

Students' Motivations and Attitudes towards Foreign Language Learning

Eva Meidi Kulsum^{1,2}, Hamdan Sugilar¹, Nanang Kosim¹ and Koko A. Kodir¹

¹UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia

²Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia
meydiqulsum@gmail.com, hamdansugilar@uinsgd.ac.id

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Abstract: It is a common phenomenon that students (language learners) who learn in the same time with the same book and of course are taught by the same teacher reach the very different levels of success in learning, this case is called as individual differences. There are three factors or variables contribute to individual differences: cognitive, affective, and personality variables. This study reported the affective variables that contribute to individual differences of students at university level. It investigated students' motivations and attitudes towards foreign language learning. This study employed a qualitative descriptive method by taking the questionnaire. The data found were calculated manually by calculating the percentages and mean scores of the student responses to infer the data findings. The first finding showed that the mean scores of integrative were 3.1 were 3.1 or (77.5% students) and instrumental 3.5 (87.5% students) which meant most of the students learning English attached to their language learning outcomes and future achievements than integrative purposes. The second finding found that there are only 17.5 % students have bad attitudes and 82.5% students have good attitudes (for all sub-scales of attitudes). Additionally, students had better motivation than attitudes towards foreign language learning showed by the mean scores of motivation revealed 3.5 (87.5% students) and students' attitudes 3.3 (82.5% students).

1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning are two faces of a coin, they both are inseparable. Teaching can lead to success in learning and vice versa. It does not only refer to learning that takes place before teaching but also to the on-going learning process experienced by both student and teacher that takes place every day.

People believe that teacher is clearly a major factor of student achievement in learning. And it is also believed that there are so many internal factors of the students themselves influenced to their success in learning. It is not easy to determine the factors that contribute to success. People cannot merely say that it is caused by the teacher who has successfully done his or her roles as a teacher. Perhaps, it is true but it does not the only one factor or variable. For example: teacher A has done her duty as a teacher, she can manage her role as a teacher, has various good methods in teaching and knows most of their students learning styles and strategies. In addition, she knows

what to do and what to teach to her students. It must lead the students to success. In the fact, there are some students who are not success in learning.

It is a common phenomenon that students (language learners) who learn in the same time with the same book and of course are taught by the same teacher reach the very different levels of success in learning. Some of them successfully engage the learning process with a good progress and achievement but some of them do not. These individual differences according to Dornyei (2005) are "*enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree*". They may be caused by the environmental advantage like student who had a chance to get more practices because fortunately she or he had a friend who is native speaker of the language she or he learned to manage a bit conversation. In other words, this student worked outside the class more than others. Besides, it also may be caused by themselves, let us say this is as the internal factors.

According to Johnson (2001:117) usually there are three factors or variables that contribute to individual differences. They are *cognitive* which refers to intelligence and aptitude, *affective* which is related to feeling such as motivation and attitudes, and *personality* concerns extrovert and introvert.

Those individual differences make the researcher interested in conducting this research supporting by phenomenon that often found, perhaps always, in teaching and learning process. To narrow the study, the researcher makes the limitation that is by only analyzing the affective variables concerning motivation and attitude proposed by Johnson (2001).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Johnson (2001:117) usually there are three factors or we can say this is as variables that contribute to individual differences. They are cognitive, affective, and personality. On the other hand, Zafar and Meenakshi (2012:639) introduced seven variables that teachers should be aware of these individual differences effects, they are: age, sex, attitude, motivation, learning styles, learning strategies, and personality. Other arguments about variables contribute to individual differences are Liao (1996:1), he states: intelligence, aptitude, and language learning strategies. Lujan-Ortega (2000) proposes: age, aptitude/intelligence, motivation, learning/cognitive style, and personality. Skehan (2002) argues: language aptitude, learning style, motivation, and learning strategies. Bond (2002) emphasizes: age, exposure to foreign language in infancy, immersion, intelligence, personality, attitude and motivation, relationship between first and target language, sensory style, learning strategies, and other factors (mimicry, musical ability). (Cited in Eddy, 2011)

This research will only discuss one of the variables introduced by Johnson that is *affective variable* which is related to feeling concerning motivation and attitudes.

2.1 Motivation

It is believed that people do things is derived by some motives; it is impossible if there is nothing influenced them to do. For example: people eat because they feel hungry, people drink because they feel thirsty, and also people learn foreign language because there are some reasons. Reece and Walker (1997) cited in Nuri (2001) expressed that motivation is the key factor in the language learning process. Motivation depends on

the social interaction between the teacher and the learner; to be able to create an effective learning environment having highly motivated students. Take a look these motivations of people learn FL taken from Johnson (2001):

- a. Bryn the Welshman is learning Welsh because he feels the need to speak the language of his roots, to understand his own culture, to help strengthen the distinctiveness of Welsh society.
- b. Zhang from China. He is learning English so that he can study abroad. The key to his ambition is a good score on an English test.

These two examples illustrate some of many great variety reasons why people learn FL. Those two motivations are classified by Johnson as integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is the motivation that comes from the learner with desire to learn more about culture, its language, and people. While instrumental motivation involves learning in order to achieve some other goals such as to get a good job and go abroad.

Some studies found that integrative motivation is more successful than instrumental but the others found that instrumental also leads to success in learning FL. Supported by those different arguments and found that the motives of pupil are often complex and difficult to categorize led Burstall (1974) cited in Johnson to investigate there was any real advantage to an early start in FL learning. His finding relates to the gender differences, he found consistently more integrative motivation in girls. Since girls appear more confident of parental support for learning language. In this case, parental support is important for learners. If the parents want the children (as learners) to do well at learning FL, this will help the process a good deal. (Johnson, 2001)

Different from Johnson, Ryan and Deci (2000) cited in Griffiths (2008:21) identified motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. They assumed that "*intrinsically motivated learners are deeply concerned to learn things well*" compared to extrinsically motivated learners "*such learners are likely to display much higher levels of involvement in learning, engage in more efficient and creative thinking process, use a wider range of a problem solving strategies*" (Condry and Chambers, 1978 cited in Griffiths, 2008:22). In line with that, Harmer (2007b: 20) supported that motivation divided into intrinsic which is known as "motivation that is generated by what happens inside the classroom", such as the teacher's method in teaching language learning. On the contrary, Extrinsic motivation is a kind of motivations that "students bring into the

classroom from outside”, it can be what they called as achievement they want to get after having the class; getting a good job, going abroad, having a good life style and so forth. Whatever the terms and classifications are; without motivation success will be hard to come by.

The motivation that affected and influenced students to learn language is came up from different sources, Harmer (2007a: 52) identified this into attitude of a number of people, those are:

- a. The society they live in: this attitude of society is really influenced to the student motivation in learning language, how important is the language that they learn to the society around them? For example, English can determine the social status of individual; they will hardly try to learn English in order they are considered as the high level in society they live in.
- b. Significant others: besides society, people who are close to them are also having a big influence to the motivation and progress of student language learning. Because those people are recognized as the first people whom they believe. For example, parents. As previously mention that the parental support is really important for students. If the parents want the children (as students) to do well at learning FL, this will help the process a good deal
- c. The teacher: teacher is clearly a major factor of student achievement in learning, the teacher role really affected to the student motivation. If the teacher can provide the positive classroom atmosphere that makes them enjoy and easier to understand the subject, it will impact to the success that both teacher and students expected.
- d. The method: it is vital to both teacher and students as the components of classroom which will lead to success in learning. When both are confidence and comfortable with the method being used, success is easier to come by.

2.2 Attitude

Attitude towards the native speakers of the foreign language people wish to learn might be very important for the advanced level of learner not for the lower level. At the advanced stage, getting inside the culture is expected; such as being able to speak in a good foreign accent. This ability is not required to the lower level.

There are three types of attitude in relation to language learning introduced by Johnson (2001): the first is attitude towards success, this type of attitude relates to student strives for achieving their goals in

life or in learning English, it can be seen through their attitudes towards learning English. The second is attitude towards teacher, this is a common believe that if people do not like the teacher of the subject they learn they are just wasting their time trying to learn that subject. The last is attitude towards your own country, perhaps what people think of their own country, and not just the country of the target-language speaker, will influence how well they success in the FL; it is also related to how students regard the people and its language.

In addition, Gardner cited in Liuliene and Metiuniene (2006) stated that the learner's attitudes towards the learning situation are assumed as the component goal of motivation. He also explained that,

“In the context of a language classroom the learning situation could include variables such as the teacher, the textbook, classroom activities, classmates and so forth. The learner's attitudes toward these variables will influence the learner's core motivation as well as the learner's orientation. Positive attitudes toward the learning situation will likely produce greater enjoyment in the study of the language, desire to learn the language, and effort expended in learning the language.”

If so, attitude can be defined as predictor of success in learning foreign language. Ellis (1994:197-201) supported that learners' attitudes have been identified as one set of variables of major importance. There are both negative and positive attitudes towards foreign language they learnt. The positive attitudes are typically connected to the speakers of the language and culture represented by its speakers. Such positive attitudes can be expressed by students' desire to be able to communicate with native speaker of the language they are learning. In other words, if students are interested in the countries where the language are spoken, they may be more motivated to learn the language (Noels *et.al.* 2003:36). On the other hand, negative attitude can be an obstacle in language learning. When the students are not interested whether in the subject or the teacher, it may cause a negative effect on students.

3 METHOD

This research method employed qualitative descriptive study and considered as a case study. English Dormitory of State University in Bandung was chosen as the research site. The dormitory was designed to provide students at the first year of study

to learn English as foreign language. 27 students were selected as a subject of this study using purposive sampling technique. This research used questionnaire as the instrument and material to analyze students' motivations and attitudes. There were 30 statements to be answered by respondents which could be assumed as a tool to see students' motivations and attitudes towards English, its people, its learning, and its teacher. The 30 items were designed in the form of statement which were divided into 4 sub-scales, each sub-scales consisted of 5 statements each data from questionnaire was counted, displayed, and analyzed. The student's responses (n=27) to the survey items (n=30) were scored by the given values: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly disagree. The data calculated manually by calculating the percentages and mean scores of the student responses to infer the data findings. At last, the analysis of each data collection was synthesized and discussed to answer the research questions.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall analysis for the 30 items portrayed in figure 1 below. It highlighted means score of students' motivations 3.5 (87.5% students) and students' attitudes 3.3 (82.5% students) which showed that students had better motivation than attitudes towards English learning:

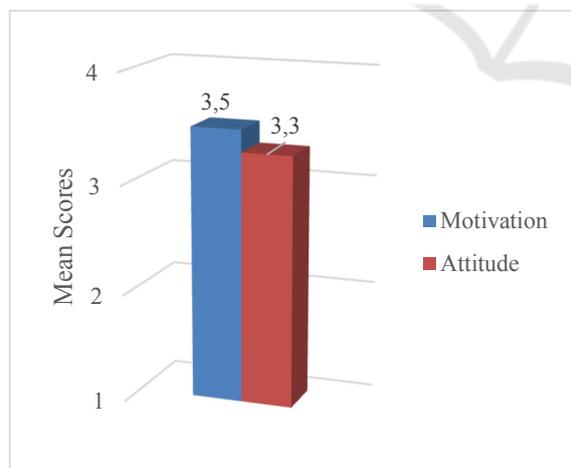


Figure 1: Students' motivations and attitudes.

4.1 Students' Motivations

The students were given questionnaire which could reflect their motivations in learning English. 5 statements reflected their integrative motivations and

5 statements reflected their instrumental motivations. The result of this research showed that students were more motivated towards instrumental than integrative as they hoped in achieving instrumental rewards in the form of grades, achievements, performance, future life, and good job.

The mean scores of integrative were 3.1 or (77.5% students) and instrumental 3.5 (87.5% students) which meant most of the students learning English attached to their language learning outcomes and future achievements than integrative purposes, see figure 2.

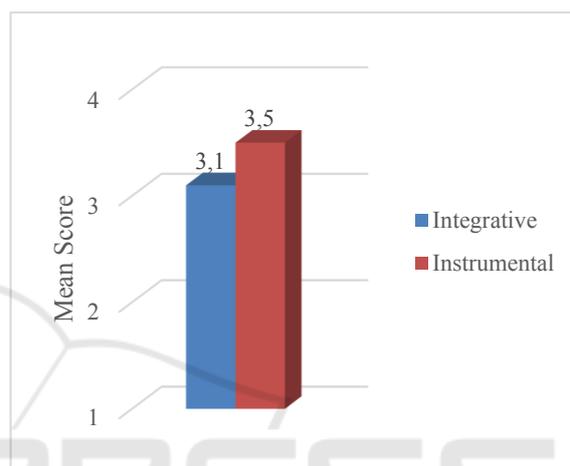


Figure 2: Students' integrative and instrumental motivation.

Henceforth, the item analysis for instrumental motivation indicated that 95% students felt that English could help them because they needed it for their future career (item 26), and 92,5% students regarded that studying English could help them to get high scores in TOEFL, TOEIC, or IELTS in order to study in an English speaking country and made them a better educated person (item 28, 29 and 30). Different from instrumental, less than 80% students (77.5%) believed that English could help them to have more friends and participate in activities of other cultures. More than 80% students appreciated that English was useful for contemporary social communication and by learning the language, it could help them to talk more with English speaking people (item 21 and 22), see figure 3.

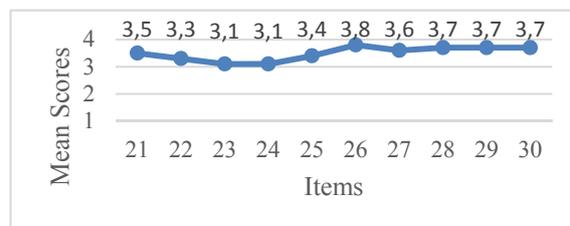


Figure 3: Sub-scales of motivations.

In addition, more than 85% students were instrumentally motivated and less than 85% students were integratively motivated.

4.2 Students' Attitudes

Learners' attitudes have been identified as one set of variables of major importance in learning language (Ellis: 1994). There are 20 items which could be assumed as a tool to see their attitudes towards English, its people, its learning, and its teacher. Each sub-scales consisted of 5 statements. The data analysis showed that their attitudes towards English were placed in the high positions which had mean score 3.7 or about 93% of students had good attitudes, while the rest (7%) had bad attitudes. It is followed by attitudes towards English learning which indicated that 85% students had good attitude towards its learning. While $\leq 80\%$ students had good attitudes towards its teacher and people. In total, there are only 17.5 % students have bad attitudes and 82.5% students have good attitudes (for all sub-scales of attitudes).

Table 1: Percentage of sub-scales of students' attitude.

No	Sub-Scale	Mean	Percentage
1	AL	3.7	93%
2	AP	3.1	78%
3	AEL	3.4	85%
4	AT	3.2	80%

Table 2: All sub-scale of students' attitudes.

No	Response	Mean	Percentage
1	Positive	3.3	82.5%
2	Negative	0.7	17.5%

Furthermore, the item analysis of sub-scales of attitudes towards English, its people, its learning, and its teacher indicated that majority of students (97% and $M=3.9$) assumed that English was an international language (item1), 95% students ($M=3.8$) hoped that they could speak English fluently (item 4), and $\leq 92.5\%$ students wished that they could read English book because English was most widely used language and helped them in understanding people from other countries (item 2,3, and 5). In total, only 7% of the students who had bad attitude towards English as a foreign language. The data analysis of other attitudes belonged to students those were attitudes towards its people, its learning and its teacher showed that $\leq 75\%$ students ($M\leq 3$) in item 6, 7,8,15, and 19 assumed that learning English was more useful than any other foreign languages which the teacher was also their favorite teacher among all teachers and respected English native speakers whom were not only friendly and sociable but also needed

in their country. 90% students ($M=3.6$) gave positive view about learning English as a great program which was required by school, even they planned to learn English as much as possible so that 85% students ($M=3.4$) intended to learned English even it was not a part of the school program (item 14). In line with learning process, $\leq 80\%$ students ($M\leq 3.2$) thought their English teacher knew how to speak fluently and helped them to learn how to speak good English so that they liked the way their teacher taught them (item 17,18, and 20). 82.5% students ($M=3.3$) had an intention to learn much about English native speakers because they learned good things from the native and they also saw their teacher who helped them in learning English was an excellence English teacher (item 9,10, and 16). Those explanations are tabulated and figured below:

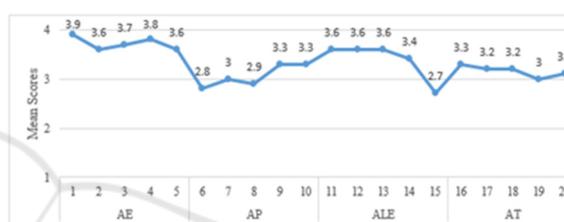


Figure 4: Sub-scales of motivations.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Students were more motivated towards instrumental than integrative as they hoped in achieving instrumental rewards in the form of grades, achievements, performance, future life, and good job. The mean scores of integrative were 3.1 or (77.5% students) and instrumental 3.5 (87.5% students) which meant most of the students learning English attached to their language learning out comes and future achievements than integrative purposes.

The data analysis showed that their attitudes towards English were placed in the high positions which had mean score 3.7 or about 93% of students had good attitudes, while the rest (7%) had bad attitudes. It is followed by attitudes towards English learning which indicated that 85% students had good attitude towards its learning. While $\leq 80\%$ students had good attitudes towards its teacher and people. In total, there are only 17.5 % students have bad attitudes and 82.5% students have good attitudes (for all sub-scales of attitudes).

The findings of this research suggest the important role of teachers as a major factor of student achievement in learning in order to build students' motivations and attitudes towards English, since they

are considered as predictors of success in learning foreign language.

Further research should look into another important variables that contribute to individual differences such as cognitive variables and personality. In order to give more comprehension to the investigation of individual differences that often experienced, perhaps always, by the learners.

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