

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses introduction of the research used in this study, that is, background, research question, objective, uses, scope of the research, and definition of terms.

### **1.1. Background**

Having been widely observed as one of the issues in studies on language learning, attitude, which belongs to affective domain, can be considered as one of the main determiners which affect the learners' capability in using the language. Gardner (1985) showed that positive attitudes are related to success in second language learning. Learning a language can be assumed as a process of change where language learners are given treatment by the instructor so that they can comprehend what people say in the language, speak by using the language, understand the contents in a reading selection constructed in the language, and communicate what is in his mind using the language through sentences on paper.

Generally, attitudes, in relation to language acquisition, can be divided into three types: attitude towards the language, attitude towards the native speaker of the language, and attitude towards language learning. In terms of its influence to students, attitude can be classified into positive and negative. Positive attitude

bolsters up the process of learning; the negative one hampers the learning process. From the three sorts of attitude mentioned above, the attitude towards language learning is the focus in this research.

It is stated that attitude towards language learning plays a crucial role in language learning as it influences learners' success or failure (Zainol, et al., 2012 and Finch, 2008). This notion stands to reason in the sense that if students have positive attitude towards the process of learning a language, they will enjoy more the lesson and, as a result, they can catch up more knowledge and skill of the language. On the other hand, if the students' attitude towards language learning is negative, they will be reluctant and pay less attention in the teaching-learning activity.

In accordance with the researcher's experience while taking the teaching practice program (PPL) at SMA Negeri 1 Sumberejo in Tanggamus Regency from July to September 2014, there were some students who still held negative attitude towards language learning. A phenomenon that can be regarded as a proof is that most of the students considered learning English as a difficult activity. This condition seemed to greatly influence their achievement. It can be seen when the researcher administered a reading test to the students. The result was unsatisfactory; particularly for those who thought learning English was uneasy and tended not to pay full attention in the class while the lesson was going. The majority of the students' grades were below standard quality (KKM) of the school. In reliance to this, the researcher was interested to analyse whether

attitude to language learning has correlation with the students' reading comprehension.

A study by Latif, Fadzil, Bahroom, Mohammad, and San (2011) to determine the relationships between attitudes, motivation, anxiety and instrumental orientation and English language learning showed that all these variables were correlated with learners' performances, with attitude having a positive impact. In another study, Johnson (2012) investigated the attitude of Japanese non-English major EFL learners. These engineering students presented a range of attitudes towards learning English. Nevertheless, their positive attitudes still correlated highly with their proficiency levels, with higher level students expressing the weakest dislike for English learning.

Previous study by Wicaksi (2012) showed that attitude had significant correlation toward the students' English speaking achievement. Eventually, the research had only found out the correlation between attitude in general and speaking achievement and provides relatively general elaboration. In this present study, the researcher differently intended to see the correlation between attitude towards English language learning and reading comprehension. Additionally, the analysis on what component of attitude that contributed most to the students' success in comprehending text would be presented. The researcher also brought about an analysis of regression between attitude to language learning and reading comprehension in order to find out whether there was cause-and-effect relationship between both variables.

Increasing reading comprehension of the students is clearly a matter of importance since reading is one of main important skills in learning a language. Having good reading comprehension will make the students possible to extract new knowledge from varied disciplines in numerous literary works as they are rich sources of science. In regard with the research, if the correlation between attitude to language learning and reading comprehension is apparently positive, then teacher needs to firstly improve their students' attitude to English language learning if he/she expects the students' reading comprehension to strengthen.

Referring to the explanation above, the researcher wanted to analyse whether there was correlation of students' attitude to language learning and their reading comprehension achievement. This was important to be conducted in order to know how the students' attitude to learning was, particularly in SMA Negeri 1 Sumberejo. By identifying this, teacher will have a possibility to enhance the success of learning by conducting a teaching which can modify the attitude towards language learning of the students.

## **1.2. Research Question**

Based on the background discussed above, the research question in this study was "Is there any correlation of attitude towards language learning on students' reading comprehension at SMA Negeri 1 Sumberejo?"

### **1.3. Objective**

The objective of this research was to analyze the correlation of attitude to language learning and students' reading comprehension at SMA Negeri 1 Sumberejo.

### **1.4. Uses**

The uses of this research are as follows:

#### **1. Theoretically**

This study is proposed to correlate whether the findings in the research are relevant or not with the existing theory dealing with attitude to language learning and its role on students' reading comprehension.

#### **2. Practically**

- a. As input for both teachers and learners on attitude to language learning and its role on students' reading comprehension.
- b. As input for other researchers who are interested in conducting some research dealing with attitude to language learning and its role on students' reading comprehension.

### **1.5. Scope**

There are two main issues in present study: attitude to language learning and reading comprehension. The focus of the research is on whether there was correlation between students' attitude to language learning and their reading comprehension. The research was carried out at SMA Negeri 1 Sumberejo in

Tanggamus Regency in the academic year 2014/2015 and employed one class out of six classes of the second year students, that is, XI MIA 3 as the sample.

### **1.6. Definition of Terms**

In order to clarify and synchronize perception of some terms the researcher uses in this study, they are defined as follows:

1. Attitude to language learning is the conviction, feeling, and response emerged by the language learner to any item, material, situation and even the teacher while the process of learning language is occurring.
2. Language learning refers to classroom activity in which the students interact with certain language materials in order that they will be able to be competent in listening, speaking, reading and writing by using the language.
3. Reading comprehension refers to the process of discovering information and ideas from a written text whereas in finding the message of the text, sufficient background knowledge is necessary.

In this chapter, the researcher has shed light on the introduction of the research used in this study, including background, research questions, objectives, uses, scope of the research, and definition of terms.