

STUDENTS' LANGUAGE ATTITUDE AND READING INTEREST TOWARD ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract: The EFL teaching and learning need to accommodate the findings, data, and information relating to language attitudes since it has a significant contribution to students' motivation to learn English. A positive attitude toward English will be helpful in determining learning materials and increasing motivation in learning the language. One way to make students' attitudes towards English become positive is the use of ICT in language learning. Moreover, it is crucial to enhance their reading interest. This descriptive qualitative research focused on identifying the extent to which ICT in online reading classes could influence students' attitudes towards English learning and their reading interests. This study took data using observation, interview techniques, and questionnaires. Observations were carried out when the teaching-learning was being processed, while interviews were carried out with the teacher and her five students in grade 8. The questionnaire was delivered to 32 students through Google form when the online ICT-based reading teaching learning was completed. In this study, the researcher found that the teacher had carried out the teaching steps related to the curriculum 2013, besides the teacher used ICT in the process of teaching reading online. The results of interviews with the respondents also showed that ICT enhanced their attitudes toward English and it motivated them to write freely. Furthermore, the result of the questionnaire showed that their reading interest also increased.

Keywords: *Positive attitude towards EFL; online ICT-based reading class; reading*

INTRODUCTION

Attitude is one of the important factors in the 2013 curriculum. Attitude formation the right kind of learners will be a trigger for motivation for him to improve effort and perseverance to learn in order to be successful. Therefore, attitude is wrong one factor that needs to be considered and considered to improve the learning process teaching in class. In language learning, language attitudes have an influence on motivation to learn students. Students who have a positive language attitude have a tendency to succeed compared to those who have negative (Cornelius & Wilson, 2021).

There are several variables that affect language learning including: developmental level of the learner, age, attitude and motivation. This research is focused on students' language attitudes as a variable in foreign language learning, namely English. This is based on the consideration that language attitude is one of the most studied affective dimensions in language acquisition.

Attitude as a deep affective factor language acquisition also determines the level of active learning and personal involvement someone in the learning process (Oxford and Shearin, 1994).

In other hand, knowing the students' attitude in learning writing skill in the online class will help the teacher to create interesting teaching learning process. The interesting teaching and learning process will motivate the students to learn, and student's motivation to learn will encourage them to involve in the teaching learning process that will make more effective learning to achieve the goal. This explanation is supported by Cornelius & Wilson (2021) who said the effectiveness of learning can be made by involving process, and the student who is not interested to learning process and learning activity, perhaps would have a tendency to not learn as well as possible, and eventually will influence quality of learning, because when students have interest, they will prepare themselves as well in learning. Based on

that explanation, it is clear that the teacher should aware his challenges and identify students' attitude on the writing skill, especially in the online learning class which one of solutions is by using ITC.

Attitude according to psychological theory consists of three components, emotions/feelings, cognitive, and behavior (Zimbardo and Leippe, 1991). Attitudes that refer to emotions/feelings are an emotional evaluation or reaction. The second component, cognition, refers to what the learner knows about the object he is dealing with. What he knows doesn't necessarily have to be fact or truth, but what he believes can be considered cognition. The third component of attitude, behavior, related to intentions or actions related to the object of attitude. As for example, will the learner try to imitate the way native speakers speak, or will the learner intend to continue learning?

Additionally, Cornelius & Wilson (2021) said that attitude is a mental disposition or way of thinking about something (place, person, event, activity, etc.); attitudes are linked to particular believers and their willingness to engage in particular activities. Based on that explanation. It can be concluded that attitude is an important thing that should be considered by the teacher to enhance their skill.

Meanwhile, utilization of Information Technology and Communication (ICT) in the era of globalization is increasingly massive. Community life in particular students can no longer be separated from all ICT products. Utilization of ICT likes two blades that can provide some benefits and bad effects. ICT will have a negative impact if not wise in its use. However, ICT will bring a variety of benefits which is much bigger when used wisely. The plus side is with digital technology, students can hone cognitive abilities, insight, and social values. Unfortunately, the younger generations who have the expertise to access digital media, as the same time have not kept up with their abilities to use digital media for interest in obtaining information self-development (Nasrullah et al., 2017).

For this reason, the role of the teacher is needed to direct these students to take advantage of their interest in ICT for positive things, including increasing a positive attitude towards English. According to Refnaldi (2017) that the attitudes a foreign language may have something to do with language learning and development of ITC, because the success of language learning partly depends on the attitude towards the learnt possessed by learners, parents, teachers, and

government. In addition, the development of ITC may increase the uses of an international language which lead people to have positive attitude. Besides that, the importance of ICT competence is a as key element for teachers to light, and it is suggested that they should develop their ICT competence simultaneously in order to teach their students both offline and online teaching learning process (Palacios-Hidalgo et al., 2020)

Furthermore, Instagram currently most chosen as online platform to practice students' reading skill because it's really popular among students recently. More than 70% of people between the ages of 12 and 24 are Instagram users (Huang & Cu, 2018). That is why almost all students of high school have an Instagram account. By using Instagram, the students can easily interact and discuss with other students and also teacher about the material or their task because Instagram is easy accessed even only use a smart phone. In addition, reading English through Instagram can make students free, fun, and relaxed because it is not formal like a usual learning atmosphere. So, it can stimulate students' ideas, boost their mood in reading, increase their vocabulary, and motivate them to be more creative in reading.

Using technology can help teacher and students achieving the learning objectives and meaningful learning, and the students can learn individually and collaborate in that technology (Jati, 2018).

Additionally, reading interest should be improved. It refers to students' fascination of something or individual's interaction with certain object that will influence to students' reading comprehension because learning is influenced strongly by interest (Eidswick, 2009). The students will be more persistence, engagement, and positive affect toward tasks if they are interested in that task (Ainley et al., 2002). Besides that, the use of learning strategies and choices for the direction and duration of attention is influenced by the interest, and the students who have high interest will be more likely to set goals of the task, and have effective learning behaviors (Eidswick, 2009). Because of that, it is important to analyze the influence of interest to the reading comprehension in the online class.

Dewi et al. (2020) defined that reading interest is a high tendency towards reading activity or a high willingness in reading activity, or it can be identified with the love for reading. It lines with Ardasheva et al. (2018). They defined that reading interest refers to as a multidimensional construct, incorporating one's affective, cognitive and behavioral tendencies towards an object, event or

tasks related to reading activity.

There are some factors influencing the reading interest. One of them is the environment that can shape one's personality and mindset. The second is the culture such as the culture of copy paste that will influence to the students' interest in the technological environment (Dewi et al., 2020). The third is motivation that someone who has higher motivation to read will encourage them and fond to read (Wheatley et al., 2016).

In line with Dewi et al. (2020), Eidswick (2009) divided the interest in three categories namely situational interest, individual interest and topic interest. Situational interest is based on the features of environmental or text stimuli such as textual coherence and comprehensibility, novelty and personal relevance. The individual interest refers to the stability to focus on activities or objects based on social support that is expressed by a desire to acquire new information, to find out about new objects, events, and ideas. The topic interest refers to interesting topic or theme, and it is based on individuals' knowledge, experiences and the perceived value of a topic (Ainley et al., 2002). Those interest had been investigated in this study.

Moreover, Indonesia ranked 60th out of 61 countries in terms of reading interest delivered by the study of Central Connecticut State University, and Indonesia was below Thailand in 59th and above Botswana in 61st position (Antaranews, 2020). The Indonesian students had read English texts since elementary school, the majority of them indicated that they had not good English reading habit. Moreover, English in Indonesian schools is formally taught to students from grade 7 to university level, but the students' English proficiency, in general, is considered relatively low (Rinantanti et al., 2017). Besides that, the fact from the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia showed that the average of students' English reading mark in junior high school was about 50.23 that all students have to struggle to reach the satisfaction (Kemendikbud, 2019).

Curriculum, methods, building, teaching materials, community, and pupils influence the kind of classroom atmosphere which prevails in aging situation. It means that using ICT is one factor influencing the classroom atmosphere. Moreover, reading plays an important thing to add knowledge, enhance the high level of life, and survive in this world. Indeed, reading is a crucial thing to do because the information runs fast by developing technology. Thus, reading must be a habit of life that will support the success of

learning process. Indeed, by reading and freedom of choice, the students can experience a new practice that might have a motivating impact on their language learning (Cornelius & Wilson, 2021). This also coincides with statement by Mukminatien et al. (2016) that science and technology can be accessed by reading, and it is one of ways to develop readers' level of education that will support the success of life. Supporting Mukminatien et al's statement, Jati (2018) said that learners can get information that is not taught and recommended by the teacher, thus they can adapt and survive well in the current situation.

Reading is not a simple thing, it needs some efforts to make it easy and interesting to do, and it must be useful for the readers. They have to get new knowledge and experience from what they have read, and it is not just reading that they get nothing, but they must understand what they have read, then they can utilize it in their life. Thus, they have to find a suitable strategy to help them in comprehending what they are reading. Mukminatien et al. (2016) pointed out that reading is not a passive process, but it is an active process that the reader can create some meaning from the written text, and the readers can use their previous knowledge to understand the written text.

It is clear that reading needs some strategies and skills to make the readers easy to comprehend what they are reading and to make what they have read useful for their life. In line with this, Bigozzi et al. (2017) said that reading is to achieve the goal, develop the knowledge and potential, and participate in the society. This is also in line with Brown (2004) that if reading is emphasized in the young learners' curriculum from the very beginning of their language education, these young children will progress faster not only in learning to read, but also in understanding and speaking the language.

Besides that, reading is defines as an attractive cognitive process in which readers can interact with the text and author's perspectives (Azkiya, 2017), and reading comprehension is the most important skill in the foreign language context (Dewi et al., 2020). Because of the importance of reading, the teachers have to solve the problem of low reading ability and reading interest by encouraging and enhancing all Indonesian people from the low to up level of education to be interested in reading. The problem of lower reading interest is not only national problem but also regional problem that is faced by English teachers of the students of *Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 6 Cianjur*; the junior high school under Ministry of

Religion (*Kemenag*).

Based on the informal interview with them focusing on reading interest, they said that the list of mark students reading test in academic year 2022/2023 was unsatisfying, and some of them are not interested in reading English. Shortly, some of them have to struggle to increase their reading comprehension and interest. Thus, they should find out the suitable strategy to improve students' reading ability and interest.

The previous research mostly concerned with reading comprehension in the face to face class (Anjuni & Cahyadi, 2019; Kusumayanthi & Maulidi, 2019 ; Riyadi et al., 2019 ; Widiawati et al., 2020 ; Bulut, 2017), and focusing on reading comprehension in the online class using WhatsApp (Kohar et al., 2022) Besides that, they did not concern with students' attitude.

To answer the problem above, the researcher engaged this research that observed an English teaching process carried out by one of the English teachers at MTs Negeri 6 Cianjur in an online ICT-based reading class. MTsN 6 Cianjur was chosen to be the location of research. The researcher on this research focused on identifying the extent to which ICT in online reading class influenced students' attitudes towards English learning. Moreover, This current research was focused on their reading interest.

METHOD

The type of research used in this study was a qualitative descriptive method. Creswell (in Semiawan, 2010) defines it as an approach or search to explore and understand a central phenomenon. The results of qualitative research in the realm of education are descriptive. The purpose of qualitative research was to understand individual views, search for and explain processes, and explore in-depth information about a limited research subject or background. The research subjects used in this study were an English teacher at MTs Negeri 6 Cianjur namely Ibu Putri Eka Srikandi, her 5 students for interview namely Salwa Asifa, Salwa Fitria, Siti Zahra, Septia and Dilla in an online reading class and 30 students for answering the questionnaire. In selecting research subjects, the researchers used purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was a sampling technique with certain considerations" (Sugiyono, 2015: 124). The subject was chosen because the purpose of this research was how the ICT-based reading learning process online, and identify the extent to which ICT in online reading class can influence students' attitudes towards English

learning in MTs Negeri 6 Cianjur. Moreover, it investigated their reading interest.

The instruments used in this study were observation, interview and questionnaire. Whereas data collection technique was an activity carried out by the researchers in order to obtain data used in research. Data collection techniques used in this study was data of observation, interviews and observation. The type of interview used in this study was a semi-structured interview. It was done via WhatsApp service. The observation was done directly during the teaching and learning process in online class, where in this case, the researcher invited to the online class and followed the learning process from beginning to end. The interview was done by phoning 5 students with certain questions, and the questionnaire was done through Google form.

The data analysis technique used by the researcher was the Miles and Huberman analysis technique. Miles and Huberman (in Sugiyono, 2015) suggest that activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and continue to completion until the data is saturated. In this case, the data that had been collected and obtained during the researching process either in the form of information in the previous stage then compiled by the researchers into a study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were obtained from observations, semi-structured interviews and reading interest questionnaire that were conducted online. Observations were conducted directly by observing the learning process in the online class, where in this case, the researchers invited as learning participants by the teacher in Instagram application, while the interviews were carried out by using WhatsApp service, and the interview was done by phoning 5 students with certain questions, and the reading interest questionnaire was done through Google form. The research results obtained in this study are as follows:

Observation

The things that the researchers observed during the learning process were the whole process from the beginning to the end of learning. According to the observations of the researchers, the teacher has taken the correct steps in the learning process as mandated by the 2013 curriculum. Learning began with opening, prayers, and attendance, all of which were done in WhatsApp groups. Before starting to learn, the teacher reminded the students to return to the material in previous meetings, which was about

describing of the physical appearances and character of a person, animal or object. Then the teacher informed the new material about reading descriptive text which was the last material in the second semester and related it to the students' daily lives.

During the learning process, the teacher used a Contextual Teaching and Learning approach, where he always correlated the material presented with real life that was close to the students. Then the teacher sent a text with unique photo that encourages students to be invited to read and understand it collaboratively. After everyone felt enthusiastic and active, the teacher again sent various texts with many unique pictures. Then, they were given some question to be answered. The teacher gave the feedback of the answer.

Finally, they comprehended text well. During this process the teacher paid attention to each student's comments or answers. Moreover, he appreciated and corrected them together with the student if necessary. All this learning process was carried out on the Instagram application. In the last activity, the students are given different text with interesting pictures that could help them to comprehend it. They are given some question based on the text to be answered, and allowed them to express their ideas through the comments column or direct message about what they read. The teachers also gave the feedback directly on their assignment. Before the students read the text. They were guided to follow the steps of reading. The steps were pre-reading, whiles reading, and post reading. Finally, they could comprehend the text well and they could sent their reading comprehension in Instagram. At the end of the meeting the teacher invited students to review what they have learned together, pray and close the lesson on the WhatsApp group.

Interview

The interview used in this study was a semi-structured interview with the teacher, Ibu Putri Eka Srikandi and her 5 students. Interviews were conducted with the aim of deepening the data obtained from observations. The results of interviews that have been conducted with the English teacher and 5 students as follows:

Results of interviews with teachers

(1) What ITC platform do you use in the teaching reading on the online learning to increase students' positive attitude toward English and why did you choose it?

"I used Instagram to teach reading skills because Instagram provides lots of photos and videos that can be easily obtained by students where photos or videos can make the learning process more interesting, more attractive, stimulate students' ideas, and motivate students to be more creative in reading"

(2) What do you think are the advantages of Instagram over other applications?

"As far as I know Instagram provides space to motivate them to read. They can read many texts they want and it provides many authentic text. The students can interact with others in the learning process effectively. For example, in doing reading task about Descriptive Text, the students can read many texts in the instagram. They can improve their new vocabulary, and the teachers also can give the feedback directly on their assignment"

(3) What are the indications that your students like the way you teach and what are the implications for them?

"Learning reading by using the Instagram application makes my students attend almost 100 percent in the online class. They read what they want. They like the stimulus in the form of pictures or videos that I upload and always give those comments or responds. I believe this will increase their motivation and their language attitude towards English will improve".

Results of interviews with students

(1) How is the online reading learning process that you have followed using instagram?

"I like It"

"I love it very much"

"I hope every teacher will use It"

"I think it's cool"

"I feel I am not learning. It's so attractive"

(2) Do you think it is useful for you? why?

"Of course, it makes me keep reading and writing"

"Sure. Actually reading is my hobby"

"Yes, I am excited doing my task through instagram"

“I think it is good if my teacher uploads attractive photos to comment”

“I freely read and write anything comes to my mind, it’s awesome”

(3) What do you think about English after you attending the online reading learning using instagram?

“I like English”

“I want to learn it more”

“I want to be able speaking English too”

“I love it. I want to be an English teacher”

“I will change my instagram stories with English”

Questionnaire

This questionnaire was based on interest dimension namely situational interest, individual interest, and topic interest. The situational interest related to textual coherence, comprehensibility, novelty and personal relevance. The individual interest related to desire to acquire new information and find out new object or event, and topic interest related to individual knowledge, experience and value of topic (Eidswick, 2009).

The three dimensions were modified in the form of questionnaire using Likert scale converted to be the interval scale such as using 1-5 that meant 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3; neutral/doubt, 4: agree, and 5: strongly agree (Retnawati & Mulyatiningsih, 2014).

Table 1. *Likert scale for reading interest (Retnawati & Mulyatiningsih, 2014)*

Score	Category
1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral/Doubt
4	Agree
5	Strongly agree

It was written in Indonesian language and shaped in the feature of google form in the link <https://forms.gle/Ck2FQpM1doDtTjsy7>), then the data was collected and analyzed quantitatively to get the result of reading interest score. The result of questionnaire showed the mean score reading interest achieved was 90 on situational dimension, 91on individual dimension, and 93on topic dimension. It mean their reading interest was high in all dimensions.

Based on the results of observations and

interviews conducted by the researcher, it was clear that both teachers and students seemed happy in the teaching and learning process they were doing. This pleasure would be a motivation, especially for students. This showed that ICT enhanced their language attitude towards English and their reading interest towards English. It was in line with Nikolopoulou (2023) found that ICT was attractive, it causes/increases students' interest and motivation, and the lessons become more enjoyable. Besides that, it was supported by Luthfiyyah et al. (2021) found that technology enhanced formative assessment gives an impact on students' performance, particularly on language accuracy. Moreover, using digital technology is required to provide digital competencies to students through their learning (Astuti et al., 2021). In addition, ICT is an important tool to help the students and teacher in order to enhance students' interest. Finally the learning objective can be achieved as found by Palacios-Hidalgo et al. (2020).

CONCLUSION

To have successful language teaching programs, the teacher of EFL in Indonesia need to persuade learners in order to have positive attitude toward English as an international language. In addition, the development of ITC increased the uses of an international language which lead students to have positive attitude. The result of this research showed that the teacher’s classical experience in utilizing ICT such as instagram developed students’ digital reading skill through the real text and interesting picture that helped them to understand the text. Moreover, it developed students writing’ productivity and creativity so that it improved their digital writing skill. Besides, according to the students, reading in digital media is more exciting and effective. It can automatically lead students to have more positive attitude toward English. Moreover, in online class where teacher and students don’t meet directly, utilizing the creative ITC highly recommended to improve and maintenance this positive attitude. Moreover, their reading interest improved based on the result of questionaire. However, it requires students’ active role, and the teacher becomes the facilitator. The recommendation is that the teachers should continuously dig students’ potential capacity by utilizing various available ICT especially in online reading class using instagram since this research has proved completely it can lead students to have more positive language attitude toward English and

improve their reading interest.

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Dadun Abdul Kohar & Leli Rahmawati

Students' language attitude and reading interest toward English as foreign language

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5