Attitude of Students towards Cooperative Skills in Learning Kadazandusun Language in Malaysia

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to identify the attitude of students towards cooperative skills in the learning of Kadazandusun language in a few secondary schools around Sabah state, Malaysia. The respondents consist of 265 Form 2 students from eight secondary schools, who is learning Kadazandusun language. The 5 point Likert scale is used in the questionnaire. There are ten items each with the attitude and cooperative skills section. To analyse the data obtained, descriptive analysis and Spearman’s Rho have been used. The descriptive result shows a mean score for attitude is between 3.04 to 4.31, and 4.07 to 4.57 for cooperative skills. Correlation analysis shows a significant positive and medium strength of relationship between the attitude of students with cooperative skills in learning Kadazandusun language, (r=0.533, p<0.01). This research implicates the importance of cooperative skills in learning Kadazandusun language in the 21st century in line with the need of industrial revolution 4.0.

Keywords: Attitude, Students, Cooperative Skills, Learning of Kadazandusun Language, Secondary Schools

1. Introduction

Concerns towards the global community needs has inspired the Partnership for 21st Century Skills/organization to plan four components of knowledge and core skills which need to be mastered by students. It consists of core subjects and the 21st century theme, life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, and information, media and technology skills (Institut Aminuddin Baki, 2017). English language and other languages are some of the core subjects given much importance. Language is crucial as a communication tool for stability, cooperation, peace, progress and a good relationship between countries to achieve common goals. This is especially in the economic, political and social aspects. Kay (2010) explains in Boyer & Crippen (2014), that the core subjects and 21st century themes should be supported by skills with the purpose to prepare 21st century students to think, learn, work, solve problems, communicate, collaborate and contribute effectively throughout their lives.

In that regard, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) emphasizes digital technology skills, critical thinking, communication and collaboration in 21st century teaching and learning (Institut Aminuddin Baki, 2017). 21st century learning is in line with the MOE’s aspirations which are stated in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025). This includes the development of knowledgeable human capital who is able to think critically, creatively and innovatively, has leadership skills, mastervarious languages, being ethical and practice spiritual values in addition to having a national identity which is to be used to compete in a global level (MOE, 2014).

The collaborative or cooperative skills are given priority by MOE to create a happy learning environment in addition to inculcating positive attributes in line with the National Education Philosophy. The Ministry of Education aspires that the students of 21st century to obtain the following collaborative skills:

(i) to be able to work effectively and respect others;
(ii) to show flexibility and willingness to compromise to achieve a common goal; and
(iii) accept responsibilities to work collaboratively and appreciate the contribution from each group member (Institut Aminuddin Baki, 2017:8-9).

What are the responses from students regarding cooperative skills in learning a particular language? Students’ responses relate to the individual attitude towards an issue based on thinking, beliefs, emotion, inclination and intentions. According to Allport (1935), as quoted in Rozmi (2011), attitude is a determinant towards everything that could be seen, heard, thought of and done by someone. H. Abu (2002), explains that positive and negative attitudes have an influence on something done. For instance, someone with positive attitude would accept, admit, agree and apply the norms wherever they are. Instead, an individual with a negative attitude, would reject or disagree towards the norms. Psychologists believe that if we can influence an
individual’s attitude, we indirectly influence their behaviours as well (Rozmi, 2011). For instance, negative behaviours would switch to positive behaviours or the other way around. Clearly, attitude is an attribute which can be used as a variable to look at its relation to other variables.

Kadazandusun language is one of the ethnic languages taught in primary and secondary schools in Sabah, Malaysia. The language is taught to the Kadazandusun students; in addition to interested students from other ethnicities. Most students who take Kadazandusun language makes it the second language, although they originate from the Kadazandusun ethnicity. One of the factors for it to be made as the second language is due to the students’ attitude of assimilating the words from Malay Language to Kadazandusun language since they do not master the language (Minah, 2015).

Kadazandusun language is an important additional subject in supporting the future success of students, especially in sustaining the language. This is in addition to improving the historical knowledge; and the Kadazan and Dusun ethnic heritage cultures(Ministry of Education, 2015). The principles of Framework for 21st Century Learning (Partnership for 21st Century Learning a Network of Battelle for Kids, 2019), states that English language and other world languages are basic subjects to be mastered by students to ensure their success in the future. In the 21st century learning environment, Kadazandusun language emphasises cooperative skills in learning activities. Students are able to cooperate to maximise the self-learning and learning with friends in groups to achieve common goals through cooperative learning (Ong & Noor, 2011).

2. Problem Statement

Complete, dependency on teachers’ teaching is not helpful to improve the ability of students in generating thoughts, beliefs and behaviors towards curriculum excellence and their social life. This is due to the limitation teachers have in motivating students to encourage them to study (Amedu & Gudi, 2017).

Therefore, students have to shoulder the responsibilities of themselves and the team members in overcoming most of the learning problems they face. Students who are reluctant to give themselves opportunity to accept the responsibility with other students, besides respecting and appreciating each team member would fail the aspirations of MOE to improve students along the industrial revolution 4.0 (RO 4.0).

Amedudan Gudi (2017) question if the factors of students’ curriculum performances deteriorating, is due to the limited contribution of teachers during teaching sessions or if students have a negative perception towards learning it. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to identify the attitude of students towards cooperative skills in learning Kadazandusun language in a few secondary schools in Sabah, Malaysia.

3. Literature Review

The research on attitude is closely related to the social psychology, which focuses on human social behavior (Azizi, Yusof, Jamaludin, Jaafar, Fawziah & Amir, 2004). In the context of social psychology, classroom learning is considered as a social transaction process involving the exchange of curriculum between teachers and students, and among students (Amedu & Gudi, 2017).

The curriculum can only be experienced by students if they have positive learning attitudes through learning experiences with their peers. Cooperative learning is one of the learning approaches which encourages social transaction through five elements. The elements are positive interdependence, social skills, individual accountability, group evaluation and face to face interaction(Ong & Noor, 2011).Kagan and Kagan (2009), stated that students are able to cooperate with their peers and be more responsible towards their own and their group members learning, through cooperative learning methods. The research byAmedu and Gudi (2017), admits that peers play important role in helping to improve learning and better communication interactions during cooperative learning.

From the education context, cooperative learning takes place when students are given the confidence that their success is related to someone else. An individual would not be able to succeed unless the team members succeed too(Johnson & Johnson, 2017). In this sense, attitudes towards beliefs, feelings and purpose of behavior should be orientated to achievement of goals. This is in line with the basic principle of cooperative learning which is reliability on each other in facing a situation (Ong & Noor, 2011).

The research regarding cooperative learning was done by Amedu and Gudi (2017) with 176 students in secondary schools of Nasarawa, Nigeria. Researchers found that the experimental group which was taught using
Jigsaw Cooperative Method developed a positive attitude among students in the Biology subject, in addition to building a good interpersonal relationship. The treatment group was implemented for 12 weeks using 10 items of Jigsaw Attitude Questionnaire (JAQ).

Items are analyzed using percentages and the chi-square. The jigsaw method which was used by the researcher underlies five elements of cooperative skills which are positive interdependence, social skills, individual accountability, group evaluation and face to face interaction. Based on the interviews held, it is found that students are happy doing assignments together with team members and this encouraged them to attend school. However, some students state that the jigsaw method is burdensome if the group members only depend on the proficient members. Besides, there are some team members who would not read their own reading materials. This is against the element of individual accountability, which needs individual responsibility to improve learning of each group member.

The research by Puji and Barratt (2018) on 77 students, focusing on 4 among them and two teachers from two secondary schools in Indonesia shows that the individual accountability element in cooperative learning encourages improvement in the learning of English Language as a foreign language. Data was collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis.

Individual accountability becomes evident while engaging in individual, group and class performances while applying Think-Pair-Share, Round Robin, Numbered Heads Together, Jigsaw and One Stray methods. Students apply their own accountability by contributing in team works through interaction among peers.

This clearly shows that attitudes of being responsible and cooperating can create positive behaviors which can be seen through cooperative learning. Research proves that students have more opportunity to interact with peers during cooperative learning compared to conventional group tasks. This result coincides with social skills elements and face-to-face interactions in cooperative learning. However, Puji and Barratt admit that teachers need to play an important role in handling the implementation of cooperative method based on the procedures in order for individual accountability to benefit students.

4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework to explain this research phenomena is based on the interaction theory led by Thibaut and Kelley, for the purpose of explaining the relationship of two or more individuals relying on each other to achieve positive results (Sarlito, 2000). The basic premise of social interaction is participants’ behaviors will only be repeated if the social interaction participation is beneficial. The purpose of social interactions which rely on each other is to maximize positive results for participants of an interaction. This interaction theory helps us understand how an individual attitude affects the behavior, while having face-to-face interaction with others during cooperative learning, in order to achieve positive goals. The theoretical framework can be seen below in Figure 1.
5. Methods

This is a quantitative research done as observation in eight secondary schools in the outskirts and rural parts of Sabah, Malaysia. Chosen schools offer Kadazandusun language as additional subjects. The respondents were chosen randomly and involved 265 Form 2 students who take Kadazandusun language as additional subjects. The students consist of proficient and non-proficient Kadazandusun language speakers belonging to the Kadazandusun ethnicity. Besides this, there are also students from other ethnicities taking Kadazandusun language due to interest or being forced to do so. Data was collected using the 5 point Likert scale questionnaire; “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “uncertain”, “agree”, and “strongly agree”. To easily interpret the mean score, Landel’s (1997) guideline taken from Razali, Asad, Soomro and Sherwani (2017), was customised to measure the mean range suitability. The mean score of 1.00 to 2.33 is considered low or anegative response, 2.34 to 3.67 is average or natural response and 3.68 to 5.00 is high or positive response. There were 10 items in the questionnaire in each attitude variables and cooperative skills section. The data was analysed using descriptive statistic test to obtain frequency and mean values. The Spearman’s Rho correlation inference statistic test was used to show the relationship between students’ attitude towards Kadazandusun language with the cooperative skills of students in learning the language.

6. Findings

Table 1 shows respondents exhibiting two types of attitude towards the learning of Kadazandusun language which are average or natural and high or positive. The joy of learning a Kadazandusun language among students can be seen during reading activities (mean score 4.31), the fun of having a discussion with peers (mean score 3.96), the joy of using text books and Kadazandusun language learning materials (mean score 3.88), followed by the interest in learning proverbs (mean score 3.74). The mean score shows that the level of joy among students is high or positive. Meanwhile, the attitude of students towards learning Kadazandusun language at average or natural level can be seen through the participation in competitions (mean score 3.04), the joy of learning poems (mean score 3.29), the joy of presenting assignments in public (mean score 3.38), joy in discussing grammar (mean score 3.5) and joy of writing essays (mean score 3.49).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I like learning poinukadan (proverbs).</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I like joining Kadazandusun language competitions.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Discussion about Kadazandusun language with friends is fun.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>3.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I enjoy reading tangon-tangon (story) in Kadazandusun language.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I enjoy using the Kadazandusun language text book.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I like to discuss with my friends regarding puralanboros (grammar).</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I enjoy learning hiis (poems) in Kadazandusun language.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I enjoy to present assignments in Kadazandusun language in class.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kadazandusun language learning materials are fun.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I like writing essays in Kadazandusun language.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3.49</td>
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Table 2 shows four out of five elements of cooperative learning skills in the questionnaire items. The positive interdependence element is in items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, while social skills is stated in item 7, individual accountability in items 8, 9 and 10 and finally item 3 are the face- to-face interaction element. Overall, respondents have a high or positive level of cooperative skills, mean range of 4.07 to 4.57. The highest cooperative skills which could be observed is a positive interdependence element, whereby item 5 is cooperating to help team members (mean score 4.57), followed by item 2 which is cooperating with friends to ease the work. Item 3, face-to-face interaction element is the highest with a mean score of 4.49, whereby working as a team enables students to interact with their friends. Individual accountability element has a mean score of 4.34 at item 8, thus there should be a leader in a team to inform the members about tasks given. A social skills element has a mean score of 4.37 at item 7, working as a team teaches students to respect the differences of opinions among each other.

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| 6    | I like to...
Table 3 shows the coefficient of correlation analysis results of students’ attitudes with cooperative skills in learning Kadazandusun language, which is 0.533 (rs = 0.533). The probability value is 0.000 which was tested at the significance level of 0.01. This rate is seemed to be smaller than the significance level (p<0.01). The positive relationship shows that the higher the attitude of students are in learning Kadazandusun language, the higher is their cooperative skills towards the subject.

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Table 3. The relationship between attitude of students with cooperative skills in learning Kadazandusun language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students Attitude</th>
<th>Cooperative Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho</td>
<td>Students Attitude</td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.533**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Discussion

Attitude of students determines what they think and do. If something is attractive, pleasing, easy to be done, challenging and beneficial, students would respond positively. H. Abu (2002), explains that individuals who possess a positive attitude towards an object, would be prepared to help, observe and do something profitable. Based on the social interaction theory, the attitude of individuals to cooperate with team members would only be repeated if there is reward for participation. The rewards can be in the gift or praises from teachers after completion of a task.

Positive attitude would encourage students to be more responsible towards themselves and their teams for the sake of the success of their teams. This individual accountability element is evident in item 10 when respondents admit that working as a team instills responsibility (mean score 4.2). Respondents too realize that they would still require a team leader to communicate with other members regarding Kadazandusun language with a mean score of 4.34. Students’ positive attitude would create opportunities to themselves to share opinions as listed in item 9 with a mean score of 4.07. Teachers should motivate their students in order for them to be aware that their individual success depends on the other team members as well (Ong & Noor, 2011).

The joy of learning in Kadazandusun language should also be encouraged and strengthen by the language teachers. Ani, Amir and Minah (2019), suggested that teachers apply information and technology (ICT) through applications such as Powtoon, Kahoot, Google and others in the teaching and learning sessions to improve the impact of learning a joy.
8. Conclusion

The results of this research show that most students like and enjoy learning Kadazandusun language due to the textbook and other prepared materials. Besides, students find that learning Kadazandusun language is fun since they are given opportunity to discuss with their friends. This is in line with cooperative skills’ elements being implemented in Kadazandusun language learning. In conclusion, it can be summarised that students’ attitude with cooperative skills in learning Kadazandusun language is positive. Therefore, identifying attitude of students and their cooperative skills are important steps to vary teaching and learning methods is suitable with the 21st century learning.

9. Acknowledgment

The authors would like to extend their gratitude to the Research Management & Innovation Centre (RMIC), Sultan Idris Education University for the university research grant Code: 2019-0061-107-01 (GPUBP) that helped fund the research.

References