

THE STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT THE MECHANICAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT OF SRIWIJAYA STATE POLYTECHNIC PALEMBANG

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Abstract: One of the important elements in learning English is motivation. Motivation is the incentive, the need, or the desire that the learner feels to learn the second language. High motivation that the students possess will lead them to be successful language learners. This study is aimed to know the student's motivation especially the Mechanical Engineering students of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic Palembang in learning English Language. The data were obtained through a questionnaire. The findings show that the students have a high level of Integrative motivation and a moderate level of Instrumental motivation. The students are highly motivated to learn English because they want to achieve maximum proficiency. They think that English is important for traveling abroad. Their Instrumental motivation in learning English is to make their knowledgeable, skillful and educated people and enable them to understand English books, movies, pop music, etc.

Keywords: Motivation, English language learning, Mechanical Engineering Students

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is very important in learning English language. In Spolsky's words (as cited in Elyildirim and Ashton, 2006:2), motivation is regarded as a key component of a model of language learning. Students with low motivation often fail to reach their full potential as English language learners (Niederhauser, 2012:28). It is in line with Brown (2000, as cited in Elyildirim and Ashton (2006:3). He states that negative attitudes may lead to decreased motivation and, in all likelihood, because of decreased input and interaction, to unsuccessful attainment of proficiency.

Motivation is defined as an inner drive, impulse, emotion or desire that moves one to a particular action. Human beings universally have needs or drives that are more or less innate, yet their intensity is environmentally conditioned (Brown, 1987:114). Deci and Ryan (1985, as cited in Elyildirim and Ashton, 2006:3) identify motivation as *intrinsic* or *extrinsic*. Students are intrinsically motivated when they are interested in learning tasks and outcomes for their own sake, and that results in internal feelings of self determination and competence. On the other hand, students are extrinsically motivated if they carry out some actions to achieve some instrumental end, such as earning a reward or avoiding a punishment. Brown (1982:115) divides motivation into *instrumental* and *integrative motivation*. Instrumental motivation refers to motivation to acquire a language as means for attaining instrumental goals: furthering career, reading technical material, translating and so forth. Integrative motivation is a motivation to integrate themselves within the culture of the second language group, to identify themselves with and to become a part of that society.

In the early studies, integrative motivation appeared to be superior to instrumental. It was found in the studies of Gardner and Lambert (1959) and Gardner (1960). They conclude that integrative motivation to be more strongly to reach language achievement than instrumental motivation (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982:48). But later research done by Gardner in 1972 and Lumski in 1972 show that instrumental motivation to be superior. English is used as the language of education and business (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982:49).

There are many factors that influence students' motivation. One of them is students' prior learning experience. Niederhauser (2012:28) says that most Korean students are still unable to carry on simple conversations with native speakers or write sentences free of basic grammatical errors although they have completed at least six years of English classes before entering college.

The Mechanical Engineering students of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic Palembang have the same condition with Korean Students. Their motivation in learning English language is negatively affected by their prior learning experience. By the time the students enter Sriwijaya State Polytechnic Palembang, they have completed more than six years of English classes (elementary school for 6 years, junior high school for 3 years, and senior high school for 3 years), but they perform their English unsatisfactorily in class both orally and in written. For example, when they answer questions to a reading text, they often write with basic grammatical errors such as in using the right pronouns and verb forms.

Motivation in learning English language needs to be identified by the teachers of English because it influences the success of language learning (Lifrieni (2005:4) as cited in Tamimi and Suib (2009: 32). Moreover, Brown (2000), as cited in Tamimi and Suib (2009:32) states that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation. Gardner (2000: 241) as cited in Tamimi and Suib (2009: 32) adds that if one is motivated, he/she has reasons for engaging in the relevant activities, expending effort, persisting in the activities, attending to the tasks, showing desire to achieve the goal, enjoying the activities, etc.

This study was conducted to survey the motivation of the Mechanical Engineering students at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic Palembang. The problem of this study is what motivation of the Mechanical Engineering students is in learning English language. The objective of this study is to identify their motivation towards English language learning. This study is hopefully beneficial for the teachers of English to improve their English language teaching with respect to the students' motivation in learning English language.

METHODOLOGY

This study belongs to descriptive quantitative study. The population of this study was all the Mechanical Engineering students of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic Palembang in the academic year of 2013. The samples of this study were 100 first semester students with 8 female students and 92 male students. Their age varies from 17- 21 years old. The data were collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions which were adopted from Prapphal's Attitudes Testing (as quoted in Wimolmas, 2013:909). The questions are divided into *Integrative motivation* items (items 1-10) and *Instrumental motivation* (items 11-20). The questionnaires were translated into Indonesian to prevent misunderstanding and distributed to the 100 students during their normal class. The instrument used in this study is a 5 point likert-scale which was adopted from the original 7 point likert-scale format of Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) ranging from *Strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* (Wimolmas, 2013:908).

The data got from the questionnaire then were analyzed by using the formula $T \times P_n$, where T is the number of participants who choose the likert-scale score and P_n is the likert-scale score. Then the Mean is obtained by dividing the total number of the likert-scale score calculation with the total number of participants. Then the results of the calculation are interpreted based on the following criteria (Wimolmas, 2013:909).

Mean Range	Interpretation
3.68 - 5.00	High degree of Motivation
2.34 - 3.67	Moderate degree of Motivation
1.00 - 2.33	Low degree of Motivation

FINDINGS

The analysis of the data was based on the students' responses on the questionnaire. The students were required to tick any of five choices, i.e. *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neutral*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*. The results of the analysis are shown in the table 1 and 2.

Table 1 Students' Instrumental Motivation

Instrumental Motivation	Mean	Motivation Level
1. I mainly focus on using English for class assignment and the exams.	2.67	Moderate
2. I simply quote the textbooks and do not really communicate myself when speaking or writing in class.	2.58	Moderate
3. I am interested in reading only English textbooks for my university study, but not other English texts e.g. newspapers, magazines.	2.38	Moderate
4. I am more interested in earning a university degree and a good job than learning English language itself.	2.64	Moderate
5. I am more interested in furthering my higher education than learning English language itself.	2.53	Moderate
6. Learning English is important for traveling abroad.	4.45	High
7. Learning English is important for making me a knowledgeable and skillful person.	4.48	High
8. Learning English is important for making me an educated person.	4.19	High
9. Being proficient in English can lead to more success and achievements in life.	4.20	High
10. Being proficient in English makes other people respect me.	2.95	Moderate
Total	3.31	Moderate

Table 1 shows the students have a moderate level of Instrumental motivation. The average mean score of their Instrumental motivation is 3.31. The Students' motivation to learn English to make them knowledgeable and skillful people has the highest mean score (4.48). In contrast the lowest mean score (2.38) is the statement number 3 (I am interested in reading only English Textbooks for my university study, but not other English texts e.g. newspapers, magazines). The students also possess high motivation to learn English to obtain some achievements like to be a knowledgeable, skillful, educated, and successful person. It is seen from the mean scores of 4.48, 4.19, and 4.20 to the items 7, 8, and 9 respectively. The statement number 6 (Learning English is important for traveling abroad) has an average mean score of 4.45. The Students' interest in furthering higher education than learning English language itself has a moderate level of motivation (the statement number 5 with an average mean score of 2.53). The Students' motivation to learn English for traveling abroad is at the high level of motivation with an average mean score of 4.45.

Table 2 Students' Integrative Motivation

Integrative Motivation	Mean	Motivation Level
1. Studying English enables me to understand English books, movies, pop music etc.	4.42	High
2. Studying English enables me to better understand and appreciate the ways of life of native English speakers.	3.50	Moderate
3. Studying English enables me to keep in touch with foreign acquaintances.	3.93	High
4. Studying English enables me to discuss interesting topics in English with the people from other national backgrounds.	3.71	High
5 Studying English enables me to transfer my knowledge to other people e.g. giving directions to tourists.	4.27	High
6. Studying English enables me to participate freely in academic, social, and professional activities among other cultural groups.	4.00	High
7. Studying English enables me to behave like native English speakers: e.g. accent, using English expressions.	3.21	Moderate
8. Studying English enables me to appreciate English arts and literature.	3.59	Moderate
9. Studying English helps me to be an open-minded, and sociable person like English speaking people.	3.76	High
10. I am determined to study English as best as I can to achieve maximum proficiency.	4.81	High
Total	3.93	High

Table 2 reveals that the students' Integrative motivation is at the high level of motivation with the average mean score of 3.93. The statement number 10 (I am determined to study English as best as I can to achieve maximum proficiency) has the highest mean score of 4.81. On the contrary, the statement number 7 (Studying English enables me to behave like native English speakers: e.g. accent, using English expressions.) shows the lowest level of motivation with the mean score of 3.21. The statements: number 1 (Studying English enables me to understand English books, movies, pop music etc.), number 5 (Studying English enables me to transfer my knowledge to other people e.g. giving directions to tourists.), number 6 (Studying English enables me to participate freely in academic, social, and professional activities among other cultural groups.), and number 10 (I am determined to study English as best as I can to achieve maximum proficiency.) show the high level of motivation with the mean scores of 4.42, 4.27, 4.00, and 4.81 respectively.

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that the students are highly motivated to learn English. The students emphasized greatly on integrative reasons for learning English. They indicated that they are very anxious to learn English to achieve proficiency and to understand English books, movies, pop music, etc. This apparently supports the idea that those students whose test responses indicated the presence of integrative motivation volunteered to answer questions more often, made more correct answers in

class and received more positive reinforcement from their teacher. They were perceived to be more interested in language lesson (Gardner et al, as cited in Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982:48). They also agree to use English to transfer their knowledge to other people (for example, in giving direction to tourists). Moreover they will be confident to participate freely in academic, social, and professional activities among other cultural groups.

The findings also show the students' tendency to learn English on instrumental reasons. They learn English language mostly for attaining instrumental goals such as for traveling abroad; making them a knowledgeable, skillful, educated person; and they are not interested in using English for class assignments and the exams.

The discussion above reinforces the opinion that both types of motivation (Instrumental and Integrative) can positively influence the rate and quality of L2 acquisition: each is more effective (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982:48). Some studies cited in Brown (1987:116) suggest that the two types of motivation are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Second language learning is rarely motivated by attitudes that are exclusively instrumental or exclusively integrative. Most situations involve a mixture of each type of motivation.

CONCLUSION

The Mechanical Engineering students of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic Palembang have a high level of integrative motivation towards English language learning. The students are very anxious to learn English in order to achieve maximum proficiency. They are motivated to learn English because they want to understand English books, movies, pop music etc. and to transfer their knowledge to other people.

The students are indicated to have a moderate level of instrumental motivation. They believe that learning English can make them knowledgeable, skillful and educated people. The students also believe that being proficient in English can lead to more success and achievements in life. They agree that learning English is important for traveling abroad.

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