STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Students' motivation contributes to the successful teaching learning process as it determines self-engagement and participations in the classroom. Encouraging students' motivation, then, becomes important for the teacher to achieve the teaching goal and to provide a meaningful learning process for the students. This research is aimed to discuss responsive pedagogy in encouraging students' motivation to learn and participate in classroom learning process. One English speaking class becomes the object of the observation. The interviews with the teacher and some students were also part of data collection in order to obtain information about the students' motivation in learning English speaking, teacher's teaching strategy, and classroom interactions. The findings indicate that classroom activities are crucial in motivating students' responsive learning. In addition, the teacher's competency in creating a conducive environment and leading an interactive communication are the ways of the teacher influence students' motivation in learning process.

Keywords: *Students' motivation; responsive pedagogy; language classroom*

INTRODUCTION

Having a motivation is a key to be engaged in learning activities. Gorman (2004) states, "motivation is a complex process or driving force of everyone to reach the goal or target through actions" (p.2). Through motivation, a person creates an energy to actively act in order to produce a goal-oriented result. In teaching-learning activities, motivation is considered as one of important aspects that can engage a student to pay attention to the subject taught in class. Motivation will force the

students to actively participate and contribute in activities provided by the teacher. Without good motivation, the goals of learning cannot be optimally reached although the students may have an exceptional capability (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008).

Although there are some factors influencing motivation, both internal and external factors, the role of a teacher in the class cannot be put aside. The position of the teacher is very important in teaching-learning process. The way of the teacher in transferring the knowledge to the students will influence the achievement of educational goals because the teacher is directly involved with the students in the class. This condition has required the teacher to have some particular capabilities in doing their roles as an instructor, motivator, facilitator, and manager; a comprehensive knowledge and skill is necessary to play these roles appropriately in the classroom teaching-learning activities. In other words, a teacher needs to have skill in instructional techniques, teaching behaviors and other essential skills which can accommodate the needs of their students (McEwan, 2002).

In classroom teaching-learning process, the teachers are demanded to provide the students with the knowledge and skills, not only theoretical but also practical. In this light, understanding subject content is not enough to be an expert teacher as there are other factors that influence the success of transferring knowledge to sudents, such as classroom management, teaching strategy, learning materials, and students (Woolfolk, 2007). As the students in the classroom have different characteristics, backgrounds and intellectual ability, a careful preparation in order to accommodate the needs of all students is necessary. This is important to provide an engaging environment for the students; thus, they can have a meaningful teaching-learning process.

Nevertheless, providing an engaging and meaningful teaching-learning process is not easy. It is common that the students do not always focus their attention on the course subject. While they are studying, they may think about something else that may be more interesting for them than subject taught in the class. For this reason, the teachers need to find a suitable method, material and attractive situation

that will engage students' interest to the class. The teachers need to create a situation that leads the students to have the spirit and motivation to learn.

Motivation to learn a foreign language may produce a more complex situation as it is related to new language system, culture, and psychology. It considers not only knowledge and skills but also sociocultural aspects (Dörnyei, 1998). Thus, an appropriate teaching strategy and classroom management are crucial to help students be motivated to learn the language in order to reach proficiency. Circumstances inside and outside the classroom may affect the students' motivation, but the ways of the teacher handles the classroom and interacts with the students also have a great impact to motivate the students' engagement in learning.

MOTIVATION IN LEARNING

Motivation can be defined as making choices of "goals to pursue and the effort devoted to that pursuit" (Brown, 2007, p.85). These goals cause a person "to engage and to persist in action" (Ushioda, 2008, p.19). In other words, motivation is related to the purpose of human life, and the interest and motive which lead people to hold their attention of something, including in learning. The above understanding has placed motivation as one of important factors in successful accomplishment. Nevertheless, to maintain energy and behaviour in order to stay motivated in particular actions may need hard effort as some factors can affect human's motivation and these can be unpredictable.

Internal or personal factors, such as needs, interests, and curiousity, and external or environmental factors, such as rewards, social pressure, punishment are seen as two factors that influence human motivation (Woolfolk, 2007, p.373). The types of motivation are divided based on those factors; they are intrinsic and extrinsic.

Intrinsic motivation refers to the motives that come directly from inside the person, not because of pressures from others or the environment. It leads us more directly to the behavior that we desire. Ryan and Deci (2000, p.57) state that "intrinsically motivated activities were said to be ones for which the reward was in the

activity itself". People engage in the activities for fun and self-expression instead of extrinsic pressures.

Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation is the motivation which is influenced by external factors, such as parents, friends, teachers, rewards and so forth. We are interested only in earning something from our effort or activities not because we are really excited about the activities. Extrinsic motivation place the rewards, such as money, prizes, grades, positive feedback, punishment avoidance, and other reasons that have no or a little connection with the assigned task, as a motive to do some actions and maximize some efforts (Brown, 2007, p.88; Woolfolk, 2007, p.373).

Both of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations may have their own position in human life, but which one is more important or powerful and which factors that influence motivation may create different answers as different theorists emphasize different perspectives on human behaviour, which in turn affects their perspective on motivation theory. It is not impossible that our motivation come from both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Sometimes, people accept external causes to be part of them which, then, stimulate an internal cause (Woolfolk, 2007). Some researches indicate that extrinsic reward may influence on intrinsic motivation. For instance, positive feedback from the teacher may create or increase intrinsic motivation to do better in doing their task as the students feel their critical thinking, autonomy and self-fulfillment receive an approval (Brown, 2007). Thus, intrinsic motivation need to be encouraged and extrinsic motivation can be used to support learning process (Woolfolk, 2007).

For students, motivation is needed to engage their attention to the lesson and activities in class, thus, they can have a meaningful teaching learning process. In this case, a teacher has to understand that there are different motives among students following their personal experiences at home and neighborhood environment. These needs and motives lead to different level of attention. For this reason, the teacher needs to have a great effort to win students' attention, not only cognitively and physically but also emotionally.

The challenging of students' engagement on the classroom activities has led a learning environment play an important role in providing a meaningful learning

process. In this light, the involvement of the teacher in teaching-learning process is crucial by considering that she/he is the one who is responsible in teaching, managing, facilitating, and directing the classroom in order to reach particular goals of subject matters and social behaviors. The activities provided by the teacher in class determine the students' effort in doing their best in order to reach an optimal outcome of their studying. The role of activities in motivating students become bigger when it comes to language learning classroom which usually emphasizes communicative skill as its learning goal.

This study is an attempt to provide classroom phenomena related to the interaction between students and teachers in order to discover students' enthusiasm in studying and teacher's actions in encouraging students' participation. Thus, the information about students' motivation and their perspective of classroom preferences on classroom activities and teachers' characteristics will be revealed.

METHOD

As previously mentioned, this paper focuses on students' motivation and responsive pedagogy in language classroom. The students' action and their perspective on the teacher, classroom strategy, and motivation to learn is part of an investigation in this study. For this reason, this study falls into the qualitative research as it provides a wide opportunity for the researcher to explore the classroom phenomena in context, thus enabling a more understanding of the teacher's role in encouraging students' motivation. Qualitative research is concerned with exploring of meaning in context in order to understand phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).

A case study approach is used in this study. Yin (2003) states that a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.13). For this study, the use of case study is intended to reveal the information related to responsive pedagogy in the classroom and the position of the teacher in motivating students' engagement in teaching-learning process.

This study is conducted at English Department, the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of UIN Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The main research setting in this study is one of the English speaking class. The unit 3, class of conversation 2, was selected to be the participants after the teacher and the students agree to participate when the researcher presented her research to them in their classroom. Twenty six students, then, became part of the classroom observation. However, the primary source of the data came from four students, as the case study participants; they are Duta, Lina, Sahir, and Tini (pseudonym name), who were chosen as representative of gender, personality, and social-cultural background. The teacher in the chosen speaking class, Mrs. Hana (Pseudonym), was the other participant.

The data for this study was collected through interviews and five times observation. The first interview was conducted to recruit four case study participants; meanwhile the second interview was conducted after the classroom observations to access the information about the learners' perspectives of the learning process in the observation class. Mrs. Hana, the teacher, was also interviewed in order to find out case study participants' characteristics as the learners and to discover her teaching strategy in English speaking class. Meanwhile, the observations were directed towards students' engagement in learning spoken English and their interaction with teacher and classmates.

The data analysis included coding schemes, data displays, and interpretation mechanism. The first step of the data analysis was classifying the data from interviews and classroom observations into several themes. The field notes during the classroom observations emphasize some points, they are: *participation* and *engagement*. All of these points were reflected in a behaviour checklist which was prepared for each student and also for the teacher. The students' actions and responses were noted in detail which then were classified into several themes. Finally, these actions were analyzed and interpreted by connecting them with the data from interviews.

Language Learners in the Classroom: The Findings

Based on some observations and interviews with the students and the teacher, the teacher's communication style and strategy in designing classroom activities place the major points that raise students' enthusiasm to learn and participate in the classroom.

1. Classroom activities and Students' enthusiasm to participate

The teacher in the observed English speaking class, Mrs. Hana, mostly emphasized collaborative works for her teaching strategy. These included group work, working in pairs, lecture, and scaffolding. The students have different perspectives and responses of the teacher's teaching strategy.

a. Collaborative work is not always fun for students, particularly if the teacher has no specific rules how each group member should play their role in the group.

One student, Duta, thinks that collaborative work may lead some students lazy. He said:

> ...there are some friends who are lazy and do not work at all…I prefer personal work…

This situation leads Duta to choose question and answer session as his favorite activities.

b. Personal performance may put some students in uncomfortable situations which may lead them hesitate to participate.

Different with Duta, Lina does not enjoy classroom activities that involve personal performance or express personal ideas because of her shy and quiet characteristics that make her uncomfortable performing or speaking in front of the class. She says:

> ...If I am not in class, I am more active. If my friends speak to me in English, I reply in English, but this does not happen in class.

Tini may share a similar situation with Lina in term of her passive contribution in the class. However, Tini is actually not afraid to perform or to express her ideas if

she understands what she has to do in her performance or know what she has to say. The problem is that she has no confidence in her English language skills. She says:

> *I have no confidence... because I don't know much about English words.*

Most of the time, Tini only keeps silent in the class, particularly, when she has to speak or express her ideas in English.

c. Various activities and environments help to overcome students' boredom as well as to accommodate students' different characteristics.

Sahir has different point of view about the classroom learning process. He really enjoys various activities in the class. However, Sahir admits that he sometimes feels bored with learning inside the classroom. He says:

> *Sometimes, I want the teaching-learning process conducted outside class... because I feel that studying in class every day is quite boring.*

Sahir lessens his boredom by talking to friends sitting next to him or looking at his phone.

The differences of perspectives on teacher's teaching strategy discussed above shows students' different expectation and favourable activities. Each activity may provide different responses, depending on what their preferable activity. Thus, their respond will vary from one day to another as the strategy in applying activities is not the only factor that make the students engaged and motivated in teaching-learning process.

2. *Teacher's communication style and classroom atmosphere*

Effective teaching is not only understanding teaching principles and content knowledge but also involving other important aspects (Stronge & Xu, 2012). A teacher plays an important role in designing classroom activities and transferring knowledge as well as in creating a conducive environment for students to study. The interaction between the students and the teacher determine the outcomes of the classroom.

a. The way of the teacher responds to the students' participation create a particular impression on them which affect their interaction.

The participants give Mrs. Hana a high point for her friendly behaviour which make them comfortable to interact with her and feel secure with their present in the classroom. As Duta said:

Mrs. Hana is easy to interact with...The way she teaches is very good for me.

Mrs. Hana also often directed the students to appreciate their peers' performance and responses by clapping hands or giving positive appraisal and gestures. This is good to lead the students know that they have support from their peers.

b. Involving students in decision making leads students to become more active in expressing their opinions

The fact that Mrs. Hana often asks students' opinion of the preferable discussion topic or activity for the day leads the students feel more involved rather than passive waiting the material or the topic from the lecturer. Duta comments:

Sometimes, Miss Hana comes into the class and asks 'what should we learn today?'

The classroom atmosphere in which the lecturer supports the students to express their   ideas freely in responding the task at hand motivate the students to participate and are not afraid of being different from their classmates in term of both point of view and the way in communicating the ideas.

c. Support from the teacher and peers encourage students to engage and participate in classroom activities.

Everyone in the current class seems to feel comfortable with the present of peers and the lecturer. As Sahir says:

...In this speaking class, I do not keep image... but for other class, I just keep silent

Sahir words reflect his behaviour in this speaking class is different with other classes. He admits that he feels confident to express himself in the current class since everybody supports his expressive behaviour. A supportive behaviour from the

teacher and the peers is also felt by Tini who is different with Sahir in level of activeness. She admits that her classmates and the teacher help her to deal with her problems in English. Tini comments:

> *My friends and teacher really help me to study...if I do not understand, they tell me the words...*

A conducive and comfortable environment in the classroom that motivate the students have a willingness to engage and participate in various activities may, at last, develop the students' confident to speak English which means help the class to reach the goals of the teaching-learning process.

Students' Motivation and Responsive Pedagogy: An Analysis

As presented in previous section, there are two aspects bringing students to engage and participate in learning activities, namely classroom activities and teacher's communicative style. Although other factors may also influence students' motivation to learn, outside and inside the classroom, learning activities and teacher's communicative style encourage students to participate in tasks at hand. Based on the findings, some strategies to motivate language learners to engage in classroom learning activities can be revealed.

For one thing, the use of various activities and environments needs to be maximized not only to accommodate the differences of students' learning preferences and personality but also to lessen the boredom. The students are usually easy to pay attention to something that is interesting or unusual. To accommodate this thing, the teacher should provide interesting and fun learning tasks. The tasks that are related to real life situations and stimulate students' curiousity are some of good strategies that can be used to attract students' attention and motivation to learn (Woolfolk, 2007). Activities and courses that bring the students to be more involved with meaning and purposes lead them to be intrinsically motivated to engage with classroom (Brown, 2007). In this light, collaborative works and personal performance should be appropriately used based on the tasks at hand.

Moreover, teacher's communication style also influences students' willingness to participate in classroom activities. Supportive, open-minded, creative, warm and friendly behavior becomes some teacher's characteristics that need to be developed

in the classroom. The teacher's enthusiasm and commitment in teaching influence students' motivation to learn (Dornyei, 1998, p.130). The way of the teacher interact with the students leads to secured or insecured feeling with their presence and participation in the classroom. Secured feeling brings the students become more active and have an interest toward a course subject or activity (Stronge, 2002). A good interactive communication may lead the students to look at the teacher not only as the instructor but also as a friend who can help them learning on the subject matter. Thus, the interaction between the teacher and the students can run well and the teacher can play her roles in a great term.

Also, it is important for the teacher to guide the students to appreciate their peer's performance through positive appraisal and gestures; this is useful to raise students' confidence to participate in each task at hand. The right feedback will affect the students' motivation. Smiling face and certain gestures are some examples of the feedback needed by the students. All of this kind of feedback should be put on the appropriate proportion because the right feedback will motivate the students to show their real ability and lead to improvement.

In lesson approaches, providing opportunity for the students to be involved in taking decision related to the classroom activities and discussion topics needs to be maximized as it can encourage students to be engaged in the classroom discussions and activities. Sharing ideas of students' learning preference leads to find the activities that are suit to their characteristics and needs, thus they have more enthusiasm to participate.

Furthermore, a comfortable classroom environment is also very important to encourage students' motivation to participate. A teacher has to create a positive classroom climate which produces a conducive environment for learning (Stronge, 2002). A conducive environment allows the students to think and share their ideas. To support that condition, the class must provide a secure emotional climate to every student. The teacher has to make sure that no one in the class has an unsafe feeling when she/he steps in to the class. If the students feel comfortable with themselves and people around them, they will have high motivation. In other words, a good classroom environment encourages students' engagement and participation

and at the same time it lessens anxiety and develops self-confident (Clement, Dörnyei, & Noel, 1994). The result of this condition is the students will be able to produce the best achievement from their own intellectual capacity. As Rost (2006, p.2) states, "motivation affects effort, effort affect results, positive results lead to an increase in ability".

CONCLUSION

The teacher's teaching style and strategy creates a particular image for students which influence their motivation to participate in each classroom activities. A good communication becomes an important aspect to build an understanding between the teacher and the students. The activities provided in the classroom may not meet the expectation of the students as each of them is unique, but a good interaction with the students can encourage them to give a responsive actions in learning process which, then, affect their speaking practice and improve their fluency. The results in this study indicate that the learning activities provided by the teacher and the teacher's way of interaction with the students are some aspects that are acknowledged by the participants in this research to facilitate the students' learning and encourage motivation to learn. In brief, having competency in knowledge is not enough for the teacher; teaching strategy, learning environment, and teacher's communication style also have crucial impact to students' motivation.

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