

THE EXPLORATION OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS BI/MULTILINGUALISM ACQUISITION: A CASE STUDY OF NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

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Abstract

Attitudes refer to the behavior of how people respond to their own language or are being taught. A qualitative research design with 27 students of Non-English Major at Private University. The collected data was questionnaire and in-depth interview. The data were analyzed using the percentage analysis and thematic analysis. The result indicates students' attitudes towards L1, L2, L3, L4 etc. In opinion, L1 and L2 were still maintained and used in daily activities, whereas foreign languages such as L3 or L4 seem to get much more exposure through social media or formal domains. In the feeling aspect, the majority of students were excited to learn their languages that were implemented in the classroom due to challenging and fun. However, foreign language as their L3 or L4 was still distracted from learning in the classroom. In language use, L1 and L2 are used in the surrounding environment for communicating with their relatives, friends, and etc., L3 or L4 seems to be required for formal domain, social status and future career. Building on these results, techniques and strategies could be applied in the classroom and the parents could encourage their mother tongues to use in a certain place and keep on maintaining to encourage students' attitudes.

Key words: attitudes, language acquisition, bi/multilingual students

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Introduction

Attitudes and language learning are inextricably linked (Yosintha, 2020). She adds that attitude is a valuable behavior in response to the language, either their own or that which is being taught, that influences learners' participation in language learning. Attitudes are constructed by a set of beliefs in people's mind and acted in their performance in their community (Brown, 2000). Attitudes can have either negative or positive reactions, so that attitudes play a crucial role in encouraging learners' thoughts and behavior. Positive attitudes will lead to more successful language learning. In addition, According to Ibararan, Lasagabaster, & Sierra (2008); Peric & Radic (2021), positive attitudes are supposed to make people think more creatively and have desires to learn their languages that could give an impact on their successful language learners, whereas negative attitudes tends

students feel stressed that can bring unsuccessful in learning language.

Several studies have been carried out on attitudes and language acquisition. Liando's study found that bilingual classes can give a positive impact on language acquisition and language learning achievement (Liando, 2012). In another study, the attitudes towards language acquisition in EFL learners in Darrehshahr, Ilam, Iran conducted by Zeinivand, Azizifar, and Gowhary (2015), they claimed that the success of language acquisition can be affected by the affective factor that is a critical component in the process of learning a second language. On the basis of their exposure and experiences, engaging in conversation in both formal and informal settings can determine their level of linguistic proficiency. Another study was conducted by Moritanos-Johnston (2018), positive attitudes bring success in language acquisition and increase their

optimistic feelings that can give an impact on easily learning a language. Similar concerns are pointed out by Istiyani's study (2014), a learner's personality plays a role in acquiring the language. Learners' personality can be established by their experiences that could lead their attitudes towards their language acquisition and learning. According to Qingquan, Chatupote, & Teo (2008), learners can govern their language experiences by active participation in such as any language clubs, language self-centers, or investing their time to read books, magazines, newspapers, and so forth. Consequently, acquiring and learning languages is easier and more efficient.

Based on the previous research, language acquisition can be affected by formal and informal settings. Both settings established learners' linguistic competences that were generated by their experiences and exposure. Learners can change their attitudes, feelings and emotions based on their experiences, settings, and function or goals of the conversation. Positive and negative attitudes have an important role in being successful learners in diverse settings. This, teachers and parents are role models to shape their learners' attitudes in the classroom and outside the classroom. The strategies and approaches that can be employed by teachers and the rules generated by their parents can influence their attitudes towards their language acquisition and learning. In this case, the researchers investigated the attitudes towards language acquisition and learnt in the classroom or outside the classroom.

In this case, this study concerned on non-English major students who used language learning and acquisition among students placed equal emphasis on local or mother tongue languages as well as official regional languages. Based on the explanation, the formulation of the research problem was "What are students' attitudes

towards languages they acquired and learned?

Learners' attitudes towards Bi/Monolingual Acquisition

Language attitude depends on the learners. When they transmit their confidence and express their new language to the addressee that can give impact positive attitudes for the speaker and listener whereas the speaker was doing not well in transmitting their language gives an impact on negative attitudes towards their language. Moreover, the success of conversation depends on the speakers who used that language (Rossi, & Saneleuterio, 2016).

Furthermore, the increase in student's attitudes toward the languages have some factors. One of the factors is motivation. According to Calderon & Morilla (2018). The motivation has an effect to increase the students' desires to learn a new language. It is affective factor that change their behaviour to encourage them how they can be successful for any purposes or achievements in learning a new language whether it is a long-term goal of short-term goal. Moreover, the languages can be acquired in the environment where the use more than one language could be happened in place that is called bilingualism. Bilingualism and multilingualism emerged due to the process from a society where the individual or group from any original place brings their original languages to the particular place. Moreover, the languages used in one community are closely connected (Baker, 2001).

Bilingual or monolingual presented highly complex socialites (Butler, 2012). The substances, function, interlocutors, psychological conditions, social setting can give an impact on how learners use each of their languages, so that alternative languages could be used in a diverse setting. According to Baker (2001), languages used in one community are

closely connected. One community has exacted more than one language to have successful conversation. The dominant and the balanced languages used at the same time or in place predispose the functional ability where learners accept and produce the particular language. According to Rossi, & Saneleuterio (2016), the success of conversation depends on the speakers who used that language and the context in which has an impact on the people to increase proficiency levels. Thus, learners could have recognized linguistic codes that they can learn simultaneously or sequentially and language status (Hamers & Blanc, 2000).

Simply, learners feel stressed and distracted to alternate between their languages when they communicate informally and formally. When they transmit their confidence and express their new language to the addressee that can impact positive attitudes for the speaker and listener whereas the speaker was not doing well in transmitting their language gives an impact on negative attitudes towards their language. Basically, attitudes towards language acquisition and learning languages depend on learners' motivation. According to Calderon & Morilla (2018), the motivation that is one of the factors has an effect on increasing the student's desire to learn a new language. It is an effective factor that changes their behavior to encourage them how they can be successful for any purposes or achievements in learning a new language whether it is a long-term goal or short term goal.

Research Method

The method used was qualitative research to investigate students' attitudes towards bi/multilingual acquisition. According to Creswell (2009, p. 4), qualitative research is an investigation and understanding of what individuals or

organizations consider to be a social issue. It is used to better understand the mechanisms and causes of social phenomena.

This research was conducted at Private University located in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia. The participants were the first-term of the Communication and Islamic Broadcasting (KPI) program study. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select the sample with the total of 27 participants in the age around 19 - 38 years.

The participants were multiethnic and multilingual individuals who had learned regional tongues including *Acehnese, Palembangnese, Bataknese, Malay, Sundanases, Minangnese, and Kampar* and *Javanese* and official language, such as *Bahasa*, and foreign languages in Indonesian Country, such as *Mandarin, English, and Korean*.

The instruments used were the questionnaire and in-depth interview. The questionnaires were adapted from Orwig (1995). The questionnaires were in the form of a Likert-Scale from 1 to 4 points (strongly agree to strongly disagree), with 22 items of question including opinions, feelings, and language use. To ease and avoid misinterpretation, the questionnaire was translated into Indonesian. To collect a large amount of information about the attitudes, in-depth interviews are employed. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), In-depth interviews allow for greater flexibility and allow participants to describe their experiences and perspectives. In this study, five students were chosen as interview volunteers to serve as resource persons and ask questions about the students' attitudes towards their language acquisition. To analyze the data, the percentage analysis used to transcribe the data based on the collected data.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the findings, students' attitudes towards their bi/multilingual acquisition. The attitudes in terms of opinion, feelings and language use. Based on the interview, students claimed that they are multilingual individuals. Excerpt 1 admitted by D: "*I acquired more than languages including Sundanese, Bahasa, English and Arabic.* K stated in excerpt 2:" *I acquired Javanese, Bahasa and English*". It is stated by W in excerpted in 3: *I almost use my languages, such as Palembangnese, Bahasa, and I*

sometimes use English in the classroom. In this case, the majority of students acquired and learnt more than one language. L1 as their mother tongue used in their home, L2 used in their environment, L3 used in the classroom.

Regarding opinion towards their language acquisition, the majority of students with percentage strongly agree and agree (96%) admitted that the use of their L1 was necessary to practice in their environment. Their interaction with their parents and relatives used a first language that was supported by their parents and their surrounding environment.

Tabel 1. Attitudes towards local languages

Items	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I prefer to speak using my first language (mother tongue) rather than L2, L3, and so on.	40%	56%	4%	0%
2	It is important for me to acquire my parents' languages.	20%	56%	4%	20%
3	My parents are always supposed to help me acquire my mother tongue.	7%	48%	4%	41%

Based on the interview data, one participant named pseudonym S stated in Excerpt 4: "*My local language was my mother tongue that I always use in daily activities, whereas English is employed in the classroom*". L stated in Excerpt 5: "*I would like to maintain my local language with my relatives*". This proof is in line with what Rizqy (2017), the use of local language tends to be used in informal settings and less formal domains. Where and when are considered to use alternate languages. In this case, the use of local

language as consideration to practice or to communicate with whom they talk to or place in a formal or informal setting. Moreover, a local language (L1) was still maintained and supported by their parents, so that the students still preferred to employ their local languages as well as their mother tongue.

Majority of students with a percentage of strongly agree and agree (95%) claimed that L2 and L3 used in social media and television programs and any digital information using *Bahasa* support their improvements of L2 and L3.

Tabel 2. Attitudes towards *Bahasa* (L2 or L3)

Items	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
5	Social media, television programs and any digital information support my <i>Bahasa</i> .	40%	56%	4%	0%
12	I can learn languages through social media and any other digital platforms.	7%	56%	37%	4%

Besides, the results of the questionnaire show that 61% preferred social media and other digital platforms as a medium

to learn their language, which was supported by the interview data. Participant named D in Excerpt 6: *in*

acquiring my mother tongue, my environment supported my language improvement, whereas Bahasa, English and Arabic are encouraged by my teachers in the classroom and social media used to lead me being self-learner and beyond social media I could explore my cultural knowledge and information. Participant named W in Excerpt 7 stated: In acquiring my language, I could improve them through schools, courses, and social media to support my language acquisition. Similarly, L in Excerpt 8 stated: Besides, taking a course and school, social media supports my language improvement. This evidence is in line with Alencar (2018). According to the findings, social media networking sites were especially important for refugee participants to acquire language and cultural competences, as well as to

build bonding and bridging social capital. Besides, school and courses were taken to enhance their language acquisition, social media used to access cultural language employed in target settings.

Regarding their opinion towards L3, L4, and etc. The majority of students admitted L3 and L4 as their foreign languages that they learn in formal settings. L3 and L4 were required to learn for any purposes, such as their career future with percentage of strongly agree and agree (59%) and social status with percentage of strongly agree and agree (75%). Meanwhile, L3 and L4 were sparsely practiced in their environment that made students feel arduous with a percentage of strongly agree and agree (78%). It is displayed in Table 3.

Tabel 3. Attitudes towards L3, L4 and others as foreign language

Items	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
6	I believe in learning L3 or L4 as foreign languages help me get a better job	11%	48%	37%	4%
7	I learn L3 or L4 as foreign languages seriously	37%	63%	0%	0%
8	I learn L3, L4 or others as foreign languages due to the increase of my social status.	42%	33%	25%	0%
4	I am arduous in learning L3, L4 or foreign languages not employed in the surrounding environment.	22%	56%	12%	0%
9	I often consider improving my knowledge of L3, L4, and other foreign languages.	37%	63%	0%	0%

L3 and L4 as their foreign languages that they learnt in a formal setting due to some purposes, such as getting a job, social status, and the demands of their environment. Besides, the questionnaire data tends to show that learning foreign languages is important in their life. In line with interview data, participant named D claimed “*L3 and L4 used for having relationships and getting careers better*”. Similarly, W states “*English as L3 is crucial for future career and makes it challenging to learn better*”. Furthermore, Oroujlou, & Vahedi (2011)

stated that the dominant language in the target country seems to be required in the dominance language community that could support their career and education.

Regarding students’ feelings, learning L3 or L4 as foreign languages makes them negative, such as trembling and breaking out with a percentage of strongly agree and agree (89%). According to Oroujlou, & Vahedi (2011), students with negative feelings or demotivation in learning foreign languages could be encouraged by implementing techniques and strategies

in their classes that immerse students in language learning.

Meanwhile, a positive feeling was established when they claimed learning a

new languages is challenging and fun with a percentage of *strongly agree* and *agree* (67%).

Tabel 4. Feelings towards their language acquisition

Items	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
10	When I have to speak in front of people while learning L3, L4 or others as foreign languages, I tremble and almost break out in a cold sweat.	15	74	11	0
11	I feel learning new languages I learned is challenging and fun	0%	67%	33%	0%

Based on the interview data, participant named D claimed “*feel stressed and confused to learn languages because of the demands from my environment.*” On the other hand, W states “*learning a new language because of my desires*”. However, students feel comfortable talking and expressing themselves in more than one language; they will transmit that confidence to the next speaker and be more open to learning new languages (Bartrum, 2010, 41).

Regarding students’ language use, L1 and mother tongue tends to use in interacting with parents, friends and people who were in their surrounding environment with percentage of strongly agree and agree (96%), whereas the use

of L1 or mother tongue still employed to the strange people, the majority claimed that the use their L1 or mother tongue is polite to use when they talked to the people who understand their language with percentage of strongly agree and agree (70%).

In official language, *bahasa*, majority students claimed that official language was used for academic setting. It could be learnt for interacting with people in an academic setting with a percentage of strongly agree and agree (67%). Students had also learnt L3 or L4 as their foreign languages for interacting with foreigners with a percentage of strongly agree and agree (89%).

Tabel 5. Language use

Items	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
13	I use my local language to interact with my friends and parents and people surrounding me.	15%	78%	4%	0%
14	It's impolite for me to speak in my native language in front of people who don't understand it.	0%	30%	63%	7%
15	It is critical for me to learn the official language of my country so that I can communicate with others in an academic setting.	26%	41%	0%	15%
16	It excites me to learn languages (L3 or L4) in order to interact with people from other countries.	19%	70%	11%	0%

Based on the interview data, the use of languages depends on the topic and the participants with whom to talk to. In this case, the topic is considered to use what languages are suitable that I can apply in

a particular setting. In Excerpt 8 stated by D: “*I consider the topic in which particular place*” in Excerpt 9, it stated by L: “*I use a language depending on the audience*”. In excerpt 10 stated by W: “*In the classroom, Bahasa and foreign*

languages are used frequently, meanwhile, in my surrounding environment, I use host languages". According to Zeinivand, Azizifar, and Gowhary (2015), students alternate their language by considering the places. Moreover, their exposure and experience could encourage what languages they choose for communicating with audience. It is in line with Antonova-Ünlü, Sağın-Şimşek, Ateşman, & Lozovska, (2015), people are capable of using both languages simultaneously depending on their needs and communicational contexts.

Conclusion

The present study aims to describe the attitudes in terms of opinion, feeling and language use. Based on their opinion toward their language acquisition, local languages are their preference to use in their surrounding environment. They talked to their parents, relatives, friends and neighbors more comfortably. Even though the topic and the audience are their consideration what languages they choose and use to make conversation more interactive as well as maintain their mother tongue that was supported by their parents. Regarding their L2 and L3 acquisition referring to official language, *Bahasa is used* in social media and formal settings, such as courses and schools. The use of social media is one strategy that students applied for increasing language improvements. In this case, social media is an alternative way to access more information regarding cultural language in certain places that can be learnt by students. In line with the purposes of language use, future career, social status, having relationships are reasons why students learn their language, especially, foreign language in their country. They believe in that foreign languages, English, Mandarin, and Korean that could support their purposes or goals in their life. Whereas they felt stressed and it was

hard to practice in their environment. Strategies and techniques could be handled by teachers in their classes to increase their motivation and to establish students' attitudes. Regarding students' language use, students considered context, participants and topics to choose what languages used in practicing. In pedagogical implication, teachers could implement strategies and teaching techniques that are appropriate with their needs and communicational contexts. Their L1, L2, and L3 could be alternative languages to instruct their language content to avoid students feeling stressed and distracted. The use of social media that could be applied to make learning more interactive and increase awareness of cultural languages used in particular context for increasing linguistic code. For further research, factors like teaching strategies or techniques, students' role, language in society, language learning content, and attitudes towards foreign language are crucial to be discussed more extensively in this study.

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