

WHEN ENGLISH GRADES GET LOWER – EXPLORING THE BIOPROCESS STUDENTS’ MOTIVATION TO LEARN ENGLISH

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Abstract

This study investigated the motivation of 47 Indonesian university students in a Bioprocess program to learn English. The study was conducted using questionnaires to gauge students’ personal views on the importance of motivation and the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery as the fundamental theory to assess their intrinsic and instrumental motivation. A semi-structured interview was conducted to learn more about the students’ responses. The study found that students were motivated to learn English, had high instrumental motivation and had good intrinsic motivation. They were motivated to do 67% of inside classroom activities but not likely to do activities outside the classroom.

Keywords: motivation, intrinsic motivation, instrumental motivation, learn English

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui motivasi dari 47 mahasiswa Indonesia yang merupakan mahasiswa di Fakultas Bioprocess. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan menggunakan metode pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner untuk melihat pandangan mahasiswa terhadap pentingnya motivasi dan dengan menggunakan teori ‘the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery’ sebagai teori dasar

untuk menilai sikap dan motivasi pelajar dalam mempelajari bahasa asing, dilakukan penilaian terhadap motivasi intrinsik dan motivasi instrumental mahasiswa tersebut. Wawancara semi terstruktur dilakukan untuk menyelidiki lebih banyak mengenai tanggapan mahasiswa yang ditemukan didalam kuesioner. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa mahasiswa tersebut memiliki motivasi untuk belajar bahasa Inggris, memiliki motivasi instrumental yang tinggi, dan memiliki motivasi instrinsik yang baik untuk kegiatan di dalam kelas karena mereka memiliki motivasi untuk melakukan 67% dari kegiatan yang disebutkan namun ditemukan bahwa mereka tidak memiliki motivasi untuk melakukan kegiatan di luar kelas.

Kata Kunci: motivasi, motivasi intrinsik, motivasi instrumental, belajar Bahasa Inggris

Introduction

English is a mandatory lesson to be given in universities all over Indonesia and the government only provided certain rules to be followed by all universities to meet the national qualification framework (Ristekdikti, 2016). It would mean that the English curriculum from one university could be different from the others. Yet, when English was determined as a mandatory subject it meant that English held an important role for any university student' life. Despite's its importance, some students seemed to perform unsatisfactorily in English classes. This happened in Learning University (pseudonym) where in some classes students tended to perform less than the others because not few of the students got grade 'D' and 'E'. Learning University had three faculties and one of them; Bioprocess faculty, seemed to have students whose English competence was the weakest among the others.

Among all factors that might influence the students' low performance was motivation; it would be the very root of every success in any lesson, therefore this study tried to explore the students' motivation towards learning English because motivation was the best trigger for the possibility to gain good achievement as C. R. Gardner &

MacIntyre (1991) stated that it had been a general assumption that people with motivation would be more likely to be successful. However, this study would not go far to study all kinds of motivation as ever mentioned by Gardner in his Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (R. C. Gardner, 1985) but limited to learn about students' personal views about their two kinds of motivation to learn English; their intrinsic and instrumental motivation because both of these motivation were highly interrelated.

With intrinsic motivation, learning was driven and motivated by the learners' curiosity and interest and without the intrinsic motivation, the student's motivation intensity was very weak and the students almost had no desire to get knowledge of the target language. Self-awareness of the importance of motivation was very necessary because it would enable students to develop their intrinsic motivation that meant it was from their own willingness to be motivated to learn; not triggered by any reward or punishment (Wagner-Gough, & Hatch, 1975; Muslim & Park, 2014; Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996; Soo, 2016; Yahia, 2015; Yue, 2012; Zhao & Chen, 2014).

The intrinsic motivation's roles were very crucial in students' life because they could avoid the students to be demotivated to learn (Jodaei, Zareian, Amirian, & Adel, 2018; Trang & Baldauf Jr, 2007), open more possibility to be successful (Amabile & Hennessey, 1992 cited in Shin et al., 2018) and make them autonomous learners (Ou, 2017; Soo, 2016). Being autonomous was very effective in helping students to remember lessons for quite a long time (Bravo et al., 2017) and therefore made them more engaged to the subjects they learned (Bieg, Reindl, & Dresel, 2017; Tanaka, 2015; Ur, 2001). That was probably why Gandhimathi treated intrinsic motivation as an 'asset and not a requirement' (Gandhimathi & Devi, 2016, p. 81); because he could see the very crucial roles of motivation in life that those could make a lot of meanings to life and change life to be better. However, to be motivated was not free laden because students lived in an environment that shaped their mind towards the course they needed to deal with. Therefore, the environment contributed to developing students' motivation as well. The environment could refer to the facilities around the students such as the teachers (Matsumoto, 2005; Ur, 2001), the teaching methods (Muslim & Park, 2014; Nawaz, Amin, & Tatla, 2015; Wang, 2014), the books, the

classrooms, the classmates, the university, the course guidelines and the rules in the university.

Instrumental motivation had a very close relationship to intrinsic motivation (Yu, 2012) because when there was a sense of enjoyment or that person voluntarily studied a lesson even though the target was clearly set only to pass a test or in other condition a person studied a lesson with no clear purpose but still enjoyed learning the lesson, it was called instrumental motivation (Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996). Therefore, Instrumental motivation 'emphasized the practical value and advantages of learning a new language' (Lambert, 1974 cited in C. R. Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991) to gain social recognition or economic advantage through knowledge of a foreign language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972 cited in Murray, Gao, & Lamb, 2015). So, students who could see the benefits of learning a foreign language for their future career were most probably triggered by their instrumental orientation to learn English seriously.

Instrumental motivation was no longer limited to an intention to pass a test like in a study that was conducted by Long (Long, Ming, & Chen, 2013) who found that junior middle school students in Gejiu, China learned English most predominantly for exams and on some other studies to get into a university (Ababneh, 2013), but it had gone beyond academic purposes as Zhao & Chen (2014) mentioned that students learned English to gain something related to 'business and government' positions.

Considering that motivation was very essential in learning English for good result while there was an indication that the students of the Bioprocess Faculty had low motivation to learn English, this study framed the research questions into:

1. How important was the role of motivation in order to learn English for Bioprocess students?
2. How motivated were the Bioprocess students to learn English?
3. What were the most likely intrinsic and instrumental motivation of the Bioprocess students?

Research Method

The data analysis was organized and presented using '*issue or theme*' approach in which the research questions of this study became the main 'driving concern of the research' (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, pp. 551-552). This approach could enable 'patterns, relationships, comparisons and qualifications across data types to be explored conveniently and clearly' (p. 552). The author used primary data from the questionnaires and did analysis to see the students' reflective views towards all statements provided in the questionnaires. Interesting findings from the analysis were then explored by conducting interviews with respondents in which the respondents were chosen for the reason of best achiever from each class and limited to one student per class. The interviewees' names were written using pseudonym for the purpose of anonymity.

The questionnaires were designed to consist of two types of question scales regarding motivation to learn English. The two types were about personal views on the importance of motivation and about personal agreement on some statements given on intrinsic and instrumental motivation scales. The instrumental motivation scale used for this study was based on the existing one which was formerly created and used by Gardner (R. C. Gardner, 1985) on his study about students' motivation to learn French. However, although the intrinsic motivation questionnaire was initially rooted from Gardner's theory of interest in foreign language and of motivational intensity (R. C. Gardner, 1985) and Spratt and colleagues' (2002) activities for motivation to do inside and outside class activities, the author made adjustment to meet the context of this study which fell mostly to activities introduced by Spratt and colleagues'. For the intrinsic motivation, the students were asked to give agreement or disagreement to activities that they would probably do in the classroom or outside classroom; 12 and 17 items for inside and outside classroom activities respectively. While for the instrumental motivation, the students were given a five-point Likert scale that consisted of four statements that related motivation to learn English as a media to reach a certain target. The assessment for positive and negative responses towards the Likert scale was measured by using the university's grading system in which positive response was granted for 'B' grade or 64.5 to 100 percent and negative response was below 64.5

percent and below. The university grading system looked like this: A ($79,5 \leq x \leq 100$), AB ($72 \leq x < 79,5$), B ($64,5 \leq x < 72$), BC ($57 \leq x < 64,5$), C ($49,5 \leq x < 57$), (D ($34 \leq x < 49,5$), E ($x < 34$)).

There were two groups of students on this study and the decision to take both groups was because they were both Bioprocess Faculty students who had just finished their English courses in the 2017/2018 academic year. The first group was 25 first year students who had just finished English 2 course in their second semester and the second group was 22 final year students who had just finished English 3 course in their eight/final semester. For this study purposes, the first group was named junior class (JC) and the second group was called senior class (SC).

Findings

Students' reflective views on the importance of motivation and their own motivation to learn English

Students should have been able to reflect on the importance of English because they had gone through a series of education from primary to senior high schools; a total of 12 years, with English as a mandatory foreign language subject to learn in each of the twelve years. However, students might value the importance of motivation differently, therefore they were asked to rank the importance of motivation from crucial to not important at all. Interestingly, it was found that all students agreed to say that motivation was needed for learning English because 100% of both classes' responses went to important, very important and crucial as shown on the table below.

Table 1

The importance of motivation to learn English

The importance of motivation to learn English	Junior Class	Senior Class
Crucial	11 (44%)	12 (54.5%)
Very important	9 (36%)	7 (31.8%)

Important	5 (20%)	3 (13.6%)
Not important at all	0 -	0 -

The other important finding was that more than half of the senior class considered motivation as crucial for learning English which might indicated something to do with their future career. From the interview, Lou, the senior student said that motivation was important because it could help her push her spirit ahead so that she could enjoy learning English and when she enjoyed it, English became an easy subject to learn. Meanwhile May, the junior student said that motivation was the fundamental of everything including learning English. It seemed that senior class's response was based on their more experiences and reflective thoughts after learning English longer than the junior class.

After reflectively noticed the importance of motivation to learn English, the students were asked to reflect on their own motivation and by self-awareness to give declaration to either they were motivated or not motivated to learn English. The table below shows the students' reflection on the degree to which they were motivated or demotivated to learn English.

Table 2

Students' self-reflection on their own motivation to learn English

Considering the motivation to learn English,	Junior Class	Senior Class
I will say that I am ...		
not at all motivated to learn English;	0 -	1 (4.6%)
slightly motivated to learn English;	3 (12%)	0 -
motivated to learn English;	7 (28%)	5 (22.7%)
Well-motivated to learn English;	9 (36%)	8 (36.4%)
highly motivated to learn English;	6 (24%)	8 (36.4%)

It was clearly shown that almost all students were motivated to learn English because there was a total of 88% and 95.5% of junior and senior classes respectively who chose motivated to highly-motivated to learn English. However, there was an extreme answer from one senior student who did not have motivation at all, but the person could not be traced because the questionnaire was completed anonymously. This finding encouraged the author to ask the interviewees about their personal perspectives on how they could be motivated or demotivated to study English. Lou said that she was motivated to learn English because she wanted to study abroad while sometimes she could be demotivated to learn when there was none to force her. The force she mentioned referred to friends' encouragement because she was happy to learn when her classmates had the same interest, so they could motivate one another. That was interesting to know that students actually valued peer-motivation and it was considered not as rivals but friends. May, similarly said that she was very motivated to learn English because she had always wanted to go abroad for her master degree and she could be demotivated when she felt bored. It was very obvious that the two students found extrinsic or instrumental motivation or the motivation from outside of their selves like ability to study overseas (R. C. Gardner, 1985; Ur, 2001) as the main motivator for building up their motivation to learn English.

Students' intrinsic and instrumental motivation to learn English

Students' intrinsic motivation was assessed by their responses to a list of activities for inside and outside classroom by giving agreement (Yes) or disagreement (No) to what they did and did not do based on the list. Below are the students' responses to classroom activities:

Table 3

The intrinsic motivation to learn English inside classrooms

Intrinsic motivation-Inside class	YES		NO	
	JC	SC	JC	SC
Participate in class	23(92%)	19(86%)	2	3
Ask questions if you do not understand	19(76%)	15(68%)	6	7
Try to work out the meaning of words you do not understand	24(96%)	19(86%)	1	3
Note down new words and their meaning	16(64%)	15(68%)	9	7
Make suggestions to the teacher	9(36%)	10(45%)	16	12
Take opportunities to speak English	19(76%)	16(73%)	6	6
Discuss learning problems with classmates	19(76%)	20(91%)	6	2
Always listen to the teacher in the classroom	22(88%)	20(91%)	3	2
Take notes	17(68%)	19(86%)	8	3
Activate your prior knowledge while you're studying	19(76%)	16(73%)	6	6
Made inferences about your lesson	14(56%)	12(55%)	11	10
Use resources while studying	16(64%)	17(77%)	9	5

The findings clearly showed that both junior and senior classes were not motivated to make suggestions to the teacher and made inferences about their lessons while only the junior class seemed to be demotivated to note down new words and their meaning and use

resources while studying as the percentages for all items fell into 64% and below.

However, from the interview it was found that both students seemed to be very enthusiastic to give suggestions to their teacher as Lou said *'I can better understand my lesson when I ask questions for what I find interesting or difficult to learn and I think giving suggestion can prevent a class from being very stiff.'* But Lou emphasized the importance of using polite language and not to act like she was the cleverest one as she said *'I do not want to act like I am the most correct person.'* It showed the Eastern culture in which students highly respected teachers and considered that teachers were more knowledgeable. Meanwhile, May emphasized the importance of immediate suggestions as she said she would love to give suggestions straight away in the classroom as the thought appeared on her mind and she did so for efficiency because she thought efficient class would result in good atmosphere to learn. It seemed that good achievers would be more likely to be encouraged to give suggestions to teachers since the questionnaire resulted in negative response to that particular item.

The students' degree of motivation was then evaluated to their agreement to do some activities outside classrooms. The result of the students' agreement or disagreement was shown on the table below:

Table 4

The intrinsic motivation to learn English outside classrooms

Intrinsic motivation-outside class	YES		NO	
	JC	SC	JC	SC
Revise what you have learnt regularly?	9(36%)	13(59%)	16	9
Use a dictionary when you do homework?	19(76%)	19(86%)	6	3
Read newspapers/magazines/webpages in English?	17(68%)	12(55%)	8	10

Intrinsic motivation-outside class	YES		NO	
	JC	SC	JC	SC
Send emails or write letters in English?	8(32%)	2(9%)	17	20
Watch movies/TV shows in English?	20(80%)	15(68%)	5	7
Listen to English songs?	23(92%)	21(95%)	2	1
Practice English with friends?	17(68%)	14(64%)	8	8
Have a look at the topic of the day before going to class?	12(48%)	4(18%)	13	18
Visit your teacher about your work?	1(4%)	2(9%)	24	20
Talk to foreigners in English?	9(36%)	5(23%)	16	17
Do grammar exercises?	14(56%)	12(55%)	10	10
Plan your lesson/study?	16(64%)	12(55%)	9	10
Summarize your studies?	10(40%)	7(32%)	15	15
Keep a journal?	6(24%)	17(77%)	19	5
Use English for computer games?	20(80%)	20(91%)	5	2
Use English for travelling?	10(40%)	8(36%)	15	14
Use English for personal communication?	12(48%)	2(9%)	13	20

From the data it could be said that both junior and senior classes had motivation to use dictionary while doing homework, watch movies/TV shows in English, listen to English songs, and use English for computer games. Meanwhile, there were two outside classroom activities that junior class was motivated to do but senior class did not like to do like reading newspapers/magazines/webpages in English and practicing English with friends. Yet there was one activity that senior class

loved to do but the junior class did not like such as keeping a journal. Referring to the frequency of using an English dictionary, Lou said that although she was not very often using a dictionary, but when she did, she used it to find not only the meaning but the synonym of the unfamiliar words, while May said she loved using dictionary as she said *'I use dictionary whenever I find words I don't understand and I love using Cambridge dictionary.'*

In the interview, both Lou and May mentioned they loved watching movies in which Lou loved watching romantic movies and May loved watching science fiction TV shows and movies. Lou emphasized that she could better understand the feelings of the characters in the movies because she knew English and May emphasized her interest to the words, phrases or sentences spoken by the characters. Lou mentioned that she loved repeating the words she found interesting from her favorite movies. In addition, as both respondents similarly had high motivation to listen to English songs, they also similarly said that it helped them to be fluent English speakers by repeating and singing the songs every day because they memorized the lyrics and tried to feel the author's feeling when singing the songs they loved.

While in terms of using English for games, both Lou and May said it was good to play computer games because it helped increase their vocabulary and that there were so many game applications available on mobile phone that could help them develop understanding towards many unfamiliar vocabulary and help them understand the meaning through the context as May said *'For example, if I did not know what the word 'kick' meant before, after I played games, I could know because I practiced it right away.'*

Referring to instrumental motivation to learn English, the students were assessed by a five-point Likert scale with four statements emphasizing the importance of English. Students chose their position from strongly disagree to strongly agree:

Table 5

The importance of English

Instrum ental orientat ion	A		B		C		D		E	
	JS	SC	JS	SC	JS	SC	JS	SC	JS	SC
Studying English is important only because I'll need it for my future career.	2	0	4	1	5	1	4 (16%)	6 (27%)	10 (40%)	14 (64%)
Studying English is important because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.	0	0	0	0	3	1	6 (24%)	10 (45%)	16 (64%)	11 (50%)
Studying English is important because I think it will someday be useful in getting	0	0	1	1	1	0	5 (20%)	4 (18%)	18 (72%)	17 (77%)

Instrumental orientation	A		B		C		D		E	
	JS	SC	JS	SC	JS	SC	JS	SC	JS	SC
a good job.										
Studying English is important for me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of a foreign language.	1	0	0	0	3	4	8 (32%)	6 (27%)	13 (52%)	12 (55%)

Note: A (strongly disagree), B (somewhat disagree), C (Neither agree or disagree), D (Somewhat agree), E (strongly agree)

It was clearly shown that both classes understood that English was very important to their lives though the senior class had more percentage in which there were 82% to 95% agreed to the four statements. The junior class almost had similar positive understanding except for the idea that English could help them for their future career as only 56% of the students agreed to the first statement. The senior class seemed to realize the importance of English for their future career because they were about to leave the university and had experienced the need of English as a requirement to apply for a job such as to write a CV, resume, application letter, and attend an interview. It was like what Wagner-Gough & Hatch (1975) and Szocs (2017) said that instrumentally motivated students might see a better chance to get employment if they were competent in English and better job would probably mean better salary to them. From

the interview it was found that Lou, who had in mind a career as a researcher, said that English was a compulsory skill nowadays if she wanted to apply for a good job because almost all great companies in Indonesia were multinational companies that required selection and examination processes using English skill. Lou also said *'I became a knowledgeable person because with English I can interact with all people from various parts of the world and we can share knowledge using English as a tool of communication.'* It was like what (Byram & Morgan, 1994) said that learning a foreign language could change students' perspectives towards other cultures and the people who had the cultures. Lou continued to say that having a skill in English made her look smart because she could talk about many issues by her broad sight as the result of using English skill to acquire information and knowledge.

On the other hand, May, who saw becoming a diplomat or a journalist was an ideal job for her future career, said that knowing English would open up channels to social networks that could ultimately help her find job vacancies as she said *'knowing English means we have the ability to connect to other people and I suppose it would help people find a job.'* May whose hobby was reading said that through reading books she could reach the other side of the world and it meant she became a more knowledgeable person that might result in people looked up on her. In contrast to the questionnaire's finding, this particular junior student seemed to be able to look at her place in the future already with English skill as a supporting skill.

Conclusions

Overall, the students of the Bioprocess faculty acknowledged that motivation was a very important factor to learn English because it could help students enjoy learning the subject. The study also found that the students were mostly motivated to learn English because of instrumental/extrinsic motivation like having an intention to study overseas. Looking particularly at the students' intrinsic motivation for activities in the classroom, they seemed to be motivated to participate in class, ask questions, find the meaning of unfamiliar words, practice speaking English, have discussion with friends, always listen to teachers, take notes, and activate prior knowledge. Meanwhile, only senior class

was motivated to note down new words and their meaning and use resources while studying. In terms of students' intrinsic motivation for outside classroom activities, the students were willing to do activities which include using dictionary when doing homework, watching English movies and TV shows, listening to English songs, and using English for computer games. However, it was only the junior class who was motivated to read many texts in English and practice speaking English with friends and it was only the senior class who was in favor of keeping a journal. Finally, for instrumental motivation it appeared that though both classes agreed that English proficiency could make them become more knowledgeable and gain more respect from others, it was only the senior class who had better understanding on how English could help them gain a better career in the future.

However, there were some limitations to this study such as the study should have been interviewing more than two students including weak students in order to make the findings more valid in contrast to the questionnaire results. For further study, it would be better if the teacher's responses towards the students' motivation should also be investigated and the students' motivation before and after classes should be investigated to see the students' tendency for motivation change whether the motivation increase, decrease, or level and to find out the influential factors that contribute to the change.

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