

# LEARNING MOTIVATION AND ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS AT POLITEKNIK NEGERI SEMARANG CENTRAL JAVA

*Ridha Fadillah*

English Department,  
Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training, IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin  
Jl. A. Yani Km. 4,5 Banjarmasin  
Email: ridhafadillah@iain-antasari.ac.id

## ABSTRAK

*Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki hubungan antara motivasi dan prestasi pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing oleh mahasiswa Jurusan Teknik Mesin Politeknik Negeri Semarang Jawa Tengah. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari 147 mahasiswa berumur tujuh belas sampai dua puluh satu tahun. Data penelitian dikumpulkan lewat kuesioner dan dianalisis dengan perangkat statistik SPSS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan motivasi mahasiswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing berada pada tingkat sedang. Mereka paling termotivasi pada situasi belajar, minat hakiki, pergi keluar negeri, ingin berprestasi, tanggung jawab sosial, dan pengembangan diri. Skor motivasi mahasiswa paling rendah adalah pada media informasi. Ada hubungan yang tidak signifikan antara jenis-jenis motivasi belajar bahasa Inggris dan prestasi bahasa Inggris secara menyeluruh. Akan tetapi, hubungan positif yang tidak signifikan antara ingin berprestasi, situasi belajar dan prestasi mahasiswa teridentifikasi. Secara umum, mahasiswa Politeknik Negeri Semarang memiliki motivasi belajar bahasa Inggris yang rendah, tetapi prestasi bahasa Inggris mereka baik. Ini ditunjukkan oleh hubungan negatif antara kedua variabel tersebut. Dengan kata lain, rendahnya motivasi tidak mempengaruhi prestasi bahasa Inggris mereka.*

**Kata Kunci:** *motivasi belajar bahasa inggris, prestasi.*

## ABSTRACT

*The aim of this study was to investigate the correlation between learning motivation and English achievement of students of Mechanical Engineering at Politeknik Negeri Semarang, Central Java. The subjects of this study were 147 students aged seventeen to twenty one years old. The data were collected using questionnaire and analyzed using the Statistic Package for Social Science. The result indicate that the students' motivation in learning English was at moderate level. They were most motivated in learning situation, intrinsic interest, going abroad, immediate achievement, social responsibility, individual development, and the students were least motivated in information medium. There was no significant relationship between students' learning motivation types and their English achievements as a whole. However, there is no significant positive correla-*

*tions among immediate achievement, learning situation and students' outcomes were indicated. In general, Politeknik Negeri Semarang students had low motivation in their English course but they still had good achievements. It was seen from the negative correlation between the two variables. In other words, the learning motivation does not influence their achievements.*

**Keywords:** *English Learning Motivation, english achievements*

## INTRODUCTION

There are thousands of languages in the world. We use English as international language to communicate between people all over the world. English is taught from kindergarten up to high education all over the world depending on educational system and philosophy, and national curriculum used in certain country. Most people learn English for different purposes; some might view English as a requirement for them to develop themselves and study the wider knowledge, and for communication and integration. The others might think English just as an instrument; it means that studying that particular language for passing examinations and getting a job.

Besides being taught in the countries where the English is used as the first language (for native speakers), English is also taught in the countries where English is used as the second language (for non-native speakers). This is known as Teaching English as Second Language (TESL) or Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL). The students where live in the country that does not use English for daily communication have difficulty to master that particular language. Hence, teaching English sometimes will be fail in the country that does not use English as the first language.

One factor that influences the success and failure in learning and teaching foreign language is motivation. Motivation plays an important role in foreign language students' classroom performance. Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) cited in Dörnyei (2001). It determines students' success or failure in foreign language classes. Therefore students' motivation will influence to students' outcomes in language learning.

In learning English as second language or foreign language, non native speaker students have difficulties to master that particular language. One factor that influences the success and failure in learning and teaching foreign language is motivation. Motivation is the key to the success of English language learning.

Many studies connected with English learning motivation and student's outcomes have been conducted by many educators, language teachers, experts in education and researchers. They have been interested in the phenomenon of foreign language motivation for a number of years (Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010; Moiiinvaziri, 2010; Honggang, 2008; Gao, Zhao & Cheng, 2007; König, 2006; Gao, Zhao, Cheng, & Zhou, 2004; Gao & Zhao, 2003; Hashimoto, 2002; Huang, 2008; and Gardner, 1985).

In one study of 255 students at Islamic Azad University, Technological faculty and Payame Noor University in Iran, Moiiinvaziri (2010) argued that this study was conducted to probe the motivational orientations of Iranian university students. The findings present a picture which establishes that Iranian university students are both instrumentally and integratively oriented. This provides

a sufficient answer to the research questions addressed, and contradicts the opinion of some researchers who believe that in a foreign language situation students are instrumentally oriented. Also it was shown that students are highly motivated towards learning English.

König (2006) indicated that the motivation of Turkish University students to learn the second foreign language is very high in general. The respondents report that they enjoy learning the second foreign language and would like to use it both in the classroom and outside. The students think that English has had a positive effect on learning the second foreign language. They plan to reach an advanced level of proficiency in the second foreign language. They describe a person who voluntarily learns a second foreign language as being motivated, hard-working, social, open-minded, etc. which are all positive personality attributes. They consider the knowledge of a second foreign language necessary to be successful in professional life in Turkey.

The previous studies showed the level and reasons of student's motivation in learning the second language. So, it raises the writer's desire and curiosity to find whether the same findings will be found in Semarang, Indonesia.

Most of result of the previous studies showed that there is a positive correlation between students' motivation and students' outcomes in a foreign language. That is, students with high motivation will gain high outcomes; on the contrary, students with low motivation will gain low outcomes.

Based on the early observation and information from English Lecturer at *Politeknik Negeri Semarang*, it is known that there is an indication that the level of English learning motivation influences the student's outcomes. Because of that issue, the writer would like to find out whether in Semarang, the relationship between English learning motivation and students' outcomes in English as a foreign language would be similar or different from studies done in other countries.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The subjects of the study were 147 students of *Politeknik Negeri Semarang* (146 males and 1 female). They were from Mechanical Engineering department. Their ages are 17-21 years old. The writer determines this college as population because it is assumed that the students have high English learning motivation. The sampling technique used is random sampling.

The writer used a questionnaire as the instrument. The questionnaire is divided into two parts; the background of the students in Part A included class/department, age, gender, parent's occupation, and informal education, and the Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) based on the socio-educational model adapted by Gao & Zhao (2003) in Part B. The questionnaire is translated into *Bahasa Indonesia* to make it easy for students to understand. Adaptations of the AMTB have been used in many studies of L2 motivation (e.g., Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010; Moiinvasiri, 2010; Honggang, 2008; Gao, Zhao & Cheng, 2007; König, 2006; Gao, Zhao, Cheng, & Zhou, 2004; Gao & Zhao, 2003; Hashimoto, 2002; Huang, 2008; and Gardner, 1985). The dependent variable, English outcomes, is taken from students' final semester examination scores.

The independent variable, the students' motivation was measured by the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). AMTB tests on the seven types of motivation i.e. Intrinsic interest, Immediate achievement, Learning situation, Going abroad, Social responsibility, Individual Development, and Information medium. It is a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from strongly agree (*sangat setuju*) to strongly disagree (*sangat tidak setuju*). The scale will use range from one (1) for low to

five (5) for high. Strongly agree (*sangat setuju*) is coded by 5 and strongly disagree (*sangat tidak setuju*) is coded by 1. According to Gao & Zhao (2003), Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire is 0.84. The English learning motivation can be reliably and validly measured and that it plays an important role in language learning.

The questionnaire survey consists of 30 questions. Six items are to measure students' intrinsic interest; the item numbers are 1, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 23. Five items are to measure immediate achievement; they are items number 2, 3, 4, 6, 11. Five items are to measure learning situation; the numbers are 5, 7, 8, 9, 10. Four items are to measure going abroad, they are items number 12, 26, 27, 28. Three items are to measure social responsibility, they are items number 22, 24, 25. Five items are to measure individual development; they are items number 13, 14, 16, 29, 30. And two items are to measure information medium; they are items number 15, and 17 (See Gao, Zhao & Cheng, 2007). However, the questionnaire is translated into *Indonesian* using the back-translation procedure in order to avoid the difficulties and misunderstanding. The help of an English lecturer who is also proficient in *Indonesian* was recruited to provide the Indonesian translation and back-translation by an English teacher to ensure the content validity.

Firstly, the writer saw the Head of National Education Services in Central Java and then the Director of *Politeknik Negeri Semarang* to get permission to conduct the study and to ask for the college profile. The writer came into the classes to give the direction and some information to the respondents about the study and also informed them about the purpose of the questionnaire and then distributed the questionnaire to the students. The respondents were reminded in writing and verbally of the questionnaire have no bearing on their exam scores. They were also informed that their English lecturer would not look at their responses and all information disclosed was confidential.

The students submitted the completed questionnaire to the leader of the class. The writer took the submitted questionnaire from the leaders of the classes. The duration of main study was about 45 minutes. Before leaving, the writer thanked the lecturers, the respondents and heads of college for their cooperation. Secondly, the writer requested the students' English final semester examination score from the English lecturers (students' outcomes in English).

The English learning motivation data was analyzed by determining the categories of English learning motivation level and English outcomes level, determining the mean score for English learning motivation, consisting of overall items, students' intrinsic interest items, immediate achievement items, learning situation items, going abroad items, social responsibility items, individual development items, and information medium items. The Mean score for students' English outcomes was also determined, then determining the correlation between motivation and students' outcomes in English as a foreign language. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Microsoft Office Excel.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Students' Demography**

In this study, the students' demography shows that students' age average was nineteen years old; there were 102 students (69%) in this age level. Their ages were 17 up to 21 years old. 146 students were male (99.3%) and 1 student was female. Father's occupation was dominated by Private sector 47 people (32%) and Entrepreneur 42 people (28.6%). Mother's occupation was

dominated by housewife 58 people (39.5%). And the students that ever took or were taking English course were 52 students (35.4%) while the students that never took English course are 95 students (64.6%).

## 2. The Level of Students' English Learning Motivation

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the types of motivation used in the research. It indicates that all the values for the types measured in Likert Scale are around their midpoint with a standard deviation below 1. As for types measured using 5 point Likert scale, learning situation ( $\bar{x} = 3.29$  and  $s.d = 0.69$ ) was recorded as the highest rating, followed by intrinsic interest ( $\bar{x} = 2.98$  and  $s.d = 0.61$ ). Going abroad showed  $\bar{x} = 2.91$  and  $s.d = 0.71$ . Immediate achievement showed  $\bar{x} = 2.85$  and  $s.d = 0.69$ . Social responsibility showed  $\bar{x} = 2.42$  and  $s.d = 0.72$ . Individual development showed  $\bar{x} = 2.15$  and  $s.d = 0.65$ . Information medium was recorded as the lowest rating  $\bar{x} = 2.14$  and  $s.d = 0.66$ . And Overall motivation showed  $\bar{x} = 2.75$  and  $s.d = 0.38$ . From the data obtained, it can be concluded that the level of students' motivation was at moderate level.

Table 1 English Learning Motivation: Mean ratings and standard deviations

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Overall motivation	1.90	3.80	2.7463	.37731	147
Intrinsic interest	1.50	4.30	2.9769	.61109	147
Immediate achievement	1.00	5.00	2.8544	.69027	147
Learning situation	1.60	5.00	3.2952	.69414	147
Going abroad	1.30	5.00	2.9102	.70979	147
Social responsibility	1.00	5.00	2.4211	.71685	147
Individual development	1.00	4.00	2.1469	.65137	147
Information medium	1.00	4.00	2.1395	.65893	147

From the data obtained, the students were most motivated to learn English because of aspects of the learning environment included the quality of teaching, teaching materials, teachers, and affiliation with the learning groups (Learning situation). Next, the students' motivation were intrinsic interest, they interested to learn English because of their love on that particular language and certain aspects of its culture. Going abroad was the next students' motivations; it is to learn English go abroad for various purposes such as seeking better education or job opportunities, experiencing English speaking culture and immigration. Immediate achievement, the students learned English because of the target for high test scores, high scores in university entrance examination, or learning the target language to obtain satisfactory scores in examination and a bachelor's degree. These reminded us of certificate motivation. Then social responsibility, the students motivated to combine harmonizing the family and putting the country in order, indicating an individual's responsibility to fulfill social expectations. The next is individual development, the students desired learning English to increase one's own ability and social status in future development. It was pointed to the practical value of English as an instrument for communication, job opportunity, and life in general; finding a good job and a sense of achievement. The students were least motivated about information medium. They desired to learn English to obtain information and learn other academic subjects. The content in this category exhibited a tendency of viewing English learning as a means to obtain information of

various kinds, whether it was related to other subjects, or general development of world economy, science and technology.

These seven motivations could be placed in three categories, namely: instrumental, cultural, and situational. "Instrumental motivations" referred to the employment of the target language as an instrument to achieve certain goals. Immediate achievement, information medium and individual development belonged to this category, their differences lying in the purposes the instrument served. "Cultural motivations" were related to the learners' cultural interests and concerns. Under this category, intrinsic interest was target-culture oriented; social responsibility was native (home)-culture oriented. It was partially similar to the "integrative motivation" in Gardner and Lambert's model, yet "integrative motivation" did not have a native-culture dimension. In addition, the target-culture oriented intrinsic interest in our study was largely intellectual, which did not necessarily involve personal "integration" into the target culture (Gao, Zhao, Cheng, & Zhou, 2004).

Within the seven types of English learning motivation, the students were most motivated about learning situation and least motivated about information medium. The reasons for the results can be explored in two factors; internal and external factors. The internal factor is closely related with the students themselves: they probably did feel very motivated in English as a foreign language classroom because they liked the lecturers, the quality of used books/ materials, the quality of language classes, and classmates. All of these items were assumed to be able influence the students' English learning motivation.

Good relationship with classmates is assumed as one factor that can increase the motivation. Classmates' favorable characteristics most likely enabled the students to get well along with them, which seems to have contributed to students' English class with a good atmosphere. Therefore, the atmosphere in the class would be more motivated.

One external factor that could explain the results is parents' occupation. Kwong (1983) stated that parents' occupation influenced a child's educational opportunities because it determined the area of residences and thus the quality of the school. Office workers' children had more opportunities than the peasants' with better educational facilities in the cities, and the children of intellectuals out-perform all others with their additional support from home. In this study, the majority of students' parents' occupation was private sector officers and entrepreneurs, and it determined where they lived, which is urban area. This factor is expected influencing the parents' thinking pattern, they felt necessary to send their sons and daughters to the qualified colleges which is good in skills and foreign language. This could have given positive effect to them and it would influence the English learning in the colleges. Therefore, the students in this college were motivated to obtain the particular skill in engineering and language, i.e. English skill.

A second external factor is the role of lecturer. It is possible that English lecturers at *Politeknik Negeri Semarang* always encouraged the students to practise their English both in and out the classroom. And they were able to create a lively climate in the classroom. Lecturers' characteristics or attitudes such as being helpful and encouraging could have played an important role in motivating students' motivation at *Politeknik Negeri Semarang*.

Another external factor that can influence English learning motivation is students' residence area. Semarang is one of big cities in Indonesia; it is the capital of central java. In this case, the college is located in Semarang. Most students were from urban area and educated parents. This factor was assumed to influence the students in learning. Urban area and educated parents were

closed to the books. Therefore, the students were common with the books too. In this study, it can be approved by most students chose learning situation factor that included the quality of books/materials as one of English learning motivation types.

### 3. The Correlation among English Learning Motivation, Language Anxiety and Students' Outcomes

**Table 2. Result for Pearson correlations between English learning motivation and students' outcomes**

		Score	Overall	II	IA	LS	GA	SR	ID	IM
Score	Pearson Correlation	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.								
Overall	Pearson Correlation	-,085	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,306	.							
II	Pearson Correlation	-,288(**)	,605(**)	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	.						
IA	Pearson Correlation	,096	,487(**)	-,071	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,245	,000	,390	.					
LS	Pearson Correlation	,128	,260(**)	-,095	,128	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,123	,001	,255	,122	.				
GA	Pearson Correlation	-,004	,652(**)	,361(**)	,250(**)	-,111	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,959	,000	,000	,002	,181	.			
SR	Pearson Correlation	-,118	,674(**)	,417(**)	,128	-,027	,480(**)	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,155	,000	,000	,121	,744	,000	.		
ID	Pearson Correlation	-,122	,756(**)	,482(**)	,188(*)	-,056	,413(**)	,557(**)	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,141	,000	,000	,023	,500	,000	,000	.	
IM	Pearson Correlation	-,102	,550(**)	,241(**)	,200(*)	-,002	,287(**)	,349(**)	,525(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,218	,000	,003	,015	,978	,000	,000	,000	.

The correlation between overall English learning motivation types and students' outcomes showed not significant negative correlation as a whole  $r = -0.085$ ,  $p > 0.01$ . A significant negative correlation was seen between intrinsic interest and students' outcomes  $r = -0.288$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . A positive correlation was seen between immediate achievement and students' outcomes  $r = 0.096$ ,  $p > 0.01$ , not significant. A weak positive correlation was also seen between learning situation and

students' outcomes  $r = 0.128$ ,  $p > 0.01$ , not significant. A negative correlation was seen between going abroad and students' outcomes  $r = -0.004$ ,  $p > 0.01$ , not significant. A negative correlation was seen between social responsibility and students' outcomes  $r = -0.118$ ,  $p > 0.01$ , not significant. A negative correlation was seen between individual development and students' outcomes  $r = -0.112$ ,  $p > 0.01$ , not significant. A negative correlation was seen between information medium and students' outcomes  $r = -0.102$ ,  $p > 0.01$ , not significant. Although there were two motivation types showing the positive correlation to students' outcomes, and the possibilities were higher than 0.01, as a whole, between overall English learning motivation and students' outcomes correlated not significantly at  $p > 0.01$  level.

From the data, there was not significant relationship between English learning motivation types and students' outcomes in English as a foreign language as a whole. But it should be noted that there were not significant positive correlations among immediate achievement, learning situation and students' outcomes supported the previous studies that English learning motivation would influence the outcomes positively, which is, the higher the motivation, the higher the outcomes (Gardner, 1985; Hashimoto, 2002; Gao & Zhao, 2003; Gao, Zhao, Cheng, & Zhou, 2004; König, 2006; Gao, Zhao & Cheng, 2007; Honggang, 2008; Huang, 2008; Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010; and Moiiinvaziri, 2010).

But in general, in term of the correlation, this study indicated these *Politeknik Negeri Semarang* students had low motivation in their English classrooms but they still had good outcomes. It could be showed from negative relationship between two variables. It means that the lower the motivation, the higher the outcomes, and also the lower motivation does not influence the outcomes.

One possible explanation for these results might lie on the students' English learning motivation. There are two motivation in learning English; integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Most students in Indonesia, studying English as foreign language, which is as a compulsory lesson, were for passing the examinations. It indicated that studying English had instrumental motivation. Compared with the students live in the countries where the English is as their second language, they study English for interaction out of the classroom. Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) demonstrated that reasons for studying a second language form a number difference factors in addition to the integrative and instrumental ones, depending upon the nature of the community and the language concerned. It is obvious that community in Indonesia, especially in Semarang where the study was conducted, English is as foreign language and the purpose of learning English is for passing the examinations.

Connected with the results of this study, which is, motivation did not influence students' outcomes, it was assumed that because students' motivation in learning English were passing the English examinations. Therefore their motivation did not affect their outcomes. It is recommended that teachers inform and advise that studying English is not for passing the examination only but for life skill to the students. So, it is hoped that it can increase their motivation to study English for their needs themselves in their development.

And it is suggested for further studies that outcomes should be better taken from achievement test made by the researchers themselves beside the Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) as instrumentation to avoid the inaccurate results of the study.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicated that the students' learning motivation in learning English as foreign language at Mechanical Engineering department *Politeknik Negeri Semarang* was at moderate level. From the data obtained, the students were most motivated in learning situation, intrinsic interest, going abroad, immediate achievement, social responsibility, individual development, and the students were least motivated in information medium.

In term of the correlation, this study indicated that *Politeknik Negeri Semarang* students had low motivation in their English classrooms but they still had good outcomes. It could be showed from negative relationship between two variables, it meant that the lower the motivation, the higher the outcomes, and also the lower motivation does not influence the outcomes.

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