

# Students' Attitudes towards English at Catholic University of Saint Thomas Medan

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**Abstract.** The language globalization affected the students' perception of the ethnolinguistic vitality as the result of academic learning experiences. Consequently, English could enrich students' contextual information about ethnic language and national language. This study was to find out the language attitude of Students University Catholic of Saint Thomas Medan North Sumatera towards English. This research applied descriptive qualitative research design. The subject of this study was students at Unika Santo Thomas Medan about 100 students from four tribes (Karonese, Simalungun, Nias and Tobanese) in North Sumatera and 25 students taken from each tribe as sample. The results showed that there were 19 (76%) students of Karonese found English was interesting, 25 (100%) students of Nias, (94%) students of Simalungun, and 19 (76%) students of Tobanese found English was interesting.

**Keyword:** English, Language Learning, Language Attitudes, Ethnic Language, National Language

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## 1. Introduction

The spread of English as a global lingua franca was created lingua-cultural backgrounds through the communicative purposes in a variety of contexts. Likewise, [8] Indonesia belongs to the expansion of intercultural communication where English is adopted as foreign language. [6] It means that the awareness of language varieties could foster students' understanding of global mindset because language is believed as an exposure to different sets of values of norms. It argues that intercultural communication when learning English as foreign language is needed to equip the students with skills and qualities required of global citizens, such as openness to diversity, critical cultural awareness, and the ability to deal with complex local and global realities. It happens because of students' pragmatic skills to adapt their English use in line with the demands of the current interaction.

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The determinants of language varieties are analyzed by observing language attitudes. [10] The factor that arise language attitude can be distinguished as stimulus effects, subject effects, and situational effects. Stimulus effects relate to the linguistic determinants of language attitudes. Subject effects relate to the social characteristics of the subjects holding the attitudes, and situational effects relate to characteristics of immediate situation or broader socio-cultural environment in which language attitudes develop. Language attitude is defined as [5] any cognitive, affective, or conative index of evaluative reactions towards different varieties and different speakers. The inclusion of the speakers of the varieties in this definition refers to ‘those aspects of individual self-image that derive from the social categories to which he or she perceives themselves as belonging.’

[4] Positive attitudes towards language learning can raise learners’ motivation and help language learning. [9] Motivation in a foreign language consists of goal, effort, desire to achieve the goal, and positive attitude towards the relevant activity. In order to know what attitudes are like in multilingual educational contexts, [1] it can be useful to know the status of different languages (minority, majority, English) is perceived by learners. It is important to consider the sociolinguistic context when analyzing the result of a research study on attitudes towards the minority and the majority languages.

As well as, [3] there are two types of language attitude, namely integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Instrumental motivation refers to instrumental/occupational reasons for learning a language. Integrative motivation refers to positive attitudes toward the target language group and the potential for integrating into that group, or at the very least an interest in meeting and interacting with members of the target language group. The language attitudes have three components [7], they were cognition, affect, and conation or behavioral tendencies:

1. The cognitive component of an attitude consists of beliefs, opinions, ideas, knowledge, or information held by a person towards an object. Cognitive indicators of an attitude include verbal expressions of beliefs and thoughts, or non-verbal perceptual reactions (body language).
2. The affective or emotional element of the attitude is the feelings stimulated by the object of the attitude. Affective responses include verbal expressions of feelings towards the attitude object as well as physiological reactions, facial expressions, and other non-verbal indicators of positive or negative feeling.
3. The conative or behavioral tendency component of an attitude includes predispositions, intentions, plans, inclinations, and commitments to act or behave in certain ways toward the object of the attitude.

## 2. Research Method

Descriptive qualitative research was designed as the research method in this study. The purpose of descriptive qualitative method was to describe the systematically the facts and the characteristics of a given population or area of interest, factually, and accurately. Descriptive research often used surveys, questionnaires, or interviews to obtain the data needed. [2] Qualitative research is frequently called naturalistic because the researcher frequents places the event she or he was interest in natural occur. This design was chosen because this research was conducted for one case of language in one region. The subject of this study was the students at Unika Santo Thomas Medan, North Sumatera which was located on Setia Budi Street, Kecamatan Medan Tuntungan, Medan City, North Sumatera, 20135. There were 100 students would be chosen as a sample by using random sample, namely 25 Karonese students, 25 Nias students, 25 Simalungun students, and 25 Tobanese students. Data collecting was conducted by chosing the right options in the statement and filled in the blank in the questionnaire based on each respondent assumption. The options in questionnaire was adapted by Likert Scale questionnaire which had strongly agree level to strongly disagree level on a scale of 1 to 5. The calculation of the students who choose the Likert Scale, the writer used a formula as follow:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P = the percentage of the students who chose one statement

R = the number of the students who chose one statement

T = the total number of students

## 3. Results and Discussion

The data was obtained from pupil questionnaires from each program to show language attitude at Unika Santo Thomas Medan North Sumatera. The students were asked to pick only one statement of a four-point scale (from 'Agree-S to I disagree-TS). The number of statements for each question was 15 statements. The results of students' responses toward statements reflecting positive and negative language attitudes were presented in Table 1:

**Table 1:** The Total Percentage of Students' Language Attitudes toward English

No.	Statements	Scale Value	Frequency	Percentage	Category
1.	English was more dominant used to communicate in daily activities	Strongly Agree	10	10%	Agree

in this modern era today.	Agree	43	43%	(Positive)
	Disagree	35	35%	
	Strongly Disagree	12	12%	
2. To participate in industry education 4.0, English would be the second language in Indonesia.	Strongly Agree	33	33%	Agree (Positive)
	Agree	54	54%	
	Disagree	6	6%	
	Strongly Disagree	7	7%	
3. English was an interesting language and more dominant to learn in the future.	Strongly Agree	40	40%	Agree (Positive)
	Agree	44	44%	
	Disagree	15	15%	
	Strongly Disagree	1	1%	
4. Ethnic language and English were languages that should be learned.	Strongly Agree	44	44%	Agree (Positive)
	Agree	51	51%	
	Disagree	3	3%	
	Strongly Disagree	2	2%	
5. English was complicated to learn it was not suitable to be applied in Indonesia	Strongly Agree	5	5%	Disagree (Negative)
	Agree	18	18%	
	Disagree	47	47%	
	Strongly Disagree	30	30%	
6. English was important for education in Indonesia.	Strongly Agree	49	49%	Strongly Agree (Positive)
	Agree	40	40%	
	Disagree	11	11%	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0%	
7. The development of languages demanded modern human to master English more than mother tongue.	Strongly Agree	11	11%	Agree (Positive)
	Agree	42	42%	
	Disagree	39	39%	
	Strongly Disagree	8	8%	
8. Ethnic language was more dominant to be used when learning English.	Strongly Agree	2	2%	Strongly Disagree (Positive)
	Agree	28	28%	
	Disagree	39	39%	
	Strongly Disagree	31	31%	

		Disagree			
9.	The study of English influenced the study of culture.	Strongly Agree	5	5%	Agree (Positive)
		Agree	48	48%	
		Disagree	34	34%	
		Strongly Disagree	13	13%	
10.	English was increasingly considered less prestigious than language.	Strongly Agree	3	3%	Disagree (Positive)
		Agree	26	26%	
		Disagree	52	52%	
		Strongly Disagree	19	19%	
11.	English was more desirable than ethnic language and Indonesia language	Strongly Agree	4	4%	Disagree (Positive)
		Agree	32	32%	
		Disagree	48	48%	
		Strongly Disagree	15	15%	
12.	English was very difficult to use when communicating with parents.	Strongly Agree	22	22%	Agree (Negative)
		Agree	47	47%	
		Disagree	27	27%	
		Strongly Disagree	14	14%	
13.	English was easier if it was learned.	Strongly Agree	39	39%	Strongly Agree (Positive)
		Agree	38	38%	
		Disagree	14	14%	
		Strongly Disagree	9	9%	
14.	English was less interested in culture.	Strongly Agree	5	5%	Agree (Negative)
		Agree	46	46%	
		Disagree	38	38%	
		Strongly Disagree	11	11%	
15.	The ethnic language was less than English because it was followed the development current.	Strongly Agree	4	4%	Agree (Positive)
		Agree	54	54%	
		Disagree	30	30%	
		Strongly Disagree	12	12%	

Based on the fact, the number of respondents of Karonese, Nias, Simalungun, and Tobanese who gave a positive response of the use of English was in question number 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15. For question number 1 the percentage of agreed response was 43%, for question number 2 the percentage of agreed responses was 54%, for question number 3 the percentage of agreed responses was 40%, for question number 4 the percentage of agreed responses was 51%, for question number 6 the percentage of strongly agreed responses was 40%, for question number 7 the percentage of agreed responses was 42%, for question number 8 the percentage of strongly disagreed responses was 39%, for question number 9 the percentage of agreed responses was 48%, for question number 10 the percentage of disagreed responses was 52%, for question number 11 the percentage of disagreed responses was 48%, for question number 13 the percentage of strongly agreed responses was 39%, for question number 15 the percentage of agreed responses was 54%.

The number of respondents of Karonese, Nias, Simalungun, and Tobanese who gave a negative response of the use of English was in question number 5, 12, 14. For question number 5 the percentage of disagreed responses was 47%, for question number 12 the percentage of agreed responses was 47%, for question number 14 the percentage of agreed responses was 44%. Overall, it could be concluded that the students' behavioural at Unika Santo Thomas North Sumatera had more positive attitude towards the use of ethnic language, Indonesia language, and English language as the media of instruction to measure their motivations in academic learning.

**Table 2:** The Total Percentage of Students' Interests in English

<b>Karonese</b>		<b>Nias</b>		<b>Simalungun</b>		<b>Tobanese</b>	
<b>Interesting</b>	<b>Uninteresting</b>	<b>Interesting</b>	<b>Uninteresting</b>	<b>Interesting</b>	<b>Uninteresting</b>	<b>Interesting</b>	<b>Uninteresting</b>
19 (76%)	6 (24%)	25 (100%)	0 (0%)	24 (96%)	1 (4%)	19 (76%)	6 (24%)
<b>Total respondent</b>				<b>100 sample</b>			

From the table 2 above, there were 19 (76%) students of Karonese found English was interesting and 6 (24%) students of Karonese found English was uninteresting. There were 25 (100%) students of Nias found English was interesting and 0 (0%) student of Nias found English was uninteresting. There were 24 (94%) students of Simalungun found English was interesting and 1 (4%) student of Simalungun found English was uninteresting. There were 19 (76%) students of Tobanese found English was interesting and 6 (4%) students of Tobanese found English was uninteresting. Most of the majority of students at Unika Santo Thomas Medan North Sumatera found that English was an interesting subject to learn in academic education.

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestion

The comparison of Karonese, Nias, Simalungun, and Tobanese was essential to create positive language attitude in learning English as it would increase students' motivation to better proficiency. Overall, the students at Unika Santo Thomas Medan Sumatera Utara perceived English as the main but not only means of communication in academic, but also in professional contexts. It concluded that the language attitude of Students University Catholic of Saint Thomas Medan North Sumatera towards English indicated that students at Unika Santo Thomas Medan North Sumatera had an overall positive language attitude to English.

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