

INVESTIGATING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' MOTIVATIONAL ORIENTATION TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Mia Rahmawati Yuwita

Universitas Komputer Indonesia

mia.yuwita@email.unikom.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This current study examines university students' motivational orientations towards English language learning. This study conducts a semi-structured interview to gain rich data. To achieve the objective successfully, 6 students who take an English language major at a university in Bandung, Indonesia were interviewed to provide answers related to English language learning motivation. The results of this study have demonstrated the participants' positive motivations towards English language learning. Through data analysis, the respondents positively express their strong motivations towards English language learning as they have a personal interest in English, the international language. Mastering English could help them adapt to this globalization era, and the status of English is essential as its use is immensely wide in many sectors. Yet, they understand that the status of Bahasa Indonesia and maintaining it are also crucial to their identity.

Keywords: English language learning, English, Motivational orientation

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is often associated with a complex and multifaceted concept and numerous researchers have defined it in different ways. Motivation in language learning is often linked to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as it involves social-psychological behaviour. Dornyei (2001) referred to motivation as one of the most elusive concepts in applied linguistics and educational psychology. However, he mentioned that motivation is a factor which encourages the momentum to start and subsequently continue in terms of learning a language different from one's mother tongue.

Gardner (1985) argued that the concept of motivation heavily relies on the desire, effort, and reason to learn a second language. In other words, learning motivation is not merely about factors behind one learning a language, but it also refers to the extent to which the learner strives to achieve a predetermined goal and their attempts to accomplish it. One of the languages which often draws researchers' attention is English language learning.

As we may acknowledge, English has widely spread all across the globe and the use of English has been prominently immense as a native, second, or even foreign language. The importance of English is unavoidably clear as it is used in many sectors, such as technology, education, entertainment, tourism, healthcare, retail, and many more. In Indonesia, English was chosen by decree

as the main foreign language by the Indonesian government and has been taught at schools since 1945 (Dewi, 2014).

As a matter of fact, English teaching in Indonesia had undergone several phases throughout its history. From Grammar-translation Approach in 1945, Oral Approach in 1968, Audio-lingual Approach in 1975, to the Communicative Approach in 1984 and 1994 (Dardjowidjojo, 2000; Jazadi, 2000). Today, many universities in Indonesia have English Department as one of the majors offered at campus. As stated previously, English is extensively used in educational and professional development, including in Indonesia. Thus, investigating students' motivational orientations towards English language learning is the key step to formulating effective language theory, practice, and policy in Indonesia.

Previous studies have examined learners' motivations towards a second or foreign language. For instance, Weger (2013) explored the English language learning motivation of adult international learners studying abroad in the US. Through a questionnaire designed to measure language attitudes, learning orientations and learning confidence, his research has demonstrated international English learners' dualistic nature of the instrumentality; that the learners are less motivated by positive attitudes towards the English community, and are motivated by developing the international identity for personal pride.

Malcolm (2013) attested that his participants were more into instrumental motivation as they learn English for academic and future careers. In his study, Malcolm found that factors affecting this motivation to emerge were family expectations, degree requirements, and one's long-term goals. Pazoki and Alemi (2020) claimed that in their study, the respondents, who are Engineering students, had negative attitudes and low motivation towards English for Specific Purposes due to the learning situation. They affirmed that they were not satisfied with the materials and the teaching method, which subsequently made them less motivated in learning English.

Fenyvesi (2020) found in her study that Danish children were strongly motivated by English through gaming and watching Youtube videos in English. Furthermore, they enjoyed learning English when it talked about real-life situations, variation and differentiation. Similarly, Ibarrola and Martinez (2021) discovered in their study that language learners had positive attitudes and motivation towards English. One of the factors affecting their motivation is the instructional setting.

Despite the growing numbers of research in motivational orientation, very few examine Indonesian undergraduate students using a semi-structured interview to gain in-depth data. Much research on motivational learning adopted pre-defined responses. As a result, the answers might be limited and it is occasionally unable to provide detailed information or cover all possible answers. Thus, to enrich the qualitative studies in motivational language learning, this current study aims to discover Indonesian undergraduate students' motivation for English language learning using a semi-structured interview to obtain more authentic, deeper, and more thorough answers from the participants. To put it differently, the purpose of this study is to answer this research question: What are the Indonesian undergraduate students' motivations for learning English? The answers to this question are expected to be a reference for supporting the implementation of the efficient English teaching method in Indonesia.

DATA SOURCE

The data for this research were gained from respondents' responses regarding their motivation to study English. The data were recorded and transcribed carefully. The participants of this study are six Indonesian undergraduate students who take an English major at a university in Bandung, Indonesia. This research applied criterion sampling to recruit the participants, which means the participants were selected based on specific criteria. The respondents of this study were specifically English majors and it is expected that they have a deeper understanding of the predetermined goal of English language learning.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative method, which tends to collect data in a natural setting (Creswell, 2013). According to Marshall and Rossman (2011) a qualitative study typically focuses on non-numerical data collection to understand attitudes, opinions, or experiences. The table below shows the participants of the current study.

Table 1: The participants of the current study

Number	Name	Academic Year
1	P-1	Third-year student/ 2020
2	P-2	Third-year student/ 2020
3	P-3	Third-year student/ 2020
4	P-4	First-year student/ 2022
5	P-5	First-year student/ 2022
6	P-6	First-year student/ 2022

To gain authentic and rich data, the instrument adopted in this study is a semi-structured interview, an interview where the researcher asks open-ended questions (Dornyei, 2007). The questions related to this are basically in line with English language learning motivation. For instance, the informants were asked about the benefits of learning English, the reasons why they study English, and their opinions of the English-speaking community.

The respondents were interviewed one-on-one and it lasted about 10-15 minutes. It is worth noting that the interviews were carried out in the participants' first language, Bahasa Indonesia, to gain rich and natural data in gaining the students' motivations towards English language learning. The data were then recorded and distributed in a transcription form. Next, the data were analyzed and discussed based on Gardner's theory about integrative and instrumental motivation.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Motivation is defined as the basic mechanism that determines and maintains one's desire to learn a second language in the sense of a language different from one's mother tongue. It is used as a solid pillar to understand language learners' effort, want, and reason for learning the language

(Gardner, 1985). It is regarded as the fundamental psychological construct in explaining the process and the outcome of second language learning (Dornyei, 2001; Gardner, 1985).

The early studies of motivations cover a social, macro-perspective approach, and use a product-oriented approach (Zareian & Jodaei, 2015). In this period, motivation is viewed as the output of interaction with the target language. Thus, social context and attitudes towards the target language and its community are the foundation to examine language learners' motivation (Gardner, 2010). In the 1990s, the research mostly involved a cognitive shift, a micro-perspective approach, a situation, and a context of learning (Ellis, 2008). Today, the studies on motivations in language learning have shifted from the "predictable" result to the socio-dynamic period. In other words, language learners' motivations are constantly changing over time as learners are dynamic, and unique, and they have constant changes in feelings and interests (Guerrero, 2015). As Dornyei (2001) stated, understanding one's learning motivation could not be explained by one approach, therefore language learners' behaviours and their surroundings should be studied in detail. In addition, the infrastructure, the learning medium, mindset, and peers' contribution could also play a significant role in language learning motivation (Resdiana & Yulientinah, 2021).

Gardner's model (1985) proposed the social-educational phenomenon that lies within language learning motivation. Gardner conceptualized motivation into two subcategories: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation.

1. Integrative Motivation

Integrative motivation focuses on learners' personal interest in a certain language group (Gardner & Lambert, 1974). Dornyei (2005) asserted that integrative motivations are associated with language learners' positive interpersonal disposition towards the target language and the desire to interact with or become a member of that language community. Integrative motivation occurs once a language learner has the desire to integrate themselves or at least has an interest in meeting and interacting with the target community.

However, integrative motivation does not just simply rely on the likes and dislikes of the target language. It is in fact a broad and complex concept that involves a collection of related factors, such as time, the relationship between the language learners and their peers, teachers, social community, etc. Thus, it is important to define integrative motivation according to the context attached to the language learners. This is the reason why Gardner's view towards L2 motivation is labelled as the socio-educational model. In essence, integrative motivations involve openness and respect for the target language and its community at the most basic level.

2. Instrumental Motivation

The second term coined by Gardner is instrumental motivation. He linked instrumental motivation with pragmatic benefits which second language learners may bring if they learn the target language. To put it differently, instrumental motivation pertains to the advantages of L2 proficiency, such as getting a better job or passing an examination rather than favouring the target language personally. This type of motivation is associated with achievement-oriented. People who have instrumental motivation aims for rewards and practical goals from mastering the target language.

Dornyei (2005) linked this instrumentality with ‘ideal language self’. This means that instrumentalities are divided into two subcategories, namely promotion vs. prevention. He mentioned that instrumental motivation with a promotion relies on the desire to learn a second language for the sake of professional advancement, as the part of the ideal self. Meanwhile, instrumental motive with prevention is associated with the attempt to avoid failure in examination or rejection, as part of the ought self.

Realistically, it is possible for language learners to have mixed motives as there is an inseparability of integrative and instrumental motivation. For instance, when a person learns a second or foreign language to go abroad both for working and living, he or she can have both integrative and instrumental motivation at the same time (Zareian & Jodaei, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of this study has shown students’ motivation in learning English. In this research, the respondents elaborated on their motivation in learning English. They have expressed their positive views towards English, which make them have a strong motivation in learning English as well.

1. Students’ Motivation in Learning English: Integrative Motivation

Data 1:

“Awalnya aku tertarik karena dari kakak-kakak aku waktu dulu suka nonton film berbahasa Inggris. Dari situ, aku tertarik untuk belajar bahasa Inggris karena seperti yang kita tau, sekarang kan sudah zaman globalisasi, jadi bahasa Inggris memang penting.”

(P4/ 1:20)

This excerpt demonstrates the participant’s interest in English as he mentioned he was initially inspired by his brother. At first, he believed that the English movie he watched was very interesting and worth learning. He realized that English is an international language and that mastering English could help him overcome globalisation. This motivation could be associated with integrative motivation as the respondent has a sincere interest in the language.

As stated by Gardner (1975), integrative motivation involves one’s personal interest in the target language. They have the desire to interact or even to become a member of the target community. This motivation is in fact derived from the participant’s social context, which he mentioned his brother. Thus, it can be confirmed that language learners’ surroundings could play pivotal role in shaping their motivation in learning English.

Data 2:

“Waktu saya masih TK, saya suka dengar Nenek saya ngomong pakai bahasa Inggris. Dari situ saya merasa wah ko keren ya ngomong pakai bahasa Inggris. Semenjak itu jadi tertarik untuk belajar bahasa Inggris dan kalau belajar bahasa Inggris di sekolah jadi seneng.”

(P6/ 1:31)

The above-mentioned excerpt has clearly demonstrated the respondent's attention to English from his grandmother, who liked to speak English. The participant believes that English is seen as a 'cool' language as it sounded foreign and it was uncommon for people in his surroundings to speak English like his grandmother. Thus, he felt motivated to learn more about English. He also added that he wanted to speak like a British as it sounds prestigious to him.

Similar to the previous data, this excerpt has proven that the role of family could play an essential role in forming one's motivation for learning a certain language. This confirms that situational context has affected one's motivation to learn English.

Data 3:

"Dulu waktu kecil saya suka main game berbahasa Inggris. Dari situ jadi suka banget sama bahasa Inggris. Seneng aja sih sama bahasa Inggris, soalnya kan itu bahasa internasional ya. Terus kalau bisa ngomong fluent bahasa Inggris tuh keren dan biasanya dianggap pintar."

(P1/ 1: 40)

According to the excerpt above, the participant agrees that English is an international language and that speaking English fluently is considered as smart. One of the factors affecting his motivation in learning English is his hobby, which is playing games. As a matter of fact, this study corroborates the study by Fenyvesi (2020) who found a similar result. Apparently, playing games could positively encourage one to learn a second language.

The result of this study confirms Gardner (1975) who asserted that the participant's social context could form their views towards the target language. In addition, the type of motivation here is integrative motivation, which is associated with one's personal desire to master the target language.

2. Students' Motivation in Learning English: Instrumental Motivation

Data 4:

"Kalau tujuan saya sekarang ini lulus dulu, kemudian mendapatkan pekerjaan. Kalau bisa di bidang tentang bahasa Inggris."

(P3/ 1:20)

This excerpt has clearly demonstrated the student's instrumental motivation as he specifically mentioned that he learned English due to the importance of English in the work field. He also mentioned that he learned English to graduate. According to Gardner (1975), instrumental motivation involves practical benefits that the participant will gain when mastering the target language. In this excerpt, the respondent stated that he learned English since he needed to pass the examination and to get a better future occupational attainment. Thus, this excerpt confirms that this is included in instrumental motivation.

Data 5:

“Tentunya dengan belajar bahasa Inggris saya dapat terbantu di bidang akademik, seperti mencari sumber referensi untuk tugas menggunakan jurnal dari luar negeri. Saya juga akan menggunakan bahasa Inggris untuk karir saya di masa depan karena cita-cita saya adalah sebagai dosen bahasa Inggris, atau international officer.”

(P2/ 2:01)

This excerpt confirms that the informant’s motivation in learning English is to help her boost her academic skill. She also added that learning English is essential since her future career is to become either an English lecturer or an international officer. Thus, the high proficiency in English is clearly required for her career.

In summation, this data can be interpreted as instrumental motivation since the participant wishes to gain advantages from learning English. The participants identified themselves to learn English for the sake of professional or socio-economic advancement (Dornyei, 2005).

3. Students’ Perception Towards the Status of Bahasa Indonesia

This study has demonstrated the participants’ positive views towards English, and that makes them have a strong motivation to learn English. Yet, they agree that the status of Bahasa Indonesia greatly outweighs English since Bahasa Indonesia is viewed as part of their identity. Furthermore, although they agreed that English is essential for overcoming this globalisation era, they argued that the medium of instruction at school should be delivered in Bahasa Indonesia, their first language.

Data 6:

“Menurut saya, Bahasa yang perlu digunakan di sekolah adalah Bahasa Indonesia. Karena, dengan menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia akan mengurangi miskomunikasi yang akan terjadi dan agar murid dapat memahami materi yang disampaikan dengan cepat dan tepat. Dan juga hal ini dapat digunakan sebagai bentuk pemertahanan agar kebiasaan menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia tidak menghilang dari kebiasaan kita. “

(P5/ 11: 37)

Data 7:

“Untuk bahasa pengantar di sekolah menurut saya tetap harus pakai Bahasa Indonesia karena kita kan orang Indonesia.”

(P1/ 10:00)

These excerpts have shown complex and dynamic views of the participants towards English language learning. At first, they believed that English is very crucial in today’s globalised world and they had a very strong motivation in learning English. Yet, they argued that the importance of Bahasa Indonesia outweighs English as it is considered as an attempt to protect their identity as Indonesians. The participants are aware that using Bahasa Indonesia as a medium of instruction at school should be maintained in order to avoid losing a sense of nationality. This is in line with Guererro’s statement

(2014) that language learners' motivations constantly change over time as they are dynamic, unique, and have constant changes in feelings and interests.

CONCLUSION

The result of this study has demonstrated the students' motivational orientation towards English language learning. The participants' motivation in learning English is subdivided into two categories: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Some participants affirmed that their motivation to learn English is because they have a personal interest in learning English. They believed that English is a 'cool' language as it is considered an international language. They have the desire and wish to integrate to be part of the target community. Others have the instrumental motivation, which involves utilitarian values from mastering English, either for professional or academic reasons. Interestingly, although the participants have their own types of motivation, they still believe that Bahasa Indonesia plays a pivotal role, particularly in the academic setting. To sum up, this study can conclude that learners' motivations could change over time. It surely depends on the situation, such as learning media, family background, teachers' and peers' contributions, and their own interests. It is worth noting that studying one's motivation could be shifted from "what" to "how", which means that process-oriented research could be seen as an integral part to gain a broader examination of language learners' motivation.

REFERENCES

- Creswell, J. W. 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. London: Sage.
- Dardjowidjojo, S. 2000. English Teaching in Indonesia. *EA Journal*, 18(1), 22-30.
- Dewi, A. 2014. *Perception of English: A study of staff and students at universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Dornyei, Z. 2001. *Teaching and researching motivation*. Harlow, England: Longman.
- Dornyei, Z. 2007. *Research method in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2008). *The Study of second language acquisition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fenyvesi, K. 2020. English learning motivation of young learners in Danish primary schools. *Language Teaching Research*, 24(5), 690-713.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitude and Motivation in Second Language Learning*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The roles of attitudes and motivation*. Baltimore, MD: Edward Arnold Publishers.
- . 2010. *Motivation and second language acquisition: The socio-educational model*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Guerrero, M. (2015). Motivation in second language learning: A historical overview and its relevance in a public high school in Pasto, Colombia. *HOW*, 22(1), 95-106.

- Ibarrola, A. L., & Martinez, R. A. 2021. Motivation towards the foreign language (English) and regional language (Basque) in immersion schools: Does CLIL in the foreign language make a difference?. *Language Teaching Research*, 22(2), 1-19.
- Jazadi, I. (2000). Constraints and Resources for Applying Communicative Approaches in Indonesia. *EA Journal*, 18(1), 31-40.
- Malcolm D (2013) Motivational challenges for Gulf Arab students studying medicine in English. In: Ushioda E (ed.) *International Perspectives on Motivation*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 98–116.
- Marshall, C., & G. Rossman. 2011. *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pazoki, S. J., & Alemi, M. 2020. Engineering students' motivation to learn technical English in ESP courses: Investigating Iranian teachers' and students' perceptions. *RELC Journal*, 51(2), 212-226.
- Resdiana, W., & Yulientinah, D. S. 2021. Persepsi mahasiswa di kelas bahasa Inggris blended learning sebagai dampak karantina covid-19 menggunakan PBLEQ (Perceptions of blended learning environments questionnaires). *Apollo Project*, 10(1), 25-38.
- Weger, H. D. 2013. Examining English language learning motivation of adult international learners studying abroad in the US. *RELC Journal*, 44(1), 87-101.
- Zareian, G., & Jodaei, H. 2015. Motivation in second language acquisition: A state of the art article. *International Journal Social Science & Education*, 5(2), 295-308.

