



Attitudes of Indonesian youth in Bandung towards English on social media

Dhea Mery Ad'hani, Isti Siti Saleha Gandana, Ernie D. Ayu Imperiani

*English Language and Literature Study Program,
Faculty of Language and Literature Education,
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Dr. Setiabudi No 229, Bandung 40154*

dheeadhani3@upi.edu, istigandana@upi.edu, ernie_imperiani@upi.edu

ABSTRACT

The high use of social media platforms today and the status of English as an international language have driven many people across national borders to communicate using English. This study aims to explore the attitudes of a group of Indonesian youth in Bandung towards English in social media and to investigate the factors affecting their attitudes. The study adopts a qualitative approach and draws on Schiffman and Kanuk's (2004) theory of attitude, which embraces the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions. In addition, this study also uses Jendra's (2010) theory on factors affecting language attitude. The results show that the majority of youth hold positive attitudes towards English in social media in each of the three aspects of attitude. The factors affecting their positive attitudes are the power and prestige of English and the social factor as the society at large has been accustomed to using English for global communication. This study implies the importance of English in the context of social media communication and raises people's awareness of English for online international communication.

Keywords: English; Factors affecting language attitude; Language attitude; Social media

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INTRODUCTION

English has proliferated in many walks of life today. The global spread of English has been associated with various reasons, such as historical, internal political, external economic, practical, intellectual, and entertainment reasons (Crystal, 2003). Moreover, English has been known as the most powerful language in the world since it has long served as a global language, and it is highly used for today's international communication. According to Rao (2019), English has been accepted as the global language among the speakers of thousands of different languages. Many people agree that English has the status of a global language since it is the native language of the USA with the largest and strongest economic presence in this modern era. According to Berns (2009) and Seidlhofer (2011), the country which has that power today is the United States of America.

Furthermore, English has become the most well-known and preferred means of communication for many people all around the world, who are connected very well by the internet and social media platforms. Many people around the world now also use social media platforms to communicate with

people across borders. In relation to social media use, a number of studies have indicated the youth as the most active users (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2018; Sugiharto, 2016). In the context of Indonesia, Sugiharto's (2016) study indicates that the youth are the highest social media users with the percentage of 75,50%.

As the youth account for more than 75% of social media users, inquiring into their attitudes towards the use of English on social media can be of a valuable contribution to the literature. A number of studies pertaining to English have been connected to the field of attitude. Kristina (2015), for example, did a study entitled "An Attitude Analysis of English Language Learning: A Case Study of Second-Grade Students of Natural Science Program at SMAN 4 Binjai". The findings of the study showed that the students of SMAN 4 Binjai held positive attitude in learning English. The factors affecting the students' attitude was the language internal system. Besides that, it is also stated that the students were active in English language learning even though they were not that fluent in English.

Similar findings are also indicated in Afghari et al. (2015) research about Iranian Students' Attitudes towards English as a Bilingual Language

in Iran. The findings of this study indicated that the students are interested in learning English for both social and professional reasons. The students in Iran have positive attitudes towards English as an international language. They also have positive attitudes towards English as part of a bilingual system.

However, research that incorporates holistic dimension of language attitude (i.e., cognitive, affective and conative) towards English is still scarce. To fill this research gap, this study aims to explore the attitudes of a group of the Indonesian youth in Bandung towards the use of English on social media and the factors affecting their attitudes. In conducting this study, Schiffman and Kanuk's (2004) theory of attitude is adopted as the theoretical framework. Their theory embraces a holistic approach to attitude, in which the cognitive, affective and conative dimensions are taken into account. It is hoped that this research can contribute to the English studies in the Indonesians context.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative research design to obtain an understanding of the attitudes of a group of the Indonesian youth in Bandung towards English on social media and the factors affecting such attitudes. This study also uses simple descriptive statistics to help in the process of simplifying and interpreting the data obtained. However, this study is still qualitative by design; qualitative research design gives access and space for the researcher to reflect on the feelings of the participants and to discover the underlying motives of their behaviors (Kothari, 2004).

The participants of this research are fifty youths aged 16-24 years old living in Bandung, who are the user of social media platform and English for online international communication on social media. The research data were gained from questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

There were three parts to the questionnaire. The first section dealt with questions about personal details of the participants, such as full name, WhatsApp number (for the interview needs), gender, age, educational and cultural background. The second section dealt with questions about social media engagements; it consisted of three questions, such as 1) how long have you used social media?, 2) which social media platform(s) do you use?, and 3) how long do you spend your time using social media in a day? In answering those close-ended questions, a number of options were given. The third section covered fourteen Likert-scale items, adapted from Sujono's (2017) research about students' attitudes towards the use of authentic materials in EFL classroom, which include cognitive, affective or emotional, and conative aspects of attitudes.

The questionnaire applied Clason and Dormody's (1994) Likert-type scale, which includes

(1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, and (4) strongly agree. Instead of using 5-points Likert scales, we preferred to use Clason and Dormody's (1994) Likert-type items as the adaptation of Likert's scale which initiated the deletion of neutral response in order to prevent bias results in measuring the participants' attitudes towards English on social media. The questionnaire data collected from the fifty youths were analyzed using the formula stated by Sudjana (1984 as cited in Sujono, 2017) to know about the attitude scores of the participants by calculating the central tendency of the data collected. In the analysis process, simple numerical analysis was carried out. This analysis was rigorously done after the questionnaire was completed. In analyzing the data, simple numerical analysis was involved in processing the responses from the likert-type items in Section 3 of the questionnaire.

The interviews data collected from the four youths selected were analyzed by using qualitative content analysis to know about the factors affecting their attitude. The analysis was done by conforming to Jendra's (2010) theory about factors affecting language attitude, such as (1) the prestige and power of the language, (2) the historical background of nations, (3) the social and traditional factors, and (4) the language internal system. Excerpts from the interviews were also presented to support the data gained from the questionnaire.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Participants' Attitudes towards English on Social Media

The analysis of the questionnaire indicates that the fifty participants generally hold positive attitudes towards English on social media, as shown by their extremely positive and positive responses.

The majority of the youth who participated in this study showed positive and extremely positive attitude towards English on social media with the percentage of 24% and 76% respectively. None of the youth involved in this study shows negative attitudes towards English on social media. The analysis pointed to extremely positive result with the overall mean score 47.66.

Similar to the findings in this study, Zhang and Du (2018) found that Chinese university students have positive attitudes towards English learning; consequently, they showed their willingness to learn the language in the classroom. On the other hand, a study conducted by Phusit and Suksiripakonchai (2018) indicated that the majority of Thai university students in their study displayed negative attitude towards English as a bridge language in the classroom since the language was not widely known well among students in that context. From these two studies, it can be inferred that when people are familiar with a language, they tend to show positive attitudes towards that language and show their

willingness to learn it. However, if they are not familiar with the language, they tend to have negative attitudes towards the language, and they tend to be reluctant to learn it. This is in line with Jendra's (2010) theorization in that when someone learns and knows a language and his or her attitude towards that language is positive, that positive attitude will be followed by good action towards that particular language and vice versa.

Different from the above two studies, however, this study investigated the notion of attitude more comprehensively, that is, by incorporating the cognitive, affective and conative aspects, which draws on the work of Schiffman and Kanuk (2004).

The Participants' Cognitive Attitudes

Cognitive attitudes according to Syukur (2016) include beliefs and opinions about the object. It deals with belief, knowledge, or rational reasons. In the cognitive aspect of attitudes in this study, there were six statements listed in the online questionnaire distributed.

Table 4.1
The Results of the Cognitive Statements' Analysis

Statement	CT	Interpretation of CT
Using English on social media helps me to communicate globally more easily.	94%	Extremely Positive
English is crucial for international communication on social media.	95%	Extremely Positive
I am aware of the important role of English on social media for international communication.	93%	Extremely Positive
The use of English on social media makes the international communication difficult.	48%	Neutral
The use of English in international communication on social media increases the effectiveness of the ongoing communication.	79%	Positive
English is the main language that is used in international communication on social media which can be understood by many people.	89%	Extremely Positive
Mean Score of the Overall CT	83%	Extremely Positive

Based on Table 4.1 above, it can be seen that the mean score of the overall central tendencies for all of the cognitive statements in this study is 83%, which is categorized as extremely positive. The data

indicate that the participants had extremely positive attitude cognitive-wise towards English on social media. As shown in the table above, the majority of participants had "extremely positive" response to a number of the cognitive statements, which confirm the participants' acknowledgment of the important role of English for international communication on social media.

In a recent study by Karimova (2016) entitled *The English Language for Global Communication: Perspective of Youth*, it is stated that based on the perspective of youth in Azerbaijan towards global communication, the use of foreign language, such as English is considered as useful for the best communication in modern life since the participants believe that English is known as a current lingua franca among people. Thus, the participants think that to be engaged in global communication in this modern era, they need to know how to communicate in English.

However, there are some of the participants involved in the interviews who said that English is helpful but can also be difficult when they have to choose the right words, which in turn can cause the occurrence of misunderstanding during the communication. This point was expressed by ND, one of the interviewees:

"Tantangan tuh biasanya paling sering tuh miskomunikasi ya, kesalahpahaman antara satu pihak dan pihak lainnya, terutama ini kan bahasa Inggris nih, kadang bahasa Inggris itu satu kata tuh bisa memiliki banyak artinya. Disini yang dimaksud miskomunikasi itu mungkin disaat penggunaan kata tersebut disalah artikan oleh pendengar atau oleh orang yang sedang diajak berbicara." (ND, 10/06/2021)

"The challenges that frequently occur are due to the miscommunication, misunderstanding that occurs between one party and the other, especially in English, sometimes one word in English has lots of meanings. Here what is meant by miscommunication may be when the use of the word is misinterpreted by the listener or by the person being spoken to." (ND, 06/10/2021)

Considering ND's case, the challenge stems from using correct diction for the appropriate context. We know that English has a huge array of vocabularies, and one vocabulary in English can have many meanings and can be interpreted differently. In the contexts of global communication using English as a bridge language, misunderstanding is very likely to occur since the people involved in the communication do not share the same first language. Referring to this difficulty, it is also stated in Mauranen's (2006) study about signaling and preventing misunderstanding in using English as lingua franca. In order to prevent the misunderstanding, it is stated that people can do self-repairs which include grammatical self-correction.

Yet, not all the participants in this study think that the use of English on social media makes international communication difficult. In other words, the majority of them believe that English is helpful to facilitate international communication on social media.

The Participants' Affective Attitudes

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2004), affective element covers an individual's feelings regarding a particular issue or object. In this study, there were five statements listed in the online questionnaire that reflected the affective element.

Table 4.2
The Results of the Affective Statements' Analysis

Statement	CT	Interpretation of CT
Using English for international communication on social media makes the ongoing communication more enjoyable.	88%	Extremely Positive
I do not like it if I have to use English for international communicating on social media.	45%	Neutral
The use of English for global communication on social media makes the ongoing communication meaningful.	82%	Extremely Positive
By using English, the communication on social media becomes boring.	41%	Neutral
Using English for international communication on social media is interesting.	83%	Extremely Positive
Mean Score of the Overall CT	68%	Positive

Based on Table 4.2 above, it can be seen that the mean score of the overall central tendencies for all of the affective statements in this study is 68% which indicates positive attitudes. It showed that the participants had positive feelings towards the use of English on social media in the affective aspect of attitudes. In addition, based on the analysis above, it can also be seen that the majority of the participants indicated their "extremely positive" response to several statements which indicate the contentment of using English for global communication on social media.

This finding is in accordance with Oxford's (2011) theory in the learning context (as cited in Tedjaatmadja & Roboh, 2016) which reveals that positive beliefs and attitudes can support positive emotions that are crucial for learners in learning a new language. In this study's context, positive emotions towards English on social media are also

crucial for the participants in communicating globally using English more effectively.

Moreover, there are still some participants involved in the interviews who said that English is interesting, but but they can become disinterested due to the negative action that some people show regarding the errors in their use of English during the communication. This point was confirmed by ND as stated below.

"Tapi untuk kaya kesalahpahaman mungkin kalo konteks nya di media sosial biasanya saling hujat gara-gara bahasa Inggris nya tidak benar secara struktur ya, apalagi kan banyak polisi grammar di media sosial. ... Biasanya ada satu orang nih yang menggunakan bahasa Inggris, lalu diserang sama pihak lain karena mereka menganggap bahwa bahasa Inggris nya tidak benar atau misalnya bahasa Inggris nya tidak secara grammar tuh tidak tepat gitu loh." (ND, 10/06/2021)

"In relation to the misunderstanding that occurs on social media, people usually talk badly to each other just because other people's use of English is not structurally correct. Moreover, there are also "grammar police" on social media... if there is one person using English, she or he will be getting negative comments if people think that his or her use of English is wrong and grammatically incorrect." (ND, 06/10/2021)

Considering ND's case, a number of the participants seem to dislike the use of English due to the negative judgment that some people always give regarding the incorrect use of English during the international communication on social media. However, it is actually normal for people who are not the native speakers of English to make mistakes when using English. As it is also stated in the study by Oybekovna (2020) regarding common problems faced by foreign language learners that when people are learning a foreign language which learning language is spoken, they likely confront certain kind of problems since that language is new for them.

However, it should be noted that the majority of the participants prefer to use English for global communication on social media as indicated in Table 4.2 above. In other words, the majority of them feel that they like to use English to communicate globally with their interlocutors on social media.

The Participants' Conative Attitudes

Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) assert that conative element is an attitude element which relates to the way people behave or do towards an object. They further suggest that conative element deals with the possibility that an individual will show a particular behavior to a particular object. For the conative aspect of attitudes in this study, there were three statements in the questionnaire that related to this aspect.

Inggris yang British seperti itu." (FA, 15/06/2021)

Table 4.3
The Results of the Conative Statements' Analysis

Statement	CT	Interpretation of CT
I often use English for global communication on social media.	90%	Extremely Positive
I hesitate to use English for global communication on social media.	47%	Neutral
I am inclined to use English for global communication on social media.	85%	Extremely Positive
Mean Score of the Overall CT	74%	Positive

Looking at Table 4.3 above, it can be seen that the mean score of the overall central tendencies for all of the conative statements in this study is 74% which indicates positive attitudes. In addition, based on the analysis above, it can also be seen that the majority of participants involved in this study showed their "extremely positive" response to several statements, which indicate the appeal of using English for global communication on social media.

This finding is in line with Jendra (2010) who reveals that when someone learns and knows a language and his or her attitude towards that language is positive, that positive attitude will be followed by good action towards that particular language. In this study's context, the participants' positive attitudes towards English on social media encouraged them to use English for the global communication as it is shown by the result of the analysis of the conative statements of attitude above.

Yet, some of the participants involved in the interviews said that they sometimes hesitate to use English to communicate globally on social media for they think that they are not that fluent in English and has problems understanding the various English accents. As has been expressed by FA:

"... karena mungkin bahasa Inggris saya yang masih minim dan juga mungkin dialek atau bahasa British yang saya kurang paham, jadinya ada suatu kendala." (FA, 15/06/2021)

"... it is probably because my English is still poor and maybe because of the dialect or British English that I don't really understand, so there is a problem there." (FA, 06/15/2021)

"... Saya juga pernah berkomunikasi dengan orang British gitu, kan bahasa Inggris yang biasa kita gunakan dengan orang British itu kan berbeda aksennya, dan itu menurut saya agak kesulitan juga sih berkomunikasi dengan bahasa

"... I have once communicated with British people, but the English that I usually use is different from the British English in terms of the accent, and in my opinion that's quite hard for me to communicate in British English like that." (FA, 06/15/2021)

Considering FA's case, it appears that the participants' reluctance was mainly due to lack of confidence in using English and the difficulty that they may encounter in understanding their counterpart because of the different accents. Indeed, referring to the finding of a study by Suwanpakdee (2012), it is revealed that the cause of communication failure is because of a variety of English accents, the use of difficult slang and idioms, and also cultural barriers that may occur during the communication. Thus, it is understandable that a number of participants sometimes hesitate to use English as they are afraid of misinterpreting and being misinterpreted, which can lead to communication breakdown.

However, complete failure in international communication using a foreign language, such as English seem to be rare since the interlocutors involved in the communication always try to understand what the other person mean. In a study by Junaidi (2006) regarding communication and culture, it is stated that in international communication, people will likely try to achieve mutual understanding to build an effective communication despite of their different countries and different lingua-cultural backgrounds. As pointed out by NA:

"... Namun Alhamdulillah nya mungkin orang luar juga kan lebih open-minded dibandingkan dengan kita yang selalu apa ya, mudah salah paham atau mudah tersulut emosi, dengan kita menjelaskan meskipun dengan bahasa yang sangat minim, namun dengan dijelaskan Alhamdulillah orang tersebut bisa memahami dan memaklumi apa yang dimaksud oleh kita. Seperti itu." (FA, 15/06/2021)

"...But, Alhamdulillah foreigners are probably more open-minded than us who always more easily misunderstand or are more emotional, by explaining it to them although with limited vocabulary, Alhamdulillah they can understand what we mean. Like that." (FA, 06/15/2021)

From the quotation above, we can see that even though sometimes miscommunication occurs due to the participant's minimum English vocabulary and English accents, the interlocutor always attempted to understand what the participant meant during the communication. Accordingly, this can reduce the possible occurrence of communication failure and keep people willing to use English during global

communication, including the communication on social media.

Factors Affecting the Participants' Attitudes towards English on Social Media

Based on the results of the individual interviews with the four participants, there emerged two dominant factors which seem to have contributed to their positive attitudes towards the use of English on social media, namely the prestige and power of the language and the social factor.

Concerning the prestige and power of language, it is evident that the participant's positive attitude towards English had been motivated by the language's status as an international language, which, borrowing Jendra's (2010) work, relates to the factor of prestige and power of the language:

"Untuk bahasa yang digunakan saat berkomunikasi tentunya bahasa Inggris. Seperti kita ketahui bahwa status bahasa Inggris itu sebagai bahasa internasional yang digunakan dimana-mana, jadi sepertinya bahasa Inggris merupakan sebuah bahasa yang paling tepat untuk diaplikasikan, digunakan saat berkomunikasi dengan orang asing di luar Indonesia gitu." (ND, 10/06/2021)

"The language that is used during the communication is, of course, English. As we know that the status of English is as an international language that is used everywhere, so it seems that English is the most proper language to be applied, to be used when communicating with foreigners outside Indonesia." (ND, 06/10/2021)

Based on the interview session with ND, one of the interviewees, it can be seen that she is really aware of the status of English as the global or international language. Thus, ND thinks that English will be the most proper language to use when communicating with foreigners outside Indonesia.

This finding is in line with the previous research conducted by Jimma (2017) which reveals that an overwhelming majority of people in the world agreed that English is very important for the necessity of international communication and considered English as the proper lingua franca of social media. Furthermore, because of that international status of English, the participants are sure enough that all people in the world also know English and use it automatically when communicating with their global friends outside their boundaries which make it easier for them to communicate with each other globally. This finding is also in line with another factor affecting the participants' positive attitudes in this study, which is the social factor.

In the context of society, Jendra (2010) asserts that a language which tends to have a great social influence on people affects positive attitudes

towards the language. In this research, it is revealed that the participants' use of English was also driven by their awareness to conform to the society at large. As KL, the another interviewee, pointed out:

"... saya ngobrol sama orang luar negeri gitu pake bahasa Inggris karena bahasa Inggris itu kan bahasa internasional ya, jadi pasti semua apa dari orang dari seluruh dunia tuh pake bahasa Inggris jadi buat ngobrol gitu pake bahasa Inggris dan lebih ya hampir kayak semua orang tau bahasa Inggris gitu di dunia ini, jadi saya pake bahasa Inggris itu juga." (KL, 15/06/2021)

"... I use English for chatting with foreigners since English is the international language, so of course all people from all over the world use English. It seems that everyone in the world knows English, so I also use English." (KL, 06/15/2021)

In the case of KL, she always uses English when communicating interculturally with people from different countries, since, according to her, most people in the world are probably familiar with the language.

This finding is also in line with Jenkins' idea (2006 as cited in Kaur, 2014) who maintains that English is a world language that is used by people who communicate mainly with other non-native speakers, often from different first languages than their own.

As confirmed by the participants' statements above, it is evident that their preference to use English as a means of global communication on social media is highly motivated by the prestige and power attached to the language as well as being driven to conform to certain societal expectation, as the society at large has been accustomed to using English for global communication.

CONCLUSION

The study aims to find out the attitudes of a group of the Indonesian youth in Bandung towards English on social media and the factors affecting their attitudes. In view of the first research question, which inquired into the participants' attitudes towards English on social media, this study revealed that the majority of youth hold positive attitudes towards the use of English on social media. Additionally, in the cognitive aspect of attitudes, the participants' positive attitudes are observed in their positive perception towards the important role of English on social media for international communication. The participants believe that English is crucial and helpful to establish relations with people across national borders on social media. Yet, the use of the language is not without challenge. Some participants admit that communicating in English is not easy, mainly because of their limited vocabulary, which in turn can cause the occurrence of misunderstanding during the communication. In

the affective aspect of attitudes, the participants' positive attitudes are expressed in their positive feelings towards the contentment of using English for the global communication on social media. Most participants feel that using English on social media makes the global communication more interesting, although there are a few who do not think so as they have negative experiences using the language. These people received negative comments due to the mistakes they made in English. Lastly, in the conative aspect of attitudes, the participants' positive attitudes are indicated in their positive behavior towards the appeal of using English for global communication on social media. The majority of the participants more often use English when it comes to establishing relations with people from different nations on social media, even though some sometimes hesitate to use English for the global communication due to their lack of fluency in English communication and understanding different English accents.

As for the second research question, which sought to find out the the factors affecting the participants' attitudes, the findings of the study showed that the factors which affect their positive attitudes are the power and prestige of the language and the social factor. In relation to the power and prestige of the language, the participants were motivated to use English because they realized the status of English as the global language. Meanwhile, regarding the social factor, the participants prefer to use English for international communication on social media because they are conforming to what the society at large does also, fulfilling to a certain extent the societal expectations.

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