

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

English as an International language is becoming more important as it is used in countries throughout the world, including Indonesia. In Indonesia, English is still a foreign language and it is not used for daily communication. Formally, English is taught in schools or English courses. Because of that, it is not easy to learn and master English in Indonesia. Cohen (1998, p. 4) says that foreign language learning refers to a situation where the language is not considered to be spoken for daily communication in the local community. Hence, there are many difficulties involved in foreign language learning, mostly because of the environment.

Meanwhile, the success of a learner in language learning is determined by some factors, one of the factors related to environment is attitude. Henerson, et al (1978, p. 12) states that a person's attitudes can be seen while he/she is talking and doing something. Students' attitudes in learning any language are absolutely important to achieve the maximum result. Weinburgh (1978) explains the idea that attitudes influence achievement. This means that

the students' result in learning English, such as their understanding, speaking ability, and vocabulary are mainly influenced by their attitudes.

Learning a foreign language is not as easy as people usually assume, especially for young learners like elementary school students. English becomes a new thing for elementary school students because English is different from their native language, Indonesian language. The students of elementary schools are from the age of seven to twelve years old. When they are introduced to English language, they may find some similarities and differences between learning their mother tongue and learning the foreign language. One of the differences is that the native language is used as a means of communication at home, school, and in the society, while the foreign language is not used in those settings (Wahyuni, 1997)

In learning English, the students are influenced by age, aptitude, cognitive style, personality, attitudes, and motivation result in the rate and ultimate success of learning language, as stated by Ellis (1985, p. 99). Ellis says that students' attitudes are attitudes that are likely to reflect the particular social settings in which learners find themselves (1994, p. 198). In this research, the writer decides to choose attitudes as an important factor that influenced students in learning English. It means as English language learners, students must pay attention to attitudes that can help them in learning language.

In short, the explanations above show that attitudes influence students' achievement in learning English. Thus, the writer is interested in conducting a research about students' attitude in learning English.

1.2 FIELD OF THE STUDY

The field of this research is applied linguistics.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this research is attitude in learning language. The writer focuses on students' attitudes in their English learning.

1.4 PROBLEM FORMULATION

The problem formulation of this research is:

What are the second grade elementary school students' attitudes toward learning English?

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to find out the second grade elementary school students' attitudes toward learning English.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significances of this study are:

1. The results of this study can give some information to the readers about the attitudes of Elementary School students, especially toward learning English.
2. This study is served as feedback for teachers as they are supposed to encourage their students to get better achievement toward learning English.
3. This research can be a reference for further researchers who are interested in Linguistics field, especially in Learning and Teaching area.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Attitude

Attitudes are part of one's perception of self, of others, and of the culture in which one is living (or the culture of the target language) and it seems clear that positive attitudes are conducive to increase motivations, while negatives attitudes have the opposite effect. (Brown, 1987).

2. Elementary School Students

Elementary school students are children at the age between six up to twelve years old, which are enthusiastic to know and learn everything that they have (Scott & Lisbeth H., 1990).

3. Learning English

Learning English is learning a foreign language, which is different from the mother tongue. Learning means acquiring knowledge of, fixed in the mind, gaining or receiving knowledge or skill and a process to know something that we do not know before and we know it well later.

(Webster, 1980)

