ATTITUDES TOWARD TEACHERS, MOTIVATION AND LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT:
The case of Indonesian EFL students

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ABSTRACT
This study explores the correlation of learners’ attitude towards their English teachers and their motivation and achievement in English class. Two questionnaires on attitude and motivation used in this study were adapted from the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) developed by Gardner (1985). These questionnaires were then developed using web-based survey and distributed online to 82 Indonesian students. The quantification of data shows that attitude and motivation are moderately correlated at a value of \(r = 0.569, p < 0.01\), whilst the correlation value between motivation and students’ final score is at \(r = 0.30, p <0.01\). The findings demonstrate a predictive utility of students’ attitudes toward teachers to learning motivation and motivation to learning achievement.

Keywords: language classroom, attitude, motivation, effective learning.

ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui korelasi antara sikap siswa terhadap guru bahasa Inggris mereka dengan motivasi siswa dan hasil belajar siswa di kelas bahasa Inggris. Dua kuisioner mengenai sikap siswa terhadap guru dan motivasi siswa yang digunakan merupakan adaptasi dari Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) yang dikembangkan oleh Gardner (1985). Kedua kuisioner ini kemudian distribusikan secara online kepada 82 siswa Indonesia. Hasil kuantifikasi data menunjukkan adanya korelasi yang moderat antara sikap dan motivasi dengan nilai korelasi \(r = 0.569, p < 0.01\), sedangkan nilai korelasi antara motivasi dan hasil belajar siswa adalah \(r = 0.30, p <0.01\). Hasil dari penelitian ini mengesahkan prediksi adanya fungsi korelatif dari sikap positif siswa terhadap guru kepada motivasi belajar dan dari motivasi kepada hasil belajar.

Kata Kunci: kelas bahasa, sikap, motivasi, pembelajaran yang efektif.
INTRODUCTION

Language is generally an integral part of the process of human growth which provides motivation in its own right due to the necessity of people to communicate and participate in a community. However, this is not the case for second or foreign languages (L2), especially those learned in school. Learning a foreign language involves far more than simple learning skills, or a system of rules or grammar. It is a complex process which also involves alteration of self-image, adoption of new social and cultural behaviors (Williams, 1994). There are many advantages for knowing other languages, but they are not absolutely necessary and as a consequence, attitudes toward learning situation, particularly attitudes toward L2 teachers and motivation are believed as some of crucial factors that contribute and even can play an important role in learning a second or foreign language.

Motivation is an interesting concept for second language educators and researchers due to its nature which presumably can be enhanced in the appropriate social context (Noels, 2003). Many researches (Gardner, 1985; Christophel, 1990; Noels, 2003) have been conducted to investigate the role of motivation and attitudes toward teachers in language learning achievement. Many different teachers’ behaviours have been linked to students’ learning motivation and general classroom achievement, including a manner of presenting tasks and providing feedback (e.g. Dörnyei, 1994), and immediacy – behaviors that enhance psychological and/or physiological closeness between people (e.g. Christophel, 1990). Most of the studies have revealed that positive attitudes toward teachers improve learners’ motivation in learning a foreign language. This fact implies that attitudes toward teachers are correlated indirectly to learning achievement. This study follows earlier research, in which conducting a research on English learning in Indonesia to investigate the relationship between students’ attitudes toward their English teachers and their English learning motivation, as well as the effect of both variables to students’ English learning achievement.
Motivation and Language Learning (Attitudes/Motivation Test Battery)

Gardner (1985) described language learning motivation as a combination of complex variables, including expression of efforts, reason, and desire for L2 learning. Gardner & Smythe (1981) compiled a list of construct which attempted to measure all of the attitudinal factors related to second language acquisition of French in Canada. Later on, they developed these constructs into eleven sections of the Attitudes/Motivation Test Battery – AMTB (Skehan, 1991). The format of this assessment was a Likert scale. Eight of the sections were designed to measure three primary concepts: Motivation, Integrativeness, and Attitudes toward the learning situation.

The first primary concept regarding motivation describes that a motivated individual expends efforts, is attentive and persistent to the task given, has desires, goals, enjoys the learning activity, and makes use of learning strategies to assist in reaching the goals. This kind of behaviour is generally owned by a motivated person, but is not owned by an unmotivated person. In AMTB, Motivation is assessed by dividing it into three scales: (1) Motivational Intensity, which examines the amount of effort that a person spends in learning a new language, (2) Desire to Learn the Target Language which assess the extent to which a person wants to achieve sufficient competence in the target language, and (3) Attitudes toward Learning the Target Language, which examines the effect of L2 learning experience.

The second primary concept is Integrativeness. It refers to a willingness or openness to interact or identify with another language community. Individuals who are willing to identify or interact with another language community will be more motivated to learn the language than individuals who are not. Three scales were included in AMTB to assess integrativeness: (1) Attitudes toward the target language group, (2) Integrative orientation, and (3) Interest in foreign language.
The third primary concept is *Attitudes toward the Learning Situation*. It refers to learners’ reaction or perception to anything associated with the context in which the language is taught. Masgoret & Gardner (2003) acknowledged that these attitudes are considered relative from one classroom to another. There would be differences in attitudes due to the nature of specific classroom environment. There are two scales to measure these attitudes: (1) Evaluation of the course, and (2) Evaluation of the teacher.

Further, another section of AMTB is orientations, which are distinguished into instrumental orientation and integrative orientation. *Instrumental orientation* refers to the desire to learn a second language (L2) for pragmatic reason of the L2 learning or to achieve some practical goals such as getting prestigious jobs or higher education. *Integrative orientation* refers to the desire to assimilate into the members of the target language community (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). The link between integrative orientation and positive attitude toward L2 community (Garner & Lambert, 1972) suggested that the integrative orientation might serve as a better predictor of L2 competence, as individuals with greater an integrative orientation would expend greater efforts in learning and, consequently, achieve better L2 competence than individuals with an instrumental orientation. Subsequent studies did not emphasize such a clear distinction between the two variables, in which revealed that there has been some shift in interest from the integrative motivation to other motivational concepts for understanding the language learning motivation. The concept shifting has arisen because of some major findings (e.g. Au, 1988; Noels & Clément, 1989) regarding the importance of both orientations for motivation and L2 achievement. There were also some other studies which have identified the unique characteristic of language learning and the dynamics among ethno-linguistic groups outside the classroom (e.g. MacIntyre *et al*. 1998) that may be as important for motivation as dynamics within the classroom context. Dörnyei (1990) suggested that the need for achievement and the desire for inspiration are
powerful motivators. Oxford & Shearin (1994) also added that intellectual stimulation, showing-off to friends, personal challenge, and fascination with aspects of the language are also some other reasons for learning a second language.

**Self-Determination Theory**

*Self-Determination Theory* by Deci & Ryan (1985 & 2002) is one of the most influential approaches in motivational field. *Self-determination theory* refers to motivation to perform an activity simply for pleasure which accompany the action (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The feeling of pleasure derives from fulfilling innate needs for competence and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci *et al.* 1991).

The key points in *self-determination theory* are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated are those who would feel free to choose or do an activity because they have interest in the activity, or because they perceive the activity as a challenge to their competencies. This kind of motivation is highly self-determined, in a sense that the reasons for doing such activities are linked only to individual’s positive feelings while performing the tasks. On the other hand, individuals who are extrinsically motivated are those who perform an activity in order to achieve some instrumental purposes, instead of because of an inherent interest in the activity. In pedagogic area, extrinsic motivation is distinguished empirically (Vallerand *et al.* 1992; 1993) in terms of its degree of self-determination: (1) *external*, (2) *introjected*, and (3) *identified regulation*. *External regulation* is the least self-determined which is influenced by some outer source, such as reward or punishment. Even though people with this kind of behavior may expend efforts to achieve a reward or to avoid a punishment, there is a great tendency that they will discontinue the activity once the external contingency is removed. *Introjected regulation* is considered as a more self-determined. People with *introjected* behavior perform a task because of pressure that they have internalized or because of
something they think they should do in order to avoid guilty feeling (e.g. a student who feels guilty for disappointing his/her teacher or parents). The third level which is the most self-determined is identified regulation. In this case, individuals perform an activity because it is perceived to be personally worthwhile (Deci & Ryan, 1995). The activity is very important to assist someone to achieve his self judgment.

The last motivational category proposed by Deci & Ryan (1985) is amotivation. People described as amotivated when they do not see any linkage between their actions and consequences, but rather see the consequences as arising from factors beyond their control. Amotivated people would not expend much effort in performing a task, and would be expected to quit the task as soon as it is possible to quit.

Many recent studies on motivation have based their researches on the application of the above mentioned approach. Noels and colleagues are probably the most leading researchers in applying the theory to motivational issues (see Noels, 2001; Noels et al. 1999; 2000). One recent research on motivation that applied self-determination theory was conducted by Noels in 2001 which investigated the relationship of student autonomy in learning Spanish as a second language and the language teachers’ communicative style. Student autonomy has been identified to correlate positively with L2 motivation by many other researches (e.g. Ushioda, 1996, 2001; Spratt et al. 2002). The study by Noels (2001) examined a model in which perceptions of autonomy support and informative feedback from teachers maintain generalized feelings of autonomy and competence, which in turn support feelings of intrinsic motivation. The results supported this argument and surprisingly also revealed that perceptions of the teacher as negative or amiable had only a small, indirect role in supporting learner’s motivation.
Attitudes toward Teacher and Student Motivation

In the context of language learning, some individuals have been accounted for affecting students’ motivation, such as peers (MacIntyre & Clement, 1998) and family members (Williams & Burden, 1997). Learning motivation is generally stimulated through various forms of modeling, communication, instruction or socialization by teachers (Brophy, 1987). During the learning process, student motivation could be influenced by attitudes toward their self-perception, general learning environment, subject, teachers, and personal needs (Christophel, 1990). Recent studies on motivation (e.g. Christophel, 1990; Noels, 2003) have recognized teachers’ behaviors as one of factors to students’ learning motivation. Teachers are potential active agents within the educational environment and thus are capable of influencing the students’ learning motivation. Gardner (1985) suggested that students’ positive attitudes toward their L2 teacher are related to their motivation and achievement in class. Students’ attitudes toward their teachers were also found to be correlated with students’ linguistic self-confidence and anxiety (Clement et al. 1994). Some other L2 researchers have also proposed hypotheses as to the specific aspects of teacher communicative style which influence students’ learning motivation, such as the way of presenting tasks and providing feedback (e.g. Dörnyei, 1994).

Noels et al. (1999) suggested that teachers appear to play a key role in influencing students’ self-perception of competence and autonomy. Teachers who communicate with their students in a manner which supports their self-perception are likely to lead their students to be intrinsically oriented. Noels et al. (1999) discovered that perceptions of the teachers as autonomy-supportive agent and as informative feedback provider were related to intrinsic motivation in a group of English learners of French.

Many studies have examined students’ attitudes toward teachers in many different language classroom settings, such as French learners in Canada (Gardner, 1979), English learners of French
(Noels et al, 1999), English learners of Spanish (Noels, 2003); however, there were not many research conducted to investigate this issue within language classroom setting in Indonesia. The role of teachers in Indonesia is apparently different than in western countries, which presumably apply a more communicative teaching approach. In Indonesia, schools are conventionally built with autocratic system. Teachers generally are the key person in teaching-learning activities, in which teacher – students interactions are very rare to occur. Although the 2004 competence-based curriculum with communicative approach has been implemented in Indonesia, its implementation in L2 teaching classrooms remains weak or not as ideal as it should be due to many constraints, such as large classes, diversity of students, teachers’ competence and inadequate resources (Lie, 2007). Often, students’ activities and roles are limited to listening and writing down information provided by the teacher. Therefore, it is very interesting to conduct a study in Indonesian pedagogical setting in which immediacy, communicative behaviors that enhance closeness between teachers and their students, appears to be very rarely implemented.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

Participants

The participants of this study were eighty two Indonesian students enrolled in General English class with two different non-native speaker teachers (male and female teachers). The students were from two parallel classes of a diploma in nursing program, semester 4 in a tertiary institution, STIKES Bali, Denpasar, Indonesia.

The participants were selected due to convenient accessibility and proximity to the researchers. Considering that they were not taught first-hand by either of the researchers and their small range of
proficiency level, pre-elementary to elementary, also the lack of exposure towards the target language made them a suitable group for this study.

**Instruments**

The participants’ attitude towards their English teachers and their motivation in learning English were assessed through two questionnaires. Twenty items of questionnaire for attitude adapted from an established test battery developed by Gardner (1985), i.e. Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was used to measure the participants’ attitude towards their English teacher. For assessing motivation, test battery from Gardner (1985) and Deci and Ryan (1985) were adapted to make another twenty items of questions on learners’ motivation. The focuses of the questions in the adapted questionnaire on motivation are about learners’ intrinsic motivation, instrumental orientation, interest in foreign languages and cultures, and motivational strength.

Both questionnaires were presented in Bahasa Indonesia in order to help participants understand the questions and to yield more reliable responses. The format of this assessment was a Likert scale, in which the participants’ responses were converted into ordinal data in a scale of 1 - 6 for further statistical analysis. In addition, to help improve the reliability of learners’ response, the questionnaires include items with statements that indicate more negative attitude or lower motivation by which learners’ responses are quantified in reverse order. In order to measure the participants’ achievement in the English class, the researchers used the participants’ final course scores.

**Procedure**

Using web-based survey software, the researchers developed an online survey for assessing the participants’ attitude and motivation. The participants were asked about their opinion on twenty
statements of attitude and another twenty statements of motivation. Their responses were measured by six-point scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ (valued at 6 points) to ‘strongly agree’ (valued at 1 point). Some items were quantified in reverse order when they indicate a more negative attitude or lower motivation.

The survey was conducted via internet and a teacher at the institution was assigned to administer the survey. The participants’ final course grades were obtained from their English coordinator which was sent to the researchers through electronic mail.

Data Analysis

The participants’ responses to the questionnaire were quantified by coding the responses into ordinal data in a scale of 1 - 6. Additionally, data of learners' final course scores was included in the statistical analysis. The following table is a descriptive statistics of the three variables.

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<tr>
<th>Table 1. Descriptive Statistics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Average Attitude</td>
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<td>Average Motivation</td>
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<td>Final Grade</td>
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<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
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A nonparametric correlation of Spearman’s rho was used to answer the research questions. In general, the statistical analysis shows weak correlation among the variables. A moderate correlation is reported between attitude and motivation at the value of $r = 0.569$, significant at the 0.01 level. Another significant correlation was found between motivation and final score. However, the correlation value is
considered weak as the statistical analysis reported \( r = 0.300 \), significant at the 0.01 level. An insignificant correlation is found between attitude and final score at the value of \( r = 0.054, p = 0.632 \)

**Table 2 Nonparametric correlation of Spearman's rho**

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<th>Final Grade</th>
<th>Average Motivation</th>
<th>Average Attitude</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.300**</td>
<td>.569**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.631</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Motivation</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

**DISCUSSION**

**Attitude and motivation**

As presented in table 2, attitude and motivation are moderately correlated at a value of \( r = 0.569, p < 0.01 \). This result shows that learners’ attitude towards their L2 teachers and their motivation in learning English share about 31% of the variance between themselves. This result corroborates with previous studies conducted by Deci & Ryan (1985) and Noels (2003), which also found a positive correlation between the two variables. Although this result shows a positive relation, the pattern of relation suggests that attitudes toward L2 teachers do not have a strong association with motivation. This finding is quite surprising as teachers are generally seen as individuals who are actively and
closely involved in the students’ learning activities. One possibility is that these students do not have enough interaction with their teachers to develop a strong impression of the teachers’ capacity in teaching and psychological closeness with their teachers. Reflecting to the teaching learning reality in Indonesia, a similar situation to the above mentioned scenario would probably a common circumstance. As mentioned earlier in this paper, teaching-learning process in Indonesia is very limited to teachers delivering the materials and students copying down the information, thus students – teachers’ interactions are very unlikely to occur.

The finding also reveals that learners’ attitude towards teachers has only modest influence to learners’ motivation, thus teachers’ behavior and style would not be a factor to students who have extrinsic motivation, such as for getting prestigious job or other financial benefits.

Failure to find a strong correlation between these two variables leads researchers to assume the existence of other variables which also link to and affect students' motivation such as influence from peers (MacIntyre & Clement, 1998) and family members (Williams & Burden 1997).

**Attitude and final score**

Students' perception about their teachers is statistically not correlated with their learning achievement. However, the absence of correlation does not mean that students' perception about their teachers does not contribute to students' achievement in general. Gardner and Smythe (1975) argued that attitude toward teachers would contribute to the learning achievement through improving students' motivation in learning. In other words, attitude has indirect influence to learners' achievement. This finding can be understood as the construct of attitude toward language learning is relative from one classroom setting to another (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).
Motivation and final score

In contrast to the attitude and final score, learners’ motivation is reported to have significant correlation with their achievement shown by the statistical analysis. However, the correlation value between the two variables is considered very weak as it is reported as $r = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$ which means that they only share 9% of the variance between themselves. The existence of positive correlation shared by motivation and final score might be understood as motivated individuals would be goal-directed, make effort to achieve the goal, persistence in their effort, and attend to any tasks necessary for achieving their goals (Gardner, 2001). However, motivation is only one factor out of many other factors contributing to the learners' success in learning a second language as confirmed by a weak correlation value in this study.

Educational Implication

This research, which is grounded in classroom setting situation and focuses on actual learning process, has considerable educational implications. Although more experimental designs are necessary to confirm the causal relationship, the findings of this study demonstrate a predictive utility of students’ attitudes toward teachers to learning motivation, and motivation to learning achievement. As the findings show that students’ attitudes toward their English teachers are significantly correlated to their English learning motivation, and students’ learning motivation is also found to be correlated positively with student’ learning achievement, thus teachers’ styles in teaching and behaviors may influence the students’ motivation, and thereby contributes to a better learning. According to Noels et al. (1999), teachers may improve students’ motivation by interacting with students in a way that allow the student to develop their self-autonomy and competence, such as providing informative materials and constructive feedback. Dörnyei (2001) further suggests that there is a possibility to develop a
systematic motivational strategy which can be implemented to generate and maintain students’ motivation. A comprehensive framework of a motivational teaching practice proposed by Dörnyei (2001) consists of four main dimensions: (1) creating the basic motivational conditions, generating initial student motivation, (3) maintaining and protecting motivation and (4) encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation. These four dimensions are further collapsed into concrete motivational strategies and techniques, covering wide range areas from “making teaching materials relevant to the students” through “setting specific students’ goals” to “increasing students’ satisfaction” (see Dörnyei, 2001).

CONCLUSION

Learning a new language is indeed a complicated process as many factors could contribute to language learning achievement. Given its potential to be enhanced and maintained, motivation is one factor that teachers can develop for promoting students’ learning experience and achievement through a systematic development of teaching strategies and techniques. The results presented in this study show that attitudes toward teachers are linked with learning motivation, and learning motivation is associated with achievement. In the light of these findings, it is hoped that this study will contribute to a better comprehension of the relationship among teachers’ attitude and teaching styles, learning motivation, and learning achievement in the language classroom setting. There are some limitations of this study that should be taken into account for subsequent research. Firstly, this present study focuses on students’ attitudes toward their English teachers. It is possible that the participants did not accurately report their teachers’ attitudes and teaching styles. Participants’ responses may be bias due to participants’ differences in language proficiency, general liking of the teachers, and so on. Secondly, this study only involves a small sample size, thus seems to be inadequate to represent Indonesian EFL
students in tertiary educational level in general. A study involves more participants with a wider range of age and using participants with less or longer history of English learning may produce different results. As the students’ attitudes toward teachers is found to be moderately correlated with motivation, thus, further research focuses on other variables that may associated with students’ motivation such as peers (MacIntyre & Clement, 1998), family members (Williams & Burden 1997) and members of L2 community (Noels, 1999) is merit to be conducted in order to address this issue in a more comprehensive way. Furthermore, there is also a necessity for longitudinal and experimental research, which can best measure the relationship among the three variables.

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BIBLIOGRAFY


