STUDENTS’ MOTIVATION IN EFL LEARNING

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Abstract
This study explores types of motivation for students’ EFL learning and identifies factors that motivate them in the learning process. This is a descriptive study utilizing both quantitative and qualitative design by involving a class of one vocational school. Through close-ended questionnaire, open-ended questionnaire, and interview, the data were collected. The results of this study were in line with the previous findings (see Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Yu, 2010; Tahaineh & Daana, 2013). The findings discovered that both instrumental and integrative motivation play a crucial role in the students’ EFL learning process within this context. Nevertheless, it revealed that the instrumental motivation had a predominant role in the EFL learning. Besides, the data showed that there were thirteen factors which affected the students in the learning process classified by Williams and Burden (1997, cited in Dornyei, 2001). However, since types of motivation and motivational factors are depended upon context, it is suggested to conduct the research related to this topic in different context or site.

Keywords: EFL learners, EFL learning, Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted for most of the fields of learning that motivation is the utmost importance to achieve learning goal. Arguably, without motivation, there is no effort for learners to do something proficiently. That is to say that motivation is closely related to learning process (Siska, 2015). Hence, learners who are more motivated may learn better that those less motivated (de Bot, Lowie, and Verspoor, 2005). In other words, if the learners are motivated they probably will learn, and if not, they may not be eager to learn. This notion has appeal intuitively (Ellis, 1986; Brown 2001).

In the field of acquiring or learning a language, learners’ success may vary since they have different characteristics. In relation to this, motivation is considered as one of the crucial factors that can affect individual differences in acquiring a language (Crisfield & White, 2012). As a social-psychological factor
which is frequently considered instrumental to the differential learners in learning a language, motivation appears as a predictor of language learning success (Gass & Selinker, 2008). It is as argued by Dörnyei (1998) & Honggang (2008) that motivation gives the essential impetus to initiate learning second or foreign language and later to sustain the long learning process. Thus, it is safe to say that motivation is a factor that influences the success or failure of foreign language learning.

Regarding the effect of motivation in L2 learning, many researchers have been concerned with research on learners’ motivation in second or foreign language learning. In relation to this notion, actually, socio psychologists were the first to initiate serious studies on motivation in language learning due to their awareness that this aspect may effects on L2 learning (Dörnyei, 1998). More recently, a number of studies on the role of motivation in second or foreign language learning have been increasingly flourishing (Root, 1999; Li, 2006; Carreira, 2006). In addition, since the role of motivation is undeniable, learning motivation is considered as empirical studies (Yu, 2010). Moreover, when considering the role of motivation and second language learning or acquisition, Ellis (1986) affirms that the most extensive research into it has been conducted by Gardner and Lambert (1972). Furthermore, they (as cited in de Bot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2005) distinguish motivation into two types; namely, integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. In the meantime, Williams and Burden’s (1997, cited in Dörnyei, 2001) propose a framework of L2 motivation called internal factors and external factors. Nevertheless, it is noted that most researchers like to value instrumental aspects as the major types for students learning while integrative motivation is often neglected (Jin, 2014).

Dealing with motivation in foreign or second language learning, there is a consensus that the exact nature of motivation is not clear. Different theories from different points of view have tried to define the construct of motivation (Fernandez & Canado, 2001). In relation to this notion, Gardner & Lambert (1972) cited in (Engin, 2009) define motivation as learners’ individual reasons for learning a language. Furthermore, Gardner (1985) asserts that motivation covering
four aspects; namely, a goal, effortful behavior, a desire to achieve the goal and favorable attitudes toward particular activity in question. Seeing Gardner’s further explanation, logically, motivation is not simply reasons for learning a particular language. Additionally, Gass & Selinker (2001) point out that motivation is dynamic since it changes depending on context and changes over time.

As mentioned earlier, great deals of studies have been conducted in relation to the learners’ motivation in language learning. Some of them were set out to identify types of motivation in learning a language. In EFL context, a research carried out by Yu (2010) to college students of Jiangsu University of Science and Technology in China aimed to investigate types of students’ motivation of less successful students and relates the types of motivation with their achievement. The study reported that there were nine motivation types found in the study. Besides, this study also revealed that there was a significant correlation between language value and achievement. Meanwhile, a research conducted by Tamimi & Shuib (2009) found three types of motivation, which are: instrumental motivation, integrative motivation and personal motivation. Both of the studies focused on low achiever students in the English language.

Given the importance of motivation in foreign language learning, the present study aims to investigate types of learners’ motivation in learning English as foreign language. In the present study, motivation is defined as behavior of the pupils towards the English as foreign language, its cultures, individual pragmatic reasons for learning the language, and attitudes toward the activities in language learning (Gardner, 1985, cited in Gass & Selinker, 2001). Different from Yu’s study which focused on college students, this study is intended to portray types of vocational learners’ motivation in learning English. It is due to the consideration that since English is a demand for facing this globalization era, English is necessary for vocational students.

METHODS

This study is a descriptive study that, according to Sandelowski (2000), is commonly used to describe an experience or event that happens in reality as
completely as possible. Besides, mixed method, both qualitative and quantitative, also applied in the present study. It is in accordance with Creswell (2003) that a single study can be based on any mixture of qualitative and quantitative evidence. This method is in accordance with this study which is to seek types of learners motivation for learning English and to identify both internal and external motivational factors which affecting the pupils in learning process.

This study was carried out at one public vocational school in Bandung. The school was chosen because of two reasons. First, the school was accessible easily. Second, it was feasible for the researcher to negotiate with the participants. This is in line with Alwasilah (2011) asserting that it is necessary for researcher to establish rapport with participants and site before conducting the study. In the school, a class of students was chosen randomly as the sample. The participants of the study were 32 learners in a class of eleventh grade, 29 females and three males. These students were participated in the administration of questionnaires. Meanwhile, four students from the class were also chosen randomly to be interviewed.

The study applied questionnaires and interview as the instruments. The questionnaires, adapted from William and Burden’s (1997, cited in Dörnyei, 2001) framework of L2 motivation, Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) by Gardner (1985), and the questionnaire designed Yu (2010), was mainly aimed at answering the research questions in this study; to identify types of motivation and to seek motivational factors for learning or acquiring English. The questionnaires were divided into two types which consisted of 15 open-ended items and 20 close-ended items in terms of likert-scale. The pupils indicate their statements in term of five point likert scales from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree. ”It was administered to all the participants. The rationale for using questionnaire was based on the statement proposed by Mackey and Gass (2005) that this kind of instrument facilitated the researcher to obtain information which was the participants were able to reveal their point of view, such as motivations. Meanwhile, in order to collect further information related to the research question and to ensure that the data obtained were accurate, the interview was conducted to
four pupils. It was semi-structured interview since it was guided by a list of questions (Merriam, 1988). The questionnaire and interview was delivered in Bahasa Indonesia for the practical purpose. In addition, the learners who got involved in this study were informed that their names were not revealed in the present study since confidentiality was guaranteed. It is in line with the statement proposed by Rallis & Rossman (2009) that a qualitative researcher must carefully consider how to treat the identities of participants.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In analyzing the data, the researcher categorized the items by applying criteria proposed by Gardner (1985). Accordingly, there were two types of motivation that can be found on the data; namely, integrative and instrumental motivation. The data from the open-ended questionnaire indicated that both instrumental and integrative motivation play important role in the students’ EFL learning process within this context. It is in line with Tahaineh & Daana’s (2013) belief that both instrumental and integrative types of motivation have their crucial place in language learning. Interestingly, all of the students admitted that it was necessary to learn English to fulfill the requirement to pass the exam and to prepare and continue their study at university level. Besides, 84% of the students also argued that they were willing to learn English since they believed that it enabled them to get jobs easily. It is as stated by a student which comprised T1, that it is important to learn English because most of the companies demand the employees to have proficient English. In addition, another student which comprised T2 also argued that he can get more benefits in career world by developing English proficiency.

Given the data above, actually these findings concur with the previous study conducted by Yu (2010) and Tamimi & Shuib (2009) that a favorable reason to learn English is for the purpose to get satisfying future job. Besides, another finding also similar to Yu’s research (2014) that the learners commonly learn English in order to meet academic requirement as instrumental motivation. Moreover, this finding is supported by Schmidt et al (1996, cited in Duvernay,
2007) that EFL students demonstrated instrumental motivation as their major goal of learning English.

Apart from that, different from a research conducted by Hua (1998, cited in Yu, 2010) that shows that most students merely learn English with instrumental motivation, the present study reveals another type of students’ motivation, that is, instrumental motivation. Through the data from open-ended questionnaire, 53% of students admitted that they were interested to learn English language as well as the cultures of English native countries. To clarify, the students admitted that they were eager to learn the cultures to some degree, particularly to learn the positive side of the cultures. It is in accordance with the statement proposed by Brown (1989: 24, cited in Dornyei, 2001) that “learning a foreign language always entails learning a foreign culture to some degree, even if you never set foot in the foreign country where the language is spoken.”

Considering the data, it is clear to say that the instrumental motivation was predominant for learning English in the present study. This can be seen apparently from the data through open-ended questionnaire. Thus, generally, the findings of the present study were similar to the statement proposed by Svanes (1984, cited in Fernandez & Canado, 2001); (2000, cited in Jin, 2014); and Tahainen & Daana (2013) that instrumental motivation manifested as the primary types of motivation for EFL students.

The second instrument administered to the students is close-ended questionnaire in the form of likert scale. In analyzing the data, they were categorized into two broad categories, which are: internal factors and external factors by applying Williams and Burden’s framework of target language motivation (1997, Dornyei, 2001). Furthermore, each broad factor classified into several classifications as can be seen in Table 1.

The table reveals the mean value and standard deviation of each motivational factor. Among the twelve factors of EFL motivation, personal relevance factor, one of the internal factors, appears as the highest factor (M=3.64). It indicated that personal relevance factor, such as enjoying English movies and/or literatures and learning English in order to experience the foreign culture,
affected the most in the students’ EFL learning. To clarify, intrinsic motivation appeared when the students were moved to do something for challenge instead of environment factors. In relation to this, the data above confirms Chang’s research (2005) that intrinsic interest is motivation highly correlated to the students’ EFL learning process. In other words, regardless English as a compulsory subject in the school, it is logical to say that the students decided to learn English because their interest toward the EFL learning activities.

Table 1: Internal and external factors of EFL motivation

| No | Motivational factors | items | N   | M  | SD  |
|----|----------------------|-------|-----|----|-----|
| 1  | Internal factors     |       |     |    |     |
| a. | Intrinsic interest (optimal degree of challenge) & Arousal of curiosity | 19, 17 | 32  | 3.4 | 1.0 |
| b. | Mastery (i.e. feeling of competence) | 1, 2  | 32  | 2.9 | 0.9 |
| c. | Affective states (i.e. confidence) | 3     | 32  | 3.2 | 1.0 |
| d. | Perceived value of activity (Personal relevance) | 5, 12 | 32  | 3.6 | 1.3 |
| e. | Attitudes to the target language | 7, 16 | 32  | 3.3 | 1.1 |
| f. | Attitude to the English learning | 8     | 32  | 3.6 | 1.2 |
| g. | Attitude to the target language community and culture | 18    | 32  | 3.4 | 0.8 |
| 2  | External factors     |       |     |    |     |
| a. | Cultural norms (i.e. (like the culture and history) | 4, 6  | 32  | 3.4 | 1.1 |
| b. | The local education system | 9     | 32  | 3.3 | 0.7 |
| c. | The nature and amount of appropriate praise and rewards. | 10, 11, 13, 20 | 32  | 3.4 | 1.1 |
| d. | Mediated learning experiences | 14    | 32  | 3.3 | 1.0 |
| e. | Peers factor | 15    | 32  | 2.6 | 1.0 |

Another internal factors that should be taken into account in discussing motivation within the context of language learning as asserted by Williams and Burden (1997, cited in Dornyei, 2001) is the pupils’ attitudes, particularly towards
English learning. It is in line with the statement proposed by Gardner (1985) that motivation in second or foreign language learning deals with the combination of effort, desire to achieve the goal of learning the target language, and favorable attitudes towards learning the language. In relation to this, the data shows that students’ attitude to the English learning were positive which can be seen from the mean score (M=3.62). In relation to this, the finding supports Sugimoto, Rahimpour, & Notash (2006) that attitude as a factor of motivation is considered as one of fundamental determinants to learn English as foreign or second language. Overall, given the scores of internal factors and external factors on the students in EFL learning, it was found that internal factors, particularly personal relevance and attitude to learn English were the second primary factors which prevailed on the students learning activities.

In order to gain rich information, four students were interviewed. The students comprised S1, S2, S3, and S4. Based on the interview results, there were four factors of motivation influence EFL pupils, which are: the local education system factor, teacher factor, peers factor, and attitudes to the target language learning.

To begin with, the data indicates that the local education system affected the students in EFL learning since they demanded to pass the exams. It is as stated by S1, he uttered: “…bahasa Inggris itu termasuk pelajaran wajib di sekolah jadi harus bisa.” This finding, which is accurate to the data from questionnaire, is in line with the statement proposed by Tahaineh & Daana (2013) that the students commonly learn English in order to pursue their own goal such as getting satisfying grade in the exams. Similarly, Tamimi and Syuhib (2009) also affirm that most of the students’ motivation arises from the need to pass exams.

Besides, surprisingly, it was found that teacher factor contribute to the students motivation in learning English. It is as admitted by S1 in interview session. Below is the excerpt from the interview conducted in L1:

I : Apakah Anda menyukai kegiatan belajar/tugas2 yang diberikan di kelas?
S2: Sukasi, soalnya gurunya juga mendukung, karena kegiatannya rame pelajarannya juga mengerti banget materinya.

Similarly, S3 also stated that since the activities conducted by the EFL teacher were interesting, she felt more enthusiastic in learning English. It is as stated by McCombs and Pope (1994, cited in Dornyei, 2001) & Barbaee (2012) that it is believed that most students are motivated to learn under the right condition which are closely related to subject matter, including the ways the teachers present tasks.

Apart from that, peers factor also was identified as an external factor of motivation that influenced students’ eagerness to increase their English competence. In relation to this, interestingly, S2 uttered: “….kalosekaranggakbisahasaInggrisitupayahbangetgitukamseupaygitu kaya yang udah kampungan banget, malu sama temen-temen juga kalo gak bisa.” Seeing this statement, it seemed apparent that peers encouraged learners to learn English. This finding supports previous research conducted by Duvernay (2007) that peers were found to be factor in EFL learners’ success.

In addition, in the interview session, all of the students revealed their positive attitudes to the target language learning. All of the interviewees agreed that due to the demand of this era which is English is a lingua franca for most of the countries, the interviewees admitted that they were motivated to learn English, particularly for developing their skills in order to prepare their future. It is as uttered by S1 and S4, as follows:

“…bahasa Inggris itu bukan hanya dipakai untuk ngerjain tugas sekolah tapi kedepannya itu kita bisa dapat pekerjaan lebih mudah dengan bahasa Inggris.”

And,

“…karena bahasa Inggris kan bahasa kesatu internasional jadi harus bisa, dan juga penting untuk nantinya bekerja dan melanjutkan kuliah.”

This finding was in accordance with the data obtained from the questionnaire as mentioned previously.

To sum up, it has been outlined that both instrumental and integrative motivation influence English language learning in the present study. Although instrumental motivation was revealed as the major type of motivation affected
EFL learning, some students admitted that integrative motivation also played crucial role. Besides, it was found that there were thirteen factors as mentioned earlier which encourage students to learn English. Nevertheless, clearly, it is discernible that internal motivation factors, particularly personal relevance factor and learners attitudes toward English learning were found to be the major factors which prevailed over EFL learning process.

CONCLUSION

This study was administered to find out the types of students motivation in EFL learning and to seek motivational factors that influence the learning process. This study confirms findings from the previous research that instrumental motivation reveals as a major types of motivation for EFL learners (see Tamimi&Shuib, 2009; Yu, 2010). Referring to the findings and discussions that have been elaborated in the previous section, there are at least two conclusions that can be drawn. First, it is safe to say that although instrumental motivation reveals as the major type of motivation affected EFL learning, the role of integrative motivation in EFL learning is considered inevitably. Second, it can also be seen that internal factors of motivation play important role in encouraging EFL students to learn. In addition, based on the research findings, discussion, and conclusion of the research results, it is recommended, particularly for future researchers to conduct the research of the EFL students’ motivation in different levels of education and different method.

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