

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION OF THAI  
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**ABSTRACT**

Various factors influence students' motivation to learn a foreign language. As a country that has never been invaded by other countries and in which Thai is the official language and English is the only foreign language taught in schools, the study of students' motivation to learn English is worthwhile researching. The goal of this study was to find out what motivated students to learn English and how that desire manifested in classroom activities. Qualitative case study was employed in this study. Three data gathering procedures were used to acquire data i.e. questionnaire, observation, and semi-structured interview. To determine their motivation, 17 fifth-grade pupils at Lantaratprachautit School in Thailand were recruited to fill out a closed-ended questionnaire which was adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). Three students with varying levels of motivation were observed in order to determine how motivation was reflected in the English classroom. In addition, to triangulate the data in this study, a semi-structured interview was undertaken. The majority of the participants were assessed as having poor motivation, which was consistent with their classroom engagement. Finally, students' interest and participation in classroom activities in the English teaching-learning process represented their motivation in English language learning.

*Keywords:* English as a Foreign Language, Language Learning Motivations, Students' Motivation

**A. INTRODUCTION**

The role of motivation in learning is evident. Considerable research indicated its significant roles of motivation in students' learning (Chen & Huang, 2020; Chen, 2020; Sugita, 2012; Wong 2013; Ruesch 2012; Xiao, 2012). Additionally, in the context of language learning students' motivation is also one of the fundamental elements of their learning success. Its existence on the students' selves makes the students more encouraged to communicate and participate in the teaching-learning process (Wong, 2013 & Xuejun, 2020). It occurred because language learning is not only affected by the instructional variables but also influenced heavily by students' personality factors. As supported by Reusch, 2012 & Xuejun, 2020 that one of the influential factors in learning English is known as motivation. It was in line with Gardner (1985) who stated that motivation has long been identified as one of the main factors affecting English language learning. It is considered a significant role in language learning success.

Significant research in English as a Foreign Language revealed that some students had low motivation in learning the language. As indicated by research done by Gocke and Dislen (2013); Junzhang (2006); Wragg (2019). The reasons for lack of motivation in an EFL classroom were related to the student's age, a habit of solving multiple-choice questions, syllabus density, health problems, shortage of learning materials, traditional teaching methods like expository teaching, boring and colorless lessons, attention distracters like too much noise in the classroom, lack of comprehension and boredom, too many similar type exercises, teachers' teaching strategies, and the student's perception of the functionality of the language. However, the need to learn and master the language keeps raising since the ability to speak English is one of the fundamental competencies in the 21 century (Madiano, 2001; Shin, 2011; Wesche, 2016). In a non-English speaking country, in particular, English language learning is offered for the future occupational career of the students which enables the students to communicate in English and prepare them to socialize with the global community or international environment (Shin, Eslami, & Chen, 2011).

In the context of foreign language learning, it has been recommended that exposure to a target foreign language environment is one of the important factors since foreign language learning represents a complex, varied process influenced by both learners and environment-related aspects (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). It is essential to ensure that students are given significant language training tasks and a chance to exercise in an authentic environment (Golonka, Bowles, Frank, Richardson, & Freynik, 2014). As a consequence, language learning requires a contextual environment in which the students are encouraged to communicate and actively engaged in the process. Nonetheless, conventional classroom learning activities are rarely tied to real-world contexts which are not well equipped to respond to situated language learning (Lan, 2015; Lei et al., 2019; Li, Lee, Wong, Yau, & Wong, 2019). Considering the social historical factor of the Thailand as a country in South East Asian which has never been colonized by foreign countries in the past. Therefore, this research is interested to investigate the portrayal of Thailand students' Lantratpra Cha-U-Tit-School motivation and how is the students' motivation in English learning reflected in English learning activity at Lantratpra Cha-U-Tit-School.

### **1. The Concept of Motivation**

The importance of motivation in the English language learning process cannot be overstated. It is an important aspect of foreign language learning that gained traction when Gardner and Lambert's (1972) motivational work was released (Xuejun, 2020). Experts define motivation in a variety of ways. Motivation has long been recognized as one of the key elements determining English language learning, according to Gardner (1985). Furthermore, Gardner (1985, p.11) claims that the way motivation is described within the socio-educational paradigm demonstrates that motivation must be evaluated in terms of three components: (1) Individuals' desire to learn a language; (2) Individuals' attitudes towards learning a language and (3) the level of motivation or willingness to put forth effort in learning the language. It implies that motivation is regarded as crucial to language learning success. Furthermore, Gardner et al. (1985) stated that there are two types of motivation: instrumental motivation occurs when the only reason for learning a foreign language is to gain something outside of the activity itself, such as passing an exam, obtaining financial rewards, getting a job, or pleasing another person(s). The integrative type is the other. As the name implies, one of the motivations for learning a language is to be able to communicate with a linguistic community.

## **2. The Concept of Language, Learning, and Motivation**

In order to understand why kids are motivated to study English, we must first understand the concept of language. According to Morris (1946), language is an organization of arbitrary symbols with a shared meaning within a society; additionally, these symbols may be employed and understood independently of their immediate context, and they are then related in predictable ways. To begin with, language is a system, which implies order and regularity. Second, this system is arbitrary in the sense that the meaning of its individual units or elements is determined solely by the users' agreement and convention. The third element is language, which is utilized to define the speech or linguistic community. Language is a communication system made up of arbitrary elements, as can be deduced. Furthermore, learning is a crucial activity that humans engage in throughout their lives. Brown (2007: 7) defined learning as the process of obtaining or gaining knowledge about a subject or a skill through study, experience, or instruction. Learning can be defined as a process and practice for gaining knowledge and creating experiences under the guidance of internal and external factors.

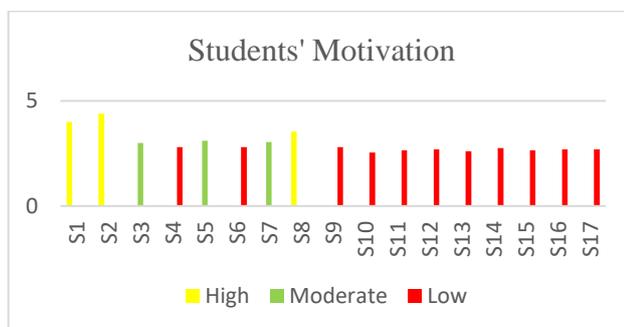
Apart from the concept of language and learning, and the type of motivation which has been explained previously, considerable research revealed that learners' motivation. Csizér and Do'nyei (2005) affirm that motivation is one of the key elements that control the degree and achievement of L2 attainment which is preponderant the learners' innate abilities for language learning. The statement indicates that motivation can be an internal and external factor influencing language learners' success. Students. Additionally, according to Xiao (2012) & Wragg, Raby, Menard, and Plante (2019) motivation is regarded as a determinant variable of students' academic perseverance and achievement. Regarding this, in the context of classroom interaction, motivations is considered as a dynamic process which resulted from classroom interaction of a teacher and her/his students (MchEown & Takeuchi, 2014). Thus, a teacher's motivational strategies are required to prompt and stimulate students' language learning, and accelerate low motivated learners.

## **B. METHOD**

This study used a qualitative method, namely a case study design, to address the challenges. Qualitative research, according to Creswell (1998, p. 14), is an understanding inquiry process built on diverse methodological traditions of inquiry that investigates a social or human problem. Furthermore, when the focus is on a current phenomenon in a real-life situation, a case study is the ideal technique (Yin, 2002, p. 1). Closed-ended questionnaires and non-participant observation were used to obtain data for this study. To triangulate the data, the data from the semi-structured interviews were employed. The study took place at Lantaratprachautit School in Krabi, Thailand. The participants in this study were seven fifth-grade kids who were chosen through a purposive sampling method. Data was gathered in both quantitative and qualitative formats. The students' closed-ended questionnaire was quantitatively examined. While qualitative analysis of students' participation in classroom activities was done through observation and interviews. In qualitative data analysis, there are three parallel flows of activity: (1) data condensing, (2) data presentation, and (3) drawing/verification of conclusions Miles, Huberman, and Salda (Miles, Huberman, & Salda).

### C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis of the close-ended questionnaires revealed that Lantaratprachautit School students lacked motivation. The results of eight aspects in the students' closed-ended surveys indicated this. Attitude toward studying English, Desire to Learn English, Intensity to Learn English, Encountered Difficult Language Skills, Instrumental orientation, Integrative orientation are some of the factors to consider. As illustrated in the following Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Students' Motivation

Furthermore, analysis of the data of the observation, it showed that in the English classroom, there was a match between the students' motivation and their learning behavior. Students with high motivation were found to have higher levels of participation in English classes. On the observational sheet, the first student received a 3.7, indicating positive engagement. The second student received a score of 3.0, indicating moderate motivation and moderate participation in the English classroom. The third student, on the other hand, was deemed to have little motivation and received a score of 2.1. For the classroom participation student 3 was categorized into negative participation in the English classroom. The finding indicates the students had different level of motivations, and the teacher motivational strategies are needed to encourage the students to be more motivated in learning. As supported by MchEown & Takeuchi (2014) that motivations are considered as a dynamic process which resulted from classroom interaction of a teacher and her/his students. Additionally, Guilloteaux and Do"rnyei (2008) stated that motivational strategies are as a teacher's instructional interventions applied by the teacher to provoke and encourage students' motivation and also considered as self-regulating strategies that are employed on purpose by individual students to cope with their own level of motivation. Thus, the teacher's motivational strategies are needed to improve the students' learning participation. The acquired data about students' classroom engagement can be found in the following Table.1.

**Table 1.** Students' Participation in English Classroom

Students code	Average Score	Participation
S1	3.7	High
S2	3	Moderate
S3	2.1	Low

The students' levels of participation in English teaching and learning were also revealed during the observation. Students' readiness to accept or attend the lesson, willingness to participate in the learning process, interest, and capacity to urge classmates to work diligently were all in line with their motivation level, according to the data. This finding implies that in order to promote students' motivated learning behavior in classroom activities, a well-designed teacher's motivating methods are required. As supported by McEown &

Takeuchi (2012) that teachers' motivational strategies are interconnected with students' motivated learning behavior. Semi structured interview was used as data triangulation.

Data analysis of the interviews revealed that in English class exercises, the students used direct overview. Based on the interview, student One did not seem to consider English to be a challenging topic. She claimed that she could enjoy the process of learning English. It is supported by data from closes-ended questionnaire which showed strong agreement: "*Learning a foreign language is a pleasurable experience*". When questioned about the most difficult language skills she encountered when learning English, she revealed that speaking was the most difficult. The data was in line with the data from the questionnaire "When I have to speak English in front of others, I get nervous". The feeling contributed to her anxious feeling less motivated in doing oral activities in the classroom. The fundamental factor of the problem was her limited repertoire of English vocabulary. As supported by Liu (2012) that students' low language proficiency contributed to students' low motivation and learning autonomy. In addition, to cope with the problem she consulted a digital dictionary to look up the meaning of the unknown vocabulary. Sometimes, she also consulted her English teacher about vocabulary or anything about English. She also suggested that additional time be set aside in the classroom for students to practice speaking English. This finding indicates that the students' motivated feeling in learning English speaking which she considered a difficult language skill to learn, has helped her in persistently strive to face the difficulty by finding solution to compensate her vocabulary problem. The finding was in line with Xiao (2012)'s & Wragg, Raby, Menard, and Plante (2019)'s statement that motivation is regarded as a determinant variable of students' academic perseverance and achievement. It can be inferred that the analysis of data from that close-ended questionnaire and interview has revealed her integrative motivation in language learning. The integrative orientation motivation is type of motivation in which one learns a language is to relate to a community of a language which was a consistent predictor of grades in English (Gardner, 2012).

These findings were in line with her statement in the questionnaire: "*Studying English was beneficial since it made it easier for me to communicate with others who spoke English.*" In terms of instrumental orientation in English language learning, data analysis revealed that she was motivated to acquire the language for practical purposes. She believed that studying English made it easier for her to communicate with individuals from other countries. She also mentioned that learning English and understanding its importance inspired her to pursue a career as an English teacher in the future. It was in keeping with her questionnaire result, which significantly backed up her claim. "*Studying English was beneficial because it allowed me to communicate more effectively and easily with those who spoke English.*", "*It is critical that I study English since it will assist me in obtaining a better job.*" It has a link to instrumental motivation as stated by Gardner (1987) that an example of instrumental motivation is when students assume that mastering the target language will lead to a better job, position, or status. Finally, the student is strongly driven to learn English for practical purposes and expects to have more possibilities to do so in the future.

According to the interview, student two considers English to be a challenging topic. When questioned about the difficulties she encountered while learning English, she answered that there are plenty of them. Unknown vocabulary, grammar, and proper English pronunciation are among the challenges. She explained that learning English was different from studying Bahasa Thai because of the structure of the language, which includes not only the writing system but also the pronunciation of each word. This discovery backs up her significant

agreement on the questionnaire.; *“When I have to speak English in front of others, I get nervous.”* and *“I’m attempting to learn English, which is proving to be really challenging.”* In conclusion, her motivation about the nature of her language learning and its difficulty was successfully exposed by the closed-ended questionnaire and interview.

Moreover, she stated that rather than learning alone, she found it easier to learn English by conversing with her friends. She also claimed that practicing with her friends had helped her realize when she wasn't sure. Despite this, she indicated that she lacked the confidence to speak English in front of the teacher. Her agreement to the statement was reflected in this statement *“When I have to answer a question in English class, I become nervous.”* As a result, her worry was linked to her sense of the difficulty she had learning English. As stated by Scovel (1978) Anxiety is defined as a state of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry brought on by an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. Her anxiety kept her from progressing farther in her English studies. Regarding this, Ruesch, Brown & Dewey (2012) stated that learner’s rapport her/his learning community is constructed socially and historically. Moreover, other aspects, such as fear of being marginalized, can clash with her/his individual’s desire to speak the target language. Thus, a learner’s investment in the target language is in a constant state of flux. Thus, building positive rapport with peers in the classroom context can be dialectically encouraging and affecting the feeling of being included which at the end result in student’ positive learning behavior. By being socially engage with peers in the language classroom learning activities are dialectically influential to students’ motivation and positive learning behaviours.

Pertaining about students’ integrative orientation in English language learning, the student was driven to learn English for practical purposes, according to the data analysis. She believed that studying English made it easier for her to access information and learn about technology, such as how to use a computer and decipher the meaning of movie translations written in English. She also claimed that learning English is enjoyable because it allows her to learn about other countries' languages, and that English will enable her to have a decent profession in the future. It was in keeping with his questionnaire response, which indicated that he highly agreed with the statement; *“Studying English is vital because it has made it easier for me to communicate with those who speak English.”*, *“It is critical that I study English since it will assist me in obtaining a better job.”* It correlates with instrumental motivation. As stated by Gardner (1987) instrumental motivation is defined as a circumstance in which pupils believe that understanding the target language has helped them obtain a better employment, position, or status. As an example, the student was driven to study English since he or she expected to have more possibilities to utilize it in the future. In line with this, Csizér and Doñyeyi (2005) affirm that motivation is one of the key elements that control the degree and achievement of L2 attainment which is preponderant the learners’ innate abilities for language learning.

In terms of her desire to study English, the student indicated that she was not motivated by the possibility of having a remarkable talent to learn English. She didn't think people could learn a language. This statement backs up her motivation as mentioned in the questionnaire. She strongly disagreed with the remark "I would like to learn English as much as possible." It is clear that she lacks integrative motivation in terms of language learning ability. Penny (1996) defines global desire to learn English as "the generalized desire to invest effort in learning for the sake of learning." This desire is largely rooted in the learners' previous attitudes: whether they see learning as worthwhile, whether they like the language and its cultural, political, and ethical associations.

Student three thought English was a challenging topic based on the interview. He indicated that he disliked learning English and that he would rather study a subject other than English. It's backed up by his vehement opposition to the closed-ended questionnaire item one, "I like English." When asked what the most challenging aspect of learning English was, he said it was unfamiliar vocabularies, speaking, and grammar. He went on to say that the challenges stemmed from the fact that English has a different structure than Thai. This conclusion backs up what he said in the survey: "I am attempting to study English, but it is really tough," and "I would rather spend my time on other things than English." The statement indicates his anxiety. As mentioned by Horwitz et al (1986); Liu (2012) that anxiety is commonly experienced by foreign language learners. It can be deduced that the closed-ended questionnaire and interview revealed his low motivation to learn English and trouble with the language. To cope with this challenge, the English teacher is recommended to increase his/her teaching practice by crafting a more motivating classroom atmosphere (McEown & Takeuchi, 2012; Weger, 2013; Wong, 2013). In line with this, Do'nyei (2001) suggested four phases of motivational strategies: (1) generating elementary motivational components; (2) generating initial motivation; (3) upholding and protecting motivation; and (4) initiating positive reflective self-evaluation. In short, teacher's motivational strategies would be an alternative solution for low motivated students to keep motivated in learning English.

Referring to the integrative orientation, data analysis indicates that the student was a firm believer in the value of practice. He believes that learning English in a group setting is preferable since students may assist one another. This conclusion backs up his statement in the survey that "studying English is vital since it makes it easier for me to communicate in English." It was also reinforced by data analysis, which revealed that he was motivated to learn English in order to put it to practical use. He believed that studying English made it easier for him to communicate with individuals from other countries. He also claimed that he hoped to have a better career in the future by learning English. It was consistent with his survey response, in which he highly agreed with the statement: "Studying English is vital since it helped me acquire a job." This findings indicates the self-regulation of peers in learning (Uztosun, 2017). It is a factor which concerns the individual's efforts to practice with people and devote more time with friend to use the spoken language (Uztosun, 2017). In short, the student was strongly driven to study English in order to put it to practical use, and he expects to have more opportunities to do so in the future.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

According to this study, most students in Lantrataprachautit School's fifth grade had low motivation for English language learning. This study also discovered that students' participation in the teaching and learning activity mirrored their motivation to learn English. Students with high motivation were more likely to participate positively or behave more actively in the teaching-learning process than students with low motivation. Students with neutral motivation tended to have moderate engagement, whereas students with low motivation tended to have negative participation or were less active in English teaching and learning activities. These findings indicate that Students' motivation for studying English leads to their participation in English classroom activities.

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