

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

A simple question on a riveting subject among educational institutions is why some people can become successful learners of a second or foreign language (L2) easily and successfully while others find it hard or almost impossible to acquire it, despite being offered a similar opportunity. The following example may illustrate this issue vividly. As we may acknowledge, many university students find that their level of motivation is not sufficient to maintain them in continuing their academic performance. For instance, a student is to be a doctor because his or her parents would like him to be a doctor. This could result in a lack of motivation and persistence in the extent of active involvement in the learning settings.

Many researchers agree that motivation to learn L2 is responsible for either success or failure in L2 learning, apart from intelligence and aptitude (Ketvalee Porkaew, 2004, pp. 69-70). It is one of the main motivational factors that impact the success of L2 learning. Moreover, for several decades researchers in social psychology and education have accepted the importance of motivation for successful learning. Gardner (1999, p. 16) asserted that learners who are truly motivated to learn L2 would find their language learning rewarding.

In reality, other affective variables like attitude, orientations, anxiety, and motivation have shown to be at least as essential as language aptitude for anticipating L2 achievement. Gardner (1999, pp. 15-16) stated that even though attitudes and other influential factors to learn a language would not directly help learners acquire a second language, they would provide a basis for motivation. That's why, Clément and Kruidenier conducted a research so as to identify further variables that can lead to motivation. Such variables as travel, seeking new friendship, and acquiring new knowledge were identified (Root, 1999, p. 3).

Gardner (1999, p. 16) added that motivation is viewed as a direct cause of achievement in the L2 learning. However, there may be other factors as well, having a direct impact on success in acquiring L2 without motivation alone. For example, Clément investigated the role of self-confidence in the language in influencing

language achievement. Also, Dörnyei and Cumming (2003) studied the role of instrumental orientation in language learning. Oxford (1996) also identified a variety of learning strategies that help learners facilitate their language learning.

Dörnyei and Cumming (2003, pp. 1-2) stated that the study of motivation in L2 learning has a history over four decades. It is one of the most thoroughly investigated fields of second language acquisition (SLA), with a number of books and studies. The research of L2 motivation was initially conducted in Canada and emphasized by social psychology. As both Anglophone and Francophone communities speak two of the world's important languages, this aspect posed a continuous challenge to researchers in the social sciences to understand the uniqueness of Canada. Consequently, in their initial comprehensive study, Gardner and Lambert (1972, pp. 4-5) viewed L2s as "mediating factors between ethnolinguistic communities in multicultural settings." The motivation to learn the language of other communities is a primary push accounting for either promoting or impeding intercultural communication and affiliation.

Gardner and Lambert (1972, p. 5) initiated a socio-educational model consisting of two kinds of motivational orientations: integrative motivation referring to motivation where learners would like to assimilate themselves with the target language community; and instrumental motivation referring to motivation where people would like to learn a target language in order to achieve instrumental objectives such as getting a better job or salary, and reading technical manuals. By the 1990s, Gardner's motivation theory dominated L2 motivation research (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 39).

Dörnyei and Cumming (2003, p. 37), on the other hand, contended that even though the integrative orientation crucially resulted in the desire for assimilation and identification with the L2 members and could predict successful L2 learning, now it would not be a foundational factor to the motivational process. It would appear only in specific sociocultural contexts rather than in the language classroom. Hence, it did not include details on cognitive aspects of motivation to learn. Root (1999, p.1) affirmed in her research that the study of motivation previously focused on two main motivational orientations: integrative and instrumental. Subsequently, many researchers conducted research studies beyond these two motivational orientations.

These new themes were not meant to replace the integrative-instrumental orientations, but Dörnyei and Csizer (2002, p. 7) stated that further research was needed to find out other new conceptualizations and interpretations in order to extend the definition of the terms without contending with the previous body of the empirical studies collected during the past four decades.

In 2001, Dörnyei's study was cited in Carreira (2005, p. 40) stating that some researchers in SLA had started to "incorporate psychological and education-friendly motivation into SLA research". These studies especially emphasize 'intrinsic motivation' and 'extrinsic motivation' called 'self-determination' as conceptualized by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002, p. 68). This concept has been used in the L2 field without specifying their relationship with the two motivational orientations: integrative and instrumental. These two variables: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation can greatly influence student motivation in L2 learning, having shown positive correlation with language achievement. After conducting the research to assess age differences in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, Lepper, Corpus and Lyengar (2005, pp. 189, 191) also stated that extrinsic motivation can be measured separately without harming reliability and validity.

The Foreign Languages Department, Buriram Rajabhat University, was established in 1972 with the objective of teaching English language, both fundamental and main courses, to regular and weekend students. The Department now offers four majors to about 650 undergraduate students: Business English (Bachelor of Arts); English (Bachelor of Education); English, major in Japanese (Bachelor of Arts); and English (Bachelor of Arts). At present, there are 27 teachers: 13 permanent teachers, 1 government employee, 1 university employee, 6 foreign teachers, and 11 contract teachers. Each year the Department produces students to work nationwide in private companies, governmental sectors, and educational institutions that need staff with overall English language skills.

Consequently, it is extremely important for instructors to understand the nature of student motivation in L2 learning as research shows that motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, plays a major role in language acquisition. In addition, understanding the particular motivational variables affecting the L2 acquisition can guide instructors or universities to initiate and maintain motivation pertinently in the educational climate.

In respect of this matter, the current study serves two purposes: (1) to determine the degree of self-determination, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations the studied samples have in English language learning; and (2) to find out the affective factors that contribute to the degree of their motivation in English language learning.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research study aims to answer the following questions:

1.2.1 What degree of intrinsic motivation do the undergraduate students have in English language learning?

1.2.2 What degree of extrinsic motivation do the undergraduate students have in English language learning?

1.2.3 What affective factors contribute to the differences in the degree of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the undergraduate students in English language learning?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research study has the following objectives:

1.3.1 Main Objective:

To determine the degree of self-determination of the undergraduate students in English language learning.

1.3.2 Sub-Objectives:

1. To examine the degree of extrinsic motivation of the undergraduate students in English language learning.

2. To investigate the degree of intrinsic motivation of the undergraduate students in English language learning.

3. To find out the affective factors that contribute to the differences in the degree of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the undergraduate students in English language learning.

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The terms mentioned in this study are operationally defined as follows:

Undergraduate student refers to the bachelor's degree students who have studied English as a foreign language offered by the Department of Foreign Languages,

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Buriram Rajabhat University. They can be categorized into four majors:

- Business English (Bachelor of Arts)
- English (Bachelor of Education)
- English, major in Japanese (Bachelor of Arts)
- English (Bachelor of Arts)

English language refers to both compulsory and elective English courses the undergraduate students are required to take throughout their bachelor's degree, provided by the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Buriram Rajabhat University.

Self-determination refers to the degree of motivation to which the undergraduate students endorse their actions at the highest level of reflection and engage in the actions with a full sense of choice. It can be divided into two types:

1. Intrinsic motivation refers to the engagement in learning English language because the undergraduate students are intrinsically motivated to learn it. In this study, it can be measured by the following indicators:

- Interest/enjoyment
- Perceived competence
- Value/usefulness
- Perceived choice
- Effort/importance

2. Extrinsic motivation refers to the engagement in learning English language because the undergraduate students are extrinsically motivated to learn it. In this study, it can be measured by the following indicators:

- Teacher
- Performance goal
- Classmate
- Parental involvement
- Learning material

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 The subjects (n=250) of the study were undergraduate students learning English as a foreign language, enrolling in both compulsory and elective courses offered by the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Buriram Rajabhat University. They were in the academic year 2007.

1.5.2 The studied undergraduate students are divided into four majors: Business English (Bachelor of Arts); English (Bachelor of Education); English, major in Japanese (Bachelor of Arts); and English (Bachelor of Arts). They studied during the academic year 2006. All of the samples were first, second, and third-year students, excluding fourth-year students, who participated in the present study.

1.5.3 Since the samples were drawn from English-majored students, the results can't be applied to students in the other programs. Nor can they be generalized to students in the following semesters because individuals have a different degree of motivation.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 This study will provide necessary information to be utilized as a guide for the Department of Languages, Buriram Rajabhat University in the preparation and employment of teaching methods and learning materials better suited to simulate its students' interest and enjoyment.

1.6.2 The research findings will be useful to help the Department increase both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for its students in L2 learning and to develop a guidance program or motivational orientation for helping fresh undergraduate students adjust themselves to a new learning setting.

1.6.3 This study will help both new and current students perceive factors that could enhance their motivation in an academic environment, thus enabling the students to successfully fulfill their actual hopes and needs. More importantly, the research finding will help teachers effectively implement a motivation-increasing teaching approach if the teachers understand what their students need and expect from the subjects they have been studying.

1.6.4 Hopefully, this study will bring this crucial issue to the management levels of the University so that management can become more aware of the importance

or influence of motivation on academic performance and learning outcomes. The University can then put more effort into developing academic settings, teaching personnel, learning facilities, and curriculum so that the students can be motivated to learn and participate in any academic activities.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study of self-determination in English language learning is divided into five chapters. Chapter One comprises the background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, definition of terms, scope of the study, and significance of the study. Chapter Two presents the review of literature, definitions of self-determination, overview of L2 learning theory, self-determination and L2 learning, and relevant research. Chapter Three details the methodology of the study consisting of subjects, materials, procedures, and data analysis. Chapter Four reports the results of the study, aiming to present the answers obtained from the questionnaire survey. Chapter Five shows conclusions and discussions of the study findings and provides recommendations for further research.