Motivation And Its Influence On English Learning At Tertiary Education

Huynh Nguyen Thu[1,] Vo Thi Anh Dao[2]

[1]Faculty of Foreign Languages

University of Finance and Marketing (UFM)

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

hn.thu@ufm.edu.vn

[2]Faculty of Foreign Languages

University of Finance and Marketing (UFM)

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

vta.dao@ufm.edu.vn

Abstract – **One of the most difficult problems that language educators often deal with today is how to improve the proficiency of students striving for FL learning with the current curriculum and language learning environment because the success of second language learning depends very much on how a learner is motivated to learn the second language. To determine whether motivation might enhance students' efforts with learning process, a study used quantitative modalities was given to students in two university classes at the Faculty of Foreign Languages (FFL) in Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry (HUI). By combining the data in the questionnaire and result of observation, the researcher found out some important factors influencing students' English learning. The significance of this research comes from both practical and theoretical perspectives. The study will contribute to diversify the topic throughout the L2 field. Furthermore, EF educators may benefit from its usefulness. Based on the results of the study, they could understand what the learners need, why they study and for what they study to some extents, thus, apply reliable methods for their teaching, and have reasonable adjustments to help students achieve the best results.**

Keywords – **Motivation, instrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, language learning, attitudes, behaviors**

I. INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that language learning achievement is not only related to language aptitude but also motivation. Indeed, a large number of studies have used different ways of assessing motivational variables in various contexts and languages to determine the roles of motivation in learning an L2, namely Ely (1986); Kraemer (1993); Ramage (1990); Clement & Kruidenier (1985); Ladonle, Gardner, R. C., Moocroft, R., & Evers, F. T. (1987). Tremblay & Gardner (1995) also noted that the concept of language learning motivation has become a central component of a number of theories of L2 acquisition. Ormrod (2008) suggested that students with stronger motivation to learn and with positive attitudes toward the target language were more successful than students with lower level of motivation and less positive attitudes. Meanwhile motivation determines the specific goals toward which learners strive, which affects students' learning attitudes.

But the researcher still questions whether motivation affects university students' learning of English at FFL in HUI or not. If yes, what are the influences? To fill the gap mentioned above, the present study aims to find out the answer for such questions. Hence, the researcher can equip her teaching career with useful awareness of students' motivation.

Therefore, the purposes of this research are not only to study what motivations of the students are, but also to find out how motivation influences university students' learning of English. Ormrod (2008) noted that motivation increased the amount of effort and energy that learners expended in activities directly related to their needs and goals. It determined whether they pursued a task enthusiastically and wholeheartedly or apathetically and lackadaisically. In the same class, according to Richard and Kruidenier (1983), some persons learn a FL quickly and easily while others given the same opportunities to learn, failed at tasks. Therefore, different learners may have different motivations to the same teacher's requirement. As a result, the teachers need to think why their students are studying and what they are studying for because it concerns what their students want their life to ultimately be about.

To clarify how motivation affects university students' learning of English at FFL in HUI, the following specific questions will be analyzed:

1.   What are the motivations of university students on English learning? Are they intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation?

2.   How are the students learning English?

3.   How do they feel about the English course they are taking? Are they satisfied with their English classes?

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Motivation

At a simple level, it seems obvious that people do things, such as go to work, so as to get stuff they really want and avoid stuff they do not want. Why exactly they want what they do and do not want what they do not do is still something a mystery. It is a black box which has not been fully penetrated.

Overall, the basic perspective on motivation looks something like this:

In other words, you have certain needs or wants (these terms will be used interchangeably) and this cause you to do some certain things (behaviors) which satisfy those needs (satisfaction); and this can change the previous needs/ wants.

According to Anderman and Midgley (1988), goal theories focus on the reasons or purposes that students perceive for achieving (as cited in Keblawi, n.d., p.35). There are two goal theories that have a specific influence on the study of motivation: the goal setting theory and the goal orientation theory (ibid). According to the goal setting theory, people must have goals in order to act since human action is caused by purpose and for action to take place, goals have to be set and pursued by. It is suggested that goals have two facets of internal and external. Also, goal setting, related to performance, affects the performance of the task, the energy expanded and effort exerted. Similarly, the goal orientation theory proposes that performance is closely related to an individual's accepted goals. Ames and Archer (1988); Ames (1992) argued that it has differentiated two separate types of goals: performance and mastery orientations (as cited in Keblawi, n.d, p.38). Learners with the first orientation are involved in looking good and competent, whereas those with the second are involved in enhancing their knowledge and being capable.

As Pritchard (1969) put it, another group of motivation theories concerns equity, which is characterized by a mathematical ratio of inputs to outcomes. Inputs include intellectual ability, personality traits, experience, psychomotor skills, and seniority – anything the individual believes he or she contributes to the work setting. Outcomes include grades, performance ratings, money, promotions, and praises – anything that results from the situation that the individual perceives as personal value. Once individual have set up this ratio, they compare the value of that ratio to their own internal standards or the value of the ratio for significant others (Landy, 1985).

Equity theories are related to L2 learning motivation because the learner must believe that the probable results are worth the effort expended. If the learner feels that many years of arduous L2 learning are likely to produce very slender outcomes (in terms of proficiency, enjoyment, social interaction, or language utility on the job), the learner will become less motivated to continue.

2.2. Categories of motivation

Based on the Socioeducational Model carried out by Gardner (1985) and his associates, he pointed out motivation as a "combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language" (ibid: 10). The author also suggested that language learning motivation could be divided into two types: integrative motivation, as defined as the desire to integrate oneself with the target language, and instrumental motivation, defined as a desire to learn a language for a specific purpose, such as employment.

Instrumental motivation reflected a "more utilitarian value" placed on language study (such as anticipated usefulness in one's career). Dornyei (1990) stated that instrumental motivation and need for achievement were associated with each other, and that these two factors affected foreign language students at an intermediate proficiency level and below. Based on Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery, the instrumental item is as follow: "Studying French can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job", Gardner (1985).

On the other hand, integrative motivation was characterized by a desire "to learn more about the (second) language group", "to meet more and different people", and to affiliate with and be accepted by the L2 group. Example of integrative item is as follow: "Studying English can be more important for me because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people".

It has been suggested by Gardner (1972) that integrative motivation might be necessary to go beyond the intermediate level in foreign language learning. I agree that the motivations of foreign and second language learners are often highly disparate. I also agree that integrative motivation is much more meaningful for second language learners who must learn to live in the new culture and communicate fluently in the target language, than for most foreign language learners, who are separated in space and attitudes from the target culture and who rarely surpass intermediate language proficiency.

Besides the construct of "integrative" and "instrumental" motivation in learning, there is intrinsic – extrinsic conceptualization (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Learners are most likely to show the beneficial effects of motivation when they are intrinsically motivated to engage in classroom activities. Intrinsically motivated learners tackle assigned tasks willingly and are eager to learn classroom materials, more likely to process information in effective ways, and more likely to achieve at high levels. In contrast, extrinsically motivated learners may have to be enticed or prodded, may process information only superficially, and are often interested in performing only easy tasks and meeting minimal classroom requirements (Gottfried et al., 2001; Reeve, 2006; Schiefele, 1991; Tobias, 1994, as cited in Ormrod, 2008)

From the researcher's perspective, she supposes that the intrinsic – extrinsic motivation conceptualization is the best terms for the number of reasons. Although the integrative/ instrumental conceptualization has been valuable in providing a stimulus and channel for the investigation of the nature and impact of motivation in L2 learning, there are several problems with this approach. First of all, it is not always easy to distinguish between integrative and instrumental motivation. As a matter of fact, it is possible that a particular reason for language study can be either integrative or instrumental, depending on the social and psychological factors involved. The second problem is whether the integrative/ instrumental conceptualization captures the full spectrum of student motivation (Nakanishi, 2002). It may be that, for a given population of FL students, there are reasons for language learning that are unrelated either of the two motivational orientations. There has been little research conducted to determine what types of motivation students may have. The results of several studies do indicate, however, that a desire to learn a L2 may indeed not coincide with either integrative or instrumental motivation. In addition to examining the type of one's language learning motivation (i.e., reasons for studying the L2), it also seems important to investigate the strength of that motivation: that is, to distinguish between the goal toward which concerted activity is directed and the effort or persistence demonstrated in the process of striving for the goal (Ely, 1986).

Meanwhile, the intrinsic-extrinsic construct contains a number of helpful theories, and they are suitable with the researcher's current study. Intrinsic motivation refers to the fact of doing an activity for itself, and the pleasure, satisfaction derive from participation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). And extrinsic motivation pertains a wide variety of behaviors which are engaged in as a means to an end and not for their own sake (Deci, 1975).

We should bear in mind that there are many kinds of motivation categories and each classification has its own characteristics. Since it is impossible to list all, it is advisable to name only a small number of "motivation categories", making it possible for teachers and students to understand and follow.

2.3. Summary of the previous studies on motivation

The study of Lai, Chan, Yi and Wong (2009) has examined the relationship among intrinsic motivation, achievement goals and study strategies of Hong Kong Chinese secondary students. The participants were 786 male and 595 female students from Hong Kong. A questionnaire was conducted to assess a sample of secondary students' intrinsic motivation, achievement goals and learning strategies. The results indicated that three subscales of intrinsic motivation as well as academic achievements were all positively and significantly related with deep strategies, but not with the surface strategies.

Meanwhile, Shih and Julia (2001) have analyzed the relationship between student achievement and the following variables: attitudes, motivation, learning styles, and selected demographics. 99 students taking two web-based courses offered by the college of agriculture at a land grant university took part in the research. The research instruments, the learning style test and questionnaire, were conducted. However, no significant relationships were found between student achievement and the following variables: overall attitude mean scores, learning style scores and selected demographics.

It can be seen from the previous studies on the field of motivation that they do not investigate which kind of motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic motivation) is more important and how motivation influence university students' learning of English, even the English-major students. These are the emerging problems that the researcher is going to deal with in this study.

III.   METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

The subjects involved in this research were 65 English-major sophomores from two university classes at FFL, HUI. Nearly 100 questionnaires were distributed but 65 of them were recollected. The number of distributing and recollecting questionnaires was different because the researcher just used the nearly completed and completed questionnaires. Moreover, the lost as well as the refusal to answer was additional reasons. All of the participants, at the same level of intermediate, had studied English formally for 7 years in junior and senior high schools and for nearly two years as university sophomores. Of the 65 students aged around 20 years old, 52 were females and 13 were male.

3.2. Research Instruments

The main instrument used in this study was a complied questionnaire comprising of both open and closed questions. The content of the questionnaire was based on the research questions, literature review and previous studies to clarify the research questions mentioned above. The questionnaire had three sections. In the first section, 4 main questions with 14 items adapted and edited from Kimura at al (2001, p. 54) and Schmidt et al (1996, p.65-66), as cited in Carreira (2005), to find out what the goals of students are, whether they belong to intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. The second section contained 4 self-developed questions to determine in what ways motivation influenced students' behaviors/ attitudes of learning English. And the last section included 4 questions about the satisfaction of students when they have learned English at FFL, HUI.

Most of the questions (8 questions) were closed/ ended questions which were employed to define the ratio and how much students agree with the statements. The use of closed/ ended questions helped the researcher administer responses quicker and easier. The rest questions (4 questions) were designed by open questions because the researcher did not want to hinder the participants from raising new issues, so that they had a tendency to express their own thinking. Nevertheless, the participants might not be willing to write a long answer and decide to leave a blank, which was the difference between the number of questionnaires distribution and recollection. The questionnaire was formally designed in English which is relevant to the current level of participants. Then, with the aim at confirming and comparing between what the participants answered and how they behaved in real situations, 4 out of 65 participants were chosen to observe in some lessons. Two of them were high motivated students and the rest were opposite.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

65 students from two university classes voluntarily participated in the research. It was conducted when they were going to

finish the second semester of the school year. Initially, the answers of reasons leading to English learning were analyzed and sorted into 2 types of motivation: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. The category was primarily based on the reasons, purposes and goals of participants when they took into the English courses at FFL, HUI. In addition, the researcher dissected motivational factors which were asked and answered in the questionnaires and be able to observe in classroom situations to define students' behaviors/ attitudes toward their present English learning. Finally, the level of students' satisfaction of learning English at FFL, HUI was also addressed in this part.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Motivation Categories

Table 1: Students' initial reasons for majoring in English

Intrinsic motivation		
Item description	**Number of answers**	**Total**
i. I love English very much.	31	
j. I like to speak with native speakers.	27	
k. I would like to make friends with foreigners.	18	
l. I learn English because I think it is necessary for the other subjects at school.	22	191
m. I feel confident when I can use English to communicate with foreigners.	41	
n. English, my most favorite subject, makes me feel confident and comfortable in any English classes.	29	
o. I am learning English because I want to touch upon the cultures of English speaking countries.	23	
Extrinsic motivation		
Item description	**Number of answers**	**Total**
p. h. My parents/ my teachers want me to improve my English skills.	30	
q. Being able to speak English will add to my social status.	27	
r. I want to learn English because I would like to emigrate.	13	
s. I am learning English to become more educated.	15	177
t. If I learn English better, I will be able to get a better job.	45	
u. Increasing my English proficiency will have financial benefits for me.	20	
v. If I can speak English, I will have a marvelous life.	27	

The results in the table 1 indicated that students' initial motivation on English learning mostly came from themselves (intrinsic motivation) with 191 choices. The desire to communicate with foreigners as well as the interest in English itself was the main reason making them to become English-major students. Next, the factor of a better job and caretakers' advice was the basic extrinsic factor influencing students' initial decision. It could be seen that their motivation primarily came from the pleasure they

got from English language itself while external factors just had negligible influences on their choices.

Table 2: Students' current motivation after 2 years of majoring in English

Intrinsic motivation			Extrinsic motivation		
Reasons	n	%	Reasons	n	%
1. I still pursue my interest	12	44.46	4. My parents/ teachers/ friends advise me.	14	36.84
2. I want to integrate and learn foreign cultures	5	18.51	5. I want to have a good job in the future and earn a lot of money.	21	55.26
3. I want to communicate with people all over the world	10	37.03	6. I want to seek for a scholarship for higher education.	3	7.9
Total	27	41.53		38	58.47

The research also revealed that the current motivation among students after 2 years studying English at FFL, HUI has changed. 38 out of 65 participants were extrinsically motivated and 27 of them were intrinsically motivated. From the two motivational construct namely, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation that have been the focus of the present study, extrinsic motivation (items 4, 5 in table 2) received the highest agreement. For instance, most students admitted that they favored learning English because they want to have a good job in the future with high salary. The remaining extrinsic motive for the purpose of seeking for a scholarship had the least significant impact on students' English learning. For the intrinsic type of motivation, the students agreed that learning English due to their interest and integration to foreign cultures were essential motives. Learning English to communicate with other people was followed in the next order. This referred that students' motivation were more extrinsic than intrinsic. Actually, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation could not be separated for the learners. From both types of motivation, there might be one of them that influence the learners much more than the other one whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic, which encourage them to achieve English. Therefore, the dominant motivation depended on their aims in learning English.

4.2. In what ways motivation influencing students' behaviors/ attitudes

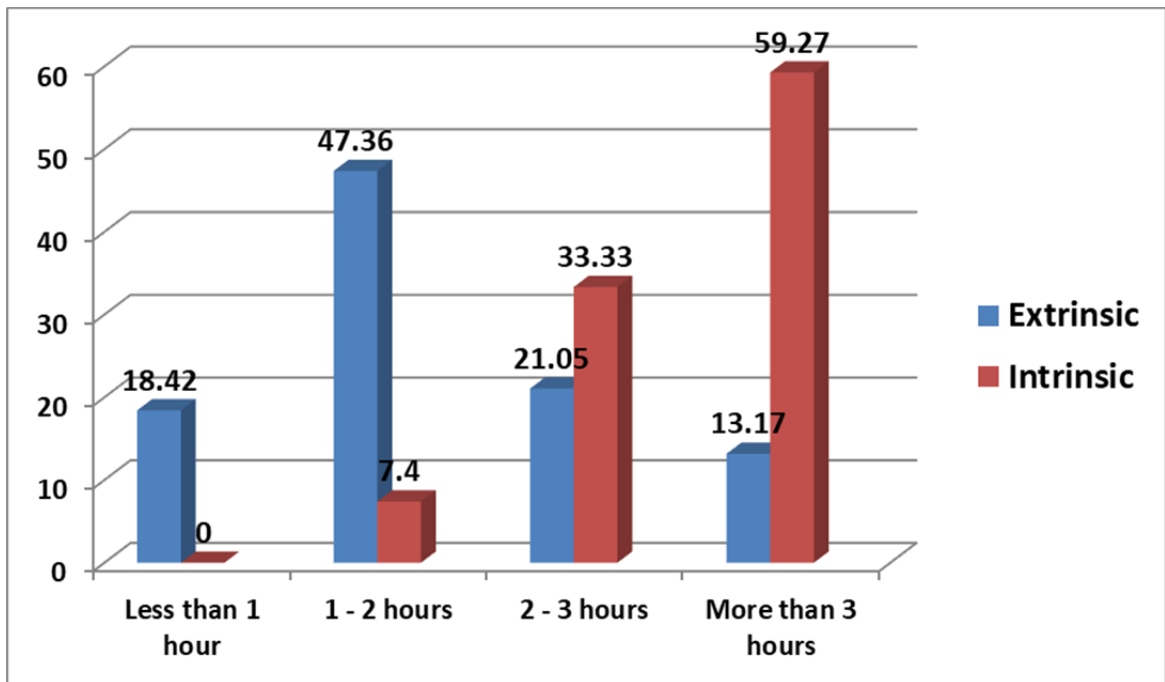*4.2.1.   Time spending for English learning per day*

Fig.1. Time spending for English learning per day

The study found that more than 90% of intrinsic students spent from 2 hours to more than 3 hours a day learning English, regardless of their compulsory learning time at school. In contrast, approximately 65% of extrinsic students spent from less than one hour to 2 hours a day learning English. It could be inferred that intrinsic students invested much more time, vigor and energy to study and complete the tasks at home rather than that of extrinsic ones for the reason that they might realized the importance of English to themselves.
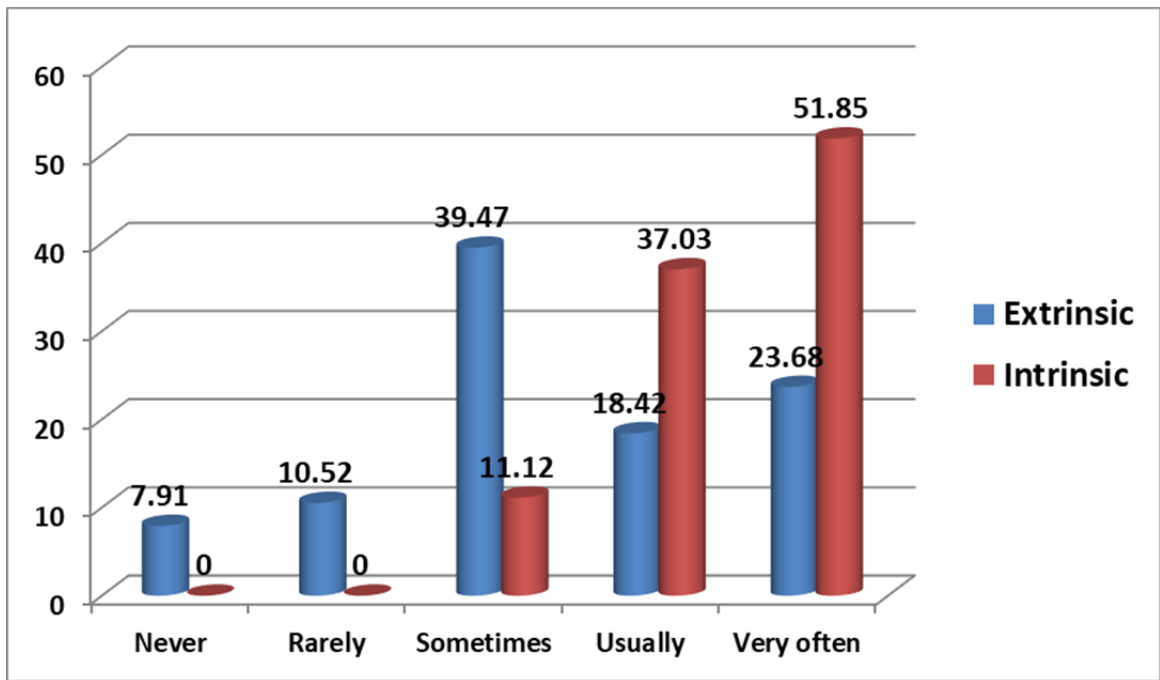
4.2.2.   Classroom participation

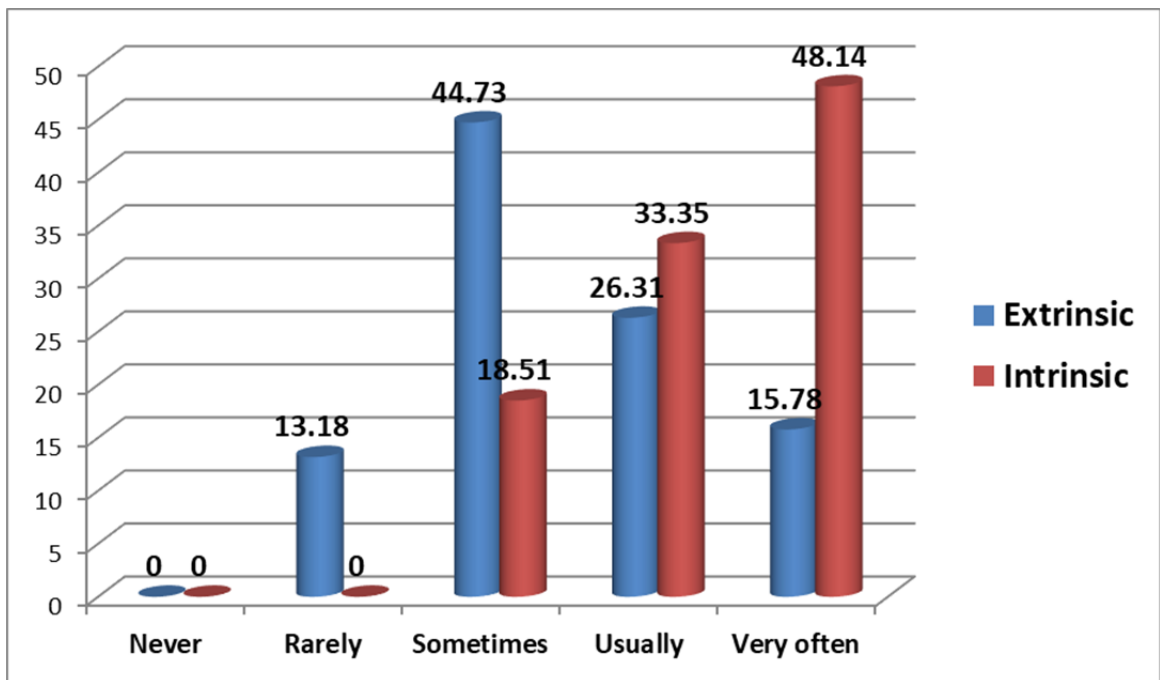Fig. 2. Students' level of concentration on lessons

Fig. 3. Students' level of sharing ideas with teachers and classmates

The data from the two figures above showed that students with intrinsic motivation have more positive attitudes/ behaviors in English learning than that of students with extrinsic motivation in terms of the level of concentration on lessons and sharing ideas with teachers and classmates. From the figure 2, nearly 90% intrinsic students admitted that they often paid attention on lessons in classrooms while approximately 42% extrinsic students often did so. Furthermore, from the figure 3, the results were nearly

similar to that of the figure 2. In this study, it was found that these intrinsic students generally expressed positive reactions toward English learning. The more they felt interested in English itself, the more time and effort they spend on learning English at school and at home as well.

4.2.3. *Students' satisfaction of learning English at FFL, HUI*

Based on the questions 9, 10, 11 and 12 in the questionnaire, the researcher found that 54% of them responded negatively. The researcher discussed a little bit about factors influencing their English learning because of its indirect meaning. It inferred that the indirect meaning of answers contributed the explanation for students' learning behaviors mentioned above. These factors could come from external conditions such as the facilities, course syllabus as well as teaching staff at FFL, HUI.

4.2.4. *Results of observation*

After collecting and analyzing data in questionnaires, the researcher divided participants into 2 groups. Group A with intrinsically motivated students and group B with extrinsically motivated students. Then the researcher chose 2 participants each group to observe in some periods. The purpose of observation was to make sure the sincere and honesty of the answers in the questionnaire in real situations. In addition, it was possible for the researcher to observe how students studied and behaved in their English classes and whether they feel satisfied with what they are studying or not.

Experiencing some periods, it was easy to recognize that the participants in group A expressed positive attitudes toward their English learning much more than students in group B. Student 1 in DHAV 7A was a specific example. In her answers, she said that she liked to speak with native speakers as well as study public speaking skills because she wanted to become an interpreter for her future job. Such goal apparently expressed in her English learning, especially in speaking and pronunciation subjects. Averagely she contributed ideas 4 times for each period and never missed any chances to speak and express her own ideas. While her classmates were presenting topics, she paid attention to their presentations. After that, she raised questions as well as her own comments immediately. Student 2 in class DHAV 7B is a considerable example for intrinsically motivated in group A. He also behaved in the same way with student 1. In the classroom, they often focused on their lessons and usually contributed ideas; especially they seldom talked in private.

In group B, I could call in evidence by student 3 in class DHAV 7A. When I came to his class for the first time, he was absent and so was he for the second. It was obvious to understand the reason of his behaviors because he admitted that his motivation came from his parents only. They advised him to major in English but he himself had no ideas about his English learning; therefore, he not only felt tired and bored in class but also just spent less than one hour per day studying English at home. Indeed, it is hard for him to achieve his goal if he continues studying with such attitudes. Student 4 in class DHAV 7B was the same. He often talked in private and seldom concentrated on the lessons. It comes to an end that different levels of motivation lead to differences in attitudes and behaviors of students toward English learning.

V. CONCLUSION

5.1. A review of the major aims

The major aims of the study were to figure out the goals in English learning of English-major students at FFL, HUI, whether their goals and performance were related or not. If yes, how goals motivated them to study in order to reach their goals. Based on the data from the questionnaires as well as the observation result, the researcher identified that students with intrinsic motivation behaved positively in their classroom. While students with intrinsic motivation pursued their English tasks enthusiastically and voluntarily, those with extrinsic motivation were opposite. According to what the researcher mentioned in the literature review part, all actions are given meaning and purpose that individuals seek out. As a consequence, goal setting and performance were related. The stronger the motivation is, the better the performance is.

5.2. Limitation

It is the first time the researcher has implemented an empirical study in classroom setting, so limitation is inevitable. First of all, the number of 65 participants could not completely generalize the whole number of students at FFL in HUI. Secondly, since the research instrument is complied from previous studies, the validity of the questions is not scientifically checked. Data recollection and analysis procedures are not easy. The questionnaire with 4 open questions helps the students tend to show their own ideas; however, it is difficult for the researcher to administer and analyze, especially if multiple answers are given. Finally, as

motivation is a mixture on its nature rather than pure intrinsic and extrinsic construct. Hence, the researcher only examined and analyzed the data based on the questionnaires and observation results. Other behaviors and attitudes relating to the field of psychology, the researcher has not gone through. If the researcher has another chance to go over this problem in the second stage of the Master degree, she will certainly address this facet of motivation on language learning.

5.3. Recommendation

Firstly, the content of the study is approximately narrow and id should be broader in the future study. Secondly, the questionnaires should be redesigned to include a more careful selection of items. Although the items in the research were developed based on previous studies, some of them were not adapted well. Thirdly, relationships among motivation factors should be explored thoroughly. One solution to solve this is to employ a structural modeling approach to the present data. Finally, the research methodologies used to investigate language learning motivation should be considered carefully. In other words, the future study should employ plural methods data collection, including qualitative methods such as ethnographic classroom observation, classroom discourse analysis, and diary analysis and so on.

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