

Motivation, Attitude and English Learning Behaviours of the low-graded Students

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Abstract— The purposes of this research were as follows:

1) to study motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours of the low-graded students 2) to compare motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours of the low-graded students according to genders and majors based on the students' grade of ENL-101 from the first semester of 2011 academic year and 3) to compile opinions and suggestions in order to improve teaching-learning methods and techniques to match with the students' needs.

Research samples were 312 low-graded students at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in 2011 academic year, derived through stratified random sampling technique. The instruments used for gathering the data were the rating-scale and open-ended questionnaire. Statistics used for analysing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, F-test, and content analysis.

Research findings were as follows:

1. The low-graded students had a moderate level of motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours. However, when considered in each aspect, it was shown that motivation was at a high level while attitude and English learning behaviours were at a moderate level.

2. Students with different genders had no statistically significant differences in motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours in total and in each aspect.

3. Students with different majors had statistically significant differences in motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours at .05 level in overall. However, it was found out that there were statistically significant differences on attitude and English learning behaviours at .05 level when considered in each aspect.

4. The students gave various suggestions as follows: 1) A pleasure classroom environment should be developed by setting interesting teaching materials as well as the new teaching methods through the application of student-centred approach. 2) English songs and movies should be applied in the classroom for motivating students' attention. 3) Pair and group discussion based on their areas of interest should be done regularly in order to practice students' critical thinking and 4) Additional classes for the students who couldn't catch up with their friends in normal class should be arranged every week. In addition, the teachers should explain the significance of learning English language to the students in order to create their positive attitude and motivation for English learning. Thus, the students may change their learning behaviours in order to achieve their goals.

Keywords— Motivation, Attitude, English Learning Behaviors, the Low-Graded Students

I. INTRODUCTION

Along with economic globalization, English has increasingly become the medium of communication around the world both in local and global contexts. The realization of importance of English highlights the necessity of every country to have its people become better equipped with English performance. Inevitably, this necessity is also applicable to Thailand. In response to the demands for English skills, the Thai government has made constant efforts to improve Thai learners' English performance in order to be competency in English. The results, therefore, might be shown as learners have a high opportunity to get a good job and enable to have promotions or career advancement [1].

The term motivation in the second language learning context is seen according to Gardner (1985) as 'referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learning the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity' [2]. High motivation is, thus, one factor that causes successful learning; in reverse successful learning causes high motivation. In addition, motivation derives from an inherent interest in the learning tasks the learner is asked to perform [3].

Self-confidence is one of the most important determinants in learner learning attitude as demonstrated by following factors [4].

1. Language competence is a changeable aspect of development.

2. An educator can promote to increase confidence in learning.

3. Success can promote positive self-perceptions.

4. Learners' contributions to learning tasks, promotes learner interest.

To follow with the stipulation of the Thai government, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology has been operated under the philosophy of "disseminating knowledge and building economic base". Therefore, one of the TNI objectives is to generate human resources who have abilities in technological advancement and industrial management. According to these objectives, TNI concept of program administration is required to emphasize on the students' language skills, especially in Japanese and English communication. In order to achieve in the TNI objectives, TNI has arranged 30 units of Japanese and English learning

which divided into 18 requisite subjects and 12 elective subjects [5].

However, it is found out that English teaching is not as successful as expected. Although College of General Education and Languages has organized Foundation English course for the new students in each semester, the problem still exists. Consequently, English teachers have to set up a remedial class for the low-grade students as well as find out various techniques to improve the students' learning ability.

Therefore, the research which focused on the background of problems that barricades the achievement in students' English learning is required.

Research Purposes

The purposes of this research were 1) to study motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours of the low-graded students, 2) to compare motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours of the low-graded students according to genders and majors based on the students' grade of ENL-101 from the first semester, 2011 academic year, and 3) to compile opinions and suggestions as for the improvement of teaching-learning methods and techniques for the low-graded students.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Populations and Samples

This research was a survey method in motivation, attitude and English learning behaviors of the low-graded students.

Populations and samples were as follows:

Populations of this study were 1,200 of the TNI students in the first semester of 2011 academic year.

Samples of this study were 312 TNI students in the first semester of 2011 academic year derived through simple random sampling technique.

B. Variables in study

- 1) The students' motivation to learn English
- 2) The students' attitude towards English language
- 3) The students' English learning behaviors

C. Research Instrument

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section consisted of personal data which were gender, major and graded received from ENL-101. The second section consisted of 37 questions in 3 aspects emphasized on the students' motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours. 5 point scale was applied to answer this section, which are 1= "Strongly disagree," 2= "Disagree," 3= "Neither agree nor disagree," 4= "Agree," and 5= "Strongly agree." The third section was open-ended questionnaire which consisted of 4 aspects mainly focused on opinions and suggestions to investigate the better methods and techniques for English teaching-learning improvement.

D. Data analysis

The data was analyzed by using SPSS/PC (Statistical Package for Social Sciences/Personal computer). The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, F-test, and content analysis.

III. RESULT

The result of this research divided into 3 phases.

Phase 1: The results of demographic variables of TNI undergraduate students.

TABLE 1

The results of demographic variables of TNI students

Demographic data of respondents	n	%
1. Gender		
1.1 male	176	56.41
1.2 female	136	43.59
Total	312	100
2. Majors		
2.1 Automotive Engineering	45	14.42
2.2 Production Engineering	40	12.82
2.3 Computer Engineering	48	15.38
2.4 Information Technology	40	12.82
2.5 Media Technology	30	9.61
2.6 Industrial Management	40	12.82
2.7 Business Japanese	69	22.11
Total	312	100
3. Grade		
3.1 C+	90	28.85
3.2 C	89	28.53
3.3 D+	70	22.44
3.4 D	63	20.18
3.5 F	0	0
Total	312	100

Phase 2: The results of motivation, attitude and behaviours in English learning of the low-graded students

TABLE 2

Table of mean and standard deviation of motivation, attitude and behaviours in English learning of the low-graded students in each aspect and in total

Components	N	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level
1. Motivation	312	3.53	0.66	high
2. Attitude	312	3.40	0.91	moderate
3. Behaviours	312	3.41	0.79	moderate
Total	312	3.45	0.78	moderate

Phase 3: The results of comparing motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours of the low-graded students according to genders and majors. In case of statistical significance at .05 level was found. Scheffe's method will be tested.

TABLE 3

Table of comparison of motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours of the low-graded students in total and in each aspect according to genders

Components	Genders				t	P
	Male (n=347)		Female (n=195)			
	\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.		
1. Motivation	3.51	0.80	3.59	0.76	-1.193	0.134
2. Attitude	3.46	0.88	3.51	0.90	0.429	0.068
3. Behaviours	3.42	0.75	3.40	0.82	0.671	0.093
Total	3.46	0.81	3.50	0.82	-0.31	0.098

*Statistical Significance at .05 level

The table revealed that students with different genders had no statistically significant differences in overall and in each aspect.

TABLE 4

Table of comparison of motivation, attitude and English behaviours of the low-graded students in total and in each aspect according to majors

ANOVA							
Components		SS	df	MS	F	p	Scheff e
1. Motivation	Between Groups	4.575	7	0.432	1.438	0.199	
	Within Groups	108.855	305	0.300			
	Total	113.430	312				
2. Attitude	Between Groups	2.589	7	0.762	2.676	0.015*	AE-BJ, AE-BI
	Within Groups	114.626	305	0.285			
	Total	117.216	312				
3. Behaviours	Between Groups	6.320	7	1.053	3.319	0.003*	AE-BJ, BJ-IT
	Within Groups	121.227	305	0.317			
	Total	127.547	312				
Total	Between Groups	3.696	7	0.756	2.282	0.035*	AE-BJ, AE-BI, BJ-IT
	Within Groups	79.191	305	0.331			
	Total	82.887	312				

*Statistical Significance at .05 level

The table indicated that students with different majors had statistically significant differences in total at .05 level. When considered in each aspect, it was found that students had statistically significant differences in attitude and in English learning behavior at .05 level. However, there was no statistically significant difference in motivation aspect.

The table above illustrated the result that students with different majors had statistically significant differences in total at .05 level from 3 pairs of the students' majors: Automotive Engineering and Business Japanese; Automotive Engineering and Business Information; and Business Japanese and Information Technology. When considered in each aspect,

it found that attitude and English learning behaviours had statistically significant differences at .05 level.

When analysing attitude aspect, the result showed that there were 2 pairs of statistically significant differences. The first pair was from Automotive Engineering students and Business Japanese students. The second pair was from Automotive Engineering students and Business Information students. For English learning behaviour aspect, there were 2 pairs of statistically significant differences as well which were from Automotive Engineering students and Business Japanese students. The other pair was from Business Japanese students and Information Technology students.

Phase 4: The results of study opinions and suggestions of the low-graded students in three components: motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours. In this phase, frequency and content analysis were presented.

TABLE 7

Table of frequency and percentage of number of opinions and suggestions of the low-graded students in 3 components: motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours

Opinions and suggestions	N	Fre	%
The teaching-learning process to generate the students' English learning motivation.	75		
1. Teaching-learning process which mainly focuses on student-centred is required.		29	38.66
2. Activities outside classroom are necessary.		17	22.66
3. There is less indication of the importance of English learning for the students' future.		13	17.33
4. Thai teachers should only teach in English.		10	13.33
5. Teachers should focus more on English communication for workplace.		4	5.33
6. Songs and movies should be applied as teaching materials in classroom.		2	2.66
Opinions and suggestions	68		
The teaching-learning process to create positive attitude towards the students' English learning.			
1. Relax classroom environment is needed.		24	35.29
2. Extra articles from the students' areas of interest are preferred.		18	26.47
3. Thai and foreign teachers sometimes speak too fast.		9	13.23
4. Weak students and good students should not be in the same class.		8	11.76
5. Pair and group discussion are helpful for practicing speaking.		5	7.35
6. The students should have spare time to ask questions before the class is finished.		4	5.88
Opinions and suggestions	42		

The teaching-learning process to arrange and organize the students to have good English learning behaviours.			
1. Grammar rules should be explained slower and clearer.		16	38.09
2. Teaching reading should start from small sentences to a longer one.		14	33.33
3. Remedial classes for weak students should be arranged every week.		12	28.57

IV. DISCUSSION

According to the table above, the results of the study could be analysed as follows:

1. The low-graded students had a high level of motivation in learning English. The majority of the low-graded students revealed that “If I have good skills of English communication, I will have good future”. The following item was “I can broaden my knowledge if my English is fluent”. These two statements are accordance with Koiso [6]’s theory who addresses that motivation is a very common concept regarded as a determining factor of success in developing a second or foreign language. Second and foreign language learners should be offered the opportunity to be motivated and fulfil their learning orientations. Qashoa [7], further, demonstrates. The different sources of motivation, therefore, are outlined as: 1) The learner’s natural interest as intrinsic satisfaction; 2) The teacher as extrinsic reward and 3) Success in task as a combination between satisfaction and reward. Frith [8], moreover, advocates the 6 components of learning motivation as: curiosity; self efficacy; attitude; need; competence; and external motivators. Therefore, these might support the result of the study that low-graded students had motivation to learn English through various factors, such as knowledge, communication skills, practical skills and future career which supported by Schneider [9] who indicates that 2 important factors of motivation are positive attitude and feelings toward the target language group; and potential utilitarian gains of second language proficiency, such as getting a better job or higher salary.

2. The result of attitude was at a moderate level. The highest score was at the item of “It is good to learn English through activities and practices”. The second item was at “My English basic is not good so it is difficult to follow my friends when teacher is teaching”. These two items matched with the notion of Crystal [10] who states that English is a foreign language which is not used in daily life. Many students, therefore, have developed passive attitudes towards learning English due to previous experiences that English is hard to learn. Hence, it is significant for the students to have positive language attitudes which related to the notion of Baker [11] who defines language attitude as the feelings of people about their own language or the languages of others which are

presented through internal thoughts, feelings and tendencies in behaviour across a context.

3. The result of English learning behaviour was at a moderate level as well. The highest score was at the item “I try to practice speaking English with both Thai and foreign teachers”. The second highest score was at the item “I try not to be absent from the class”. These items might be supported by the theory of Gootman [12] who describes that many teachers set up rules in language learning in order to give students concrete direction to ensure that the students’ expectation becomes reality. Therefore, Brown [13] suggests affirmative teaching as one of the good examples for guiding and helping the students to create learning environment where students are successful as a result of their own efforts.

Brophy [14] further indicates the notion of contemporary behaviour modification approach which involves the students more actively in planning and shaping their own behaviour through various kinds of techniques, such as self-control, problem-solving and goal setting. In consequence, the students have to know how to reinforce themselves for meeting these goals.

According to the study, the difficulties to barricade the students to speak English fluently might be from the concept of Markmee and Sheila [15] who demonstrate the following factors:

1. Interference from the mother tongue (Thai) particularly in pronunciation, syntax, and idiomatic usage.
2. Lack of opportunity to use English in their daily lives.
3. Unchallenging English lessons.
4. Being passive learners.
5. Being too shy to speak English with classmates and teachers.
6. Lack of responsibility for their own learning.

Hence, the ability of teachers to organize classrooms and manage the behaviour of their students is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes. The students, therefore, have to be fulfilled with the ability to learn and develop and be able to keep pace with the rapid changing world.

CONCLUSION

The result of the motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours of low-graded students as a whole was shown at moderate level (\bar{x} = 3.45). When considered in each aspect, it was found out that motivation was at a high level (\bar{x} = 3.53), attitude was at a moderate level (\bar{x} = 3.40) and English learning behaviour was at a moderate level (\bar{x} = 3.41).

The results of comparison motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours according to genders and majors of the low-graded students were shown as follows:

1. Students with different genders had no statistically significant differences in motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours.
2. Students with different majors had statistically significant differences in motivation, attitude and English

learning behaviours in total at .05 level. When considered each aspect, it was revealed that there were statistically significant differences on attitude and English learning behaviours at .05 level. On the other hand, there was no statistically significant difference in motivation aspect.

Students with different majors had statistically significant differences in overall at .05 level from 3 pairs of the students' majors: Automotive Engineering and Business Japanese; Automotive Engineering and Business Information; and Business Japanese and Information Technology. When considered in each aspect, it found that attitude and behaviours had statistically significant differences at .05 level.

From attitude aspect, there were 2 pairs of statistically significant differences which were from Automotive Engineering students and Business Japanese students and Automotive Engineering students and Business Information students.

From behaviour aspect, there were 2 pairs of statistically significant differences as well from Automotive Engineering students and Business Japanese students. The other pair was from Business Japanese students and Information Technology students.

3. The various opinions and suggestions provided by low-graded students in order to improve teaching-learning methods and techniques were briefly summarized as: a pleasure classroom environment was preferred; the application of student-centred approach was needed; songs and movies were necessary for motivating students' attention; pair and group discussions based on the students' interest were useful for critical thinking incubation. One interesting point was highlighted that the teachers should explain the usefulness of English language in order to create the positive attitude and motivation for English learning for the students.

It might be concluded that when studying language learning context, it comes to the concept of the language attitude and motivation to learn the language. The combination of effort and desire to achieve the goal of learning the language will, then, be led to the effective learning behaviours towards the language learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Opinions and suggestions for further development of English teaching and learning process were illustrated as follows.

1. Recommendation for this study

1.1 From the results of the study, it was revealed that ENL-101 low-graded students had a high level of motivation to learn English. Thus, the students should be more focus on practical skills in learning English. Therefore, the learning environment should be based on English communication related to real workplace situation varied from the students' majors. This might promote the students to learn and teachers create the place where the students find learning to be exciting in order to achieve their goals.

1.2 The results of the study presented moderate level of both attitude and English learning behaviours of ENL-101 low-graded students. Thus, it might be necessary for English

teachers to promote self-access learning center to the students. Therefore, the students might have a chance to do further practice on language skills on their own in addition to what has been taught in the classroom according to individual needs and interests. Consequently, the sources of a variety of general knowledge which the students can integrate in the study of subject matter in the English language especially in listening and reading skills should be supported as self-study materials.

2. Recommendation for further study

2.1 Comparisons of motivation, attitude and English learning behaviours between high-graded students and low-graded students in English subjects should be tested in the next study.

2.2 A survey of motivating and de-motivating factors among the students in English subjects should be proposed for the next study.

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