

Orientations and Motivations of Learning Foreign Language on the Students of Graduate Program at Syiah Kuala University

Rachmat Wahidi
Universitas Syiah Kuala

Iskandar Abdul Samad
Universitas Syiah Kuala

Siti Sarah Fitriani
Universitas Syiah Kuala

Nanda Marlina Abdul Samad
IAIN Zawiyah Cot Kala Langsa

*Corresponding author: Iskandar.abdul.samad@unsyiah.ac.id

Abstract

Motivation in language learning becomes one of many factors that can influence students' learning achievements and strategies. Intrinsic or extrinsic motivation can manipulate those achievements and strategies. Based on general facts, these kinds of motivation vary in each person; thus, it needs a special treatment to keep the motivation alive. In this study, the writer would like to find out the students' orientations and motivations in learning foreign language. Hence, this study focused on the students, who are learning foreign language, in Graduate Program of English Language and Education at Syiah Kuala University. The data gathered by using questionnaire and then described qualitatively. The result of this study is reported in this article.

Keywords: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, foreign language learning

Introduction

In the recent days, it is common for young learners to learn a second language over their native language. They may receive language learning either in the school or taking an additional course outside school hours. According to a statistic collected by Pew Research Center in 2018 shows that most of European primary and secondary students spend most of their time to learn their foreign language in school (Devlin, 2018). This data clearly shows that there is a crucial matter for students to learn a foreign language. However, a major reason is due to several returns. Merritt (2013) states there are at least seven reasons why someone should be a bilingual. One major advantage is that it can improve someone's second or foreign language, for which it can be used as a tool to apply for a career and other reasons that motivate someone to learn the language.

Several studies have been accomplished by some researchers which are related to motivation of the students in learning a second language, e.g. Dörnyei (1994), Wen (1997), Yashima (2000), and Noels (2001). Wen (1997) focuses on the Asian and Asian-American students who learn Chinese language at the university level in the United States. Yashima (2000) research on Japanese students, who are first-year students selecting English as the primary foreign language to study, in the Informatics Major at a university in Osaka. While Noels (2001) centers on students who are in Spanish classes and learn their motivations through questionnaire. In line with the previous studies, in this paper the writer wants to discover orientations and motivations on students of Graduate Program of English Language and Education at Syiah Kuala University in learning foreign language and investigate which motives are noticed to be most significant.

Understanding the significant motivations behind someone who are learning a language is useful to learn. It may help a student to find out whether their peers in the same group have the same motivations like he has. Moreover, discovering students' motivation in learning languages can be a groundwork to select the best teaching methodology to be applied in the classroom. Therefore, the research question of this study is "What are the orientations and motivations of students of Graduate Program of English Language and Education at Syiah Kuala University in learning foreign language?"

Literature Review

Definition of Motivation

Some scholars have defined the term "motivation". According to Gardner & Lambert (1972, cited in Ellis (1985)), motivation refers to general purposes of learners in learning second language. Brown (2001) explain this term as a consolidation of work and aspiration to become proficient in the language learning and to have a decent attitude towards learning the language. Furthermore, Ellis (1985) underlines that motivation affects someone's behavior and may influence the results of his performance. Hence, in terms of learning second language, motivation becomes one of the factors that shapes someone's awareness on how he learns a language and determines the best practices to be skilled in the language he is learning.

Brown (1981, cited in Ellis (1985)) explains more about the scope of motivation. He introduces three types of motivation. First, *global motivation*, which comprises the general tendencies or orientation to the target someone has in learning a second language. This kind of motivation is broad and seemingly everyone has this when he wishes to learn a second

language. Second, *situational motivation*, which is a kind of motivation that varies according to the situation where the language learning takes place. The last kind of motivation is *task motivation*, which is like Gardner & Lambert's (1972) sense of motivation. This kind of motivation is generally constructed when the objective of learning language is to perform certain learning tasks.

Motivation and Attitudes

Several studies mention that motivation and attitude are closely related and, in other words, has one-sided influences. It can be said that motivation shapes someone's attitudes towards the language he is learning. On the other hand, attitudes show someone's dedication to achieve his goal (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Both motivation and attitude become the support for someone's general orientation.

Gardner and Lambert have conducted several researches to find out to what extent the relation between motivation and attitudes. They draw the line between *integrative* and *instrumental* orientation to second language learning when concerning motivation. Integrative orientation occurs when someone wants to know the culture and something inside the group of second language. This type of orientation makes someone be persistent to the second language and he will, in the end, be fluent in his native and second languages. Conversely, instrumental orientation follows when someone wants to learn a second language as a tool to achieve other goals, for example, learning English language to improve language skill in order to achieve a better employment.

Regarding the concept of attitudes, Stern (1984, cited in Ellis (1985)) categorizes attitudes into three kinds: (1) learners' attitudes towards the speakers of second language, (2) learners' attitudes towards learning the language involved, and (3) learners' attitudes towards languages and language learning all together. All these kinds of attitudes are found in the language learners and they are subject to vary along with learners' personality.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Language Learning

One major distinction in the theory of second language learning motivation is that there are *intrinsic* and *extrinsic motivation*. Intrinsic motivation is defined as a strength which comes from someone's desires to perform a certain task, while extrinsic motivation comes from outside the individual. Gardner (1985, cited in Ng C. & Ng P. (2015)) emphasizes the definition of intrinsic motivation as "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in

this activity.” Ng C. & Ng P. (2015) states that when learning language is the main objective for someone, he will mirror strong motivation in himself. Meanwhile, someone will be externally motivated when he is rewarded, such as grades or prizes as the result of their efforts.

Many researchers show that intrinsic motivation plays a major role in second language learning. Noels, et al (2000) classifies the intrinsic motivation into three kinds: knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation. Knowledge motivation can be defined as a motivation to learn and have knowledge of any aspects of second language. Accomplishment motivation can be identified as the motivation to surpass or expert in the target language. Stimulation is referred to the motivation after performing a task in language learning, such as feeling happy and pleasure from the experience while speaking in the target language. All these kinds of motivation are not generally found in everyone, but at least one kind is always there.

Methodology

This study applied a descriptive qualitative study to investigate the main motivation of students in learning second language. This study is the extension of Wen’s (1997) study. In her study, she used a questionnaire to gather data from samples, consisted of students at two universities in the United States. This study, however, will use the same instruments, but with some modification localized to the current study samples.

The instruments used in this study consisted in two parts. The first part of the questionnaire measures the motivation variables, including expectation of learning strategies and efforts involved. This part assumes to be direct indicators of motivation. The second part of the questionnaire was developed by Wen (1997) based on the theories proposed by Vroom (1964) and Mitchell (1974) regarding motivation as a function of value and anticipations.

The questionnaires were circulated online via Google Forms to a class of students at Graduate Program of English Language and Education at Syiah Kuala University. Of the 15 students in the class, 8 or 53 percent participated in filling the questionnaire. Should a reference be necessary, the students will be listed here as S1, S2, S3, ..., S8, to ensure the confidentiality of their details. After the students answered the questionnaires, the writer analyzed the responds given by the students through the online questionnaire. Data gathered will be described and explained in the result section below.

Result and Discussion

In the questionnaire, there are 34 (of 42) *key* questions, consisted of four factors as suggested by Wen (1997), are used to determine students' motivation. These factors are instrumentality motivation, intrinsic motivation, expected learning strategies and efforts made, and obedience toward the requirements.

Instrumentality motivation consisted of six items (10, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16), which questioning on how the students use the language to complete certain objectives. These items will retrieve students' answers such as *to use the language they are learning when travelling to the target language-speaking country, to meet and have conversation with varieties of people, to use it with people speaking that language, and that language is an important language in the world's economic development*. The second factor, intrinsic motivation, consisted of seven items (19, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30), which generally asking on students' perceptions on how significance to learn the target language as internal motivation. These items provide answers like *because to understand and appreciate the art and literature of the target language, or doing all possible things to get along*.

The third factor, learning strategies expectations and efforts made consisted of five items (20, 21, 22, 23, and 24), which is concerned with students' strategies in learning and what efforts the made, including how many hours they spent in doing so. The last factor is passivity toward requirements, consisting three items (14, 17, and 18), which generally indicating the students' extrinsic motivation, such as reasons to study the target language *because of requirements of their degree, or because to get a better career*.

Students' Orientations Towards Language Learning

Students' orientations towards learning the target language is almost similar. This is showed by the questionnaire results, which 75 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they are motivated to learn the target language *to be used to meet and have conversation with varieties of people*. Similar argumentation supports this notion, which 63 percent of them will use the language *when they are taking a trip to the target language-speaking country*, while the rest do not have a plan to visit the country as indicated that they somewhat agree that they will use the language when visiting that country. Another supporting statement stating the students' orientation toward language learning is positive can be seen on the item 15, showing that at least 75 percent of them strongly agree that they learn the language because *they want to speak with the native speaker of the target language*. The last supporting statement in the students' orientation factor is that they believe that the tar-

get language they are learning is the important language in the world's economic development.

From these responses, the writer concluded that any target language they are learning at this moment have influences in many factors, such as from specific things originating from the students' individual (e.g. learning to speak, learning to go, etc.) to general things (e.g. development of the world). Moreover, these responses clearly indicating that students' have a positive common sense towards the language, so that they are willing to spend their time to learn the language.

Students' Intrinsic Motivation in Learning the Language

To measure how far students' internal motivation in learning the target language, the writer uses the second factor which reflected on items 19, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30. Based on the responses, at least 87.5 percent of the respondents think that *speaking fluently and developing reading comprehension in the target language is important*. Similarly, the same number of students agree that *it is important to have better understanding in the way of how the native speaker of the target language thinks*. Based on the responses, it can be settled that there are several internal stimuli from the students to which respond and make decision that those aspects are significant to have or to do.

Students' Expectations of Learning Strategies and Efforts Made

The third factor measures to what extent the students' expectancies of learning strategies and the efforts they allocated in learning the target language. This factor is also involving students' time management which can be associated to their learning strategies and efforts.

From the responses, there are variety of time allocated by the students when they are expecting *to think about ideas or words they have been taught in the class*: two students show actively thinking about the ideas, while the rest only put the ideas in their minds several times in a week, or even hardly ever think of it after class.

Concerning the students' expectation on *learning the language outside the class*, two students voluntarily spend their time more than six hours in a week to do so. Meanwhile, only three of the respondents spend four hours in a week to do so. The rest spends not more than an hour per week to learn the language by themselves. On the other hand, the feedback form shows different results on *learning the language during the class*. Half of the re-

spondents willingly reply (in the target language) to teacher's questions, while the rest will only respond when they are asked to do so.

Given the circumstances above, the students are more motivated to learn the language during the classroom, showed by several students are likely to respond to the teacher's inquiries. By doing so, they are involuntarily practice the target language which might results in multiplying their linguistics competence.

Students' Motivation Caused by Extrinsic Factors

To seek how far students' motivation comes from external factors, the writer uses questionnaire items 14, 17, and 18. These items will examine students' urgency in learning the language and in what situation they think the language will be significantly gainful.

More than 87.5 percent of the respondents persuasively agree that the language they are learning *have impacts on the career they are pursuing*. In contrast, they find the language does not fulfill their desires in *the need to study abroad or to fulfill the requirements in the degree they are currently in*.

Based on these accounts, it is an urgent matter for the students to learn the language because they think that language is a sole resource to pick up the dream career or job. Meanwhile, it is a surprising discovery that students do not learn the language to study in a foreign country. The writer at first expects at least half of the respondents will utilize the language as a requirement for study abroad.

Conclusion

There are various orientations and motivations on the students of Graduate Program of English Language and Education at Syiah Kuala University. Most of the orientations are in a positive way. Students show the similarity in the characters in terms of learning foreign language, which means they have peers who are ready to support in language learning. In the same way, students who respond this feedback form have certain and common knowledge on how the language will affect every factor in this life, including perceptions that students must gain knowledge on the target language to be able to communicate with large groups of people, and that will be easier for them understand culture and allows them to fully appreciate or comprehend the arts and literatures in that language.

Based on students' interpretations on the questionnaire items, the writer determined that the ratio of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is in the same weight, seeing that students find that *speaking fluently and developing reading comprehension in the target language is*

important. Similarly, the same number of students agree that *it is important to have better understanding in the way of how the native speaker of the target language thinks*. The same amount of percentage also applies in the items indicating external motivations, such as the language students are learning *have impacts on the career they are pursuing*.

Sustaining students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

It is important and crucial thing as to sustaining students' motivation. Some scholars suggested to endure those stimuli to keep them in the positive language learning development path. Ng C. & Ng P. (2015) suggest six strategies to do so. First, involve learners in a safe, supportive classroom environment where the learners can express their opinions and perspectives with respect and trust. Second, teachers and peers who interact with them should care about learners' personal issues. Third, learners must have a chance to choose their priority when they are assigned a task by the teacher. Fourth, let the learners do their activity if they feel they will succeed in it. Fifth, create group work for learning language. Last, help them create a realistic belief about how much they can achieve in a term. These strategies are believed to be effective in keeping someone's internal motivation. However, keeping extrinsic motivation is not simple. It requires constant force from the outside, so that students keep motivated to learn the language. One of the efforts that teachers can do is giving rewards and applauses every time the students made a positive achievement. By doing so, students are aware and have confidence in benefits of learning language.

References

- Brown, H. D. (1981). Affective factors in second language learning. In J. Alatis, H. Altman, & P. Alatis, *The Second Language Classroom: Directions for the 1980s*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- Devlin, K. (2018, August 6). *Most European students are learning a foreign language in school while Americans lag*. Retrieved December 23, 2018, from Pew Research Center: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/08/06/most-european-students-are-learning-a-foreign-language-in-school-while-americans-lag/>
- Dörnyei, Z. (1994). Motivation and Motivating in the Foreign Language Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(3), 273-284.
- Ellis, R. (1985). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation* (1st ed.). London: Edward Arnold.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning*. Massachusetts: Newbury House.
- Merritt, A. (2013, June 19). *Why learn a foreign language? Benefits of bilingualism*. Retrieved December 23, 2018, from The Telegraph: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationopinion/10126883/Why-learn-a-foreign-language-Benefits-of-bilingualism.html>
- Mitchell, T. R. (1974). Expectancy models of job satisfaction, occupational preference and effort: A theoretical, methodological, and empirical appraisal. *Psychological Bulletin*, 81(12), 1053-1077. doi:10.1037/h0037495
- Ng, C. F., & Ng, P. K. (2015). A Review of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations of ESL Learners. *International Conference on Culture, Languages and Literature*, (pp. 24-31). Kuala Lumpur. Retrieved December 28, 2018, from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Poh_Kiat_Ng/publication/278025827_A_Review_of_Intrinsic_and_Extrinsic_Motivations_of_ESL_Learners/links/55810da308ae47061e5f4333/A-Review-of-Intrinsic-and-Extrinsic-Motivations-of-ESL-Learners.pdf
- Noels, K. A. (2001). Learning Spanish as a Second Language: Learners' Orientations and Perceptions of Their Teachers' Communication Style. *Language Learning*, 51(1), 107-144.
- Noels, K. A., Pelletier, L. G., Clément, R., & Vallerand, R. J. (2000). Why Are You Learning a Second Language? Motivational Orientations and Self-Determination Theory. *Language Learning*, 50(1), 33-63.
- Stern, H. H. (1984). *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and Motivation*. Oxford: Wiley.
- Wen, X. (1997). Motivation and Language Learning with Students of Chinese. *Foreign Language Annals*, 30(2), 235-251.
- Yashima, T. (2000). Orientations and motivation in foreign language learning: A study of Japanese college students. *JACET Bulletin*, 121-133.

APPENDIX 1
Students' Questionnaire

1. Your name is _____.
2. Indicate your sex: ___ (M / F).
3. Your ethnicity: ___ Achinese; ___ Javanese; ___ Sundanese; ___ Malay; ___ Other, specify: _____.
4. You are now in semester _____ (One / Two / Three / Four / Other, specify.).
5. Foreign language you can understand: ___ English; ___ Arabic; ___ Mandarin; ___ Japanese; ___ Other, specify: _____.
6. Foreign language you can speak: ___ English; ___ Arabic; ___ Mandarin; ___ Japanese; ___ Other, specify: _____.
7. Foreign language you can write in: ___ English; ___ Arabic; ___ Mandarin; ___ Japanese; ___ Other, specify: _____.
8. Foreign language you can write in: ___ English; ___ Arabic; ___ Mandarin; ___ Japanese; ___ Other, specify: _____.

I learn the language ...

9. to understand and appreciate arts and literatures in that language.

strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------
10. to meet and speak with various people.

strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------
11. to learn other cultures and understanding the world better.

strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------
12. because that language is important in the world's economic development.

strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------
13. to help understand the problems faced by the speakers of that language.

strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

14. because I would like to pursue better career.
- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | strongly agree |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
15. to use it with friends who speak in that language.
- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | strongly agree |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
16. to use it when I am on a trip to countries using that language.
- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | strongly agree |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
17. because it is a requirement for my degree.
- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | strongly agree |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
18. to use it when studying abroad.
- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | strongly agree |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|

When learning a language,

19. I expect I will
- pass because of luck and intelligence
 - do enough work to get along
 - try to learn the language
 - enjoy doing all the work
20. I will think about the ideas or words I learned in the class:
- hardly ever
 - once or twice a week
 - several times in a week
 - daily
21. I will spend about ... to practice the language after class.
- zero hours
 - one hour per week
 - four hours per week
 - more than six hours per week
22. I will
- not actively speaking the language in class
 - answer questions when I have to do so
 - voluntarily answer to easy questions
 - voluntarily answer as much as possible

23. after I got my assignments back, I will
- just put on the desk and forget it
 - look over one more time and not trying to correct the mistakes
 - correct the mistakes when having enough time
 - always check one more time and correcting the mistakes
24. I will try to speak in that language after class:
- never
 - when I need to
 - when I have the opportunity to do so
 - in any situations as many as possible

How significant are these outcomes to you ...

25. to speak that language fluently?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| very insignificant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | very significant |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
26. to communicate with the native speakers in the basic target language?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| very insignificant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | very significant |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
27. to develop reading comprehension in that language?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| very insignificant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | very significant |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
28. to receive grade "A" in the class?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| very insignificant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | very significant |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
29. to understand better the way of thinking of the native speaker of that language?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| very insignificant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | very significant |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
30. to learn more about the culture the language originated?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| very insignificant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | very significant |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|

What is the probability you expect to achieve ...

31. to speak that language fluently?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| no probability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | high probability |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|

32. to communicate with the native speakers in the basic target language?
 no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 high probability
33. to develop reading comprehension in that language?
 no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 high probability
34. to receive grade “A” in the class?
 no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 high probability
35. to understand better the way of thinking of the native speaker of that language?
 no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 high probability
36. to learn more about the culture the language originated?
 no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 high probability

What do you think of your own ability to achieve ...

37. to speak that language fluently?
 very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very high ability
38. to communicate with the native speakers in the basic target language?
 very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very high ability
39. to develop reading comprehension in that language?
 very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very high ability
40. to receive grade “A” in the class?
 very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very high ability
41. to understand better the way of thinking of the native speaker of that language?
 very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very high ability
42. to learn more about the culture the language originated?
 very low ability 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very high ability