

## STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE (A CASE STUDY OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT STUDENTS)

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### Abstract

*The real challenges for teachers and learners lie in finding ways of sustaining the motivation through the long and often arduous process of learning a language. The aim of this study was to describe the students' instrumental and integrative motivation in English language learning. A case study was used in this study by distributing the motivation questionnaire to the 36 second-year students of English Department at Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa university in Serang, Banten. Then, the data from the returned questionnaire were analyzed by describing the types of motivation the students use. Findings from this study indicated that the second year students were instrumentally motivated and their integration was sufficient, too. The instrumental motivation was found to have more impact on students than integrative one. Three interrelated instrumental motivations in studying English were identified: future study, scores and career. In addition the students mentioned that good marks in English were required for their future studies and a good qualification for their careers. In conclusion, motivation has a contribution towards the students' English language learning. The findings could be useful for researchers and teachers in improving students' English language learning by conducting effective teaching and learning strategies to develop the students' motivation.*

Key words: *instrumental motivation; integrative motivation; motivation*

### INTRODUCTION

The English Education program, as a recent study program, at Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University in Serang, Banten, is required to build the skillful students, especially, English language. It is in line with its vision, which the university is willing to be the center of excellence to improve the academic quality, the intellectuality, and professionalism in education and linguistics for the future human resources. To achieve this vision, language learning motivation is required as a tool of acquiring the high students' achievement in learning English language. Uguroglu & Walberg (1979) stated that motivation is essential for learning and achievement in all fields of human endeavor. Motivation and educational achievement as reflected in grade point average are positively correlated at all levels of schooling, elementary through college.

Learners' motivation has been widely accepted as a key factor which influences the rate and success of second/foreign language learning (McDonough, 1983; Ellis, 1994 in Choosri, 2011). According to Ellis (1994) in Vaezi (2009) the learner factors that can influence the course of development are potentially infinite and very difficult to classify in a reliable manner. Recent studies suggest that motivation is not static; rather, it evolves dynamically during the

learning process, varying from day to day and task to task (Dornyei, 2002; Dornyei & Kormos, 2000 in Vaezi, 2009). Motivation seems to be essential considering the nature of the learning task.

Therefore, it must be realized that the role of motivation in achievement is a particularly question that deserves to be studied. In other words, the students' motivation is an essential role in language learning process. It is, therefore, essential to describe the integrative and instrumental ones the students use and the frequently motivation used by the students in English language learning.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The importance of motivation in enhancing second/foreign language learning is undeniable. Lifrieri (2005), p. 4 in Al-Tamimi. Atef & Shuib.Munir, (2009) points out that “when asked about the factors which influence individual levels of success in any activity – such as language learning –, most people would certainly mention motivation among them”. Based on this statement, motivation is really necessary in the human endeavor. It means that in every activities of human life need motivation to support their successfulness to do or learn everything. Motivation, based on Hornby’s dictionary is defined as something that causes someone to act. Motivated behavior, therefore, will lead to various actions in order to reach a goal. Someone is ‘integratively motivated’ if they are learning English through a desire to learn more about a culture, its language and people – to ‘integrate’ more within the target-language society. Instrumental motivation involves learning in order to achieve some other goal, such as being able to speak English in order to get a better job.

### *Types of Motivation*

*Instrumental motivation* refers to a learner’s desire to acquire a new language for utilitarian reasons and to reflect the practical value and advantages of learning a target language (Gardner & Lambert, 1959 in Hernandez, 2008). Gardner (1983, p. 203 in Hernandez, 2008) defines instrumental motivation as "learning a language because of someone or less clearly perceived utility it might have for the learner".

*Integrative motivation* refers to a learner’s desire to learn more about the cultural community of the target language or to assimilate in the target community (Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Norris-Holt, 2001). Integrative motivation was defined as "learning a language because the learner wishes to identify himself with or become integrated into the society” of the target language (Gardner, 1983, p.203 in Al-Tamimi. Atef & Shuib.Munir, 2009). Therefore, a learner

is motivated when he/she learns a language because he/she wants to "know more of the culture and values of the foreign language group... to make contact with the speakers of the languages... to live in the country concerned" (Wilkins, 1972, p.184 in Al-Tamimi. Atef & Shuib.Munir, 2009 ).

In the case of researching language learning motivation (LLM) in formal second and foreign language learning settings, it proves difficult to arrive at reasonable comprehension of how the concept works without appreciating the contributions of the many disciplines within which it was researched. Such disciplines include general, cognitive, and social psychology; general, social, and educational theories; in addition to sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and neurological theories. The problem, as Dörnyei (1996) in Keblawi (2006) asserts, is not the lack of theories to explain motivation, but rather the abundance of approaches, theories, and models. Researchers still do not agree on what components make up motivation and the different roles that these components play—individual differences, situational differences, social and cultural factors, and cognition (Renchler, 1992; Belmechri & Hummel, 1998 in Keblawi, 2006). McDonough (1981, 143 in Keblawi, 2006) refers to the term ironically, calling it a *dustbin* that is used to “include a number of possibly distinct components, each of which may have different origins and different effects and require different classroom treatment”. Dörnyei (2001, 7), less ironical but equally sharp, maintains that researchers disagree about everything that relates to the concept of motivation, viewing it as no more than an obsolete umbrella that hosts a wide range of concepts that do not have much in common.

New insights into the nature of motivation were brought about by the cognitive revolution that started in the 1960s. By the 1970s it rendered irrelevant the behavioral mechanical approaches to motivation which lost support in philosophy and proved ineffective (Locke, 1996 in Keblawi, 2006 ). In the *cognitive developmental theory* laid down by Piaget, motivation is perceived as “a built-in unconscious striving towards more complex and differentiated development of the individual’s mental structures” (Oxford & Shearin, 1994 in Keblawi, 2006). With the advance of the cognitive approaches, the field became more relevant to educational psychologists and the cognitive shift led to concentration on the individual’s role in his or her own behavior (Weiner, 1994 in Keblawi, 2006). In other words, there has been a shift towards focusing on *why* students choose to engage in academic tasks instead of focusing on what they do, and the time they spend doing so, as has been the case with the behaviorist approach (Rueda & Dembo, 1995 in Keblawi, 2006). Concepts such as goal and level of aspiration replaced the unconscious concepts of drive, instinct and the like. With the introduction of psychological concepts like *anxiety*, *achievement needs* and *locus of control*, individual differences were highlighted more. More cognitive concepts were developed during

the 1970s and 80s like *self-efficacy, learning helplessness* and *causal attributions*.

The cognitive revolution in psychology gave birth to a respectable set of cognitive psychological theories on motivation. Three of these theories are currently prominent and are relevant, in different degrees, to LLM. They include *the self-determination theory, the attribution theory, and goal theory*.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted at Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University in *Serang, Banten*. This study was focused on a small group of 36 learners of second year students of English Department as the participants involved in this research. This research was based on a qualitative research. A case study was used as a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event, (Merriam, 1988 in Bogdan, 1992). In this case study, the major data gathering techniques is participant observation and the focus of the study is on a particular organization (at the university). A case study was conducted to develop an informal relationship with those they are observing, generally in more natural environments to describe the phenomenon, particularly how the English students deal with the types of motivation in English language learning.

The motivation questionnaire was distributed to the participants. The first part of the questionnaire was adapted from Choosri (2011) including 17 items of instrumental motivation and 8 items of integrative motivation.

The second part of motivation questionnaire was the open ended question adapting from Mezei (2008). This part consisted only of 1 item. The 16 participants (students) with high Grade Point Average were selected to answer the open ended question. Open ended questionnaire was also conducted to gain a more in depth understanding of the participants' English language learning and to emphasize their motivation in English language learning. These two parts of questionnaires were employed to figure out the integrative and instrumental motivations used by the second year students of English Department.

The data of the research were analyzed by categorizing the types of motivation, namely, instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. The categories of Gardner and Lambert basic types of motivation were used. They distinguish two types of language learning motivation: **instrumental motivation** and **integrative motivation**.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings showed that language learning motivation is an important field in language pedagogy since it is seen as one of the key variables contributing to the successful acquisition of a foreign or second language (Kormos & Csizer, 2010). These studies revealed a

variety of results that reflected the complexity of examining motivation in language learning. Moreover, several studies in the foreign and second language field have acknowledged the social and contextual influences on individual motivation. Most importantly, these studies were concerned with what types of motivation used by the second-year students of English Department at Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University in *Serang Banten*.

The study findings can be used as a beginning point for providing some pedagogical implications that should be taken into consideration. The implications are as follow:

1. The study showed that the second year students are instrumentally motivated. Therefore, English language class should be designed to fulfil this purpose. In other words, the English Department students should make English to function effectively at both their academic and occupational settings.
2. To match the instrumental role of the language, English Department students opined that they would like to attend training courses.

To sum up, the current study had been conducted to identify second year students' motivation toward the English language learning. The findings indicated that the students have certain reasons for learning the English language.

The findings present a picture which establishes that second year students of English Department were instrumentally motivated and their integrativeness was sufficient, too. This study also provides a sufficient answer to the research questions addressed, and confirms the opinion of some researchers who believe that in a foreign language situation students are instrumentally oriented. Taken together, findings from the qualitative data of the present study give a consistent picture, that instrumental and integrative goals, especially to get good income for the students' future career development, meeting more people and learning English in order to become familiar into the society properly are very important for the second year students.

No matter what the underlying motivation to study a foreign/second language, what cannot be disputed is the fact that motivation is an important variable when examining successful foreign/second language acquisition. Some research has shown that motivation correlates strongly with proficiency, indicating both that successful learners are motivated and that success improves motivation. Thus motivation is not fixed, but is strongly affected by feedback from the environment.

It is known that motivation is an important factor in second/foreign language learning; therefore it is important to identify both the type and combination of motivation that assists in the successful acquisition of a foreign/second language. At the same time it is necessary to view motivation as one of a number of variables in an intricate model of interrelated individual and

situational factors which are unique to each language learner. Thus understanding the students' goal and motivation for learning second/foreign language helps the teachers, educational policy makers, and curriculum planners to improve the students' proficiency. Many studies (Kruidenier & Clement, 1986; Dornyei, 1994) have demonstrated that measures of proficiency in the second/foreign language are related to motivational characteristics of students.

As confirmed by the findings of the present study, second year student of English Department have a very strong motivation for learning English. Teachers should be sensitive to learners' motives, to recognize their instrumentality, and at the same time raise their integrative motivation, as both kinds of motivation are required to induce people to learn. Teachers should encourage a balanced development of both types of motivation for learners. Recognizing learners' instrumental motives can be easily achieved by preparing learners for examinations and focusing more on practical skills such as how to communicate with other people when traveling abroad. On the other hand, raising their interests towards the culture of the target language (i.e., English) can be done by activities such as giving information on the lifestyle, geography, literature of the English-speaking countries through visual, written and audio forms, or even organizing group-sharing for learners who have been to English speaking countries.

And finally, the motivation that students have in their real life is not only integrative and instrumental, but also many other kinds; furthermore, all students get motivated by different reasons; that is, some do by classroom atmosphere, course content or teacher's attitude in the daily classroom. Theory should not walk alone without practical application. Although it is not easy to draw absolute conclusions, since types of motivation may be the result of a group affect among cognition, attitude, motivation, and personality, there is clearly a need for much further research on L2 motivation as well as other areas (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991 in Qashoa, 2006). There is much work to be done before researchers, teachers and language learners will fully understand motivation and all its aspects. In the words of Dornyei (2003) "Second/foreign language learning motivation as a situated construct, will undoubtedly be one of the main targets of future motivation research".

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study aimed to describe the second year students' motivation and toward learning the English language. For the students' motivation, the results showed that instrumental motivation was the dominant motivation toward learning the English language. Personal reasons were also regarded as important motives to the students. However, in regards to the integrative reasons, the results provided evidence that learning English to be part of the culture of its people had the least impact in students' English language motivation.

In conclusion, both integrative and instrumental motivations contribute to the learning

of a second/foreign language. It is clear that the teacher, the class atmosphere, the course content, materials and facilities, as well as personal characteristics of the student will have an influence on the individual's classroom learning motivation (Gardner, 2006).

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