

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the research findings, and provides some recommendations for pedagogical use and for future studies.

Summary of the Findings

It has been stated in Chapter One that the objective of this study was to find out what motivational orientation of EFL college students were. The results from factor analysis indicated that there were altogether seven factors representing seven types of motivation: identified regulation, intrinsic motivation, amotivation, external regulation (travel), external regulation (career), introjected regulation (guilt), and introjected regulation (acceptance).

The results of the analysis also revealed that the participants were motivated by external regulation (career) the most (4.42 out of 5). In other words, the participants' most crucial reason for studying English was their awareness of the importance of English for

their jobs. The participants were also strongly motivated by the identified regulation, the belief that a certain thing is necessary and beneficial for oneself, even though it got a slightly lower average score than external regulation (career) (4.35). This means that the next important reason why the participants studied English was that they basically believe that English is beneficial. The third important reason was the participants' desire to travel to foreign countries which was signified by a high average score in external regulation (travel) (3.87). The participants were equally motivated by intrinsic motivation, that is their self-pleasure in studying English. Finally, the participants were fairly motivated by introjected regulation (guilt) and introjected regulation (acceptance). The reasons underlying these two motivations were their guilty feelings for not knowing English and their desires to be accepted by the teachers and friends.

Discussion

The results reported above were quite similar to those Noels, Pelletier, Clement, and Vallerand (2000) had obtained from their study in Canada. The similarity

between their study and the current study was that the questionnaire items could be classified into five main types of motivation: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, intrinsic motivation, and amotivation. However, the results from Noels et al. (2000)'s study showed that the participants' intrinsic motivation could be classified into three subtypes: knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation, whereas the results from the current study showed that there were no subtypes of intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, while the results of the current study showed that there were two subtypes of external regulation and introjected regulation, the results from Noels et al. (2000)'s study indicated that there were no subtypes of these two orientations. The differences between these two studies probably caused by the different backgrounds of the two groups of participants of these two studies. It seemed that the participants in Noels et al. (2000)'s study were more intrinsically motivated than the participants in the current study, which could be explained by Noels et al. (2000)'s information that their participants were from a school where bilingualism was valued. Moreover, their participants were from Canada where French was an official language, while the participants of this study

were from Thailand where English, though valued, is only a foreign language.

Another study conducted in Canada on Francophone participants studying English by Belmechri and Hummel (1998) revealed that those Francophone students' most important orientation was instrumental orientation (travel) and the least important orientation was instrumental orientation (career). Belmechri and Hummel (1998) stated that the results were quite predictable because the participants were from the middle class and they could afford to travel to America. They added that if the participants had been from the lower class, the orientation would have changed from travel to career. Similarly, the participants of the current study were from the middle class and could afford to travel to foreign countries, so their third important orientation was the external regulation (travel).

The results from these two studies implied that the students' background and their level of study were important factors determining their learning orientations. This explains that the most important learning orientation of the participants of the current study was instrumental (career) because they needed English for their jobs.

Implications

Teachers, as a factor that affects students' learning motivation (Abisamra, 2002), can do many things to help students increase and maintain their learning motivation. However, in order to motivate their students, the teachers may need to know what their students' learning orientations are. Sometimes the students' learning goals can be different from what the teachers expect, as suggested by Dörnyei (2001, p. 59), "The 'official class goal' (i.e. mastering the course content) may well not be the class group's only goal and in some cases may not be a group goal at all!" As it has been found that Thai undergraduate students' most important orientation in studying English lies in their future careers, the teachers might strengthen students' motivation by reinforcing the advantages of knowing English on their job opportunities. One way to fulfill this task is to let them experience the real situation in a workplace, so they can see that a person with better English has more opportunities than others.

The participants' second most important orientation stems from their belief that English was basically beneficial. The teachers may intensify this belief by pointing out how English can help them in their study. To

maximize the use of English, the teachers can also integrate English with other subjects.

The next important orientation was external regulation (travel) which signifies that the participants' third important reason for studying English was to travel to English speaking countries. The teachers may help students intensify this orientation by introducing English culture in the class. The following are some suggestions made by Dörnyei (2001) on how to bring English culture into EFL classrooms.

1. Use English cultural products such as magazines, music, and movies as course material.
2. Invite some English guest speakers to the class.
3. Encourage students to have some English speaking pen-friends.
4. Arrange some school trips or an exchange program to an English speaking country.

The last motivation that got a high average score in this study was intrinsic motivation. Since intrinsic motivation is caused by students' enjoyment in learning English, the teacher can enhance students' intrinsic motivation by designing a classroom that meets students' preference. This means that the course material must be interesting to the students, the teaching method that the teacher uses fits the students' learning styles, and the

classroom atmosphere must be positive. These requirements can be met by doing a need analysis before the teacher writes a syllabus for each course.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The current study was conducted in a private university where most of the students were from the middle class. It would be interesting to see how the results might change if the participants had a different background. A survey study on students' learning motivation in a university where students are from other classes than the middle class will give useful results for comparing with the results of the current study. Likewise, since age level is also a factor determining students' motivation, a comparison of motivational orientation of participants from different levels will give insightful information in this field.

As has been stated, the teacher is an important factor that affects students' learning motivation. The teacher can cause either positive or negative impacts on students. Also the teacher may help students maintain or undermine their motivation. It would be fruitful to find out what Thai teachers think about students' learning motivation. It is interesting to know whether Thai

teachers are aware of the importance of students learning motivation, how much they know about learning motivation, and what strategies they use to motivate their students to learn English.

It will also be useful to conduct a qualitative research on students' learning motivation. The researcher may interview several highly motivated students in comparison to a few students who have low motivation. The results of the study may help the teacher understand why some students have high motivation while others do not. As a result, the teachers will get some clues on how to increase and maintain students' learning motivation, which can lead to an overall improvement in their English proficiency.