

Investigating Factors Affecting English Language Engagement among the Law Department Learners in Papua: An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to investigate the factors affecting English Language Engagement among the Law Department Learners in Papua. This study is qualitative by implementing a cross-sectional design to capture a snapshot of English language engagement among the Law Department Learners in Papua. A diverse sample of the Law Department Learners in Papua from multiple schools had been selected. The sample included learners from different grades, socio-economic backgrounds, and language proficiency levels in the Law Department Learners in Papua. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes related to intrinsic and extrinsic factors. This study confirms that conventional monotony in instructional materials and insufficient reading practice are the main factors that make the Law Department Learners in Papua lazy to learn English in the classroom. It is recommended to delve deeper into the identified factors of conventional monotony in instructional materials and insufficient reading practice as contributors to students' lack of motivation in learning English in the classroom.

Keywords: *Factors, affecting, English Language Engagement, the Law Department Learners in Papua*

Introduction

In today's globalized world, proficiency in the English language holds paramount importance as a crucial tool for effective communication, cross-cultural interaction, and access to a myriad of educational and professional opportunities. At the learners, the acquisition of English language skills becomes a pivotal endeavor, laying the foundation for students' future academic pursuits and career prospects. However, a recurring challenge encountered by educators and researchers alike is the apparent reluctance or resistance exhibited by some learners towards actively engaging in English language learning within the classroom setting (Council, 2003; Rice & Zigmund, 2000).

This empirical study delves into the multifaceted nature of student engagement with the English language in the learners environment, with a specific focus on the

intrinsic and extrinsic factors that may contribute to students' varying degrees of motivation and enthusiasm (Abrouq, 2022; Zhou, 2014). Intrinsic factors pertain to those inherent to the individual learner, encompassing aspects such as personal interests, attitudes, and self-perceived competence in the language. Extrinsic factors, on the other hand, encompass external influences like teaching methodologies, classroom environment, parental involvement, and societal expectations.

While the realm of language learning motivation and engagement has garnered significant scholarly attention, this research endeavors to extend the existing body of knowledge by conducting an in-depth empirical analysis within the context of learners education (Ahmed & Pervin, 2015; Ibrahim et al., 2022). By delving into the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors, this study seeks to uncover nuanced insights that can guide educators, administrators, and policymakers in designing more effective strategies to enhance English language learning experiences for learners. Through a comprehensive exploration of these factors, this research aims to contribute to a more holistic understanding of the dynamics shaping student attitudes and behaviors towards English language acquisition, thus facilitating the cultivation of engaged and proficient learners (Kpolovie et al., 2014; Papi & Hiver, 2020; Ushioda, 2011).

While numerous studies have investigated factors influencing language learning motivation and engagement, a dearth of research exists in the specific context of learners within the realm of English language acquisition. Motivation, attention, engagement, and intellectual effort are all characteristics that influence engagement (Ginting, 2021). The students' engagement increases if the online content is related to the syllabus but engagement is not the same as the face-to-face lectures in the class (Dwivedi et al., 2019). Personal factors, characteristics of the program, implementation of the program and factors related to teacher behavior affected their engagement in English language preparatory classes (Karafil & Oguz, 2019). Social factors, i.e. interaction with peers and teachers, social presence, and usage of social media positively impact active collaborative learning and student involvement, thus affecting their learning performance (Qureshi et al., 2023). The greater the use of e-learning materials and tools within an educational context, the higher the performance of the students and the efficiency of teaching practices (Alenezi, 2020). Besides that, Many EFL student teachers' efforts in coping with course-related reading materials were externally driven. They showed low liking for learning, demonstrated little enthusiasm, interest, enjoyment, and confidence in relation to academic reading. Also, they did not always understand the values of academic reading and text relevance for their development as teachers (Yulia et al., 2020).

Existing literature predominantly focuses on language learning motivation at higher education levels or in more informal learning environments. As a result, there remains a notable research gap in comprehensively understanding the intricate interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting English language engagement among learners. This research aims to address this gap by conducting a rigorous empirical analysis that dissects the nuanced dynamics of student engagement within the specific setting of the Law Department Learners in Papua, thus providing insights that can inform tailored pedagogical approaches for this critical phase of language development. Based on the background, the objective of the study is to investigate the factors affecting English Language Engagement among the Law Department Learners in Papua.

Method

This study is qualitative (Stroud & Green, 2022) by implementing a cross-sectional design (Cummings, 2018) to capture a snapshot of English language engagement among learners. A diverse sample of law department learners in Papua from multiple schools had been selected. The sample included students from different grades, socio-economic backgrounds, and language proficiency levels in law department learners in Papua. Intrinsic factors like personal interests, attitudes, and self-perceived competence explored through items assessing motivation, self-efficacy, and learning preferences. Extrinsic factors including teaching methodologies, classroom environment, parental involvement, and societal expectations probed using items targeting teaching quality, classroom resources, parental support, and perceived societal relevance of English. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes (Clarke et al., 2015) related to intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Result

As previously explained that this research aims to investigate the factors affecting English Language Engagement among the Law Department Learners in Papua. Below is the elaboration of data:

Conventional Monotony in Instructional Materials

Through the conducted interviews, a prevailing sentiment emerged among the Law Department Learners in Papua, underscoring the prominent role played by conventionally monotonous teaching materials as a pivotal factor contributing to their disinclination towards active participation and learning in the English language classroom. This sentiment appeared to be deeply rooted in the students' initial experiences with the subject, suggesting that their difficulties commenced right from the outset of their language learning journey.

One illustrative instance that encapsulates this sentiment pertains to the pedagogical approach employed in teaching grammatical tenses. As expounded by the interviewees, the conventional method of instructing tenses through formulaic memorization engendered a sense of arduousness. This conventional methodology involves a rigid pattern of rote learning, akin to the procedures characteristic of mathematical instruction. Consequently, the students likened the process to the study of mathematical sciences, a subject often perceived as daunting and elusive.

These observations resonate across the diverse student body, as evidenced by the responses of participants hailing from three distinct educational institutions. This unanimity of perspective implies a shared experience among students, transcending the boundaries of individual school contexts. This uniform disdain towards the conventional pedagogical materials underscores their influence as a widespread and impactful factor in shaping students' perceptions of English language learning.

In essence, the students' portrayal of conventionally monotonous teaching materials as a deterrent to engagement highlights the significance of instructional methods in determining the disposition of students towards language acquisition. The analogy drawn between the process of learning tenses and that of mathematical concepts serves as a poignant depiction of the inherent challenge posed by uninspiring instructional techniques. As such, these findings accentuate the need for innovative and dynamic approaches to language pedagogy that can ameliorate the perceived tedium of

learning, fostering a more conducive environment for active and meaningful language acquisition. Below generated the interview result with the students from the different law department learners in Papua:

"I harbor a strong aversion to mathematics due to the necessity of committing formulas to memory. This requirement compels my mind to engage in constant memorization, resulting in a fleeting familiarity with the formulas that dissipates over time. A comparable situation unfolded during my English language learning endeavors, particularly when grappling with tenses. In the realm of past tense, the demand to memorize the altered forms of verbs from their present counterparts proved perplexing, leaving me notably befuddled when distinguishing the past forms of irregular verbs" (*Interview, Ronald from Class "A"*)

"I genuinely desire to become proficient in English through classroom learning, yet I find it quite challenging. The reason is that I frequently struggle to remember whether to add '-s', 'es' or 'ed' to verbs, which ultimately discourages me from continuing my learning efforts. My laziness and confusion regarding English tenses forms hinder my motivation to learn further" (*Interview, Ledy from Class "B"*)

"I consistently experienced feelings of monotony during English classroom sessions, especially when assigned tasks by the teacher. It becomes quite challenging for me when all the task questions need to be addressed right there in class. The majority of the class time gets consumed by responding to these questions. The classroom lacks engagement as we merely remain quiet while answering these questions, after which the tasks are collected for evaluation by the teacher. This approach leaves me feeling extremely uninterested and unmotivated to participate in such learning settings"
(*Interview, Sintia from Class "C"*)

Furthermore, a substantial portion of students have expressed a strong preference for interactive learning methodologies. These include engaging in discussions, sharing personal opinions, participating in educational games, making educated guesses, and embracing similar interactive activities. These dynamic approaches have the potential to captivate students' attention and maintain their focus throughout the duration of the classroom session.

Traditional methods, such as solely relying on textbooks or completing extensive student worksheets with a mere emphasis on question answering, tend to foster monotony within the learning process. To counteract this, there is a palpable demand for novel and innovative teaching techniques. These methods not only prevent the tedium that can arise from conventional approaches but also encourage deeper engagement with the subject matter.

Creating a conducive learning environment plays a pivotal role in this endeavor. It is essential to establish an atmosphere that resonates with students, making the lesson material feel relevant, intriguing, and relatable. By doing so, students are more likely to be receptive to the lesson content, leading to a more effective learning experience overall.

However, the researcher also delved into the teacher's perspective, seeking to understand the reasons behind the observed challenges. To gain insights, interviews were conducted with English teachers across three different schools. Interestingly, one of the teachers openly acknowledged that her instructional approach primarily adhered

to the prescribed content of the textbook. She had been delivering lessons in a somewhat monotonous manner, strictly following the curriculum and refraining from incorporating supplementary materials due to time constraints.

This revelation holds significant implications and underscores an important finding from the researcher's investigation. It prompted the suggestion that teacher creativity should be nurtured and harnessed to better cater to the diverse needs of students in the realm of English language teaching and learning. Enhancing creativity within teaching methods can be achieved through dynamic instructional strategies, and one effective approach is to revitalize the classroom's teaching materials by introducing a range of engaging activities.

A valuable source of material that can inject vibrancy and diversity into the classroom is literature. The depth and breadth of literary works offer a rich reservoir of activities that can be integrated into lessons. These activities not only capture students' attention but also invite them to explore language nuances, cultural contexts, and creative interpretations. By leveraging the wealth of literary resources, teachers can infuse their lessons with an element of intrigue and novelty, fostering an environment that cultivates both linguistic proficiency and a genuine love for learning. Related to this finding, the previous study elaborated other aspect that influence the students' engagements. The students' engagement increases if the online content is related to the syllabus but engagement is not the same as the face-to-face lectures in the class (Dwivedi et al., 2019). Personal factors, characteristics of the program, implementation of the program and factors related to teacher behavior affected their engagement in English language preparatory classes (Karafil & Oguz, 2019). Social factors, i.e. interaction with peers and teachers, social presence, and usage of social media positively impact active collaborative learning and student involvement, thus affecting their learning performance (Qureshi et al., 2023). The greater the use of e-learning materials and tools within an educational context, the higher the performance of the students and the efficiency of teaching practices (Alenezi, 2020).

Insufficient Reading Practice

In addition to the traditionally dull teaching materials, there are additional factors that significantly contribute to students' tendencies toward laziness in learning, with one notable factor being the absence of a regular reading habit. Cultivating a habit of reading can greatly alleviate this issue, and one effective approach to fostering such a habit is by providing students with captivating and engaging texts. These intriguing texts can be sourced from various literary forms, including poems, short stories, novels, and a range of other genres within the realm of literary works. By incorporating these types of content into the learning process, educators can stimulate students' interest and curiosity. The inherent appeal of literature lies in its ability to transport readers to different worlds, explore diverse perspectives, and evoke emotions, all of which contribute to a more dynamic and immersive learning experience.

Presenting students with thought-provoking literary pieces not only offers a break from the monotony of conventional learning materials but also encourages them to engage more deeply with the content. As they connect with the narratives, themes, and characters, students are more likely to develop a genuine appreciation for reading and, consequently, to overcome their inertia towards learning. This approach not only enhances their comprehension and critical thinking skills but also cultivates a lifelong love for learning through the written word.

The preference for novels and short stories among secondary-level students presents an interesting challenge for educators who aim to select appropriate teaching materials. This inclination towards literary works prompts teachers to consider incorporating novels and short stories into their classroom instruction. A comprehensive observation conducted by the researcher revealed a noteworthy trend: students display a noticeable affinity for reading literary compositions, contrasting with their comparatively diminished interest in news articles.

This divergence becomes evident during classroom discussions centered around reading materials. In instances where the teacher assigned news articles as reading texts for discussion, a marked hesitance was observed among students when it came to expressing their opinions. The topic of the news articles, often revolving around political matters, seemed to dampen their eagerness to participate actively. Conversely, the researcher noted a remarkable shift in behavior when the teacher introduced short stories as reading material. For instance, during a discussion on a short story or a summary of a classic narrative like "Cinderella," nearly all students displayed enthusiastic engagement. They not only eagerly raised their hands to contribute but sometimes even spoke out without waiting for the teacher's prompting. This discrepancy in student response underscores the potency of utilizing literary works in the classroom. The inherent allure of stories appears to create a more inviting and conducive environment for discussion, encouraging students to voice their thoughts confidently. It is apparent that the captivating narratives and relatable themes found in novels and short stories resonate deeply with students, fostering a sense of connection that spurs their active involvement in the learning process.

Through the interview activity, students revealed how the Insufficient Reading Practice factor became one of the factors affecting English Language Engagement among learners:

"Honestly, not always. Sometimes it's just more of the same from the textbook. It's like reading for the sake of reading. I prefer when we have something more interesting to read, like stories or something"
(Interview, John from Class "D")

"Well, I think if we had like, stories or articles about things we're really into, it would be cool. And maybe if there were some activities related to what we read, so it's not just reading but like, doing something with it"
(Interview, Rini from Class "A")

"If reading felt more like exploring things I like and doing fun activities instead of a chore, I'd be more interested for sure"
(Interview, Sandy from Class "B")

The absence of a regular reading habit stands as a pivotal factor that profoundly influences students' inclination towards lethargy in the realm of learning. As education continually evolves, the avenues for learning have expanded, granting students access to an array of resources and materials. Yet, the act of reading, whether it be academic texts, literature, or even informational articles, remains an enduring cornerstone of learning. A consistent reading routine not only enriches vocabulary and enhances comprehension skills but also fosters a sense of curiosity and intellectual engagement. In its absence, a void emerges that can be detrimental to students' overall enthusiasm for learning. The lack of a reading habit leads to a restricted exposure to diverse

perspectives, ideas, and information, limiting the depth of understanding that can be cultivated. As students refrain from this fundamental practice, they miss out on the opportunity to stimulate their minds, thereby succumbing to a diminished appetite for active participation and critical thinking in the learning process. Consequently, addressing this absence through tailored interventions that promote reading could prove instrumental in reigniting the spark of curiosity and diligence within students, fostering a proactive approach to learning rather than succumbing to the inertia of laziness. This finding related to the finding that confirm many EFL student teachers' efforts in coping with course-related reading materials were externally driven. They showed low liking for learning, demonstrated little enthusiasm, interest, enjoyment, and confidence in relation to academic reading. Also, they did not always understand the values of academic reading and text relevance for their development as teachers (Yulia et al., 2020). Further, Motivation, attention, engagement, and intellectual effort are all characteristics that influence engagement (Ginting, 2021).

Conclusion

Based on the explanation of the finding and discussion session, it can be concluded that Conventional monotony in instructional materials and insufficient reading practice are the main factors that make the Law Department Learners in Papua lazy to learn English in the classroom. For future research, it is recommended to delve deeper into the identified factors of conventional monotony in instructional materials and insufficient reading practice as contributors to students' lack of motivation in learning English in the classroom.

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