

THE ENGLISH LEARNING MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDE TOWARD ENGLISH OF D3 NURSING SCIENCE STUDENTS IN PALEMBANG, SOUTH SUMATRA

Agus Wahyudi

Program Studi Ilmu Keperawatan, STIK Bina Husada Palembang, Indonesia
wahyudiagus.aw@gmail.com

Abstrak

Language proficiency is a person's skill in using a language for a specific purpose (Richards, 1997). One of the tests used to measure the students' English proficiency is TOEFL. The purpose of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is to evaluate the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English. Over a period of three years from 2007 to 2009, one of the education Companies called Education First (EF) ranked the English proficiency among a broad population in 44 countries and territories. The results showed that Asia's performance was lower than expected, in light of the amount spent on private English training and Indonesia was in the 34th rank or in the very low proficiency level out of 44 countries and territories in the survey (EF : 2011) There are many factors that might cause the students' low proficiency in English, two of which are students' motivation and attitude toward English. 'Motivation' is the reason or reasons behind one's actions or behavior, it is a powerful affective variable in second language acquisition, and it has a great influence on second language learning. In order to collect the data, the researcher uses a motivation questionnaire to measure students' motivation which consists of 40 structured questions (items) adapted from Ethel Ogane & Masako Sakamoto (1997). 'Attitude' is defined as a disposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain thing (idea, object, person, or situation). In order to collect the data, the researcher uses an attitude questionnaire to measure students' attitude. It consists of 33 structured questions (items) adapted from R. Narayanan (2008) which is developed from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery of Gardner and Lambert and the questionnaires are calculated through Likert Scale. The population of this study is the 1st, 3rd, and 5th semester students of D3 Nursing School students which consists of 360 males and 742 females in the academic year of 2011/2012. The sample of this study consists of 91 students of 5 nursing science schools in Palembang. The result of the study shows that 25 (21.55%) students were in high motivation, 73 (62.93%) were in medium motivation, and 18 (15.51%) were in low motivation, while in attitude, it is found 21 (18.10%) in positive attitude toward English, 61 (52.60%) in neutral attitudes and 34 (29.30%) in negative attitude.

Keywords: motivation, attitude, and nursing science students.

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Introduction

Language proficiency is a person's skill in using a language for a specific purpose (Richards, 1997). It refers to the degree of skills with which a person can use a language. It can be seen as a goal and thus be defined in terms of objectives or standards. These can then serve as criteria to assess proficiency as an empirical fact, that is, the actual performance of given individual learner or groups of learners. Proficiency ranges from zero to native-like proficiency. The zero is not absolute because the second language learner as speaker of at least one other language, his first language, knows language and how it functions.

One of the tests used to measure the students' English proficiency is TOEFL. The purpose of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is to evaluate the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English.

Over a period of three years from 2007 to 2009, one of the education Companies called Education First (EF) ranked the English proficiency among a broad population in 44 countries and territories. The results showed that Asia's performance was lower than expected, in light of the amount spent on private English training and Indonesia was in the 34th rank or in the very low proficiency level out of 44

countries and territories in the survey (EF : 2011)

Moreover, PPNI (*Persatuan Perawat Nasional Indonesia*) reported that there are 100.000 unemployed nurses in Indonesia, due to the low growth of the hospital and the inability to speak a foreign language. Ironically WHO reported that the world still needs 2 million nurses.

There are many factors that might cause the students' low proficiency in English, two of which are students' motivation and attitude toward English. Motivation is one of the reasons behind one's action or behavior. It is a powerful affective variable in second language acquisition, and it has a great influence on a foreign language learning. Gardner (2006) posits that students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels. He further adds that 'if one is motivated, he/she has reasons (motives) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve goal, enjoys the activities, etc'. In Indonesia, Astaman (2009) reported that most of the students as the language learners are passive, shy to use English in real communication, pay too much attention to forms and rules when they communicate with others. Most of them do not practice English in real communication and situations. Only a few students practice English in the classroom and therefore, fail in acquiring English.

The next factor is attitude. It is "a word used to a general tendency of an individual tendency to act in certain condition." The use of the word attitude is based on what someone says or someone does and it is based on a visible behavior. It means that someone's attitude toward something can be seen from the way they say and act.

Learning will be facilitated if the student holds positive attitudes towards what he learns including the language and this, in turn, will affect the student's performance in that language. In other words, if the attitude is positive, learning will be high, whereas if the attitude is negative, in the sense that the learner community and the target language community do not accept each other's way of life, learning will not be facilitated. In

summary, both negative and positive attitudes have a strong impact on the failure and success of language learning.

In the study on predicting student success with the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI), Hedricks (1997) discovered that motivation and attitude were the best predictors of student academic achievement. Attitude has close relationship with motivation. Brown (2007) states that second language learners benefit from positive attitude and that negative attitude may lead to decreased motivation. The students who have positive attitude toward English and its culture are expected to be able to master English better than the students who have negative attitude toward English, because they will have stronger motivation to learn a language, while students who have negative attitude toward a language will do the opposite. The students who like to study English will study harder than students who do not like to study English; hence, attitude becomes important factor in language learning. For this reason, the learners should build good attitude in the teaching and learning process; the positive attitude toward English will help the students themselves in mastering it well, and if the students have negative attitude toward English, they will be indifferent toward English.

Based on my preliminary interview on some nursing science students' opinion about English, that some students like English and some do not. For those who like English, they usually find it easy to lean the language and for those who do not like English, they usually find it difficult to learn. The students who do not like English think that English is difficult in terms of grammar and pronunciation. According to Bandura (1986), many students have difficulty in school not because they are incapable of performing successfully, that they have learned to see themselves as incapable of handling academic skills. Furthermore, the lecturers gave information that the students were not really active in learning English. They had bad score in English subjects and seldom checked out books from library to get references.(p.390)

According to *Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (2006), teachers should

understand not only the material and method in teaching but also the students' attitude toward English and its culture which determine the success of language teaching process (p.4). Lamb (2008) in his study revealed that the attitude toward the experience of formal learning tended to deteriorate a general fall in enthusiasm for the process of formal learning in school. From the open questionnaire, Lamb continued 12% said that English is not important in Indonesia and 10% said English is not enjoyable.

Methodology

The researcher used descriptive study in conducting the present research. In this research, he would like to find out nursing science students' English Learning Motivation and Attitude toward English of D3 Nursing Science Students in Palembang, South Sumatra.

In order to collect the data of students' English learning motivation, the researcher uses a motivation questionnaire

to measure students' motivation which consists of 40 structured questions (items) adapted from Ethel Ogane & Masako Sakamoto (1997) and for the attitude, the researcher uses an attitude questionnaire to measure students' attitude. It consists of 33 structured questions (items) adapted from R. Narayanan (2008) which is developed from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery of Gardner and Lambert and the questionnaires are calculated through Likert Scale.

The population of this study is the 1st, 3rd, and 5th semester students of D3 nursing school students of Akper Depkes, Akper Kesdam II/Sriwijaya, Akper Aisyiyah, Stikes Siti Khadijah and Stikes Muhammadiyah which consists of 360 males and 742 females in the academic year of 2011/2012.

Results

The data were analyzed to see the mean score and standard deviation of students' English learning motivation and attitude based on school, gender and semester.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Variable Measured

No	Variables Measured		Attitude		Motivation	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Average		49.73	5.043	122.48	13.321
2	School	Kesdam II	48.25	4.142	118.33	11.320
		Aisyiyah	46.87	4.684	113.83	9.604
		Siti Khadijah	52.17	5.149	131.78	13.180
		Muhammadiyah	50.00	4.908	119.33	13.448
		Poltekkes	51.71	4.573	130.52	8.841
3	Gender	Male	49.14	5.026	122.07	13.364
		Female	50.31	5.035	122.88	13.382
4	Semester	Semester 1	48.62	4.678	117.30	11.325
		Semester 3	47.58	4.307	120.34	11.493
		Semester 5	53.51	4.168	130.91	13.688

The analysis indicate that, the mean of motivation was 122.48 (Std. Deviation = 13.321). Observed score ranged from 85 to 154. The highest score was 154 and the lowest score was 85.

The mean of students' attitude toward English was 49.73 (Std Deviation = 5.043). The highest score was 59 and the lowest score was 39.

Students' English learning motivation

In this study, students' English learning motivation was grouped into three categories; high, medium and low. Based on the analysis of motivation questionnaire, it

was found that 25 (21.55%) students were in high motivation, 73 (62.93%) were in medium motivation, and 18 (15.51%) were in low motivation. Figure 1 describes students' English learning motivation.

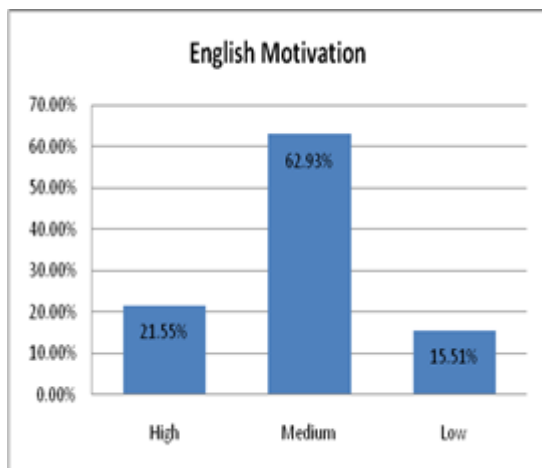


Figure 1 shows that most students' learning motivation was most in medium category: 62.93% of the total number of students.

Students attitude toward English

In this study, students' attitude toward English was grouped into three categories; positive, neutral and negative. The students categorized to have positive attitude toward English were 21 (18.10%) neutral attitudes were 61 (52.60%) and negative attitude were 34 (29.30%). Figure 2 describes students' attitude.

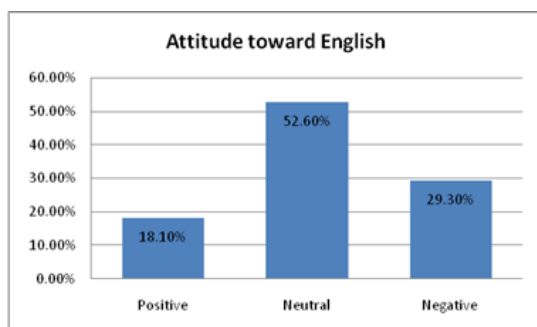


Figure 2 above shows that most students' attitude toward English was most in neutral category: 52.60% of the total number of students.

Conclusion

The exposure to English in Indonesian students' proficiency is very limited. It is different if English is used as a second language in the content where English is used in daily communication. The limitation of the use of English as the target language makes it difficult for the students to practice their English. It must also be

affected by their attitude and motivation with the fact that English subject may seem to be difficult for Indonesian students since English as a foreign language in Indonesia.

The result of the study shows that 25 (21.55%) students were in high motivation, 73 (62.93%) were in medium motivation, and 18 (15.51%) were in low motivation, while in attitude, it is found 21 (18.10%) in positive attitude toward English, 61 (52.60%) in neutral attitudes and 34 (29.30%) in negative attitude.

Low motivation is situation when the students have no willingness to develop to achieve something. The impact of low motivation will caused the students of speaking class reluctant, shy, and less confidence. Especially when the teacher asked them to speak up in front of their classmate, there is worry to say something badly and losing their face in front of their classmate

Learning a new language is linked to the way in which the learner views the target language community and culture. According to Ellis (1994), the learner's attitude towards the target language informs the determination with which the learner can tackle challenges in the target language. Normally, learners manifest different attitudes towards the target language, target language speakers, the target language culture, and the social value of learning the second language, particular uses of the target language, and themselves as members of their own culture.

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