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Language Attitude among Malaysian Secondary School Students

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Abstract

The general population of Malaysia attends 11 years of compulsory learning of the English language in a formal context at both primary and secondary schools. Since the implementation of compulsory learning, the English subject syllabus has been reviewed and revised several times. However, according to the Ministry of Education, English subject achievement among secondary students is one of the poorest in schools with 72 percent of Malaysian students not meeting the minimum requirement for secondary school graduates. This study investigates Malaysian secondary school students' attitudes towards English on three aspects of language attitude which are cognitive, affective and conative. A total of 100 respondents, aged between 17-18 years old took part in this study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data which were collected via an adapted survey questionnaire. The findings suggest the respondents have moderately positive language attitudes towards English and its learning. The result of this survey may be beneficial to those in the education line specifically in the second/foreign language field. It is suggested that future study should expand the research by identifying and comparing attitudes from students with varying proficiency levels for better insight on the attitude differences based on the achievement levels.

Keywords: Attitude, Anxiety, Language Learning, Education.

Introduction

Malaya was once colonized by the British and during the British Occupation, English became the medium of instruction at schools. Now, after more than six decades of independence, the English language is given a high status in the Malaysian education system in which has become a compulsory subject in schools. Dr. Maszlee Malik, the current Malaysian Education Minister says that mastering the English language is undeniably important as reported in the Malay Mail dated 22nd May 2018. Thirusanku and Melor (2014) also claim the mastery of English is essential for an individual to be competitive in academic or career prospects. An English speaker may receive more job opportunities compared to a non-English speaker as employers and interviewers prefer individuals with better communication capabilities and skills (Nich, 2005). Besides, it is well-acknowledged that most reading materials are in the English language whether it is online or hardcopies such as books and journals. Being able to understand these materials would benefit individuals. Therefore, Malaysia aims to

produce proficient English speakers once they complete schools (Omar, 1981) as the ability to communicate in English fluently can be a great advantage (Gill, 2002).

Thus, many efforts have been made by the Ministry of Education Malaysia to achieve its aim in producing proficient English speakers among students by changing and implementing education policy including Teaching and Learning Science and Mathematics in English (PPSMI) and Upholding the Malay Language and Strengthening Command of English (MBMMBI). Despite the efforts made, students' proficiency and achievement in English are still unsatisfactory. Eleven years of compulsory English language education are only able to produce a small group of proficient speakers while the rest are still below average (Hiew, 2012). Consequently, English subject had the lowest result among other compulsory subjects such as Bahasa Melayu, Mathematics and History for Malaysian Education Certificate (SPM) in 2015 (Ministry of Education, 2016) This situation has worried various parties and issues related to teaching and learning of English language in school has always been attracting the attention of almost all levels of Malaysian citizens. Policymakers and educators are trying to come out with solutions by exploring the real issue experienced by students in English learning. Attitudes and motivation of students towards the language and its learning are said to be one of the major aspects of language proficiency (Thang et al., 2011). This statement is further supported by Mustafa et al. (2015) that attitudinal factors should be studied as it has been identified as one of the key features that determine language achievement.

It is almost a well-known fact in the society that most Malaysian who cannot speak and use English fluently despite the compulsory learning of eleven years in school is due to attitudinal factors. Some students do not show eagerness and concentrate in English class as they cannot foresee the importance of English in the future. Naturally, they only made little or no effort at all in English subject compared to other school subjects. In the same time, most of those who cannot speak would mock others who tried speaking in English thus making it hard for them to practice outside of the class settings. Instead, language learners will be told to use their mother tongue to show patriotism. This situation makes language learners become anxious and eventually stop practicing the language. This cycle might have probably made the unsatisfactory language proficiency in Malaysia as what it is today. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to measure English language attitudes among secondary school students in which surveys were conducted to gather data to answer the research question: what are the Malaysian secondary school students' language attitudes towards the English language and its learning?

Literature Review

Attitude and its Relations to Language Learning

Brown (2000) defines attitude as a set of beliefs possessed by language learners towards the target language native speakers. Bouhmama and Bouhmama (2015) and Eshghinejad (2016) perceive attitude as the cognitions and behavior of a language learner towards the language. Meanwhile, Oller (1981) argues attitudes influence students' motivation level which resulted in language proficiency.

Students' attitude towards the target language is vital in determining the success of language learning (Mat and Melor, 2014). Prodromou (1992) also has a similar view as he argued that a successful language learner holds a positive attitude towards the target language. While those with negative attitudes towards the target language are unlikely to become proficient language speakers (Choy and Troudi, 2006). These views are parallel with Gardner's hypothesis (1982) which suggests that effective

language learning is closely related to a person's attitude towards the target language and its community. He further explained by knowing a person's mindset and feeling about a specific group, one can predict that person's behavior towards the group. This hypothesis has been widely recognized and used in most of the research conducted on language attitude and its relation to Second Language Learning (SLA).

Components of Attitude

Triandis (1971) and Wenden (1991) suggest attitude can be classified by three components known as cognitive, affective and conative. Rosenberg et al. (1960) view these three components of attitude in hierarchal form starting from cognitive, affective and conative. Jain (2014) believes the cognitive component of attitude is about the perceptions of a person towards a subject. Abidin et al. (2012) further explain that cognitive attitude is founded in four interrelated steps which are connecting existing and new knowledge, then create new knowledge before checking them and apply them into daily events. These steps are the basis and are responsible for one's beliefs and thoughts towards something or someone. Meanwhile, the affective component of attitude is also known as the emotional aspect of attitude which involves various possible emotional factors (Feng and Chen, 2009). Choy and Troudi (2006) suggest language learner emotions can be a great influence in shaping one's attitude towards the target language. Finally, the conative component of attitude which is also known as behavioural aspect of attitude is one behaviour towards specific events (Savaedi and Vahdat, 2017). Kara (2009) sees positive language conative attitude would lead to positive behaviour towards learning the target language. She also added that those with positive conative attitude will show interest in language learning by contributing to problem-solving, information acquiring and passionately partaking in the learning environment.

Anxiety

MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) view language anxiety as the fear and emotional strain associated with language learning while Scovel (1978) defines anxiety as a state of stress and vague fear. Based on past studies, anxiety is an emotional factor that greatly affects the achievement of language learners (Sadiq, 2017). According to Saranraj and Meenakshi (2016), language learners should be both highly motivated and have low anxiety in using the target language for successful language learning. Language anxiety can be caused by many variables including the learners' personality itself, attitudes towards learning, teacher's attitude and learning experience (Hu and Wang, 2014). According to Čiček (2015), as the learners progress to a higher level of language learning, the anxiety level is likely to rise accordingly. The accumulation of negative experiences through language learning greatly contributes to the high anxiety level.

However, Oxford (1999) classifies anxiety into bad anxiety and good anxiety. Good anxiety is helpful anxiety that helps in language learning whereas the latter is harmful anxiety that hinders language learning. She stated that a few studies have proved that anxiety helps with high language proficiency and self-confidence. However, those studies were conducted with excellent language learners. Also, Evans (1975) states that anxiety can be helpful in a simple task but is unlikely to be effective in language learning as language learning can be a complex process. Thus, anxiety and attitude are interrelated elements that affect language learning.

Related Studies

Many studies have been conducted to discover language learners' attitudes towards learning second/foreign language. For instance, Abidin, Mohammad, and Alzwari (2010) studied 180 participants from secondary schools in Libya to find out their attitude towards the English language and its learning. The difference between participants' attitudes and demographic profiles such as gender, field and year of study were also explored. Data gathered through surveys showed the students possess a negative language attitude in all three aspects of language attitude; cognitive, affective and conative.

Ghaitasi, Azizifar, and Gowhary (2014) also studied students' attitudes towards English language learning on 70 EFL learners in a state university in Ilam, Iran. The goal of the study is to discover the affective and conative aspects of language attitude towards language learning which focused on speaking. A questionnaire was used in collecting data and the results showed that the participants have a positive affective attitude but possess a negative conative attitude towards speaking English. While Sekharan Nair, Setia, Mohamad, Abdul Kadir, Luqman, Vadeveloo, and Ngah (2014) studied 150 pre-university students to investigate Malaysian rural students' perception of the importance of English. They investigated the students' attitudes towards the learning of the English language and their parents' participation in their language learning. It was confirmed that students were well informed on the importance of the language thus showing a positive attitude towards its learning. It was also reported that parents were very supportive of their children's English language learning.

Methodology

Respondents

The respondents were 100 Form Five students (age 17) students of Kluang High School, Johor, Malaysia, with 58 percent males(n=58) and 42 percent female(n=42). 89(89%) Malays, 4(4%) Chinese, 3(3%) Indian and 4(4%) from other races were participating in the survey.

Design

The design of this study surveys. This quantitative study utilized descriptive and inferential statistics in analyzing the data. Therefore, an adapted questionnaire was employed to gather data from the survey. The respondents' demographic profile such as gender and ethnicity are also included.

Instrument

A questionnaire on language attitude toward English and its learning was used as the measuring instrument. The use of the instrument is aimed to discover the three components of language attitude i.e., cognitive, affective and conative among respondents. The items were an adaptation from an attitude questionnaire from a study by Abidin et al. (2012). A total of 45 items were asked in the questionnaire in which 30 of the items were positive whereas 15 items were negative. 5-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire (Level 1: Strongly Disagree to Level 5: Strongly Agree).

Reliability

Table 1. Reliability regarding the Language Attitude Aspects

Aspects of Attitude	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Cognitive	0.842	15
Affective	0.911	15
Conative	0.788	15

The reliability for items used in the questionnaire was determined through the reliability coefficient test by using the Statistical Package for the Social Science Program (SPSS). Acceptable consistency of the questionnaire reliability was met when Cronbach's Alpha for the three aspects of language attitude is between 0.788 and 0.911 as shown in Table 1. These numbers show that the items utilized in the questionnaire were efficient to achieve the goal of this study. The value of Cronbach's Alpha concerning the cognitive aspect is 0.842 while the affective aspect shows 0.911 and last but not least the conative aspect is 0.788.

Administration

The main researcher clarified the instruction of the questionnaire form to the respondents. The questionnaire was translated to Bahasa Melayu which is the students' mother tongue to facilitate in understanding the items as the majority of the respondents are Malays. The administration of the questionnaire lasted about 15 minutes.

Data Analysis

SPSS program was used to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions. The mean, variance and standard deviation for the three components of attitude were determined.

Findings and Discussion

Results focusing on students' attitude towards English and its learning are presented here in three subsections. The students' attitude in cognitive aspect towards English and the learning of English was described in the first section. The second section describes the students' affective aspect of language attitude. Meanwhile, the third section presents students' affective aspect of language attitude. The result also identifies the lowest score in students' attitude that might portray problems faced by students while learning English.

The Cognitive Aspect of Attitude towards English Language

Table 2 Cognitive Component of Language Attitude

No	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
A1	Studying English is important because it will make me more educated	2 (2.0)	4 (4.0)	16 (16.0)	43 (43.0)	35 (35.0)	4.05	0.93
A2	Being good at English will help me study other subjects well.	4 (4.0)	7 (7.0)	20 (20.0)	37 (37.0)	32 (32.0)	3.86	1.07
A3	I have more knowledge and better comprehension when studying English.	3 (3.0)	6 (6.0)	28 (28.0)	33 (33.0)	30 (30.0)	3.81	1.03
A4	I like my English class so much	3 (3.0)	7 (7.0)	47 (47.0)	23 (23.0)	20 (20.0)	3.50	0.99
A5	Studying English helps me getting new information in which I can link to my previous knowledge.	2 (2.0)	2 (2.0)	26 (26.0)	37 (37.0)	33 (33.0)	3.97	0.93
*A6	I cannot summarize the important points in the English subject content by myself.	6 (6.0)	21 (21.0)	38 (38.0)	25 (25.0)	10 (10.0)	2.88	1.05
*A7	Honestly, I study English just to pass the exams.	23 (23.0)	22 (22.0)	19 (19.0)	26 (26.0)	10 (10.0)	3.22	1.33
A8	I believe people who speak more than one language are very knowledgeable.	6 (6.0)	7 (7.0)	20 (20.0)	28 (28.0)	39 (39.0)	3.87	1.19
A9	Learning English helps me communicate in English effectively.	2 (2.0)	4 (4.0)	16 (16.0)	37 (37.0)	41 (41.0)	4.11	0.95

*A10	I cannot apply the knowledge from English subject in my real life.	20 (20.0)	24 (24.0)	27 (27.0)	22 (22.0)	7 (7.0)	3.28	1.22
A11	Studying English makes me able to create new thoughts.	3 (3.0)	5 (5.0)	22 (22.0)	43 (43.0)	27 (27.0)	3.86	0.98
A12	I am able to think and analyse the content in English language.	2 (2.0)	3 (3.0)	30 (30.0)	38 (38.0)	27 (27.0)	3.85	0.93
*A13	I am not satisfied with my performance in the English subject.	5 (5.0)	11 (11.0)	33 (33.0)	31 (31.0)	20 (20.0)	2.50	1.09
*A14	I think English language is difficult and complicated to learn.	10 (10.0)	29 (29.0)	27 (27.0)	24 (24.0)	10 (10.0)	3.05	1.16
A15	English subject has the content that covers many fields of knowledge.	2 (2.0)	5 (5.0)	19 (19.0)	40 (40.0)	34 (34.0)	3.99	0.96
Overall							3.59	0.59

* Negative statement

(Level: Low = 1.00 – 2.33, Moderate = 2.34 – 3.66, High = 3.67 – 5.00)

The cognitive aspect represents the highest mean score of attitudes towards English and its learning (M= 3.59, SD= 0.59). The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents showed moderate but near positive cognitive attitude. They agreed that studying English helps them communicate in English effectively and they also believe that studying English is important because it will make them more educated. These responses among the respondents represent the highest mean score 4.11 with (SD=0.95) and 4.05 with (SD=0.93) respectively. Besides, most respondents are not satisfied with their performance in the English subject. (M= 2.50, SD= 1.09). They also showed a moderate attitude in their ability to summarize the important points in the English subject content with mean score of 2.88 with (SD=1.05). These responses represented the lowest mean score in the cognitive aspect of language attitude. This result is in line with the findings of a study by Boonrangsri et al. (2004) which discovered that more than half of the participants showed a moderate attitude in summarizing the important points in English subject.

The Affective Aspect of Attitude towards English Language

Table 3 Affective Component of Language Attitude

No	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
B1	I feel proud when studying English language.	2 (2.0)	9 (9.0)	33 (33.0)	31 (31.0)	25 (25.0)	3.68	1.01
B2	I feel excited when I communicate in English with others.	3 (3.0)	9 (9.0)	25 (25.0)	39 (39.0)	24 (24.0)	3.72	1.03
B3	I don't get nervous when I have to answer a question in my English class.	2 (2.0)	19 (19.0)	37 (37.0)	27 (27.0)	15 (15.0)	3.34	1.02
B4	Studying foreign languages like English is enjoyable.	2 (2.0)	5 (5.0)	30 (30.0)	34 (34.0)	29 (29.0)	3.83	0.98
B5	To be inquisitive makes me study English well.	2 (2.0)	5 (5.0)	29 (29.0)	37 (37.0)	27 (27.0)	3.82	0.96
B6	Studying English makes me have good emotions (feelings).	3 (3.0)	11 (11.0)	39 (39.0)	31 (31.0)	16 (16.0)	3.46	0.99
*B7	I prefer studying in my mother tongue rather than any other foreign language.	4 (4.0)	19 (19.0)	40 (40.0)	23 (23.0)	14 (14.0)	2.76	1.05
B8	I enjoy doing activities in English.	2 (2.0)	14 (14.0)	50 (50.0)	23 (23.0)	11 (11.0)	3.27	0.91
*B9	I do not like learning English.	24 (24.0)	29 (29.0)	30 (30.0)	8 (8.0)	9 (9.0)	3.51	1.20
B10	I wish I could speak English fluently.	3 (3.0)	4 (4.0)	19 (19.0)	32 (32.0)	42 (42.0)	4.06	1.02
B11	I am interested in studying English.	2 (2.0)	4 (4.0)	27 (27.0)	35 (35.0)	32 (32.0)	3.91	0.97
B12	Studying English subject makes me feel more confident.	2 (2.0)	7 (7.0)	27 (27.0)	37 (37.0)	27 (27.0)	3.80	0.99
*B13	To be honest, I really have little interest in my English class.	23 (23.0)	28 (28.0)	24 (24.0)	18 (18.0)	7 (7.0)	3.42	1.22
B14	Knowing English is an important goal in my life.	3 (3.0)	8 (8.0)	30 (30.0)	40 (40.0)	19 (19.0)	3.64	0.98

B15	I am excited for my next English class	3 (3.0)	13 (13.0)	44 (44.0)	21 (21.0)	19 (19.0)	3.40	1.04
Overall							3.57	0.68

* Negative statement

(Level: Low = 1.00 – 2.33, Moderate = 2.34 – 3.66, High = 3.67 – 5.00)

The respondents' affective aspect of attitude towards English and its learning is also moderate. It is only a little lesser than from those of cognitive aspect and the mean score is 3.57 (SD= 0.68). As in Table 2, the respondents showed that they preferred studying in their mother tongue rather than any other foreign language. The item scored the lowest mean score (2.74) with (SD= 1.05) which indicate negative affective language attitude towards English and its learning. This result is corresponding to the study by Al-Nofaie (2010) that studied the teachers' and students' attitude towards using their mother tongue in facilitating English classes in Saudi's schools. It was discovered that both teachers and students prefer using their mother tongue than English thus portray their negative attitude towards using English language. However, more than 70% of the respondents in this study wished that they can speak English fluently. This response represent the highest mean score 4.06 with (SD=1.02) that showed the respondents still have positive attitude in affective aspect of language attitude. This finding highlights the need for teachers to encourage students to participate in speaking activities by initiating authentic speaking practice like collaborative dialogues where students can acquire the language effectively.

The Conative Aspect of Attitude towards English Language

Table 4 Conative Component of Language Attitude

No	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
*C1	Speaking English generally makes me feel anxious.	8 (8.0)	27 (27.0)	38 (38.0)	18 (18.0)	9 (9.0)	3.07	1.07
C2	Studying English helps me to have good relationships with friends.	2 (2.0)	11 (11.0)	42 (42.0)	27 (27.0)	18 (18.0)	3.48	0.98
C3	I like to give my thoughts during English lessons.	4 (4.0)	13 (13.0)	52 (52.0)	22 (22.0)	9 (9.0)	3.19	0.92
C4	I am able to make myself pay attention during studying English.	2 (2.0)	7 (7.0)	42 (42.0)	30 (30.0)	19 (19.0)	3.57	0.95
C5	When I hear a student in my class speaks English well, I like to practice	2 (2.0)	4 (4.0)	28 (28.0)	39 (39.0)	27 (27.0)	3.85	0.94

	speaking with him/her.								
C6	Studying English makes me more confident	2 (2.0)	10 (10.0)	29 (29.0)	37 (37.0)	22 (22.0)	3.67	1.00	
C7	Studying English helps me to improve my personality.	2 (2.0)	4 (4.0)	32 (32.0)	37 (37.0)	25 (25.0)	3.79	0.94	
*C8	I delayed my English homework if I can	8 (8.0)	22 (22.0)	44 (44.0)	20 (20.0)	6 (6.0)	3.06	0.99	
*C9	I am not relaxed whenever I have to speak in my English class.	6 (6.0)	9 (9.0)	31 (31.0)	35 (35.0)	19 (19.0)	2.48	1.09	
*C10	I feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other students.	8 (8.0)	17 (17.0)	36 (36.0)	27 (27.0)	12 (12.0)	2.82	1.10	
C11	I like to practice English the way native speakers do.	4 (4.0)	2 (2.0)	39 (39.0)	25 (25.0)	30 (30.0)	3.75	1.04	
C12	I wish I could have many English speaking friends.	2 (2.0)	4 (4.0)	36 (36.0)	28 (28.0)	30 (30.0)	3.80	0.99	
*C13	When I miss the class, I never ask my friends or teachers what I missed in class	8 (8.0)	24 (24.0)	41 (41.0)	17 (17.0)	10 (10.0)	3.03	1.07	
*C14	I do not feel excited to come to English class	17 (17.0)	29 (29.0)	34 (34.0)	13 (13.0)	7 (7.0)	3.36	1.12	
*C15	I do not pay any attention when my English teacher is explaining the lesson.	15 (15.0)	31 (31.0)	35 (35.0)	11 (11.0)	8 (8.0)	3.34	1.11	
Overall							3.35	0.51	

* Negative statement

(Level: Low = 1.00 – 2.33, Moderate = 2.34 – 3.66, High= 3.67 – 5.00)

As shown in Table 3, the conative aspect of attitude towards English language represents the lowest mean score ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.51$) among the three aspects of language attitude. The low score indicated that the participants have mostly negative conative attitude. It was revealed that they are not relaxed whenever they have to speak in English class and they feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other students. These responses among the respondents represent the lowest mean score 2.48 with ($SD=1.09$) and 2.82 with ($SD=1.10$) respectively which indicates negative attitude. It was revealed that the majority of the participants feel anxious when they have to speak English in front of other students. This could be due to their unpleasant past experiences when using English. They may have been ridiculed, humiliated and laughed at when trying to speak English in public. The item "When I hear a student in my class speaking English well, I like to practice speaking with him/her" obtained the highest mean score ($M=3.85$, $SD= 0.94$), followed by item "I wish I could have many English speaking friends" with ($M=3.80$, $SD= 0.99$). It means that the respondents wished they have more English speaking friends so they can practice using English with them to improve the language.

Discussion

Many studies reported a strong relationship between attitude and the effectiveness of language learning. This study aimed to investigate the language attitudes of upper secondary ESL students in a national secondary school in the district of Kluang. Descriptive analysis of this study agrees with the past researches which showed a positive correlation between language attitude and language achievement. The results indicate that generally upper secondary students have moderate but close to a positive attitude towards English and its learning. They are aware of the importance of English and they have the desire to become fluent in the language. The results confirm Sekharan et al. (2014) study in which the respondents are very much conscious that English is an important language in both studies. The findings also yield a similar result of research conducted by Ghaitasi, Azizifar, and Gowhary (2014) which both respondents of the studies have a higher score in the affective aspect than the conative aspect of language attitude. Most ESL students seem to recognize the importance of English but labour minimal effort in learning the language thus their English is hardly improved. However, the current findings are not in line with the findings of a study conducted by Abidin, Mohammad, and Alzwari (2010). Their survey showed that the students generally possess a negative attitude while the current study showed a moderate attitude for all three aspects of language attitude. Population, demography and time (period) can be the reason for the different findings. Other than that, education policy and approaches of both countries may also contribute to the different outcomes.

Implication

Several critical implications intended to be highlighted especially to the government, teachers, and parents. Since conative aspect have the least score among the three attitudinal components, efforts should be emphasized towards this area. Efforts toward conative aspect which is also known as behavioural aspect in language learning should be tackled both in language learning class and public setting. In class, language teacher can encourage students' participation by implementing a variety of teaching methods. Lectures, discussions and group work can be made to cater for all the students' proficiency. For example, lectures can be made short or students are given opportunities to ask question throughout the lesson instead of at the end of it. Ask questions to students to check their

engagement. Start with a simple question and give them time to think so the students are not anxious. You can also allow discussion before students answering questions. It would be beneficial especially for weak students. This would help build their confidence and increase class participation over time. In addition, attractive and meaningful activities would help enhance students' interest to keep participating in language lesson. Language games can be a great approach for both proficient and less proficient language learners. Teachers should mapped out on how to play the game so none of the students feel bored nor left out despite their various proficiency level. As example, during a word game, every group ca be given opportunity to use dictionary and chances for discussions reserved for less proficient learner while the more proficient learner can act as aids. The right approach can provide a conducive language learning environment thus would help language learner to be more relaxed and excited in class which lead to positive behavioural changes towards learning English. It would also encouraged them to be more active in the subject which would increase the rate of attention span, class participation and homework completion.

On the other hand, reading can be extremely beneficial for students who are learning a language. Students should be encouraged to read as much as possible as they will be exposed to a wide range of vocabulary and could familiarize themselves with grammar as well as sentence structure. The government also should play its role by promoting English and its importance through the mass media. Activities or competition related to the English language could be organized more often. The Ministry of Education may consider improving the English subject syllabus so that it is not too exam-oriented which is intimidating to ESL learners. Last but not least, parents should aware that their role in cultivating positive English language attitudes in their children is extremely important. Encouragement and support from parents at home from a very young age pay a huge contribution in shaping students' attitudes towards the language.

Conclusion

The respondents portrayed moderate language attitude indicates that they neither have negative nor positive attitudes towards English and its learning. Although respondents showed a moderate language attitude for all three components, cognitive, affective and conative, there are still differences noteworthy. Among the three, affective component scored the highest, followed by cognitive component while conative component scored the lowest although the participating respondents' proficiencies in this study may vary from very proficient to very poor, Another study should be done separately according to a certain group of proficiency to determine their exact language attitude. Other researchers may conduct a similar study but either on very proficient language learners or very poor language learner so the relationship between attitude and their proficiency is clear cut. Studying students' attitudes towards English and its learning extensively in the future are hoped to determine the cause of the low proficiency in the language among Malaysian students, therefore, develop an effective remedy for this language issue. This study provides general information about Malaysian students' language attitude although the respondents do not represent all language learners in Malaysia. To conclude, Malaysian students generally have a moderate language attitude towards English and its learning.

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