

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

In the era of globalization, English is spoken by millions of people worldwide. According to Stern (1983:17) English is used as a means of international communication across national boundaries among speakers of other languages and it is used as the reference to specified English speaking territories. That is why, English is learnt in many countries across the world. There are many reasons why learning English is important. English is the most commonly used language among foreigners. In all over the world, when people with different language come together, they commonly use English to communicate each other. English is important because it is the language that links the whole world together.

In Indonesia, English is important. Many people decide to study English as a second language and children start learning English at a young age. There are two reasons why learning English is important. First, English is the most commonly used language among foreigner language speaker. Throughout the world, when people with different language come together they commonly use English to communicate. It is highly essential to know the language for communication. We can communicate with almost all of the people in this world in English. If we do not speak English, it will be difficult to communicate with other people from other countries. Second, the majority of films and entertainment

programs in the world is in English. The wealth of information and entertainment that the world has access to is primarily in English. Therefore by learning English we will have access to a great wealth of entertainment and will be able to have a greater cultural understanding. Kearney (2011) states that as a subject in school, English is crucial for children to learn. For young children, learning English as soon as possible will help them with the basic and communication skills. For older children, possessing proper English skills will enable them to understand more complex tasks and to write effectively. Empowering students to learn proper English will help them go further in life and achieve more. Some learners can learn English easily but some others have to struggle with it.

There are hundreds of factors that affect the students' success in learning English: social life, economic, health, family, relationships between teachers and students, students attitudes, the students' motivations, and many more. Attitude is one of the factors that may determine the success of the students in learning a second language. Students who have positive attitudes toward the things they learn and feel enjoy about it are more likely to achieve better or higher than those who are negative and lack of desire. Students who have negative attitude toward the things they learn might cause some negative behaviours. Many students do not ask and answer questions, make comments, and join in discussions. Students who do not participate in are often considered to be passive. They sometimes get busy with themselves and do not pay a good attention to the teachers' explanation in class.

Attitude plays a major role in learning a second language since the students' positive or negative attitudes towards learning English largely determine the degree of their achievement in English. Therefore, this study aims to find out the correlation between students' attitude towards English and their English achievement.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

In accordance with the title of this thesis and the background of the study, a relevant research question is formulated as follows:

Is there any correlation between the attitude towards English and the English achievement of Grade Eight students?

## **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

In line with the statement of the problem, this study aims at finding out whether there is any correlation between the students' attitude towards English and the English achievement of Grade Eight students.

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

### **a. For the teachers:**

The results of this study will be a motivating drive that they need to pay attention to their students' attitude towards English. It is because attitude may influence the success of the students' learning.

**b. For the students:**

They will find learning English is interesting. It's good to make the learners get more active therefore they can find English as a fun learning. Learning to speak English well may be the best thing the learners' do to improve their life.

**1.5. Assumption**

This study is conducted under the following assumptions. First, it is assumed that two or more related factors of learning can be investigated in terms of the degree of their correlation. Second, it is assumed that as one of the key successful factors of learning, attitude, is observable, measurable, and correlatable.

**1.6 Limitation and Scope of the Study**

As reflected in the title and the research question, this study is limited to find out the correlation between two independent variables; they are attitude toward English and the English achievement. Besides, this investigation focuses on the correlation between the attitude toward English and the English achievement of grade eight students.

**1.7 Theoretical Frameworks**

The first theoretical frameworks used in this research is the theory of attitude by McLeod (2009), while the second theoretical frameworks used is the

theory of belief by Flavell (1987), the theory of feeling by Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman (1986), and the theory of behavior by Robbins (1996). Last but not least, the third theoretical frameworks used in this research is language learning achievement by O’Cala, Maggie (2010).

### **1.8 Hypotheses**

In accordance with the underlying theories and the statement of the problem, two hypotheses are formulated as follows:

a. Alternative Hypotheses (HA)

There is a correlation between the attitude toward English and the English achievement of Grade Eight students.

b. Null Hypotheses (HO)

There is no correlation between the attitude toward English and the English achievement of Grade Eight students.

### **1.9 Definition of the Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding, some key terms used in this study are defined as follows:

a. Attitude

Attitude which plays an important role in the teaching and learning process of English and may effect students’ achievement, is defined as “relatively lasting organizations of feelings, beliefs, and behavior tendencies directed

*towards specific persons, groups, ideas, or objects.*”(Hellreigel, Slocum and Woodman, 1986).

#### b. Language Learning Achievement

Achievement refers to the ability, skill and attitude in resolving some cases. Some teachers measuring their success by how well the students are achieving (Zaenal, 1991 as cited in Yusuf, 2013).

### **1.10 Organization of the Thesis**

Chapter one presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, assumption, limitation and scope of the study, theoretical frameworks, hypotheses, and the brief definition of the key terms are provided.

Chapter two contains a review of the related literature. This review is divided into two parts. The first part is the review of related theories. It is a theoretical framework which explains the attitude, factors influencing students' attitudes, and attitude measurement. The achievement in language learning and relationship between students' attitude and student's achievement are also explained. The second part is the review of related studies.

Chapter three is research method. It involves the research design, variables, population and sample, research instruments which include students' attitude questionnaire and students' achievement test, procedures of data collection, and technique of data analysis. The use of Likert scale as an instrument to measure attitudes is also described.

Chapter four consists of findings and discussions. The description of the data and the data analysis and findings are also explained. The research subjects and the description of the variables are examined. The instrument test and the hypotheses test are explained with the discussions.

Chapter five focuses on conclusion discussion reached on the basis of the findings of the study. The chapter aims at answering the questions posed in chapter one. It also presents the results of the summary and the suggestions of this study.