Students’ Motivation in Learning English at The Sixth Semester of Mathematics Education Program

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Abstract - This study intended to figure out the level and the dominant motivation in learning English for sixth-semester students majoring in the Mathematics Education Program of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University. This was viewed from three dimensions (Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience) of the L2 Motivational Self System framework of Dörnyei (2005, 2009). A quantitative research approach was employed through a survey study design to achieve the aim of the study. A total of 27 close-ended questionnaire items with a 5-point Likert Scale was administered to 79 participants. The main findings revealed that the motivation level of students held a moderate rate (̅ = 3.53, SD = .870). Further description, 70% of students had a moderate level, and 30% reached a high level. Additionally, it found that the students were dominantly motivated by the L2 Learning Experience (̅ = 3.67, SD = .756). It indicated that the motivation came from learning experiences and situations around students. While the Ideal L2 Self (̅ = 3.63, SD = .878) was ranked in the second position, and Ought-to L2 Self (̅ = 3.29, SD = .977) followed in the third position. Based on the research findings, some implications were recommended to be employed by EFL lecturers in enhancing students’ motivation, along with some directions for future researches in the area of motivational studies.

Key words: L2 Motivational Self System, Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to Self, L2 Learning Experience, English Language Learning

INTRODUCTION

Individual capability is not the only influential factor in language learning. Motivation is one of the most crucial and fundamental factors in determining the achievement of learners in learning English performance. Key elements in language acquisition, such as skill, suitable curriculum, and competent instruction are insufficient to override motivating factors that assure the learning achievement of students (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 65). It implies that possessing an excellent degree of motivation is expected for language students since it affects the success of the learning process. As stated by Gardner (1985 cited in Chairat, 2015, p. 70), good students are those with optimistic attitudes, motivational attributes, and excessive performance compared to those with negative attitudes and low motivation. The term “motivation” originated from the Latin word “movere” and has interpretation “to move” things in which make a stir to create particular choice in the

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condition of the real situation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 3). Meanwhile, Harmer (2015, p. 98) interprets that motivation is several types of internal impetus to force a person in taking active steps to reach a goal.

**Historical review of motivation in language learning**

In language learning, motivation becomes the popular and central field of education study. The research on second and foreign motivation has evolved and undergone multiple phases, then scientists have conceived several L2 motivation models on the area (Lai, 2013). Gardner (2005 as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 39-40) has reviewed the history of the development of motivation on second and foreign language learning into four different phases, at an early period was started by social-psychological period (1959-1990), then continued by a period of cognitive field (during the 1990s), the period of process-oriented (at the turn of the new century) and the recent theory which called social-dynamic period (current era).

The first period was characterized by the great works of Gardner with his associates in the Canadian context. Gardner’s work gives a greatly influential role to other frameworks (Lai, 2013, p. 91). Gardner emphasized that the socio-cultural aspects, such as attitude, stereotypes, and cultural familiarity are regarded as the central factors to affect language learning among learners (Gardner & Lambert, 1975 cited in Subekti, 2018, p. 58). Gardner (1985, in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 41) argued the concept of motivation is viewed as the correlation between motivation variable and orientation (refers to a goal). With Lambert in 1972, Gardner has divided motivation into two major types of motivation, namely instrumental and integrative motivation. Learners with integrative motivation are oriented to learn language because they attract and interested to know other culture of the native language group whereas instrumentality is the learners learns another language because of the practical motive like getting a suitable occupation and future education (Gardner & Lambert, 1972 cited in Subekti, 2018, p. 58). By the fact that Gardner’s socio-educational model was profoundly influential to other motivation theories but some experts had criticized integrativeness regarded as the core concept of his model (Lai, 2013, p. 92). Gardner’s concept of integrativeness that mentions the learners has the desire to communicate and participate in the target language, also even become like them is doubtful. In addition, integrativeness is viewed as an ambiguous concept due to the obscurity of the target language’s ownership in the integration refers to (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 23). Dörnyei (2010) further adds since English is currently has developed as a Global and international language, it is necessary, in various educational settings, to reexamine whether the idea of integrativeness applies to all language students, particularly to EFL.

**L2 Motivational Self System by Dörnyei (2005, 2009)**

Because of insatiability with the notion of Gardner about integrativeness, the re-conceptualization had occurred. One of them is the theoretical framework, namely the second language (L2) Motivation Self System which emerged in the socio-dynamic period. This work was initiated by Zoltan Dörnyei in 2005, then developed in 2009 as a predominant expansion in this field. The first initiation was begun by the ambitious project with Kata Csizér to conduct the largest survey ever in Hungarian learners’ context when learning a foreign language which takes time 11 years, starting in 1993 until 2004 (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 3). It provides the eventful re-conceptualization of the L2 field especially the integrativeness of Gardner’s work to correspond to the use of current English. The L2 Motivational Self System was reformed based on understanding obtained from the socio-educational framework of Gardner which is developed more relevant on the use of English as a Global language in the early 21st century (Lamb, 2012). Dörnyei did not disregard the results of prior research but has used its theoretical basis to build on several aspects of the L2 Motivational Self System (Islam, 2013). The key distinction from Gardner’s model was the application of a future vision of selves among learners. The L2 Motivational Self System targets an aspect of individual learners by implementing self-psychological theory (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 9). More importantly, Dörnyei’s framework was inspired by Markus & Nurius (1986) with their Possible Self concept with and Higgins (1987) with his Self-Discrepancy concept.

The possible selves which are often called future self-guides are highly contribute to Dörnyei’s Motivational Self System. This idea conceptualizes hope, dreams, and imagination of what people want to be and what they should avoid in the future. Possible selves reflect the conceptions of what they might be, what they like to be, and what they fear to be (Carver et al., 1994 cited in Dörnyei, 2009a, p. 11). Another influential theory to Dörnyei’s framework is Self-Discrepancy that consists of ideal selves and ought selves. According to Higgins (1998 cited in Dörnyei, 2009, p. 18) that ideal self focuses on promotion motive, concern with hopes, aspiration, advancements, growth, and accomplishment while ought-to self focuses on prevention motive, concern with the absence and presence of negative result related to the failure for completing the responsibilities and obligations. After all, in this context, motivation refers to the desire to narrow the gap between one’s actual self and the projected behavioral standards of one’s ideal/ought selves.

The Ideal L2 Self represents the influence of the ideal image of personal learners in what they desire to be a language speaker in the future and linked with the instrumental and integrative motivation of Gardner’s theory. As was predicted to be the most powerful component of the L2 motivating self-system, the Ideal L2 Self was found to subsume the integrative and internalized instrumental motives (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 87). An example of integrativeness is when the learner is interested in the culture of the L2 language and for practical reasons in an internalized instrumental orientation, such as having goals to obtain a better academic, career, and job promotion in the future. The Ideal L2 Self is the future ideal self that integrates the desirable characteristics and the individual’s wish and hopes to possess, such as having success, achievement, and happiness (Moskovsky et al., 2016). The Ought-to-L2 Self refers to the impact of social pressure and the existence of responsibilities and obligations in learning another language to prevent the negative results. Dörnyei (2009, p. 29) defines the Ought-to-L2 Self as the features that people think should have to achieve people’s expectations and prevent the potential of unfavorable and negative results. The Ought-to Self means learners perceived the responsibilities, duties, and obligations in learning another language to prevent the negative outcomes (Subekti, 2018). This element can be said to be more extrinsic and less internalized than the previous element, Ideal L2 Self. Whilst, the L2 Learning Experience reflects the potential effect of teachers, peers, curriculum, and other factors around students. Due to the motivation for some learners in learning a language does not always emerge from external and internal self-image factors, the actual learning process affects the achievement engagement in the learning process (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 86). As defined by Dörnyei (2009, p. 29), the L2 Learning Experience is a “situation-specific motive concerning immediate learning experiences and environments”. Furthermore, the possibly other factors around learners also can influence their motivation on language learning activity, such as friends at class, teachers, curriculum, and the success experience (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29).

English learning at Mathematics Major of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University

University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa is one of the state academic institutions in Indonesia that attempts to build skillful students, particularly in mastering English skills by obligating them to study English courses for non-English study programs in a certain semester. One of the non-English majors was Mathematics Education Department which required students to study English in the second semester for courses Bahasa Inggris and Bahasa Inggris Profesi in the sixth semester. Furthermore, they had to be certified with a minimum of 450 scores for the TOEFL test as one of the thesis defense requirements. However, motivation problems are immensely possible to exist in the process of learning English and are serious matters faced by the educators in the process of teaching and learning. Veenman (1994 in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 105) identified that teachers found the issues of motivation among students assumed as the second significant source of complication (the first one is maintaining the discipline of the classroom). It was even more challenging for the non-English major students at the university level seeing that English is not their primary subject.

One of the feasible ideas to overcome these motivation problems was that the students should stimulate their motivation and enthusiasm in learning English, which was also helped by English lecturers Utomo et. al. (2021). It is backed up by Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011, p. 109) who states that educators play a role as key social figures who significantly influence the quality of motivation in learning activities. Therefore, the lecturers were required to recognize the extent to which the level and dominant type of motivation among students. It drives to design the most suitable strategies in enhancing the students’ motivation and reach better success in learning English. Attempting to address the problems, the researcher was interested in conducting a study concerning this area.

Relevant early studies on motivation

However, some previous studies provided supports in investigating the motivation of English language learning, such as conducted by Jatidiri (2016) who investigated the kinds of motivation of Mathematics Education Major of Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana based on Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory (2000). Using qualitative method by interviewing 10 students randomly, it found that Mathematics students were highly motivated to study English both integratively and externally. Secondly, also qualitative study through a questionnaire which aimed to know the type of motivation based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by Ulfa & Bania (2019). It revealed that students of Senior High School in Langsa were dominantly motivated because of external factors in which teachers had a high influence on students' motivation. Thirdly, a survey study that explored the level and kinds of orientation on learning English based on the major theory of Gardner (1985) was conducted by Sari (2019). It concluded that English Education
students were considered highly motivated to learn English and the dominance of students’ orientation was integrative motivation. The last, Rizkina (2021) who attempted to figure out the level of motivation and the dominance of motivation type among 50 participants in the first grade of MAN 1 Sigli viewed from intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Through a survey study, it indicated that on average, the participants held a moderate level of motivation, and the dominant motivation came from intrinsic motivation.

Even though motivation had been extensively explored in the Indonesian context but this essential and highly significant study was lacking in the type and level of motivation research viewed from the L2 Motivational Self System theory. Therefore, the researcher determined to conduct this study considering the previous studies and the importance of knowing the level and the dominant type of students’ motivation in the sixth semester of the Mathematics Education Department. Furthermore, this study created a difference by adopting L2 Motivational Self System as the major framework. Hopefully, the outcome of this study would give an overview to EFL lecturers of the Mathematics Department about the factors that would boost motivation among students.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The participant of this research was sixth-semester students of the Mathematics Education Program of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, Serang, Banten in the academic year of 2020/2021. From a total of 99 active students in three classes, it was carried out on a sample of 79 respondents (male: 65, female: 14) aged 20-21 years old as their usual age range. Specifically, the students who enrolled in Bahasa Inggris Profesi subject in the sixth semester and had completed enrolling in Bahasa Inggris subject previously in the second semester. For getting the information regarding the level and the dominant type of student’ motivation, the researcher used the quantitative method by employing a survey design. A survey is a quantitative research procedure in which the researcher conducts a survey (questionnaire) of attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of entire people (population) through a small group of people (sample) (Creswell, 2012, p. 376). The source of data was collected through 27 close-ended questionnaires as the main instrument by administering to respondents. It was begun from June 4 to July 12, 2021.

The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert Scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree) that adapted from the L2 Motivational Self System questionnaires of Subekti (2018). It was divided into two main sections. Section 1 asked students about their Background Information. Then, Section 2 asked to fill out the motivation questionnaire which measured three different components of the L2 Motivational Self System. Adapting to the native language used by Mathematics students, the questionnaire had been translated into the Indonesian language so that students could comprehend the meaning of each item clearly and answer the questionnaire well. The researcher used SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) 26.0 software and Microsoft Excel 2010 to collect the data obtained. Then, it was analyzed by descriptive statistical analysis since it was suitable to survey study design as the present study. The descriptive statistical analysis focuses on the numerical interpretation of a specific group studied and no resemblance is acceptable to anyone outside of the group (Singh, 2006, p. 224). Statistically, the data were shown through percentages, frequencies, arithmetic mean, and standard divisions.

It applied a scale to specify the level of L2 Motivational Self System determined from the following classification (Wimolmas, 2012):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.68 – 5.00</td>
<td>A high degree of motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.34 – 3.67</td>
<td>A moderate degree of motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00 – 2.33</td>
<td>A low degree of motivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

1. **The Level of Motivation**

In this study, each component of the L2 Motivational Self System had been specified its level to know the overall students’ level with the mean score and standard deviation (SD).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 Self</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.878</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to-L2 Self</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.977</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learning Experience</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.756</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.53</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.870</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moderate</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table above shows, the sixth-semester student of the Mathematics Department had different reasons for learning English based on Dörnyei’s theory. It has demonstrated that every individual’s level and type of motivation are distinct from each other (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012). It is also emphasized that in the research findings of Ghapsangi et al., (2011), “language learners with different personality types have diverse reasons for learning English. Further explain, as a
result, different incentives are required for language learners to study a second language. Concerning the Ideal L2 Self component, the result was considered as moderate level rated 3.63 of the mean score. This revealed that even though they were non-English major students, the students were moderately motivated to learn English because they had been quite successful to create their ideal goals in the future by using English, especially to communicate and interact more easily with people who can speak English. Nevertheless, some students had difficulties knowing what they hope and desire by learning English. A study of educational psychology has been found that in regular class most students do not understand well the reason they participate in the process of learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 115). Thus, the role of EFL lecturers was needed to assist the students in finding their reason and ideal goals in learning English.

In the case of the Ought-to L2 Self component, the result revealed that students were also moderately motivated with a mean score of 3.29. It demonstrated that the students had realized the importance of learning English but they regarded external or social pressure did not encourage them significantly to learn English. As supported by the explanation of Dörnyei (2009, p. 29) about Ought-to L2 Self that can be defined as the features that people think should have to achieve people’s expectations and prevent the potential of unfavorable and negative results. It also pointed out that even though there were duties and obligations, such as the obligation to enroll in English as compulsory in the second and sixth semester, then the requirement to pass the TOEFL test with a minimum score of 450 to conduct a thesis defense did not give a significant effect on students to motivate in learning English. Therefore, the result was in contrast to the argument of Taguchi et al. (2018) and Kormos et al. (2011) who argued that the Ought-to L2 Self may play a major role in the Asian setting because of the essential impact on Asian societies of family and others. However, doing something only based on obligations surely did not always work smoothly, it was different if it was purely self-willed or self-interested, including in learning English. As stated by Dörnyei (2001, p. 12), in establishing the notion of self-determination, "we will get more motivation to accomplish something for ourselves than something we are forced to do".

Lastly, the L2 Learning Experience aspect proved that the level of motivation in learning English of students reached a moderate level with a value of 3.67 of the mean score as two previous results. The mean score was close to a high level. It implied that the EFL lecturer, stimulating activities, tasks, and teaching materials were moderately influenced the self-conceptions of the students who motivated because of the L2 Learning Experience component as well as how willingly the students study English. The L2 Learning Experience is the possibly other factors around learners that can influence their motivation on language learning activity, such as friends at class, teachers, curriculum, the method used by the teacher (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 86).

The comparison rate between three aspects of the Motivational Self System presented the Ideal L2 Self rated 3.63 of the mean score, the Ought-to L2 Self rated 3.29 of the mean score and the L2 Learning Experience 3.67 of the mean score. According to the criteria of motivation level of Wimolmas (2013), the overall mean of L2 Motivational Self System among respondents rated 3.53 of the mean score with interpretation Mathematics students possessed a moderate level of L2 Motivational Self System in learning English. Specifically, 55 students were moderately motivated and 24 students were highly motivated towards learning English. Furthermore, on average, the students had realized the importance and the benefits of learning English nowadays. It was similar to the research finding of Rizkina (2021) that means on average, the participants held a moderate level of motivation. Notably, as seen from the calculation result, there was no evidence that Mathematics students in the sixth semester held low motivation in English language learning.

2. The Dominant Type of Motivation

The next research question discussed the dominant component of motivation. As illustrated in the chart above, the analysis of motivation results revealed that the students were a bit more dominantly motivated because of the third element of L2 Motivational Self System. It verified that the dominant motivation towards learning English in the sixth semester of the Mathematics Education Program of Sultan Ageng Titayasa University in the academic year 2020/20212 was the L2 Learning Experience which rated 3.67 of the mean score. This L2 Learning Experience could be meant as the favorable reason for learning English among respondents, it was followed by the Ideal L2 Self in the second position and the last position was placed by the Ought-to L2 Self as the unfavorable reason.

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The *L2 Learning experience* had positive views as the strongest factor was the same to research findings of Lamb (2012, p. 997-1023). It can be argued the motivation of students comes from a suitable learning environment than having an ideal self-image, such as the lecturer, peers, the method used by the lecturer, comfortable class, and others. Students who had the motivation this type tend to depend on the circumstances of the situation and conditions when teaching and learning take place, whether the lecturer who teaches the method was effective, whether the class was fun, and many more aspects. The result was followed by the other L2 Motivational Self System components, which were *Ideal L2 Self* in the second position and *Ought-to L2 Self* in the third position. The fact *Ought-to L2 Self* as the lowest factor was in line with the study of Subekti (2018) in Indonesia.

By recognizing the level and dominant motivation among students, it was necessary to notice more the strategies in increasing the motivation of students. By interpreting the L2 Motivational Self System offers a benefit in constructing strategies to stimulate motivation in learners. The new area of motivating methods involves promoting the first part of the system, the *Ideal L2 Self* by establishing a language study vision and improving imagery on learners. Various ways were also suggested to increase the capacity of *Ideal L2 Self* and *Ought-to L2 Self* by emphasizing to the students the clear and specific visions in the future that can be achieved either to promoting like an *Ideal L2 Self* or preventing like an *Ought-to L2 Self*. The *Ideal L2 Self* is the L2 Motivational Self System component that has a powerful influence.

**CONCLUSION**

The study figured out the level and the dominant type of motivation of the sixth-semester students at the Mathematics Education Program of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University in the academic year 2020/2021. It was viewed from the L2 Motivational Self System theory of Dörnyei (2005, 2009) that consisted of three dimensions, *Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self*, and *L2 Learning Experience*. Based on the findings of the data analysis regarding two main research questions, it could be inferred that the level of motivation among the research participants possessed moderate motivation in learning the English language. Specifically, 55 students had a moderate level, and 24 students reached a high level. Therefore, it was necessary to enhance the motivation of students who were moderately motivated in learning English. Second of all, the dominant motivation of students was the *L2 Learning Experience*. It indicated that the *L2 Learning Experience* was fairly more influenced than the two other components and also the motivation emanated from a suitable learning environment around them like the lecturers, peers, curriculum, and lecturer’s method and approach.

**REFERENCES**


