The Overview of Motivational Theories in Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract

This paper aims to review two motivational theories in second language acquisition, underlying on the effect of motivation to the students' effort in learning English as foreign language and discussing the issues that emerge in applying motivational theories in English learning within global context. The paper begins by reviewing the development of motivational theories, previous and current trends, and debates on development of motivational theories. Its overview on theoretical developments is based on the examination of some published articles and books in motivation and the field of language teaching. It is expected that this overview contribute positive future consideration for English teacher in developing teaching method that enables to motivate the student in learning English.

Keywords: motivation, language learning, teaching method.

Introduction

Motivation is one of the prominent issues for researchers to focus on due to its significant influence on longer learning process in second language learning and becomes one of significance factors in mastering second language (L2). Because motivation is also influenced by both psychological and social factors that contribute to the desire and the effort of the learners in learning, English language teachers have to pay attention on student's social factor and students' psychology that impact the final result of learning L2. As Ushioda (2011, pp.11-12) points out that the learners is a self-reflective agent, with a fluid and complex web of social relations, activities, and experiences, and cannot be separated from either micro or macro-social contexts.

English has status as foreign language in Indonesia. In generally, English is learnt at school along with other foreign languages such Arabic and Japanese. Besides, in general, Indonesian learners are bilingual. They speak vernacular languages as their mother tongues and Bahasa Indonesia as official and national language as well as medium of instruction both in formal or non-formal circumstances. Therefore, generally, English is learnt as prerequisite subject in school from primary to tertiary level. This situation provokes serious challenges not only for learners themselves but also for the English teachers in teaching the language. The situation and status English as foreign language as the same as to other learners from other expanding circle that has to be able to see the benefit of learning and using English in global context. Therefore, it is considered that English teachers have very significant role to keep their learners’ motivation and to motivate them in learning process by applying motivational strategies in their teaching method.
This paper has two following aims; First, to overview two motivational theories in second language acquisition; integrative motivation and L2 motivational self-system underlyng on the effect of motivation to the students effort in learning English as foreign language; Second, to discuss motivational theory used that is compatible with English learners in global context, and the last one is to discuss the appropriate teaching method applied to teaching English as foreign language that is in line with the context of the students/learners of English in Indonesia. The paper overviews on theoretical developments based on the examination of some published articles and books in term of motivation and the field of language teaching that influence learner motivation, desire, and learner’s effort in learning English. It is expected the result of this study contributes positive consideration for English teachers in developing teaching method that motivate the student during the process of learning English.

Theoretical Overview of Motivational Theories in Second Language Learning
The notion of motivational factor in L2 learning has been introduced over the last few decades. The issues on influential factor of motivation have been raised and been fruitful to discuss over many years. Many scholars and research examinations have conducted studies on motivation in order to seek the solution in learning second language. Corder (1967, as cited in Dornyei, 2009) mentions ‘given motivation’ a term which refers to essential factor for learners in second language acquisition. Many motivational theories have been proposed by many scholars such integrative motivational theory, self-determination theory, and L2 language motivational self-system in order to overcome the issues in second language acquisition. The following discussions are integrative motivation and L2 motivational self-system theories.

Integrative Motivational Theory
Integrative motivational theory is suggested by Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972, as cited in Dornyei, 2006, p.10). The theory is that learning second language is affected by the psychosocial factors operating while acquiring the target language. The integrative theory describes the relation between motivation and learner of L2 learning by suggesting the following components: integrative orientation, integrativeness, and integrative motives/motivation. Integrative orientation is about the reasons of learners for learning second language and the final goals are set to be achieved by the learners. Integrative orientation also refers to emotional engagement of second language learners to the community of target language. Integrativeness is constructed based on several variables, including the interest in foreign languages, learners’ attitude toward L2 community, and also including integrative orientation. Furthermore, Integrative motives is constructed from attitudinal, goal-directed, and variables of motivation; effort, desire, and attitude toward L2 learning.

Gardner (1985, as cited in Dornyei, 2003) further states that integrative motive/motivation refers to positive interpersonal of the learners or affective nature on the community of second language and the interaction desire with the target language community, which results to the openness and respect for the ways of life and culture other groups. In line with this Gardner (2001:1 as cited in Dornyei et al, 2006) describes that integrativeness shows the learners’ positive attitude on the L2 and its culture and the possible desire to integrate into the L2 culture or may be to be similar to the L2 speakers. Thus, the main point of the integrative concept is about identification of learners’ emotion regarding with the interaction between learners and the community of target language.

L2 Motivational Self-System
According to Markus & Nurius (1986, as cited in Dornyei, 2003) the process of integrative motivation may lead to motivational issues that later on they underline the terms of possible and ideal selves, which relate to the self-concept of the learner as an individual. Markus & Nurius describe the possible selves to represent the notion of
a learner as an individual relating with what she/he may become, what she/he would like to become, and what she/he is afraid of becoming. Therefore the possible self refers to the ideal self of a learner as an individual to possess motivational factors for instance, hopes, aspirations, and desires. Further Dornyei (2009) by borrowing the term of possible self and ideal-self from Markus & Nurius, he re-conceptualises and broadens the motivational theory of integration proposed by Garner by employing self-approach. Dornyei proposes the ‘L2 motivational self-system’ concept in order to cover a number of issues raised in motivation regarding to various learner context. Thus, the concept broaden wider understanding of diverse learning contexts, even if the learner does not have desire to interact or little possibility or no opportunity to contact or to emulate with the culture of L2 community of the target language (Dornyei, et al, 2006, pp. 144-145). The concept of ‘L2 Motivational Self-System proposed by Dornyei, introduces the concept of the person’s self into the L2 learner as self-concept, regarding to the psychological theory of ‘possible selves’ which represents the learner idea as an individual.

Subsequently, the possible selves of a learner as a person act as future self-guides that explain how the learner moves from different time phases; present to the future; that involve the imaginative self-identity and its influence on a learner’s purposive behaviour. Possible selves are classified into ideal/hoped selves, which refers to what learners would like to become, and the self of what a learner could become. Possible selves relates to what the learner is afraid of becoming. Therefore ideal or hoped self includes the successful self, the rich self, the loved self or admired self that could refer to the expected or likely self. However, the afraid of self includes the alone self, depressed self, incompetent self, or unemployed self, which it is assumed may give constraints and demotivate the learner’ effort and his/her desire in learning the target language. According to Dornyei (2009, p. 11) the possible selves may lead to the best or worst situation of the learners, which result in various motivational factors, such as expectations, attributes, values, and beliefs.

The main concept of possible selves is the ‘ideal self’ that represents the learners of what she/he ideally likes to possess which represents personal hopes, aspirations or wishes of a learner as an individual. A complementary self-guide, the ought-to self, will serve as a powerful motivator to learn the language because of the psychological desire to reduce the discrepancy between our current and possible future selves, which is caused by the purpose in every action taken by the learner. If the learners’ ideal self is associated with the L2 learning and would like to become an L2 speaker professionally, the integrative disposition will be compatible with the ideal self-concept. As the self is a central element of possible selves’ theory, dreams/images of future desires are the main content of the ideal self. Therefore, the imaginary component of future self-guides is a powerful motivation tool because motivation drives the desire to reduce the difference between one’s actual self and the ideal/ought-to self and put more effort for the L2 learners to learn the target language in order to delineates the ought-to-self in preventing the worst consequence in the futures.

Furthermore, Higgins (1998 as cited in Dornyei, 2009, p. 10) mentions that the future self can be divided into ideal self-guides which have a promotional focus, and are imbued with hope, aspiration, growth, and accomplishment. Ought-to self-guides have a preventing focus, which regulates the absence or presence of negative outcomes associated with failure or the ability to live up to various responsibilities and obligations. Self-discrepancy theory, offered by Higgins, mentions that people are motivated to achieve a condition where their self-concept contests their personally relevant self-guides.
Debates on Motivational Theories within Global Context

However, the issues on the integrative theory arise since the limitation of the theory is only applicable for specific group of learners who are interested with specific group or culture of the target language. The debate will be more intensified when we are discussing of the real owner of L2 which is not always to be owned by a particular community of the L2 which will not correspond with the application to global community in case of English language as international lingua franca (Dornyei et al 2006, p. 12), where the learners are not interested to integrate with the culture or to emulate of English native speakers. Therefore, it is believed that integrative theory is not able to answer specific issues linked with psychological factors between motivational issues of learners and the contexts of English an international lingua when the learners are learning English as one of the major subjects in school, but never have interests or meet or have any contact with the English native speakers, and their culture. However, the motivation of learners to learn English is driven by other factors such as for travelling to non-native English speakers countries, gaining a better job, or because of the influences of significant others, such as learners’ peers or their parents. These factors of learning English are called instrumentality factors that will motivate the learners to have instrument motive. Instrument motive/motivation is the way of learners to seek their actual self to become the ideal-self in order to achieve their goal in mastering English language.

In addition, Lamb (2009), based on the results of his observations of Indonesian learners in learning English as a foreign language, also describes that the appropriate vision of a future L2-using self is the key component for an ideal-self-concept. Thus future self-guides provide incentive, direction, and impetus for action. Sufficient discrepancy between these and the actual self-initiates the distinctive self-regulatory strategies to reduce the discrepancy-future self-guides, representing points of comparison to be reconciled through behaviour.

According to Dornyei (2009), the possible selves’ theories subsume the imaginary component since language learning is a sustained and tedious process with a lot of temporary ups and downs. The secret of successful learners is the possession of a superordinate vision that keeps them on track. Thus, possible selves lead to the generation of motivation, imagination and vision (Dornyei, 2009, p. 25). He suggests the usefulness of reinterpreting integrativeness as the ideal L2 self-concept. This concept explains the attitude toward members of the L2 community, where L2 speakers are close parallels of the L2 speaking self. It is suggested that L2 learners’ attitudes toward members of the L2 community must be related to our ideal language self-image. The more positive our disposition towards the L2 community, the more attractive our idealized L2 language selves will be.

When the learners are willing to learn a L2 as choice, thus the possible self-concept will let the learners possess the attribution of various motivational factors: expectations, attributes, and beliefs that are psychologically experienced and durable aspects of consciousness (Dornyei, 2009). This lead the learners as individuals to see themselves in the present when the motivation is generated and the possible selves will represents the ideal-self of the learners as individuals about what they might become and would like to become and are afraid to become referring to future ideas rather than the current self-state. Thus, when the learner for instance Indonesian learner chooses to learn English because of instrumentality factors for travelling abroad or working overseas, it guides the learners to generate his/her initial motivation to learn English but not because learner interests to interact with the culture of English native speaker or try to emulate the specific community. A learner imagines himself/herself as someone who possibly becomes a person working in a developed country, speaking English fluently as part of global imagined community of English language users. Then, it will lead the learners “possible self” to become part
of the ‘hoped ideal self’, as the self who has aspirations, dreams, hopes, and wishes that will act as future guides to contribute positive outcomes toward his effort and desire in learning the target language. Therefore, the learner who learns English as international lingua franca without any purpose to interact or to assimilate with the culture of English native speakers will have more desire and make intense effort to learn the target language in order to achieve their goal for using English within global context. On the other hand, the possible selves of learners who tend to learn L2 because of obligation or because of the pressure assigned by a policy or curriculum, thus the learner will adopt the afraid-of self or the incompetent self. The ideal self will become the future guide self as ought to self in learning L2. The ought-to self relates to the learners ought to possess the attributes such as fear to fail the examination or afraid to be disappointed the parents.

Dornyei and some other scholars point out how significant the influence of the learning environment is toward learners’ motivation, their effort, and desire in learning L2. Moreover, Csizer and Kormos (2009), based on their studies on Hungarian learners, mention that the ought-to L2 self-dimension contains extrinsic motivational variables which come from parental encouragement, that is, parents’ views on the importance and necessity of L2 learning, and international postures relating to the view of the target language as lingua franca. Thus, they believe both the L2 learning experience, the international posture, and the ought-to L2 self-concept will impact on student’s desire, and efforts to become competent in the target L2. They suggest that a positive L2 learning experience will support the learners’ image of themselves as competent language users, with a knowledge orientation that refers to the instrumental value of English, since that will help the learners to gain more knowledge about the world.

Therefore, the motivational theory proposed by Dornyei (2009) offers three components of the L2 motivational self-system; the first is the ideal L2 self, associated with L2-specific facets; one ideal self when someone wants to become an L2 speaker. The second one is the ought-to L2 self, which is concerned with the attribute that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to reduce possible negative outcomes. The last one is the L2 learning experience; this is concerned with the situated executive motivation related to the immediate learning environment or significant others and the experience/impact of the teacher, curriculum, peer group, and the experience of success.

Dornyei’s theory of the L2 motivational self-system intends to broaden the integrativeness in order to be able to fix the learners’ situation as individuals in global context as part of imagined community of English users, particularly when there are no opportunities for them to integrate and get involved with the L2 language culture or its community of English language. Moreover, L2 motivational self-system theory is able to reinterpret L2 motivational self-system. The sources of the first component of the ideal L2-self generate the enhancement of learner imaginary and language learning vision. The second component of the L2 motivational self-system, the ought-to L2 self, is based on extrinsic motivational influences caused by external factors such as parents’ encouragement, duties, obligation imposed by curriculum policies, or other authority figures. The third component L2 learning experience is associated with a wide range of techniques that can promote motivation in classroom learning activities.

**Suggesting Motivating Teaching Method**

Dornyei’ (2001) declares that all teachers’ performances and their behaviour in classroom activities can influence the learners’ motivation in L2 learning. Additionally, he states that, in terms of teaching material, it is very important to associate the subjects with their backgrounds and everyday experiences. Additionally, some other studies reveal the significant correlation between L2 learning and the classroom
According to Xu (2011), language learning motivation is correlated with the use of language learning strategies in order to achieve the better outcomes in L2 learning. Thus, the L2 teachers should be more aware of their students' motivation and the strategies used to support the students in accomplishing better results in L2 learning. Moreover, Oxford (1990, as cited in Xu, 2011) also points out that learning strategies are specific actions that aim to make learning more enjoyable for the learners, more effective, easier, and faster, in order to enhance their learning activities. Nikolov (1999, as cited in Scizer & Kormos, 2009, p. 108) also state that classroom factors, including the teachers’ contribution, are the most important influence on what learning experiences students have and how much effort they are willing to invest in language learning.

Subsequently, Dornyei (2003) suggests that the factors affecting the learners in the learning process can fluctuate over time. The influences on learners’ motivation are decided by various factors: values associated with learning outcomes; learner beliefs and strategies; attitudes toward the L2 and its speakers; expectancy of success and perceived coping potential; environmental support and hindrance; and various goal properties. Environmental support or hindrance may be based on the particular status of L2s, for instance, English, as the second or the foreign language, and micro-social factors, such family, school, or the learners’ peers. These motivational influences can be positive or negative. Thus Dornyei proposes the differentiation of learner motivation into three stages, which illustrates the ‘ups and downs’ of learners’ motivation that will be changing over the time; preactional stage, actional stage, and postactional stage. The preactional stage explains that motivation needs to be generated which refers to the choice of a motivational tool; generated motivation creates the selection of the target or task that learners as individuals are going to pursue. Furthermore, in the actional stage, the main motivational influences include the quality of learning experiences such as the following: pleasantness; need significance; coping potential; self and social image; sense of autonomy; teachers’ and parents’ influences; classroom rewards; goal structure; influence of the learner group; and knowledge and use of self-regulatory strategies, such as goal-setting, learning and self-motivating strategies. The last one is the post-actional stage, which includes attribution factors, self-concept beliefs, such as self-confidence and self-worth, and received feedback, praise, and grades.

Therefore, Sampson (2012) based on Dornyei framework on L2 motivational self-system theory lists some following significant categories to be applied in teaching strategies: Construction of ideal L2-self; strengthening the division of self; making the ideal-self plausible; activating the ideal L2-self; developing final goal; counterbalance the vision of the ideal L2 self with the potential failure. Furthermore Sampson suggests some considerations on some motivating activities in teaching as perceived motivation activities: predicting own/ other future; conversation skit with overseas friends; own/other failure future; troubling situation; timeline to ideal future; and reflection of one semester study. Additionally, Sampson in his study also proposes some following activities as not perceived as motivating activities: English using occupations; international communication events; and English study role model.

Subsequently by adopting some teaching method based on motivating activities mentioned above, it is expected that teaching learning will focus on the centrality of self of the students as individual who possesses components of self; ideal-self, possible-self, and ought to self in learning English which will determine their motivation during the learning process. Motivating teaching method such as story telling on students possible failure in the future for final grade on their study for instance can enable the students to imagine their future self, and possible self that they can encounter to avoid ought to self during learning English. This the motivating teaching strategies that teachers apply can provide powerful motivation for the
students in learning English which will determine the students’ positive achievement in mastering English as International lingua franca.

**Conclusion**

English teachers have to take into account on the significant influence of motivation factor for the students during long process of teaching learning English. Therefore, the teachers should develop teaching method that can provide the powerful motivation to the students. The method should be link with the L2 motivational Self-System that enables the learners to imagine the visualization of selves.

**References**


