

Students' Attitudinal Factors in Learning English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract—This study investigates the interplay of students' attitudinal factors in learning English as a foreign language. The researchers carried out a descriptive research by applying an attitudinal scale in studying the interplay of the attitudinal factors. The respondents of this study were the second-year students of Indonesia English Education Department academic year 2014-2015. The instrument of this research was a questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to study the interplay of attitudinal factors in learning English as a foreign language. The attitudinal factors were *attitude, motivation, achievement motivation, interest, perseverance, and self-esteem*. The results show that the students have high or positive attitudinal factors in learning English as a foreign language. It indicates that the students' attitude toward English language learning can, to a certain degree, influence their learning results. There is a positive correlation between attitude and motivation and the students' enthusiasm, commitment and persistence are the key determinant of success or failure, the more favorable the attitudes the students have the higher the motivation the students possess. It was found that instrumental reasons were considered the primary source of the students' attitude towards learning the English language. Students' attitudinal factors can be improved by involvement in learning process and effective language teaching methods can encourage students to be more positive towards the language they are learning.

Index Terms—interplay, attitudinal factors, and learning English

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning a language is influenced by a variety of factors. Some of them are attitudinal factors in learning a language. Understanding the attitudinal factors as well as variables that influence the attitudinal factors is important. It is important to study attitudinal factors because in the field of second or foreign language learning, attitudinal factors have been identified as one of the key factors that determine second or foreign language success and achievement. They serve as stimulus to produce learning firstly and then as a supporting power for the tiresome process of obtaining a second or foreign language (Cheng & Dornyei 2007) (1). As a result, some of approaches to attitudinal factors can focus on cognitive behaviors (such as monitoring and use of strategies), non-cognitive aspects (such as perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes), or both (Lai, 2011, p. 2). (7)

A. Focus of the Study

This study investigated the attitudinal factors of Universitas 45 Makassar students have in English Foreign Language (EFL) learning and how the attitudinal factors interplay in EFL learning. The focus of this study has two aspects. First, current researches within the background of EFL learning (Lioulienė & Metiūnienė, 2006; (8) Cheng & Dornyei, 2007; (1) Lai, 2011), (7) which have indicated that EFL students learn English instrumentally and/or integratively, did not examine how individuals' motivations for learning a foreign language interplay with their language learning goals. Second, English has been learned in Indonesian universities, but, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has examined the interplay of attitudinal factors in Learning English as a foreign language as vital elements in the English learning process by the universitas 45 Makassar students. So, the recent research is conducted to study these two facets and confer their educational consequences for the teaching of English to Indonesian university students.

In relation with the problem statement above, the researcher formulated the research questions as follows:

1. How is the students' attitude, motivation, achievement motivation, interest, perseverance, and self esteem toward Learning English as a Foreign Language?
2. How do the attitudinal factors interplay in Learning English as a Foreign Language ?

B. Objectives

In relation to the problem statement and the research questions above this research aims at finding out:

1. The state of the attitude, motivation, achievement motivation, interest, perseverance, and self esteem of Universitas 45 Makassar students toward Learning English as a Foreign Language.
2. The interplay of the attitudinal factors in learning English as a Foreign Language.

C. Significance of the Research

The result of the research is expected to be useful information for educators especially English lecturers in evaluating and encouraging attitudinal factors in Learning English as a Foreign Language. The analysis of the attitudinal factors in English foreign language learning of Universitas 45 students theoretically will offer significant data for lecturers, managers, and language course designers. This will aid them to make the correct choices with regard to teaching English to university students. So, they can manipulate certain instructional practices to enhance students' motivation in studying English. It is hoped by reading the result of this research, English lecturers can determine what type of instructional practices they should use in attempting to give students more autonomy or control over their own learning.

D. Scope of the Research

By discipline, this research is under psycholinguistics. By content, this research investigated the attitude, motivation, achievement motivation, interest, perseverance, and self-esteem of Universitas 45 Makassar. By activity, this research is specified on investigating the interplay of students' attitudinal factors in studying English as a foreign language.

The participants were Indonesian university students from Universitas 45 Makassar. There were 7 participants. The participants were two students with high achievement in English learning, two students with moderate achievement, and three students with lower achievement in English learning.

E. Previous Related Studies on Attitudes toward Learning English as a Foreign Language

A more recent study that falls in the socially relevant factors was developed by Duisberg (2001), (4) who explored language attitudes of high-school level heritage learners of Spanish. Five varieties of Spanish were presented to 238 students. The results showed that students had a marked preference for standard varieties of Spanish. According to the researcher, there is a need to extend students' familiarity with divergent speech styles.

Gardner (2008) (6) questioned whether attitudes and motivation influence how well someone learns a second or foreign language. His research suggests that deviations in attitudinal factors evaluated at the time may be highest where the programs contain new practices of rather brief period. He wrote, "There is little to suggest that changes in attitudes result because of differential grades obtained in the class (p. 106).

F. Previous Related Studies on Motivation in Learning English as a Foreign Language

Fortier, Vallerand, and Guay (1995) (5) conducted a research to examine the relationship among intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and autonomy. This research used the French form of the Academic Motivation Scale. The scale assessed intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, interjected regulation, external regulation, and motivation. This research established the model using the motivation subscales that measure aptitude, self-determination, and autonomy. This model supports previous study conducted by Cordova and Lepper (1996). (2) This research reports that this test has been found to have internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and repeatedly supported the results of the past. Nevertheless, there are a lot of features of extrinsic motivation that are not accounted for in this inventory such as, power motivation or anxiety of failure. This study also did not account the interplay among the competence, self-determination, and autonomy.

Pelletier & Vallerand (1996) (9) reported that the energy range of intrinsic motivation and behavioral psychological processes which the main reward is the experience of competence and autonomy. It is postulated that the fulfillment of these needs motivates ongoing process of looking for an interesting situation, which represents the optimal challenges, and that requires the use of creativity and resourcefulness.

Schmidt, Boraie and Kassabgy (1996) (10) used the dichotomy of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation of their questionnaires. A questionnaire for the motivation factor includes 50 items: Intrinsic Motivation 5 items, extrinsic motivation 15 items, personal goals 5 items, hope/control components 9 items, attitude 4 items, anxiety 6 items, and motivational strength 6 item. Factor analysis produced nine factors: determination, anxiety, instrumental motivation, socialization, cultural attitudes, foreign residence, intrinsic motivation, beliefs about failure, and enjoyment.

Extrinsic motivation is motivation to get an external reward and intrinsic motivation as motivation to get satisfactory rewards from the activity itself. Intrinsic-extrinsic distinction is similar to the integrative-instrumental distinction, but not identical. Both instrumental and integrative motivation can be seen as subtypes of extrinsic motivation, because both are related to the goals and outcome. Instrumental and integrative motivation are not a dichotomy, and that there are several good students who are both instrumentally and integratively motivated to learn a foreign language and those who are not instrumentally or integratively motivated (Schmidt et al. (1996). (10)

Dev (1997) (3) advanced the Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory, it is designed to test the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on four different subjects: math, English, science, and geography. The researchers may find that he/she is extrinsically motivated when completing mathematical tasks. An educational intrinsic inventory for

university learners should be developed keeping in mind all of the problems with past records. Many extrinsic factors have not yet been categorized as extrinsic motivators and need to be known in order to apply this information to real academic world.

II. METHODOLOGY

The method of the research was qualitative and quantitative research (mix method). This research was concerned with discovering and describing the interplay of attitudinal factors in learning English as a Foreign Language in naturally occurring settings, without experimental manipulation. This study was carried out by means of case studies, while surveys, interviews and observations constituted some of the distinctive methods of data collection. It fit into the descriptive model as it aimed to detect and describe systematically, factually and accurately, the qualities of a pre-conceived phenomenon (the interplay of attitudinal factors) in a naturally occurring context (in Learning English as a Foreign Language) through questionnaire-based survey data. This study was case studies of seven students within this setting, exploring attitudinal factors through reflection and discussion, as a means of understanding the interplay of the attitudinal factors in English Foreign Language learning. Case studies were seen to be a chiefly appropriate study method as they “disclose the diversity of factors which have interrelated to yield the distinctive character of the object that was the subject of the study through description, explanation, assessment and prediction. This research has two variables. They are attitudinal factors and English foreign language classroom. The attitudinal factors are attitude, motivation, achievement, interest, perseverance, and self-esteem; each learner has different attitudinal factors in Learning English as a Foreign Language.

The population of this study was the English Educational students of Universitas 45 Makassar that consist of 78 students. For this study, purposive sampling was used to identify seven students within the population that met specific criteria.

The attitudinal scale was used for this research targetted both, as it contained close-ended sections that required students to answer to statements on a five point Likert scale, as well as open-ended questions that requested students to describe or comment on an issue in detail.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The overall results reveal that the students have high or positive attitudinal factors in learning English as a foreign language. These findings answer the research questions of how the students’ attitude toward learning English as a foreign language is, how the students’ motivation, achievement motivation interest, perseverance, and self-esteem in learning English as a foreign language.

All the respondents have positive attitude in learning English. They learn English because English is important that it will make them more educated. This indirectly indicates that all the respondents have intrinsic motivation to study English and this can be inferred that the more positive the attitude of the students the higher the motivation the students have. The students’ attitude is said to reflect their belief or opinions about English language learning. The researcher believes that attitude and motivation are closely related. The students’ attitude and motivation mean scores can be seen in the following chart.

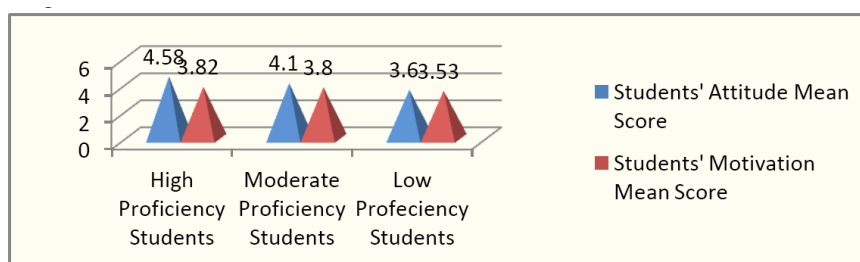


Figure 1. Chart of students’ attitude and motivation mean scores

Since the students have positive attitude, high motivation, high self-esteem, and high perseverance, they wish they could have many English speaking friends and knowing English is an important goal in their life. So, it can be concluded that for high proficiency students, positive attitude can engender high motivation, stimulate achievement motivation, encourage interest, support perseverance, and maintain self-esteem. All the discussions on the findings of the students’ attitude toward learning English as a foreign language above can be visualized as follows.

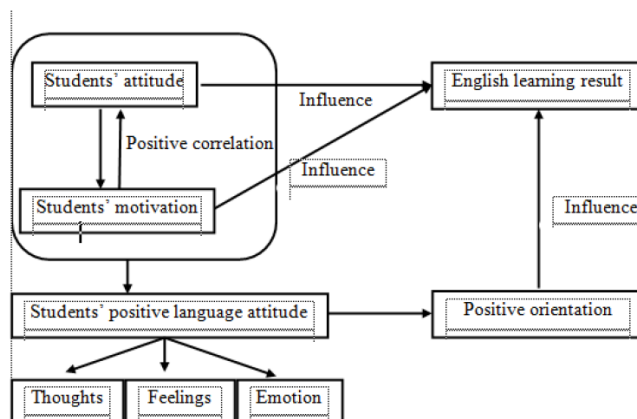


Figure 2. Visualization of the students' attitude toward learning English as a foreign language.

The findings indicated that the most common reasons for studying English as a second language because the students find English useful for them and they wish they could have many English speaking friends. These findings were related with the work of Gardner (2008: 6) (6) which suggested that a person's need for studying a second language is for the ability to socialize with the learning language community or integrative motivation and the ability to gain knowledge applied from that learning language or instrumental motivation.

Based on the attitudinal scale and interview, it is exposed that the learners are somewhat more strongly instrumentally motivated to study English which can answer the research question of the motivation found is more integrative or instrumental. All these findings have relevant implication and should therefore lead to recommendations for further studies. It was found that motivation is an important factor in English foreign language learning. It is an individual's attitude, desire, and effort. Motivation is one of the key factors that determine the achievement and attainment of English language. It serves as an impetus to produce learning initially and then as the tedious process of obtaining English as the target language. Attitude is a factor of motivation, which denotes to the combination of effort plus desire to attain the aim of learning plus positive attitudes towards learning the language.

Motivation is considered significant in its role in English learning success. Learning makes the participants gain new knowledge and skills and motivation pushes them or encourages them to go through the learning process. All the students study English to get a better job in the future, so they sign up the English classes that will prepare them for the future. It indicates that they have high extrinsic or instrumental motivation to study English (getting a better job). The students' inclination toward instrumental motivation could be a great value of Universitas 45 Makassar for the improvement through novel focusses on the Institution's English language development programs. At the same time the institution should also take into account the capabilities and policies for the learners' integrative motivation to study English as a foreign and eventually increase the students' ability. Based on the findings of this research, the results are distinctive for these specific learners; i.e. their high motivation in both instrumental and integrative facets and even with a slender domination in instrumental motivation. Furthermore, the research of the students in other universities with mainly dissimilar setting may produce meaningfully diverse outcomes. Future research should also contain more and several of institutions or universities.

As the English motivation is one of the greatest significant learning elements, the necessity to define the definite motivation circumstances of any learners group is valuable. This is for the advantage of their English language learning efficiency and aptitude.

It was found that the students have a desire to communicate in English, which includes a curiosity in a discussion of important impressions, thoughts and anxieties about a wide range of topics, and not just a disposition feature of extraversion and/or talkativeness. The interview showed that lower students hold more instrumental motivations, which means that they are more likely to learn an English for utilitarian purposes. The students may be motivated by the novelty of finding new words for familiar stimuli, from the fear of failure, or achievements.

Based on the findings above it can be identified that motivated students are probable to study more and teach more rapidly than learners who are less motivated. In certain learning condition, learners who are less motivated are possible to miss their attention, misbehave and cause discipline difficulties. On the contrary, learners who are more very interested will contribute actively and pay more responsiveness to a definite learning assignment or activity. Motivating student is one of the greatest challenges that lecturers face, lecturers always play a vital role to influence the students, indeed lecturers instructional choices can make a positive impact on student motivation.

Based on the attitudinal scale and the interview, it can be concluded that the correlation between language-related attitudes and achievement were not only be based on language skills, but also on emotions associated with language learning.

Once poor performance is likely to reflect poor aptitude, a condition of high threat is produced to the student's intelligence. On the other hand, if an excuse permits poor performance to be attributed to a aspect underrated to aptitude, the threat to self-esteem and the student's intellect is much lower. All students, except the moderate students,

study best when they are alone. Based on the interview, the higher students and the lower students prefer to study alone because they can be proactive in studying. They can study whatever and whenever they want. They have their own study styles. For example, some students want to have something to eat when they are studying, some want to lie down with a book in their hand, while still some want to study without anything doing. And when students study alone, they can take their favorite way and need not regard what others feel.

Receiving a good score in English class is the most satisfying thing for the higher students and the most significant thing for them is improving their overall score point average, thus their chief anxiety for English class is receiving a good score. It indicates that achievement motivation is one of the crucial psychological factors determining future academic and occupational success and achievement motivation is closely related with extrinsic or instrumental motivation.

Since necessity for attainment differs from single learner to another, it might aid in scheduling accomplishments to recognize where learners stand which learners, for example, possess high attainment desires which are low in attainment and which look mainly encouraged by a necessity to dodge disappointment. Those who are more very encouraged to attain are possible to answer well to stimulating tasks, severe rating educative response, novel or uncommon difficulties and the chance to attempt again. However, fewer stimulating tasks, simple support for achievement, minor stages for each assignment, lenient rating and protections from embarrassment are perhaps more positive approaches for those learners who are very keen to dodge disappointment.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the students' achievement motivation is influenced by the students' attitude and the students' motivation. The more positive the attitude of the students and the higher the students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language the greater the achievement motivation of the students.

Achievement motivation is one of the personality variables in which the success of a student in his study depends strongly on it, so it is an important and effective factor in raising competence and productivity of a student. It can be inferred that high interest will cause high self-esteem in studying English.

Interest may be conceptualized as a component of intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation may have a variety of sources, including needs for competence. The results showed that it is worth fostering interest-triggered learning in school and elsewhere.

Students' interest in this study consists of two types, they are situational interest and individual interest. These interests are component of intrinsic motivation.

All the students do not put off their English homework as much as possible. For high and moderate students, English language is not difficult and is not complicated to learn; whereas for the lower students, English language is difficult and complicated to learn. It indicates that the high and moderate students have high perseverance in studying English and the lower students have low perseverance in studying English. And it indicates that the higher and the moderate students have higher perseverance than the lower ones. High achievement motivation will cause high perseverance.

All the students have not achieved an English goal that took years of study. It indicates that the English instruction have not success in teaching-learning process. The findings concluded that strong academic performance confirm positive mindsets, increases perseverance, and reinforces strong academic behaviors.

In studying English and in communicating in English the average mean score of the students' self-esteem is high. It means that they have high self-esteem in studying English and in communicating in English. Due to this great self-esteem, they usually contribute actively in the learning process. The learners are more confident, active and interested towards learning English as a foreign language. The students usually perform better in examination. It was found that there is close relationship between self-esteem and high rate of academic achievement. The students contribute enthusiastically in the instructional process. They do not keep on silent, active and possess a positive attitude towards learning activities.

Based on the findings above it was found that learners with great self-esteem and great achievement motivation desired a deep processing learning style. In contrast, learners with low self-esteem and self-doubt desired a surface processing style. Higher students' score is higher on self-esteem as compared to moderate and lower students. Students who develop higher self-esteem will be encouraged to study in ways that will aid them improve greater aptitude in English. Self-esteem may be channeled into active learning and subsequently can produce good academic performance whereas low self-esteem may lead to low academic achievement and deviant behaviour.

It can be indicated that a great self-esteem yields confidence which permits learners to improve a wish to converse. By the same token, learners with low self-esteem will do with less efficacy and satisfaction since they have developed moods of being no self-worthy and a disappointment.

The attitudes of all the students toward English learning as a foreign language are positive. The students' attitudes reflect their belief or opinions about English language learning. The researcher believes that attitude and motivation are closely related because all the students who have positive attitude toward English learning as a foreign language also show high motivation in learning English. It indicates that attitude and motivation have positive correlation, the more favorable the attitudes the students have the higher the motivation the students possess.

It was found that achievement motivation of the students is only influenced by the extrinsic motivation of the students (getting a better grade), intrinsic motivation of the students does not influence the achievement motivation of

the students. The students' achievement motivation is also influenced by the students' attitude.

The students' interest may be conceptualized as a component of the students' intrinsic motivation. It was indicated that the higher the intrinsic motivation the students possess the higher the interest the students show in learning English as a foreign language. The students' perseverance in learning English as a foreign language is also high. It was indicated that the students' high motivation, both extrinsic and intrinsic, cause high perseverance of the student in learning English as a foreign language. The students' self-esteem is moderate. It indicates that there is interplay between achievement motivation and self-esteem. Low degree of achievement motivation will show low degree of self-esteem and high degree of achievement motivation will result in high degree of self-esteem.

All the discussions on the findings of the interplay of the attitudinal factors in learning English as a foreign language above can be visualized as follows.

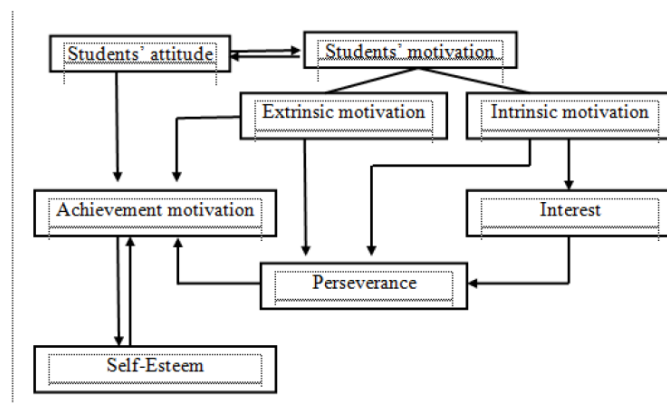


Figure 3. Visualization of the interplay of the attitudinal factors in learning English as a foreign language.

IV. CONCLUSION

a. The overall results reveal that the students have high or positive attitudinal factors in learning English as a foreign language. There is a positive correlation between attitude and motivation and the students' enthusiasm, commitment and persistence are the key determinant of success or failure, the more favorable the attitudes the students have the higher the motivation the students possess. Students' attitudes can be improved by involvement, effective language teaching approaches can inspire learners to be more positive towards the language they are learning.

b. Students' motivation toward English learning as a certain degree, influence their learning results. The more positive the students' attitudes the greater motivation the students to learn English both intrinsic and extrinsic.

c. Based on the attitudinal scale and the interview, it can be concluded that the correlation between language-related attitudes and achievement were not only be based on language skills, but also on emotions associated with language learning. There was positive relationship between integrative motivations (subtypes of extrinsic motivation/related to the goals and outcome) and the students' grades in English learning. The students' achievement motivation is also influenced by the students' attitude. The more positive the attitude of the students and the higher the students' motivation in teach English, the greater the achievement motivation of the students.

d. The students have high situational interest in learning English as a foreign language. It was indicated that the higher the intrinsic motivation the students possess the higher the interest the students show in learning English as a foreign language.

e. High motivation of the student will cause high perseverance of the student in learning English as a foreign language. Positive attitude and high motivation will cause strong perseverance. It was found that strong academic performance confirm positive mindsets, increases perseverance, and reinforces strong academic behaviors, the students' high motivation, both extrinsic and extrinsic, cause high perseverance of the students in learning English as a foreign language.

f. There is close relationship between self-esteem and high rate of academic achievement. It is composed of two distinctive scopes, aptitude and value. The aptitude aspect (efficacy based self- esteem) denotes to the degree to which the students get themselves as proficient and worthwhile. The value dimensions (worth based self- esteems) refer to the degree to which the students feel they are the individuals to be valued.

The students' high self-esteem seems affect the learning process. It is stated that each positive involvement is a chance to reinforce self-esteem, aid gain more self-confidence, and increase the feelings of self-worth. Learners with high self-esteem are eager to study and effort harder in the classroom, and finally, these learners succeed in college. Self-esteem may be channeled into active learning and consequently may generate good academic performance whereas low self-esteem may lead to low academic achievement and deviant behaviour. By the same token, learners with low self-esteem will do with less efficacy and satisfaction since they have developed feelings of being no self-worthy and a disappointment.

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