

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Thai Vocational Students' Motivation on Learning English at Narathiwat Technical College

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Abstract

English is an international language in many functions. It is used to communicate by different people from different nationalities around the globe for international communication in commerce, tourism, military aid, scientific and some other fields. Thai students in three southern parts of Thailand (Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat) said to have lack of motivation and interest in learning the English language. This study adopted Keller's motivation theory (Keller, 2010). Motivation is an influential factor in teaching and learning English. The purpose of this study is to investigate the Thai vocational students' motivation on learning English at Narathiwat Technical College. This study used the quantitative research design to find out the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation among students at Narathiwat Technical College. Samples of the study consisted of 68 first-year vocational students from Narathiwat Technical College, Narathiwat province, southern part of Thailand. Purposive sampling was used in selecting participants of the study. A questionnaire was used as an instrument for collecting data. The findings from the paired sample t-test indicated that students' mean scores for both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation were at low level. Therefore, Thai English teachers need to provide various teaching methods in order to motivate students interested in learning English. This study has crucial pedagogical implications for English teachers because a teacher is concerned with students' success.

Keywords : Motivation, Intrinsic, Extrinsic, Vocational students, learning English

Introduction

According to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) plan, among the 10 ASEAN member countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam can be worked freely by using English as a medium of communication (Somjai et al., 2014). In other words, Thai people who are good at English will confidently work in these 10 countries freely. Based on this context, English speaking skills are quite important for Thai people who plan to work in these ASEAN countries especially those who live in the border areas. English becomes an important subject to be renewed in non-English speaking member countries such as Thailand. English language is not only important for ASEAN member countries, but it also functions as one of the most significant tools for communicating to all countries in the world. As mentioned by Crystal (2003), English is spoken by 700 million people all over the world. Since then, Thai students should start learning English from nursery school through university. English has been taught as a foreign language (EFL) in educational institutions in Thailand. It has been stated in the curriculum as a compulsory subject which is learned to fulfill the requirements. By the way, English subject is regarded as a difficulty subject for Thai students compared to other subjects in the curriculum which makes students feel down and uninterested to learn English (Hajikaleng, 2024). Thai students are only involved with English in the classroom and most English classes are taught and explained in Thai language (Shin et al., 2014). The government of Thailand have supported learning English language at all levels. Besides, Thai English teachers have been using different types of techniques to find the most attractive way of learning the language (Cook, 2016). One way that has been used effectively is encouraging English language teachers to develop students' language competencies by integrating media while teaching English lessons.

Students are expected to be able to master the four language skills in English language learning which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All these skills are actually important for students to learn but a speaking skill is one of the most crucial skills to be learned because it is used to communicate with people all over the globe. Speaking can be regarded as a production in the learning process. In addition, speaking is a skill that

requires the students to be able in responding and giving an effective answer to other sides when they are communicating. Through speaking, the students can express their ideas, respond to other ideas, tell stories, and convey information. According to my teaching experience, English is one of the difficult subjects for them especially speaking skills which causes their grade points decrease. To overcome the problem, English teachers have to be more creative in choosing the materials and techniques which can make the speaking class more exciting, enjoyable, and interesting. Based on the 21st-century learning, it is encouraged to integrate media in the teaching and learning process. Film is included in one kind of media, and using media in the process of teaching and learning is regarded as an effective tool. Therefore, integrating English films into classroom materials is one of the acceptable educational tools that can help students to improve their language skills, especially speaking skills (Hajikaleng, 2024).

Thai English teachers have started to integrate English films in teaching English speaking gradually, but some of the English teachers still prefer to use traditional methods based on textbooks, which makes teaching and learning English in Thailand remain unsuccessfully. There are some noticeable problems regarding the standard of the English language in Thailand (EPI, 2022). According to the result of the English Proficiency Index (2024), Thailand English proficiency was very low, it was ranked 106 out of 116 countries (<https://www.ef.co.th/epi/>) as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1 English Proficiency Index 2024

| Ranking | Country | Proficiency |
|---------|-------------|-------------|
| 3 | Singapore | Very High |
| 22 | Philippines | High |
| 26 | Malaysia | High |
| 63 | Vietnam | Low |
| 80 | Indonesia | Low |
| 93 | Myanmar | Very low |
| 106 | Thailand | Very low |
| 111 | Cambodia | Very low |

Table 1 shows the result of the English Proficiency Index 2024 among 116 participating countries. This result displayed only eight ASEAN member countries that participated in English Proficiency Index 2024. Thailand was regarded as very low compared to Singapore,

the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Myanmar. This ranking shows the real situation of Thai students, where there is a vital need to upgrade the level of English in Thailand. There is a relationship between motivation and learning achievement (Thi & Nguyen, 2021; Dwinalida & Setiaji, 2022). In other words, those who have high motivation would receive high achievement in learning.

Thai vocational students have lack interested in learning English and they learn English just to pass the examination (Hayikaleng, 2019). In Thailand, a lot of prestige is attached to mastering English. English proficiency is crucial for both academic and professional advancement. It enhances job opportunities and enables effective communication in the world, especially within the ASEAN community. According to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) plan, there will be a free-flow market for goods, services, investment, capital and skilled labour among the 10 member countries (Somjai et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important for English teachers to motivate students and find appropriate teaching method to attract students to participate in learning English.

Objective

1. To investigate the Thai vocational students' motivation on learning English.
2. To investigate the students' levels of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in learning English

Research Questions

1. How are Thai vocational students' motivation towards learning English?
2. How are Thai vocational students' levels of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in learning English?

Literature Review

Motivation is one of the most important components that brings about success in learning a foreign language. Maslow (1970) mentioned that motivation is the internal force which pushes a person towards a goal based on personal needs. Motivation has been accepted as one of the important factors which involves desire and effort in achieving the goal of individual. Thai students said to be lack motivation and interest towards learning the English language (Hayikaleng et al., 2016). It is said that Thai students have lack of motivation. This issue greatly affects their English ability. Thai students spend 12 years studying English, from nursery class to university level, but their English language ability is relatively low

(Noom-ura, 2013). This study adapts the Keller's theory of motivation (2010) which comes out with ARCS model. The first component is "A" stands for "Attention" refers to using several techniques of teaching to attract students' attention in learning process (Keller, 2008). Next is "R" stands for "Relevance" refers to texts or passages given by the teacher is concern to students' past experience. The lesson must be matched with the students' ability level and related to students' past experience (Keller & Suzuki, 2004). Then, "C" stands for "Confidence" which is the element which makes the learners trust that they can understand the learning task (Keller & Suzuki, 2004). For example, they are able to answer the questions orally and in writing. The first three components produce the motivation to learn (Keller & Suzuki, 2004), but the final component "S" stands for "Satisfaction" which refers to students' satisfying experience during the learning process (Keller, 2008). If all the elements (ARCS) are combined together then students are probably having a high motivation in learning. These four components are needed to support students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Keller & Suzuki, 2004). Intrinsic motivation (IM) in language learning refers to motivation that leads the students to involve the learning activity because they feel enjoyable and interested to join in it. Extrinsic motivation (EM) refers to a performance that an individual performs in order to get reward such as high marks in examination or getting a good job and a good salary or to avoid from punishment. The following figure shows the theoretical framework of the study.

Theoretical Framework

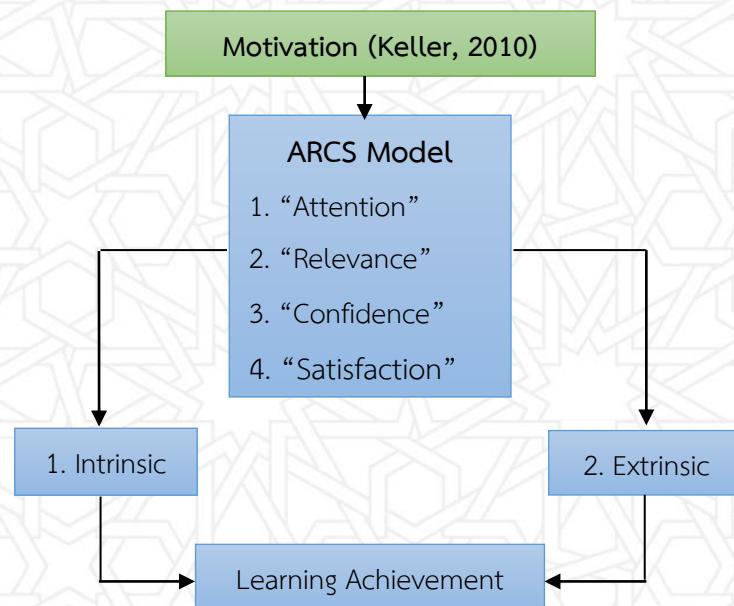


Figure 1 Keller's motivation theory (2010)

Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework of the study. There are two kinds of students in the English language class; those who learn English because of their need, interest and their hobby. These kinds of desires are called intrinsic motivation. Another kind of students are those who learn English because there is stimulation from outside. For example, a student studies the lesson because he knows that tomorrow morning there will be an examination, and so he studies in the hope of achieving high marks. This kind of motivation is called extrinsic motivation. Based on motivation, the principles of ARCS which were mentioned earlier are necessary to support students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Keller & Suzuki, 2004). The researcher carried out a study by adapting Keller's (2010) instrument to measure the Thai vocational students' motivation on learning English at Narathiwat Technical College. Related to motivation, there are many researchers who agree that there is a correlation between motivation and learning English as can be seen from previous studies below.

Ulfa and Bania (2019) have conducted their study on EFL student's motivation in learning English in Langsa, Aceh, Indonesia. The aim of the study was to find out the EFL learners' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in their learning of English. The participants consisted of 40 senior high school students in Langsa. The instrument used in collecting data was the questionnaire which consisted of 35 items. The results showed that the teacher is important in the process of learning because of a variety of teaching techniques that can attract students' attentions which concern to the extrinsic motivation of the students. Meanwhile, the biggest component of intrinsic motivation is the students' own learning goals.

Nuraeni and Aisyah (2020) carried out their study to explore students' motivation to learn English as a foreign language. The aim of this study was to find out what kind of motivation inspire their decision to choose English as their major. The participants were 10 students from Universitas Muslim Maros, Indonesia. The instruments used was interview questions. The results showed that majority of students had extrinsic motivation and only a few students had intrinsic motivation. After learning English for more than a year, some students mostly remained the same motivation while some students changed their motivation from intrinsically turned into extrinsic motivation.

These two examples above showed that the students learn English because there is stimulation from outside that is to get high marks. Besides, there are also examples of

students who learn English because of their interest as can be seen from previous studies below.

Mahmud et al. (2023) conducted their study about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of Gayonese EFL students in learning English. The aim of the study was to investigate both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learning English among 33 students from batch 2014 to batch 2018, department of English language education from Gayo highland districts, Indonesia. The instrument used was close-ended questionnaires. The results showed that the intrinsic motivation score was greater than the extrinsic motivation. In another words, the teachers required to improve students' extrinsic motivation in order to increase their academic achievement in studying English at the university.

Rasool and Rashed (2020) presented an article on investigating intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for learning English language at a college level. The purpose of the study was to investigate Kurdish sophomore college students' motivation on learning English. The samples were 82 students from English Language Department, College of Basic Education. The instrument used was the 22 questionnaire items. The results revealed that their intrinsic motivation level was higher than their extrinsic motivation for English learning.

I can be concluded from the above article that students have different in motivation. The two examples above showed that students perform at higher on intrinsic motivation than extrinsic motivation which mean that students learn English because of their own goals. However, these two types of motivation can be exchanged each other. Therefore, teachers can be a key factor which attract students to give more attention on the English lesson. By applying interesting teaching methodologies in an English language classroom can provide a positive impact on the learning of the English language in general. Various techniques of teaching are able to create high motivation in the process of learning as mentioned by the previous studies as follow.

Imsa-Ard (2020) carried out the study on motivation and attitudes towards English language learning of secondary school students in Thailand. The purpose of this study was to investigate Thai EFL secondary school students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English. The participants of this study consisted of 640 secondary school students from all over Thailand. The instrument used was a modified 34-item motivational survey adapted from Gardner's (2004) international version of Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). The study was analysed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. The results revealed that

Thai EFL students were highly motivated, and they were keen to learn and improve their English. However, passages given by the teacher was not relevance to students' experience.

Ulla (2020) conducted the study on students' speaking motivation and their perspectives on a task-based language classroom. The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of task-based language activities on Thai students' attitudes towards improving their English-speaking skills. The participants were 137 Thai EFL learners who were enrolled in a general English class at a Thai university during the third term of 2017- 2018. The instrument used was the survey questions. The findings revealed that although students had lack of confidence to use English in their conversation both inside or outside of the classroom, they still held a high level of motivation with regard to learning English in a task-based language learning classroom.

Syuhada and Fatimah (2021) presented their study on students' motivation in learning English after the practice of teacher-in-Role. This study intended to find out how is students' motivation in learning English after the practice of Teacher-in-Role. The instruments used in this study were questionnaire sheet and focus group discussion. The samples of the study were 32 grade 7 students of SMP Negeri 12 Padang, Indonesia. The results revealed that students' motivation after the practice of Teacher-in-Role has shown a positive manner, desire to integrate and more persistence in learning English.

Laiphakpam and Aroonsrimorakot (2021) carried out their study on attitudes and motivation of Thai undergraduate students towards learning English language. The purpose of the study was to find ways for improving motivation in a Thai EFL classroom. The samples of this study were 129 Engineering students of technical English classrooms in a private university in Thailand. The instruments used were activities as 'Job Interview' and 'Role-Play'. The findings revealed that both activities increase students' interest in learning English.

It can be concluded from the previous studies that motivation is one of the factors influence the success in learning English. The aim of the study was to investigate the Thai students' motivation in order to help them to improve students' achievement. Many studies confirm that there was a strong relation between motivation and English learning achievement as mentioned by articles below.

Dwinalida and Setiaji (2022) conducted their study on students' motivation and English learning achievement in senior high school students. The purpose of study was to investigate the relationship between students' motivation and their English learning

achievement of 100 grade 10th students from a Senior High School in Indonesia. The instrument used was a set of questionnaires consisting of 18 items to see the correlation between motivation and English learning achievement. The finding indicated that there was a significant relationship between students' motivation and their English learning achievement. The study encouraged the English teachers to apply effective teaching and learning strategies to develop students' motivation in order to improve students' achievement

Regarding motivation, Thi and Nguyen (2021) studied on the effects of classroom management styles on students' motivation and academic achievement in learning English. The instruments used in the study were an interview and questionnaires with 398 students. The results revealed that each style of classroom management applied impact with different levels and dimensions on students' English learning motivation. With different styles of classroom management, this can help students to receive high achievement in learning English.

Based on the above articles, the teacher's strategy in teaching English determines student motivation in learning. In order to achieve the goals in English language teaching, the teaching methods should be relevance to students' experience (Prihatin, 2019). There is a core relation between motivation and academic achievement. Therefore, to be successful in learning language, the motivation is employed as a key to judge students' success or failure (Dincer & Yesilyurt, 2017). With those articles, make the researcher become interested in investigating the motivation and the levels of extrinsic and intrinsic of Thai students at Narathiwat Technical College in order to see whether this theory can be used with these students or not.

Research Methodology

This section provides details on participants, research instruments, data collection and analysis.

Participants

This is a quantitative study using a descriptive research design. The research was conducted at Narathiwat Technical College which is situated in Narathiwat province, the southern part of Thailand. Samples of this study were 68 first year vocational students from Narathiwat Technical College, Southern Thailand. The researcher used purposive sampling technique in selecting participants who have certain key characteristics connected to the

purpose of the investigation (Dornyei, 2007). Random sampling cannot be done because this will affect the college's administration and timetable.

Research instruments

The instrument used in this study were 20 questionnaires. It has 10 items for extrinsic motivation and another 10 items for intrinsic motivation to be used to collect data concerning students' motivation towards learning English. Prior to this, the questionnaires were given to the samples in Thai version which were translated back-to-back by an expert in applied linguistics in order to make the participants fully understand of what is really meant by it. The close-ended items contained statements with a Five-Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' as follows:

Table 2 The Five-Likert scale

| | | |
|----|-------|-------------------|
| 1. | means | strongly disagree |
| 2. | means | disagree |
| 3. | means | not sure |
| 4. | means | agree |
| 5. | means | strongly agree |

Data Collection and Analysis

The purpose of this research was to investigate the Thai vocational students' motivation on learning English. The motivation questionnaires were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22.0. The total marks for questionnaires were converted into percentages. Paired samples t-test was used to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaires. The close-ended items contained statements that were measured on a Five Point-Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. After marking the tasks, the teacher analyzed the marks and presented the differences in the scores of the extrinsic and intrinsic motivations in a table.

Results

This part reports the findings from data collection based on research questions.

Research question 1. How are Thai vocational students' motivation on learning English?

Table 3. Statistics

| | Extrinsic | Intrinsic |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| N Valid | 68 | 68 |
| Missing | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | 31.9412 | 29.6324 |
| Std. Deviation | 1.38092 | 1.09141 |

The results in Table 3 show that students' mean score for extrinsic motivation is 31.9412 (SD 1.38092), which is at a higher level compared to intrinsic motivation. While students' mean score for intrinsic motivation is 29.6324 (SD 1.09141). The findings indicated that the students who participated in the study had high extrinsic motivation toward learning English. It happens because the students planned among themselves to pass the examination as mentioned in Table 3. The study also show that students study hard to get high marks even though they have less interest in the lesson. On the other hand, the teacher can attract the students to concentrate on study by applying various method of teachings. The study is in line with Ulfa and Bania (2019), and Nuraeni and Aisyah (2020), who mentioned that the students would pay attention in learning English if the teacher used an appropriate teaching method in teaching English. As a result, the students were able to pass the examination.

Research question 2. How are Thai vocational students' level of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation?

Table 4. Paired sample t-test comparing extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation

| Motivation | N | Mean | SD | Mean | t-value | df | p-value |
|------------|----|---------|---------|---------|---------|----|---------|
| Different | | | | | | | |
| Extrinsic | | 31.9412 | 1.38029 | | | | |
| | 68 | | | 2.30882 | 9.807 | 67 | .000 |
| Intrinsic | | 29.6324 | 1.09141 | | | | |

Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

The findings in Table 4 showed that there is a significant difference in the mean score between extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation ($t = 9.807$, mean difference = 2.30882, $df = 67$, $p = .000$). The results also reveal that the students' mean score for extrinsic motivation is significantly higher than intrinsic motivation. It is indicated that the students are

not interested in learning because their intrinsic scores are lower than extrinsic scores. In other words, the students learn English to get rewards that is high marks in examinations. For this reason, the teacher should find an interesting method to attract students to pay more attention and make students enjoy in learning. It is said that there is concerning between motivation and English learning achievement. Motivation is important in acquire knowledge. The students should have both extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation in order to gain achievement in learning. The findings of the study are in line with Dwinalida and Setiaji (2022), Thi and Nguyen (2021), who stressed that there is a strong relationship between motivation and English learning achievement.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the Thai vocational students' motivation on learning English. The theoretical framework for this study also involves Keller's Theory of Motivation (Keller, 2010). This involves both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Learning and motivation have a relationship in mastering the target language learning. Therefore, to be successful in learning English, learners need to have motivation. Motivation is regarded as one of the key factors that influence the process of second and foreign language learning (Chen, 2014). Besides, there is a positive correlation between students' achievement in learning English and their motivation. In other words, motivation boosts students' achievement in all areas of English learning, including speaking skills. Based on 21st-century learning, it is encouraged to integrate media in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, integrating media into classroom materials is one of the acceptable educational tools that can help students to improve their language skills, especially speaking skills. Integrating media increases students' motivation and grabs students' attention, increases focus and concentration, creates interest in class as well as makes learning enjoyable. It also helped students to understand the lesson better. Providing interesting materials is also important, and passages given should be related to daily life and based on students' ability (Cheng & Cheng, 2012); then it would be more interesting and fun.

This study clearly shows that the students' mean score for extrinsic motivation is at a higher level compared to intrinsic motivation. Based on my experience, the vocational students mostly focus on working skills, but at the same time, they have to pass all the subjects that they learn in the particular course, which means that the students learn English just to pass the examination; otherwise, it will affect their grade point average. For this

reason, English teachers should apply various teaching methods to attract students, encourage them to pay more attention, and create a feeling of enjoyment and fun towards the lesson. Enjoyment and fun are the key factors to make teaching and learning EFL more motivating. As a result, it motivates the students to feel satisfied and be interested in participating and learn more during the lesson. They do not think of only passing examinations (Jehdo, 2009) but also want to be able to use it in the future.

Conclusion

The study which is carried out at Narathiwat Technical College by the researcher is to investigate the Thai vocational students' motivation on learning English among first-year vocational students. The results clearly showed that motivation is regarded as an important component of making students successful in their English learning. This study has revealed that the vocational students from Narathiwat Technical College have low motivation because the English teachers use inappropriate teaching methods that is usually based on chalk and talk, making students unmotivated and uninterested in learning the English subject. Related to this, previous studies have shown that there is a positive relation between motivation and students' achievement (Thi & Nguyen, 2021; Dwinalida & Setiaji, 2022). It can be argued that to gain success in learning English, learners need to have strong motivation in that particular subject. The Thai government has made efforts to improve English skills among Thai vocational and technical education students in every part of Thailand, but the outcome does not reflect improvement. Thai vocational students and technical education face serious problems due to their lack of interest in learning English subject and also due to the method of teaching English (Choosri & Intharaksa, 2011). Therefore, the Thai English teachers should change their way of teaching from traditional methods to new teaching methods in order to increase both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, create goals for learning and make clear between language courses and their future careers. The Thai English teachers should play an important role in finding ways to motivate and make students interested in learning English subject. The findings of this study also serve as a guide to the Ministry of Education, in particular to the Teacher Training Division and English teachers to take into consideration about the problems faced by vocational students in Thailand and find new teaching methods to motivate and make students interested to learn English.

Recommendations

In this study, the researcher used only a small sample of 68 students from Narathiwat Technical College, Princess of Naradhiwas University, Narathiwat province, southern part of Thailand. Future research should involve larger samples that include other departments of different technical colleges from different provinces in Thailand to obtain more conclusive findings that can resemble a larger population. In relation to this, the researcher might use both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to get more information regarding teaching and learning English subjects among technical college students. For the future research, the English teachers in the three southern provinces of Thailand might use various types of methodologies, such as textbooks, pictures, and PowerPoint in order to develop English skills in the future.

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