An Analysis of Students' Intrinsic Learning Motives in Studying Grammar at the English Department of Bung Hatta University

MERRY PRIMA DEWI

*English Department, IAIN Bukittinggi, Jl. Gurun Aua Kab. Agam, Indonesia
E-mail: merryprimadewi@gmail.com*

Abstract— This research aimed to find out English Department students' intrinsic learning motive in studying Grammar. Students could not apply correct Grammar in speaking and writing, many students repeated grammar subject, and remedial teaching was conducted. Those problems indicate that students have problems concerning about their motive in studying Grammar. This research is a composite of quantitative and qualitative research by using explanatory sequential design". The participants of the research were all students of FKIP, Bung Hatta Univeristy. The instruments to collect the data were questionnaire, interview, and observation. The technique of data analysis was initiated by calculating the mean of each questionnaire items as the quantitative data. Qualitative data analysis was gained from the result of the interview and observation. The result gained from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis was interpreted, and research finding was gained. The finding of the research shows that the tendency of students' intrinsic learning motives are for utilizing Grammar knowledge in order to get a good job and gaining score compared to the motives of gaining Grammar knowledge and developing Grammar knowledge.

Keywords— Grammar; intrinsic learning motive; learning Grammar

I. INTRODUCTION

Motive is indispensable to learning; it cannot be separated from the needs and characteristics of the learner. Garrison and Gray (1955, p. 237), Barrett (2013, p. 298) describe motives as the basis of learning; it represents dynamic background for both original behavior and its modification. Students need to have obvious and persistent motive to learn. Persistent motives in learning generate students' motivation indicates when the reason to learn is obvious, students will be motivated, they may apply correct learning strategy and reach learning goal. Moreover, well-developed learning motive

is influential to students' achievements, attitudes, and future education. In the field of language learning, motive is also considered as the most fundamental point to be concerned. Therefore, without obvious motive to learn, the language learning process will not run well.

Learning motives refer to individual reasons to learn. Without motives to learn, it is hard to make progress. Learning motives are varies, every student has its own reason to learn. It is not impossible for a student to have a number of motives, depends on students' personal objectives. Brophy (2010, p. 301) states particular motive might be less applicable for some people than for others, but to the extent that the motive is

appropriate in a given situation, but principles relating to the motive should apply to everyone.

In English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Bung Hatta University, there were some problems related to students learning, especially in grammar subject. A lot of students often took the same grammar subject for several times, most of the students repeated grammar subject in short semester and some faced remedial teaching. Those facts indicate motive in learning grammar is lacking.

Additionally, the fact from Advanced Grammar class, the number of students in one class was 51; 29 students were the original member of that class, while 22 students were repeaters. It mostly happens in all grammar levels; the number of repeaters is almost equal to the original member of the class. Those repetitions also indicated that students have problems concerning their learning motive in studying grammar.

Previously, at junior and senior high school, grammar was only given as a part of a lesson, not as one specific subject. As a result, they are not familiar with grammar learning. Student's previous experiences in learning limited grammar at school may also influence their learning motives when studying grammar in a higher education. Consequently, grammar subject becomes one of the obstacles faced by the students when they enter English Department in university.

Students have to be able to apply grammar rules because grammar is the bone of the language. Grammar is also one of the most crucial elements to create meaning. As a foreign language, English has a lot of differences compared to Indonesian language, especially the grammar. Since Indonesian language belongs to tense less language; it was not easy for students to learn English grammar. They were not accustomed to the rules and formula. This issue may also influence students learning motive in studying grammar.

According to Shwalb, Nakazawa, and Shwalb (2005, p. 80) there are six elements of learning motive which is classified in two factors. Intrinsic learning motives which involve; enjoying learning, developing general ability, utilizing knowledge.

Some experts supported the above theories. Gaining knowledge is one of the most

fundamental motives in learning. According to Skyrme (1999, p. 202) learning is closely related to knowledge. As people learn more, they gain more knowledge. Similarly, Maki (2010, p. 142) indicates that one of students' patterns in learning is to gain knowledge and develop perspectives that lead to enhancements, improvements or innovations in educational practices. Furthermore, Bush and Middlewood (2013, p. 227) state that learning to gain knowledge for its own sake covers the intellectual curiosity which is enjoyed by those who learn a particular topic and are fascinated and feel enriched by what they learn.

Another motive in learning is to develop ability. According to Ngaroga (2008, p. 228) learning may develop ability for critical thinking and critical judgment; it may also lead the desire to continue learning. Moreover, Doyle (2008, p. 66) states students can develop their learning skills by finding and organizing the right information which leads them to a deeper understanding. Afterward, Wankel and Defillippi (2008, p. 162) explain students develop their ability in order to gain deep understanding of concepts and principles that raise their awareness in learning.

Regarding about the utilization of knowledge, there are some related theories. The strongest learning motive is student's desire to become more proficient at their future job as described by Singh and Sudarshan (2004, p. 24). Students are willing to study if they are convinced that as a result they will be a better worker. Failure by the teacher to be convincing about the professional relevance of his lessons will result a lack of students' interest and willingness to learn. The learning motive makes people realize the goal of the learning, and set the strategy used to achieve the goal. Similarly, Sharma (2006, p. 140) state that adult students' learns because they want to use the knowledge.

According to Hakim (2005, p. 27), in general, student's learning motives are varies. Students learn not only because they want to gain knowledge, but there are motives such as; getting good scores, passing exams, and some other motives. Since motives are personal, each and everyone have its own reasons to learn.

Moreover, Caroselli (1994, p. 146) explains some reasons why students learn. Students learn to satisfy their curiosity, some learn in order to be better prepared to perform their

future jobs. In addition, students also learn because they want to please and impress others. Then, there are students who learn because they want to satisfy their inner drives for achievement. He also clarifies when students' have determined motives, they have stronger motivation to learn and as a result they will soon obtaining the knowledge.

To be brief, there are several terms used to identify learning motives. The following are students' learning motives based on the theories discussed above; students learn for the sake of gaining knowledge, developing ability, utilizing knowledge, gaining score, others' temptation, pride, and reward.

Since this study aimed to find out students' learning motive in studying grammar, the following are some theories about the concept and significance of learning grammar. A number of experts have proposed their ideas to define what grammar is. Thornbury (1999, p. 17) says grammar is a description of regularities in a language, and knowledge of these regularities provides the students' with the means to generate a potentially enormous number of original sentences. Furthermore, he says that grammar is a kind of "sentence making machine". Without grammar, the sentence will be failed to have meaning.

Moreover, Thornbury states that grammar is a description of rules that govern how a language's sentences are formed. Grammar is a description of the rules of the structure of a language; the way the words combine, the order they come in, the way they change according to their relationship to other words, how they build up into units like a sentence etc. Similarly, Richard and Schmidt (2002, p. 230) define grammar as a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language. It usually takes into account the meanings and functions these sentences have in the overall system of the language. But it may not include the description of the sound of the language.

Every language has grammar. Knowing the grammar of the language correctly can help users of the language to communicate easily. Brown (2001, p. 362) says that grammatical competence occupies a prominent position as a major

component of communicative competence. Additionally he states that no one doubts the prominence of grammar as an organizational framework within which communication operates. It is a process for making a speaker's or writer's meaning clear when contextual information is lacking. Grammar means understanding the relationship of the words we choose and thought we want to express. In order to be communicative, speakers should consider their grammatical competence.

In conclusion, grammar is significant in learning a language. Grammar is an organizational framework within which communication operates. Without grammar, our communicative attempts and language would simply be chaos.

In short, it seems that students' have problems in learning grammar, seems that students have problems concerning their motives to learn grammar. Students' learning motives is questionable. This research aimed to find out students' learning motives in studying grammar that leads them to the failure of grammar learning.

II. METHOD

This is a mixed method research. This research was aimed to find out student's learning motive in studying grammar conducted at English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Bung Hatta University. The basic assumption is that the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods provides a better understanding of the research problem than either method by itself. In this research, the type of mixed method conducted was explanatory sequential design. Creswell (2011, p. 78) stated that explanatory sequential design is a two-phase mixed methods design in which the researcher starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data to help explain the initial quantitative results.

Specifically, Creswell (2011, p. 81) states that the explanatory sequential design requires; 1) Design and implement the quantitative strand which involves inspecting the data and conducting a descriptive analysis, 2) Determine the quantitative results, 3) Design and implement the qualitative strand which involves reading through all of the data to develop a general understanding,

and 4) Summarize and interpret the quantitative and qualitative results.

The participants of the study were all students who study grammar, in this case; Grammar I, Grammar III, and Advanced Grammar classes at English Department of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Bung Hatta. There were 261 students as the participants. As this study employed mixed methods design, there were three of instruments of gathering data; questionnaire, interview, and observation.

To identify students' learning motives in studying grammar, this study adapted two-factor model of learning motive by Shwalb (2005, p. 80). The questionnaire was developed in positive statements with four options of Likert scale to measure the appropriateness of the statement to students' learning motive. There are 11 statements of intrinsic learning motives and it was organized under four sub categories; gaining knowledge, developing ability, utilizing knowledge, and gaining score

In reporting students' intrinsic learning motive, the researcher calculated the mean for each statement in questionnaire items. The mean which falls in the range of 3.25-4.00 are defined as high learning motive, the mean in 2.51-3.25 are moderate motive, the mean in 1.76-2.50 as adequate motive, and the mean in 1-1.75 as low motive. Students' learning motive were measured by four points of Likert scale; each of questionnaire item will be scored 4 for MA (Most Appropriate), 3 for A (Appropriate), 2 for LA (Less Appropriate) and 1 for IA (Inappropriate) responses.

Next, the researcher interviewed twelve respondents as the verification of questionnaire data. The interview questions were as follows:

1. Why do you learn Grammar? Are you expecting to have good grammar knowledge?
2. Do you agree that Grammar is the bone of the language? Why /why not?
3. If you do not understand certain Grammar point, what did you do?
4. Do you practice your Grammar a lot? Why /why not?
5. What will you do if you do not understand certain Grammar point?
6. Do you learn Grammar in order not to have any problems in teaching your students in the future? Why /why not?

7. Do you learn Grammar because you want to give a correct model to your future students? Why /why not?
8. Do you learn Grammar seriously because it is beneficial for other subject related to other skills in English? Why /why not?
9. Do you learn Grammar just because you want to pass the subject? Why /why not?
10. Do you learn Grammar because you want to get a good score? Why /why not?
11. Do you learn Grammar because you failed in the previous Grammar subject?

Moreover, to confirm the data gained from questionnaire and interview, the researcher did an observation in Grammar classes. In this case, the researcher entered Grammar classes, observed students learning process in the classroom. In addition, researcher also observed students' activity during Grammar class, which shows their motive in studying Grammar.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the result from the questionnaire:

Fig 1. Students' Intrinsic Learning Motives

By relating the result of item number 1 to the facts above, it is assumed that students' previous experience in learning grammar, whether it was good or bad, do not have negative impact to their view about grammar learning. They still want to study because they need grammar; they want to learn it to gain knowledge.

Item number 2 is about grammar as the framework of language which is needed to be learned and comprehended. The responses show that students have the eagerness to learn grammar. They realize that learning grammar is the most crucial factor in learning English. Besides, they also need to comprehend all the elements of grammar in order to understand and apply it when using the language.

The third item is about whether the students triggered by not having enough understanding of grammatical items. The responses specify that students are triggered by the situation when they are having lack of grammar understanding. The statement indicates that, if they face difficulties, they will directly overcome the problems. They do not want to have their grammatical problems unsolved. Having these perspectives may direct the respondents to be the type of students who have the desire to gain to a greater extent of knowledge.

The forth item concern with grammar practice in applying the theories gained during the lecture. The result of the responses shows that the motive was moderate. Students do not practice much to apply the theories given. In fact, the theories could only be applied accurately if the students are familiar with the patterns and know exactly how to use it. However, if they did not practice, it will be very hard to comprehend grammar well.

While for item number 5, the respondents also have moderate motive. The item was asking whether the students ask their lecturer when they do not understand certain grammar points. The responses indicate that they are not eager to ask when they faced grammar problems. They let their grammatical problems unsolved. It is not a good way of learning, once the students ignore grammatical problems, then another problems may appear. They need to have clear understanding of every grammar aspects, because it will be the basis of further grammar understanding.

The result of the items number 6 showed that the majority of the respondents chose most appropriate, meaning that students have high motive. Respondents motive to learn are for their feature career. These responses point out those respondents learn grammar because they want to be able to get a job, in this case as a teacher. They learn grammar because they do not want to have problems in teaching their future students.

Moreover, the result of the items number 7 showed that the majority of the respondents chose most appropriate, meaning that students have high motive. Respondents motive to learn are for their feature career. These responses point out those respondents learn grammar because they want to be able to get a job, in this case as a teacher. They also have the willingness to be a good model for their students.

Next, for items number 8, respondents' motives were also high; besides, focusing on how to get a job, they also realize that grammar will be applicable for other aspect in learning English. They realize that grammar is needed in other subjects. They need to master grammar in order to be successful in other subjects as well.

The result of the items number 9 showed that the majority of the respondents chose most appropriate, meaning that their motive is high. These responses point out that they learn because they want to pass grammar subject. The most significant thing that the students want is passing this difficult subject. Passing Grammar means a lot for them. If they can pass this subject, they feel relieve.

The result of the items number 10 showed that the majority of the respondents chose most appropriate, meaning that their motive is high. These responses point out that they learn because they want to get a good grammar score. It is disappointing that students' motive to learn grammar is to gain a score. It seems that they learn only for the sake of score to pass Grammar subject.

The result of the items number 11 showed that the majority of the respondents chose most appropriate, meaning that their motive is high. These responses point out that they learn because they want to pass grammar subject. The experience of failing in Grammar subject previously makes the students focus on how to

pass this subject only, not to get Grammar knowledge.

The result of the interview is as follows. The respondents learn because they want to gain new grammar knowledge and they also realize that learning and comprehending grammar is crucial. The responses indicate that they were not developing their grammar knowledge well. They let their problems in certain aspect of grammar vague. It was surprising that students just rely on their grammar practice on the homework given each week. Actually homework is given as an additional practice which cannot be done in each class meeting. Since the subject only offered three or two credit hours per meeting, it cannot fulfil all the practice needed during each meeting. That's why homework is given. They do not have extra effort to practice more.

Students seems not having confidence to ask questions to their lecturer. In every class meeting, there is always a chance for the students to ask any points of grammar which has not been mastered. But students are reluctant to ask even they have not understand the material yet. They end up in asking their friends or just let their grammatical problems unsolved. They did not realize that lack of understanding of certain grammar points will lead to other grammar problems in a higher level.

Respondents motive to learn are for their feature career. These responses point out that those respondents learn grammar because they want to be able to get a job, in this case as a teacher. Respondents focus more on how to get a job rather than paying attention that grammar will be applicable for other aspect in learning English.

The responses point out that respondents learn because they want to pass grammar subject as well as get good grammar score. Some of the respondents also learn grammar because they were repeaters, they did not pass grammar subject, so they have to take this subject again to fulfill the standard point to pass grammar subject.

The observation indicates that all observed class show students learning motive are lacking, especially motives to gain knowledge. They do not have passion to learn and they do not learn for the sake of knowledge. Students came to campus just to obey the rules. Therefore, their motive to learn grammar is not satisfactory. The main aim from the students to learn grammar is to utilize the

knowledge for the future career. However, when they are learning Grammar in the classroom, they are very passive. Moreover, the competition are also lacking, no eagerness to learn. Students do not seem to have any passion in learning grammar. The spirit was also lacking. Being in grammar class is something obligatory, nothing more.

Moreover, the observation indicates that students learn because they want to pass grammar subject as well as get good grammar score. The fact that the students' motive in learning grammar is to gain score was shown from the way their effort in doing homework. They will borrow other friends' homework, or they even borrow their friends' books which already been used and all the exercises has been answered. Those facts show that their motive is only for the sake of score. Some members of grammar class were repeaters, they did not pass grammar subject, so they have to take this subject again to fulfill the standard point to pass. The orientation of learning grammar is not for the knowledge and the development of grammar ability, but for the score. They learn to attain better score, they will be more grateful if they pass. In short, the finding of the study shows students intrinsic learning motives are for utilizing knowledge and gaining score.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of the research are as follows; learning motives in studying grammar in terms of intrinsic motives are for utilizing knowledge and gaining score. Theoretically, they know that learning Grammar is crucial; they need it badly for their future career as a teacher. In reality, they do not really apply those concepts when they learn Grammar. They tend to have their own way of learning which make the concept of learning Grammar goes in a different way. They are in the zone of having their own perspective of learning Grammar. As a result they only focus on the result and do not really pay attention to the process. They might do anything to gain good score, even if it is not appropriate to do. Students' learning motive is not as it is expected. In fact, students learn for the sake of utilizing the knowledge for their future career, score, and reward. While ideally, the students learn because they want to have the Grammar knowledge.

REFERENCES

- [1] Barrett, K. C., N. A. Fox, G.A. Morgan, D. J. Filder, and L. A. Daunhauer. 2013. *Handbook of Self-Regulatory Processes in Development: New Directions and International Perspectives*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- [2] Brophy, J. 2010. *Motivating Students to Learn* (3rd Ed). London: Routledge.
- [3] Brown, H. D. 2001. *Teaching by Principle: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (2nd Ed). New York: Pearson Education.
- [4] Bush, T. and D. Middlewood. 2013. *Leading and Managing People in Education*. California: SAGE Publications Inc.
- [5] Caroselli. M. 1994. *Continuous Learning in Organizations: 50 Principles and 150 Activities*. MA: Human Resource Development Press.
- [6] Creswell, J. W. and V. L. P Clark. 2011. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2nd Ed.). California: Sage.
- [7] Doyle, T. 2008. *Helping Students learn in a Learner-centered Environment: A Guide to Facilitating Learning in Higher Education*. Virginia: Stylus Publishing.
- [8] Garrison, K.C. and J. S. Gray. 1955. *Educational Psychology*. New York: The Macmillan Company
- [9] Hakim, T. 2005. *Belajar Secara Efektif*. Jakarta: Puspa Swara
- [10] James, F. L. and B Vanpatten. 1995. *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen*. McGraw-Hill.
- [11] Maki, P. L. 2010. *Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution* .Virginia: Tylus Publishing.
- [12] McKenna, T, M. Cacciattolo, and M. Vicars. 2013. *Engaging the Disengaged: Inclusive Approaches to Teaching the Least Advantaged*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [13] Ngaroga, J. M. 2008. *PTE Revision Education*. Nairobi: Icons Printers Ltd.
- [14] Richards, J.C and R. Schmidt. 2002. *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (3rd Ed). London: Pearson Education Limited.
- [15] Schmidt, R., D. Boraie, and O, Kassabgy. 1996. Foreign language motivation: Internal structure and external connections. In R. Oxford. *Language Learning Motivation: Pathways to the New Century. Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center*. (11) 9-70.
- [16] Sharma, P. L. 2006. *The Future of the Learning World*. New Delhi: Prabhat Kumar Sharma for Sarup and Sons.
- [17] Shwalb, D.W., J Nakazawa, BJ. Shwalb. 2005. *Applied Developmental Psychology: Theory, Practice, and Research from Japan*. NJ: Information Age Publishing Inc.
- [18] Singh, U.K and K.N. Sudarshan. 2004. *Technical Education*. New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House.
- [19] Skryme, D. 1999. *Knowledge Networking: Creating Colaborative Enterprise*. Oxford: Reed Educational and Professional Publishing.
- [20] Thornbury, Scott. 1999. *How to Teach Grammar*. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- [21] Wankel, C. and R. DeFillippi. 2008. *University and Corporate innovations in Lifelong Learning*. CA: Information Age Publishing, Inc.