

EXPLORING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND LEARNING STRATEGIES IN MULTICULTURAL ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) CLASSROOM

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ABSTRAK

Kelas EFL multikultural memerlukan strategi tertentu bagi siswa untuk belajar dan juga bagi guru untuk mengajar. Siswa yang berasal dari budaya yang berbeda mungkin memiliki motivasi dan strategi belajar yang berbeda dengan tantangan berbeda yang mereka hadapi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan motivasi, tantangan, dan strategi pembelajaran mahasiswa internasional di jurusan pendidikan bahasa Inggris. Lima mahasiswa yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini berasal dari negara berbeda. Dua di antaranya berasal dari Filipina, dan sisanya dari Thailand. Untuk mendapatkan informasi detail dari partisipan, desain penelitian yang digunakan adalah *narrative inquiry*. Dalam hal ini peneliti menggunakan wawancara semi terstruktur dan observasi dalam pengumpulan data, analisis tematik Brown dan Clark dalam menganalisis data, dan teknik triangulasi dalam mengukur keabsahan data. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa asing menggunakan beberapa strategi pembelajaran yaitu *self-regulated learning* yang dikategorikan ke dalam strategi kognitif dan metakognitif, serta diskusi teman sejawat dan mendapatkan bantuan siswa lokal yang dikategorikan ke dalam strategi sosial.

Kata kunci: kelas multikultural, EFL, motivasi, tantangan, strategi belajar,

ABSTRACT

An EFL multicultural classroom requires certain strategies for the students to study as well as the teachers to teach. Students coming from different cultures especially different countries might have different motivations and learning strategies with different challenges they face. This study aims to describe the motivation, challenges, and learning strategies of the international students in the English education department. Five students involved in this study are those coming from different countries. Two of them are from Philippines, and the rest are from Thailand. To gain the detail information from the participants, narrative inquiry is used as the research design of this study. In this case, the researchers used semi-structured interview and observation

in collecting the data, thematic analysis from Brown and Clark in analyzing the data, and triangulation technique in measuring the validity of the data. The study found that international students' primary motivation to study English is because they believe English is the key to their bright future, especially for job, which is called as instrumental motivation. It also reveals that the main challenges they face in learning English in this multicultural EFL classroom is the communication, especially when it is not in English. In the case of learning strategies, most of the international students use several learning strategies namely self-regulated learning which categorized into cognitive and metacognitive strategies, as well as peer discussion and getting local student's assistance which categorized into social strategies.

Keywords: *multicultural classroom, EFL, motivation, challenges, learning strategies*

INTRODUCTION

There are increasing numbers of international students from Thailand and the Philippines who study in Indonesian campuses. Some of them choose to learn in English department either in English literature or English education. Each of them comes with different learning motivation. Ellis (1997) stated that there various motivation why somebody wants to learn certain language. They are (1) instrumental motivation. It is a motivation to learn a second language due to functional reasons such as in order to pass exams, in order to get a good job, and to be able to pass the entrance test college. (2) integrative motivation. It is learning motivation where someone is interested in learning a second language because they are attracted to their culture or society (3) resultative motivation. It is the motivation based on the success that has been achieved in the process of learning the language (4) intrinsic motivation. It is the curiosity and the learner's interest in studying and exploring a language.

Unfortunately, the different cultural background inevitably has become the challenge for them in performing their study. On one hand they have to follow and master the lessons; on the other hand, they have to adapt with the local cultures which might be different from their home cultures. Yan and Berliner (2009) studied the most stressful aspects of Chinese international students' academic lives. These students felt stressful about cultural and educational differences, lacking opportunities to use English with their same language friends, ineffective

interactions with school faculty, and their motivations to be successful. Based on McLachlan and Justice's (2009) study of international student wellbeing in higher education, the international students suffered from stress and tried to negotiate academic, cultural, and social differences in the first 6-12 months. This mixture of cultures of the students then creates what is so called as "multi-cultural classrooms". Thus, it is very urgent to study more about how to handle this kind of multicultural education.

Multicultural education refers to efforts to develop human potential that respects diversity and differences caused by differences in ethnicity, culture, language and religion. Ibrahim (2013) stated that multicultural education positions the philosophy of cultural pluralism in the education system. The students who come from Thailand and the Philippines have the same rights with the local Indonesian students. In other words, the classroom should promote equality, or social justice, mutual respect for existing differences, and respect for each other is a spirit of greeting in order to achieve progress.

Due to these challenges, the international students must have good strategies to pursue their study. Hong-Nam & Leavell (2006) found that most students tend to choose to use metacognitive strategies and a small number use memory and affective/social strategies in learning English. Namwong (2012) found that the majority of English language learners use direct strategies more than indirect strategies. The research conducted by Wu (2011) indicates that language learning strategies are significant for language learners at the university level, especially compensation, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Ellis (1997) also added that there are some learning strategies usually used in learning a language. It includes (1) cognitive strategies. It includes analyzing, synthesizing, and transforming materials that have been learned. (2) metacognitive strategies. It encourages the students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning process. (3) social/affective strategies. It refers to the learning way by involving interaction either students with their peers or students with their teachers or tutors. International students should have more opportunities to receive learning strategy training in their academic preparation before they study abroad.

One of the study programs that applies multicultural education is the English study program at UIN K.H Abdurahman Wahid Pekalongan. This study program has students from various cultural, ethnic, even citizenship. Starting from Java, Papua, Nusa Tenggara, to abroad such as the Philippines and Thailand. Starting from this different cultural background, an interesting phenomenon emerged in student performance at class. Some of them show good performance in learning, and others show poor performance. Therefore, this research intends to dig up information related to differences in learning motivation, challenges, and learning strategies by these international students. There are some studies discussing about international students' learning strategies. However, none of them used the theory of Ellis (1997) in analysing the gathered data. It is hoped that the information that will be obtained will be a consideration for related parties, namely managers and lecturers, in optimizing achievements the international students' academic performance.

This study aims to describe the motivation, challenges, and learning strategies of the international students in the English education department. Five students involved in this study are those coming from different countries. Two of them are from Philippines, and the rest are from Thailand. To gain the detail information from the participants, qualitative approach in the form of narrative inquiry is used as the research design of this study. Narrative inquiry is a way in comprehending and investigating experience through collaboration between researcher and participants, through social engagement with milieus, in a place or a set of places (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). In this case, the researchers investigated the participants' experience related to their motivation, challenges, and learning strategies of the international students in the English education department. To collect the data, semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was used. Barkhuizen (2013) said that semi-structured interview provides freedom to the interviewees in delivering more detail information from the delivered questions. After gaining the data, the narrative analysis from Yuan & Lee (2016) was used in analysing the data. Its process includes (1) transcribing interview result, (2) telling the participants' story by referring to identified theme (3) changing the narration into story (4) providing the result of data interpretation.

METHOD

This research was conducted to the five participants of international students studying in English Education Study Program, including three students from Thailand and two students coming from Philippine. Those students have been learning in English Education Study Program since their first semester and they are active students who are actively communicate with other students from Indonesia.

In order to collect the data from the participants, there were observation and interview. The interview was conducted in English because they master English better than Indonesian. By using narrative inquiry, the collected data were analysed based on Ellis's Theory regarding Second Language Acquisition.

DISCUSSION

Learning Motivations

Instrumental Motivations

The Thailand students reported their motivations as follows:

- 1.. *I also want to study English more because in the future I will have a good job.*
2. *English is a language that plays a role and is relevant to every profession.*
3. *I think if my English is good, I will have a job in the future.*

Here are the responses form the students from the Philippines:

1. *To gain knowledge and also to prepare myself for my future career.*
2. *My primary motivation to choose English education program lies for the language itself and a desire to become skilled educator in this field.*

Most of the international students learning English because they believe that mastering English will give them better chance to get a good job in their future. According to Ellis (1997) instrumental motivation is a motivation to learn a second language due to functional reasons such as in order to pass exams, in order to get a good job, and to be able to pass the entrance test College.

Intrinsic Motivation

One of the Philippines students said:

I chose English Education because I have a genuine curiosity for the English language. I want to explore its intricacies and contribute to nurturing English proficiency in others as student.

While of the Thailand students said:

I'm not good at languages, but because I wanted to be good at it, I chose to study English.

Intrinsic Motivation is the curiosity and the learner's interest in studying and exploring a language (Ellis (1997)). Some of the international students have genuine curiosity for the English language and want to explore its intricacies and contribute to nurturing English proficiency.

Integrative Motivation

One of the Thailand students said :

I'm interested in English and everything related to England because I feel that if we are proficient in many languages especially English, it's the profit of life. I'm also interested in its culture and community.

Integrative Motivation is learning motivation where someone is interested in learning a second language because they are attracted to their culture or society (Ellis, 1997)

Resultative Motivation

Most of the international students said that they were not good at English in high schools. Some of them even neglected English in the past, so and they want to fix it by studying English now because they realize English is important.

One of the Thailand students said :

When I was in high school, I neglected it too much, which made me unable to listen to English, so I wanted to study English.

Resultative Motivation is the motivation based on the success that has been achieved in the process of learning the language (Ellis, 1997)

Challenges

Communication

Most of the international students experience problem communicating in local language (Bahasa Indonesia). Here are the responses from the students:

1. *I can't understand what I'm learning from the teacher directly, but when I ask friends and they explain it to me, I can understand it.*
2. *I have problems with language in studying and conversing.*
3. *I have problems in communication because I can't speak and understand Bahasa Indonesia like I can't express it well what I mean although I understand but it's basic only.*

4. *Sometimes I feel like I'm in the wrong place because I didn't understand the lesson.*
5. *I usually ask my friends for help if I don't understand the materials delivered by the lecturers.*

Culture Shock

One of the students reported:

I also have problems for foods and new cultural practices.

Singh et al. (2003) also states that the known challenges international students include: racial discrimination, changes in their life status, climatic conditions and food differences, language, accommodation, separation from home, dietary restrictions, money, diminished social discrimination, and discrepancy in educational systems. Le et al. (2016) is of the view that the majority of international students have to deal with dominant challenges such as language barriers and Singh, N., Zhao, H., & Hu, X. (2003). Cultural adaptation on the web: A study of American companies' domestic and Chinese websites. *Journal of Global Information Management (JGIM)*, 11(3), 63-80. culture gaps

Learning Strategies

Social Affective Strategy

Social/affective strategy is an engaging way of learning which involves social interaction where the learner chooses to interact with other people (Ellis, 1997). Most of the international students employ this strategy by having discussion with their fellow Philippines and Thailand friends as well as Indonesian friends especially when there are things they don't understand in Bahasa Indonesia. One of the students said:

I like to study with friends in the same country because we can help each other, but I also want to study with friends abroad because it makes me good at the language and international friends often explain things to us about studying.

Cognitive Strategy

It is the learning strategies which involve analysis, synthesis, and transformative in the learning process (Ellis, 1997). Some of the international

students employ this strategy by reviewing the materials they do not understand and find the mistakes they made. If there are materials they want to study more, they search on Google. They analyze the material by coming back to study and understand more. The students said:

1. I sometimes analyze the material if don't understand it by reviewing the material and find where the mistake is.
2. I analyze the material by coming back to study and understand more.

Metacognitive Strategy

Learning strategies which involve planning, evaluating, monitoring the learning process (Ellis, 1997). Some of the international students employ this strategy by setting specific learning objectives, scheduling regular practice sessions, and utilizing various resources and checking their learning result at the end of semester, taking self-assessment quizzes, practice tests, and seeking feedback from peers or teachers.

The students said:

1. I evaluate my competencies by checking the result of my exam after each semester.
2. I sometimes evaluate my competencies through self-assessment quizzes, practice tests, and seeking feedback from peers or teachers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, there are several conclusion can be drawn. First is the fact that the international students' primary *motivation* to study English is because they believe English is the key to their bright future, especially for job, which is called as instrumental motivation. The main *challenges* they face in learning English in this multicultural EFL classroom is the communication, especially when it is not in English. The last, the international students' *learning strategies* in EFL classroom mostly rely on social affective strategy where they can discuss with friends both from their home country or local students (Indonesians). Yet, they also have good planning and monitoring for their learning progress (cognitive-metacognitive strategy).

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