THE REASONS OF STUDENTS REALIZING THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD ENGLISH CONVERSATIONS CLASS

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ABSTRACT

English conversation is an important lesson for Senior High School students in order to face the globalization effects. Many students considered English conversation as a controversial lesson through their positive and negative attitudes toward it. This study aimed to reason for the Senior High School students realize their attitudes toward English conversation class in the ways they are. This qualitative study was conducted at the twelfth grade of Senior High School students. The subjects of this study were 20 students consisting of 11 females and 9 males at the age of 16-18 years old. The data were collected by observations and interviews then were analyzed using Interactive Models. The result showed that there were four reasons of the students realized their attitudes i.e. the (1) language pride, (2) awareness of language norms, and the new findings were (3) motivation to get the job, and (4) lack of skill. It was concluded that the students' attitudes varied as to positive and negative ones and realized in numerous manners affected by several factors.

Keywords: language, attitudes, conversations

INTRODUCTION

People in society create the interaction through the communication in daily life. To communicate each other the people need language as the tools for communication. Through the language there are interaction among people to exchange the information, thoughts, and feelings. The activities of exchanging information, thoughts and feelings in other word are called by conversation. Brown (2014:281) said that conversation class lessons can be on one or more of the language skills or fully integrated practice sessions such as: formal, polite, interviews, presentations, face-to-face and everyday conversations. Baily (2005:42) states that conversation is also one of the most basic and pervasive forms of human interaction. The process of exchanging information, the attitudes often appear in responding the information acquired from the other people. Furthermore, Crano (2008:3) states that an attitude represents an evaluative integration of cognitions and affects experienced in relation to an object. Attitudes are the evaluative judgments that integrate and summarize these cognitive/affective reactions. These evaluative abstractions vary in strength, which in turn has implications for persistence, resistance, and attitude-behavior consistency.

The students often show their attitudes in several ways in the process of teaching and learning of English conversation subject. Abidin (2012:119) found that the EFL students showed negative attitudes toward learning English. It meant that when in teaching and learning process of English conversation, some students did not participate in the classroom activities, some also did not want to speak, some others were not confident to speak, but some of them were serious in learning, and some others were also confident in speaking English.

Meanwhile it was expected that students should be able to speak English well as the learning objective of English subject particularly in English conversation class. So that is why, English conversation is the application of the speaking skill in teaching English.

Factually, the problems of the students which were found in SMA Al-Hidayah Medan namely; students were worried about saying things in English in the classroom because of simply being shy of the attention that their speech attracts; students had no motive to express themselves, i.e., the guilty feeling that they should be speaking; low or uneven participation, this meant that the tendency of some students to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all; students tended to share mother tongue. Finally, it was considered important to conduct the research toward this phenomenon to reveal the way of students in realizing their attitudes toward English conversation class.

1. The Factors that Influence Language Attitudes

Language attitudes were influenced by several factors as Gravin and Mathiot (1986) assumes that the language attitudes may be influenced by language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of language norms.

1.1. Language loyalty

Language loyality is an attitude that encourages the speaker of language to maintain their language viability from the adverse impact of foreign language. In the other words, it is desire of the speaker to maintain and sustain a language. Even if it necessary to prevent the language from other language' influence, prevent the interfrence from foreign language. The loyalty of speaker to use and to maintain the language indicates the positive attitude of the speaker.

1.2. Language Pride

Language pride is an attitude that encourages the person or group of people to make the language as a symbol of person identity or as their group identity. And it can also distinguish them from the others groups. The pride of the speakers to use their language indicates the positive attitude of speaker, but if the speaker are no longer proud or shy to use

their language, they are already included as people who gave negative attitude towards the language.

1.3. Awareness of Language Norms

Awarness of the language norms is an attitude that encourages the use of language carefully, corrective, polite, a descent by the speakers. It encourages the speaker of language to use the language in accordance with applicable norms. The language awareness was reflected in the responsibility, attitude, and feeling of having a language that raises the willingness to foster and develop the language. Awarness of language is and important factor in determining the use of language.

It was stated that characteristics of language attitudes can affect the attitudes of students, for example when some students have loyalty to use and speak English, he/she tended to have the positive attitudes in learning it. The second one was language pride, it occured when the students made English as their symbol of personal or group identities. The last one was awareness of language norms, when the students use the language in accordance with applicable norms especially in English conversation.

2. Conversation

Conversation was an activity of asking and answering between two or more people with a particular language to talk about a certain topic. Conversation according to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary is a talk between two or more people in which thoughts, feelings, and ideas are expressed, questions are asked and answered, or news and information is exchanged.

In the process of conversation, the speakers interacts each other as today the technology has allowed the people to interact and communicate such as via electronic media and the speakers are not necessary facing each other. Since the speakers talk to each other, they also pay attention to the nonverbal signals containing the paralinguistic meaning. For

example, the voice tone of speakers that signs an anger, affection, excited, doubt, or pretentious.

Hartman and Stork (1976:54) defines conversation as "a spoken language used between at least two speakers. As opposed to written language and deliberate prose, conversation is often spontaneous speech (and sign language), and such has not been subjected to large- scale and detailed analysis in linguistics."

Richards and Renandya (2002:212) define conversations as "a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total information input, both linguistic and paralinguistic". That is to say, the speaker and listener can ask questions, express disagreement, all of which need a command of particular language features and which can be learnt. They can engage participants in the process of negotiation collaboratively.

According to Brown (2014:281), conversation class lessons can be on one or more of the language skills or fully integrated practice sessions such as: formal, polite, interviews, presentations, face-to-face and everyday conversations. Conversation classes are ranged from "quasi-communicative drilling to free, open, and sometimes agenda-less discussions among students".

It meant that conversation was the interaction with a dynamic exchange of information by asking and answering in one language or more. Conversation also presents verbal and non-verbal human acts aimed at mutual understanding. It must be understood in the broad sense of establishing common meanings for practical goals.

A normal conversation could follow these rules:

1. Usually only one speaker speaks at a time;

2. The speaker change;

3. The length of the any contribution varies;

4. There are technique for allowing the other party or parties to speak; and

5. Neither the content nor the amount of what we say is specified in advance. (Nolasco and Arthur, 2000:7).

Richards (1980, as cited in Chastain, 1988:275) argues that conversation is more than exchanging information; it involves discussing, lecturing, debating and so on. In other words, there are two or more participants involving in a joint communicative effort to ensure that the speaker creates a message that the listener can comprehend. In foreign classes, conversation is understood by some students as a list of continual questions and answers. However, in some well-known books, the following authors give different views on conversation:

First, Baily (2005: 42) claims that conversation is "one of the most basic and pervasive forms of human interaction". Topics, for example, generally bear very little resemblance to authentic native-speaker conversation because they exclude some of the most vital grammatical, pragmatic and sociolinguistic features of everyday spoken English. Richards (2008:20) supports this by saying when choosing topics for conversational classes, it is necessary to recognize the different functions speaking performs in every day communication and the different purposes for which our students need speaking skills.

Second, Celce and Murcia (2014:110) assumes that there are four strategies for building speaking skill: get student talking through positive feedback, maintain conversational parity through turn-taking, ask leading questions (dealing with sentence-level problems, global discourse, etc.) and "link and extend" through verbal linkages (for example, echo student's own talk) and idea linkages (which incorporate student's ideas into the instructional dialogue, as when teachers summarize or paraphrase them). Moreover, conversation is really an argument where opinions clash with each other, and the best man wins, a good conversation employs a kind of parallel thinking where ideas are laid down alongside each other, without interaction between the contributions. There is no clash, no dispute, and no true/false judgment.

Unfortunately, conversational texts become associated with phrase book type English, focusing largely on transactional exchange such as service encounter, under the heading of "every day conversation" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006:250).

In conversation class context, the role of teacher is always encouraging students to engage in classroom activities, and their participation is often evaluated according to the amount and quality of their talk. Moreover, teachers must provides means of developing conversation skills; they must be aware of different media of communication to meet the students' individual differences. (Arulsamy and Zaya, 2011:26)

It was argued that conversation was a dynamic exchange between two or more people discussing a certain topic to achieve the certain goals. Since, this was an interaction among the people, so there were attitudes among the participants who involved in that conversation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted on students of Senior High School (SMA) Al-Hidayah Medan located at Jl. Letda Sudjono Gg. Perguruan No. 4 Medan, Indonesia in 2018/2019 academic year. The subject of this study consisted of 20 students with the average age were 16 to 18 years old. This research conducted using qualitative descriptive analysis. The data of this research were the students' utterances and behavior toward English conversation class. The data of this research were collected by doing observation and interview. The process of collecting data was supported by interview transcript and some other instruments i.e field note; and audio/video recorder in order to get the students' utterances, and behaviors. Then, the data were analyzed by applying interactive models (Huberman, Miles and Saldana : 2014). The steps were data condensation, data display, and data drawing/verification. Finally, the trustworthiness of the study was based on credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Lincoln: 1985).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

There were many reasons expressed by the students why they realized their positive attitudes in the ways they were. The reasons affected by some factors. The data analysis got from the students by doing interviews explained that students' positive attitudes related to their opinion and beliefs toward it. It was also influenced by several factors as Gravin and Mathiot (1986) assumed that the language attitudes may be influenced by language loyalty, language pride and awareness of language norms. In this study, there were four (4) reasons of students realized their attitudes toward English conversation class i.e. (1) language pride, (2) awareness of language norms/use, (3) motivation to get the job, and (4) lack of skill.

(1) Language Pride

Language pride was one of factors that influence the language attitude of someone. From the interview done to the students, the data showed that students give the reason why they like English conversation because of the language pride.

The example of data below explains they way of students realized their attitudes.

Data 1

Respondent : saya sangat menyukainya karena conversation itu adalah berdialog ke siapapun dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan itu sangat menyenangkan.

Data 1 showed that the student enjoyed using English as a language to communicate to others, and he/she felt that it was fun.

(2) Awareness of the Language Norms

The category of language awareness of norms was how the students encouraged themselves to use the English politely and accurately. The students showed their language awareness of norm of English conversation.

Data 2

Respondent : saya suka walaupun saya masih belajar agar bisa berbicara bahasa Inggris.

It showed that students were aware about the language norms of English and he/she encouraged him/herself to study in order to be good in English speaking particularly in conversation.

(3)   Motivation to Get the Job

The students showed their positive attitudes toward English conversation to get the job later on.

Data 3

Interviewer : mengapa anda menyukai pelajaran conversation bahasa Inggris?

Respondent : karena pelajaran ini sangat penting bagi kami semua dan gampang untuk mencari lowongan kerja

Data 3 shows that the respondent shows his/her awareness of the important of learning English conversation and became his/her motivation to get the job after the graduation.

(4) Lack of Skill

The lack of English skill of students also became one of the reasons why the students realized their attitudes toward English conversation class in the ways they are. The following example of data explain it.

Data 4

Respondent : tidak menyukai karena saya tidak tahu arti bahasa Inggris ke bahasa Indonesia

Data 4 shows that the student did not understand in translating English into Bahasa Indonesia instead the student had lack of skill in English and it made him/her had a negative attitude toward English conversation class. The following conversation also shows the lack of skill of student in English.

The lack of English skill in doing conversation became one of the reasons of students in realizing their negative attitudes. It can be seen that the conversation above describes the students asking his/her pair about how to ask in English by using bahasa Indonesia. It shows

that he/she has the lack of English skill so he/she realize the negative attitude toward English conversation class.

The Table 1 showed how the realization of students reasons having their attitudes toward English conversation class.

Table 1 The Students Reasons Realizations

No	Reasons	Number	Percentages
1	Language pride	2	10%
2	Awareness of language norms	6	30%
3	Motivation to get the job	6	30%
4	Lack of skill	6	30%
	Total	20	100%

Table 1 showed that 70% of students reasoned their positive attitudes because of language pride (30%), awareness of language norm/use (30%), and motivation to get the job (30%). Otherwise, the reasons of negative attitudes toward English conversation class because of the lack of skill (30%).

There were four reasons of students realizing their attitudes i.e. (1) language pride, (2) awareness of language norms, (3) motivation to get the job, and (4) lack of skill. Dweik (2015) found that Immigrant-Arab Quebec people in Canada have the positive attitudes towards Arabic because of their ethnic pride, they also have the positive attitudes toward English and French because they could express their identity as Canadian people. It meant that pride affected the attitudes of people toward a certain language. Different with Faruk (2014) found that Arabian people have the positive attitudes toward English with two major factors namely Saude Economy (SE) and Saudi English Language Education Policy (SELEP).

The similarity found by Fadlala (2017) examined on the Sudanese undergraduates were many of Sudanese students did not like English because of the lack of their English skill.

Khaled (2014) observed that the students' attitudes towards Standard Arabic appeared to be apathetic in general. Several factors affected their attitudes were the lexical gap, literacy and education. It can be seen that the lack of language skill can affect the students' attitudes toward a certain language.

CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that there were four reasons of the students' attitudes realizations i.e. language pride, awareness of language norms, motivation to get the job and lack of skill.

In relation to the conclusion, it is suggested that the students who have the positive attitudes should be more ideas to have more examples for extrinsic motivation, e.g. English as the international language for the world, and the students who have the negative attitudes should be encouraged to study English as the science of technology. It is advised that language researchers should do further researches about the relationship of English conversation skill toward the successfulness of student in getting the job after graduation.

It is recommended that the teachers of English conversations class should give more topics and trainings to the students related to the specific purpose i.e. English for specific professionalism in order to get the job when students finish their studies.

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