

Investigating Students' Motivation to Speak English in EFL Classroom

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Abstract

Owning a motivation to learn the English language can act as a catalyst to success in the student's professional career. Nonetheless, the student's English proficiency and motivation to learn English cannot be attained unless the teacher implemented some strategies in the classroom. This prompted the researcher to investigate students' motivation despite their shortcomings in the EFL classroom. The study aims to investigate students' motivation and explore the teacher's strategies to motivate students. The study was conducted by a case-study design using secondary students as participants. The findings indicated that the students were equally motivated to learn English, either intrinsic or extrinsic.

Keywords: Secondary students' motivation, teacher strategies, EFL classroom.

1. Introduction

One of the benefits of having English proficiency is the increase in chances to acquire a prestigious occupation (Dick, 2022), especially if one wants to enroll in large and international corporations. Major industries (e.g., finance, energy, textile, automobile, etc.) regard their employees as having English language ability is beneficial to interact with customers, CEOs, and boards of directors. Another advantage is to compete in international education and institutions because the English language has become the mandatory requirement to enter a university (Irham, 2022), and is still greatly cherished among major countries for those who want to study abroad (Phillipson, 2016). However, to pursue such knowledge one has to consider the difficulties that lie ahead. There are common difficulties faced by English language learners, particularly as secondary school students in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. According to them, the inability to find other materials to study, reflect, and explore becomes their major disadvantage (Erdem and Tutkun, 2016). Later, coupled with the student's lack of self-esteem and background knowledge in English caused the EFL student to despair (Suchona and Shorna, 2019). In addition, student's perception of having native-speaking English teachers at their school to promote a better understanding of the English subject is still in favor. As a result, public schools not being able to employ native-speaking English teachers is a major concern (Tsang, 2019). Similarly, the lack of vocabulary (Al-Hosni, 2014), the excessive use of the mother tongue in the classroom (Cristina, 2012), and the difficulty to construct correct grammar while speaking (Derakhshan et al., 2016) contribute to students' difficulties to speak in the English language. And yet, what motivate students to speak English despite their shortcoming? Motivation is a key component of success in learning a foreign language. It drives learners to be able to cope with the hardships in a meticulous subject known as the English language (YE, 2020). Motivation has potentially increased learners' participation in learning the English language, particularly in school. However, students cannot maintain their constant motivation throughout the school term (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011), because their motivation fluctuates depending on the school environment (Hiew, 2012). In a broad view, the EFL students' motivation to speak the English language could be related to future employment (Arnaiz, 2016), the usefulness to have the ability to speak English (Getie, 2020), enjoyment, or to pursue of knowledge (Wongsa and Son, 2020). The researcher will elaborate further on EFL students' motivation in the next chapter.

1.1. Background of the Study

It is undoubtedly that motivation has become the major contributor to success in learning to speak the English language (Ma et al., 2020). YE (2020) conducted a study on motivation in China regarding seven students in a private school, employed a quantitative, mixed method, and focused only on seventh-grade students in a private school (YE, 2020). After completing the research YE (2020) stated that further study needs to be taken with some improvements, such as different locations, adding more participants, and identifying their future motivations. In response to the previous research had recommended, the current study conducted the research by case-study method, adding its participants to twelve students, using different locations, and categorizing the students' motivation. Additionally, the current research

has to examine the teachers' role because they are prominent figures in the EFL classroom and directly influenced students' learning motivation. It was evident that many of the teachers' motivational strategies (e.g., giving rewards, telling jokes, and helping students prepare to study) have increased students' motivation greatly (Wong, 2014). Especially when the subject in question was the English language, the teacher has to consider the use of L1 (mother-tongue language) and L2 (target foreign language) strategically to provide scaffolding rather than to interpret what the teachers have said (Maeng and Lee, 2015). And another study has also shown that occasionally making changes in the learning environment is believed to benefit students in their language learning process (Van den Broek et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the strategies aforementioned cannot be applied to all schools in every country due to the diversity of cultural backgrounds (Hennebry-Leung and Xiao, 2020; Lamb, 2017). In summary, learning to speak the English language have several benefits for students in the future such as securing a prestigious career (Dick, 2022), fulfilling the requirements to enroll in university (Irham, 2022), and having the advantage of those who want to study abroad (Phillipson, 2016). Although it was tempting to have such skills, learning to speak the English language displays major problems for secondary students, such as a lack of materials to study (Erdem and Tutkun, 2016), limited vocabulary to express their thoughts (Al-Hosni, 2014), and unable to perform accurate grammar while speaking (Derakhshan et al., 2016). This phenomenon has to be related to teachers' strategies in the classroom to keep the students engaged in class. Therefore, in the current study, teacher strategies such as giving rewards (Wong, 2014), moderate use of L1 (mother-tongue language) in the classroom (Maeng and Lee, 2015), and changes in the learning environment (Van den Broek et al., 2019) has to be applied if the teacher desire student engagement and motivate them to learn the English language in the classroom.

1.2. Research Questions

RQ 1. What is the major factor that motivate students to speak English in EFL classroom?

RQ 2. How do English teachers motivate their students to speak in English?

1.3. Aims of the Study

The aim of the study are as follows:

- a) To explore the types of motivation to speak English.
- b) To explore English teacher's strategies in motivating students to speak in English language.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The contribution of the current research theoretically will modify teachers' understanding of students' low motivation to speak the English language in the EFL classroom. The modification will be in the form of guidelines as teachers' strategies (e.g., giving rewards, telling jokes, and changes in the learning environment) that need to be applied sufficiently in the classroom to motivate students in learning the English language. Moreover, for practical purposes, teachers can identify students' impediments in speaking the English language and present solutions to the issues. Furthermore, the current study will benefit educational society, specifically for secondary students how they should behave and act when they face difficulties in learning a foreign language. And for teachers as guidelines to teach English subjects and provide proper encouragement to students who are struggling to learn the English language.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Motivation in the context of learning the English language

The study of motivation was rooted in Gardner and Lambert's research which they did in 1972. In 1985, the previous theory was developed further by two researchers into two categories which are intrinsic and extrinsic (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Essentially, intrinsic motivation is the contentment of a learner in studying the English language, and extrinsic motivation is a reward that a student hopes to attain in the future (Deci and Ryan, 1985). The 2005 version of Dornyei and Ryan's book categorize motivation into three types: (a) "the ideal L2 (target foreign language) self" is the projection of one's perfect image in the future, (b) "the ought-to L2 self" is criteria one should have to be able to elude other people negative perception to oneself and meet their expectation, (c) "the L2 learning experience" is the one's experience in an instantaneous learning atmosphere, such as learning English with Native-speaking teacher, found the solution to a problem, and study in teamwork (Dornyei and Ryan, 2015, p. 87-88). Later in a more recent study by Martin in 2020, it was conceived that motivation is either "integrative" or "instrumental". Integrative means that a student will be

motivated to learn a language only for applicable reasons (e.g., better employment prospects, school exams, and university entry exams). However, instrumental means that a student is motivated to learn a language only to get a greater knowledge of the country's cultural norms and perspective (Martin, 2020).

2.2. Students' speaking difficulties in the English language

A comprehensible theory of speaking was suggested by Levelt (1985). He divided speaking into four parts; conceptualization, formulation, articulation, and self-monitoring. First was conceptualization, dealing with how the person's mind, thoughts, or ideas appeared before utterances, such as a plan to give information, to express sympathy, or to declare future action. Next was the formulation, which has two symbols for a speaker to be familiar with; grammatical symbols (e.g., verbs, nouns, adjectives, prepositions, etc.) and phonological symbols (i.e., stress words) to make his speech understandable to others. The third is articulation. Articulation is the muscle movement (i.e., larynx, pharynx, lungs, and tongue) inside the articulator's body to produce a coherent word and for the performance of speech. Lastly is self-monitoring. It is the act of halting when the speaker realized that he made a mistake or is doubtful about the topic of the conversation (Levelt, 1985). Based on the speaking model proposed by Levelt (1985), one of the student's inability to speak the English language was grammatical incompetency (i.e., vocabulary and grammar structure). Equally important, peers and the English teacher contribute to students' difficulties to speak English in EFL classrooms (e.g., the fear of being judged and over-permissiveness to use L1). The first example was the teachers' over-permissiveness in the use of L1 (mother-tongue language) in the classroom (Cristina, 2012). Cristina (2012) stressed that using L1 only benefits students when the teacher needs to discuss something essential to elaborate further on the target language and not use it the entire lesson. The same idea was expressed by Al Hosni (2014) during his interview session with a student (Al-Hosni, 2014). This prompted a hypothesis that students used L1 because they lack vocabulary. The second example was the students' narrow scope of vocabulary shared an important contribution to their difficulties to speak English (Kashinathan and Abdul Aziz, 2021). The third was the hardships that students experienced when they had to construct correct grammar and articulation simultaneously to produce a coherent speech (Derakhshan et al., 2016). Finally, students' fear of being judged by peers combined with anxiousness made it worse for them to endure (Shen and Chiu, 2019).

2.3. Teacher strategies to motivate students

The students' motivation holds 18% to 33% in terms of success in learning a foreign language, and the teacher played a central role in the students' entirety of the learning session (Lamb, 2017). Therefore, in this study, teachers' strategies are under scrutinized to decide how teachers influence students' motivation using teaching strategies. Essentially, teaching strategies must be applied to the English subject, but they are best used to the teacher's preferences and the student's degree of understanding (Lambani, 2016). The current research discussed three motivational strategies in the previous chapter (Maeng and Lee, 2015; Van-den-Broek et al., 2019; Wong, 2014), nevertheless, in the context of Indonesian teachers, it is important to refer to the national curricula before deploying those strategies to students (Lamb et al., 2016). One of the widespread studies of teaching strategies was done by Lamb in 2013, he emphasized the approach of personal strategies specifically the use of humor in the classroom to make students engage in learning (Wedell and Lamb, 2014).

3. Research Method and Materials

3.1. Research Method

The research was conducted using a case study method. A case study is a thorough investigation of a limited data system. Limited means there have to be countable amounts of variables, such as how long the event has undergone, how individuals are involved, and how many activities occur (Creswell, 2012). The researcher chose the design because it was relevant to the issue of students' motivation to speak the English language in EFL classrooms and also to elaborate a deeper explanation rather than confirm its problems (Kumar, 2011). Moreover, the researcher is interested to find out how students purport their experience in speaking the English language in the context of public school. Thus, a qualitative method was applied (Merriam, 2009).

3.2. Participants

A suitable sample was favored for the participants consisting of one English teacher and twelve ninth-grader students of a secondary public school located in West Jakarta, Indonesia. The researcher decided on convenience sampling because the participants were willing to be studied and can provide useful information. However, the researcher cannot

guarantee that the participants are archetypical of the population (Creswell, 2012). The researcher chose them as participants, because the researcher was working as an intern in the aforementioned public school, and due to time constraints, the researcher only had access to the designated ninth-grade students and teacher's data. The sample frame ranges from class 9.1 (nine-one) to 9.6 (nine-six). Since the beginning of the research, the researcher has observed that the students had different English proficiency levels. For confidentiality, all students in the study were pseudonyms.

3.3. Instruments and Data collection procedure

The research instrument gathered in the current research is a semi-structured interview and class observation. According to Macintosh (2015), this study is a suitable to employ semi-structured interviews because it is epistemically adaptable in qualitative research (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Further, the researcher used semi-structured interviews to give participants a relaxed interview session and to respond freely (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). It allows the researcher to anticipate the participants responses by using open-ended questions and to dive deeper into the participants' answers (Irvine et al., 2013, as cited in Brown and Danaher, 2017). In the context of the secondary school in West Jakarta, the researcher interviewed two students from each class; these six classes include 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, and 9.6. In total, the interviews were twelve students and one English teacher. Reasonably, the researcher decided to interview two students from each class because the time allotment presented to the researcher were limited to collecting the data. Thus, it was logical for the researcher to have examined twelve students and one English teacher, instead of the whole school students. First and foremost, each student and teacher were asked for their consent and they all agree to be interviewed. The students and the teacher interviews were conducted for two days during school hours in the library (with their teacher's permission) and the teacher interview session in the teacher's quarters on November 2022. All interviews were administered using Bahasa Indonesia. Next, to validate the students' and teachers' statements, the researcher did an observation without getting involved using Min and Chon's observation checklist (2020). The purpose of the observation was to record objectively and confirm the students and the teacher's behavior concerning their statements in the interview, rather than to report from their subjective point of view (Creswell, 2012). The teacher's observation consists of twelve close-question that need to be answered. The researcher observed six classes, each class approximately forty-five minutes to one hour within one week. Finally, both the interviews and the observation results were transcribed and codified.

3.4. Data analysis procedure

The researcher used a qualitative design that entails interview sessions and class observation. After that, the researcher collected the interview responses and observation results to be sorted into data. Later, the data were categorized into two types: IM (intrinsic motivation) and EM (extrinsic motivation). The categorization of the data will determine students' motivation to speak English in EFL classes.

4. Results

There were twelve students and one English teacher who participated in the research to be interviewed. The findings were interesting to say the least. It was indicated that six out of twelve students were identified as intrinsically motivated, thus to answer RQ (1) what is the major factor that motivate students to speak English in EFL classrooms? Is because the students want to pursue the knowledge of English language and responses such as "like to study English language" was prominent during the interview session. However, the other six students expressed that they have to receive something externally beneficial to them, such as a reward. Hence, they were marked as extrinsically motivated.

4.1. Students' Intrinsic Motivation to Speak English

Based on the interview, six students were intrinsically motivated. After examining the student's responses, the researcher concluded that responses such as 'I want to study English' or 'I like studying English' is included in the intrinsic motivation diagram. The findings indicated that six students learned to speak the English language is to pursue further knowledge. One of the students (Rc) expressed his feelings; he said "yes, because I like it. Like and happy. And because English is very important for life at this time." Another student (Rp) – about facing difficulties in learning English – said "I am even more curious, sir. If I find information (difficulties) like that, I would find out more on how to solve it."

4.2. *Students' Extrinsic Motivation to Speak English*

In contrast to their counterparts, students who -- extrinsically motivated -- were driven by their desire to attain tangible outcomes such as, comprehending English-speaking movies, online video games, and fulfilling school obligations. Although the previous study showed that intrinsic motivation deeply influenced students' achievement in EFL classrooms (Ma et al., 2021), extrinsic motivation proved to increase students' interest to study foreign languages indirectly (Ma et al., 2020). Thus, establishing extrinsic motivation (e.g., reward, obligation, avoid punishment) in EFL classrooms is indispensable. According to one of the students (Ac), informed that the English language is useful to comprehend English-speaking movies. He remarked: "English is an international language, so I can use it like watching a movie." Another student (Rf) said that learning English was a kind of obligation. He expressed: "Because I am taking lessons at school." And lastly, a student (Rr) contemplated that learning English can be used to understand chats in an online video-gaming room. He stated: "During the pandemic (COVID-19), I played online games. I met foreign people in the game when they say [something] I did not understand. So, I started learning to speak English."

4.3. *Students' difficulties to speak English*

The previous studies had indicated that there are speaking difficulties and they varied among students. Some of them have taken the form of teaching habits, such as the excessive use of the mother tongue in the classroom. Other difficulties are students' deficiency in vocabulary and the inability to structure proper grammar. As mentioned previously, speaking in the English language involved the combination of a grammatical symbol (e.g., verbs, prepositions, nouns, adjectives, etc.) and a phonological symbol (i.e., stress words) in the speaker's mind (Levelt, 1985). It was the lack of verbs, pronouns, and adjectives which made the students' utterances even more perplexing for others to understand. In addition, there were some speaking difficulties mentioned by the students outside of the variety which the previous study named, such as the fear of being judged.

4.4. *Teacher strategies to motivate students to speak English*

To answer RQ (2) how do English teachers motivate their students to speak in English is as follows. It was unarguable that the teacher (Miss W) conducted her teaching using a strategy. The result indicated that the teacher favored the conventional strategy (e.g., teacher-centered teaching style) over the creative approach (e.g., student-centered teaching style). Regardless, whatever kind of teacher's (Miss W) strategy was applied, it influenced the students' motivation (Bernaus and Gardner, 2008). The teacher (Miss W) explained to the researcher that her style of teaching was a "traditional approach," and she preferred it that way. From the observation checklist, it was revealed that she performed her strategy such as giving feedback, rewards, and compliments to students only on occasion. Eighty percent (80%) of her lesson consisted of lectures, with fewer students engaged. Through interview and observation, the researcher positively identified that Miss W provide a positive response to the students and gave a compliment to them when they completed their tasks.

5. Discussion

The current study emphasized on the students' motivation to speak and teacher strategies to motivate students in speaking the English language. The researcher examined students' motivation which includes intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, the researcher inquired into kinds of teacher strategies and how these strategies were implemented in the EFL classroom.

5.1. *Factors that contribute to the students' motivation to speak English*

The findings showed that the ninth-grade students were equally motivated (intrinsic and extrinsic) to speak English in the classroom. Six out of twelve students were established as intrinsic, while the others extrinsically motivated. Thus, it was inconsistent with the previous study by YE in 2020 that suggested that secondary students were intrinsically motivated to learn the English language (YE, 2020). The ninth-graders intrinsic motivation was characterized by their pleasure and enjoyment to pursue English literary and cultural knowledge. Meanwhile, the other ninth-graders were categorized as extrinsically motivated, which were understanding English-speaking movies, online video games, and fulfilling school obligations (Deci and Ryan, 1985; YE, 2020).

5.2. *Teacher strategies to motivate students to speak English*

The teacher's interview and observation checklists produce an interesting result. The teacher was confirmed to perform some strategies (e.g., provide feedback, give appreciation, respond to questions, give compliments, and respond positively to a student who completed her assignments), although it was not innovative, her strategies were considered

acceptable due to her teaching preferences and choices (Lambani, 2016). The teacher (Miss W) was a senior teacher who has been teaching for over twenty years, and yet her current strategies were proven did not entice her students to embrace the English language intrinsically (only six out of twelve students were intrinsically motivated). Moreover, the researcher found prominent causes which could negatively affect students' motivation to learn English. First, the teacher's instruction was difficult to follow, thus making students cannot fully understand the lesson (Min & Chon, 2020). Second, the secondary students were in the phase of learning a foreign language, which contributed to students' anxiety. To make matter worse, the teacher never gives personal feedback to a student who is struggling. Conversely, if the teacher can assist students in preparing them to learn, they will be motivated long enough to stay learning English (Lambani, 2016).

6. Conclusion

The current study investigated students' motivation and how the teacher motivates students to speak English. It concluded that six out of twelve participants were intrinsically motivated, marking them as someone who enjoys speaking the target foreign language. While the other six were extrinsically motivated, which signified that these students learned English because there are some rewards to be possessed (e.g., travel overseas, online video games, and school obligations). Conversely, the findings in the current research regarding the teacher's strategies were consistent with the previous research, which affects students' motivation in EFL classrooms (Min and Chon, 2020). The findings in the current research indicated that the teacher did not allocate her strategies optimally and some improvements have to be made in the classroom (e.g., including games in the lesson, helping students to prepare the lesson, and discarding threatening acts). Nonetheless, the researcher need to address the limitations of this study. First, the result and the conclusion of the current study cannot be generalized and applicable to all Indonesian secondary students, because the researcher used a case study design which only allows the researcher to investigate a certain population. Second, the researcher used a limited amount of population which was twelve students in the ninth grade of public schools. Third, due to time constraints, the researcher did not pursue quantitative data such as a questionnaire. For further study, the researcher recommended examining secondary students' motivation using participants in large quantities and including a questionnaire to measure their motivation. Additionally, the subject-teacher interviews and observation checklists have to be conducted to capture the students' motivation in learning a foreign language from the teacher's and the student's perspectives. Lastly, to differentiate from the current study, a future researcher should investigate secondary private school students.

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