

# The Attitudes of Freshman Undergraduates in Learning English as a Second Language

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of tertiary students towards the learning of English language with regard to their gender, discipline and language proficiency. This descriptive study involved a total of 200 undergraduates from the Faculty of Education in Shah Alam, Selangor. The study employed two methods of data collection: questionnaire and semi- structured interviews. The findings revealed that there was a moderately positive attitude towards the learning of English language. However, the findings showed that the female respondents were more positive towards the learning of English language compared to their male counterparts while the Non Science major students had positive attitude towards learning English language compared to the Science major students. The study also showed that low proficiency students had better attitude towards English language compared to high proficiency students.*

**Keywords:** ESL, Attitude, Tertiary Students

## **INTRODUCTION**

The development of English language and its recognition as a world's lingua franca has resulted in its use by people of various native languages (Cruz- Ferreira & Abraham, 2006). The English language is used for business, social and education in today's competitive world. In Malaysia itself, the importance of English language is seen in the education policy whereby the learning of English as a second language is compulsory in all Malaysian public schools. It was also mentioned by the Minister of Education, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin that English language is essential towards building the nation (New Straits Times, May 1, 2012). A student's mastery in English language will not only help him or her to do well in his or her studies but also secure a better job in the future. However, according to the Department of Statistics (2011), about 28,000 to 34,000 local graduates from year 2008 to 2010 have no secure employment. This is partially due to employers' demand for graduates who are proficient in English language yet many graduates have a poor command of the English language and poor communicative skills (Noor Azina Ismail, 2011). Berita Harian dated January 23, 2007 also reported that many students from public higher educational institutions were of lack proficiency in English as almost 30 percent of the students achieved Band 1 and Band 2 in the Malaysian University of English Test (MUET) whereas Band 6 is the highest level.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

In Malaysia, English is taught as a compulsory second language in all public schools. Therefore, students are exposed to a minimum of eleven (11) years of formal education spanning both the primary and the secondary school levels. However, even after more than ten years of learning English in schools, a vast majority of Malaysian students are unable to gain a good mastery of the language. In line with this, a study by Karahan (2007) unveiled that the importance of English language was not seen during their childhood by learners and most adult learners were forced to learn English language due to professional needs. He further added that the lack of awareness of the importance of English resulted in poor effort to improve in English language which caused incompetency in English language among learners. Furthermore, speaking English in public is often negatively viewed

as showing off, being proud, reliving colonialism, having superior standard and betraying the Malay identity and language (Lee, Lee, Wong & Azizah Ya'acob, 2010). Norhana Abdullah and Chandran (2009) also pointed out that one needs to have cultural understanding of the context of learning English if one wants to be competent in English language.

Moreover, the poor mastery of English among learners can be linked to Pappamihiel's (2002) views that teachers often overlook students' lack of engagement in the classroom and limited cognitive skills in English as they focus more on students' language proficiency. This is also supported by Stroud and Wee (2006) who highlighted that language learning is difficult because learners are often not confident to speak the target language as they are afraid of being evaluated by teachers or the native speakers of the language. Thus, positive attitude is indeed an important aspect towards the success of language learning. This is agreed by Thadphoothon (1999) who stated that students with positive attitude achieve success while students with negative attitude face failure in the learning of English language (in Serin, Serin & Ceylan, 2010).

In addition, Biber (2006) noted that freshmen who have just entered a university face many obstacles and changes which include learning to use English language accurately. This is because the lack of language proficiency among students will bring difficulties when they enter higher learning institutions as the medium of instruction is in English. Instructional materials and reading in English language will be challenging for the students and the majority of them are unable to adjust to the language shift. This is further supported in a study by Kaur and Thiyagarajah (1999) in which they found that first year students majoring in English language and literature have difficulties in reading literary texts. Moreover, Karahan (2007) noted that eventhough much effort and time are spent on learning English language, learners are still unable to be competent in the language unless they develop positive attitude that drives self- motivation in language learning. Meanwhile, a study by Vaezi (2009) revealed that tertiary students have negative attitude towards the learning of English language because of the burden from their studies and time limitation. However, according to Siti Norliana (2008), attitudes can be changed in the learning process by using appropriate materials and effective teaching. In view of this, positive attitude towards learning English need to be fostered among

undergraduates. Besides, it is crucial for institutions of higher learning to focus on the development of soft skills especially competency in English language and communication skills among undergraduates for their survival in the globalised international market (Voviana, 2006). This is because the increasing unemployment rate and bad command of English language among undergraduates are in a worrying state. Thus, this study intended to examine the attitudes of freshman undergraduates in learning English language with regard to their gender, discipline and language proficiency.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Second language learning is affected by learners' attitudes towards themselves and others (Cullingford, 1999). According to Wenden (1991), attitude has three different components that are: cognitive component which involves beliefs and perceptions about a particular object or a situation, evaluative component which generates feelings of like and dislike towards an object or a situation and behavioral component which causes learners to adopt learning behavior based on a situation or an object. Furthermore, attitude can be also be categorized into two types which are attitude towards language learning and attitude towards the English speaking community (Uribe, Gutierrez & Madrid, 2011). With regard to language learning, attitude is seen as one's beliefs of factors affecting language learning such as the culture of a second language and one's culture (Lopez, 1997 cited in Awad Mohammed, 2012). Attitude is a very important concept in second language learning. People might have positive attitude towards a second language because they want to succeed in the community which helps to strengthen the motivation to learn the second language (Awad Mohammed, 2012). This is further supported by Young (2006) as cited in Yu (2010) who stated that learners with positive attitude in language learning will experience increasing input and better interaction in a second language. Attitudes towards language learning can be affected by several factors such as language groups, the language itself, its features, uses or cultural associations, language provisions, language policy or language practices (Baker, 2006). Attitudes towards language learning hold a vital role in language teaching and learning. Chalak and Kassaian (2010) added that a successful second language learner is a person who possesses a positive attitude towards the language, the culture and the people. They also pointed

out that teachers and language learners agree that high motivation and positive attitude help in the learning of a second language. Zhang (2007) claimed that attitude is an important factor in language learning besides intelligence, aptitude, personality, motivation and age. According to Gardner (1983), students' attitudes towards second language and learning a second language is determined by their level of motivation while Reeve (1996) views motivation as essential to succeed academically.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a descriptive study designed to identify freshmen undergraduates' attitudes in learning English as a second language. A descriptive study was selected as it allows the collection of data related to the sample and investigates the existence of relationship between two or more variables in the study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010).

## **SAMPLE**

The target population for this study were tertiary students undertaking Social Science undergraduate programmes at The Faculty of Education in one of the higher learning institutions located in Shah Alam, Selangor. The sample comprised 200 undergraduate students from all programmes offered in the Faculty of Education. The subjects for this study were in their first year of their academic disciplines majoring in Science, i.e. Chemistry, Physics, Biology or Mathematics programmes and in Non- Science major, i.e. Art, Music or Physical and Health Education programmes. The freshman students were selected for this study because a vast number of them were from Malaysian public schools where Bahasa Malaysia is the medium of instruction. Besides that, being exposed to the Malaysian culture, most of them converse daily in Bahasa Malaysia. Hence, it can be assumed that adapting to a new learning environment where English language is the medium of instruction will determine the type of attitude the students have in learning English as a second language and having English as a medium of instruction.

## **INSTRUMENTATION**

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods and it involved the use of a questionnaire and semi- structured interviews. The questionnaire used in this study was adapted and designed based on the items drawn from a study conducted by Gardner and Smythe (1981) in which they designed the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) survey to study attitude, motivation and anxiety in foreign language learning. The AMTB survey has been widely used in a number of international studies and the items were amended to reflect the studied target language group such as Bahasa Malaysia (Thang, Ting & Nurjanah Mohd Jaafar, 2011), Japanese (Yamashiro & McLaughlin, 2000), Panjabi (Abdul Hafeez Mian, 1998), Portuguese (Figueiredo & Silva, 2008), Romanian (Gardner, 2007), Farsi (Nejad & Jomeh, 2011) and French and Spanish (Ushida, 2005). Gardner (1985) as cited in Chalak and Kassaian (2010) stressed that the AMTB survey is reported to have good reliability and validity. Nonetheless, each subscale from the survey is an independent subscale and can be used separately without affecting the validity and the reliability of each subscale (Morreale, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the original questionnaire was modified by replacing the term foreign language with the generic term “English”. Nine open ended questions were also added in the questionnaire as they were pertinent to achieve the objectives of this study.

To ensure the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire, a panel of experts comprising three educationists reviewed the draft of the questionnaire. The proposed questionnaire was piloted at the Faculty of Education in an institution of higher learning located in Shah Alam. The measure of reliability of the questionnaire reported a Cronbach Alpha of 0.94 while the Cronbach Alpha for the attitude domain was reported at 0.91 indicating the questionnaire is valid and can be used for the actual study.

The questionnaire consisted of 4 parts. Part 1 was designed to gather the basic demographic information of the respondents that will provide their profile for this research. This section consisted of nine questions that delved into variables such as gender, semester, course, programme, English language grade in SPM, parents’ highest education level and occupation. Part 2 of the questionnaire listed four open ended questions that looked into the types of respondents’ mother tongue and the languages they used

when they are in their social circles such as with their friends, lecturers and strangers. The items in Part 3 were adapted from the Attitude Motivation Test Battery by Gardner and Smythe (1981). The rating of 1 to 5 Likert scale with the starting point of “1- Strongly Disagree” and the end point of “5= Strongly Agree” allowed the respondents to indicate their responses in learning English as a second language. The questionnaire consisted of 60 items from a bigger study but only 10 items on attitudes were used for this paper. Section D consisted of five open ended questions that endeavored to find out respondents’ opinions and methods in overcoming anxiety, changing of attitude and cultivating motivation in learning and also proficiency in English language.

In order to probe the findings collected from the questionnaire, interviews were conducted by selecting students from the same group that responded to the questionnaire with three different levels of language proficiency; high, average and low. Five undergraduate students were chosen from each discipline which brought to the total of ten interviewed respondents. The Science major respondents were referred to as SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR5 (i.e. S= Science major ‘R’= Respondent 1= respondent’s number) whilst the Non- Science major respondents were referred to as NSR1, NSR2, NSR3, NSR4 and NSR5 (i.e. NS= Non-Science major ‘R’= Respondent 1= respondent’s number). The respondents were informed beforehand of the purpose of the interview and they were also assured that the confidentiality of the interview would be maintained at all time. Probing method was also used during the interview to get exact and accurate responses from the respondents. Each interview was conducted for about 30 to 40 minutes.

The data of the survey questionnaire was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Raw data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 20 software while the information gained from the interview was transcribed inductively and deductively to recognize and develop patterns. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze the obtained data.

## **FINDINGS**

This section illustrates the main findings obtained from the distributed questionnaires. In order to investigate the results of the study in depth, necessary data from the interview sessions was added. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed and the response rate stood at 80% as 200 students responded to the questionnaire. The discussion will first focus on the demographic data of the respondents, followed by the language used by the respondents and the findings on their attitudes with regard to gender, discipline and language proficiency.

### **Respondents' Demographic Profile**

Out of the 200 respondents, 69.5% were females while another 30.5% were males. The findings also revealed that the highest percentage of respondents involved in this study was the Science major (58.5%) while the remaining was the Non- Science major (41.5%). In order to gauge the proficiency level among the respondents, their results in SPM English language paper which is equivalent to GCE and O' Level were used. The findings indicated that 20.5% of the respondents had high level proficiency, 37.5% of them had average level proficiency while the rest, 42% had low proficiency in English language. The findings obtained revealed that a large majority (92.5%) of the respondents used Malay language while the rest (7.5%) of them used English language in the classroom. A similar pattern of findings was also shown in the language used among the respondents with their friends whereby 98% of them used Malay language, 1.5% used English language while 0.5% of them used other languages. It was reported that the highest percentage of language used at home by the respondents was Malay language with 92.5%, followed by other languages 6.5% and only 1% of them used English language. The respondents also indicated that their best fluent language was Malay language, followed by English and other languages such as Kelantan Malay language, Sabah Malay language, *Dusun* language, *Bidayuh* language and *Iban* language.

### **Respondents' Attitudes towards English Language**

One of the aspects of this study was to identify the attitudes of tertiary students towards the learning of English language. The mean rating for



attitude among the respondents was 3.22 (SD= 3.65) indicating that the respondents had moderately positive attitude towards the learning of English language.

**Table 1: Overall Mean Score on Attitude towards Learning English Language**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attitude	3.22	3.65

Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Not sure, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

### Positive Attitude

This study also intended to look into the positive attitude of the tertiary students in learning English language. Data in Table 2 demonstrates a high level of positive attitude among the respondents towards learning English language as the mean rating displayed are above 3.5. It shows that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that English was an important part of the university programme (mean =4.59, SD =0.56). Many of the respondents agreed they planned to learn as much English as possible, wanted to learn good English and that learning English was great. They also agreed that they put in a lot of effort to learn English (mean= 3.93, SD= 0.79) yet only few of them were willing to read English newspapers and magazines as often as they could (mean= 3.21, SD= 0.94). Many of them were in agreement that they enjoyed learning English (mean= 3.75, SD= 0.89) and enjoyed their English classes (mean= 3.66, SD= 0.89) but only a few were willing to complete their English assignments immediately (mean= 3.05, SD= 0.91). Items ranked number 8, 9 and 10 were the respondents' actual effort in learning and improving in English language. Items ranked number 9 and 10 displayed a mean rating below 3.5 which indicated that the tendency to improve in English was not as high as their interest in doing so. Nevertheless, educators can make the classroom more interactive and English learning materials more interesting to encourage students to put in effort in learning and improving their English language.

**Table 2: Rank of Mean Score for Positive Attitude**

Rank	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	English is an important part of the University programme	4.59	0.56
2	I plan to learn as much English as possible	4.22	0.70
3	I have desire to learn good English	3.94	0.83
4	Learning English is great	3.93	0.79
5	I put a lot of effort in learning English	3.85	0.79
6	I find learning English is very interesting	3.75	0.89
7	I really enjoy learning English	3.66	0.89
8	I enjoy my English class	3.21	0.94
9	I would read English newspapers and magazines as often as I could	3.05	0.91
10	When I have English assignments, I will finish it immediately		

Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Not Sure, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

Key:

Item 1- awareness of importance of English

Item 2, 3, 5- expression of desire to improve English

Item 4, 6, 7- expression of interest in learning English

Item 8, 9, 10- actual effort towards learning and improving English

The findings above were also supported with the data obtained from the open ended section where the respondents were asked if they liked or disliked learning English and to indicate their reasons for the given answers. Eight reasons were given by the respondents as to why they loved English language. The majority of them (19.5%) claimed that they loved English because of the importance of the language. Another 14.5% of them highlighted that English was fun and interesting. Slightly more than 12% of the respondents claimed that they loved English because it helped to increase their knowledge and it helped to build their level of confidence. Less than 10% of them stated that they loved English language because they would be able to improve in speaking in English, to speak in English with others and English was vital for their future career. The remaining indicated that they loved English language because they would be able to read in English. It can be seen that the majority of the students loved English language for various reasons and most of the reasons given were for the students’ benefits in the future.

The reasons stated by the students were also supported by the findings from the interview sessions. One of the respondents (SR3) stated,

*“I love English subject...because since I was young, my mum will read me English stories and buy English books for me to read.”*

Respondent NSR1 also highlighted that she loved English because her teacher used to give interesting newspaper materials in the classroom when she was in her secondary school. This is reflected in the excerpt below:

*“My teacher will give us interesting and funny stories from NST newspaper to read in the classroom and based on the stories, we will do exercises... and that is how I improved in my English subject too!”*

Meanwhile, a small number of the respondents (4%) indicated that they did not like learning English language because they faced difficulties in understanding the language and English contexts in the classroom were not interesting and demotivated them from loving the language.

These findings collaborated with the data obtained from the interview sessions. To illustrate, respondent SR1 stressed that he disliked English language because the language was too difficult to understand.

*“I don’t like English...I have this problem of understanding the difficult words or ...complex structure of English ...sometimes, I will ask my younger sister for help, or maybe friends. But it is difficult to ask for help from them all the time. So, I will refer to the dictionary and I forget or I will just ignore it”.*

### **Respondents’ Attitudes towards English Language Based on Gender**

A t- test analysis was used in order to investigate the attitudes of the male and female respondents. Data in Table 3 below illustrates that the mean score for the female respondents was 3.23 (SD= 0.37) which indicated that the females had positive feeling towards the learning of English language compared to the males (mean= 3.20, SD= 0.35). However, there was no

statistically significant difference in the level of attitude based on gender. Based on the interviews conducted, three out of five male respondents showed negative attitude towards the learning of English language. This was supported by SR3, a male respondent, who stated,

*“I am anxious to speak in English because I’m afraid of using the right word in forming sentences while speaking in front of my friends during class presentations. Sometimes, I have prepared everything beforehand, but still I was nervous because I forgotten everything I practiced.”*

In contrast, female respondents were found to be less anxious when speaking in English language. A female respondent, NSR5 pointed out,

*“I am not afraid of speaking in English especially during the presentation because I talked about something that I have studied and my friends need the information. I know I will hesitate a lot when speaking in English but everyone in the class is learning and no one speaks fluently except for the lecturer.”*

**Table 3: Respondents’ Attitudes towards English Language based on Gender**

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Attitude	Male	61	3.20	0.35	0.05
	Female	139	3.23	0.37	0.03

### **Respondents’ Attitudes towards English Language Based on Discipline**

In order to identify the attitudes among the Science major and Non-Science major students, a t-test analysis was used. The data in Table 4 revealed that the mean for the Non- Science major students was 3.37 (SD= 0.40) which was higher than the mean score among the Science major students (mean= 3.11, SD= 0.30). The findings showed that there was a significant difference in the attitudes of the Non- Science major and Science major students towards the learning of English language.

**Table 4: Respondents' Attitudes towards English Language Based on Discipline**

Variables	Discipline	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Attitude	Science	117	3.11	0.30	0.03
	Non- Science	83	3.37	0.40	0.04

The data above was also reflected by the findings obtained in the interview sessions. During the interview sessions, the Non- Science major students were more positive towards the learning of English language compared to the Science major students. This can be seen through the responses given by the respondents during the interviews. A Science major student (SR5) stated,

*“During the presentation in the class, (the) lecturer will tell us that we need to speak in English language. But if the lecturer did not say anything, I will usually speak in Malay language.”*

This was in contrast with the attitude of the Non- Science major students towards learning English as a second language. This was supported by the statement from respondent NSR2 as seen below,

*“I never feel afraid to speak in English. I know if I practice, I will improve and be fluent in English language. I want to be fluent in English language because people who can speak English language are well respected by others.”*

### **Respondents' Attitudes towards English Language Based on Language Proficiency**

An analysis of ANOVA was used to compare the total mean of attitude towards English language among the high, average and low proficiency students. The findings obtained revealed the comparison of mean ratings of the attitudes towards English language of the tertiary students. The mean score for the high proficiency students was 3.09 (SD= 0.22), followed by average proficiency students with a mean score of 3.16 (SD= 0.37) and the

low proficiency students' mean score was 3.33 (SD= 0.39). All the mean ratings reported were above 3. However, based on Table 5, the p value was  $0.00 < 0.05$ , indicating that there was a difference in the level of attitude towards English Language among the high, average and low proficiency students.

**Table 5: Respondents' Attitudes towards English Language Based on Language Proficiency**

Variables		High Proficiency	Average Proficiency	Low Proficiency
Attitude	Mean	3.09	3.16	3.33
	N	41	75	84
	Std. Deviation	0.22	0.37	0.39

Note: Total number of respondents= 200: High Proficiency =41, Average Proficiency =75, Low Proficiency = 84.

Therefore, in order to determine the difference in the attitudes of the three groups, a post hoc test was done (Duncan Test). The findings of the Duncan test (Table 6) demonstrated that the high and average proficiency students had similar attitudes while the low proficiency students had better attitude towards the learning of English language.

**Table 6: Duncan Test on Attitude**

Proficiency Level	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
High	41	3.09	
Average	75	3.16	
Low	84	3.33	
Sig		0.28	1.00

The data obtained above was also supported by the findings from the interview sessions. In the interviews, the level of English language proficiency among the respondents was identified during the warm-up session, which was at the beginning of the interview. Out of the ten respondents interviewed, three of them had high proficiency in English, four of them had average language proficiency while the remaining three respondents had low English language proficiency. It is interesting to note that the respondents with low language proficiency were more open and

less anxious compared to the high and average proficiency students. This finding is further supported by the excerpt from a low proficiency respondent (NSR5) who pointed out,

*“I love presentation in the classroom because that is the time that I get to practice using English language.”*

Conversely, the average proficiency respondent (SR3) claimed,

*“If I am given a choice, I choose not to learn English language because it is difficult.”*

This sentiment was further echoed by a high proficiency student, SR2 in the following extract,

*“I don’t like speaking in English because when I speak, everyone will be looking at me and I’m afraid I have said something wrong or my English was really bad.”*

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings indicated that the overall attitudes of the tertiary students towards English language was moderately positive with regard to gender, discipline and language proficiency. It was reported that the female students had better attitudes in learning English language compared to the males but it was not statistically significant. This is supported by Ellis (1994) who stated that female students have better attitudes towards English language compared to male students as females rather than males are more likely to allocate more time in learning English language and spend their money to buy reading materials.

The Non- Science major students had a significantly more positive attitude towards learning English language than the Science major students. This finding was also supported by the responses from the open ended questions posed in the questionnaire and semi structured interviews conducted with the students. It can be seen that the attitudes towards English language among the students developed from the learning environment.

They might have developed positive attitude towards English language because they were exposed to learning English language in a fun and interesting way while some of them tended to have negative attitude towards English language because of the complex structure of the target language or bad learning experiences during their school days. This was found from the interviews. To illustrate, a respondent (SR5) claimed that she had negative attitude towards English language since primary school after being scolded by her English teacher for forgetting to complete her homework. She felt that she had carried the dislike for the language into adulthood and she viewed English language as a language of colonization (“bahasa penjajah”). She stressed,

*“English is a “bahasa penjajah” and I hated English since I was young, I never like English and there is no way I’m going to like the language, I love arithmetic and if possible, I would love to write my name in arithmetic too.”*

The findings also revealed that the low proficiency students had better attitudes towards the learning of English language compared to the high and average proficiency students. This might be caused by the desire among the low proficiency students to improve and excel in English language once they embarked on university education. The students realized that they were weak in English language but they built positive attitudes that drove their motivation to learn in the classroom. Similar result, i.e. low proficiency secondary students with positive attitudes in learning Literature components in English was also found by Mohamad Shukor (2001). Meanwhile, according to Zhang (2001), in schools, teachers often focus on the teaching and learning methods that raise higher marks in examination and neglect the use of English for interaction in and out of the class. Thus, this might why the high and average proficiency students develop negative attitude and low motivation towards speaking and learning English language in university.

Besides that, the results obtained from this study is in line with the findings by Karahan (2007) in which tertiary students were aware of the importance of English language for their future but little effort was put into the improvement of language learning. Hence, educators play a crucial role to enhance the teaching and learning environment in the classroom by emphasizing more interactive and effective language learning activities



and encourage the practice of speaking in English among students. On the other hand, it is important to give feedback and correct the mistakes in second language made by students. As Lightbrown and Spada (2006) claimed, errors should not be seen as a failure among students but a form of mastering the language as feedback and guidance for the students will help them to avoid using ungrammatical forms in the future. Cullingford (1990) believes that the learning and development of attitudes in learning are dependent on the education system.

This study hopes to shed some light on the challenges faced by tertiary students, specifically freshman undergraduates in learning English language. Through the understanding of these challenges, it would be possible for relevant recommendations to be made to help students cope with the situation and also prepare them for the working world which requires them to be fluent in English. It is hoped that the findings of this study may help higher education institutions to focus on the importance of students having the right attitudes towards learning English to enable them to master fluency in all the skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing in English. It is also hoped that the findings can guide policy makers in strategic planning of curriculum specifications that will ensure effectiveness in language learning among students. With the realization that the English language has become the international language for commerce, education and social interaction, language learning in the ESL classroom should be given more crucial attention and focus. By doing so, students will be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and positive attitudes towards English language to prepare them to be global players in the competitive international market.

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