

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The expressions of “*Saya sedang di jalan, ya*” and “I am on the way” will result in different reactions from the people who hear and speak it. Both expressions are of the same meaning, the difference is that the first expression is spoken in Indonesian (“*Saya sedang di jalan, ya*”) and the other one is spoken in English (“I’m on the way”). For people who adore English, they will like to use and hear English expressions because they think that English sounds more beautiful and holds more prestige when using it. For Indonesian people who are loyal to their language, will prefer to use Indonesian expressions as they are proud to use their own language. This is what is known as language attitude, as stated by Crystal (1997:215): “The feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others.”

It is important to study language attitude because it is one of the influential aspects in learning languages. Having positive attitude may result in a better student’s performance. On the other hand, having negative attitude may hamper the learning process and degrade the student’s performance. Therefore, it can be said that language attitude is one of the influential aspect in the language learning process. Richards et al. (1992:199) elaborates in below excerpt:

"The attitudes which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other's languages or to their own language. Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, degree of importance, elegance, social status, etc. Attitudes towards a language may also show what

people feel about the speakers of that language. Language attitudes have an effect on second language or foreign language learning. The measurement of language attitudes provides information which is useful in language teaching and language planning."

Richards explains that language attitudes have an impact on second language or foreign language learning. In language attitude lies important aspects of the behavior the people will then have towards the language. For example, expressions of positive or negative feelings towards the language may reflect on the difficulties and fears of learning, the elegance feeling when using that language, etc. Therefore, measuring language attitude is beneficial to determine which is useful in language teaching and language planning. This may result in better students' performances because a successful learning process may lead to a successful achievement of the students. This statement also supported by Oxford (1996) who said that the most influential aspect in language learning success or failure is the affective side of the learners.

There are seven areas have been defined to for affective factors, consists of acculturation, ego, personality, emotion, beliefs, attitude and motivation, based on the works of some researchers including Dornyei (1990), Ehrman (1996), Gardner (1980), and MacIntyre and Charos (1996). However, this research is limited to discuss about the attitude only, not other six affective factors.

According to McGroarty (1996:5) attitude towards language is one of the affective factors in learning because attitude has cognitive, affective and conative components. It involves beliefs, emotional reactions, and behavioral tendencies related to the language. Therefore, it may influence the people tendencies to act or

evaluate behavior in a certain way. This is then promotes or discourages the choices made in all realms of activity, whether academic or informal.

Moreover, Popham (2011:233) considered the affective domain important because of its influence on learner's future behavior as elaborated in the below excerpt:

“The reason such affective variables as students' attitudes, interests, and values are important to us is that those variables typically influence future behavior. The reason we want to promote positive attitudes towards learning is because students who have positive attitudes towards learning today will be inclined to pursue learning in the future. The affective status of students lets us see how students are predisposed to behave subsequently.”

Therefore it is important to study language attitude because it greatly helps the language learning and planning. For example to determine which type of learning methods will be effective and suitable for the students, to address the students' fears and difficulties of learning, etc. As this will promote positive attitude among the students, they will be inclined to pursue learning in the future.

In addition to influence the students' future behavior, language attitude is also believed to be the factor that differs underachievement and accomplishment of the students. According to Spolsky (2000), attitudes towards the language hint at students' fears, feelings, or prejudice about the learning of English as a second language. It is believed that learners' attitudes, skills and strategies dictate whether or not they will be able to absorb the intricacies of language, as stated by Oxford (1990) and Nunan (2000).

As the researchers above agreed on the same thing, which is a positive attitude towards language will then result to a better performance of the students, the writer wants to know about the proficiency as well. Proficiency is a part of

learning process because by learning through certain stages, proficiency can be achieved. Therefore, it can be assumed that if the students have positive attitudes towards the language being taught, they will likely to have higher proficiencies.

According to Oxford Online Dictionaries, proficiency means “a high degree of skill; expertise” while Cambridge refers to proficiency as “great skill, ability, and experience.” Therefore, by being proficient in certain language, for example English, it means that person must be able to converse and understand English to certain degrees depending on his or her level of proficiency. As this is quite hard to determine somebody’s proficiency in language, many language organizations have developed scales to help identify a person’s language ability. Those scales might vary in details but they are all the same in the core.

Below are two examples of the language proficiency scale that are commonly used:

In the US, an influential proficiency measure is the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale, developed by the US State Department. It identifies five levels of language proficiency:

Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR)		
	Level	Abilities
Level 1	Elementary	Can fulfill the basic needs in a language, such as ordering meals, asking time, and asking for directions.
Level 2	Limited Working Proficiency	Can fulfill routine social demands, such as small talk about one’s self, one’s family, and current events.
Level 3	Professional Working Proficiency	Can discuss a variety of topics with ease and almost completely understand what others are saying.
Level 4	Full Professional Proficiency	Can participate in all manners of conversations with ease and only rarely makes grammatical mistakes.
Level 5	Native or Bilingual Proficiency	Can use the language the way an educated native speaker of the language would.

Table 1.1 ILR Scale

European countries use something called the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or called as CEFR in short. It is the same idea, but the levels are broken down as:

CEFR	
Level	Level of Proficiency
A1	Breakthrough or Beginner
A2	Waystage or Elementary
B1	Threshold or Intermediate
B2	Vantage or Upper Intermediate
C1	Effective Operational Proficiency or Advanced
C2	Mastery or Proficiency

Table 1.2 CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

These levels are then explained further to inform the people what kind of competencies they have when they are situated in those certain levels.

The respondents of this study are limited to UKI Papuan students. There are two occasions which inspired the writer to conduct a research towards UKI Papuan students. First, it is because the writer has taught them in a program called English is Fun. Both Papuan students have positive attitudes toward the learning process. Unfortunately, they did not achieve better than those who do not show eagerness. Second, when the writer attended debating competition in national level back in 2014. There, she found out that all students who came from Eastern Indonesia, especially Papuan students, were situated in “Below Average” category. Therefore, the writer wants to find out whether having a positive attitude

towards English does have impacts to the process of learning or not. Since the subject of study is UKI Papuan students, the writer explains about the characteristics of Papuan people in general in the following paragraph.

The writer finds that generally, Papuan have the characteristics of black curly hair, charcoal colored skin, and faces similar to the Aborigin ethnic. Due to its far distance from the capital city of Indonesia, Papuan oftentimes neglected by the government, as this area is not developed properly yet. The prices are spike in this province as it takes much fuel and energy to transport goods to this far island, the transportation is in improper condition as there is no regular transportation provided for the people there and roads are also in poor condition. The same thing is also happening in academic. Schools and teachers are insufficient and sometimes in poor condition too.

That is why the writer wants to bring up this topic as this interests me. The writer wants to find out whether those Papuan students are lacking in their performances due to their attitude in English learning process.

Therefore, the *skripsi* titled “**The Relationship between Language Attitude and Proficiency: A Case Study on Papuan Students at Christian University of Indonesia**” is made to answer the questions and as partial requirements for the degree of *Sarjana* in English Language and Literature.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, research questions that this paper is intended to seek for the answers are as follows:

- a. How is the English language attitude of Papuan students who are studying at UKI?
- b. What are the factors that influencing UKI Papuan students attitude toward English?
- c. How such language attitude related to UKI Papuan students' proficiency?

1.3 Purpose of The Study

According to the research questions above, this *skripsi* is intended to:

- a. Find out how the English language attitude of Papuan students who are studying at UKI.
- b. Analyze what are the factors that influencing UKI Papuan students attitude toward English.
- c. Analyze how such language attitude related to UKI Papuan students' proficiency.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of The Study

1.4.1 Scope of The Study

The subject in this study is Papuan students who live in Papua for over than ten years and currently attending Bachelor degree at UKI. The age of the respondents is not limited, as long as they are still registered as active students at UKI. Samples in this research are ten Papuan students at UKI who are chosen using purposive sampling technique.

Application that is used to help in predicting their proficiency is Duolingo Test Center.

1.4.2 Limitation of The Study

This study will be limited to explain the relationship between English language attitude and proficiency through the sociolinguistics perspective. The data will be taken from the result of the in-depth interview from the respondents and literary sources as the theoretical base in deducting the conclusion. As this research is only focused on the language attitude toward English and its relation to UKI Papuan students' proficiency, respondents demography is limited to UKI only.

1.5 Significance of The Study

The findings of this *skripsi* are expected to be beneficial for those who are interested in language attitude within a certain social group or communities and the linkage of this sociolinguistics phenomenon towards becoming proficient in a certain language, in this case is, English. This study is aimed at Papuan students that are attending Bachelor course at Christian University of Indonesia because the writer is interested in their attitude towards English. Another reason is that Christian University of Indonesia has a great numbers of Papuan students, approximately 200 students, that make the writer feels the moral value to seek for the answer of why, even though Papuan students have positive attitude toward English, they mostly underperform. This *skripsi*, hopefully, may evoke the

government's intention to take this matter more seriously and conduct a more comprehensive research towards English proficiency of Papuan people, because one of its fundamental obligations is to empowering its citizens academically.

1.6 Research Methodology

The writer uses descriptive qualitative as her research design.

Samples of this research are obtained by purposive sampling technique. Black (2010) states that:

“Purposive sampling (also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling) is a sampling technique in which researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study. Purposive sampling is a [non-probability](#) sampling method and it occurs when elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. Researchers often believe that they can obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment, which will result in saving time and money.”

The writer uses this sampling technique as the objective of this research is to understand the relationship between English language attitude and UKI Papuan English proficiencies. But, as there are many specific types of purposive sampling according to Palys (2008), the writer uses criterion sampling as her specific purposive sampling technique, which described as “...involves searching for cases or individuals who meet a certain criterion, for example, that they have a certain disease or have had a particular life experience.”

The criteria that should be met by all respondents are:

- a. They should spend more than 15 years in Papua (any regions)
- b. They should be active students of Bachelor degree at UKI; but their majors are not limited
- c. The sample must consist of equal numbers of female and male students

The writer only obtained ten UKI Papuan students, which consist of five male and five female, based on the theories below:

“The sample size used in qualitative research methods is often smaller than that used in quantitative research methods. This is because qualitative research methods are often concerned with garnering an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon or are focused on meaning (and heterogeneities in meaning)—which are often centered on the how and why of a particular issue, process, situation, subculture, scene or set of social interactions. In-depth interview work is not as concerned with making generalizations to a larger population of interest and does not tend to rely on hypothesis testing but rather is more inductive and emergent in its process. As such, the aim of grounded theory and in-depth interviews is to create “categories from the data and then to analyze relationships between categories” while attending to how the “lived experience” of research participants can be understood (Charmaz, 1990:1162).”

There are no exact numbers on how many samples should be taken, but here are suggestions from the experts:

Phenomenology: Creswell (1998, p.64) five to 25; Morse (1994, p.225) at least six. Since the samples taken for this research are ten respondents, they have met the minimum criteria according to Creswell and Morse.

The main data of this research is the answers from the in-depth interview sessions with the UKI Papuan students.

1.7 Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis technique that the writer used in this research is as follow:

- a. Searching for related books, articles, and journals that are discussing the topic of language attitude.
- b. Based on the library research, the writer will sum up all the information to be the background of the study and to understand the matter that is intended to be discussed. The library research is also intended to find the

appropriate theories on language attitude to improve the analysis of this study and to become the benchmark to conclude the result of this research.

- c. After all the theories and data being collected and analyzed, the writer then will make a list of in-depth interview questions to find the next data required in this study, which is the Papuan students' attitudes toward English. Before beginning to conduct the interview to the intended respondents, the writer will ask for the approval of the writer's advisor, to check whether this list of questions is already appropriate to solicit the answer or not.
- d. Next step is conducting the interview to the intended participants. After all the participants needed in this *skripsi* have attended a session in the interview that was held in the canteen of UKI, the writer will input the data and analyze the data using the theories and related articles obtained before.
- e. After the data have been analyzed, the writer will identify the aspects of language attitude, proficiency and the correlation between language attitude and the proficiency level of the sample.

This *skripsi* is aimed to get the result to answer the research questions.

1.8 Structure of *Skripsi*

Chapter I: this chapter consists of background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study and research methodology which includes the method of obtaining and analyzing the data.

Chapter II: this chapter is the theoretical framework used in this *skripsi*, including theories on language attitude, definition of proficiency and the correlation with the attitude, and also historical background of Papuan people.

Chapter III: This chapter is the result and discussion of this *skripsi*. After analyzing the data in chapter II, the writer will then use the findings to explain and discuss about the topic. How is the attitude toward English by Papuan students and whether their attitudes will help or prevent them in achieving high level of English proficiency.

Chapter IV: this is the final chapter which consists of conclusion and suggestion. The writer will conclude the discussed topic based on the analysis and suggest a few things for a further study in the future.