Motivating Undergraduate Students in the Faculty of Logistics to Learn English

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Abstract

This study investigated the English language motivation factors that influence students to study English for their future career success. In the study, 230 students who studied English for logistics were the respondents and a total of 200 questionnaires were used for data analysis. The data were analyzed by Exploratory Factor Analysis to classify groups of motivation factors, and multiple linear regression was used to solve the hypothesis. The study revealed that there are nine motivational factors: factor 1, interested in English; factor 2, opportunity seeking; factor 3, interaction with friends/socialization; factor 4, dislike English; factor 5, better career and working abroad; factor 6, prestige; factor 7, opportunity to learn a foreign culture; factor 8, feeling respect for native speakers, and factor 9, motivated by English teachers. However, there are only 5 factors that influenced the willingness of participants to learn English for their career success, which are: interested in English; opportunity seeking motivation; interaction with friends/socialization; prestige; and motivated by English teachers. The findings of this study may have important implications for English education and language training programs.

Keywords: Motivation; Logistics; Learning English

Introduction

The English language is widely accepted in worldwide industry. English is a tool for both non-native English speakers and native English speakers to communicate (Cruz-Ferreira & Abraham, 2006). The people who are fluent in English usually have an advantage. They can receive more benefits when they apply for jobs or ask for promotions, especially in logistics companies because the staff has to deal with international companies and import-export companies. English is a very important tool for them (Burcher et al., 2007).

In Thailand, English is a second language. English is a compulsory subject from elementary school to the university level, in order to provide more efficient language knowledge for students. Schools and universities have to provide English communication skills for learners. Students have to learn and practice reading, speaking, writing, and listening skills. However, the majority of Thai students still are unable to develop good language skills. The level of student proficiency in English is still weak. The English teaching programs are not as successful as they should be (Namwong, 2012). JobStreet.com English Language Assessment (JELA) (The Nation, 2013) collected data from 1,540,785 officer workers in the Southeast Asian countries of Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. The survey results showed Singapore workers have the highest average score while Thai workers have the lowest. From the 1,000 questions of the program, 40 questions were randomly selected by computer. The assessment results show workers from Singapore obtained the highest scores at an average of 81%, followed by the Philippines (73%), Malaysia (72%), Indonesia (59%) and Thailand (55%). Therefore, it is essential to solve those problems and find ways to improve the language skills of workers in Thailand. In 2016, the liberalization process under the AEC is giving Thailand huge opportunities for the expansion of market and production. Thailand's market share has increased to 35.8 % from the growth in Thai exports of goods to ASEAN (Nguyen, 2011).

According to the World Bank (2014), a set of job-relevant skills that can enhance their productivity are problem learning skills, learning new knowledge skills, social skills, self-management skills and communication

skills including reading, writing, collecting and using information to communicate with others by using foreign language as a tool. Even so, there is still the question: "Do Thai workers have sufficient communication skills in order to work in the international market?" Several industries demand highly skilled workers. Hence, since 2012, the Thai government has formulated the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan to develop knowledgeable and skilled human capital. However, the current status of the Thai workforce hardly meets this demand (Nguyen, 2011).

Researchers have stated that communication ability depends on how well the communicators communicate. Clear communication requires good language skills. Ismail (2011), Shafie and Nayan (2010), and Pandian (2002) found that people have diverse language skills because of their educational and family backgrounds. Nevertheless, the problem also relates to the confidence of the person. Stroud and Wee (2006) insisted that language learning is difficult because learners have no confidence to speak, they feel shy, especially when they have to speak English with native speakers. Anxiety is one of the most important factors to block learners from learning English (Tanveer, 2007; Jain and Sidnu, 2013). Motivation is the force that drives people to do something. Whether the workers/learners want to learn language skills or not depends on their motivation. Motivation in various aspects can encourage people to learn a second language (Gardner, 2007).

This research studied undergraduate students who will join the workforce after graduation. It is the duty of educational institutions to provide them with sufficient knowledge for future work performance. Hence, in order to find ways to improve their language skills, it is essential to understand the factors that motivate them to learn languages. The benefits of this study can help English teachers to understand more about their learners in order to encourage them to learn English.

Objective of this study

To study the motivation factors that influence students' willingness to study English for their future career success.

Literature review

Motivation to learn English

Motivation is a combination of effort plus desire for persons to perform their tasks to achieve their goals (Gardner, 1985). Motivation has a significant role in the process of learning languages. Teachers must understand the relationship between motivation and the effect of student performance on studying language (Dornyei, 2005). Gardner's integrative model stated that "a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer psychologically to the other language community (p.7)". Motivation to learn language can be classified into three parts: desire to learn the language, motivational intensity (the amount of effort put into learning the language), and attitudes toward learning languages (Gardner, 1985; Fallah, 2014). Motivation has a significant relationship with learners' communication self-confidence, communication frequency, proficiency, and perceived communication competence (Ghonsooly, Khajavy and Asadpour, 2012; Yashima, 2002).

Attitude

Attitude towards learning a language can be either positive or negative (Youssef, 2012). Attitude is one of the most important concepts for a person to be successful. Yu (2010) stated that learners who have a positive attitude in language learning will result in increasing their ability and better interaction in a second language. Attitude and motivation can drive learners to study language. Gardner (2006) found that motivation is the driving method to learn a new language, together with the learner's effort and desire to learn, plus a positive attitude toward the language are all important components for gaining success in language learning. Language learning motivation has been influenced by both social and cognitive theories (Dornyei, 2003). Dornyei (2003) stated that social theories examine both individuals' ethonolinguistic attitudes (e.g., attitude toward speakers) and social variables (e.g., language status and language contact). Cognitive theories consider an individual learner's characteristics (e.g., perceptions of success or goals).

Attitude/motivation toward learning language research

Gardner (1985) developed the original motivation test for language learners. Gardner's attitude/motivation test battery measures learners' willingness to speak many foreign languages perfectly, whether learners like language classes, or if they are motivated to learn language by family or teachers. Rifai (2010) studied attitude, motivation, and difficulties that learners have in learning the English language. He measured attitudes toward learning the English language, integrative motivation toward learning the English language, and instrumental motivation toward learning the English language. Moreover, he also studied the factors that influence learning to study, those factors are teachers and class courses. He found that the respondents' attitudes toward English learning were very positive (Mean = 4.0-4.2 from a 5 rating scale). Teachers and class courses positively affect student motivation toward learning English. Ozkai (2015) studied opinions of university preparatory school students toward the effects of learning English on their career. He found that 26% of students in Gazi University were pleased about studying, while 36% were not pleased about it. Opinions of the students showed that they realized English is an important international language and learning English will help them proceed in their careers. Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011) suggested strategies for teachers to encourage students to learn English by creating a friendly atmosphere in the classroom, encouraging students to personalize the classroom environment, creating situations in which students will feel a sense of accomplishment, encouraging students to set their own short-term goals, providing pair and group activities to develop students' confidence, and connecting language learning to students' interests outside of class.

Hypothesis testing

This study aims to test the hypothesis "Motivation factors that can influence the willingness of participants to learn English for their future career success."

Janin and Sidhu (2013) studied the relationships among anxiety, attitude and motivation of tertiary students in learning English as a second

language. They found positive attitudes among low proficiency students by increasing the level of motivation in learning English as a second language. Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011) showed there is a direction relationship between the efficiency of the students in language class, and motivation and attitude. The brilliant and talented students with low attitude and motivation achieved little progress. So, teachers should use the techniques and strategies that can motivate students to learn.

Methodology

Participants

The population consisted of 230 undergraduate students in the logistics faculty of a university in the eastern region of Thailand. The logistics faculty was selected because students who will graduate from this faculty will work in the logistics industry, and English language skills are important for their success. All students were 18-22 years old, studying English for logistics as compulsory subsidiary subjects and in their final year of study. Thirty-eight items were included in the questionnaire. From the results of data collection, there were 200 usable questionnaires that were sufficiently large for factor analysis (Pallant, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Those amounts provided a ratio of participants to items of 5:1, which is considered good (Hair et al., 1998).

Questionnaire

The Motivation factors for the questionnaire were adapted from Gardner's (2004) 'Attitude/motivation test battery', Yashima's (2002) study of motivation in foreign language of Japanese college students, Bradford's (2007) study of motivation orientation in an under-research FLL context in Indonesia, and Ali, Wyatt, and Laar's (2015) study of Pakistani postgraduate students' orientations for learning English as a second language. The 38 questions were assessed through a 5 point Likert scale, with options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The reliability of the questionnaire was checked by using the Cronbach alpha. The resulting score come out as 0.899, which is considered appropriate in social sciences as it is above 0.7

(Pallant, 2007). The dependent variable "the willingness of students to learn English for their future career success", the questionnaire contained three questions in a 5 point Likert scale.

The questionnaire was distributed to students by permission from the Dean of Logistic Faculty. The researchers collected data from students who took the last class of English for Logistics. The participants completed the questionnaire within 30 minutes of class time.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed by the SPSS program, using factor analysis and testing the hypothesis by using multiple linear regression.

First, the Kaiser-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser, 1974) was used. The values of KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity produced were 0.873 and 0.000, respectively, showing that data were appropriate for factor analysis. Using a principle component approach, the total variances of 9 retained factors were found. Kaiser's Criterion is based on the recommended eigenvalue of 1.0. Researchers use the orthogonal Varimax approach during rotation. In addition, in order to ensure stable and robust factors, researchers retained items with a minimum loading of 0.4. The factor loadings measure the correlations of the items with the factors. Comrey and Lee (1992) suggested the following: Loadings in excess of 0.71 are considered excellent; Loadings in excess of 0.63 are considered very good; Loadings in excess of 0.55 are considered good; Loadings in excess of 0.45 are considered fair; and Loadings in excess of 0.32 are considered poor.

Second, the hypothesis was tested by multiple linear regression. Multi-collinearity was tested by examining tolerance which must have a value of more than 0.4, VIF must have a value less than 10 (O'Brien, 2007; Action et al., 2009), and Durbin-Watson should have a value of1.5-2.5 (Prusty, 2010).

Results

From 200 usable questionnaires, there were nine loading factors that had an eigenvalue of more than 1.0.

Table 1 The eigenvalues and variances of each of the 9 retained factors.

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loading			Rotation sums of squared loading		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	10.092	26.557	26.557	10.092	26.557	26.557	5.825	15.328	15.328
2	2.984	7.851	34.408	2.984	7.851	34.408	3.251	8.556	23.883
3	2.419	6.367	40.775	2.419	6.367	40.775	2.372	6.243	30.126
4	1.723	4.535	45.310	1.723	4.535	45.310	2.251	5.923	36.049
5	1.395	3.671	48.981	1.395	3.671	48.981	2.069	5.444	41.493
6	1.335	3.513	52.495	1.335	3.513	52.495	2.028	5.338	46.831
7	1.232	3.243	55.738	1.232	3.243	55.738	2.016	5.306	52.137
8	1.152	3.033	58.771	1.152	3.033	58.771	1.818	4.783	56.920
9	1.028	2.705	61.476	1.028	2.705	61.476	1.731	4.556	61.476

The resulting rotated component matrix is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Rotated component matrix.

Items	Motivation	Component								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
26	I review my English lessons every day.	0.768								
30	If I have any problems, I usually ask my teacher.	0.763								
31	I like to study English and am always waiting for the next lesson.	0.754								
37	When I study English, I do not pay attention to something else more than studying English.	0.687								

Table 2 Rotated component matrix (Continues)

Items	Motivation	Component								
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
24	I like to read newspapers and magazines in English.	0.667								
23	I try to learn and understand what people say in English every time that I have a chance.	0.617								
16	Although I say something wrong, I try to speak English.	0.563								
25	If I can speak English, I will have more chances to talk to foreigners.	0.559								
13	Although my university does not force me to learn English, I wish I will have the chance to study English.	0.506								
4	English is so fun.	0.482								
33	I plan to study English as much as possible.	0.407								
38	I like to watch English movies / listen to English music and try to understand the sentences.		0.755							

Table 2 Rotated component matrix (Continues)

Items	Motivation	Component								
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
20	I feel disappointed if I have no chance to speak English in class.		0.738							
34	I like to study English with foreign teachers more than Thai teachers.		0.663							
28	I want to learn English so well that it will become natural to me.		0.562							
7	I enjoy meeting foreigners.			0.626						
14	I like an English class that has many activities for me to participate in.			0.619						
8	My friends really like to learn English.			0.608						
6	English is a compulsory subject.				0.740					
35	I think English is difficult to learn.				0.667					
15	I won't study English because I don't like it.				0.603					

Table 2 Rotated component matrix (Continues)

Items	Motivation	Component								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
21	Native English speakers are very sociable and kind.				0.510					
18	I believe English will enhance my career.					0.844				
10	If I want to work abroad, English is important.					0.543				
17	I believe that well educated people should speak English.						0.670			
11	People that I respect realize the importance of English.						0.580			
19	I can imagine about my ability to use English when I work.						0.496			
27	I want to have foreigners as friends.						0.455			
1	English is important for my career.							0.809		
2	I want to learn the different cultures of other countries.							0.745		
3	I intend to learn several foreign languages.							0.505		

Table 2 Rotated component matrix (Continues)

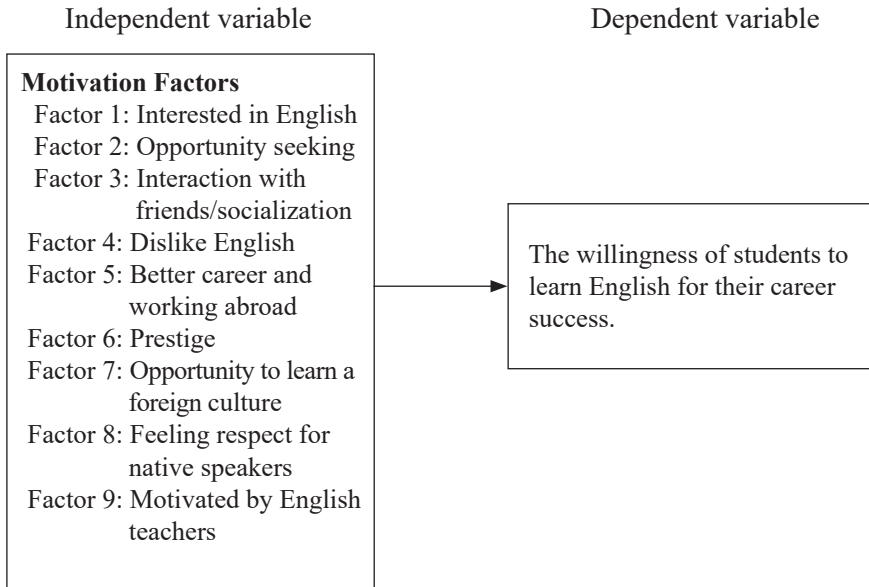| Items	Motivation	Component								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5	My parents motivate me to learn English.							0.403		
12	It is unnecessary to speak English fluently, I wish I can do simple communication.								0.640	
36	I respect people who can speak English.								0.562	
32	I think native speakers are all proud of themselves.								0.421	
29	My English teacher motivates me to study.									0.619
22	I like my English teacher.									0.591
9	I like to study English more than other subjects.									0.469

The results indicated 9 motivation factors, which are:

Factor 1: Interested in English

Factor 2: Opportunity seeking

Factor 3: Interaction with friends/socialization

Factor 4: Dislike English

Factor 5: Better career and working abroad

Factor 6: Prestige

Factor 7: Opportunity to learn a foreign culture

Factor 8: Feeling respect for native speakers

Factor 9: Motivated by English teachers

Conceptual Framework

Independent variable   Dependent variable

| **Motivation Factors** |
| Factor 1: Interested in English |
| Factor 2: Opportunity seeking |
| Factor 3: Interaction with friends/socialization |
| Factor 4: Dislike English |
| Factor 5: Better career and working abroad |
| Factor 6: Prestige |
| Factor 7: Opportunity to learn a foreign culture |
| Factor 8: Feeling respect for native speakers |
| Factor 9: Motivated by English teachers |

The willingness of students to learn English for their career success.

Result: Hypothesis testing

H_o: Motivation factors cannot influence the willingness of students to learn English for their future career success.

H_1: Motivation factors can influence the willingness of students to learn English for their career success.

Table 3 Multiple Regression Analysis.

Independent variables	Unstandardized coefficients	Standard error	Standardized coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
						Tolerance	VIF
Constant	- 0.186	0.204		- 0.911	0.363		
Factor 1	0.500	0.049	0.524	10.229**	0.000	0.541	1.849
Factor 2	0.177	0.045	0.180	3.961**	0.000	0.688	1.453
Factor 6	0.150	0.047	0.147	3.201**	0.002	0.674	1.484
Factor 3	0.125	0.041	0.148	3.075**	0.002	0.612	1.633
Factor 9	0.104	0.042	0.104	2.500*	0.013	0.827	1.209

*significant level 0.05; **significant level 0.01

Hypothesis testing was done by using the stepwise method in multiple linear regression. The results show that there was no multi-collinearity among the variables because tolerance is higher than 0.4, VIF is less than 10, and Durbin-Watson equals 2.205. There are five factors that can influence the willingness of students to learn language for their career success. Those factors consist of interested in English, intrinsic motivation, prestige, interaction with friends/socialization, and motivated by English teachers. Factors 1, 2, 3, and 6 influence the willingness of students to learn language at significant level 0.01. While Factor 9 influences the willingness of students to learn language at the significant level 0.05. The R is 0.851, R square is 0.725 or 72.5%, and adjust R square is 0.718. Whereas Factors 4, 5, 7, and 8 cannot influence the willingness of students to learn language.

Discussion and recommendations

According to the hypothesis testing, there are five factors that can influence the willingness of participants to learn English for their career success. Examining the beta statistics, the first factor that has the strongest influence on the participants' willingness to learn English is 'Interested in English'. The participants like English, so they are waiting for the lessons, review their English lessons every day, and try to acquire the opportunity to learn and speak English. Bai, Hu, and Gul (2014) stated that students in the high English proficiency group were found to use more revising, self-evaluating, and information-seeking. Therefore, researchers suggest that English teachers should provide a class environment which learners feel is so much fun. Learners should have the chance to participate and practice their speaking skills. The learning tasks must be practical, must have a clear purpose, and should be relevant to important issues for their future career, and the teacher should offer more comprehensive grammar presentations and more detailed explanations (Cozma, 2015).

The second factor is 'Opportunity seeking'. The participants like to watch English movies, listen to English music and try to understand the sentences. They like to study English with foreign teachers more than Thai teachers. They want to learn English so well that it will become natural to

them. Magogwe and Oliver (2007) found that there are significant relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and language learning strategies. Therefore, researchers recommend English teachers should be native speakers or foreigners who have an English level up to standard to teach students instead of only teaching by Thai teachers. The techniques used for developing English language skills are songs, movies, and cartoon strips. Namwong (2012) found that the target group obtained scores in the very good level with English language learning by songs. The target group obtained scores in the good level with English language learning by movies.

The third factor is 'Interaction with friends/socialization'. The participants enjoy meeting with foreigners. They like to study English because of friends and are willing to participate in a variety of activities in English class. The researchers suggest that learners who want to develop their English skills should have more foreigners as friends. Learners will have the chance to communicate in English. Zhou (2012) found that group-mates can be powerful motivators for shy, insecure, or even uninterested learners.

The fourth factor is 'Prestige'. The participants believe that well educated people should speak English. So if the learners recognized that they can communicate in English well, they have confidence and prestige in their mind as the rewards in life.

The fifth factor is 'Motivated by English teachers'. Rafai (2010) found that teachers positively affect motivation toward learning the English language. Stroud and Wee (2006) added that learning language can be very difficult if learners are stressed. Learners are often not confident to speak the target language because they are afraid of being evaluated by teachers, especially the native speakers of the language. So teachers should be the ones who can help learners to feel relaxed and enjoy learning.

Conclusion

In summary, this study provides a greater understanding of the motivation and attitudes of students toward their willingness to study English for their future careers in logistics. The data collection method was

questionnaires, distributed to bachelor's degree students in the Faculty of Logistics. Those students can be respondents because they will graduate and become the staff in logistics companies where English plays an important role for their communication. The results of this study found that there are five factors that can influence the willingness of participants to learn English for their career success. Those five factors include 'Interested in English, 'Intrinsic motivation', 'Interaction with friends/socialization', 'Prestige' and 'Motivated by English teachers'. Therefore, teachers should design lessons that encourage learners to recognize the importance of English and the benefits for their future careers to be more prestigious.

Acknowledgements

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