

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

Learning English has become one aspect that cannot be separated in this globalization era. English may not be the most spoken language in the world, but it is the official language of 53 countries and it is the most common second language in many countries such as in Philippines, Malaysia, Netherland, Germany and many more. People start learning English because it allows us to communicate with new people, helps us to get better understanding of an information, and also open up opportunities for us. According to a survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit, almost 70% of international executives say that to accomplish their goals, they need their staff to master English. It is because English is the most crucial language for doing International business. As a consequence, it is listed as a main skill for jobs.

However, there is a negative view among people in learning English. Many people believe learning a new language would be threatening their own language. They assume that learning new language such as English will correlate with the declining the national loyalty of the learners (Jendra, 2010). After all, scholars have learned that the enthusiasm on learning a new language not always correlated with a negative attitude. A research on Japanese children studying English, proved that although the learners showed a great interest towards the

culture as well as the language being studied, they kept holding a strong Japanese identity and a language loyalty.

In today's global society, being bilingual is certainly has many advantages. If you choose to learn a commonly spoken language such as English, you can confidently go to English speaking countries and speak freely to locals or others. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972) the ability of individual to master a second language is not only influenced by the mental competence or language skills, but also on one's attitudes and perceptions towards target language. Their statement also in accordance with Starks and Paltridge, they stated that learning a language is closely related to the attitude toward the language. It is clearly stated that learning a language is related to individual's attitude toward the language.

English with its status as the language for international communication has become a favorite language attitude study. There are several reasons why research on students' attitudes toward language learning is important. First, according to Kaballa & Crowley as in Gencel and Saracaloglu (2000), attitudes toward learning language are believed to influence behaviors, such as reading books and speaking in target language. Second, a relationship between attitudes and achievement has been shown to exist. Momani (2009) investigated the secondary stage students' attitudes toward learning English as foreign language and their achievement in reading comprehension and found that they had positive attitude toward learning and there was a strong correlation between students' attitude toward learning English and their performance in reading comprehension.

Furthermore, the language attitude study is chosen because the subjects of this study were non-English department students who took English enrichment program. The program is an additional program provided by the university to all non-English department students for 4 semesters so that the students can improve their basic knowledge such as their ability to read, write, understand and converse on a wide range of topics in English. A good foundation will certainly help the students to form themselves into a competent person in this globalization era.

Non-English department students were chosen because English is not their compulsory subject which make their attitude towards learning English could be varied. They could show a positive or negative or neutral attitude. Students who like reading an English article or book or show their great interest toward English could indicate their positive attitude. While students who less motivated in learning English could indicate their negative attitude.

After knowing that students' language attitude is important in learning English, the researcher interested in conducting a research entitled "Students' Language Attitude toward Learning English". This research aimed to investigate English enrichment program students language attitude and their dominant attitude at Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto.

## B. Reason of Choosing the Topic

The reason for choosing the topic stated as follow:

1. Learning English is crucial nowadays. It allows us to communicate with many people across the world since English is listed as one of the official

language in many countries. By learning English it helps us to get better knowledge, understanding and opportunities around the world.

2. Knowing students' language attitude is very important as feedback to improve the teaching and learning process. It is because their attitude can be used as a reference in determining an appropriate teaching and learning plan. Providing a good teaching and learning plan could help students in achieving their goal in learning English.

#### C. Problems of the Study

In this research, the problems are formulated into following questions:

1. What is the language attitude of English enrichment program students' of Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto toward learning English?
2. What is the dominant language attitude of English enrichment program students' of Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto toward learning English?

#### D. Objectives of the Study

Based on the research problems, the aims of this study are:

1. To investigate students' language attitude toward learning English.
2. To find out their dominant language attitude.

#### E. Significance of the Study

The result of this research is aimed at giving benefits both theoretically and practically.

- a. Theoretically the research about language attitude has been done over the world, but it is still interested to be discussed considering language attitude are changing all the time.
- b. Practically, for students, this research can help them to decide wisely how they should behave to the language being learned. For lectures, hopefully the result of the study can be used to develop appropriate learning strategy in order to help students in achieving their goal. For researchers, hopefully the result of the study can be additional information when they conduct a research about language attitude.

