



SNAP TO READ

UNDERSTANDING EFL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN: WHY DO YOU STUDY ENGLISH?

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Abstract:

This research explored students' motivation to learn English as a foreign language. The aim of this research was to find out what kind of motivation underlie their decision to choose English as their major. This research is important as it can be used as an assist for students to be aware of their own motivation to learn as well as a basis for teachers in helping students to improve students' learning motivation. To reach the goal of the research, an interview was carried out. The result showed that from the data, initially, most students had extrinsic motivation and only a few students experienced intrinsic motivation. After learning English for more than a year, the motivation of some students mostly stayed the same. However, some students changed their motivation. Due to difficulties in learning, several students who were motivated to learn English intrinsically turned into extrinsic motivation. Oppositely, one student coined her extrinsic motivation attributable to her curiosity into intrinsic motivation and found that English is an interesting subject to learn

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Motivation has been acknowledged as an important element for success

in the second or foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 2003). Emily (2011) contends that Motivation refers to the fundamental reasons for someone's behaviour which is characterized by willingness and volition. In foreign language learning, motivation is considered as initial learning stimulant and when in time students encounter problems during the learning process, it becomes the mood enhancer to elevate learning efforts and to evade boredom (Dörnyei 2003). It then can be emphasised that the main influence of one's successful is determined by the motivation they possess.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject in secondary and high school. However, it is only learned one or twice a week with the length of only 60 to 90 minutes. Therefore, many school level students consider English as only a school subject that they are obligatory to be part of. This is due to the fact that English is not spoken in everyday life and it is considered as a language that "has no special standing but is simply just another language" (Stevens 1982, p. 36).

Meanwhile, it also cannot be denied that English has its own charm. Still, many students pursue to advance their English language ability after finishing school. However, they are limited only to certain group of people with certain needs who are motivated externally for example students who have desire to find a good job after finishing their study (Ratih 2005). This reality becomes problems as many of foreign language students are only motivated in the early stage of learning and the motivation decrease gradually as they face difficulties during the learning process (Busse and Walter 2013).

This research is designed to understand students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language. This research was conducted to examine their reasons why they choose to learn English language. It is important as students' motivation can be used as the basis of helping students to reach learning outcomes.

Motivation in Foreign Language Learning

Frankly speaking, motivation is the core of successful learning (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012). It is described as being "responsible for determining human

behaviour by energizing it and giving it direction” (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117) because motivation has “beliefs, perception, value, interest and action” as integrated variables of the behaviour (Lai, 2011, p. 5) . It means that in teaching learning context, successful learning must be supported by certain behaviours to reach desired outcomes.

In regard to the second or foreign language learning, Motivation refers to “overall goal or direction” (Huang & Wang, 2013) which can be achieved by conducting learning activities without any coercion from another party in order to undergo satisfying experience (Gardner, 1985). Therefore, to be successful in learning a second or foreign language , the motivation is employed as a gauge to judge students’ success or failure (Dincer & Yesilyurt, 2017).

A study focusing on external factor of motivation came from Vatankhah & Tanbakooei (2004). They investigated the role of social support such as parents, teachers and siblings on students’ motivation in learning English as a foreign language. The objects of the study were Iranian EFL learners. The result shows that, parents, teachers and siblings played important role in students’ learning motivation. The result showed that at the beginning students were motivated to learn English extrinsically. However, it became intrinsic-extrinsic motivation as they gained positive support from their parents and instructors.

Ayub (2010) conducted a research about the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on academic performance. The objects of the study were male and female students range from 18-21 years old with the total of 200 participants. All the participants were college students located in Karachi Pakistan who came from different socio-economic background. The result shows that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation have positive influence in students’ academic performance

Huang and Wang (2013) analysed students’ motivation in their research. They wanted to find out how motivation influenced students’ learning achievement. The sample of this research was non-English majors

with the total of samples were 100 students. They used a survey in the form of a self-designed questionnaire. The result said that students who showed that they experienced integrative and intrinsic motivation did better in some English proficiency tests. They also suggested to teachers that giving more attention to students' motivation and create friendly classroom milieu would give benefits to students in learning English.

Busse and Walter (2013) in their study found that motivated students encountered a decrease in motivation after continuing their education in higher level. This is a mix methods research using questionnaire and interview. This research was conducted in two different universities targeting first-year students. From the data, they found that the participants who were engaged in learning foreign language in school level were motivated to continue it in higher education. Initially, they had strong will to master the target language. However, their confidence was turning down during their study in higher education level due to difficulties that they experienced towards their assignments.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Initial theories of learning motivation claimed that control and domination from teachers are the source to avoid misbehaviour (Nicholson, 2013). After many studies are carried out, theories of motivation are improving particularly in second or foreign language learning. In this present year, many studies in learning motivation are influenced by self-determination theory proposed by Deci and Ryan in 1985 (Ryan & Deci, 2000) which introduced intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. SDT refers to "a macro-theory of human motivation that investigates human growth tendencies for self-motivation and personal integration"(Fernandez, 2011, p. 12). In order to be called self-determinant, an individual needs to have engagement in activities with "a full sense of wanting, choosing, and personal endorsement"(Wehmeyer, Abery, Mithaug, & Stancliffe, 2003, p. 15). This theory believes that every individual has propensity to be consistent or even increase motivation if the feeling of satisfaction is fulfilled. In other hand, some factors can cause

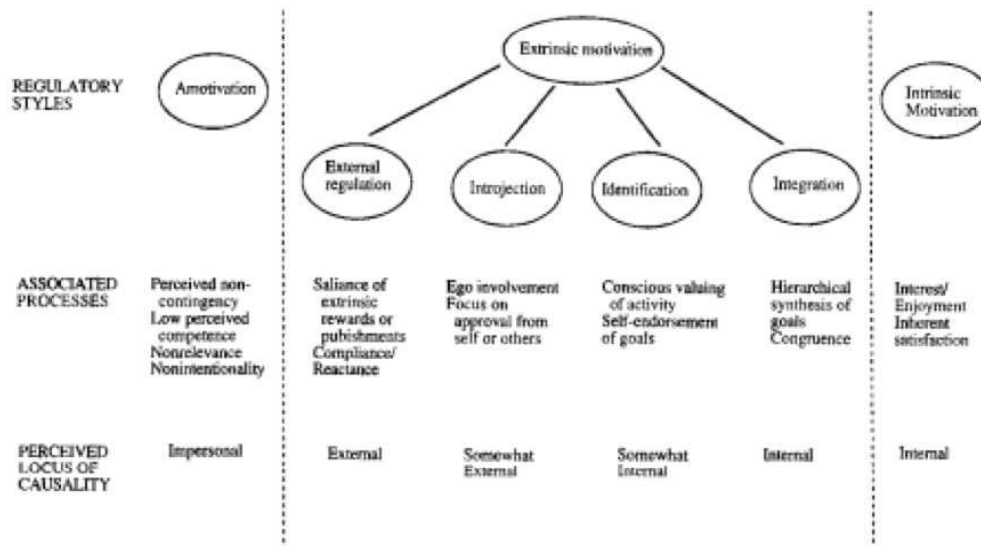
intrinsic motivation decreasing and turning into extrinsic motivation when individual fails to preserve the feeling of enjoyment towards activities.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation lies on its rigid dichotomy of where the origin motivation comes from. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation is carrying out likeable activities without wanting any external rewards while extrinsic motivation refers to conducting activities in order to achieve specific rewards.

Intrinsic motivation has become a phenomenon in the world of education due to the fact that undergoing enjoyable activities without any coercion from outside creates satisfaction resulting high-quality learning and creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In self-determination theory, it is impelled by three innate physiological need: autonomy which means every individual is the one who controls of every action or simply put one's behaviour is self-determined, competence relates to one's capability of doing something and relatedness refers to the need to get connected to other's individual to reach outcomes (Fernandez, 2011; Kusurkar et al., 2011; Hagger et atl., 2014). Furthermore, activities or actions are addressed intrinsic motivation if it is involved intrinsic regulation. There are some different types of intrinsic regulation those are interest, inherent, enjoyment and satisfaction. (Ryan & Deci, 2000),

INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATIONS



(retrieved from Ryan & Deci, 2000)

Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation is the opposite of intrinsic motivation. People who are motivated extrinsically means they take a part in an activity in order to reach outcomes or to get rewards (Taylor, Ntoumanis, & Standage, 2008). In self-determination theory, extrinsic motivation can be carved into four types namely external regulation (the pure extrinsic regulation where one does activities to avoid consequences and the doer experiences external pressure), introjected regulation (being involved in activities with pressure that comes from inside oneself such as feeling guilty), identified regulation (activities are undertaken due to the importance of the activity) and integrated regulation (the behaviour is categorised as an integral part of oneself when pursuing an activity in other words self-determination). (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Taylor et al., 2008)

METHOD

This research was conducted at Universitas Muslim Maros. Particularly in English Education Department. Participants came from different level of grade with the total of ten participants (eight females and two males).

Participants were varied in terms of their level: three students from semester two, five students from semester four and two students from semester six. All participants did not represent their level and were chosen randomly. In gathering participants, the researcher, firstly, conducted observation then announced to all students about this project. Then, some students were chosen randomly. However, the participants were not forced to join.

In order to collect data, semi-structure interview was carried out. The interview was conducted using Bahasa Indonesia. This is due to the fact that not all participants can speak English fluently. Therefore, native language was chosen to gain honest and rich data from participants. As participants came from different classes, the interview was divided into three groups: group one for the sixth semester, group two for the fourth semester and group three for the second semester. Each group was interviewed in different time as they did not have the same class activity and it was the convenient time for every group. During the interview, every participant was recorded. Then, the recorded data was transcribed and translated into English.

From the collected data, the researcher analysed it based on Braun & Clarke' thematic analysis (2006). There were six steps to be undertaken: getting familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing the report within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULT

From data analysis, students' motivations are varied. Most participants have positive attitude, while some students have negative attitude towards learning English. After coding the data using thematic analysis, two main themes are formed as presented below.

The Initial step: Reasons to study English

In this section, participants revealed their reasons why they enrolled in English education department. The reasons then analysed in to two parts, those are the reasons that come from oneself or intrinsic motivation and the

reasons that come from outside oneself or extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic Motivation

Some participants have more curiosity and interest in English than others. They are motivated to learn English intrinsically. Some of them have even learnt the language seriously since they were kids.

I like it

Having learning English since in early education, participant 4 found it interesting. Initially, she liked her English teacher and found it easy to understand. Then, it became intrinsic motivation because she liked to learn more and wanted to be good at communicating in English.

“I like speaking English since I was a kid” (4)

“liked my English teacher and I had good grade.” (4)

It is my Hobby

Some participants had similar experienced. They liked English since in elementary level and wanted to master the language as a form of satisfaction. Participant 6 was always excited in learning English and 9 considered it as her hobby.

“since in elementary school, I was excited if I learn English.” 6

It is my hobby, I just like it from the beginning...(9)

I am fascinated by the language

English vocabularies are extremely different with Bahasa Indonesia. Participant 8 has a unique way to express her feeling towards English. He said that the words and the sound attracted him and made him want to learn the language. Since then, his dream is to be fluent in English and becoming an English teacher.

“... how they say the words and how they pronounce the words ... Because I am fascinated by the language and my dream to be an English teacher.”” (Participant 8)

Extrinsic Motivation

It can be said that most of participants were motivated to learn English extrinsically. Even though some students were purely interested in English and enjoyed learning it but, they still had extrinsic motivation such as good grades and jobs. Below are some of extrinsic motivation that students possess to learn English.

Family Involvement

From all 10 participants, half of them were influenced by their families, mainly their parents, to study English. According to participant 1 and 9, English is an interesting subject. Initially, participant 9 had a doubt to enrol in English department. She then discussed it to her parents and her parents suggested her to choose English. Meanwhile, participant 1 was in dilemma, she liked English but was afraid she did not capable enough to develop. Therefore, she decided to choose Math as that subject was her also favourite in high school. Her family then gave some views that English would be more beneficial in her future. She then enrolled in English language department.

“my family persuaded me to choose this major. But when I was in high school, I was interested to study English” (Participant 1)

my parent said that English is an interesting subject to study about.” (Participant 9)

Other reason involving parents' significance comes from Participant 2,3 and 10. They said that they never thought to study English. However, their parents persuaded them to enrol in English department. Participant 2 continued that she wanted to be a good daughter. Therefore, she follows what her parents want. Meanwhile, Participant 3 admitted that she was forced to enrol in English department. In order to be a good daughter, she then followed her parents' decision. Similar to other two participants, participant 10 studied English in order to make his parents happy.

Actually, I don't have any intention to choose English, but my parents do. I just follow what my parents want me to do because my believe is without your parents' blessing you cannot be success.” (Participant 2)

I did not choose English. It is what my parents want. It was my

parents who took registration form from the university. They took care everything until I could study here. So, I study here because my parents insisted me to study English.”(Participant 3)

[my main motivation] parents... to make my parents happy” (Participant 10)

Job

From all the reasons that motivate students to choose English as their major, job is in the first rank. All participants agreed that acquiring English as their skill means a bigger chance to get a job. they also emphasized that one of the advantages of acknowledging English was many jobs required English proficiency test as an admission test for new employees. Therefore, it becomes adding value for their future career.

“I can find a job with English as a requirement, I can work in a bank, tourist agency, English teacher” (Participant 9)

“most jobs have English as basic requirement” (Participant 8)

“English can be used to apply a vacant job because mostly English is part of the test for recruiting new employee ... it is useful for my future career. It will give you a plus point in the working world” (Participant 6)

Going Aboard

According to Participant 9, one of the advantages of mastering English is going abroad. She said that having good English for non-native English speakers allowed them to go to another country without getting lost.

“If you are good at English you can go abroad” (Participant 9)

Understanding Technology

Some participants said that having good English could assist them to understand technology. They said that English is necessary in this digital era and it will help them to operate new technologies it is because most new technologies such as gadgets are initiated from west countries. That means that the devices are built in English.

“because in this era English is very important especially in this technology era” (Participant 10)

“it is because new branded technology is usually initiated by west countries ...we can understand the new technology which the language mostly is in English” (participant 6)

The Further step: The reasons to keep learning English

After studying for a while, being an English language student is not easy. There were times that they enjoyed learning the target language. Unfortunately, there were also times they wanted to give up. From the data, it is revealed that, most students were still stick into their original motivation, but a few students turned their motivation from intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation and visa verse.

Intrinsic Motivation: I want to know it

According to participant 5, English gained her attention. She felt curios to know more about how to speak English fluently. She said that she wanted to be an active speaker. She would use English anywhere.

Because I want to know how to speak English ... if I can speak English, I can use it anywhere (Participant 5)

Extrinsic Motivation: Good Grade

The other motivation that comes from outside is grade. Some participants felt frustrated with their score and it made them loose their intrinsic motivation and turn into extrinsic motivation. One of the participants revealed that she did not like if she gets low scores. Therefore, if she had one, she will study harder to get a higher score.

“when I studied listening comprehension, my score was B. It motivated me to study hard so I can get A” (Participant 4)

DISCUSSION

The New Beginning: why do you study English?

This research set out to explore students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language. The result shows that from all participants, most of them have extrinsic motivation when enrolling at English language department. Meanwhile, only a few have intrinsic motivation

In this research, the participants who were categorized as intrinsic motivation showed that they are interested in learning English due to the curiosity and interest. To be labeled as intrinsic motivation, Deci and Ryan propose three psychological needs which are assumed as the basis of internal motivation: the need for autonomy, the need for competence and the need for relatedness (as cited in Kusurkar, et al., 2011).

Two of the participants fell for the category of the need for relatedness. This kind of motivation is attached due to the feeling of belonging and comfortable (Kusurkar et al., 2011). For example, introducing a new thing in an interesting way which leads to "interest and enjoyment" as forms of extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this study, the result revealed that two participants had showed the need for relatedness when they were interested and felt enjoyed studying English as a new subject in elementary level. They said that they enjoyed the way their teacher taught English. Since then, they built their interest to learn more about the language which played vital roles because individuals who show "interest" in their work will have commitment to do well (Deci, 1992).

On the other hand, two other participants were related to the need for autonomy category. They have shown excitement learning the target language since in early education level. They consider learning English as their hobby and they are fascinated by the language. They then learn by themselves through internet or get used to listening to west song and watching west movies. As they continued to higher education, they chose to learn English to satisfy their curiosity about the target language. This behaviour is called as the need for autonomy because every individual who initiates to conduct activity without any influences from external involvement is categorised as autonomous engaged by behaviour (Hagger et al., 2014).

In Indonesia, English is labelled as a foreign language which means the language is mostly obtained through learning interaction due to the fact that it is not used as a first and/or second language in everyday conversation (Sulistiyo, 2016). Therefore, English users in Indonesia are uneven. The

reality shows that not many students learn English intrinsically. Most students who learn English has specific external purposes called extrinsic motivation. This kind of motivation can be distinct depending on the level of its autonomous (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Nicholson (2013), extrinsic motivation refers to getting involved in such activities with an aim to reach specific external reasons. In this research, most participants learn English due to some reasons such as wanting to have good grade, good job, to go aboard, to understand technology and to please family.

From the result, some participants are categorized as external regulation from the branch of extrinsic motivation. This classification is purely learning motivation from outside oneself. It comes up to please another party. According to Levesque et al (as cited in Jarvela, 2011, p. 619), external regulation is “the least of self-determined” due to the fact that the activities are performed with the result of “pressures, obligations, and constraints coming from external sources”. One of the pressures is coming from social environment, particularly family (Alizadeh, 2016).

Almost all participants chose to study English because of family involvement. Some of them did not have any intention to learn English. However, their family suggested them to enrol in English education department. In other hand, some of the students have some interest in learning language and it is supported by their family. Therefore, they chose English rather than the other subject that attracts them the most. These participants agreed with one thing: they did not want to disappoint their family.

The other external motivation of the participants was Integrated regulation. This type of motivation is the most autonomous in extrinsic motivation (Ryan, 2009). In this research, some students were motivated to study English due to the fact that it can benefit them in the future for example getting their dream work, going to another country and understanding new technology.

Frankly speaking, most students in Indonesia concern to learn English because English is a global language and is needed in many fields particularly

in the working world. Participants opined it would be easier for their future to have a language skill. This result is in agreement with Huang and Wang (2013)'s result in their research that finding satisfying job is one of the reasons for studying English.

Another extrinsic motivation revealed by participants was going abroad. Among many other enticements of mastering English, being able to wander abroad has its own charm. However, this motivation is not too popular as many students avoid interacting with native speakers (Huang & Wang, 2013). Participants with this motivation argued that they could go to another country without afraid of being lost if they could speak English.

One of the participants mentioned that one of the reasons she studies English is she wants to be an up-to-date person. She contended that it is necessary to understand technology which uses English as language instruction in order not to be left behind.

The Further Step: The Reasons to Keep Learning English

After learning English for more than a year or so, some participants admitted that their motivation had changed. The result shows than most students who were initially motivated to study English intrinsically changed their behaviour into extrinsic motivation. This is due to the fact that Bahasa Indonesia has different linguistic pattern which became the main problem that they experienced when working on their assignment. This finding is in line with a study conducted Busse and Walter (2013) who found that students' motivation decrease as a result of difficulties when doing the assignment.

Good grade became a spectre to all students including those who learn English intrinsically. Good grade has become a debatable topic in many studies about motivation (Ayub, 2010; Covington, 2000; Lin, McKeachie, & Kim, 2003). Achieving good grade is classified in extrinsic motivation because most students value it as a status of acceptance for example as "a mark of approval, to impress other people, or to avoid failure" (Covington, 2000, p. 24) which make them focus mostly to earn good grade (Adamma, Ekwutosim, & Unamba, 2018). According to Pressley (Pressley et.al., 1998)

all participants considered that good grade was number one priority while other came second.

In this study, one of the participants felt disappointed with her result when she only got B in listening comprehension course. Hence, she did her best to study hard in order to achieve the maximum score. It can be said that, even though she studies English intrinsically in the beginning, but her passion to high score can diminish her motivation into extrinsic motivation. Nevertheless, she said that she was still interested to learn more about English language. This finding is in-line with Biehler & snowman's result in their study (cited in Ayub, 2010) that factors that come from outside oneself are able to dwindle intrinsic motivation. Further, Ayub Affirms in his study that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have positive impact in students' academic performance. In this case, her motivation is the combination of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation resulting with positive attempt to reach future aims (Van Calster, Lens, & Nuttin, 1987).

Oppositely, by working hard to acknowledge English language, one of the participants turned her motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. Experiencing activities that initially start with extrinsic motivation and turn into intrinsic motivation are not impossible. It can happen if during the process, one changes their motives unconditionally. From the data, participant five learned English because of her family. Through the time, after learning more that 2 years, her motivation was increasing, and she wanted to know more. Thus, when the feeling of wanting to know arises optimally, it instigates the external motivation (Reiss, 2005). This transition of change in motivation produced interest. As Kashdan and Silvia (2009, p. 368) contend that "Interest motivates people to try new things, explore complex ideas, meet intriguing people and do novel action". This finding is in agreement with a study carried out by Vatankhah & Tanbakooei (2004) who found that parents and siblings play vital role in developing students' learning motivation.

CONCLUSION

Motivation in foreign language learning plays a crucial role to develop students' language ability. Learners' motivation can rise up or go down for some reasons or conditions during the learning process. This study investigated students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language. From the findings, extrinsic motivation dominated students' reason to enroll in English department. Interestingly, most of the participant's reason had a lot in common that is family involvement particularly parents. Undergoing extrinsic motivation throughout the learning process is acceptable. However, it needs hard works to be successful in learning which might change the extrinsic motivation into combination intrinsic-extrinsic motivation. Therefore, English language teachers should promote the important of motivation in learning. it is necessary to pay close attention to students' reasons of learning. By acknowledge the reasons, the teachers can help them develop their language ability such as finding a suitable learning method and materials.

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