
***INVESTIGATING EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS'
MOTIVATION IN LEARNING***

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ABSTRACT:

It is believed that, motivation can affect all aspects of life. As it is self-evident in the literature, motivation has an enormous impact on teaching and learning EFL. The aim of this paper is to find out whether the students are motivated to learn EFL or not, and what type of motivation do they have; whether it is instrumental motivation or integrative motivation? This study has been conducted in the context of Kurdish EFL students at the University of Halabja, English Language Department. The problem this study is trying to tackle is to find the important role that motivation plays in learning the English language, and whether there is a lack of motivation from the EFL students, and then find ways to improve them. To conduct this study, the quantitative approach was followed, and a Likert-Scale questionnaire was designed, and was distributed among 50 EFL male and female students. The results indicated that EFL learners at the College of Basic Education in the English Language Department at University of Halabja are, to a great extent, motivated in EFL learning. Moreover, the results also presented the majority of the students have instrumental motivation rather than integrative motivation. Based on the results, some recommendations for University EFL lecturers are being presented in order to build upon the type of motivation that students already have to have the best teaching outcome.

Keywords: EFL, English language learning, motivation, L2, instrumental motivation

INTRODUCTION

Motivation applies to various aspects of life, and it has a great impact on obtaining end goals in any field. Among those various aspects, is the area of teaching and learning a foreign language; in this case learning EFL by Kurdish students at the University of Halabja. Woolfolk (1998) defines motivation as “an internal state that arouses, directs and maintains behavior” (P.372). Based on that definition, it can be said, motivation positively affects learning a foreign language. According to Gardner’s model, there are four features of learning a foreign language:

- 1- Socio-cultural environment
- 2- Learner’s individual differences.
- 3- The overall context of learning
- 4- Linguistics outcomes.

Thus, motivation can be divided at the following levels

- 1- Effort: this has to do with the drive of the learner.
- 2- Desire: this has to do with the want of the learner.
- 3- Affect: this means the emotional reaction of the learner.

(As cited in Rehman et al., 2014)

According to this, EFL students can be divided into the following categories of motivation:

1. Integratively motivated students
2. Instrumentally motivated students

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), integrative motivation refers to the willingness of EFL learners and their interest in having interactions with people from L2 group. Students who have integrative motivation are willing to learn EFL because they want to understand and have conversations with people who speak different languages because they want to get to know them and experience their culture. Moreover, according to Gardner and Lambert (1972) learners who have the quality of instrumental motivation really learn the L2 language because of practical reasons like finding a job, applying to university, employment, etc.

Some educators believe that it is better for both types (integrative and instrumental motivation) to be used in order to get the best results in learning a target language.

A suggestion was made by Brown (2000) on this matter which was that target language learners would want both types of motivation to be used. According to Fillmore (1991) suggests the following criteria for learning a target language:

- 1- Students have to be motivated to learn the L2.
- 2- The existence of support from native speakers for learning the target language.

3- The existence of communication and contact between L2 learners and native speakers.

(As cited in Rehman et al., 2014)

In addition, Clement and Kruideniet (1983) believed EFL learners which are willing to create friendships with members of the target language can only either be integratively or instrumentally motivated. On the other hand, Alshenqeeti (2018) made another categorization for motivation:

Intrinsic, and Extrinsic

According to (Woolfolk, 1998) the definition of intrinsic motivation is that “Motivation that stems from factors such as interest or curiosity “(P.374). Moreover, Ryan defines extrinsic motivation as “a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome” (2000: 60). Ellis states that “motivation varies depending on context and it varies from one person to another” (1997:76). Thus, it is not easy to quantify and measure motivation because many variables can affect it. This research aims at finding out the prominent type of motivation which the population of students have. This is important because it will help us in improving and working on that type of motivation, in particular.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Moskovsy & Alrabai (2009) believed instrumental motivation influences EFL learning, but integrative motivation influences ESL learning. However, Al-Munawwarah, (2018) believed both types of motivation are important in EFL learning process. Dörnyei (1994) argued that the nature of social dimensions of L2 depends on who learns the language, what language and where. Moreover, Oller et al (1977) state that Chinese L2 learners are integratively motivated, but Mexican Students are instrumentally motivated.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Gardner’s motivation theory is one of the best theories laying the ground work for research in the field of second language acquisition. According to Gardner, there are three main elements of motivation: eagerness, willingness and enjoyment of learning. (Gardner, 2001)

Another model describing the theoretical background of second language acquisition is the Process-oriented Period Model. According to this theory there are three phases of language acquisition based on the passage of time. The phases are: the pre-actional stage, the actional stage, and the post-actional stage. (Dörnyei, 2014)

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes the quantitative method of research. As for the participants, 50 EFL students were chosen as a simple random sample, from the University of Halabja, Department of English

language. All the participants were students from the academic year 2022-2023. A questionnaire was adapted from Widesti (2016) research paper which, in turn, taken from Gardner's (1985) (AMTB). The items' questionnaire was prepared via using Google Forms, and then it was shared with student participants of both male and female genders. The questionnaire was prepared based on the Likert scale; five scales: scale number one was titled strongly disagree and scale number five was titled as strongly agree. The items of the questionnaire were 10 questions: the items were organized in such a way that item 1,2,3,4, and 5 were about instrumental motivation and item 5,6,7,8,9 and 10 were about integrative motivation. Finally, the data was analyzed in order to find out what type of motivation the students utilize in their EFL studies, in general.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Various similar researches have been conducted on the topic of this research. One example includes research conducted by (Nguyen, 2019) under the title of Motivation in learning English language: A case study at Vietnam National University, Hanoi, which comes to the conclusion that the majority of their student participants also have instrumental motivation. Another study conducted in the same field is under the tile of The Role of Motivation in Learning English Language for Pakistani Learners by (Rehman et al., 2014) which conducted s similar study but in the Pakistani context. The research came to the conclusion that the students were mainly instrumentally motivated. In addition, another study, Chinese Students' Motivation by Liu (2007), reveals that the more students possessed a positive attitude towards learning English, the higher score they got in an English proficiency test. According to another research by Al-Dosari (2011), it is concluded that ESL speakers connect using English words in their firs language makes then believes they will be perceived as more respectable in society.

THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore the two different types of motivation which are integrative and instrumental; whether students are highly motivated in general or not. Another aim of the study is to find out what type of motivation do students of the English department at University of Halabja have.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Are the students motivated to learn EFL?
- What kind of motivation do students have?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of this paper are significant for university educators many ways. First, Educators will get a better understanding of their students and the type of motivation which they have. Second, educators will learn more about the significance of motivation in teaching EFL.

Moreover, both lecturers and administrators will understand the importance of creating better plans and strategies for teaching and administrating EFL students for better results.

Last but not least, anyone else who may be interested in EFL learners' motivation shall get benefit from such a study which, broadly speaking, belongs to the subfield of applied linguistics. Those people may include grammarians, linguists, lexicographers, and etc.

DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

This paper utilizes a quantitative method to collect data through a questionnaire originally adopted from Gardner's (1985) Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). The questionnaire comprised of 10 items. Item 1 to 5 specified to instrumental motivation and item 6 to 10 specified to in integrative motivation. The items were scaled on the Likert scale ranging from 1- strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree. The method used to analyze the results uses the model of Best (1981) and Degang (2010), which in simple terms gives each scale a numerical value ascending from 1 the lowest value to 5 the highest value. Thus, the scale and the level of motivating can be connected as such: a mean range from 0.50 to 1.49 is considered a very low level of motivation, and a mean range from 1.50 to 2.49 is considered a low degree of motivation and so on until the highest level of motivation is reached which has a range from 4.50 – 5.00. this scaling acts as a cornerstone for deciding the level of motivation based on the results of the questionnaire items.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on Best (1981) and Degang (2010), the Mean score for motivation was interpreted. Table 1 shows the results and interpretation.

Table 1 Motivation level Mean Score Interpretation

Mean Range	Meaning
4.50 – 5.00	Very high degree of motivation
3.50 – 4.49	High degree of motivation
2.50 – 3.49	Moderate degree of motivation
1.50 – 2.49	Low degree of motivation
0.50 – 1.49	Very low degree of motivation

Below, the results, mean score, is presented for both types of motivation.

Table 2 Mean Score for both types of motivation

Motivation type	Mean	Interpretation
Instrumental motivation	4.24	high
Integrative motivation	4.02	high
Average	4.13	high

The results in table number 2 shows the average mean for instrumental motivation and integrative motivation as well as the total average for both types of motivation together. Thus, the average Mean score for motivation, in general, is 4.13, and as it is shown in the table this can be interpreted as high. This result shows the learners possess a high motivation in their EFL studies. Moreover, this table shows another important finding which is that instrumental motivation Mean is higher compared to integrative motivation by 0.22. The finding of this study is similar to the findings of (Rehman et al., 2014) which studied the same case among Pakistani students. The results are also similar to another study carried out on Chinese students' motivation by Liu (2007). The latter study reveals that the more students possessed a positive attitude towards learning English, the higher score they got in an English proficiency test.

INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVATION

This section deals with the findings and interpretation of the results of the items dedicated to instrumental motivation. Table number 3, shows the Mean score and the motivational level rating for instrumental motivation.

Table 3 Mean score and motivational rating for instrumental motivation

Q. NO.	Instrumental motivation items	Mean	Rating of motivational level
Q1	Learning English is important for me because I want to communicate with native English speakers	4.34	High
Q2	Studying English will help me find a good job in the future	4.52	Very high
Q3	Studying English will help me in the future in studying for Master's degree and/or PhD degree	4.22	High
Q4	If I learn English, it will help me to find information and material on the internet	4.5	Very high
Q5	If I know the English language, I will be respected in society	3.62	High
Total / Average		4.24	High

As table number 3 shows, it can be said that all students are motivated in the category of instrumental motivation. The highest Mean score among the instrumental items was 4.52, and the lowest mean score was 3.62. the total average of Mean score was 4.24 which as mentioned before indicates a high level of instrumental motivation.

Although obviously the results for all items were high, yet some of the items scored the highest Mean which ought to be mentioned here:

1. Studying English will help me find a good job in the future
2. If I learn English, it will help me to find information and material on the internet

Thus, it can be said that most of the EFL learners at University of Halabja are motivated to learn English because of these two major reasons; finding a job, and finding material online.

It is also worth mentioning here that although item number 5, which is about learning English for the reason of getting respect in society, got the lowest Mean, of 3.62, among the other items. Although this is still a high Mean, it is not the highest Mean which means it is probably not a priority reason for the EFL learners in the University of Halabja to learn English. Comparing these results to another similar research shows a notable difference. That research done by Al-Dosari (2011) about learning EFL in the context of Saudi Arabia showed that English loan words are being integrated into the first language because speakers thought of English as the language of prestige. Thus, speakers believe they will get respect in society if they use the English language.

INTEGRATIVE MOTIVATION

Here, the resulting data about integrative motivation is described; namely, the items of the questionnaire which deal with integrative motivation. The definition of integrative motivation is provided by Deci and Ryan (1985), which indicates that the main reason why integratively motivated learners want to learn a language happens due to the fact that they are willing to understand the culture, traditional values and habits, and the community who speaks that language. The results for the integrative motivation items are shown below in table number 4. The results include Mean and rating of motivational level of each item as well as the total average.

Table 4

Mean score and motivational level ration for integrative motivation

Q. NUMBER	Items on Integrative motivation	Mean	Rating of motivation level
Q6	Learning English is important for me because I can understand English movies, stories, and novels.	4.54	Very high
Q7	If I learn English, I can easily become friends with Native English speakers	4	High
Q8	American people and British people are nice people.	3.52	High
Q9	It is important form to learn English because I will understand more about the culture of English-speaking countries	3.8	High
Q10	Learning English will make me open-minded and friendly just like an American or British person	4.24	High
Total / Average		4.02	High

From table number 3, it becomes apparent that, overall, the vast majority of participants possess a high rate of motivation in the area of integrative motivation. This is specifically true because the average Mean score for all items was 4.02 which is interpreted as a high level of motivation. Moreover, the highest Mean score among the integrative motivation items was item number 6 which was about learning English for understand English movies, stories, and novels. The analysis of this item resulted in a Mean score of 4.54. this shows that most students who are integratively motivated believe learning English is relevant to them as they want to understand English movies, stories, and novels. It is also worth mentioning that the lowest Mean score of all the integrative items occurred in item number 8. This item was about the concept of an American or British person from the viewpoint of the EFL student. Although the motivation level for this item is 3.52; which is rated as high, but compared to the Mean results for the other items, the rate is the lowest. This shows that students do not think that it is their highest priority to learning English because they think American or British people are nice people. In addition, the next item which got the highest Men score, after item number 6 was item number 10. This item was about EFL learners wanting to learn English because they believed it made them open-minded and friendly just like an American or British person. To summarize, it can be said that the students of the university of Halabja are integratively motivated to learn the English language because of two main reasons:

1. Learning English is important for the students because they will be able to comprehend movies, stories, and novels in the English language.
2. If students learned English, it will make the students open-minded as well as friendly just like an American or British person.

CONCLUSION

According to the results of this research paper, it is concluded that most of the EFL students at the University of Halabja, English language department possess a high degree of motivation to learn English, whether it be instrumental or integrative motivation. This answers the first question of the research. The results also showed that the students are considered to be more instrumentally motivated rather than integratively motivated, which answers the second question of the research. Moreover, one specific reason that ranked the highest among instrumental motivation factors was that the students believed studying for English will help them find a good job in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended for teachers to take this point into consideration in their teaching practices. They can always motivate their students directly by reminding them that learning English will actually help them find a good job in the future. Moreover, it is recommended that educational administrators do their best to make modifications to their curriculum in order to best prepare the students for the job market, hence, providing all the more reason for students to believe they will get a better job in the future. Consequently, it will also increase the motivation of the students in learning EFL.

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