

International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies

ISSN: 2308-5460



An Investigation into Attitudes towards Learning English and the Motivation Type (Integrative vs. Instrumental) in Iranian Students at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

[PP: 204-213]

Sara Kashefian-Naeeni

Faramarz Aminlari

(Corresponding author)

Department of English, Faculty of Paramedical Sciences
Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, **Iran**

Hoda Sadat Mousavi

Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages
Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, **Iran**

ABSTRACT

Learning a second language is of paramount importance as it equips one with the ability to communicate with people of other cultures. There are some factors that affect the success of learning a new language. The most omnipresent of all are students' attitudes and motivation. L2 learners' motivation helps them move forward and make progress and is deemed to be the key to successful language learning. Motivation for learning a language can have a variety of natures, the most important of which being 'instrumental' and 'integrative'. Some students strive to learn a language for practical purposes such as entering college or meeting some requirements (i.e. instrumental) whereas others have an affinity for a particular language or for identifying with its native speakers (integrative). This study encompassed Iranian postgraduate students who were studying in Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia (UKM), doing either their master's or PhD in a variety of majors. The objective was to shed light on their attitudes towards learning English, the second language studied there, and the comparative nature of their motivation, in terms of being instrumentally or integratively oriented. Using a number of instruments, it came to light that those students had highly positive attitudes towards learning English. Moreover, results showed that they had high levels of both integrative and instrumental motivations although the instrumental motivation outweighed the other type. Stated differently, the majority of students were interested in learning English mainly to get a better job or to pursue their studies at a higher degree.

Keywords: *Integrative Motivation, Instrumental Motivation, Attitudes, Iranian, International Students*

ARTICLE	The paper received on	Reviewed on	Accepted after revisions on
INFO	05/06/2018	10/07/2018	12/09/2018

Suggested citation:

Kashefian-Naeeni, S., Aminlari, F. & Mousavi, H. (2018). An Investigation into Attitudes towards Learning English and the Motivation Type (Integrative vs. Instrumental) in Iranian Students at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*, 6(3), 204-213.

1. Introduction

Today, English is undoubtedly the most widely used language for communication. Many people use English not only to meet a variety of needs in their personal daily lives, but they employ it for a variety of academic purposes as well. Manivannan (2006), for instance, point out that English is spoken by more than 300 million native speakers and between 400 and 800 million speakers of other languages, and that it is the major medium of instruction, publishing and international communication. This is mainly because English has become an international language, one without being equipped with which the prospects of success for those who would wish to enter the world of business, commerce or the academia are not quite promising. Having

recognized its importance in having a successful career in today's constantly changing world, therefore, parents in many non-English speaking societies often impel their children to learn.

Within academic settings, knowing English is absolutely essential for students, as it allows them to gain access to a bulk of information. This is because the majority of scientific materials are published in English. This fact suggests the importance of having a strong motivation for learning the language on the part of the students. For this reason, it is necessary for educators and decision-makers in non-English speaking countries to identify students' learning styles as well as the reasons why in some cases students lose their interest and motivation to learn. This is a case that holds true for

Iranian students, too. Despite the fact that these students seem to be very well aware of the importance of English in success at high-ranking universities abroad they intend to study at, they sometimes seem to lack the necessary positive attitude towards, or the motivation for, acquiring this indispensable tool.

The direct relationship between the level of motivation and success in learning, generally, and learning English, in particular, has been shown time and again (Jafari, 2013; Tuan, 2012). It is a fact that the students who have a higher motivation are more likely to succeed in their learning in general and English learning in particular. On a general level, motivation influences how and why people learn as well as how they perform (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Within the realm of languages, students' attitudes and motivation are very important factors in learning a second or foreign language efficiently. Both attitudes and motivation deal with human behavior-the ways students want to learn- being in turn influenced by the process and product of learning. However, these two concepts behave differently in different individuals. According to the Pocket Oxford Dictionary (2004, p: 587), "motivation" is the "reason or reasons behind one's actions or behavior and it contains the element of enthusiasm". On a more technical level, Gardner (1985, p: 10) defines the term as "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity". Williams and Burden, (1997) state that an overriding principle, that seems to have received too little attention in the debate about motivation, is the perceived value of the activity to the individual performing it. The greater the value that individuals attach to the accomplishment of or involvement in an activity, the more highly motivated they will be both to engage in it initially and later to put sustained effort into succeeding in the activity. This would appear to be true, whether they are influenced by intrinsic or extrinsic reasons. Learners have a personal perception and attitude in language learning in spite of the fact that they have some conflicting beliefs about learning which is due to the fact that some of the factors which construct attitude are different among people. A number of factors are associated with shaping attitude. These include the social context of learning, society's attitude toward immigration, bilingual education, cultural beliefs about language learning, and

the status of the target language and the process of language learning itself (Ramiraz, 1995). At the same time, the perceptions, motivation and attitudes that individuals bring to the learning environment are significant factors in the process of learning (Breen, 2001), ones which affect the degree of eventual success.

The present study is significant as it investigates for the first time the attitudes and motivation of Iranian students in a context never studied before; namely, the UKM. The findings of the study are likely to be used as highly relevant information to be used by educational policy makers such as those functioning in the Education Planning and Research Division of the Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Center (in which specific country?), schools and administrative centers in education. The information obtained from this study is expected to give them a deeper insight into improving the process of learning in general, and learning English by Iranian students in particular.

This study has the following objectives:

- to investigate the motivation and attitudes of Iranian students studying in UKM;
- to investigate the kinds of motivation and attitude of Iranian students in UKM; and
- to give well-delineated and comprehensive guidelines to the society to focus on English language learning in an informed way

The present research is trying to answer the following questions:

What are the Iranians UKM students' attitudes towards and motivations for learning English?

What kind of motivation do these students have towards learning English as a foreign language?

2. Review of Related Literature

For a number of years now, the idea that education and learning must have the learner as the center of focus has attracted some momentum. There are some views which state that education and learning must focus on the learner (William & Burden, 1997). According to this view, a learner should participate in the process of learning as a decision-maker and evaluator; one constructs meaning in his/her own world. The idea originates mainly from the study of attitudes and motivation, which has been a prominent area in the educational



psychology over the last two decades (Dornyei, 2001), where motivation is deemed by many as the core to success to learning (Nguyen, 2017), including the study of languages.

The literature on motivation for learning L2 has two main trends. One trend has led to a series of studies based on Gardner's socio-educational model, in which the role of integrative motivation comprises an integrative attitude toward the learning situation. Here, motivation is experimentally investigated as a determinant of L2 acquisition. The other trend of studies calls for the implementation of a new "agenda" (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991) for L2 motivation research, proposing a number of alternative models as an attempt to gain more in-depth understanding of L2 learning motivation within mainstream education. While the former studies investigate causal relationships among possible individual difference variables with various L2 achievement measures, the latter attempts to identify possible variables that could influence learner's motivations within the immediate L2 learning context. Each of these approaches is reviewed in the following sections.

2.1 Gardner's Socio-educational Model of SLA

The role of L2 learning in attitude and motivation was intensively studied in Canada in 1985 by the social psychologists-Gardner. He examined and studied whether or not learners with positive attitudes toward the target culture and people would learn the target language more effectively than those who did not have such positive attitudes. In an earlier study, Gardner and Lambert (1959) had found that attitude and motivation were the two factors that were most strongly associated with learners' L2 achievement. Elsewhere, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) drew together the findings from many studies carried out over several decades and developed Gardner's "Socio-educational Model of SLA".

According to Gardner (1985), language learning attitudes and motivation are a combination of a goal, tendency to achieve the goal, positive attitude toward learning, and the effort to gain it. He asserted that a highly motivated individual has an inclination to enjoy the language and to learn it. Gardner proposed that to understand why learners were motivated, it was necessary to understand the learner's ultimate goal or purpose for orientation. He

highlighted two distinct orientations for learning a language: "integrative" motivation and "instrumental" motivation. (See also Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

The integrative motivation helps individuals to empathize with the people and culture of target language; learners try to visit countries and read a literature of the target language, for instance. Such motivation can lead to personal development and cultural richness, as argued by Alizadeh (2016). Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, states that a learner studies the language so as to use it as a means of gaining some practical outcome such as passing an examination or finding a better job. It is characterized by a desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowing an L2 (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). It is also characterized by an interest in learning L2 for pragmatic and utilitarian benefits--a high salary, power or career, to name just a few (Johnson, 2001).

According to Cook (1991), L2 motivation does not necessitate having to choose between integrative or instrumental motivation--both types are important to learning. A certain learner might learn an L2 well with an integrative motivation or with an instrumental one, or indeed with both. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), when a language is learnt only for the utilitarian purposes, the success in a foreign/second language is supposed to be lower than if it is learned for an integrative purpose.

Clément and Kruidenier (1983) designed a research study in order to identify further factors that might influence motivation. Results of their survey identified four different orientations to language study. The instrumental orientation was an important factor, along with reasons such as travel, seeking new friendships, and acquiring knowledge. They acknowledged that the "relative status of learners and target groups as well as the availability of (or at least familiarity with) the latter in the immediate environment are important determinants of the emergence of orientations" (1983, p: 288). The challenge was to look not at the universality of integrative and instrumental orientations, but to look more at "who learns what in what milieu" (p: 288).

Ely (1986) looked specifically at an FL setting, choosing learners of Spanish in Northern California as his participants. He designed the study so as to allow for the

possibility that the integrative-instrumental dichotomy might not capture the full spectrum of student motivation. To his surprise, he found a clustering of motivation in such a way that resembled the instrumental-integrative classification, even though the survey had not been designed on the basis of that prior theory. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) also strived to move beyond the instrumental and integrative orientations, specifically looking at how motivation would include both internal and external factors. They identified four internal and attitudinal factors:

1. Interest in the language based on existing attitudes, experience and background Knowledge;
2. Relevance (some needs being met by language learning);
3. Expectancy of success or failure; and
4. Outcomes (extrinsic/intrinsic rewards).

The three internal characteristics that they specified were:

1. The language learner decides to engage in language learning.
2. The language learner persists over time and interruptions.
3. The language learner maintains a high activity level.

2.2 Dörnyei's Model

Dörnyei was also concerned with expanding the model of motivation beyond the two orientations, specifically in a foreign language setting. He stated that "the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of second language motivation is always dependent on who learns what languages and where" (1994, p: 275). Contrary to Gardner's focus (i.e. on integrativeness), Dörnyei (1994) asserted that in a FL setting, instrumental orientation would have a greater influence on language learners. He created a model of FL learning motivation that could account for and include some of the expanding views of motivation. Three different levels of factors were included, which not only allowed for the inclusion of orientations, but also for specific situations that involved the learner and the surrounding context.

The first level in Dörnyei's Model is the language level, which includes both the integrative and instrumental motivational subsystems focusing on reactions and attitudes toward the target language.

The second level is the learner level, which focuses on the individual's reaction to the language and the learning situation.

At this level, different cognitive theories of motivation are included. These theories view motivation as a function of one's thoughts, rather than an instinct, need, drive, or state. The source of action, then, is when information is encoded and transformed into a belief (Dörnyei, 1994).

The third level is the learning situation level, which takes into account specific motivational factors connected with the teacher, the course, and the group of language learners with which an individual interacts. This level consists of extrinsic and intrinsic motives in different areas. Extrinsic motivation consists of doing "something because of an external reward that may be obtained, while intrinsic motivation is demonstrated when we do something because we get rewards enough from the activity itself" (Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996, p: 14). Field studies indicate that intrinsic motivation is probably the most important form of motivation in the school milieu (Froiland & Worrell, 2016). Although these two motives are not necessarily mutually antagonistic, extrinsic motivation can undermine intrinsic motivation. Traditional school settings often cultivate extrinsic motivation (Brown, 1990), but under certain circumstances classroom rewards can be combined with or lead to intrinsic motivation.

Dörnyei (1996) specified that each of these different levels, language, learner and learning situation, to have an effect independent of the others. He stated that "... each of the three levels of motivation exert their influence independently of the others and have enough power to nullify the effects of the motives associated with the other two levels" (p: 78). However, with regard to his framework, he admitted elsewhere that "many of its components have been verified by very little or no empirical research in the L2 field" (1994, p: 283).

Along with Dörnyei, Oxford called for research regarding FL settings: "perhaps instrumental motivation or orientation should have a greater prominence in theory and research, at least in certain settings, most notably FL environments" (1996, p: 4). Oxford also called for further expansion of models into the research on motivation in SLA: "For the sake of students worldwide, we cannot afford to restrict ourselves to a small set of motivational variables, especially when we know from research in other fields that motivation is an extraordinarily complex, multifaceted, and important construct" (1996b, p: 1).



Therefore, it is necessary that more research be carried out to explore the nature of a FL setting in language instruction, to see how that would affect motivation in learners, and to include the possibility of a wide range of motivational factors which are likely to influence the language experience.

One specific area in which motivational factors can be seen at work is in the use of different learning strategies. According to Krashen (1988), there are 'affective variables' playing a facilitative role in second language acquisition. These variables include motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen believed that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety would be more successful in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and anxiety can combine to 'raise' the 'affective' filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. In other words, when the filter is 'up', it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient per se, for acquisition to take place. There are other factors like age, anxiety, aptitude and the amount of exposure which are related and influenced in the process of learning.

2.3 Attitude and Motivation towards Learning

Attitude governs all aspects of human life as it influences the end result of the quality and swiftness at which a particular task may be undertaken. Attitude encompasses a wide area ranging from the extreme end of our professional life to the most personal domains of our personal sphere. According to Zhao (2015), learners' motivation and attitudes have a great effect on second language learning and teaching. Unfortunately, attitude is a very subjective and broad area with a myriad of intangible variables interacting with it. Nevertheless, its importance cannot be denied in the field of learning in general, and language learning in particular. Many definitions have been proposed for attitude. These vary depending on interpretations and perceptions people in various fields of study have of this concept.

The demands of a changing world impose on learners the need to take increasing responsibility for their learning (Kashefian-Naeeni & Riazi, 2011) and in the last decades, there has been a perceptible change towards learners and learning

(Kashefian-Naeeni, & Nooreiny Maarof, 2010). Such an active role, however, is not likely to be adopted by students unless they feel a strong motivation to do so. Charanjit (1998) considers attitude and motivation quite important in language learning. There is a close relationship between attitude and motivation, as acknowledged by Asmah (1992). She claims that those with a high motivation have a positive attitude to language learning while those with negative attitudes may not be motivated at all to learn the target language. Asmah's view is supported by Charanjit (1998) and taken as fact by Gardner and Lambert in their 1972 study. (1972). There, they further emphasize that if students have a negative attitude towards learning and are reluctant to use any other language aside from their native language, it will inevitably inhibit language development. This is what normally happens to language that is acquired outside the household, that is, the language or languages that are not the student's mother tongue.

Different studies have been conducted on attitude and motivation. Faramazi, Elekaei and Afghari (2005) did a study on 200 Iranian university students. They attempted to specify Iranian students' attitude towards learning English as an international language. In a separate study, Aliakbari and Monfared (2014) involved 100 Iranian university students with intermediate to advanced proficiency levels in English to determine their motivational orientations. In other studies, Both Krashen (1982) and Gardner (1985) have examined the role of motivation in second language learning (L2) context. While Krashen emphasizes the importance of motivation, Gardner sees the link between motivation and learning in an informal context. In order to account for this inconsistency in the findings Gardner proposes that attitudes and motivation may be influenced by the social environment in which learning takes place. For instance, in the contexts where the target language serves as a foreign language and its acquisition is not essential to communication, integrative motivation is more influential. On the other hand, in communities where the language taught in school is used as a language of wider use that is for communication outside the classroom an instrumental motivation is far more dominant.

3. Methodology

3.1 Subjects

Participants of the present study comprised 54 Iranian postgraduate students in Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia, who were majoring in different fields either at a master's or a PhD or level. They were selected randomly, and were of both sexes (60% male and 40% female). Their age ranged between 23 and 48. As it can be seen in figures 1 and 2, around 44% of the participants belonged to the Faculty of Engineering, 30% to the Faculty of Science and the remaining 26% were studying Social Sciences. Around 60% were male

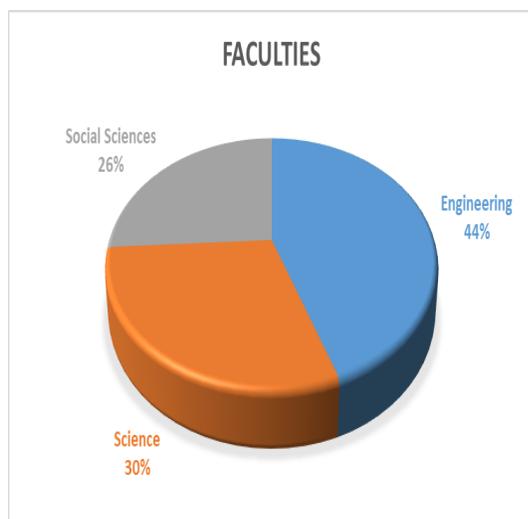


Figure 1: The distribution of participants across faculties

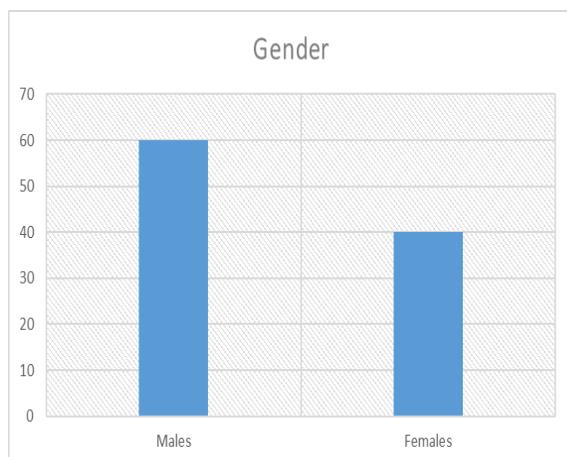


Figure 2: Relative percentage of Gender

3.2 Instruments for Data Collection

A questionnaire was used as the main instrument of this study in order to collect data from the selected population. The questionnaire consisted of 28 items regarding attitude and motivation of Iranian postgraduate students in UKM. All items for the measures were related and put on a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 standing for 'strongly disagree' to 4 meaning 'strongly agree'. The questionnaire addressed basically three areas, as explained in the list below:

Attitude to learn English: In this section, there were 28 items. Items 1 to 13 asked

about students' attitude and motivation towards learning English

Integrativeness (INT): Items 14 to 20 inquired about students' degree of integrativeness in their motivation towards the target language.

Instrumentality (INS): This scale included 13 items (21-28) and the respondents were asked to rate their utilitarian reasons for learning English.

5.3 Procedure

The survey was administered in the central library in UKM among 54 Iranian students over two days. After collecting the entire filled-out questionnaires, the data were analyzed using the Statistical package for the Social Science (SPSS).

4. Results and Discussion

Learning English is of undeniable importance, as it equips people with the ability to communicate with one another. Some reasons can be thought of as responsible for a student failure in gaining the desired level of proficiency in English. The first and most obvious would be the role of motivation and attitude towards learning the language. Motivation is a dynamic, multifaceted variable and is most directly connected with inner or outer variables that shape one's behavior (Hosseini, Kashefian-Naeeni and Mojarrad, 2015). When students do not have a positive attitude to learning English the learning process would be rendered inert. This is because learners' attitude directly or indirectly affects their motivation towards learning. The end result is that the expected learning will not successfully take place. In this research, the attitudes and motivation of students in learning and their proficiency in English were investigated. This section is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the results of items pertinent to students' attitude towards learning English. The second part encompasses the study's findings on students' motivation towards learning English, and the third part presents the results of the survey on the type of motivation that participants hold towards learning English.

4.1 Students' Attitude towards Learning English

The results illustrated that most students (90.4%) agreed that studying English is significant because it is a language of future. Even a larger number (96.2%) disagreed with the statement that they hated English, and so did 96.3% that an English class is a waste of time. All this indicates that the students had a positive



attitude towards learning. In addition, 88.7% disagreed that they had a feeling of drowsiness in English class. A considerable proportion (79.7%) agreed that they liked to learn English even when it is not a compulsory subject at school or university, and 74.1% attributed joy to meeting and listening to people who spoke English. More than half of the students (59.3%) claimed that they used English with friends, a finding that suggests a positive attitude to learning the language. When it came to reading books in English, the majority (74.1%) expressed their interest in so doing, and around the same number (72.3%) agreed that they felt calm in the English class.

Moreover, it came to light that a considerable number of students (64.8%) proved under no duress to learn English. Nor did the majority (88.7%) agree with the statement that they felt sleepy in the English class. Based on these findings, one can say with a reasonable degree of confidence most of the Iranian students who were involved in the study had a positive attitude towards learning English. The results of the first section of the survey are summarized in a Table 1.

Table 1: Results of attitudes to learning English (Items 1-13 of the questionnaire)

No	Items	Disagreement	Agreement
1	I don't pay much attention to the feedback I receive in my English class.	64%	42%
2	I learn English because I am forced to learn.	64.8%	35.2%
3	During English class I feel sleepy.	88.7%	11.4%
4	I don't study for English tests.	62.3%	37.7%
5	My English class is really a waste of time.	96.3%	3.7%
6	I hate English.	96.2%	3.8%
7	I use English with my friends.	40.8%	59.3%
8	I would still learn English if it is not a compulsory subject at school or university.	20.4%	79.7%
9	I enjoy meeting and listening to people who prefer to speak English.	66.7%	33.3%
10	I love reading English books.	74.1%	25.9%
11	I am calm whenever I have to speak in my English class.	27.8%	72.3%
12	English is the language of the future.	9.6%	90.4%
13	Studying English is important because it will enable me to better understand the culture of English speaking people.	64.9%	35%

These results are in line with those obtained by Vaezi (2008), who had demonstrated that Iranian students have very high motivation as well as positive attitudes towards learning English. In the same way, our results confirm Faramazi, Elekaei, & Afghari's (2015) finding that a great number of students reacted positively towards the English language.

4.2 Students' Motivation towards Learning English

This part presents the results acquired from the analysis of items that concerned the students' motivation to learn English. The results are presented in two sections. The first section contains results obtained from the analysis of the integrative motivation statements (i.e. items 14-20). The second section presents the results obtained from the analysis of the instrumental motivation statements (i.e. items 21-28). These are summarized in Tables 2 and 3, respectively.

Table 2: Results for integrative motivation (items 14-20 of the questionnaire)

No	Items	Disagreement	Agreement
14	I look forward to going to class because my English teacher is good	26%	74%
15	I have a strong desire to know all aspect of English	22.6%	77.4%
16	I study English to be more at ease with the English speakers	7.4%	93.6%
17	I study English to meet and converse with varied people	77.4%	22.6%
18	I study English to understand British and American English arts and literature	48.2%	51.9%
19	I study English to practice more freely in the activities of other cultural group	16.7%	83.3%
20	It worries me that other students in my class seem to speak English better than me	45.3%	54.7%

The results from Table 2 (i.e. those pertaining to items that dealt with integrative motivation) clearly demonstrate that the vast majority of students (93.6. %) agreed that studying English is helpful because it would enable them to communicate with people from other cultures. Not much lower was the number of those who believed that knowing English would assist them in liberally practicing the activities of other cultural groups (83.3%). . Only around half of the students (51.9%) turned out to favor learning English for the purpose of understanding British and American arts and literature. When asked if they would look at learning English as a means of satisfying the wish to know about every aspect of the language, a remarkable 77.4 percent agreed. Less than half of the students (45.3%) suggested concerns about their classmates being able to communicate in English as a plausible reason for studying English. The latter point implies that the students were evaluating and comparing their abilities with that of their peers --a sign that integrative motivation was at work when learning English. We now turn our attention to the results obtained from the section of the survey related to instrumental motivation.

Table 3: Results of responses to items associated with Instrumental Motivation (i.e. items 21-28 of the questionnaire)

No	Items	Disagreement	Agreement
21	I study English to get good grades in the exams	40.7%	59.3%
22	Studying English is important because it will make me more educated	5.6%	94.4%
23	Studying English is important because it will help me to get a good job		100%
24	Studying English is important because it will help me to make friends with people who speak the language	3.7%	96.3%
25	I study English because I need it in order to pursue my higher studies	5.6%	94.5%
26	I study English because it is the principal language of communication among countries in the world	3.7%	94.5%
27	I study English because it is the language of science and technology	11.1%	88.8%
28	Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English	40.4%	59.7%

Treating the results obtained from this section of the questionnaire indicated that a surprising 100% of the students agreed that learning English is important to them in finding a suitable job in future. This could obviously be interpreted as the students' view of English as an instrument for achieving practical goals (in this case, career expectations) in life. Not much less significant was the proportion of those believing that knowing English would render them more educated people in the society (i.e. 94.4%). . Almost the same number of the students (94.5%) regarded studying English as a necessary prerequisite to pursuing higher studies. Another impressive number (96.3%) goes to students who maintained that learning English was important as it would enable them to make friends with people from other countries, given that English is the most wide-spread language of communication across the globe. The figures dropped significantly (to 59.3%), however, when English was proposed as being closely linked with making good marks

There are some implications that can be made by reference to the results obtained in this second section of the survey. For a start, many people would view English not only as a tool within an EFL context with which to improve their life conditions, but also as a means of overcoming the difficulties they are experiencing in their social and economic settings. English has become a desire and need for many people due to the extra opportunities it can provide them with (e.g. entering various businesses and improving their lifestyles).

A more basic question that might arise here is the reason why the participants in this study, namely Iranian learners of

English within an academically-oriented EFL context (i.e. a university setting in Malaysia) should have proficiency levels that are far from ideal. A plausible explanation could be provided by reference to their educational background; one where learning English is not seriously promoted for communication, either for practical or academic purposes. Nor are the bulk of the materials or the instruction that students receive sufficient to prepare them to function efficiently in an international community where English is a means of communication. Students officially take English courses for a total of only 7 years (rather than 12), beginning with the first year of guidance school. The situation is worsened by the fact that all the instruction takes place within an EFL context (more often than not in their L1), where students have almost no opportunity to put into actual use what they learn in class. All this leads to a condition where students generally do not feel the need for, or the importance of, being proficient in English as a means of making a success of their lives. It has been held that if a student does not feel the need for acquiring a second or foreign language to function either within or outside his/her community, they will most probably develop a negative attitude towards that language, the result being a lack of interest in learning it (Baker, 1988).

This state of affairs implies the necessity of making radical changes to the instruction of English within the Iranian educational system, and moving towards programs where English is taught more communicatively, and is emphasized to such a degree as to make prospective university students quite conscious of its indispensable role in having a successful post-secondary education as well as future careers. Despite all these drawbacks, the future holds promise as students are increasingly being provided with more varied and interesting opportunities to be exposed to English. This is thanks to technological advancements (e.g. the Internet), which are quickly becoming part of parcel of education, and readily accessible to students.

4.3 The Type of Motivation that Students Hold towards Learning English

As shown in the figure below, the overall mean score for the integrative motivation items is 2.88. While the overall score for the instrumental motivation items is 3.24. This shows that the participants are more instrumentally motivated to learn English as a foreign language than having



other intentions in mind. In other words, students in this study seem to like to learn English for external rewards such as getting good grades or a good job in future, communicating with people from different cultures and languages, and gaining respect and social recognition. Figure 3 (below) illustrates a comparison of the means of the two types of motivation as expressed by the participants.

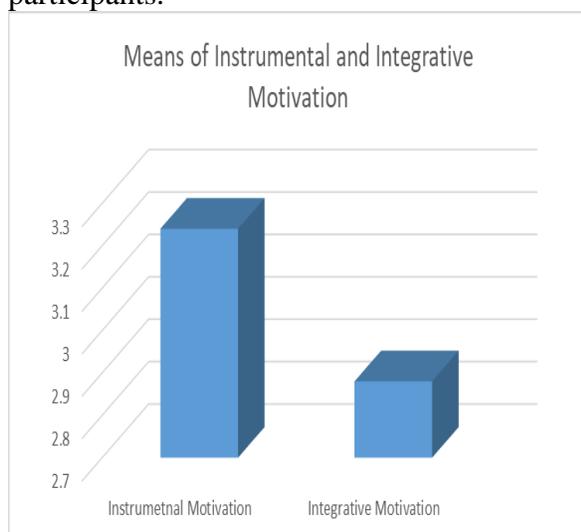


Figure 3: A Comparison of Overall Means for Instrumental and Integrative Motivations

This finding is a reminiscent of findings by Vaezi's (2008), who report that students in her study had a motivation that was oriented more instrumentally than integratively. Still, further confirmation comes from a study by Aliakbari and Monfared (2014). They conducted their study at Ilam University, Iran on B.A. and M.A. students of different age groups and in different fields of study (i.e. students with comparable characteristics and English backgrounds as the participants in the present study). Here again, students portrayed more orientation towards learning English for instrumental rather than integrative purposes.

5. Conclusion

Students' motivation and attitude play prominent roles in their learning a new language. It was shown that Iranian students studying at Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia had high degrees of motivation and positive attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language. Although the analysis of the results of questionnaire obviously demonstrated that participants had high levels of both the instrumental and integrative motivation to learn English, the instrumental motivation surpassed the integrative one. The reason might be due to the fact that Iranian L2 learners are interested in preserving their identity by unconsciously selecting to be instrumentally

motivated. Aspiration related to integrative motivation might affect their identity and fears. This might be related to their socio-cultural affiliations. On the other hand, instrumental motivation was found more important in some situations, mainly where there appears to be little desire to integrate with another community.

Furthermore, this study confirms the belief held by some researchers who maintain that in a foreign language situation, students are instrumentally oriented to learn the target language. Taken together, findings from this quantitative research manifest that future career development, meeting more varied people in the world, and learning English for pursuing further education are exceedingly significant for Iranian students.

References

- Ahmadi, R. A. (2017). The Impact of Motivation on Reading Comprehension. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 2(1), 1-7.
- Aliakbari, M. and Monfared, M. (2014) Iranian Students' Beliefs and Motivations towards English. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 98, 200 – 206.
- Alizadeh, M. (2016). The Impact of Motivation on English Language Learning. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 1(1), 11-15.
- Asmah O. (1992). *The linguistic scenery in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Baker, M. (1988). *Incorporation: A Theory of Grammatical Function Changing*. University of Chicago Press.
- Breen, M. P. (2001). *Learner contributions to language learning: New directions in research*. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Charanjit, S. (1998). *Attitudes of undergraduates towards English in two faculties at the University of Malaya*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Universiti Malaya.
- Clément, R. & Kruidenier, B. G. (1983) Orientations in second language acquisition: The effects of ethnicity, milieu, and target language on their emergence. *Language Learning*, 33, 273-291.
- Cook, V. (1991). *Second language learning and language teaching*. Oxford university press.
- Crookes, G., & Schmidt, R. W. (1991). Motivation Reopening the Research Agenda. *Language Learning*, 41, 469-512.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1994). Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom. *Modern Language Journal*, 78, 273-284.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1996). Moving language learning motivation to a larger platform for theory and practice. In R. Oxford (Ed.), *Language learning motivation: Pathways*

