

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Discussion

This research identified the motivation types and reported self-identity changes among Thai students studying EFL and determined to what extent there is a relationship between the two. The participants were surveyed, and follow-up interviews were conducted. This chapter presents the summary of the results, discussions, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for future studies.

5.1 Summary of the Results

The following section summarizes the results of the study by answering the three research questions presented in Chapter One using the results of the data analysis as presented in Chapter Four.

5.1.1 Motivation Types

The first research question focused on identifying the motivation types held by the participants and determined to what extent there were differences between university level groups. The highest motivation types among Thai EFL learners was identified regulation (mean = 4.67). The next three highest motivation types were all subtypes of intrinsic motivation: intrinsic motivation for stimulation (mean = 4.37); intrinsic motivation for knowledge (mean = 4.27), and intrinsic motivation for accomplishment (mean = 4.23). The remaining identified motivation types were external regulation (mean = 4.16) and introjected regulation (mean = 3.45), and amotivation had the lowest mean score of 1.46 which indicated few responders were not motivated in their ELL. In response to comparisons among groups, there was a statistically significant difference between freshmen and seniors in introjected regulation. There were no statistically significant differences between the groups in identified regulation, intrinsic motivation for stimulation, knowledge, or accomplishment, external regulation, or amotivation.

5.1.2 Self-Identity Changes

The second research question focused on the reported self-identity changes of the participants. The results revealed that Thai EFL students mostly changed in self-confidence (mean = 3.85) followed by productive change (mean = 3.79), additive change (mean = 3.27), zero change (mean = 2.98), and subtractive change (mean = 2.59), and the lowest level of change was split change (mean = 2.24). In response to comparisons between the groups of learners, there were no statistically significant differences in self-identity changes.

5.1.3 Correlation of Motivation Types and Self-Identity Changes

The final research question sought to determine to what extent there were correlations between motivation types and self-identity changes. All three extrinsic motivation types positively correlated with self-identity changes. Identified regulation positively correlated with additive, confidence, and productive changes while external regulation positively correlated with subtractive and productive changes; internal regulation positively correlated with split and zero change. In addition the subtypes of intrinsic motivation had positive correlations with self-identity changes. The subtypes of stimulation, knowledge, and accomplishment all positively correlated with additive, confidence, and productive self-identity changes. Finally, amotivation had positive correlations with subtractive and zero self-identity changes.

Several motivation types had negative correlations with self-identity changes as well. Identified regulation had a negative correlation with split change while the stimulation and knowledge subtypes of intrinsic motivation had negative correlations with zero change.

5.2 Discussion

The results concerning motivation types found in the current study were quite similar to Noels' study (2001a). The university students studying English in Thailand and the California university students studying Spanish in the United States both had the highest mean scores for identified regulation which is the most self-determined subtype of extrinsic motivation. Students who learn English because of identified regulation do so because they understand the behavioral goal has value and is good at the personal level. They personally choose to accept the values and participate. In the interview, the Thai students who identified this type of motivation valued communication and viewed English as the language that would allow them to communicate with the world or at least with people from the ASEAN.

The two contexts of second language learning in these studies are very similar even though the languages involved are different. Spanish is learned as a foreign language in the U.S. even though Spanish language skills can be beneficial in finding a job or interacting with the Spanish-speaking community. There is no official status for Spanish as a second language although many students study it in primary and secondary school in order to fulfill the foreign language credit. In Thailand English is learned for many of the same reasons and under the same conditions.

In the current research identified regulation was followed by intrinsic motivation and then external regulation while the American students chose external regulation followed by intrinsic motivation. Perhaps this difference in identification with intrinsic motivation is because of the chosen majors of the students. Spanish may have a more immediate effect on the lives of the students in California in terms of completing their university degree, and although they may have had a choice in what foreign language to take, they may have chosen Spanish just to fulfill the degree requirements. On the other hand, the Thai university students were English majors and were not required to take English classes in fulfillment of another degree plan. This is in contrast to Taejaroenkul (2006) who found that the majority of Thai students who were enrolled in a general English course identified different subtypes of extrinsic motivation as the most important.

In addition Thai students may have had higher intrinsic motivation because of the place English has in globalization. Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) write that a central idea in the study of language globalization is that the promotion of English also causes a diminishment of other languages. This might explain how students could be intrinsically motivated to learn English as a foreign language in Thailand to a greater extent than students studying Spanish as a foreign language in the United States.

Noels (2001a) found a correlation between the integrative orientation and intrinsic motivation and the self-determined motivation type of identified regulation. Correlating these terms allows for comparison with this research and others who researched the integrative and instrumental orientations dichotomy. Most of the participants in this study had an integrative orientation as the top four reported motivation types were identified regulation and the three subtypes of intrinsic motivation, and these results correspond with the results from Degang's 2010 survey of Thai students majoring in business English. In contrast, other studies in Asia found that students who studied in an EFL setting and were not majoring in English were not integratively motivated (Liu, 2007; Warden & Lin, 2000).

Both Liu (2007) in China and Warden and Lin (2000) in Taiwan found instrumentally motivated groups which would correlate with the less self-determined types of extrinsic motivation and did not find integratively motivated groups; however, the present study found the majority of participants in this study were integratively motivated identifying with both intrinsic motivation and identified regulation. Dai (2009) and Gao et al. (2005) reference the limited contact English students in Taiwan and China have with the L2 community, but the interviewed Thai students in this research spoke about the numerous opportunities they have at the university campus to interact with Americans and others from the ASEAN community. Perhaps it is the interaction with the L2 community that caused the difference in motivation types between the Thai students and their counterparts who are also studying English in an EFL context.

In terms of self-identity changes, the current study found that self-confidence change was the highest rated self-identity change which was also the highest rated change in China and Taiwan (Gao et al., 2005; Dai, 2009); however, in China and Taiwan the second-highest rated identity change was zero change. In Thailand the next highest reported change was productive change. Dai (2009) writes that perhaps Taiwanese students experience zero change because they see ELL as fulfilling a requirement with little contact with the L2 community whereas the students in Thailand reported in the interviews that they valued the contact they have with the L2 community as they meet and work with the international students on the university campus. Students reported in the interviews that communicating in the classroom and outside of the classroom with foreigners has shown them that they are able to successfully use English to communicate. They have been able to express their opinions in English and have become more confident when talking to foreigners.

The studies in Taiwan and China (Dai, 2009; Gao et al., 2005) along with this current study identified groups who experienced productive changes which indicates that there are students who value their C1 and L1 more after learning the L2 and C2 and that this can be accomplished in EFL contexts. Thai students revealed in their interviews that ELL had expanded their worldviews and caused them to learn about the cultures of their English speaking friends. However, this did not cause them to lose respect for their own Thai culture. As they learn more about the cultures of their

foreign friends, they also become more talkative and share the Thai culture with their friends.

The correlations between motivation types and self-identity changes differed slightly between this study and Boonchum's (2009a) study in Thailand. Although both studies were conducted among university students in Thailand, the correlations between motivation types and self-identity changes were slightly different. This study identified positive correlations between intrinsic motivation and self-confidence, productive, and additive changes while Boonchum's (2009a) study found positive correlations between intrinsic motivation and additive, productive, subtractive, and split identity changes. In addition Boonchum's study found positive correlations between extrinsic motivation and self-confidence, additive, productive, subtractive, and split changes, and this study found positive correlations between the subtypes of extrinsic motivation and all six self-identity changes. Again the context of the studies is different. Boonchum's study was conducted at Thammasat University and Naresuan University while this research was conducted in Northern Thailand at a private university. The universities differ in structure where Thammasat University pairs new international students with a Thai English-speaking student to be a helper in learning about Thai culture, and the university in this study pairs the Thai English-speaking student to be roommates with the international student at the international dormitory ("About Us," 2010; "Student Life," 2011). The focus on sharing culture as two live together could produce more long-term self-identity changes than intermittent meetings scheduled throughout the semester between two university students who might not have much free time. Since the questionnaires in this study were administered at the end of the semester, students have spent much time together during the semester and have adjusted accordingly. The correlations between split and subtractive with the intrinsic motivation types may be temporary; a transition into the additive or productive changes could occur as they spend more time with the international students on campus.

5.3 Implications of the Study

Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) write that because motivation is an important factor in learning success, "skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness" (p. 207), but much of the research has paired motivation types with linguistic outcomes. Based upon the results of this study, nonlinguistic outcomes deserve attention as well since there are correlations between motivation types and self-identity changes. Suggestions will be submitted for practical use in the language classroom so that motivation can be monitored, developed, and perhaps channeled in different directions in order to meet nonlinguistic ELL objectives.

After the teacher is aware of the students' current motivation types, steps can be taken to reinforce and strengthen the motivation types which correlate with the additive, confidence, or productive self-identity changes or to encourage students to create new goals as teachers encourage them to expand their goals for ELL. For example, if the students are motivated by their desire to communicate with the world as in this study, teachers can give them opportunities to do that through setting up pen-pal programs or by bringing in English-speaking guest speakers. Through experience and personally relevant activities, students will internalize more of the benefits of ELL and will become more self-determined in their motivation type ultimately leading to intrinsic types of motivation; increased motivation occurs

simultaneously with learners becoming autonomous. In addition teachers can encourage goal-setting focusing on long-term goals to encourage intrinsic motivation rather than the often short-term goals associated with extrinsic motivation such as earning more money or getting a better job. Students should be encouraged to set realistic personal goals for their learning (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998).

In addition to addressing motivation in the classroom, teachers can also affect self-identity changes. The highest rated change was confidence change. Four students noted this type of change in their interviews with one student reporting this was a result of his professors. In class he noted his professor gave him an opportunity to express his opinions, and he learned he could successfully do that. Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) suggest that teachers should focus on increasing the learners' linguistic self-confidence. This can be accomplished by giving positive feedback, giving the learners opportunities to be successful, encouraging learners, and allowing mistakes since they are a natural part of learning. Teachers must realize that self-confidence is not directly related to an actual level of competence but a perceived level of confidence; therefore, what the learners think they can do or accomplish will affect outcomes.

The last pedagogical implication addresses culture in the classroom. Learners should be familiar with the target language culture. Teachers can introduce learners to authentic materials, native English-speakers, the cultural background of the L2, and devise a pen-pal program for the learners (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). However, in order to promote productive self-identity changes, efforts should be made to strengthen learners' intrinsic motivation and enlarge their understanding and appreciation of their C1 and L1 while simultaneously developing their C2 and L2. Giving them opportunities to share about their own culture, beliefs, and values in English will bring about productive changes which will also improve their self-confidence. The results of this study identified a group who experience productive self-identity changes even in an EFL setting, and a proper integration of intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes about the C1 and C2 as well as the L1 and L2 will lead to more productive changes.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Studies

The current study was conducted in a private university in Northern Thailand; therefore, it was limited to mostly middle class students. Future studies that would include a larger cross-section of people groups are recommended as well as a larger sample size that would not be limited to English major students. This would enable researchers to find out if there is a group who has learned English not necessarily by choice but in fulfillment of a degree yet experienced productive self-identity changes.

When determining motivation types for this study, many students seemed to identify and hold to more than one motivation type. Cluster analysis could be used to identify certain subgroups within the sample. These subgroups would consist of participants who share similar characteristics. This would give more insight because although there are a large number of factors that influence L2 learning, "within a community of L2 learners there appear to be a smaller number of distinct subcommunities who share similar cognitive and motivational patterns" (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005, p. 615).

Qualitative studies carried out over an extended period of time might also prove useful for discovering more about various aspects of motivation and self-identity changes. The current study considered the temporal aspect of motivation by

comparing responses of different university levels, but it showed only one statistically significant difference among freshmen and seniors in one motivation type. Rather than using a questionnaire which gathers responses at one point in time, journal entries from students or multiple interviews with students might yield more insight as to whether their motivation types remain constant or vary day to day.

Finally, a comparative case study might also be used to determine other factors affecting self-identity changes. For example, some universities pair Thai students and international students together as roommates. Some university students have interaction with the international students, but it isn't consistent. Determining what kinds of self-identity changes these students experience in relation to how much time is spent with the L2 community will help determine if contact is necessary in order to experience positive self-identity changes and will further explore the results from previous quantitative research.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a summary of the results from this study including their motivation types, self-identity changes, and the correlations between the two. The results were discussed and compared with other studies, and pedagogical implications were explored. Finally, recommendations for future studies were given to continue and expand motivation and self-identity change research.