

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Definitions of Attitude

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, Ninth Edition (1995), ‘attitude comes from a Late Latin word, in ‘aptitudo’, ‘aptus’ which means ‘fit’. The word ‘aptus’ which is also the root of the word aptitude indicates a state of preparedness or adaptation. The word attitude is defined as a settled opinion or way of thinking or behavior reflecting this. Among the earliest definitions of attitude is that of Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) as cited in Erwin (2001;4): ‘a state of mind of the individual towards an object.’ Meanwhile the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2003) states that, ‘attitude means the opinions and feelings that you usually have about something. It also refers to the way that you behave towards someone or in a particular situation, especially when this shows how you feel. The Random House Thesaurus College Edition (1989) provides the synonyms of attitude as disposition frame of mind, outlook, point of view, perspective, manner, demeanor and air.

However, there are differences in the way the word is explained and elaborated by different theorists. Most studies on language attitude focus on attitudes to second language learning. Among the most influential of these studies was that by Gardner

and Lambert (1972) who suggested attitudes of an individual or a group towards a language and its users determine the motivation to learn and use the language. It is suggested that 'positive attitude' enhances second language learning, whereas 'negative attitude' does not. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) presented a general theory of attitudes in which the primary concern was with the intended actions that are associated with attitudes.

2.1 Ajzen and Fishbein Reasoned Action Theory (1980)

In the theory of *Reasoned Action* by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), attitude can be identified and assessed. The significance to the attitude can be established and components which contribute to attitudes can be revealed. Based on the theory, a person's intention is a function of two basic determinants; personal in nature while the other reflects social behaviour. Attitude towards behaviour is described as individual's positive or negative evaluation or perception of performing any particular behaviour. The second determinant is termed as a subjective norm since it deals with perceived prescription. It is the person's perception of the social pressure on him to perform or not perform the behaviour in question. For instance, an individual does or does not do something because he cares about the perception of society on the action or decision he makes.

Attitudes are functions of beliefs. Behavioural beliefs refer to beliefs that underlie a person's attitude towards the behavior, while, normative beliefs refer to beliefs which underlie a person's subjective norms. It is stressed that a person's behaviour towards some targets is determined by his attitude towards the target. Figure 2.1 shows how behavior can be explained in terms of concepts.

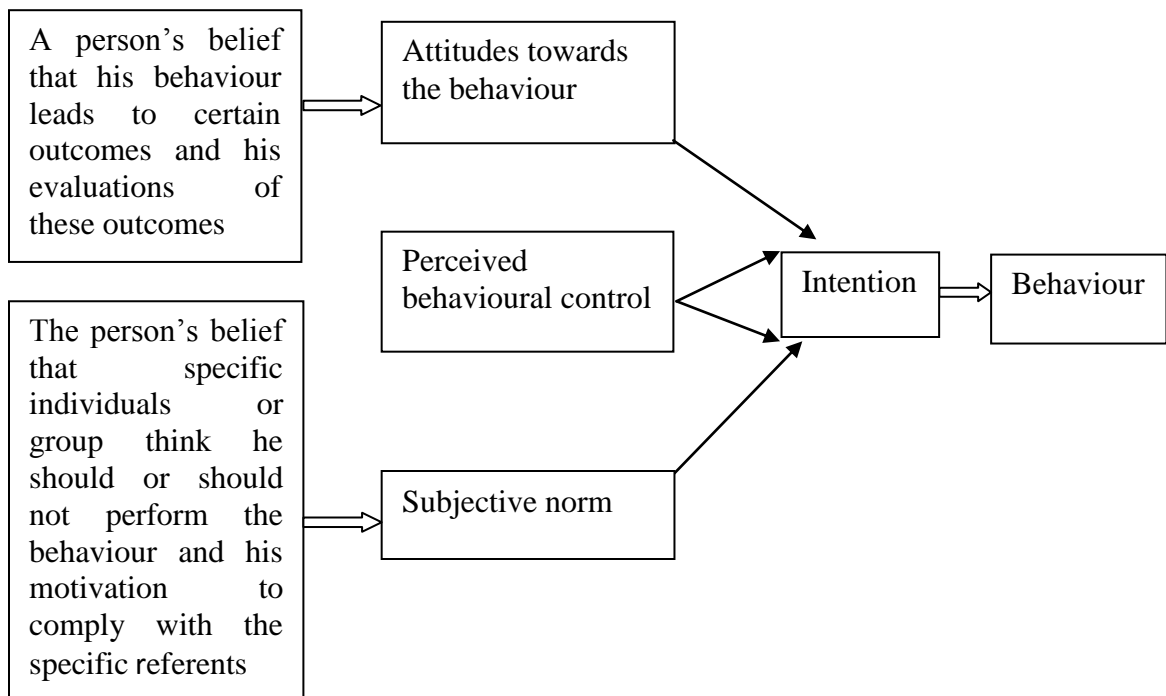


Figure 2.1 Ajzen's Model of Planned Behaviour or Factors Determining a Person's Behaviour (1980:8).

The model consists of three main strands at its base:

1. *Attitudes towards the behaviour*. It refers to “the personal reasons why an individual performs any particular behaviour. It could be either the positive or negative evaluation of a behaviour which signifies the value or advantages of performing a behaviour. An individual will probably perform a particular behaviour if he sees any benefit in performing the behaviour”. In contrast, he is unlikely to perform any particular behaviour if he perceives it as unbecoming. (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980:8).
2. *Perceived behavioural control* is to reflect “past experience as well as expected impediments and obstacles. There is a strong correlation between self-efficacy (the subjective probability that one is capable of executing a certain course of action) and an individual’s attempts to performing a behaviour to the extent that he has confidence in his ability to do so” (see Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980:).
3. *Subjective norm* refers to “social influences which is an individual’s perception of social pressure to perform or not to perform a particular behaviour. An individual’s intention to perform a behaviour is not probably influenced by his positive evaluation of the behaviour but his beliefs on what others think” (see Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980: 6).

The three main areas of Ajzen's categories are used in this study due to its suitability and flexibility. *Attitudes towards the behaviour* determines the attitudes that the Semai students have in learning English. What may be the influences causing these attitudes? *Subjective norm* discovers the extent to which parents, home background and the English language teacher influence the Semai students' motivation to learn and their attitudes towards learning the language. *Perceived behavioural control* identifies the realistic limitations which students perceive as influencing their ability to learn English.

2.2 Gardner's Revised Socio-Educational Model (2001)

A great deal of work has been done within the field of attitude and how it correlates with motivation, foreign language acquisition and learning. In Ajzen and Fishbein Reasoned Action Theory (1980), it was hypothesized that actions are associated with attitudes. With respect to attitude, the most influential and significant motivation theory in the second language learning was proposed by Robert Gardner and his colleagues and associates. Gardner and Lambert's (1972) initiated series of studies carried out at McGill University and the University of Western Ontario on the topic of attitude of foreign and second language learners has resulted in the construction of a socio-psychological theory of second or foreign language learning. Three categories of attitude relevant to second language learning are identified;

attitude towards the target language community, attitude towards learning the language and attitude towards languages and language learning in general (Gardner and Lambert:1972). Later, Gardner (1985) proposed three components in motivation: motivational intensity, desire to learn the language and attitudes towards learning the language. Gardner socio-psychological model receives many criticisms that his models only focused on stable motivational attributes that were derived from social psychology, that Gardner's model should include other factors like situational characteristics related to L2 learning context (see Dönyei 1994, 2001; Oxford 1994). In 1993, as a minor revision to the earlier model, Gardner and Tremblay suggested that individual differences variables (cognitive and affective), when interacting with formal and informal language acquisition context, will result in linguistics (consist of language proficiency) and non-linguistics outcomes (consist of the general changes in the learner). In part in reaction to criticism that had been directed towards the earlier models, in 2001 a revised version of Gardner's model evolved (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Gardner's Revised Socio-Educational Model (2001)

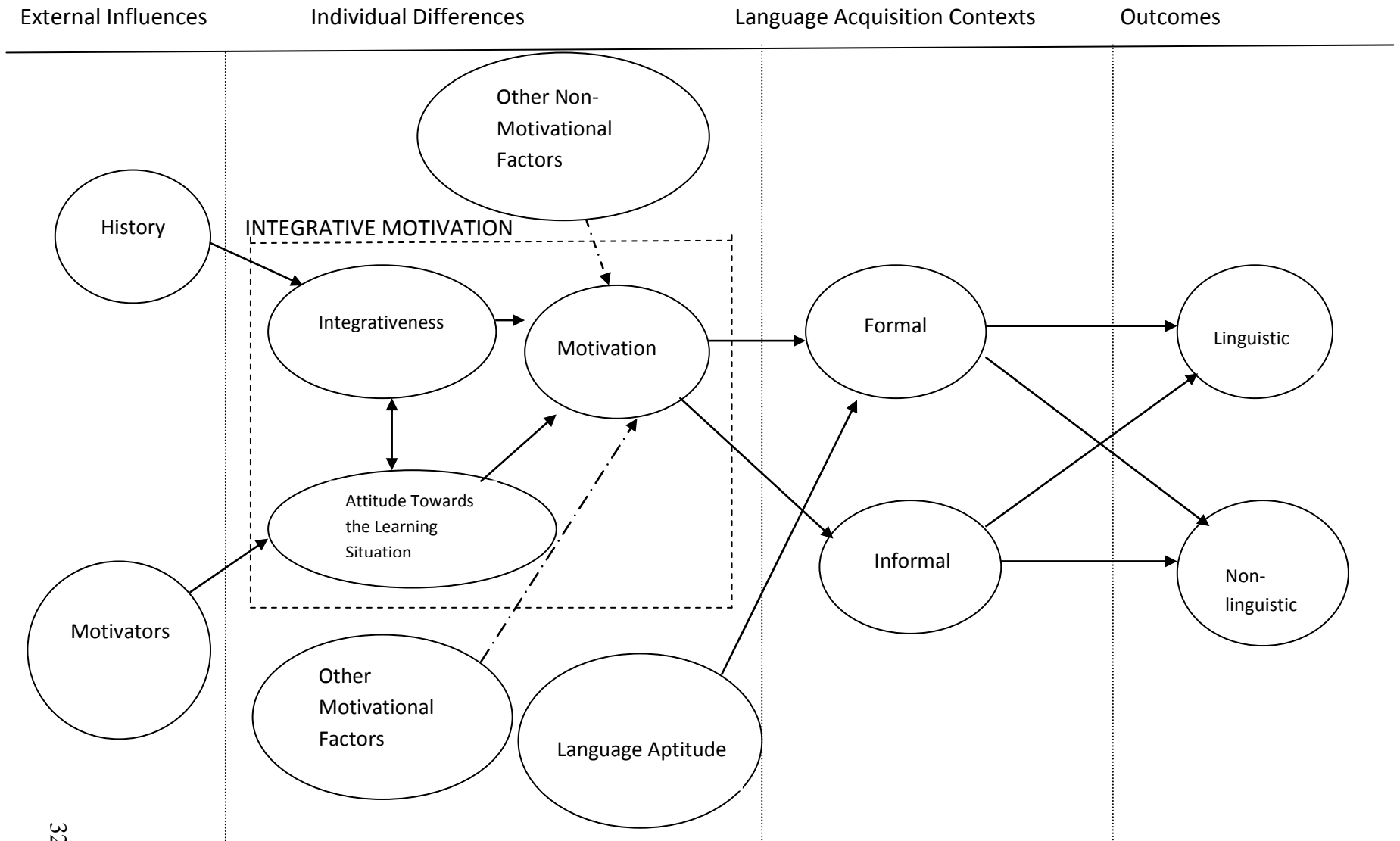


Figure 2.2 represents a schematic representation of the model. Its main importance lies in 4 distinct aspects of the second language acquisition process: external influence, individual differences, language acquisition contexts and outcomes. External influence refers to any factor that might influence language learning. Two of the main influences include *history* and *motivators*. *History* refers to a complex of social and personal variables that the individual brings with her/him that include the socio milieu in which the person lives and the personal family background (Gardner, 2001;5). For instance English speaking children learning French in Canada have a different cultural background than school children learning English in Japan or Indonesia. Children from a bilingual home or from homes which value language learning have a different history from those which do not. Past experience, family and cultural background affect the L2 attainment as it is different as compared to learning other subjects in school. Learning an L2 is believed to involve personal conflict (Gardner; 2001;6) as it requires students to incorporate speech sounds, grammatical structures, behaviour patterns which differ from learning other subjects like geography or mathematics. The other external influence proposed by Gardner is *motivators*. In the model, *attitude towards the learning situation* is directly connected to *motivators*. That indicates that teacher (who act as motivators) variables affect students' *attitudes towards the learning situation*.

Attitude towards the learning situation include attitude towards the teacher and the course in general. Next to *attitude towards the learning situation*, the other five individual differences variables that play a role in second language learning are

integrativeness, motivation, other motivational factors, other non-motivational factors, motivation and aptitude. The two variables *integrativeness* and *attitudes towards the learning situation* are shown to have a direct impact on *motivation*. Integrativeness reflects a genuine interest in learning the second language as to come closer psychologically to the other language community (Gardner, 2001;7). It indicates a level of interest or willingness to learn the language and favourable attitude or openness towards the language community. However this integrativeness variable does not apply to the learning of English in Malaysian context because an English language community per se does not exist.

Motivation is viewed as the driving force in any situation in learning the language (Gardner: 2001;8). Three elements involved in distinguishing different levels of success among the language learners are labeled as effort, desire and affect. The persistent attempts and consistent attempts to learn the language by doing homework and seeking out opportunities to learn more display the effort involved. Wanting to achieve a goal and willingness to strive as to achieve success describe the desire in learning the language and affect is shown when the learner enjoys the task of learning the language.

The figure also illustrates that integrative motivation with its three strands; *integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation* and *motivation*. In this model, integrative motivation is seen as a complex attitudinal, goal directed and motivational attributes (Gardner: 2001;9). *Integrativeness* and *attitudes towards the learning*

situation are seen as factors contributing to motivation which is responsible for the achievement in the second language. *Motivation* and *language aptitude* are believed to be affected by *formal* (any situation in which language instruction takes place) and *informal* (any other setting where the individual might learn the English material) context. Both *formal* and *informal* language learning context are shown to have *linguistic* and *non-linguistic* outcomes. *Linguistic outcomes* refer to various aspects of proficiency in the language while *non-linguistic outcomes* refer to those other consequences of language learning such as language anxiety, various attitudes and motivation (Gardner: 2001;10). Thus, in this model, it can be seen that *motivation* and *language aptitude* interact with language learning contexts to produce many consequences or outcomes.

Two other variables are also identified in the model which do not relate directly to the learning contexts but are shown as having a possible effect (through the broken arrow) on motivation; *other motivational factors* and *other non-motivational factors*. *Other motivational factors* refers to the instrumental factors (see Gardner, 1972,1985, Noels, Pelletier, Clément and Vallerand, 2001) or other individual factors that could promote motivation. *Non-motivational factors* are described as variables such as language learning strategies (Gardner; 2001:10). However, it is not directly linked to the *language acquisition context* as it depends whether the learners use the strategies (if they are motivated). It is *motivation* that connects the non-motivational factors to the *learning context*.

2.3 Attitude and Motivation

Attitude and motivation are closely related in the case of learning a second language. Attitude is affected by the amount of motivation received by a second language learner as motivation is also affected by the attitude a learner has in learning a language. Both attitude and motivation help to determine the level of proficiency achieved by different learners. In the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2002), the term ‘motivation’ refers to eagerness and willingness to do something without needing to be told or forced to do it. Dörnyei (1999:1) explains “motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are going to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it.”

In learning a language in a second language setting, motivation is crucial. It determines the success of the learners. Those who are interested in the social and cultural customs of the native speakers of the language they are learning are likely to be successful (Ellis, 1985). In a second or third language setting, Galloway et al (1998:42 as in Dörnyei 2001) affirm that, “If motivation were a straightforward concept, it would be uninteresting. The challenge is to find ways of conceptualizing in which helps teachers to understand children’s progress and behaviour, thereby helping them to evaluate their classroom practice and teaching methods.” Cook (1996) states that the usual meaning of motivation for the teachers is probably the interest that something generates in the students.

Some L2 learners do better than others because they are better motivated. A social psychological factor frequently used to account for differential success in learning a second language is motivation (Gass and Selinker, 2008; 425). Attitude begets motivation. Gardner (1985: 50) stated that “motivation involves four aspects, “a goal, effortful behavior, a desire to attain the goal and favourable attitude toward the activity in question.” Statistical evidence from numerous studies (Sánchez, 1998, Oxford, 1999) indicate that motivation is a predictor of language learning success. Skehan (1989 in Gass and Selinker 1995) affirms that motivation appears to be the second strongest predictor of success, trailing only attitude

Most researchers (Baker, 1995; Cook, 1996; Dornyei, 2005; Gardner 2007) now agree that students’ attitude and motivations have a great effect on their classroom achievement. L2 learners who are highly motivated typically learn language faster and to a greater degree since they have developed a positive attitude towards learning the language. Mantle-Bromley (1995) signifies that motivation is a major problem in achieving greater numbers of proficient speakers of second language and attitudes influence the efforts that students expend to learn another language. Gardner (1985) classified the motivation to learn the language into two types of orientations; integrative orientations and instrumental orientations. Integrative orientations refers to a desire to learn the second language in order to have contact or identify with the members of the second language community while instrumental orientation refers to a desire to learn the second language to achieve some practical goal. According to Cook (1996), students will find it difficult to learn a second language in the classroom if

they do not have the two types of favourable motivation; instrumental and integrative motivation. High motivation is one factor that causes successful learning; successful learning however may cause high motivation (Cook, 1995) (See Figure 2.3).

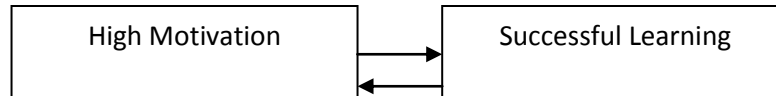


Figure 2.3 Two-way cause and effect relationship between high motivation and successful learning (adapted from Cook, 1995).

2.4 Factors Contributing to Attitudes Towards Second Language Learning

In general, students' attitudes towards second language learning may be influenced by social, behavioural, cultural and educational factors or backgrounds. Social factors is defined as "influences on individual behaviour attributable to the social values and/or behaviour of the groups to which an individual belongs or aspires to belong" and behavioural factors refers to "factors related to the individual, to how that individual lives or has lived and to how that individual actually behaves" (The Westburn Dictionary of Marketing, 2002). Cultural factors are "factors related to the set of beliefs, moral values, traditions held in common by a nation, a community, or

other defined group of people". It includes the customs, gender roles and occupations, dietary practices, intellectual, artistic and leisure time pursuits. Educational factors are related to factors which involve "the studies of theories and the practice of teaching in the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning" (The Westburn Dictionary of Marketing, 2002).

Brown (2000: 180) posits that attitudes are often shaped by the social context, "develop early in childhood and are result of parents' and peers' attitudes". Socio-economic background of the family influenced students' attitudes in learning English as a second language (Pillay, 1998, Choy, 2002). Parents, too have significant importance in developing learners' interest and attitudes towards the language they learn. The amount of support and encouragement received from the parents determine the attitudes the learners have (Baker, 1995).

Behavioural factors are believed to influence the learners' attitudes towards learning a language, too. Learners are responsible and have the right to determine the direction of their learning. Those who are able to identify their styles and strategies in language learning, inclined to have a more positive attitudes towards the language. Significantly more positive attitudes resulted when students' styles were similar to their teachers' (Dunn, 1984).

Apart from that, social environment and culture influence thoughts, emotions, behaviour, assumptions, expectations and attitudes of students (Brown, 2000). In

educational and pedagogical aspects, factors like teaching strategies, classroom and school environment could influence students' perception and attitudes towards learning language (Choy, 2002). Schools play a relatively significant role in establishing the success of second language learning. A school that is positive towards multilingualism and multiculturalism is needed to ensure positive children's attitude to their language preference and ability (Baker, 1995). Imparting knowledge to students is the biggest role of teachers. Next to it, teachers play a big role in determining students' attitudes towards the subject they teach. Teachers help shape students attitudes towards education and need to be properly trained and equipped with proper knowledge and skills to successfully accomplish their task (Cole, 2003, Siti et. al, 2009).

2.5 Attitudes Towards the Use and Study of English

The varying degrees of success of learners learning a second language differ from one to another. Depending on the learners' attitude, learning a second language can be a source of enrichment or a source of resentment. Mantle-Bromley (1995), suggested that positive attitudes and realistic beliefs are linked to proficiency. The misconception and beliefs about language learning should be evaded as these beliefs may hinder the students' progress and persistence in language study (see Figure 2.4).

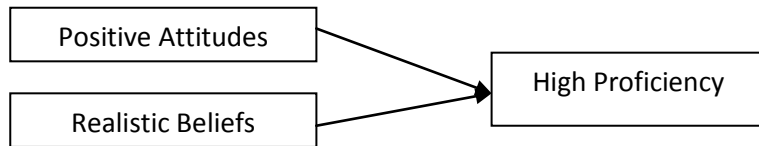


Figure 2.4 Factors that Lead to High Proficiency in Learning a Second Language (adapted from Mantle-Bromley, 1995).

Baker (1995) states that children's attitude, motivation and interest in the second language should be inspired. It is crucial for parents to provide a stimulating and varied language environment since parents are only one source of language encouragement for the children to build a positive self-concept about the language learned.

Parental attitude towards foreign language learning and indeed learning in general may be influenced by educational, socio-economic, socio-cultural, ethnic and linguistic background (Chamber, 1999). Gardner (1972:133,141) concluded that parental support and encouragement seemed to underlie the motivation in the case of French learners in Louisiana. In the Philippine study, it is attested that students who approach the study of English with an instrumental orientation and who received parental support were clearly successful in developing proficiency in the language (Gardner,1972:141).

Gardner (1985:110) identifies two main dimensions of the role of the parents in their children's learning process. An "active role" is identified as the

encouragement, support and monitoring of the parents towards the children while a “passive role” of the children refers to indirect modeling and communicating attitudes related to L2 learning and the L2 community.

2.6 The Teachers’ Roles and Teaching Strategies

Researchers have concluded that teachers can make a difference in their students’ attitudes towards languages and culture. Chamber (1999:129), stated that in the case of pupils in Leeds learning German, the teacher was one of the extrinsic factors that affected the pupils’ motivation to learn the language. The pupils identified having ‘a better teacher’ as the reason for their enhanced perception of their learning experience.

Teachers influence the learners and therefore need to be aware of the reservations and preconceptions of their students (Cook, 1996). Their success in learning the language are affected by what they think of the teacher and the course itself rather than just the learners’ deep-seated motivation. This is supported by Ibrahim and Gaudart’s (1993) study that the teachers need to understand their role in language teaching. Teachers need to ascertain why students want to learn English and help them learn more effectively. Teachers must vary their teaching styles and techniques to cater to all learners since different learners have different learning styles and preferences (see 4.4.4).

It is the teacher's duty to develop the confidence of a learner. Teachers should be aware of the students' attitudes so that they can help students learn. Teachers should endeavour to cultivate positive self-efficiency and intrinsic motivation to learn among the students. It is important for teachers to assess students' self-efficiency and provide evocative, motivational activities that will improve and enhance students' confidence in their abilities (Cole, 2003). Teachers too, can help to reduce language anxiety among students.

Oxford (1999) described "debilitating anxiety" as a negative kind of anxiety because it harms learners' performance in various ways through worry and self-doubt. It also leads to decrease in motivation resulting in negative attitude and beliefs and difficulties in language performance. A supportive teacher can help to alleviate foreign language anxiety by acknowledge students' feeling of isolation and helplessness and offer concrete suggestion for attaining foreign language confidence (Horwitz and Cope, 1986). Teachers can help by boosting self-esteem and confidence of students by providing multiple opportunities for classroom success for instance, providing activities that add varied styles and strategies in the classroom.

According to Goodman (1986:78), all children are whole language learners, but there is no whole language classroom without whole language teachers. Only a dedicated and an effective teacher can nurture in children a quest for knowledge, a joy of learning and a pride in achievement. A compassionate teacher plays a role of a facilitator of inspiration and hope. Underhill (1999) suggested facilitation as an

effective and exciting approach for the teachers as they learn about their students moment by moment. The personal qualities of an effective facilitator are illustrated as caring, encouraging and helping learners to overcome obstacles as having the capacity for motivating learners and having the ability to raise learners' awareness (Breen and Menn, 1997).

Ideally, a teacher needs to become familiar with each student so that the students can be guided in terms of the students' language learning process. Campbell (1996) recommended individualized talk to take place as teachers should provide an opportunity for communication with the students as a way of getting to know the students. In a study conducted by Campbell (1996) who as a learner of Spanish in Cuernacava, Mexico revealed that the socializing of teachers with their students may benefit the students affectively and sociolinguistically.

Furthermore, teachers need to use their initiative, imagination and creativity to extend the experiences of their learners. Therefore, teachers should set a variety of tasks that will enable learners to use the language items often so that they gradually develop ability, knowledge and confidence to use them effectively. And in order to bring about effective learning, learners must be given every opportunity to take part in activities that require them to use the language they have learnt (English Language Curriculum Specifications, 2003).

Teachers too, have the responsibility to ask students about their learning strengths and preference for more effective learning in the classroom (Reid, 1999). Nunan (1996) suggested that teachers should find out what their students think and feel about what they want to learn and how they want to learn.

2.7 Effective Language Learners

In language learning, one of the factors that contribute to success is the degree of motivation gained by the language learners. However, every language learner achieves different degrees of success. One of the determinants for success in language learning is learners' characteristics. Ellis (1994) listed five good and successful learners' characteristics:- a concern for language form, a concern for communication (functional practice), an active task approach, an awareness of the learning process and a capacity to use strategies flexibly in accordance with the task requirement.

Other factors have also been cited as important for a success in language learning. Autonomous learning is suggested as an effective way of studying language that can be adopted by language learners (Breen and Menn, 1997). Learner autonomy is defined as the ability to take charge of his or her own learning (Holec, 1981 cited in Nunan, 1997). But according to Benson and Voller (1997), autonomy is described as situations in which learners study entirely on their own and learn a set of skills needed in learning and applied in self-directed learning.

Breen and Menn (1997) discussed the qualities to characterize autonomous as learners' desire for their own learning and their sense of self (see 4.4.4). Learners must have a genuine desire to learn any particular language. It can be intrinsic or instrumental depending on the reason for studying the language. Learners need to have a robust sense of self as any assessment of themselves or their work by significant others in the learning process can be used as a rich source of feedback or can be discarded if it is irrelevant.

Meanwhile, Reid (1999) added that informed students are able to articulate their needs affectively and cognitively besides being able to identify their styles and strategies in language learning. By understanding the learning environment, students are able to take control of their own learning and maximize their potential for learning besides increasing their sense of freedom and responsibility. This results in self-motivation as they are able to evaluate their own language experiences and are able to identify their learning strength and weaknesses. In contrast, having unable to take control of their own learning indicates failures in identifying suitable learning and teaching styles and strategies in the L2 classroom. For instance, while learners regard code-switching as an appropriate teaching strategy used by the English teacher, students who constantly cling on to L1 will make mistake in acquiring the L2 (Yoong, 2001 as in David, 2007).

2.8 Code-Switching

In the context of English taught as a second language in Malaysia, teachers tend to code-mix and code-switch as to get a point across by talking to the language that the learners understand, which is their L1 (David, 2007:ix). Fishman (1989: as in David, 2008) described codes-switching as “changing from the use of one language to that of another within a single speech event.” Again, according to Fishman (1965:17 as in David, 2008), code-switches takes place as “certain topics are handled better and more appropriately in one language than in another.” Gardner-Chloros (1997 as in David, 2008) stated that “the effect of language incompetence or the lack of it as a reason for code-switching.” In Malaysia, code-switching occurs “when participants of a similar ethnic group, the Malays converse in an informal setting” (David, 2008:81).

In an ESL classroom, code-switching is a common occasion as teachers have to ensure that students comprehend the lesson. Teachers tend to mix English with the students’ mother’s tongue in order to facilitate comprehension among the students (see 4.3.4, Table 4.19). A teacher who is a bilingual teaching English is said to have code-switch into Bahasa Melayu when she introduces a word that is recognizably as Bahasa Melayu.

In a study conducted by Tam Shu Sim (1993) on a teacher’s language choice in English language classes in Mara Institute of Technology, Shah Alam, it was observed that teacher’s code-switching from English to Bahasa Melayu took place when the

former did not appear to be effective. There were instances where the teacher switched from SE (Standard English) to substandard or ME (Malaysian English). The teacher employed in code-switching for number of reasons as she claimed codeswitching should be used as a technique with weaker classes and to achieve rapport with students. All English repertoire only applied in high language proficiency classes.

2.9 Research on Language Attitudes

Numerous studies have been conducted locally on students' attitudes towards learning a language. Various studies have shown that students' positive attitude towards learning a language is proven as a determining factor for their success in learning a language. In a study conducted by Ibtizam Naji (1999) on the attitude of Malaysian students in the International Islamic University towards Arabic language in general and towards using it as a medium of instruction in particular revealed that students' attitude towards the language affected their ability in the Arabic language. Students with positive attitudes tend to do better in the Arabic language than those who did not have positive attitudes towards learning the language.

It is evident that having positive attitudes towards learning a second language affects the learners' performance in learning the language. Another instance, is in a survey of students' attitudes about English essay writing conducted by Jayasri (2006).

It demonstrated that students with positive attitudes towards essay writing produced better essays than those who have negative attitudes towards essay writing. It was discovered that the factors that influence students' negative attitude about writing essays are the wrong perception about essay writing, negative feelings about essay writing, poor writing habits, teaching method and poor motivation.

Studies have shown that there is a correlation between attitude and motivation of the second language learners and this affects their competence in the English language. Haniza (2003) in her study on attitude and motivation towards English as a medium of instruction, attempted to identify the students' attitude and motivation towards English as a medium used in classroom teaching and learning. The study was carried out in a private technical institute of higher learning. This research determined students' perception toward English and students' motivation toward English as the medium of instruction. In addition, it sought to find out the correlation between attitude and motivation and English Test Achievement as well as correlation between attitude and motivation and overall academic performance. The finding showed that there was a correlation between students' attitude and motivation and English test achievement. There was also a weak correlation between students' attitude and motivation towards overall academic achievement. The results also indicated that there was a strong correlation between students' English test achievement and overall academic performance.

Chandrasegaran (1981), in her study on the factors affecting the learning of ESL in Malaysia observed that students with favourable attitudes tend to work more regularly at their second language. Besides that it has discovered that, “the intensity of motivation is the strength of the learner’s interest, desire or need that maintains perseverance of effort in the learning process” (Chandrasegaran, 1981;7). The study revealed that learners who had favourable attitudes towards English are more competent in English and had a high level of motivation as they subscribed to various language learning strategies and techniques to assist their learning of English.

Similarly, in a more recent study conducted by Lim (2003) on urban secondary school students’ attitude in Malacca towards English revealed that students who have positive attitude and motivation towards English employ relevant strategies to assist them in their learning so as to make their learning of English more successful. A majority of the respondents recommended that teachers provide translation in order to help them understand the task given in class. The use of translation in the classroom is supported by Ravender’s study (2004) on students’ beliefs in learning English as a second language. 57.9% or 59 out of 102 Malay, Form one student respondents in the study admitted that English is a difficult language to learn. Therefore, translation method is needed for them to learn English better.

In another study, Chow (2001) focused on the attitude of Malay and Chinese undergraduates towards English in the University of Malaya. Findings revealed that respondents have a positive attitude towards the language as a result of their

realization of the potential usefulness of the language and vice-versa. However, there were significant differences found in the attitudes towards English between the two ethnic groups.

Yong (2000) in her study on Learner Factors and Second Language Learning Strategies: A Case Study of Two Form 5 School Leavers also supported that high motivation and interest to learn a language contribute to effective learning of English. In exploring the learners' factors and language learning strategies of two respondents who are Form 5 school-leavers in Petaling Jaya, she found that there were possible links between the high motivation and interest of one informant with her greater number of beliefs about language learning and her slightly greater number of perceptual learning styles (self-motivated and self-directed to be autonomous). The other informant, who was a low-achiever of English, lacked the motivation and autonomy in learning. The study also identified four learner factors that have facilitated the effective learning of English as a second language and they are motivation and interest, intelligence, memory and exposure to English.

There may be a distinction as regards to attitudes and proficiency levels between urban and rural students. Students in rural areas are more likely to have less exposure to English that would affect their proficiency in the language. Ee (2001) studied cultural factors affecting English proficiency in rural areas of Terengganu. The study pointed out that rural cultures certainly influenced the learning of English among the students. Five main factors that contributed towards the low proficiency of

English of the rural student were identified; lack of motivation, teaching methods, lack of parental support, lack of study skills and socio-economic status. As a result of where they were living, (where their livelihood mostly depended on agriculture and fishing), the students had no opportunity to use the language since they lacked contact with people speaking English. The notion that parental support and socio-economic status are important determinants to success in language acquisition (Baker, 1992) is demonstrated in a study on English language proficiency of rural Malay learners by Rahimabe (2002). Parents in the rural areas with a lower economic status did not realize that lack of parental support resulted in lower motivation for their children to study and acquire English.

In addition, a study by Ratnawati (2004) on learning English in rural schools and students' attitudes, motivation and anxiety, showed that the majority of the students in rural schools have positive attitudes towards learning English and only few have negative attitude towards learning English. 48.4% students strongly stated they love the subject and are willing to improve their English. However, their lack of exposure to English hindered them. Limited vocabulary in English was among the difficulties experienced in learning English and this led to reticence in the classroom. It was discovered that the students had low self-concept due to their lack of proficiency in the language. Teachers needed to provide a conducive environment so as to motivate the students to learn English and overcome the students' anxiety about learning the language.

Many studies on attitudes on language learning have also been conducted in other countries. The attitudes towards a language are determined by the function that the language serves. In the study of language attitudes in multilingual Fijian schools, eight primary schools with 48 Fijian students, 24 teachers and eight head teachers participated and Shameem (2004) revealed that language attitude along with language use were tied to the functional use of each language among Indo-Fijians in the education system in Fiji. The purpose of communication in their multilingual context played a role in language choice. English was recognized as the most essential language and they preferred to learn and use English as early as possible in the school and recognized that monolingual English instruction was the best language to use.

The reasons for learning English are also discussed in Rahman's (2005) study on the Orientations and Motivation in English Learning: a Study of Bangladeshi Students at Undergraduate Level. He analyzed and determined the various socio-psychological orientations of undergraduates in private universities in Bangladesh towards learning English. The findings present a consistent picture which establishes that the instrumental motivation is the major motivational orientation for undergraduates to learn English as a foreign language in Bangladesh. Usually, Bangladeshi students do not have a chance to interact in any form with native speakers of English. The study proves that English is very much domain specific and English is used only for specific purposes; and is especially limited and restricted within the academic domain. The reason for the findings can be explained by the fact that Bangladesh is a predominantly monolingual country and Bangla serves most of the

communicative purposes. Therefore, English is learnt only for its utilitarian value that is to get a good job, to build a successful career, and to go abroad.

The same reasons for learning English were identified in Muthwi (2004) who studied the perception of parents, pupils and teachers among the Kalenjin in Kenya towards the language of instruction. Apparently, all respondents preferred using English or Kiswahili instead of their mother tongue as the language of instruction in primary classes 1-3. The respondents cited specific advantages they saw in learning and using English; to increase the opportunities for employment, and have access to higher education and knowledge, as well as to provide communication with a wider population, nationally and internationally.

2.9 Conclusion

The theory of *Reasoned Action* by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) and Gardner's Revised Socio-Educational Model (2001) are used in this study due to their suitability and flexibility (see Chapter 4.3). In Ajzen's and Fishbein's theory of *Reasoned Action* (1980) there are few factors determining a person's behaviour. *Attitudes towards the behaviour* determine the attitudes the Semai students have in learning English. What contribute to these attitudes (see chapter 4.3)? *Subjective norm* discovers the extent to which parents, home background (see Chapter 4.3.1, 4.3.3) and the English language teachers (see Chapter 4.3.4, 4.3.5) influence the Semai students' motivation to learn and their attitudes towards learning the English language.

Influences and motivation are correlated with success in language learning. With Gardner's Revised Socio-Educational Model (2001) the second language acquisition process is associated with four distinct aspects that influence language learning: external influence, individual differences, language acquisition contexts and outcomes. It is suggested that the four distinct aspects are the major determinants in successful second language learning (see 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4).