing the students' passiveness and inactiveness which lead to their dull and unattractive lesson. In rural school, teacher is the sole reference and the authority. Therefore, the liveliness of the lesson mostly depends on their creativity. Poor teaching methodologies will create an unpleasant learning environment. Apart from that, the study also agreed with other studies and highlighted the factors of lack of practice, limited learning resources, language complexities and motivation related to language attitude.

METHODOLOGY

The participants of the study were selected based on purposive sampling where the researcher relies on her perception and judgement in choosing the participants. The sampling procedure is known as one of the most cost-effective and time-effective sampling methods available. The study were 30 students, 13 (43.3%) are males and 17 (56.6%) are female, purposely selected from six different form 4 classes at Tebedu Secondary school. The questionnaire of the survey was adapted from Zulkeflei and Said (2020) with an acceptable value of Cornbach's Alpha for the item's reliability is between 0.788 and 0.911. The participants of the study need to answer all the items by themselves sincerely as well as their demographic profile such as ethnicity and gender. A total of 45 items were applied in the questionnaires consisting of 30 positive statements and 15 negative statements. For better comprehension, the questionnaires were prepared in both English and Malay language. The items were arranged in a 5-point Likert Scale from level 1: Strongly Disagree to Level 5: Strongly Agree.

FINDINGS

The results of the study are presented based on the three components of language attitude. The first section is describing the result of cognitive attitude, followed by the affective attitude findings and finally the conative attitude result towards the English language learning. The result also identified the lowest score mean in the study that might depict the problems faced by the students while learning the language. According to Zulkiflie and Said (2020), the

indicator of the attitude is categorised as 1.00-2.33 low, 2.34-3.66 is moderate and 3.67-5.00 is high.

THE COGNITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

The cognitive component of attitude obtained the highest mean score with 3.61 (SD=2.61) indicate a moderate level of attitude. Four statements of the items indicate a high score in the study. Most of the participants agreed that being good at English will help them to study more (M=3.97, SD=2.16) and believe people who can speak English are knowledgeable (M=3.90, SD=1.97). Apart from that, the participant like their English class (M=3.77, SD=3.01) as it able to help them to create a new thought (M=3.77, SD=2.16). English language is claimed as important subject (M=3.75, SD=2.11) and do help them them to communicate effectively (M=3.67, SD=1.94). Meanwhile, the study recorded a moderate result as eight statements achieved a score between mean score 3.10 to mean score 3.63. The participants moderately agreed that the language is difficult to be applied in the real life (M= 3.58, SD=1.88) and in helping them to comprehend other knowledge (M= 3.57, SD=1.68) This is because English is a very difficult and complicated subject (M=3.43, SD 2.66). They agree that it is difficult to think and analyse the contents and summaries important point (M=53, SD 1.94) of the subject by themselves alone. However, the participants were unsatisfied with their language performance (M-3.47, SD=1.88) and some of the participants revealed that they learn the language just to pass the examination (M-3.17, SD= 2.03). The result for cognitive component is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Cognitive component of language attitude in ESL classroom English

No.	Statements	Mean	SD	Level
A1	Studying English is important because it will make me more educated	3.73	2.11	High
A2	Being good at English will help me study other subjects well.	3.97	2.16	High
A3	I have more knowledge and better comprehension when studying English.	3.57	1.68	Moderate
A4	I like my English class so much.	3.77	3.01	High
A5	Studying English helps me getting new information which I can link to my previous knowledge.	3.73	2.22	High
A6	I cannot summarize the important points in the English subject content by myself.	3.37	2.28	Moderate
A7	Honestly, I study English just to pass the exams.	3.17	2.03	Moderate
A8	I believe people who can speak English are very knowledgeable.	3.90	1.97	High
A9	Learning English helps me communicate in English effectively.	3.67	1.94	High
A10	I cannot apply the knowledge from English subject in my real life.	3.53	2.71	Moderate
A11	Studying English makes me able to create new thoughts.	3.77	1.92	High
A12	I am able to think and analyse the content in English language.	3.47	1.88	Moderate
A13	I am not satisfied with my performance in the English subject.	3.40	1.88	Moderate
A14	I think English language is difficult and complicated to learn.	3.53	2.66	Moderate
A15	English subject has the content that covers many fields of knowledge	3.63	1.92	Moderate
	Overall	3.61	2.16	Moderate

Indicator: 1.00-2.33 low, 2.34-3.66 is moderate and 3.67-5.00 is high.

THE AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING.

Affective component indicated a moderate attitude level towards English language learning with overall mean score 3.48 (SD=2.07). According to the responds, the participant agree that knowing English is a goal in their life with the highest mean score 3.83 (SD=2.3) followed by the feeling of proud to learn English (M=3.67, SD=2.15) and enjoy study foreign language like English (M= 3.67, SD 1.48) as it makes them feel good (M=3.67. SD=2.49). They also agree that they do enjoy the subject (M=3.67, SD=2.06) and feel excited for the next class (M=3.67, SD=2.16). Majority of the participant agree moderately in other statements by indicating mean score between 2.80-3.63. Despite of little interest in learning English (M=3.60, SD= 2.22) among the respondents, participants responded that they feel excited to communicate in English with the others (M=3.60, SD=2.50) and to be inquisitive in their (M=3.60, SD=1.66). They wish they could speak English fluently (M=3.63, SD=2.2) because of their interest to study English (M=3.63, SD=2.28) as it be able to build their confident more (M=3.53, SD=2.31). Two statements recorded the lowest mean score and revealed that participants dislike learning English (M=3.00 SD=1.37) and prefer to use their mother tongue than other foreign language (M=2.80 SD=1.76). The result for affective component is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The Affective Component of language attitude in ESL classroom

NO.	Statements	Mean	SD	Level
B1	I feel proud when studying English language.	3.67	2.15	High
B2	I feel excited when I communicate in English with others.	3.60	2.05	Moderate
B3	I don't get nervous when I have to answer a question in my English class.	3.27	2.58	Moderate
B4	Studying foreign languages like English is enjoyable.	3.67	1.48	High
B5	To be inquisitive makes me study English well.	3.60	1.66	Moderate
B6	Studying English makes me have good emotions (feelings).	3.67	2.49	High
B7	I prefer studying in my mother tongue rather than any other foreign language.	2.80	1.76	Moderate
B8	I enjoy doing activities in English.	3.67	2.06	High
B9	I do not like learning English.	3.00	1.37	Moderate
B10	I wish I could speak English fluently.	3.63	2.2	Moderate
B11	I am interested in studying English.	3.63	2.28	Moderate
B12	Studying English subject makes me feel more confident.	3.53	2.31	Moderate
B13	To be honest, I really have little interest in my English class.	3.60	2.22	Moderate
B14	Knowing English is an important goal in my life.	3.83	2.3	High
B15	I am excited for my next English class.	3.67	2.16	High
	Overall	3.48	2.07	Moderate

THE CONATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

The conative attitude towards language learning indicated a moderate result with overall mean score 3.31 (SD=2.07). The findings revealed that all the statements achieved a moderate response from the participants with mean score 2.77 to 3.63. The participants admitted they love to practice the target language like a native speaker does (M=3.63, SD=2.28) as the highest mean score. The study indicated moderate responses in giving their thoughts during the lesson

($M=3.23$, $SD=2.58$) and they never ask their teacher or friend whenever they missed their lesson ($M=3.27$, $Sd=2.22$). They agree that they feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other students and used to delay their homework if they can ($M=3.17$, $SD=2.06$). It made them feel anxious to speak in English ($M=3.07$, $SD=2.15$). Two statements indicated the lowest mean score of conative attitudes. Participants agree that they are not relaxed when they are asked to speak in English class ($M=2.97$, $SD=1.37$) and agree that they do not pay attention when the teacher explains ($M=2.77$, $SD=2.16$). The result for conative component are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The Conative Component of language attitude in ESL classroom

NO.	Statements	Mean	SD	Level
C1	Speaking English generally makes me feel anxious.	3.07	2.15	Moderate
C2	Studying English helps me to have good relationships with friends.	3.40	2.05	Moderate
C3	I like to give my thoughts during English lessons.	3.23	2.58	Moderate
C4	I am able to make myself pay attention during studying English.	3.63	1.48	Moderate
C5	When I hear a student in my class speaks English well, I like to practice speaking with him/her	3.53	1.66	Moderate
C6	Studying English makes me more confident	3.40	2.49	Moderate
C7	Studying English helps me to improve my personality.	3.53	1.76	Moderate
C8	I delayed my English homework if I can	3.17	2.06	Moderate
C9	I am not relaxed whenever I have to speak in my English class.	2.97	1.37	Moderate
C10	I feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other students.	3.10	2.2	Moderate
C11	I like to practice English the way native speakers do.	3.63	2.28	Moderate
C12	I wish I could have many English speaking friends.	3.53	2.31	Moderate
C13	When I miss the class, I never ask my friends or teachers what I missed in class	3.27	2.22	Moderate
C14	I do not feel excited to come to English class.	3.40	2.3	Moderate
C15	I do not pay any attention when my English teacher is explaining the lesson.	2.77	2.16	Moderate
	Overall	3.31	2.07	Moderate
Indicator: 1.00-2.33 low, 2.34-3.66 is moderate and 3.67-5.00 is high				

DISCUSSION

The finding of the study indicated a moderate cognitive attitude towards English language learning. students agreed that being good at English language assists their study more as it helps them to create a new thought and believe people who can speak English are more knowledgeable. The students also agree that English is an important language as it helps them to communicate effectively. The findings of the study also stated in Ratnadewi et al. (2020) and Zulkiflie and Said (2020) where English language is claimed as a crucial subject which can help to gain more knowledge and understanding. The target language is very essential in improving the communication skill either in formal or informal situations. Meanwhile, the students moderately agreed that the language is difficult to be applied in their real life and in helping them to comprehend other knowledge because English is a very difficult and complicated subject. The language difficulties made it hard to think and analyse the contents and summaries of important points of the subject by themselves. Then again, the students were dissatisfied with their language performance and some of them revealed that they only learn the language just to pass the examination. The findings of the study are also depicted in Kumar and Malekar (2017) and Zulkefly and Razali (2019) where both studies pointed out that

students in rural areas face a lot of problems in ESL classrooms and one of the reasons is because English is a difficult subject. Setianengsih et al. (2017) supports the findings as language complexities are one of the reasons that killed the students' learning interest. English is labelled as a dry subject by most students because it is taught in a foreign language. The situation has made the target language more complicated and difficult to learn.

Affective component indicated a moderate attitude towards English language learning. Students do recognise knowing English is a goal in their life and feel proud to learn the target language. They do enjoy studying foreign languages like English as it makes them feel good. Despite little interest, they enjoy the subject and feel excited for the next class. The students also feel excited to communicate in English with the others and to be inquisitive to study. They wish they could speak English fluently because of their interest to study English help to build their confident more. The findings of study also depicted in Setianengsih et al. (2017) where the researchers highlighted the importance of enjoyment in language learning to increase the student's engagement and involvement during the lesson. Meanwhile, in Ratnadewi et al. (2020), the study also indicated that the students feel proud and interested to learn English. The target language learning managed to build a good confident level in speaking while enjoying the learning activities. Some students indicated their dislike of the subject and prefer to use their mother tongue rather than other foreign languages. A quantitative study conducted by Zulkiflie and Said (2020) also highlighted the same findings and found out that the students preferred to communicate in their mother tongue compared to another foreign language which portrayed a negative affective attitude.

The conative component towards language learning indicated the lowest moderate attitude result. The findings revealed the students love to practice the target language the way a native speaker. They do use their thoughts during the lesson. It is also highlighted in Ratnadewi et al. (2020) where the study revealed that the students do love to speak English and wish they can speak with better English speakers. The same findings are also depicted in Zulkiflie and Said (2020) where students expressed, they love to hear their friends being able to speak fluently and confidently and they wish to have more English-speaking friends so they can practice the target language without fear. However, they never ask their teacher or friend whenever they missed their lesson. They agreed that they feel uncomfortable speaking English and used to delay their homework if they can. It made them feel anxious to speak in English. The situation was also found in the study conducted by Zulkiflie and Said (2020) and Zulkefly and Razali (2019) where the students felt embarrassed to speak in front of the class because of their bad experience being offended, embarrassed and laughed whenever they try to speak in English language. Zulkefly and Razali (2017) supported the findings and stated that the situation normally occurred in rural areas where it involved other aspects such as peers, teachers, parents and the community around them. The circumstances somehow have succeeded to lead to their passiveness, lack of confidence and fear of trying to improve their competency. According to the responses, the students stated that they do not relax when they have to speak in English class and do not pay any attention when the teacher explains in the classroom. The result of the study is also highlighted in Zulkiflie and Said (2020) where the students also face the same situation whenever they are asked to speak in the target language.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

A few vital implications have been underlined to highlight particularly the authority of school, teachers and parents. The school authorities are responsible for inventing a positive learning environment to build a positive language attitude among the students. This might include the intervention programs for examination class and related school's activities to spark the interest in learning English. As for the teachers, it is important for the teacher to build a positive

relationship among all students to allow active participation and relieve their anxiety. For example, teachers can encourage their students' participation by implementing a variety of teaching methods and inject the fun element in their classroom. Most importantly, the activities must be able to cater to the student's needs and interests. It will help to develop the students confidence and increase their class participation. At the same, it is able to build a positive learning environment that can occupy the students to learn. In the other words, the teacher should try to make the class as comfortable as can be in order to minimize the disliking attitudes from her students.

On the other hand, students should be good in their attitude when they are in English class. As they know English language is important, they should pay attention to the lesson despite being carried away with the dull and boring situation. To avoid boredom, they should be more participative and confident to use the target language in the class. Besides that, as a second language student, it is common to see other students use English wrongly. They should realize their weakness and develop their positive attitude to develop their learning motivation. As for the parents, they should be attached directly with their children's learning at home. They should help to cultivate positive attitudes towards English language. Parents can support their children's learning by providing sufficient material like English books, dictionaries and magazines.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study aimed to identify the language attitude among the form 4 students in Tebedu rural secondary school in Sarawak. The findings of the study revealed that the form four students have a positive cognitive language attitude but a moderate affective and conative language attitude. Basically, the students do know the importance of English as it be able to help them to gain new thoughts and ideas. They love to learn the target language and hope they will have a lot of English speaker friends so that they can practise the target language without fear. However, the language is labelled very difficult and affects their language comprehension. The difficulty of the language occurred due to insufficient language exposure, peer pressure and lack of language practice. The findings of the study provide an insight on the phenomena of language attitude towards English in Malaysia especially in rural areas. It is hoped that it will be able to provide general information that helps to develop an effective remedy for the problem. It also encourages future researchers to conduct a similar study to investigate the language attitude among the poor students in Malaysia and the factors that influence the learning attitudes in ESL classrooms.

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Estella Sharon Bambol is a teacher in SMK Tebedu. She obtained her Diploma in Teaching from Batu Lintang Training College, Sarawak (2001) and her Degree in ESL from UNIMAS (2008). She is currently pursuing her master's degree in TESL in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Nur Ainil Sulaiman is a lecturer at Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and her areas of interest are second language reading and vocabulary acquisition.