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Title

Learners' Motivational Traits and Strategic Investment in Learning through EFL Immersion
Program: A Study at Insan Cendekia Madani Boarding School
Tangerang Indonesia

Author

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Abstract

The present study investigates learners' motivational traits and their learning strategies invested during the implementation of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) immersion program. Taking the English tutors and the students of grade 7 and 10 as subjects, it is revealed how English is perceived by the students and how this perception is reflected in their learning motivation and strategy use to improve their communication skills. Using qualitative research paradigm utilizing interview, and focus group discussion (FGD) the study emphasizes that EFL immersion program is an essential alternative to overcome problems encountered by students in traditional classroom contact for full-board type of schooling. Personal approach to individual students develop a conducive interaction that allows students' motivation in learning English to be enhanced and thus enriches the strategy use to perform better in speaking skills. This study is particularly beneficial to be attended by EFL school teachers and related practitioners.

1. Introduction

The educational dynamics of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia have long been documented in a large volume of research. Various topics on the development of different English language skills have been elaborated as well as the ways they are practiced by learners at different age, level and learning context. More research attention has also been directed to the individual differences of EFL learners which are believed as playing crucial roles in developing the skills of English as a foreign language. Among others, individual differences cover motivation, learning strategies, age, learning styles, etc. Motivation and learning strategies are believed to be interrelated as the more motivated the language learners are, the more learning strategies they employ in the process of learning.

Some studies have shown that individual differences play important roles in achieving success in language learning. Moni's (2007) research on motivation in an Indonesian EFL context found that high school students were more integrative and instrumental than university students who had a stronger intensity of motivation and more positive attitude toward learning English. Moni further suggested to broad his research to other contexts, the need to examine certain other level of school context, the need to study the relationships between motivation and other constructs such as other individual differences, and the requirement to more fully understand students' learning strategies and related teaching approaches to better model the complexity of the EFL learning process.

Kamarul Shukri, et.al. (2009) stated that motivation and learning strategies have a major role in language learning process in which these two aspects influence the outcome of language learning. These two learner characteristics can be modified by the teacher through improved pedagogical practices to facilitate the learning. It is important in language learning instruction design to motivate students in order to maximize the choice and use of learning strategies.

In the other study, Muhammad Thalal's (2010) conclusion also stated that in creatively preparing teaching content and making the classroom situation as communicative as possible, it is extremely crucial for teachers to comprehend their students' characteristics and cultural background.

This study reports on a prominent picture of how influential motivation and language learning strategies are in determining success in English Foreign Language (EFL). The aim is to provide a general portrait of how well these two individual differences develop in an English Immersion program of Secondary school and how the field is important to contribute to the program of a boarding school in which an extremely serious curriculum is in the process to be implemented; Cambridge curriculum.

2. Why immersion program?

The English curriculum as a part of school based-curriculum (SBC), that endorsed by the Department of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia (Depdiknas, 2006) has recently been widely implemented from elementary to high schools in Indonesia. It is a compulsory subject to be taught for three years at junior high schools and for three years in senior high schools although it is still an optional subject in elementary schools. (Lauder, 2008).The teaching

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of English has become increasingly important as a first foreign language in Indonesia.

The school-based curriculum is basically the application of the principles of competency-based education and learner-centered instruction in language teaching and learning process. It focuses more on learner-learning rather than teacher-teaching. In conjunction with this shift, language teachers with school-based curriculum in Indonesian nowadays are suggested to understand students' individual differences as confirming contribution to design their teaching preparation in order to gain the quality of their teaching and learning process. Therefore, it is a performance-based instruction with which the goal is to address what the learners are expected to do with basic competence in the language. Consequently, SBC greatly focuses on what students can do with basic competence in the target language than what they know about it. Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated that competencies comprise essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors required for effective performance of "a real-world task or activity".

To shift the focus more on learner-learning rather than teacher-teaching in English Language Teaching and Learning based on school-based curriculum of English is not easy. Teachers' dominance of the class is quite obvious and is difficult to be avoided. They spent most of the class time explaining their materials to their students. Students just listened and had less opportunity to respond teacher's instruction with independent tasks in large mixed ability class. Bjrok (2005) stated that teacher-centered class instruction is deeply embedded in Indonesian school settings. Marcellino (2005) also stated that teachers still cling to the old paradigm, in which they play a significant role in class as a model. In SBC, teachers are expected to shift their role, not as a model, but as a facilitator, co-communicator, or advisor so that the class has ample time and opportunities to actively participate in class interaction. Teachers also repeatedly and monotonously employ a particular teaching technique in class. Students have less chance to learn various ways to express different thoughts and feelings.

It is claimed that by improving the curricula, syllabi, materials, and activities or by putting a more emphasis on learners' autonomy, more effective language learning will take place (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). However, to create learners' independence is not easy for language teachers. While well designing teaching and learning preparation, teachers are expected to understand individual differences among their students. Teachers are obliged not only to be knowledgeable of the teaching topics, but they are also to be skillful in the language and in transferring their knowledge to the students. In addition, teachers have to be creative and

innovative in preparing the teaching materials and making the teaching aids that meet and reflect the nature and the authenticity of learning tasks. (Dardjowidjojo, 2003).

Confirming whole teachers' preparations with understanding learners' differences become a key factor to success learning process. Understanding individual differences among students like motivation and strategies is necessary as the constructive contribution to design well-designed curriculum, syllabus, lesson plan, and teaching materials.

All the facts mentioned above become the bases for the implementation of Immersion program in which much more exposure to English can complete what has been missing in the process of preparing EFL learners to be more proficient users of English. This study put the emphasis on the learners' motivation and how they orchestrate their learning strategies to improve their performance in all skill areas of English.

3. Learners' Motivation

Broadly, motivation is defined as "some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something" (Harmer, 2001). As stated by Brown (2001), motivation is the extent to which you make choices about goals to pursue and the effort you will devote to that pursuit. Motivation is thought to be responsible for "why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it" (Dörnyei, 2001). Ryan and Deci (2000) stated that "to be motivated means to be moved to do something". Unlike unmotivated people who have lost impetus and inspiration to act, motivated people are energized and activated to the end of a task.

In more specific definition, Wlodowski (1985) explained motivation as "the processes that can arouse and instigate behavior, give direction or purpose to behavior, continue to allow behavior to persist, and lead to choosing or preferring a particular behavior". Ruesch (2009) stated that motivation to achieve is tied to individuals' personal, scholastic, and professional goals, as well as to their self-concept and identities, both imagined and real. The following are learning motivation models.

Gardner was one of the pioneering researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) to focus on motivation. He chose to define motivation by specifying a goal, effortful behavior to reach the goal, a desire to attain the goal, and positive attitudes toward the goal as four aspects of motivation. (Gardner, 1985, cited in Root, 1999)

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A goal, however, was not necessarily a measurable component of motivation. Instead, a goal was a stimulus that gave rise to motivation. Gardner focused on classifying reasons for second language study, which he then identified as orientations (Gardner, 1985, cited in Root, 1999). He found two main orientations through his research:

1. integrative: a favorable attitude toward the target language community; possibly a wish to integrate and adapt to a new target culture through use of the language.
2. instrumental: a more functional reason for learning the target language, such as job promotion, or a language requirement.

Gardner's socio-educational model of motivation focused on the integrative motive. Motivation was the central concept of the model, but there were also some factors which affected this, such as integrativeness and attitudes.

Dörnyei (1994) was also concerned with exploring the model of motivation, specifically in a FL setting. Dörnyei's (1994) model has three different levels of factors. The first level in Dörnyei's model is *the language level*, which encompasses both integrative and instrumental motivational subsystems focusing on reactions and attitudes toward the target language. The second level is *the learner level*, which focuses on the individual's reaction to the language and the learning situation. *The third level* is the learning situation level, which takes into account specific motivational factors connected with the teacher, the course, and the group of language learners with which an individual interacts. This level consists of extrinsic and intrinsic motives in different areas. Extrinsic motivation is a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome. Extrinsic motivation constructs with intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing a simply activity for the enjoyment of the activity itself, rather than its instrumental value (Ryan and Deci, 2000). These two motives are not necessarily mutually antagonistic. However, extrinsic motivation can undermine intrinsic motivation. Traditional school settings often cultivate extrinsic motivation (Brown, 2001), but under certain circumstances classroom rewards can be combined with or lead to intrinsic motivation.

Motivational variables can correlate with other variables in research of educational fields although motivation itself is an extraordinarily complex, multifaceted, and important construct. One specific area in which motivational factors can be investigated is in the use of different learning strategies. Studies by Oxford and Nyikos (1989) showed that the degree of motivation is the most powerful influence on how and when students use language learning strategies.

However, it is important to first distinguish specifically what learning strategies are.

The motivation of EFL learners is still a problem in Indonesian schools context and this is clearly shown by the students under study. The problem is that many students show low motivation in learning English. They come to class to fulfill their attendance list. Most of them are passive in teaching and learning process. Only some are brave to communicate in English. They are shy to speak English. Suyuti et.al (1985), Samad (1989), Sri Lestari (2007) overall concluded that students in studying English still have low motivation and low achievement without deeply clarifying the causes based on students' learning differences and students' background. Marcellino's (2005) study in five outstanding Senior High Schools involving 258 students in the metropolitan city of Jakarta concluded that students remained passive in class and had no interest in challenging their teachers because teachers still used a lockstep approach that consumes the whole class time.

Many other related problems are encountered in the implementation of students' centered learning in Indonesian classrooms in junior and senior high schools and universities such as authentic materials, large class with mixed ability, teaching techniques, and teacher roles. When learning process becomes central to English Foreign Language (EFL) learning, teaching preparation including teaching aids is fundamental for class success.

4. Language learning strategies

Many researchers have defined the term language learning strategy. Wenden and Rubin (1987) define learning strategies as "... any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information." Richards et. al. (1992) state that learning strategies are "intentional behavior and thoughts used by learners during learning so as to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information." According to Stern (1992), "the concept of learning strategy depends on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and learning strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional directions and learning techniques." Either consciously or unconsciously, language learning strategies are employed when language learners are processing new information and performing tasks in the language classroom. Since teaching and learning activity is like a problem-solving process, using language learning strategies is inescapable for students to find the quickest or easiest way to do new input and difficult tasks

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given by their instructors. The following is some different taxonomy of language learning strategies.

According to Rubin's (1987) classification, there are three types of learner strategies that contribute directly or indirectly to language learning. They are learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies.

She divides learning strategies into two main types; *cognitive learning strategies* and *metacognitive learning strategies*. These strategies are contributing directly to the development of the language system constructed by the learner. *Cognitive learning strategies* refer to the steps or operations used in learning or problem-solving that requires direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. She further identifies 6 main cognitive learning strategies contributing directly to language learning (clarification/ verification, guessing/ inductive inference, deductive reasoning, practice, memorization, and monitoring). *Metacognitive learning strategies* are used to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning. They involve various processes as planning, prioritizing, setting goals, and self-management. Communication strategies are used by speakers when faced with some difficulties due to the fact that their communication ends outrun their communication means or when confronted with misunderstanding by a co-speaker. Social strategies are those activities learners engage in which afford them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge. Although these strategies provide exposure to the target language, they contribute indirectly to learning since they do not lead directly to the obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using of language (Rubin and Wenden 1987). Oxford (1990) sees the aim of language learning strategies as being oriented towards the development of communicative competence. Oxford divides language learning strategies into two main classes, direct and indirect, which are further subdivided into 6 groups. Oxford's direct strategies are *memory* (creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, employing action), *cognitive* (practicing, receiving and sending messages strategies, analyzing and reasoning, creating structure for input and output), and *compensation* (guessing learner's learning, overcoming limitations in speaking and writing). Indirect strategies are *metacognitive strategies* (centering your learning, arranging and planning learner's learning, evaluating learner's learning), *affective strategies* (lowering learner's anxiety, encouraging learner himself, taking learner's emotional temperature) and *social strategies* (asking questions, cooperating with others, empathizing with others)

O'Malley et al. (1985) divide language learning strategies into *metacognitive*, *cognitive*, and *socioaffective Strategies*. *Metacognitive* is a term to express executive function, strategies which require planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Among the main metacognitive strategies, it is possible to include advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, functional planning, self-monitoring, delayed production, self-evaluation. *Cognitive strategies* are more limited to specific learning tasks and they involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, inferencing are among the most important cognitive strategies. *Socioaffective strategies* are related with social-mediating activity and transacting with others. Cooperation and question for clarification are the main socioaffective strategies (Brown, 2001).

According to Stern (1992), language learning strategies are divided into five main categories. They are management and planning, cognitive, communicative-experiential, interpersonal, and affective strategies. *Management and planning strategies* are related with the learner's intention to direct his own learning. A learner can take charge of the development of his own program when he is helped by a teacher whose role is that of an adviser and resource person. *Cognitive strategies* are steps or operations used in learning or problem solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. *Communicative - Experiential strategies*, such as circumlocution, gesturing, paraphrase, or asking for repetition and explanation are techniques used by learners so as to keep a conversation going. The purpose of using these techniques is to avoid interrupting the flow of communication. *Interpersonal strategies* refer the efforts to monitor their own development and evaluate their own performance. Learners should contact with native speakers and cooperate with them. Learners must become acquainted with the target culture. It is evident that good language learners employ distinct *affective strategies*. Language learning can be frustrating in some cases. In some cases, the feeling of strangeness can be evoked by the foreign language. In some other cases, foreign language (L2) learners may have negative feelings about native speakers of L2. Good language learners are more or less conscious of these emotional problems. Good language learners try to create associations of positive affect towards the foreign language and its speakers as well as

towards the learning activities involved. (Stern, 1992).

5. Motivation and Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) of the students.

Motivation and language learning strategy use have a strong correlation as displayed by the students of Insan Cendekia Madani Boarding school. The study found that motivation proved to have the most powerful influence on the use of learning strategies. Highly motivated students tended to use more strategies from formal rule-related practice strategies, functional practice strategies, general study strategies, and conversational strategies. It is also revealed that language learners with higher motivation level possess a richer repertoire of strategies and employ strategies more frequently than less motivated language learners. Motivation is one of the most important factors in language learning and is the key determinant of frequency and type of strategy. So, motivation affects how hard learners are willing to work on a language activity, and how much they will persevere when they are challenged.

The motivation and learning strategies have a major role in language learning process in which they can influence the outcome of language learning. Therefore, it is important in language learning instruction to develop learners' motivation to use learning strategies, and in return, the use of learning strategies can influence learners' motivation for language learning activities. In receiving, processing new information and performing the tasks in language classroom, students perform motivation and use different language learning strategies. Motivation and Language learning strategies are good indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems encountered during the process of language learning.

Being aware of how teacher-student interaction (relations) can promote motivation may provide implications in a variety of areas for educators. Teachers can likely restructure the teaching and learning environment by providing different strategies to students, finding ways to motivate student to learn and engage them in active learning, and understanding their students' learning strategies. Without knowing and understanding how teacher-student interaction influences motivation, teacher may limit their abilities to improving instruction. Students engage in learning through behaviors and motivation, and those learners who are highly motivated remain engaged, enthusiastic and are more likely to participate in learning activities. On the contrary, the less motivated the students are, the less they remain engaged in learning.

Understanding of students' motivation and language learning strategies (LLSs) as

individual differences is crucial for all target language teachers in order to help development of their students' competence and language learning. This study suggested that the first attribute of successful teachers is their understanding of their students' attitude to learning because having knowledge of students' learning and factors that affect their learning attitudes are necessary for effective teaching. It is further emphasized that teachers need to look closely at their students' learning styles and other related factors such as family background and social status. Understanding students' learning styles and other factors like learning strategies and motivation that influence students' learning enables teachers to develop the most appropriate ways of interacting with their students in and out of the classroom. They would also be more conscious of their students' social circumstances.

6. Conclusion

Motivation and learning strategies are unavoidable students' differences in teaching and learning process. Understanding both individual differences among learners is a must for teachers in shift from teacher-teaching to learner-learning. How teachers judge by giving their students the different or similar chance to learn, if they don't understand the similarities and differences among them. The more teachers understand about students' individual differences, the more ready they prepare and implement their instructional design (syllabi, lesson plan, strategy and others) and the more flexible they facilitate and assess their students in learning.

It seems to be a very fertile time for unraveling the issues that relate how students in different motivation and different learning strategies learn a foreign language, and how and why students succeed to study and teachers undertake to teach.

The issues become important in the implementation of immersion program as current curriculum by focusing on learner centered instruction in large class and in other old paradigms especially in English Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning conducted at Insan Cendekia Madani boarding school.

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