

**STUDENTS' ATTITUDE IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE**

THESIS

Submitted by

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
2024 M / 1445 H

THESIS

Submitted to *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*
Unuversitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching



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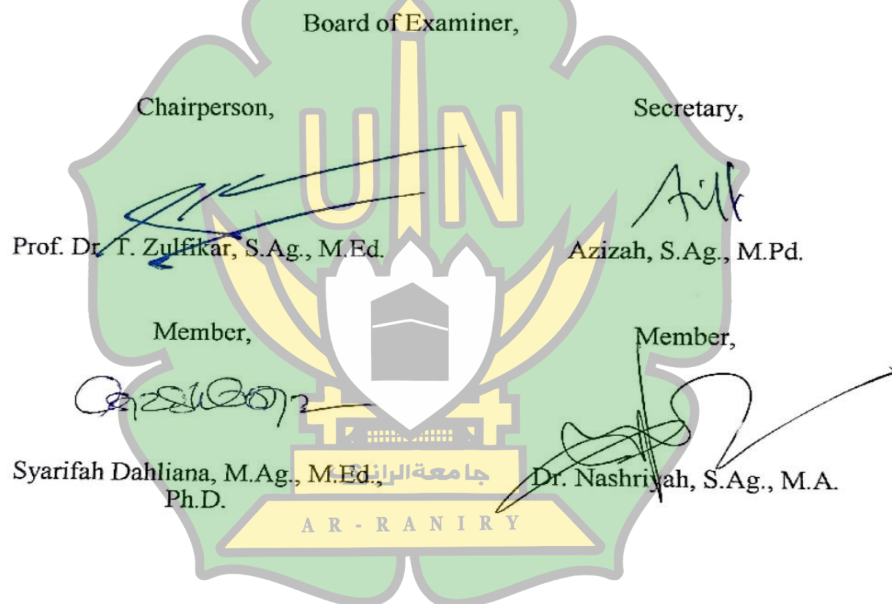

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Date: 27 / 11 / 2023

It has been defended in *Sidang Munaqasyah*
in front of the board of the Examination for the working paper
and has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching

On:

Wednesday, 31 May 2024
25 Dzulqaidah 1445

In Darussalam, Banda Aceh



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SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN
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Menyatakan dengan sesungguhnya bahwa skripsi yang berjudul:

Students' Attitude in Learning English as a Foreign Language

adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan didalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggungjawab saya. Demikianlah surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

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Saya yang membuat surat
pernyataan,


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

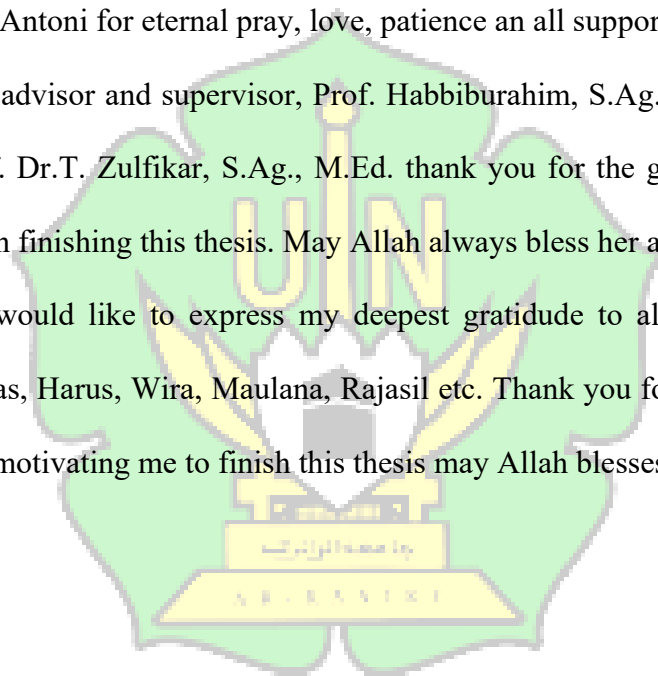
In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

First of all the writer's deepest thank To Allah SWT, the lord of the universe an to our prophet Muhammad SAW, may peace and blessing be upon him, his family and his followers.

I would like to express my gratitude to my beloved mother Asmawati and my father Edy Antoni for eternal pray, love, patience an all supports.

To my advisor and supervisor, Prof. Habbiburahim, S.Ag., M.Com., MS., Ph.D and Prof. Dr.T. Zulfikar, S.Ag., M.Ed. thank you for the great patient and contributions in finishing this thesis. May Allah always bless her and her family.

I also would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of my friends especially; Anas, Harus, Wira, Maulana, Rajasil etc. Thank you for always giving inspiration an motivating me to finish this thesis may Allah blesses them all.



ABSTRACT

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Thesis working title : Students' Attitude in Learning English as a Foreign Language
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Keywords : Students' attitude; Learning English

This study aimed to explore two key aspects of English language learning at SMPN 3 Lawe Alas: students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language and the specific obstacles they encountered. Adopting a quantitative approach, the research utilized a questionnaire to collect numerical data on students' attitudes, behaviors, and responses, focusing on motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence. The questionnaire, adapted from established sources and consisting of 25 Likert-scale statements, was distributed to 30 seventh-grade students. The findings of this study showed that students generally had a positive attitude towards English, with notable areas of neutrality suggesting potential for enhanced educational focus. A significant proportion of students experienced anxiety related to social and performance aspects, and self-confidence in English varied widely. The primary challenge identified was in mastering grammatical aspects, particularly tenses, while comprehension of vocabulary and practical application of language skills were lesser concerns.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses the background of the study, research question, the aim of the study, the significance of the study and it is followed by the terminology.

A. Background of the Study

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. A foreign language that may be learned as an elective at school is not often utilized in the learners' immediate social setting. Several issues arose with studying English as a second language. First, there is the hourly teaching restriction. Students in Indonesia are only allowed to study English for four hours a week. Next, a lack of exposure causes students to lack confidence in their English language acquisition. These issues cause pupils to view studying English as a foreign language negatively.

Students' attitudes have a significant role in determining their level of competency when learning English as a second language. Motivations, attitudes, concerns, learning successes, IQ, and personalities can all have an impact on students' English language acquisition, according to Abidin et al. (2012). Khan (2016) adds that one of the most important aspects of learning a foreign language is attitude, and that attitude plays a significant part in piquing students' interest and enthusiasm to study. Furthermore, positive attitudes in pupils indicate that they are motivated and excited to study the target language. According to Al Noursi (2013)

research, pupils that have a negative attitude tend to perform poorly, and vice versa. Thus, the mindset of the students is crucial in English learning.

Numerous studies have explored student attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language. For instance, Al Noursi (2013) examined the attitudes of students at Technology High School towards English learning, discovering a generally positive outlook. This research also indicated that the presence of native or non-native English teachers does not alter this positive stance. Similarly, Eshghinejad (2016) investigated both male and female students at Kashan University, finding that attitudes towards English, encompassing behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects, were predominantly positive. In contrast, a study by Abidin et al. (2012), which focused on Libyan secondary school students, revealed a negative attitude towards English learning based on behavioral, cognitive, and emotional criteria. Additionally, this study noted significant differences in attitudes based on gender and field of study, although not year of study.

Numerous studies on students' attitudes towards English learning have been conducted globally, yet this topic remains underexplored in Indonesia. However, Jaliyya and Idrus (2017) addressed this gap by examining the attitudes and perceptions of EFL students at Assa'adah Islamic boarding school in Banten, West Java, regarding their English proficiency. Utilizing a qualitative research design, the researchers conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 12 students to gather data. The results revealed that the students held positive attitudes towards

learning English and were motivated to improve their proficiency. Furthermore, they recognized the significance of acquiring English skills.

The discussion above highlights that students' attitudes towards learning English are vital in shaping their educational experience. Despite its importance, research on this aspect remains limited in Indonesia. Consequently, there is a pressing need for comprehensive research dedicated to exploring this critical factor more thoroughly. Previous studies, such as those by Ellis (2004) who emphasized the importance of students' attitudes and motivation in language acquisition, and Dornyei (2007) who linked these attitudes with actual classroom outcomes, provide a foundational framework for this inquiry. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations to collect data from 30 seventh-grade students at a public junior high school. It specifically examines the students' attitudes toward learning English as a foreign language and how these attitudes reflect in their English learning process. The methodology aligns with Nguyen and Baldauf's (2010) emphasis on the need for diverse data collection methods to fully understand learners' attitude dynamics in language learning settings.

English, as a globally recognized language, is essential for those aiming to become well-informed and educated individuals. As such, it is an important subject in school curriculums, reflecting the expectation that proficient English speakers will positively influence schools, communities, and the broader world. Therefore, it is advisable to introduce English education at the elementary level, enabling students to begin learning from an early age.

Language has a central role in the intellectual, social, and emotional development of students and is a support for success in learning all areas of study. Therefore, the main purpose of learning English is directed to improve students' ability to communicate with English, both orally and in writing. Merely understanding the theory of English grammar, including structure and vocabulary, is insufficient. Regular practice in speaking English is essential, as it helps individuals become accustomed to forming and articulating sentences fluently.

B. Research Questions

Before the inquiry can begin, the research question must be written down. Its goal is to assess current uncertainty in a topic of concern while emphasizing the need of a researcher's deliberate investigation. The researcher formulates study questions as follow:

1. How do SMPN 3 Lawe Alas students feel about learning English as a foreign language?
2. What problems do SMPN 3 Lawe Alas students have when they are learning English?

C. The Objectives of Study

Based on the above research questions, I formulated the objective of this study below:

1. To find out students' attitudes toward learning English as a foreign language at SMPN 3 Lawe Alas.

2. To find out the obstacles SMPN 3 Lawe Alas students experience in learning English.

D. Research Significance

This research provided three significant benefits: theoretical, practical, and professional. Theoretically, the findings supported the theory regarding Junior High School students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language. Practically, the findings benefited Junior High School students by correlating positive attitudes towards learning English with positive outcomes, and similarly, negative attitudes with less favorable outcomes. The study also revealed how these attitudes manifested in students' learning behaviors. Professionally, the findings helped English teachers better understand their students' attitudes, enabling them to enhance their teaching methods and ensure students more effectively grasped the material presented.

E. Delimitation of The Study

To focus the scope of this study, the participants were confined to seventh grade students at SMPN 3 Lawe Alas, a public Junior High School in Aceh Tenggara. Additionally, the research concentrated solely on examining the attitudes of these students towards learning English and how these attitudes are reflected in their learning behaviors.

F. Terminology

To ensure clarity and prevent any misunderstandings, the researcher has defined several key terms used in this study:

1. Attitude

Attitude refers to a person's opinions that influence their thoughts, feelings, and reactions towards a person or an object. Kim (2001) describes an attitude as a person's positive or negative evaluation of an object or concept in particular. It is important to note that there are no right or wrong answers when assessing attitudes. In this research, the term "attitudes" pertains to how students perceive learning English as a foreign language. This was investigated using students' questionnaires, interviews, and observations during classroom learning.

2. EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

EFL refers to English when it is learned in a non-native setting, where English is not the commonly spoken language. Gebhard (2006) defines EFL as English taught to individuals in countries where English is not the native language. Brown (2001) further explains that a foreign language is typically not used by students outside their classroom environment. In this research, the term "EFL" denotes the framework used to support the study's objectives, where English is considered a foreign language.