

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the study. Some recommendations for future studies are also provided.

The main concern of the study was to investigate how selected components of motivation ranked among university students and the reasons for their motivation in learning English as a second language. The study also attempted to ascertain the differences in motivation between male and female students in learning English as a second language. Thus, three research questions were formulated to address the above:

1. How do selected components of motivation (integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, effort, valence, expectancy and ability) rank among university students in learning English as a second language?
2. What are the factors that affect their integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, effort, valence, expectancy and ability in learning English as a second language?
3. How do female and male students differ in their degree of motivation in learning English as a second language?

The dissertation firstly discussed the position of English as a second language in Malaysia. A general definition of motivation and a more specific one pertaining to the language classroom were provided. Subsequently, various motivation theories, approaches and models were presented. Next, the dissertation discussed gender differences in language learning. A number of studies on language learning motivation and gender differences and motivation, which are pertinent to this present study, were also reviewed and discussed.

The data for this study were collected from 189 Malaysian students from a private university college in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Their level of motivation was measured using the Motivation Scale (developed by Wen, 1997 and adapted by Shaaban and Ghaith, 2000). The Motivation Scale looks at six components of motivation – integrative, instrumental, effort, valence, expectancy and ability. The data was then analysed using a quantitative method followed by the presentation of the findings and discussions.

5.2. Overview of the findings

Based on the analysis, the following sections will provide the answers to the three research questions.

5.2.1. How do selected components of motivation (integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, effort, valence, expectancy and ability) rank among university students in learning English as a second language?

In terms of the ranking of the selected motivation components, instrumental motivation is ranked the highest, followed by integrative motivation. Perceived ability is ranked third and this is closely followed by expectancy. Valence is ranked second last, while effort is ranked the lowest.

The results show that both integrative and instrumental orientations of motivation were present. However, the participants have shown that they have a higher degree of instrumental motivation. This is in line with some of the studies that have been conducted in Asia (Lukmani, 1972; Wu, 2004; Kelly, 2005; Liu, 2007; Ransirini, 2006; Vaezi, 2008).

5.2.2. What are the factors that affect their integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, effort, valence, expectancy and ability in learning English as a second language?

The participants of this study have indicated that they have a higher degree of instrumental motivation. This result echoed the findings of the studies done by Lukmani (1972), Wu (2004), Kelly (2005), Ransirini (2006), Liu (2007), and Vaezi (2008) whereby instrumental motivation is found to be stronger than integrative motivation.

Thus, the results also contradict studies by Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Meselu (2003) that found integrative motivation to be superior to instrumental motivation.

The participants have reported that the main factors that affect their instrumental motivation are:

- to help them get a job
- the status of English as the language for economic development
- to fulfill a university requirement

The participants have revealed that they are more instrumentally motivated than integratively motivated. The participants in this study have clearly indicated that their integrative motive to learn English is mainly because they feel that it would help them in communicating with native speakers when they travel to English-speaking countries. This outcome is similar to the results obtained by Liu (2007) where travel orientation was the main factor for the participants' integrative motivation.

The other factor that has affected the participants' integrative motivation is the need to converse and communicate with English speaking friends.

It is also important to note that the participants perceive English as an important language for various reasons. However, some of these reasons were not strong enough to encourage them to learn the language. For example, the participants were not interested in learning English so they could understand and appreciate English arts, literature or the Western cultural heritage.

With regard to their perceived ability, the participants have indicated a high degree of perceived ability (at least 70% and above) in achieving all the learning outcomes. However, when asked if they would be able to understand the English people and their way of thinking, they perceived themselves as lacking the ability to achieve the outcome. This is also one of the two items that has registered lower percentages in terms of valence and expectancy.

The majority of the participants felt they had a 70% or above chance in achieving the following outcomes from their English class:

- to communicate in basic English
- to develop comprehension in their reading assignments
- to receive an A in their course.

On the other hand, the participants have demonstrated low expectancy in achieving these outcomes: to speak English fluently and learning about the English culture and customs.

With regard to valence, the participants feel that to be able to communicate in basic English is important to them. In addition, the majority of the participants also put high value on developing comprehension of reading assignments and receiving 'A' in their course. Nevertheless, the majority of the participants also have stated that to understand the English people and their way of thinking is a significant learning outcome for them.

Based on the analysis conducted, effort is ranked the lowest. It is clear that most participants put in just enough effort to learn English or pass their English class. This is similar to the results obtained in studies by Liu (2007), Madileng (2007) and Vaezi (2008). These studies have shown that despite showing high perceived ability and giving high value to learning English, the participants did not put in a lot of effort in learning the language.

However, the majority of the participants put in a lot of effort in trying to speak English in a wide variety of situations and to speak the language as much as possible. This is the only item in the section that registered the highest responses with regard to effort.

5.2.3. How do female and male students differ in their degree of motivation in learning English as a second language?

Statistically there are significant differences between females and males in terms of motivation except for valence and expectancy.

Although the overall findings of this study show that the participants are instrumentally motivated, the results have revealed that females are more integratively motivated than males. Thus, result concurs with the results in the studies by Kang (2000) and Rahman (2005) that found females to be more integratively motivated than males. The female participants have indicated more positive responses throughout the analysis. The reasons for their motivation are mainly because they feel that English is needed to help

them meet and converse with different people, to help them communicate with English-speaking friends and English is needed when they travel to English speaking countries.

In addition, the female participants have demonstrated that they are also integratively motivated to learn English because English will help them learn about other cultures, learn about the world better and understand the Western cultural heritage. The responses from the male participants on these two items were shown to be less positive. It would imply that the female participants are interested in learning English not just because of its practical functions.

In terms of instrumental motivation, both female and male participants have demonstrated that they are instrumentally motivated in learning English. Both genders agree the following motives are the reasons for them to be instrumentally motivated: to help them in getting a job, English is an important language for economic development and English is important for university.

Having said that, the female participants have also shown that to better understand the problems that English speakers face is another reason for them to be instrumentally motivated in learning English.

The results of the study also revealed that the female participants put in more effort than the males. This finding concurs with the results of studies by Shaaban and Ghaith (2000) and Pajares and Valiante (2001), Salem (2006) and Rúa (2006) where females are more motivated in terms of effort.

The effort exerted between the females and males differ in terms of the amount of work that both genders do, and the time they both spend thinking about what they have learned. Females tend to enjoy learning the language more and they also spend more time thinking about what they have learned. This is contrary to the findings by Bernat and Lloyd (2007) where males are said to enjoy learning the language more than females.

Having said that, one similarity that can be seen in the responses of the female and male participants is the fact that the majority of them spend just one hour per week to practise the language after class. In addition, the responses also show that both females and males only answer questions when they are called upon. Both genders also responded that after receiving their English assignment, they would correct their mistakes only when they have the time to do so.

Nevertheless, the participants exerted a lot of effort in trying to speak English in a wide variety of situations and as much as possible.

In general, there are no statistically significant differences in terms of valence between the female and male participants. This is contrary to the findings by Shaaban and Ghaith (2000) and Salem (2006) that have found female participants to have higher perception of valence.

Both females and males place high value on all the outcomes although females tend to put a slightly higher value on these outcomes than the males. Both genders indicated

that the outcomes that they value the most would be to communicate with English speakers in basic English, to receive 'A' and to develop reading comprehension. To both genders, these outcomes are the most significant.

In terms of expectancy, both females and males do not differ significantly in their expectancy to achieve the above outcomes from the English class. However, with regard to developing reading comprehension and getting 'A', females have indicated that they have higher expectancy in achieving these outcomes than the male participants.

With regard to their perceived ability in achieving all the outcomes, the female participants have estimated that they have the highest ability in communicating with English speakers in basic English. The females also have estimated high ability compared to males in terms of receiving 'A' in course, to speak English fluently and to develop comprehension of reading assignments.

5.3. Recommendations for further studies

The results of the present study show that instrumental orientation is a driving force for learning English at university level, but the presence of integrative motivation also needs to be noted. From the mixed findings, one should not conclude that in general all students are purely instrumentally motivated. More studies in this area need to be conducted and it is also important for future studies to define integrative motivation in a country like Malaysia.

An implication of the findings is that the motivational orientation of learners should be considered in teaching and learning English. At present, most courses tend to prepare learners for instrumental motives such as to prepare them to pass examinations and communication for practical purposes. Schools and universities should help students clearly identify their goals in learning English including short-term and long-term goals. Once these goals are identified, a meaningful learning environment can be designed and established.

Teachers and language instructors should be perceptive of learners' motives, to acknowledge their instrumental motivation, and at the same time stimulate their integrative motivation in learning English. Any negative stereotypes of the language should also be corrected. Teachers and language instructors can improve the content of their syllabus, teaching methods and classroom activities. Most importantly, in language learning, it is also fundamental to create a pleasant and relaxed environment to help learners to be at ease.

In raising the students' interest in understanding the culture of the target language, it would also be beneficial in enhancing their perception and understanding of other cultures and in producing quality learners. This can be done with discussions on various topics, giving information on the lifestyle, geography, culture and literature of the language.

With the limited hours of instruction that learners have in their (university-imposed) English classes, it is impossible for them to have the chance of learning English

specifically in particular skills like speaking or listening as most courses are designed for reading and writing. In addition to that, overcrowded classes could also be another reason learners could not benefit from their English classes as the instructors often have limitations to communicate effectively and often, learners have no talking time.

Thus, to maintain their goals and motivation, universities could offer ESP courses throughout the duration of a program so that non-English majors could have consistent contact with the target language, beyond their textbooks and medium of instruction in the classroom. This could increase the learners' goal-orientedness and their linguistic self-confidence.

On the basis of the conclusions above, some recommendations for further studies in the same areas are listed below:

- a. Although the findings of this study were not consistent with some of the previous studies reviewed, the results of this study highlight the need to conduct more studies in relation to language learning motivation and gender differences at university level in order to elucidate the reasons behind the inconsistency of most of the findings of the present study.
- b. Further studies may also focus on motivation and students' proficiency, which was not covered in this study.
- c. Further studies may also be conducted in the Malaysian context specifically in the area of motivation, gender and proficiency. In order to get a clearer picture of the relationship between gender, motivation and proficiency, larger samples from both public and private universities should be taken into account.

- d. Further studies may focus on the influence of language learning strategies on motivation. Learning strategies are important to facilitate motivation and by identifying the learning strategies that students use, teachers and instructors will be able to train students and plan lessons according to the strategies students employ to help them with language learning.
- e. It is also recommended that further studies would look into other motivation variables which were not measured in this study such as discipline, aptitude, teacher training, parental encouragement and the role of learners' first language.
- f. Further studies may focus on gender and their attribution to success and failure in language learning.
- g. Further studies may also employ a variety of data collecting methods to measure motivation such as by observation or interviews.

Although the findings from this study were inconsistent with some of the other studies reviewed, the findings highlight the need to conduct more research in the area of motivation especially among tertiary education learners in Malaysia. This is vital as more research in this area will definitely help language instructors to have a better concept of motivation, which may hopefully encourage them to do better in their teaching.